

# 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, Sincholagua, 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

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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

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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

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## 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

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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

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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

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### III. Chimborazo Region

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**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

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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 La Casona de Alausí for the night.

 **Activity:** Drive / Trekking

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 **Accommodation:** La Casona de Alausí

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DAY

10

## Drive to Alausí / Devil's Nose Train Ride / Drive to Baños

In Alausí we catch the 8:00 AM train for the well know Devil's Nose ride. The Devil's Nose has always been the most popular section of Ecuador's train track: a trip down the rocky slopes of the Andes through stunning scenery. The elevation of the tracks drops 500 m / 1,640 ft over a course of 12 km / 7.5 miles. The Devil's Nose crossing is made with the use of switchbacks: the train rumbles ahead past a junction, then backs down the next section, before going forward again. It was the only way to get the lumbering trains down the hill. You will enjoy astounding views. After the train ride we drive to the town of Baños 1.900 m / 6,232 ft.



**Activity:** Driving / Train ride / Sightseeing



**Accommodation:** Hotel in Baños



**Transportation:** Private van or jeep transfer



**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

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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

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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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