



## Transformational Advocacy Journey and Amazon Adventure

***"Ecuador: Environmental Justice and Indigenous Rights"***  
**December 28th, 2014 - January 8th, 2015**

Join Amazon Watch on an Amazon Rainforest Adventure that will enrich your life! Join Amazon Watch founder and Executive Director, Atossa Soltani, as well as Ecuador Field Organizer, Leo Cerda, on this remarkable journey. Starting from historic Quito, Ecuador, you'll learn from staff and partners about the history of the struggle to protect the Amazon and support the rights of indigenous peoples who call the Amazon home. Traveling by air and by land, you will see sights that few will ever have the opportunity to see.



We'll take you into the heart of the devastation wrought by oil companies who sought profits over people and the environment, getting a first hand look on our Toxic Tour. Next we'll take you to the Yasuní Ecolodge in Yasuní National Park, *the most biodiverse place on the planet*. We'll enjoy the beauty and wonder of pristine rainforest with engaging activities, comfortable accommodations and excellent food. We'll travel by small plane to Sarayaku, home of the *Children of the Jaguar*, where we'll be their guests, learning about this Kichwa community in a vast, pristine rainforest. Sarayaku stood up to Big Oil and the government and won their case with our support, establishing once and for all their rights to self-determination and a healthy environment. Then back to Quito to integrate our experience at our comfortable hotel.

This is a journey without parallel, taking you safely to the heart of Ecuador's Amazon and providing everything necessary to learn, discover and grow from the experience.

## Itinerary

**Arrive Sunday, Dec 28th**

**D | Quito**

Arrive in exotic Quito, recognized as a premiere and desirable destination for a multitude of experiences. The group will meet for our first dinner together and there will be optional cultural activities available to you to enjoy.

**DAY 1 : Monday, Dec 29th**

**B | L Quito**

After breakfast we'll have an orientation meeting by our journey leaders and then be briefed by partners on the situation in Ecuador as it relates to development and indigenous peoples. We are planning to hear from representatives from Acción Ecológica/Oilwatch as well as CONAIE, Ecuador's national indigenous organization and Ecuador-based colleagues from the Pachamama Alliance, currently dissolved by government decree.



We'll tour the old colonial town of Quito, a UNESCO-declared cultural heritage site before dinner at the celebrated *La Cuchara de San Marcos*. La Cuchara is very popular and noted for serving organic and traditional Ecuadorian food, the have handcrafted beers as well as a fair-trade store and gallery.

**DAY 2 : Tuesday, Dec 30th**

**B | L Quito – Lago Agrio – Coca : Toxic Tour**

We leave for Lago Agrio by plane, flying down from the highlands past tall, snow-capped volcanoes and down to the floor of the Amazon for a full-day excursion. We will take a "Toxic Tour" organized and lead by the Amazon Defense Front, which was originally formed to "fight Texaco, now Chevron, in the worst case of oil pollution on the Planet" and to make Chevron-Texaco accountable to the communities that have suffered years of contamination. *"The company left a region three times the size of Manhattan polluted with close to 1000 open toxic waste pits. To this day, the outdated and unlined dumps continue to leak into the water table, polluting rivers and streams used by more than 30,000 people for drinking water, cooking, bathing and fishing."*



**DAY 3 - 5 : Wednesday, Dec 31st - Friday, Jan 2nd**      **B | L | D Coca – Yasuní**

We'll head to the [Yasuní Ecolodge](#), located right in the magnificent Yasuní National Park. After an orientation from our hosts, we'll settle in and then experience a pristine rainforest first hand, with a native guide who will explain the flora, fauna and traditional uses of the rainforest during our visit.



We'll spend our time exploring the rainforest and diverse animal life in comfort and with plenty of time for integration and relaxation. We'll engage in canoeing, bird watching, caiman watching, see the canopy from above atop a giant Kapok tree in a purpose-built platform, hike through the jungle at night to see the nocturnal activities of the creatures of the night forest, and make the most of this remarkable place. We should see plenty of the abundant and exotic wildlife there.

The food and amenities are excellent, the staff helpful, kind and knowledgeable.

With our dedicated biologist and our local guide, this segment of our journey through the Amazon will give you a real feeling for what it is to be in the heart of the world.

**Day 6 : Saturday, Jan 3rd**      **B | L | D Yasuní - Coca - Sarayaku**

We'll return by boat to Coca and transfer over to airplanes for a chartered flight over the vast green sea of the Amazon Rainforest. We'll fly direct to the Kichwa community of Sarayaku, home to the "Children of the Jaguar." We'll get settled and then have an initial meeting, getting the lay of the land as we meet our hosts. We'll look at the options and activities available during our visit before we have dinner along with an orientation presentation on the community. We'll be staying in the home compound of the Gualinga Family, whose patron, Don Sabino Gualinga, is the community Yachuk (shaman) and whose children all play various roles in the leadership of the community and the fight for indigenous rights across the Ecuadorian Amazon. The people of Sarayaku are a real beacon of hope for justice and self-determination amongst indigenous Amazonians, as you will see.

**DAY 7 & 8 : Sunday, Jan 4th - Monday Jan 5th**

**B | D - Sarayaku**

Staying in this remarkable community in this pristine rainforest, we'll learn about the history and struggle of the community against oil extraction on their lands. We'll learn about their cosmology, meet with their elders, take nature hikes and be guided through the rainforest. We may join in a roundtable discussion with the Kurakas, the community leaders, or participate in a community minga – or work project. There's much to see and do and all at an indigenous pace.

We will also discuss the Sarayaku Resistance with our hosts, and learn about the status of their struggle to keep oil exploitation out of their territory. We will engage and visit the different educational centers and we'll have the opportunity to learn more about "Selva Viviente." We'll also visit part of the "Camino de las Flores", a novel approach to community land demarcation and a metaphor for the people, their land and the very heart of life that is the rainforest.



**DAY 9: Tuesday, Jan 6th**

**B | L Sarayaku - Baños - Quito**

After breakfast we'll gather say goodbye to our hosts before we take our return flight over the rainforest back to Shell on our way back to Quito. Then we'll travel by private coach, stopping in picturesque Baños, a beautiful town known for its waterfalls, hot springs, and miracles. We'll have lunch and enjoy the afternoon, reflecting on our adventure and the way forward in circle together before continuing on to Quito. We'll check into our hotel and regroup.

**DAY 10 : Wednesday, Jan 7th**

**B | D Quito**

We will meet with government representatives to hear their stance and viewpoint on petroleum driven socioeconomic development and the pertinent issues of the day. We will visit the remarkable Chapel of Men, a museum created by Oswaldo Guayasamín, without doubt the most important painter in Ecuador's Art History. The rest of the afternoon will be spent enjoying Quito, including the opportunity to visit an indigenous crafts market before our farewell dinner at La Cuchara de San Marcos.

**Departure : Thursday, Jan 8th**

**Quito**

Transfers to airport and homeward bound...or extend your stay for more of your own adventures. It's up to you!

## *Amazon Adventure Leaders*

### ***Atossa Soltani, Executive Director and Founder, Amazon Watch:***

Atossa is the founder of Amazon Watch. Since 1991, she has been leading international campaigns in defense of the world's tropical rainforests. Before Amazon Watch, Atossa directed campaigns at the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) to end logging in endangered ecosystems. Atossa began her environmental career in the late 1980's as Conservation Director for the City of Santa Monica where she designed and directed an award-winning resource conservation program. She is the board chair of the Christensen Fund and is the 2014 Hillary Laureate for Climate Justice. She is fluent in Spanish, Portuguese and Farsi.



### ***Leo Cerda, Ecuador Field Organizer, YASunidos:***

Leo is a Kichwa youth climate, energy and sustainability activist focusing on efforts to build a more just, sustainable society in Ecuador. Leo is a native from the city of Tena in the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest. Having worked with local grassroots organizations to create awareness of the environmental and cultural impacts caused by the oil industry, Leo is currently collaborating with the YASunidos youth collective that formed in 2013 with the goal of stopping planned oil extraction in an oil block (ITT) in Ecuador's Yasuní National Park via a national referendum. He firmly believes in a post extractivist Ecuadorian Society.



### ***Yury Guerra, AtruVistas South America Program Director:***

Yury Guerra is an Ecuadorian organizer who lived for twelve years in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Major in Social Anthropology. Currently he lives in Ecuador and is enrolled in a Masters Program in Social Development Management at the Universidad Ándina Simón Bolívar in Quito, Ecuador. Since December 2004 Yury has been working with Global Exchange coordinating its Ecuador program. He has led over 20 Reality Tours.



## ***Past Participants - Reactions***

*"Our trip to the Amazon in 2011 was the journey of a lifetime. To see the widespread un-remediated damage left by Chevron/Texaco was devastating. Much greater impact in person, particularly on the individual level. Then the trip into the Yasuni National Park was otherworldly... incredible beauty and biodiversity. Truly awe-inspiring and we were warmly welcomed by all we met. Can't recommend it enough." - Ken*

*"Journeying to the Ecuadorian Amazon with Amazon Watch was life-changing...being there was more amazing than I imagined. I am extremely grateful to have had the chance to travel into the jungle with knowledgeable and friendly Amazon Watch staff. I will never forget this experience or the close friends I made on this journey. Thank you!" - Asia*

*"...the best trip of my life" "an entree into places and cultures that the average traveler would never be able to experience" - Patrick*

*"An unparalleled opportunity. There are many trips that will take you to the Amazon, but this is one of the few that will give you a truly holistic view of the nature, the cultures, and the challenges it faces." - Gary*

*"This journey truly led participants through transformational experiences. It opened our eyes and hearts to alternative, and perhaps healthier, indigenous worldviews. Coming back to the U.S. I am buzzing with new energy, life, ideas, and intentions for how to live and act with greater reverence for Pachamama, and, indeed, for all life. The time in Sarayaku instigated new ideas and appreciation for relationship and community centered lifestyles, and I have since felt inspired to seek small ways to replicate such practices in my home and work spaces. In addition, recollecting the sheer diversity and intrigue of Amazon flora and fauna makes me long for nature-filled spaces and greener urban zones. Lastly, the necessity of fighting for Amazon preservation and indigenous people's rights was viscerally made real by the Toxic Tour in Lago Agrio. While horrifying to behold the effects of oil degradation in that region, seeing, smelling, and touching the remains of the pollution, along with meeting affected parties and hearing their stories, fortified my resolve to ensure that environmental justice ultimately prevails." Jessica*

*"If you want to understand the cost of oil exploitation and the work done to prevent it, save the Amazon, and respect indigenous peoples, look no further than Amazon Watch!" Zachary*

## *Register Your Interest*

Contact **Branden Barber**, Director of Engagement, to learn more and to secure your spot on this once-in-a-lifetime adventure: [branden@amazonwatch.org](mailto:branden@amazonwatch.org) or 510-281-9020.

**Trip cost - \$3500** including domestic flight from Quito to Lago and chartered flights to Sarayaku and transport to and from Yasuní. Price does not include international flight and incidentals. Itinerary and pricing subject to change.

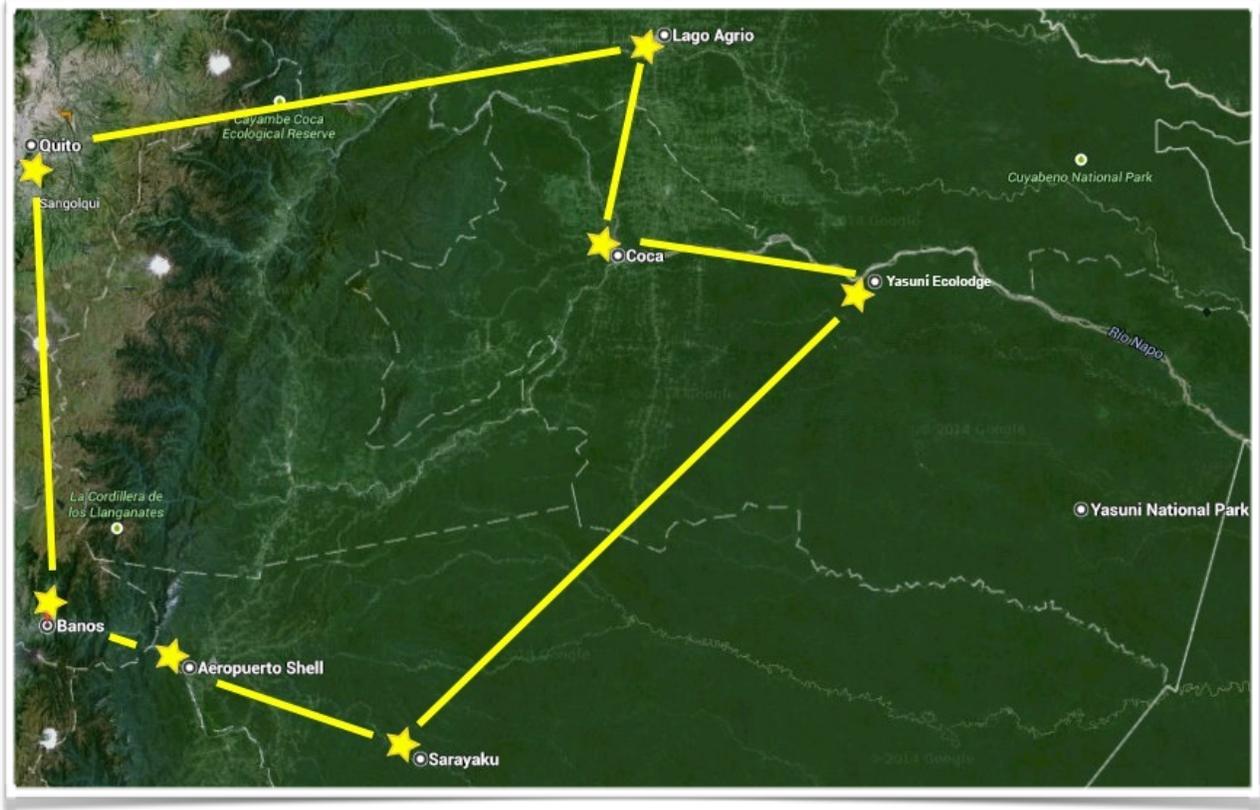
*Maintaining the integrity of the trip and the safety and comfort of our guests are our top priorities. Please contact us for more information and to sign up. We can't wait to journey to the Amazon with you!*

## *Travel Partner - AltruVistas*

Founded last year by veteran Ethical Travel expert, Malia Everette, [AltruVistas](#) serves as the bridge between mission-driven organizations and their places of operation. Helping to facilitate engagement journeys with organizations aligned with AltruVista's values of environmental and social justice, they have grown rapidly thanks to their impeccable service, savvy logistics management, and familiarity with the country areas served and local knowledge therein. Amazon Watch is proud to partner with AltruVistas and is grateful for their collaboration and commitment to ethical travel.



# Locations



November 15th - 25th, 2014

1. Quito, Ecuador
2. Lago Agrio, Ecuador
3. Coca, Ecuador
4. Yasuní EcoLodge, Yasuní National Park, Ecuador
5. Coca, Ecuador
6. Kichwa Community of Sarayaku, Ecuador
7. Aeropuerto Shell, Shell, Ecuador
8. Baños, Ecuador
9. Quito, Ecuador

You can access this map by [following this link](#).