



The volcano trail: from Cotopaxi to Quilotoa

ECUADOR

An exciting **trail ride** for riders looking to tick some of the most impressive **volcanoes of Ecuador** off their list, including Volcano Quilotoa and of course the mighty Cotopaxi. Ride through the cloud forest, the Avenue of Volcanoes and the wild Ecuadorian paramo with your knowledgeable guide Gabriel, enjoying some of the most stunning views in **South America**. A **incredible riding holiday** in Ecuador with some of the highest gallops in the world! It is also possible to add days before or after the ride - please contact us.

Trail Riding	 12 days / 10 days riding	 From £2,800	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- A very knowledgeable guide and home-bred horses
- 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
- Discover the Avenue of the Volcanoes and ride to the majestic Quilotoa and Cotopaxi volcanoes


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

 Hacienda La Alegria

Flight from London or anywhere to Quito. Please note that flights are not included. It is likely that you will fly via a hub airport such as Madrid or Miami as there are no direct flights from the UK.

On arrival at Quito airport you will be transferred to the hacienda to overnight (2,890m). Transfers from Quito city centre are also possible.

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. Today is about acclimatising to the altitude and so it will be a steady four hour ride before you head back. Enjoy a hearty lunch at the hacienda.

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 - CORAZON VOLCANO - BOMBOLI - 6 hours riding

Hacienda Bomboli

Crossing extensive pastures and eucalyptus forests, enjoy the stunning views of the “Avenue of the Volcanoes”. 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 4 — 4: BOMBOLI - CORAZON VOLCANO - ALOAG - 4 hours riding

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 incredible flora that thrives in this part of Ecuador. You will use the old road that was built in 1873 to connect Quito with the coast.

Arrive to Hacienda La Alegria for lunch. In the afternoon you are free to relax and enjoy the hot tub and the fireplace.

Day 5 — 5: RUMINAHUI VOLCANO - 8 hours riding

Hacienda Los Mortiños

After breakfast, get the horses ready for your first long journey from Hacienda La Alegria. You head to the west mountain range and through the valley toward Machachi. You may stop at the Machachi market (on Sundays), if not, you will continue toward the Ruminahui and stop at a beautiful Hacienda for a snack.

In the afternoon, you will continue riding until you arrive to Pedregal valley.

Enjoy the hot shower and a delicious dinner, with lovely views of the valley. Overnight at a refuge at 3500 meters.

Day 6 — 6: COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK - 6-8 hours riding

Refuge Tambopaxi

This morning, you will enter the Cotopaxi National Park, and ride towards the Sincholagua volcano. Make your way downhill to the valley and stop for a snack before getting back on the horses and crossing different lava flows. You will ascend north of Cotopaxi up to 4,100 mts to the highest plains, where you will engage in a breathtaking canter. If you are lucky, you may ride in proximity to berber wild horse herds that live in the park.

Overnight at Tambopaxi refuge

Day 7 — 7: LA ALEGRIA - 5-6 hours riding

Today, you will ride in Ruminahui continuing west, passing the highest point of our ride (4,250 m) on the edges of the rocks of the Ruminahui Volcano. Continue to ride toward the green Machachi valley, as always, guarded by the volcanoes avenue. Later today, you will cross the Machachi plaza, where horsemen are always welcomed before arriving back at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 8 — 8: Isinlivi - 5 hours riding

After breakfast, you will be transferred south of Hacienda La Alegria (approx. 1h), to begin your journey in the southern Andes.

Ride through Inca trails and dirt roads from which you can admire the nice scenery from one valley to another. The colours and the mountains change from “Paramo” to eroded land full of different colour

patches. At the distance, we will see the Eastern Mountain Chain.

The ride continues through several hills, until you arrive to a small village called Isinlivi.

Day 9 — 9: QUILOTOA - 5 hours riding

Quilotoa Inn

After breakfast you will take a small walk to get the horses. From there, you will ride up to the Quilotoa Crater Lake. Along the trail, you will cross a few villages and learn about the crops and agricultural practices.

In the afternoon, you finally reach the Quilotoa volcano summit at 4,000 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 kilometers wide caldera was formed by the collapse of this volcano after the last eruption.

Day 10 — 10: SIGCHOS - 7 hours riding

Today you will ride to Sigchos, the village that was known as the “last home” of the Inca general Ruminahui.

After breakfast, you will head north by the ridge of Quilotoa Crater Lake. The trail goes across the highest mountain heading north-west.

There you will find some small dairy farms and a couple of artisanal cheese makers. You will stop for a short visit and cheese taste.

In the afternoon, you will arrive to Hacienda San Jose, a working dairy farm and guesthouse, in time for a good meal, Jacuzzi, sauna and a comfortable night.

Day 11 — 11: WINGOPANA - ALOAG - 6 hours riding

Today you will ride through dramatic landscapes, including steep ravines.

To reach the final destination, you will have to cross several mountain chains to get there. This area is a combination of forest, rock peaks and eroded land from the past centuries. Along the trail, you will stop in the mountain to taste blueberry wine.

Today's ride ends on the sacred Wingopana Rock at 4000 meters above sea level.

Transfer back to Hacienda La Alegria in time for dinner.

Day 12 — 12: ALOAG - QUITO - EUROPE

After breakfast you are transferred to Quito airport for your flight home. Depending on your flight route you may arrive home tonight or tomorrow.

We are also able to organise extensions in Quito or to the Galapagos Islands, please contact us for more information.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
03/06/2024	14/06/2024	£2,800	Open
05/11/2024	16/11/2024	£2,800	Open

Price details

- International flights are not included. Please contact us and we can arrange flights on request.

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

- The group is composed of 3 - 12 riders plus guides. Departures with only 2 guests can be confirmed upon the payment of the small group supplement supplement of £235/\$300/€275 per person.

- There is a single supplement of £160/\$200/€190 where possible, payable if you are not prepared to share a room with another rider of the same sex.

- Children above 12 years old are welcome as long as they are competent riders. There is a discount available for children up to 15 years old.

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

- 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.

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, twin or triple rooms in a variety of accommodation from haciendas, refuges and even camping for a few nights

MEALS

Full board from first diner D1 to last breakfast D12

Beverages including beer and wine (at the Hacienda in Aloag)

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Ponchos, rain ponchos, helmet, chaps

Saddle bags

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverage and personal extra if taken outside the hacienda Aloag

TRANSPORTS

International flights bookable on request

Visa fees if applicable

Return airport transfers - see "dates and prices" for details

EXTRA

Tips to local team

EXTRAS

Small group supplement - see above for details

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

Extension 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 a capable rider who is comfortable in all paces across varied terrain.

There is a rider weight limit of 90kgs.

PACE

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. The ascent is gradual and the itinerary was created to help riders get used to the altitude progressively. This trail is not suitable for riders suffering from vertigo.

Previous experience of trail rides over a number of days would be beneficial but is not required. 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

You stay in a variety of accommodation from haciendas, refuges and even camping for a few nights. Some of the haciendas are more rustic than others and refuges provide dormitory accommodation.

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

- Sleeping bag with a comfort rating of at least minus 5c, preferably minus 10c. We also suggest adding a liner, such as silk or fleece for extra warmth
 - Thermarest pad or similar self-inflating mattress
- (These items can be hired at extra cost - payable locally, but must be requested in advance).

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 for moving around camp at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)
- Water bottle - 2 x 1 litre, or equivalent
- Wet wipes for when washing water isn't available

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
- Toilet paper

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](#) .