

Quilotoa Trek and Cotopaxi Park

Discover the emerald jewel of the Ecuadorian Andes

DURATION

5 days

DIFFICULTY

Easy

ITINERARY

DAY

01

Drive to Insilivi - short hike in the afternoon (3.100m / 10.171ft)

After an interesting journey along the Pan-American Highway we get to the Town of Toacazo. From here we start heading towards the western range of the Cotopaxi Province. We will pass the little settlement of Planchaloma, after driving through dramatic landscapes on a dusty road we get to Guingopana, a beautiful rocky ridge, here we will do a stop in order to observe the contrast of the Andes. In this region you will have the feeling of going back in time, people 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 spent the night at Lullu Llama Lodge, an old colonial house that was converted into a mountain Lodge.



Activity: Driving / Sightseeing / Trekking



Accommodation: lullu Llama lodge



Transportation: Private van or jeep transfer



Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY

02

Insilivi to Chugchilan [3.200 m /10,499 ft]

After breakfast, we start our day by going down towards a tributary river of the Toachi River Canyon, that will form the main Toachi river further north with its western tributary. Later we will find ourselves on the north-eastern slope of the Quilotoa Crater Lake. In our path we might encounter the shepherds that regularly take their sheep and llamas on these interesting, winding, steep, and sometimes, dusty paths that offer us the best views of the surrounding landscape. In the early afternoon we will arrive at our second lodge, after crossing for the first time the western Toachi canyon, and have some time in the afternoon to recover from the hike and enjoy the scenery. Tonights accomodation is at El Vaquero Hostal.

 **Activity:** 5-6 hours trekking

 Accommodation: Hostal El Vaquero

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY

03

Chugchilán to Quilotoa Crater Lake

Hiking from Chugchilán to Laguna Quilotoa we will have beautiful views of the canyon of Toachi River. After crossing the canyon and finishing a steep ascent, we will reach a plateau where lies the small indigenous village of Huayama. Our climb will continue from there on the outer northern slope of the Quilotoa Crater Lake, passing by highland grass slopes and finally mountain deserts. Once on the edge of the caldera, we will walk by the crater edge with impressive views of the lagoon inside, until we reach the village of Quilotoa. The climate and scenery changes dramatically. Soon we will be surrounded by the highland. Quilotoa is a beautiful volcanic crater-lake 3 kilometers in diameter. Its emerald water spans two kilometers. 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, if we have enough strength and time to do it. The night will be spent in a basic Indian lodge.

 **Activity:** 4-5 hours trekking





 Accommodation: Mountain Hostel

 **Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY
04

Quilotoa Crater Lake Hike (3.800m / 12.467ft)




We will start our hike early in the morning to have the best views of the Quilotoa Crater Lake. Once on the edge of the caldera, we will depart the village and walk by the crater edge with impressive views of the lagoon inside, and all the surrounding canyons, passing by some high points and paths carved by sheep and their shepherds. The climate and scenery changes dramatically. Soon we will be surrounded by the highland bushes and grass. We end our journey on the other side of the village, and drive towards Tigua, our next destination, where the Tigua Naif Art pictorial tendency originated, having enough time there or in Quilotoa, to learn and admire this type of painting.

-  Activity: 4 hours hiking / Drive back to Quito
-  Accommodation: Mountain Hostel
-  Transportation: Private van or jeep transfer
-  Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY
05

Drive to Cotopaxi National Park (4.800m / 15.748ft)

We depart early in the morning from the western mountain range, and drive north east to the so-called "central mountain range" where the Cotopaxi Volcano is located. Once in the park, we will drive up to the parking lot and attempt the hike to the Rivas Refuge at 4800m above sea level, located at the second highest peak of the Andes of Ecuador, and one of the highest active volcanoes in the world. Great first hiking experience at extreme high altitude, to finish our trekking days. In the late afternoon we will be driving back to Quito.

-  Activity: 4-5 hours hiking / Drive back to 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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