

Hacienda to Hacienda Trek

Experience the raw beauty of a country full of treasures

DURATION

11 days

DIFFICULTY

Easy

ITINERARY





I. Cotopaxi Region

DAY

01

Explore the Pita River Waterfall [3.000 m / 9,840 ft]

We leave Quito and after a short drive of 1 hour we arrive high above “Los Chillos Valley” where we will start our hike from a village called Rumipamba. Rumipamba is located at the base of Pasochoa, one of Ecuador’s extinct volcanoes. First we will follow a smooth cobble stone road along the Pita River. This cold, fast moving river originates from the glaciers of Cotopaxi and offers breath taking resting spots. We walk through a humid, tunnel like, Andean forest, with more than 80 bird and 25 tree species. Strolling up to the Condor Machai waterfall, we will cross eleven small bridges. On the way to our lodge we pass in front of a shrine, where locals come to worship the “Virgen de la Piedra”, the Virgin of the Rock. The legend states that lightning etched the figure of the Virgin Mary on a large rock. Local people came to worship it regularly, as several miracles have been attributed to this holy shrine.

-  **Activity:** Short drive / 4 hours hiking
-  **Accommodation:** CotopaxiPungo Hotel
-  **Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer
-  **Meals:** Lunch, Dinner


DAY

02

Hike to Hacienda El Porvenir (or los Mortiños) [3.500 m / 11,480 ft]

Today we will hike to the rustic Hacienda El Porvenir. Part of the hike goes through the lush humid Andean Forest where there is a chance to see a variety of colorful hummingbirds. The terrain will change dramatically as, close to El Porvenir, you will enter the wide open “paramo”. In the past El Porvenir was

one of the largest working farms in Ecuador. It was built with local materials such as brick, straw, wood and adobe that have been used for centuries. Surrounded by four volcanoes, Cotopaxi, Sincholhua, Pasachoa and Rumiñahui, you will enjoy the rustic ambience of this traditional, comfortable and beautiful casa de Hacienda (farmhouse). Today's hike will take approximately 4-5 hours.

 **Activity:** 4-5 hours hiking

 **Accommodation:** Hacienda El Porvenir


 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

03

Hike to Pucará Salitre and Tambopaxi [3.700 m / 14,060 ft]

From Hacienda El Porvenir we follow an ancient dirt road of about 2 km /1.2 miles until we arrive at the entrance of Cotopaxi National Park. From the entrance we will start hiking, following a winding trail towards the ruins of a hill fort named Pucará Salitre. In general the Pucarás were used for military observation and monitoring. Due to its elevated position, the Pucará Salitre was a strategic military fortress of the Inca Empire, which was used to control the passage of armies, resistance groups and migration within the conquered territories of the northern Andes. After our hike we will spend the night at Tambopaxi Lodge, which is at the base of Cotopaxi and offers incredible views of this iconic volcano. Today's hike will take approximately 4-5 hours

 **Activity:** 4-5 hours hiking

 **Accommodation:** Tambopaxi Lodge

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY


04

Hike up to Rumiñahui's Central Summit [4.500 m / 14,750 ft]

Rumiñahui is a long extinct volcano, located just 13 km / 8 miles west of Cotopaxi. It is named after the last leader of the Inca army, which fought against the Spanish in 1530. In Quichua the name means "stone face". From Tambopaxi we start hiking towards the central ridge of Rumiñahui, leading to the middle summit. Technically, it is a hike with some easy scrambling at the end. The views from the summit, overlooking the vast paramo are unforgettable. We spend another cool Andean night next to the warm fire at Tambopaxi.

 **Activity:** 5-6 hours trekking

 **Accommodation:** Tambopaxi Lodge

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

II. Quilotoa Region

DAY

05

Visit Saquisilí Indian Market / Hike to Insiliví [2.900 m / 9,515 ft]

According to the local people, for many years, Saquisilí has been the largest indigenous market of Ecuador. It is famous for the way it's seven "plazas" and most of its streets become packed with people. Many of them from nearby villages, but also from other provinces, all attracted by the variety of products and low prices. After lunch we drive to Cerro Guingopana (4.150 m / 13,615 ft) from where we will do a 3 hour downhill walk to the small village of Insiliví. Overnight at Hostal Llullullama.

 **Activity:** 2-3 hours hiking / Sightseeing / Driving

 **Accommodation:** Hostal Llullullama

 **Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

06

Hike to Chugchilán [3.300 m / 10,496 ft]

From Insiliví we take a trail that leads down to the Cumbijín River. We cross a hanging bridge towards the village of Itualó. The road leads through little villages where you will feel time has stood still for centuries. You will enjoy the peaceful ambience of this area, and perhaps interact with the friendly and welcoming locals. In Chugchilán we will stay at Mama Hilda's Lodge. It is a very friendly, basic and clean hostel where you will be welcomed by Doña Hilda, a very warm hearted Indigenous woman. The hike today takes 5-6 hours. Overnight at Mama Hilda's Lodge.

 **Activity:** 5-6 hours trekking

 **Accommodation:** Mama Hilda's Lodge

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

07

Hike to Quilotoa [3.800 m / 12,464 ft]

From Chugchilán we follow a path that goes to the Sigui River and up to the modest village of Guayama. The hike will get steeper as we get to the rim of the crater of Quilotoa. This is a mystical volcanic crater-lake with a diameter of 3 km / 1.85 miles. Its emerald waters span two kilometers. The local legend claims it is connected to the ocean and therefore it is salty and sulphuric. On top of the rim, there is a 280 m / 918 ft drop down to the lake. The hike down normally takes 40 minutes and one hour to climb up.

At the crater you will have an opportunity to admire and perhaps purchase the famous native leather Tigua paintings and carved wooden masks. The night will be spent at Samay Quilotoa Lodge or Posada de Tigua. Today's hike will take 5 to 6 hours.

 **Activity:** 5-6 hours trekking

 **Accommodation:** Samay Quilotoa Lodge or Posada de Tigua

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner


III. Chimborazo Region

DAY

08

Drive to Chimborazo Lodge / Afternoon Hike [4.000 m / 15,200 ft]

Today we start with a small drive for 1.5 hours to the city of flowers and fruits, Ambato. From there we will continue, following the scenic route "via Flores", which was the first road that went from the central sierra (central mountain region) of Ecuador to the coast. The road follows the canyon of the Ambato River, which is graced by small groves of pear trees. When we reach 4.000 m, we will pause for a while at the high altitude hot springs of Cunuyacu, run by the local indigenous community. We arrive at Chimborazo Lodge in the afternoon and will do a short hike. The lodge is located at 3.900 m / 12,795 ft at the base of Chimborazo. It is owned by Marco Cruz, who is known to be the first official mountain guide in Ecuador. In the lodge you will see wonderful old pictures that explain the history of Ecuadorian mountaineering.

 **Activity:** Drive / Relax at hot springs / Short hike

 **Accommodation:** Chimborazo Lodge

 **Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

09

Chimborazo trek to Whymper's Needles [5.250 m / 17,220 ft]

At 08:00 am, we take a very short drive to the Carrel Hut of Chimborazo at 4.800 m / 15,748 ft. From there we walk first to the upper hut named after Edward Whymper (a British mountaineer who did the first ascent of Chimborazo) at 5.000 m and then to the Whymper's Needles. Here you will reach your highest altitude at 5.250 m / 17,220 ft! Chimborazo's summit is known for being the nearest point to the sun on the planet. Later on we drive down to the town of Baños 1.900 m / 6,232 ft.

 **Activity:** Drive / Trekking

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 **Accommodation:** La Floresta Hotel

DAY

10

Rainforest Hike and Waterfalls

Today we will wake up in Baños, a town located at the edge of the Pastaza River Canyon on top of a lava Plateau. Baños receives a lot of moisture from the amazon basin, which creates many beautiful waterfalls in and around town. We will drive eastwards to the waterfall's route in order to hike into/on top/or below the Devil's Pot waterfall, located in an extremely lush environment, that will show you the diversity of climatic zones that Ecuador has to offer within a short drive. There is always the chance to "fly" in one of the longest canopy rides from Ecuador (close to 1000m long) inside the Pastaza Canyon, and enjoy the hot springs in the late afternoon. Night again in the town of Baños 1.900 m / 6,232 ft. Important NOTICE: as of the year 2021, the state-owned Railroad from Ecuador is no longer supplying services, therefore we have updated our program on this day and excluded the train ride.



Activity: Driving / Train ride / Sightseeing



Accommodation: Hotel in Baños



Transportation: Private van or jeep transfer



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY

11

Day in Baños / Drive back to Quito in the afternoon

Baños is a nice town (tourist resort) located at 1.900 m / 6,232 ft in a subtropical climate, known as the jungle gate, we will spend the morning visiting the hot springs and water falls. Arriving in Quito at 6 PM our journey will end.



Activity: Driving / Hot springs / Sightseeing



Accommodation: In Quito



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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