



Cotopaxi Trek & Climb

Get intimate with one of the World's highest active volcanoes

DURATION

7 days

DIFFICULTY

Easy to
Intermediate

ITINERARY

DAY

01

Hike to Hacienda Santa Rita [3.280 m / 10,758 ft]

After a short drive of only one hour, we start hiking from the village of Santa Clara located in the Valley of Los Chillos at 2.750 m / 9,020 ft. The trek follows cobble stone roads on the side of the Pita River, which comes from Cotopaxi National Park. Close to the Hacienda Santa Rita we pass in front of a shrine where locals come to worship the "Virgen de la Piedra", the Virgin of the Rock.

Today's hike will take around 5 hours. When you get to the Hacienda the camp will already be set up. You will spend your first night at an altitude of 3.280 m / 10,758 ft.



Activity: 4-5 hours hiking



Accommodation: Camping



Transportation: Private van or jeep transfer



Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY

02

Pasochoa Hike [4.200 m / 13,776 ft]

Today we leave in the morning around 8 a.m. for a 6 hours hike to the Pasochoa volcano. We will be crossing the fields of Hacienda Santa Rita. Pasochoa is an ancient and heavily eroded volcano that has been inactive since the last ice age. If the weather permits, from the summit, we will be able to take a good look at the crater. Inside you will see the Pasochoa Protected Forest Reserve, a humid Andean forest with more than 110 species of birds and 45 species of trees, located between 2.700 m / 8,856 ft and 4.200 m / 13,776 ft. On a sunny day you can eventually see condors. We return to Santa Rita campsite for the night.

 **Activity:** 6-7 hours hiking up and down Pasochoa

 **Accommodation:** Camping

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Box Lunch, Dinner

DAY

03

Hike to Hacienda El Porvenir or Los Mortiños [3.600 m / 11,808 ft]

Today we hike towards the hacienda El Porvenir. Part of the hike goes through humid Andean forest where there is a chance to see hummingbirds. El Porvenir is one of the largest farms in Ecuador. It can be used as a base for excellent hikes within the Cotopaxi National Park. Located at 3.600 m / 11,808 ft, El Porvenir is surrounded by four volcanoes: Cotopaxi, Sincholagua, Pasochoa and Rumiñahui. Here you will be able to enjoy your stay in a comfortable, functional and beautiful traditional Andean hacienda. The "casa de hacienda", or farmhouse, is built with materials such as brick, straw, wood and adobe that have been used for centuries. If El Porvenir is not available we will use Hacienda Los Mortiños.

 **Activity:** 5 hours trekking

 **Accommodation:** Hacienda El Porvenir

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

04

Central Summit of Rumiñahui [4.600 m / 15,092 ft]

From Hacienda El Porvenir we start hiking towards the central ridge of Rumiñahui, leading to the middle summit. The rock on this mountain can be a bit loose underfoot, so we have to take care, but the views from the summit are really worth it. The volcano is located only 13 km North West of Cotopaxi and it is named after Atahualpa's general, who was the last Inca Emperor. After the emperor was murdered, Rumiñahui led the fight against the Spanish conquerors. In Quichua his name means "stone face". We spend the night at Tambopaxi.

 **Activity:** 5-6 hours trekking up and down Rumiñahui

 **Accommodation:** Tambopaxi Lodge

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

05

Hike to the hut and to the Glacier [5.000 m / 16,400 ft]

Today we do a gentle 2-3 hour hike to 5.000 m / 16,400 ft on Cotopaxi to increase our acclimatisation, have lunch at the hut and drive down to Tambopaxi for the second night there. It is a beautiful hostel, located inside the Cotopaxi National Park and a great place to rest and acclimatise at the same time! It has excellent facilities such as good and clean showers, including the luxury of warm water, and the food is good.

 **Activity:** 2-3 hours hiking

 **Accommodation:** Tambopaxi Lodge

 **Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

06

Cotopaxi Refuge [4.800 m / 15,700 ft]

From Tambopaxi we drive the short distance to the car parking at 4.600 m / 15,088 ft in only 45 minutes. From here we hike for another 45 minutes to an hour to the Jose Rivas Refuge at 4.800 m / 15,750 ft. After lunch, we provide a good glacier skills review and we will brief you about all the technical aspects of the ascent. After a couple of hours we return to the refuge for a hearty hot meal.

 **Activity:** 1 hour hiking up to the refuge

 **Accommodation:** Jose Rivas Refuge

 **Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

07

Cotopaxi Summit [5.897 m / 19,300 ft] / Return to Quito

This is the day in which you will actually be climbing Cotopaxi. We leave the refuge around 1 AM for a six hours climb. From the hut we ascend moderate glacier slopes to the summit. Along the way however, complex crevasse patterns and snow bridge crossings over crevasses will make the climb very interesting. After passing through a heavily crevassed area, we reach the final summit slope. Here a challenging section of 35-40 degree snow leads to the abrupt finish of the climb on the crater rim of the World's highest active volcano. At the top of Cotopaxi you can look inside the crater and see its sulphur fumaroles. The crater rim measures approximately 800 m / 2,600 ft in diameter. The view from the summit is indeed one of the most spectacular in Ecuador.

Technically the normal route is not difficult, but special care has to be given to potential hidden crevasses. The descent usually takes around two hours. After resting and packing we return to Quito.

 **Activity:** 8 hours climbing up and down Cotopaxi

 **Accommodation:** In Quito (not included in the program)

 **Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

Important: Please note that this itinerary is a guideline only. We will do every effort to follow it, but in case of unforeseen circumstances we may have to make changes.

Got Questions?

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