



## Volcanoes and Haciendas

### ECUADOR

This **horseback trail ride** journeys between charming haciendas in the Ecuadorian highlands. Ride through tropical cloud forest and across the wide open paramos, where the local chagras and herders roam. Journey through the avenue of volcanoes, with the snow covered peaks of Ruminahui, Quilindana and Cotopaxi your eternal companions.

|                     |                                |                    |  |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| <b>Trail Riding</b> | <b>10 days / 8 days riding</b> | <b>From £2,258</b> |  | Open to non-riders |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|



Explore Ecuador on horseback



The conical peak of the Cotopaxi Volcano, always best seen from horseback



Ride with Chagras - the Ecuadorian cowboys

### ITINERARY

## Highlights

- Meet local Chagras - the breeders and horsemen of the Ecuadorian Andes
- Comfort and friendly welcome of charming haciendas
- Ride into the mighty Quilotoa crater lake
- Ride through the tropical cloud forests whilst acclimatising to the altitude
- Visit the colourful Indian market at Machachi
- Experience the unique fauna of the Andes - alpacas, eagles, pumas and the impressive condor

## Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - QUITO - ALOAG - No riding

Hacienda La Alegria

Flight from Europe to Quito. Please note that flights are not included.

On arrival at Quito airport you will be transferred to the hacienda to overnight (2,890m). Airport transfers are at additional cost.

## Day 2 — 2: ALOAG - 4 hours riding


Hacienda La Alegria

After breakfast, get to know the horses and tack by starting in the arena before heading out to ride around neighbouring haciendas at the west Andes. Today is about acclimatising to the altitude and so it will be a steady four hour ride before returning to the hacienda for lunch.

In the afternoon you can rest and try out the hot tub or visit the milking barn and cave where cheeses are aged.

## Day 3 — 3: ALOAG - 5 hours riding

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 Hacienda La Alegria

Another trail around the Hacienda. This gorgeous hacienda is set in the fertile Machachi Valley, known as the valley of the nine volcanoes.

Depending on what's going on today, you may ride through the valley of Gualilhua Aloag and along historical paths, admiring the nearby volcanoes of Viudita, Atacazo, and Pasochoa. Or you may ride to Viudita mountain. The panorama is spectacular, with breathtaking views off the "Nine Volcanoes Valley". The local area is full of surprises and wherever today's trail ride takes you, you're in for a treat!

## Day 4 — 4: ALOAG - CORAZON VOLCANO - BOMBOLI - 4 hours riding

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 Hacienda Bomboli


Crossing extensive pastures and eucalyptus forests, enjoy the stunning views of the "Avenue of the Volcanoes". From there you will appreciate the green and fertile Machachi Valley and tomorrow's route. Ascend by Corazon Volcano up to 4,000 meters and descend through the Cloud forest reserve.

In the Cloud forest you will be able to observe a great biodiversity of plants and flowers, including giant guneras, orchids, and birds such as the turkey of the forest. In the afternoon you will arrive to Hacienda Bomboli at 3,000 m, and relax by the fireplace enjoying the sunset and watching the lights of the villages near the coast. Arrive in time for tea before a delicious meal.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda Bomboli.

## Day 5 — 5: CORAZON VOLCANO - ALOAG - 5 hours riding

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 Hacienda La Alegria

In the morning, enjoy a walk around the Hacienda gardens to learn about orchids and plants of the Cloud Forest. Then ride uphill admiring the forest and the hundreds of flowers and plants. You will use the old road that was built in 1873 to connect Quito with the coast.

Arrive to Hacienda La Alegria for lunch, relax and enjoy the hot tub and the fireplace.

## Day 6 — 6: ALEGRIA - ISINLIVI - 5 hours riding

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 Isinlivi Lodge

Today is a long journey in the saddle. Start the ride one hour south of the Hacienda (by road transfer) to start our 4-day adventure at the southern Andes. Ride by the Inca trail and dirt trails that will take your group to Isinlivi. From this day on you will ride through a dramatic landscape, including steep ravines and narrow passages. From a distance you will see the magnificent Eastern Mountain chain. Here, the ride continues through the breathtaking hills and scenery, before arriving at a small village called the Isinlivi, that dates back to 1857. Tonight, you will be staying at a lodge.

## Day 7 — 7: ISINLIVI - QUILOTOA - 5 hours riding

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 Quilotoa Inn

After breakfast you head south to the Quilotoa Crater Lake. The trail goes across the highest mountain heading west. As you descend to the Canyon the environment becomes arid and desolate. The soil is composed by pumice from the Quilotoa volcano that erupted 1,280 years ago.

In the afternoon, you finally reach the Quilotoa volcano summit at 3,800 meters above sea level, where your hostel is located. At the edge of the volcano you will enjoy an amazing view of the breathtaking Quilotoa Crater Lake. The 3 kilometer wide caldera was formed by the collapse of this volcano after the last eruption.

## Day 8 — 8: QUILOTOA - SIGCHOS - SAN JOSE - 7 hours riding

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
Today, you will ride to Sigchos, a village that is known as the "last home" of the Inca general Ruminahui.

Ready for a long day in the saddle, you will head north to the ridge of Quilotoa Crater lake. The trail will take you across the highest mountain, heading north-west. Here, you will find some small dairy farms and some artisanal cheese makers where you can take a short break and try some of the delicious, locally produced cheese.

Arriving in the afternoon to Hacienda San Jose, you will have time to relax and enjoy the jacuzzi and sauna, and have a comfortable night's sleep at the working dairy farm and guest house.

## Day 9 — 9: SAN JOSE - PLANCHALOMA - ALOAG - 6 hours riding

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 Hacienda La Alegria

The last day riding in the region will pass through several narrow old paths ascending to the high Andes paramo. From here enjoy the incredible scenery from one valley to another.

The colors and the mountains make the changes from paramo to eroded land full of different color patches. At the distance you will see the Eastern Mountain Chain before you make your way back to your starting point.

## Day 10 — 10: ALOAG - QUITO - EUROPE - No riding

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After breakfast you are transferred to Quito airport for your flight home. Depending on your flight routes, you may arrive home the following day.

### DATES & PRICES

| DEPARTURE  | RETURN     | PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS | STATUS |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|--------|
| 05/09/2024 | 14/09/2024 | £2,258                | Open   |
| 17/10/2024 | 26/10/2024 | £2,258                | Open   |

## Price details

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- International flights are not included.

- Airport transfers are not included and are payable locally - \$100 per car, return rate.

- The group is composed of 3 - 12 riders plus guides. There is a supplement of £160/\$200/€190 per rider if there are only two riders.

- There is a single supplement of £130/\$150/€140 payable if you are not prepared to share a room with another rider of the same sex.

- Children are welcome as long as they are competent riders and able to ride horses. There is a discount of c. £160/\$200/€190 for children of 15 years and younger (mini 12 years old).

- Non riders are welcome on this ride for the same cost.

- There is a possibility to extend your stay. The cost is £200/\$250/€240 pers/night (sharing). This price includes full-board accommodation and riding lessons or a trail ride.

- There is a rider weight limit of 90kgs. If you are over this limit please contact us.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

## Price includes

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### SUPPORT TEAM

1 English speaking horse guide

### LOGISTIC

1 support vehicle

1 "chagras" support team for horses and logistic

### ACCOMMODATION

Double or triple room in Haciendas

2 nights in double or triple room in Guesthouse

### MEALS

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Full board from first dinner D1 to last breakfast D10

Beverages including beer and wine at the Hacienda in Aloag

### ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

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Ponchos, rain ponchos, helmet, chaps

Saddle bags

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

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Beverage and personal extra if taken outside the hacienda la Alegria

### TRANSPORTS

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International flights bookable on request

Return airport transfers

Visa fees

### EXTRA

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Tips to local team

### INSURANCE

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Cancellation and travel insurances are not included. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend to take out an insurance policy as soon as your travel is booked in case of cancellation.

## Optional

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### ACCOMMODATION

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Single room supplement

### EXTRA

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Extension at the Hacienda

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

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You ride local Criollo horses which are sure footed and ideally suited to the terrain and altitude.

## Guide & local team

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Gabriel is your host and owner of the hacienda. He speaks good English, is very knowledgeable about his country and delighted to share it with his guests. He will be supported by local chagras.

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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You need to be a capable rider who is comfortable in all paces across varied terrain.

There is a rider weight limit of 90kgs.

### PACE

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The pace is varied depending on the terrain, with long periods of walk due to the altitude. There are plenty of opportunities to canter.

## **TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION**

You will be asked to help groom, tack and untack your horse but help is on hand if required. You are also welcome to assist with feeding and watering the horses if you wish.

## **TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE**

You need to be physically fit with good endurance. This ride is at high altitude (4,500 - 5,000m) and there is a possibility of altitude sickness.

Previous experience of trail rides over a number of days would be beneficial. Riders who do not ride regularly are required to get fit before joining the trail.

## **EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT**

The saddles are similar to western but have a basic frame over which sheepskins are placed for comfort. Bridles are usually simple snaffles. Ponchos and waterproof trousers are provided to help in cold weather but you should still take your own warm clothes and jackets. Saddlebags are provided on the horses.

## **TRAVEL INFO**

### **COMFORT**

4 nights at hacienda la Alegria, 4 nights at different haciendas.

You stay in charming haciendas, in double/twin rooms with private bathrooms. Some of the haciendas are more rustic than others - Hacienda Bomboli, for instance, has no electricity in the rooms. There is however no camping on this trail ride.

### **MEALS**

Meals are produced each day by your guide. Lunches are taken as picnics in the saddle bags and dinner will be warm and hearty. Local produce is used wherever possible and is of high quality.

Be careful if drinking water from unknown sources and ask for boiled water or mineral water if you are unsure. You could also take purification tablets.

### **CLIMATE**

The weather can be unpredictable and it is not unusual to experience all four seasons in one day. It can be sunny, windy, cloudy or rainy and the whole range of variations can occur within a matter of hours. Temperatures can fluctuate from 7c - 10c or even as high as 25c.

At lower altitudes the weather is less variable and can be warm and sunny throughout the dry season, which is usually around June - September and December.

### **TIPS**

It is customary to tip in Ecuador. Porters in airports and hotels will expect c. USD 1 per bag. City restaurants will include both tax and a 10% service charge, but smaller restaurants may not include tax or tips so you will need to add them.

We would recommend tipping c. USD 5 per person per day for your guide and USD 3 per day for your driver.

### **PACKING LIST**

Please note: if you wish to pack lighter, Gabriel can provide ponchos and a limited supply of long chaps. Please let us know in advance.

#### Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun and dust
- Warm hat

#### Upper body

- Thermals in case of cold weather (can also be worn at night)

- Down jacket or warm coat for the cold evenings
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm polar fleece or equivalent (plus a spare in case one gets wet)
- Waterproof jacket - rain can be difficult to predict and it's better to be prepared.

#### Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Waterproof over trousers
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- Thermals in case of cold weather

#### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Good walking boots (or hybrid walking/riding boots)
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

#### Nightwear

- For extra comfort, a sleeping bag liner.

#### Other useful items

- Swimsuit - for swimming/bathing in rivers
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)
- Water bottle - 2 x 1 litre, or equivalent

#### Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Micropur or similar water purification tablets
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

#### Our Recommendations

- You should use a soft sided suitcase which can easily be transported - we recommend a large backpack or rucksack of c. 60-80 litres
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both

your skin and the environment.

4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .