

# El Monte Mindo Cloud Forest Lodge



## Highlights

Experience the other worldly wonder of Ecuador's tropical cloud forest, where the low mists shimmer with the polychrome play of birds and butterflies! This three-day tour based out of the El Monte Cloud Forest Lodge takes you to the heart of Mindo, one of the world's most biodiverse cloud forest, for a holiday like no other!

It may be the second smallest country in South America, but what Ecuador lacks in size it more than makes up for in natural and cultural diversity! Straddling the equator on the northwest coast of the continent, Ecuador is a land of ancient cities, lush cloud forest, volcanic highlands and palm-fringed coastline. In a single day it's possible to travel through all these landscapes and more, making Ecuador (pound-for-pound) the most diverse nation on Earth! One of 17 megadiverse countries, with 15% of the world's known bird species as well as 250 endemic reptiles and amphibians, the "Republic of the Equator" is also home to four UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including its capital, Quito, and the Galapagos archipelago, the lost world that inspired Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. Small wonder, then, that Ecuador is a traveller's dream!

Welcome to the jungle paradise of Mindo, where exotic orchids bloom among the moss-clad trees and tropical birds score the canopy like precious gemstones! Set amidst all this, the riverside El Monte Cloud Forest lodge is the perfect spot from which to explore the cloud forest! You're free to fill your time as you wish, whether that's hiking, bird-watching or whitewater tubing! There are guided nature walks on offer, as well as a trip to the Pululahua crater and the equator monument. The trip culminates with a visit to the world-renowned 'Tony's House', a jungle lodge that's frequented by around 25 species of hummingbird, many of which swoop down to the balcony at the eponymous Tony's command! Read more in our detailed [El Monte review](#).

## Is it for me?

This is one of most magical tours we've come across, one that promises sights, sounds and even smells that are as unique as they are intoxicating! Ecuador's Edenic cloud forest is a seriously special place, and there's no better way to discover it than with an eco-lodge stay like this one. This enchanting little tour will be adored by anyone with an interest in Life in all its myriad tones and textures, those whose idea of rest and relaxation involves a dip in a waterfall or a book, a hammock and some tropical birdsong. On the other hand, if you can't imagine a holiday without TV, sun beds and beach bars, best look elsewhere!

## Accommodation

The El Monte eco-lodge offers a truly unique cloud forest experience. Set amidst 44 hectares of jungle and gardens, the three riverside cabañas can accommodate up to 10 people. All are clean, spacious and en suite, with porches and balconies providing back stage access to this living theatre! The food is no less spectacular, with a skilled chef in residence to cook up some fabulous forest fare. The menu is gourmet Ecuadorian, meaning lots of fresh and exotic fruits and vegetables, exquisite fish and seafood dishes, soups, stews and a mind-boggling variety of potatoes! You can also expect some great wines and beers from neighbouring Chile.

## Itinerary

Prices from

**519** GBP (3 days) per person

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**Day 1:** You will transfer from Quito to the lodge. You can decide on a short visit to the monument which marks the equator and to the Pululahua crater on the way to El Monte. At the lodge a short informal introduction to El Monte and its nearby garden will be provided by your hosts before lunch. In the afternoon you will take a two hour introductory walk beside the Mindo River and the nearby forest. Your local guide will help you to identify exotic birds and will explain about medicinal plants and their local uses. Dinner will be followed by a briefing on the next day's activities.

**Day 2:** After breakfast you will take a five hour nature walk (up and back) along the Cordillera San Lorenzo. Your guides will describe the flora and fauna along the way and there will be a good possibility of seeing spectacular bird species such as the Golden-Headed Quetzal, Choco Toucan and Crimson Rumped Toucane, among others.

**Day 3:** Today there is an optional early nature walk before breakfast. You will be back at the lodge for lunch. In the afternoon there is the chance of another short walk or whitewater tubing down the Mindo River. Later you will visit the famous Tony's House, a small house where you can see more than 24 species of hummingbirds from the balcony. Tony, who knows the birds and their 'songs' very well, has placed a lot of hummingbird feeders around his house, as well as in the forest itself. They attract many species of hummingbirds and more than 19 varieties can regularly be seen including some very rare ones. In the afternoon you return to Quito.

## Details

### Getting there

Flying from the UK...Major airlines flying to Ecuador are Iberia, Intercontinental, British Airways and LAN Ecuador. All flights require at least one stop over in José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport - Guayaquil (GYE), and often two, possibly in Madrid or Houston. Fly to Mariscal Sucre International Airport - Quito (SEQU).

You will be picked up from your hotel in Quito at the start of your trip.

### Price includes

Accommodation, food, park entrance fee, airport transfers to and from Quito.

### Not included:

Alcoholic and not alcoholic drinks, entrance fee to Middle of the World Monument, Pululahua crater and Tony's house, personal expenses.

Price is based on 2 people sharing.

### When is best

The weather is by nature very changeable in Ecuador - so be aware of what is forecast for your visit and be sure to pack accordingly. The weather in this part of the Amazon rainforest is warm and humid, with temperatures ranging from 18 to 36°C.

### Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

### Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed