



THE UNTOLD STORY OF CHOCOLATE  
AN EXCLUSIVE JOURNEY IN ECUADOR TO DISCOVER  
THE ORIGINS OF CHOCOLATE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TO'AK

BROWN & HUDSON

Archaeologists recently traced the origins of cacao to Ecuador. Here in the Amazon basin, some 1,500 years before the Mayans, cacao was first domesticated by the ancient Mayo-Chinchipe culture.

This very special journey, created in partnership with To'ak - makers of the world's finest chocolate - affords a unique opportunity to trace the extraordinary story of cacao, as you travel through five thousand years of history from its first origins to its most rarefied modern expression.

Travelling by private helicopter from the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean to one of the last remaining patches of Ecuadorean coastal rainforest, you'll be immersed in a richly captivating tale, with privileged access to people and places that will bring this untold story to life.

Visionary conservationists, acclaimed chefs, scientists and cacao growers will all be on hand to provide insight and enrich your understanding. Along the way, you will enjoy special tastings and visit spectacularly beautiful and seldom-visited parts of Ecuador.

While this journey will leave you with a new appreciation for this noble and treasured fruit, perhaps your fondest memories will be of the Ecuadorians themselves: kind-hearted, generous and proud of the great strides they've made in the last decade, they are in fact the nation's greatest treasure.



## THE THINKING BEHIND THE JOURNEY

### THE STORY OF CACAO: FROM ITS EARLIEST ORIGINS TO ITS FINEST EXPRESSION

Ecuador's most exclusive ocean retreat Las Tanusas is your home for three nights. Las Tanusas has an unbeatable beach location from where humpback whales can often be seen at this time of year. It is also home to Boca Valdivia, where Alain Ducasse-trained chef Rodrigo Pacheco, who recently starred in the Netflix hit *The Final Table*, brings to life his sustainable sea-and-land-to-table philosophy in exquisite and innovative ways. You'll spend time foraging and cooking with Rodrigo and you could also learn to surf or relax with yoga sessions and spa treatments.

The following day starts with a dawn pick-up on the beach in helicopters for

your flight to To'ak's cacao plantation in the remote Valle Piedra de Plata. Here you'll be met by one of To'ak's founders, who will tell you the extraordinary tale of how the last pure nacional cacao trees in Ecuador, which had all but been wiped out by disease, were saved. You will also meet key plantation staff to see first-hand how the pods are grown, harvested, dried, fermented and then turned into the world's finest chocolate using age-old artisanal methods. And learn how the valley's terroir affects the chocolate's flavour profile.

After lunch on the estate, continue by helicopter to the little-known reserve of Jama-Coaque which – under the Third

Millennium Alliance – protects one of the last existing fragments of Pacific coastal rainforest. It was here that co-founder Jerry Toth first began cultivating cacao trees, making chocolate by hand in a thatched bamboo house in the middle of the forest, before teaming up with fellow co-founder Carl Schweizer and turning To'ak into the art form it is today. Jerry will be on hand to show you round the research station and introduce you to the scientific team responsible for conserving this fragile patch of forest. You'll have a chance to learn how genetics is shaping the future of cacao conservation, and add to the legacy created by Jerry and Carl by planting your own cacao tree. In the late afternoon, fly back to Las Tanusas.

## HIGHLIGHTS

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE REMARKABLE STORY  
OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST AND FINEST CHOCOLATE

MEET KEY STAKEHOLDERS WITH EXCLUSIVE ACCESS  
TO TO'AK'S CACAO PLANTATION  
AND  
THE THIRD MILLENNIUM ALLIANCE RESERVE AT JAMA-COAQUE

UNCOVER ECUADOR'S GASTRONOMIC RICHES THROUGH  
ITS FINEST CHEFS AND PRIVATE TASTINGS

EXPLORE PRISTINE COASTAL RAINFOREST

TRAVEL BY SPECIALLY CHARTERED HELICOPTER

## DAY BY DAY

**DAY 1:** Arrive at Manta Airport + drive to Las Tanusas  
+ lunch in hotel + afternoon relaxing + dinner at hotel

**DAY 2:** Morning foraging and culinary masterclass with Rodrigo Pacheco  
+ lunch + afternoon free for optional activities from surfing to whale watching + dinner at hotel

**DAY 3:** Helicopter pick-up from hotel + fly to Valle Piedra de Plata + welcome and private tour with one of the co-founders of To'ak + hosted lunch + fly to Jama-Coaque Reserve + welcome + plant a cacao tree + meet scientists + return flight to hotel

**DAY 4:** Drive to Manta Airport + onward plans

## YOUR ACCOMMODATION



### TANUSAS RETREAT & SPA

Unquestionably Ecuador's finest beach hideaway, Tanusas Retreat & Spa is an exclusive 10-room eco-friendly boutique resort on the unspoiled coast of Manabi Province. Run by Alain Ducasse-trained Rodrigo Pacheco, whose buzz-generating kitchen is a hothouse of culinary creativity, Tanusas' Pacific coast setting, chic tropical decor, and palm-tree-filled grounds are equally alluring.

Work up an appetite by learning to surf, taking a horseback ride through the mangroves, visiting a local Panama hat-maker or joining Rodrigo Pacheco on a trip foraging local ingredients from the ocean and forest. If that's all too much work, then relax on the beach or succumb to a heavenly essential-oil massage in the spa.



# THE NITTY GRITTY

## Start & Finish, Inclusions, Exclusions, Costs

### START AND FINISH

Start of the trip: Manta, Ecuador

End of the trip: Manta, Ecuador

Duration: 4 days, 3 nights

### TRIP COST

GBP £5,950 per person

Based on on 2 adults sharing as part of a wider South America itinerary booked through Brown + Hudson

### WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- 3 nights' accommodation at Las Tanusas
- All meals as per the itinerary
- Land transportation to and from Manta Airport in comfortable vehicles
- Helicopter flights from Las Tanusas to Valle Piedra de Plata to Jama-Coaque Reserve to Las Tanusas
- Half-day foraging and masterclass with acclaimed culinary star Rodrigo Pacheco
- Privileged access to key stakeholders within To'ak Chocolate and the Third Millennium Alliance
- Access to a team of experts - stakeholders, scientists, conservationists and cacao growers
- Various private presentations and informal chats

### WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED?

- International flights to/from Manta (we are however able to arrange flights for those who wish)
- Meals other than those stated above
- Any activities or inclusions not expressly stated
- Insurance
- Tips and incidental expenses

7