

## Quilotoa Trek

Discover the emerald jewel of the Ecuadorian Andes

DURATION

4 days

DIFFICULTY

Easy

## ITINERARY

DAY

**01**

### Drive and Hike to Posada Tigua - Visit the Town of Tigua

After an interesting journey along the Pan-American Highway we get to the city of Latacunga. From here we start heading towards the western range of the Cotopaxi Province. We will pass the little village of Pujilí, known for its colourful Indian market that takes place on Wednesdays and Sundays. After Pujilí we will follow a dusty road climbing up the Eastern "cordillera", or mountain range. There will be fantastic views of the Inter-Andean Valley and the Andean highlands. On the way there we will have a chance to visit the Tigua Painters' Gallery. The indigenous artists of the small village of Tigua are famous for their colourful paintings depicting their life in this particular area of the Andes.

The paintings made on sheep leather reflect the history, festivals and legends of a people whose traditions date back to pre-Inca times. Living much as they have lived for centuries, families herd sheep and llamas, and cultivate a variety of potatoes and grains in small communities perched on the windswept slopes of the mountains. Their language is Quichua, the language of the Inca Empire. We stay the night at Posada Tigua, a farmhouse that was converted in a B&B hostel.



**Activity:** Driving / Sightseeing / Trekking



**Accommodation:** Hacienda Posada de Tigua



**Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer



**Meals:** Lunch, Dinner

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DAY

**02**

## Walk from Tigua to Quilotoa Crater [3.800 m /12,464 ft]

Today we walk five hours to Quilotoa. From Tigua there is trail that leads to the crater, passing through the fields of small private farms. On the way we will see some little "chozas", very basic Indian huts, where the local families live. Children will follow us and try to make conversation!

The objective of today would be to reach the crater early in the afternoon. Quilotoa is a beautiful volcanic crater-lake 3 kilometres in diameter. Its emerald water spans two kilometres. Local legend claims it is connected to the ocean and is therefore salty and sulphuric. Once there, we will see a 280 m / 918 ft drop down to the water. The hike down normally takes 40 minutes and one hour to climb up.

At the crater you will have an opportunity to buy the famous naive Tigua paintings and carved wooden masks. The night will be spent in a basic Indian lodge.

 **Activity:** 5-6 hours trekking

 **Accommodation:** Mountain Lodge

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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DAY

**03**

## Hike from Quilotoa to the Village of Chugchilán

Hiking from Laguna Quilotoa to Chugchilán we will have beautiful views of the canyon of Toachi River. First we will walk by the crater edge with impressive views of the lagoon inside, until we descend to the plateau where lies the small indigenous village of Huayama. As we descend the switch back trails down to the Toachi River Gorge, the climate and scenery changes dramatically. Soon we will be surrounded by the canyon walls and hike along the river banks. The hike ranges from 4 to 5 hours and is moderately challenging.

We will be staying at Mama Hilda's Lodge. It is a basic, but friendly and clean hostel run by Doña Hilda, a warm hearted Ecuadorian lady. Chugchilán is a well known destination for hikers. This little town is a typical village of a mountain region in Ecuador. It has a small plaza, a church and a school, and most of the people still use a horse or donkey as transport. Here we will feel like a few hundred years back in history.

 **Activity:** 4-5 hours trekking

 **Accommodation:** Mama Hilda's Lodge

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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DAY

**04**

## Walk around Chugchilán and Drive to Quito

There are a couple of options for half day hikes around Chugchilán that you can discuss with your guide; either visiting the local cheese factory, hiking towards the town of Sigchos or simply exploring the surroundings by yourself. Or if you prefer, you can enjoy the quietness and peacefulness of the village from the hammocks at Mama Hilda's. After lunch we drive back to the central valley and head to Quito.



**Activity:** 4 hours hiking / Drive back to Quito



**Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer



**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

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**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?

Please feel free to contact us at:

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