Equus Journeys
HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Volcanoes and Haciendas (Quilotoa)

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 'Volcano Avenue', riding by Corazon, Illinizas and Quilotoa, and visit the spectacular Quilotoa Crater Lake.

Trail Riding	**10 days / 8 days riding**	**From £2,171**		Open to non-riders


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ITINERARY

Highlights

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

Day 1 — 1: ARRIVAL IN QUITO - HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA

Hacienda La Alegria

International flight to Quito. Please note that flights are not included.

On arrival at Quito airport, you will be transferred to the hacienda (2890m) where you will meet the rest of the group and enjoy a welcome dinner and briefing. Airport transfers are not included, please see the 'dates and prices' tab for details. Depending on the time of your arrival, you may be able to enjoy a short afternoon ride.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 2 — 2: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA - 4 hours riding

Hacienda La Alegria

Today is a relaxed day for you to acclimatise to the altitude. After breakfast, you'll meet the horses and have a short ride in the arena before heading

out for a ride in the local area, passing neighbouring haciendas. You'll ride the old road that was built in 1873 to connect Quito with the coast, stopping at an Inca Pucara (Inca construction).

You'll return to the hacienda for a late lunch, and in the afternoon, you can relax and try out the hot tub.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 3 — 3: WIDOW MOUNTAIN - 5 hours riding

Hacienda La Alegria

After breakfast, you'll set out to explore the western range of the Andes. You'll ride to Widow Mountain, where you'll discover páramo (the high-altitude ecosystem found mainly in the northern Andes) and cloud forest.

You will cross several farms and observe the change in vegetation as you ascend higher, up to 3800 meters. You'll enjoy breathtaking views in the lush Machachi Valley, also known as 'the Valley of the Nine Volcanoes'. At the bottom of the valley, you'll be able to see six volcanoes from the east mountain chain (Cayambe, Antisana, Pasochoa, Sincholahua, Cotopaxi and Ruminahui). The Valley of the Nine Volcanoes is completed by the western range: Atacazo, Ninahuilca, and Corazón.

Then you'll head back to the hacienda for a late lunch, after which you can visit foals and mares on another property and enjoy the hot tub.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 4 — 4: CONDOR MACHAY - 5 hours riding

Hacienda Bomboli

This morning, you'll ride to the cloud forest behind Widow Mountain, crossing farm roads, hills and a ravine. You'll continue to ride downhill, where the vegetation creates the ideal habitat for the spectacled bear. The giant gunnera plants, tree ferns, and orchids make the place feel magical.

Eventually you'll reach Condor Machay, where you'll find a small lake and trout farm in the middle of the steep hills. If trout are available, you may be able to enjoy trout with potatoes and beans for lunch.

After lunch, you'll ride back and enjoy dinner and and another night at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 5 — 5: ATACAZO VOLCANO, TAMBILLO - 5 hours riding

Hacienda La Alegria

You will ride north to the village of Tambillo today, sometimes riding parallel with the old train track and along haciendas' cobblestone roads.

You'll arrive at Hacienda Sierra Alisos where you can enjoy a short walk in the Andean cloud forest. Here you can observe a rich ecosystem that includes a variety of plants, trees (including the iconic Alisó tree) and fresh water sources such as small creeks, artesian springs and natural irrigation systems.

Lunch will be served at Hacienda Sierra Alisos, and then there is the possibility of riding to another hacienda, known for its fantastic gardens filled with native plant species. You'll then continue back to Hacienda La Alegria, where you can relax and enjoy the hot tub.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Alegria.

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

Isinlivi Lodge

Today is a longer day in the saddle. You'll transfer to a point one hour south of the hacienda and from here you'll begin a 4-day adventure in the southern Andes.

From today, you'll ride through dramatic landscapes, including steep ravines and narrow passages. From a distance you'll see the magnificent Eastern Mountain chain.

Today you'll ride along the Inca trails through the breathtaking hills and scenery, before arriving at a small village called Isinlivi, which dates back to 1857.

Dinner and overnight at the lodge in Isinlivi.

Day 7 — 7: QUILOTOA - 5 hours riding

Quilotoa Inn

Today's ride takes you south to the mighty Quilotoa Crater Lake.

On today's ride, you'll discover the same agriculture from years ago, such as lupins, potatoes, quinoa and barley, but as you continue on the trail you'll notice the environment is more arid and desolate. The soil is composed of pumice from the Quilotoa Volcano that erupted 1,280 years ago.

In the afternoon, you'll finally reach the Quilotoa Volcano summit at 4,000m, where your lodge is located. At the edge of the volcano you can enjoy amazing views of the breathtaking Quilotoa Crater Lake. The 3km-wide caldera was formed by the collapse of the volcano after the last eruption. The water colour changes with the light.

Dinner and overnight at the lodge near Quilotoa.

Day 8 — 8: SIGCHOS - 7-8 hours riding

HACIENDA SAN JOSE

Today is another long day in the saddle, as you ride to Sigchos, a village that is known as the "last home" of the Inca general Ruminahui.

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.

In the afternoon, you will arrive at Hacienda San Jose, a working dairy farm and guest house. You will have time to relax and enjoy the jacuzzi and sauna.

Dinner and overnight at the Hacienda San Jose.

Day 9 — 9: PLANCHALOMA - HACIENDA ALEGRIA - 6 hours riding

Hacienda La Alegria

Today is your last day of riding, and the trail will take you through dramatic landscapes, including steep ravines.

This area is a combination of forest, rock peaks and eroded land from the past centuries, and you will stop briefly for blueberry wine tasting.

In the afternoon, you will reach the Wingopana sacred rock (4000m), and then make your way back to Hacienda La Alegria by car for a last dinner with the group.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 10 — 10: DEPARTURE - No riding

After breakfast you will be transferred to Quito airport for your flight home.

Lunch is not included but is available at the hacienda for an additional fee, please see 'dates and prices' for details.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
12/02/2027	21/02/2027	£2,171	Open
15/04/2027	24/04/2027	£2,171	Open
20/05/2027	29/05/2027	£2,171	Open
22/07/2027	31/07/2027	£2,171	Open

16/09/2027	25/09/2027	£2,171	Open
14/10/2027	23/10/2027	£2,171	Open

Price details

- Flights or transportation to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room during the ride.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 3 riders and a maximum of 12 international riders, plus guides.

- Please note: the ride will also confirm for 2 riders on payment of a supplement of approx. $200 / £150 / €180 per person. Once the group has reached 3 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.

- If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider and there are no other riders likely to share your room, you will be charged a single room supplement of approx. $200 / £150 / €180 per person. You will then be reimbursed if a sharer is found for you at a later date.

- Airport transfers are not included and are payable locally. The price is $50 per car (max. 3 riders), per way.

- There is a possibility to extend your stay. The cost is $330 / £250 / €295 per person, per night. This price includes full-board accommodation and riding.

- Accompanied minors are welcome from 12 years old, provided they match the riding requirements.
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

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 or lodges

MEALS

Full board from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Ponchos, rain ponchos, chaps
Saddle bags

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

TRANSPORTS

International flights bookable on request
Return airport transfers

Visa fees

EXTRA

Tips to local team

INSURANCE

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

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement

EXTRA

Extra nights at the hacienda

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

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

Guide & local team

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

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be at least a strong intermediate rider who is comfortable riding at all paces across varied terrain.

Maximum rider weight limit: 90 kilos / 14,1 st / 198 lbs.

PACE

The pace varies depending on the terrain. There are long periods of walk due to the altitude, alongside some trots and canters.

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 fit and in good physical condition. This ride is at high altitude (up to 4,000m - 5,000m) and there is a possibility of altitude sickness. Please check with us if you have any medical conditions.

You should also be prepared for extremely changeable weather -- it is possible to experience rain, snow, wind and sun all within 24 hours.

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

6 nights at Hacienda la Alegria, 3 nights at different haciendas.

You stay in double/twin rooms, usually with private bathrooms. Some of the haciendas are more rustic than others but there is no camping.

MEALS

Meals are prepared 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.

You should tip what you feel the service is worth and what you feel comfortable with.

PACKING LIST

Please pack carefully and sensibly: the following guide is here to give you an idea of what to bring. Please note: you will be riding at altitude and the weather can be unpredictable, even in the summer, so make sure to bring layers and enough warm clothing, waterproof gear and gloves. Please also use a soft sided case / bag which can easily be transported.

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
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper (plus a spare in case one gets wet)
- Waterproof jacket - rain can be difficult to predict and it's better to be prepared
- Thermals in case of cold weather

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
- Waterproof riding/hiking boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Nightwear

Other useful items
- Swimsuit
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding (optional, saddlebags will be provided)
- Headtorch or small torch
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)
- Water bottle - 2 x 1 litre, or equivalent

Medical kit
- Any medication you regularly take
- Sunscreen and lip balm - essential, should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- 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
- 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) although saddle bags will be provided.
- 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 .