

Cotopaxi Trek

Summit Ecuador's highest stratovolcano in the Andes Mountains



Ultimate Challenges

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Ecuador, South America

Mount Cotopaxi –19,000ft (5,897m)

On this stunning trekking challenge we will discover some of the marvels that Ecuador has to offer! Are trekking challenge will culminate in an ascent of the most famous active volcano in the world – Cotopaxi!

Lying along the equator with Peru to the south and Colombia to the North, Ecuador is the smallest country in the rugged Andean highlands. Ecuador is small by South American standards, but peaceful and astonishingly beautiful. The majestic peaks of the Andean Cordillera run through the middle of the country, and divide the tropical jungles of the Amazon Basin from the rich farmlands of the coastal plain.

Ecuador is blessed with an amazingly varied geography that helps give this country some of the greatest biodiversity on earth and makes it one of the most rewarding travel destinations in South America.

With its array of vibrant indigenous cultures, well preserved colonial architecture, otherworldly volcanic landscapes and dense rainforest, it packs its perimeters with more points of interest than many countries twice its size.



Detailed itinerary

Day 1: Depart London to Quito

Leave London via Madrid early in the morning to arrive in Quito (2,800 metres). Here, you will be given a briefing as to what to expect over the next few days.

Day 2: Hacienda Santa Rita to El Porvenir 5 hours trekking

Transfer from Quito to Santa Rita Private Reserve on the skirts of Pasochoa Volcano to start the trek to Hacienda El Porvenir. The trek will take about 5 hours and we will trek from 3,000 to 3,500m. Stunning views can be seen along the way of surrounding valleys and mountains.



Day 3: Pucará Del Salitre to Santo Domingo

Altitude from 3,500 to 3,900 metres
6-7 hours trekking

Today we will trek to a place called “Pucará Del Salitre”, a strategic military fortress from the old Inca Empire. It was used to monitor the roads that led to the Amazon Rainforest and Latacunga valley. This old road or “incañan” will lead us to our campsite. Along the way we will have the chance to see herds of Alpacas. Today’s trek is relatively flat but will be challenging for some because of the altitude.



Day 4: Santo Domingo to Chuquiragua Altitude from 4,000 to 3,600 metres 7-8 hours trekking

The hike will take the group from Santo Domingo Lake to Chuquiragua. The group will trek through the Cotopaxi páramo. The landscapes around this area are magical. This is a pristine area, where we can see wild horses, rabbits and deer. Today’s trek is great to help us prepare for the next few days.

Day 5: Rumiñahui Volcano Summit Altitude from 3,600 to 4,615 metres 6-7 hours trekking

We break camp very early and begin climbing Rumiñahui Volcano. We cross vast highlands swept by the cold breath of the Andes. From the peaks of Rumiñahui at 4,712 metres (15,455 feet) on a cloudless day, we can admire in the distance the peaks of Ilinizas and Chimborazo. In the afternoon we trek back to El Porvenir farmhouse where we camp. We are now prepared for the altitude that faces us for Mount Cotopaxi.

Detailed itinerary

Day 6: Rest day

Today will be a rest day in camp. We will learn about knots, equipment etc. There is an option today to go horseback riding. A brief lesson will be given in the morning at Hacienda El Porvenir, to teach us how to ride and get acquainted with the horses. Wearing the typical “Chagra” attire, we will begin a visit to the foothills of Rumiñahui volcano, riding side by side with herds of wild horses and bulls. Our native guides will share their knowledge in medicinal plants. The ride will take about 4 hours. A delicious lunch comprised of local dishes will be waiting for us at the campground.

Day 7: Padre José F. Ribas Refuge

Cotopaxi is considered to be the highest active volcano in the World. First, we start with a short hike from the foot of the volcano at 4,500 metres (14,763 feet) to Padre Jose F. Ribas climbers’ refuge at 4,800 metres (15,748 feet). Once in the refuge, we will have a light lunch and get ready for glacier practice. We will learn basic climbing and safety techniques. In the afternoon, we head back to the refuge, have an early dinner then get into our sleeping bags for a well-earned sleep until midnight.

Day 8 : Summit night

8-11 hours trekking

After getting all the climbing equipment ready we leave the refuge and start our climb to the summit of Cotopaxi at 5,897 metres (19,347 feet). Most of the climb happens at night, so by the time we reach the summit we get the best views of the surrounding mountains as the sun rises. It takes about 6 hours of climbing and then 2 hours of descending back to the refuge. For this adventure we have to be physically fit and focused. Although it is not a complex climb, we need enough training and mountain safety knowledge. After we return to the refuge for a rest we head to the coach and head back to the hacienda for our Gala dinner.



Day 9: Overnight flight to London

Depart Quito on an overnight flight to London.

Day 10:

Arrive London early morning.

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This itinerary is complex and subject to change

Challenge grade

Challenging

Best time of year

June, September or November - January

