



Volcanoes and Haciendas (Cotopaxi)

ECUADOR

Journey to a region known as 'Volcano Avenue' in Ecuador, and experience an exciting **trail ride** between charming haciendas in the country's highlands. On this 8-day programme, you'll ride through tropical cloud forest, meet the local chagras, marvel at the grandeur of the Andes and enjoy one of the highest canters in the world in Cotopaxi National Park.

Trail Riding	 8 days / 7 days riding	 From £1,705		Open to non-riders
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Discover the unique fauna of the Andes - alpacas, eagles, pumas and the impressive condor.
- Meet local Chagras - the breeders and horsemen of the Ecuadorian Andes.
- Ride through the tropical cloud forests.
- Admire the majestic Cotopaxi, the highest active volcano on earth.
- Enjoy one of the "highest canters in the world" on a ride through Cotopaxi National Park.
- Experience the comfort and friendly welcome of charming haciendas.
- Visit the colourful Indian market at Machachi.

Day 1 — 1: ARRIVE IN QUITO - HACIENDA - 3 hours riding

 Hacienda La Alegria


International flight to Quito. Please note that flights are not included but can be booked upon request.

On arrival at Quito airport, you will be transferred to the hacienda (2890m). Airport transfers are not included, please see the 'dates and prices' tab for details.

After you've settled in, you'll head to the arena to get acquainted with the horses and tack before enjoying a ride to neighbouring haciendas. This ride will help you acclimatise to the altitude and get to know your horse. Crossing extensive pastures and eucalyptus forests, you will have a good view of "Volcano Avenue" and discover the green and fertile Machachi Valley.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 2 — 2: 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, Pasocha, Sincholhua, 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 then enjoy the jacuzzi and a family-style dinner.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 3 — 4: CONDOR MACHAY - 5 hours riding


 Hacienda La Alegria

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 another night at Hacienda La Alegria.

Day 4 — 4: 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 5 — 5: COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK - 5 hours riding

After breakfast, you'll be taken to meet the horses at the entrance of the Cotopaxi National Park, where you'll be riding for the next two days.

You'll start your ride in the north area of the park, and discover the river that supplies water to Quito, which 150 years ago was the lava path of the volcano. You'll head south toward the Inca ruins Pucará El Salado, part of the route linking stations toward Cuzco.

Today, you'll also be able to appreciate the effects of regular volcanic eruptions over hundreds of years, and enjoy stunning views of the world's highest active volcano.

You'll return to the lodge in the heart of the national park (3750m) for dinner and an overnight stay.

Day 6 — 6: COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK - 5 hours riding

After waking up in the heart of Cotopaxi National Park, you'll ride out towards the Cotopaxi Volcano.

You'll cross lava flows and ride through the valley before ascending south to the highest plains at 4100m, where you can enjoy what's considered one of the "highest canterers in the world". You may also encounter wild Barb horses, descendants of Spanish horses from the 16th century.

Then it's lunch by Santo Domingo Lake before returning north towards your hacienda for the night, located near the park entrance.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda Los Mortinos.

Day 7 — 7: HACIENDA LA ALGERIA - 5 hours riding

 HACIENDA SAN JOSE

For your final day in the saddle, you ride north of Rumiñahui volcano towards Machachi valley.

You'll pass through the villages of Machachi and Aloag, and return to the hacienda for lunch and dinner. Then you'll have time to enjoy the hot tub and to share memories of your adventure.

Dinner and overnight at Hacienda La Algeria.

Day 8 — 8: QUITO - EUROPE - 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
10/08/2026	17/08/2026	£1,783	Guaranteed departure
10/12/2026	17/12/2026	£1,783 £1,705	Open

Price details

Promotional rate for 4 first bookings until 05/12/2026.

- 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 c. \$200 / £150 / €175 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. \$150 / £115 / €130. 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 approximately US\$50 per car (max. 3 riders), per way.

- Lunch is not included on arrival or departures days but is available at the hacienda for an additional US\$25 (per lunch).

- There is a possibility to extend your stay. The cost is \$220 per person/night (sharing). This price includes full-board accommodation and riding.

- Accompanied minors are welcome from 12yo, provided they match the riding requirements. Children under 17 will receive a 15% discount.

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 and Spanish speaking horse guide

ACCOMMODATION

Double or triple room in haciendas or lodges

MEALS

Full board from first dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Wool ponchos, rain ponchos, chaps and saddle bags provided

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

TRANSPORTS

International flights
Return airport transfers

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.

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 knowledgeable 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 4300m) 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 waterproofs are provided but you should still take your own warm clothes and jackets.

Saddlebags are provided.

Chaps and helmets are also available, but Equus Journeys recommends taking your own to ensure the correct fit.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

5 nights at Hacienda la Alegria, 2 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 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.

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

- 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](#) .