




Wild Andes

ECUADOR

This **trail ride** is specifically designed for those looking for cultural immersion and adventure. You ride close to Illinizas, Quilotoa, Chimborazo, Carihuirazo and Tungurahua volcanoes in the avenue of volcanoes and discover isolated communities which still farm in traditional ways. This **horseback trail** allows you to ride in 3 ecosystems between 4000m and 2400m high going from the parano to the tropical forest.

Trail Riding	 12 days / 10 days riding -	 From £0	
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Ride up to the Quilotoa crater lake in Ecuador



Get ready for a riding holiday in Ecuador




Discover the rugged scenery of the Ecuadorian Andes in the saddle

ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride through the avenue of volcanoes and get up close to Illinizas, Quilotoa, Chimborazo, Carihuirazo and Tungurahua
- Chance to kayak on Quilotoa's crater lake
- Visit the thermal hot springs at El Salado and Tungurahua


Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - QUITO - ALOAG - No riding

 Hacienda La Alegria

Fly to Quito. It is likely that you will fly via a hub airport such as Madrid or Miami as there are no direct flights from the UK.

On arrival at Quito airport you will be transferred to the hacienda to overnight (2,890m). Airport transfers are at additional cost. Depending on your flight schedules, there might be time for a short ride.

Day 2 — 2: ALOAG - 4 hours riding

 Hacienda La Alegria


After breakfast, you will try out the horses and ride in a closed arena until you feel comfortable with your horse and the tack. There will be the opportunity to change horses if you aren't happy with the first one selected for you.

Today's ride is an acclimatisation ride around the hacienda. You will observe the green valley of Machachi and the soaring mountains of the "Avenue of Volcanoes" where you will be riding throughout the rest of your trip.

Returning to the hacienda for a late lunch in the afternoon, you may choose to take a tour around the yard and watch the cows being milked.

In the evening, don't forget to make the best of the hot tub!

Day 3 — 3: ALEGRIA - CORAZON VOLCANO - HACIENDA BOMBOLI - 6 hours riding

 Hacienda Bomboli


Today you will set off on the trail starting from Hacienda La Alegria. Riding west, you will reach the Volcano Corazon at 4000m high then riding down through 3 ecosystems going from the paramo in the high plateau to the rich grass of the valley and the tropical forest at the end of the day where you will be surrounded by the tree fern, orchids and a large variety of birds.

The paramo ecosystem can be found around the northern Andes of South America above the continuous forest line. It is a neotropical high mountain biome composed of giant rosette plants and scrubs.

In the afternoon, you will reach the Hacienda Bomboli located at 3000m just in time for tea. You can spend the evening in front of the fireplace admiring the beautiful sunset and lights along the coast.

You will have dinner and spend the night at the Hacienda.

Day 4 — 4: HACIENDA BOMBOLI - HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA - 4h30 hours riding

 Hacienda La Alegria

You will be able to explore the beautiful garden around the hacienda and discover a wide variety of cloud forest plants, including orchids. Thanks to the region's microclimate, over the following days you will get to experience a vast range of vegetation.

Then you will leave the cloud forest behind and follow the ancient path leading from Quito to the coast which offers beautiful views of the green Machachi valley and along "the Avenue of Volcanoes" - giving you a glimpse of the ride to come.

Riding through the steppes and the eucalyptus forest in the evening, you will reach the hacienda where a warm and delightful dinner will be waiting.

Day 5 — 5: ALOAG - SIGCHOS - 8 hours riding-40km

 Isinlivi Lodge

Now better acquainted with your horse, the climate and the altitude, you will set out on your expedition through the amazing scenery of the Andes Mountains.

After a 1 hour car transfer to the south you will start the ride with a full 8 hours in the saddle. You will ride among a herd of free-running horses.

Your ride will follow an Inca trail and secondary road which leads directly to Sigchos - the village that was known as the last home of the Inca general Ruminahui. From this point on, you will be riding through a dramatic landscape which includes steep ravines and narrow passages.

Even though you can see your destination and it looks close, you have to cross many mountain chains to get there - passing through a combination of forest, rocky peaks and eroded land as well as the Toachi Canyon.

After a long day's ride, you will arrive at Hacienda San Jose which is a working dairy farm and guest house. There should be time for a Jacuzzi, sauna or swim in the pool before dinner.

Day 6 — 6: SIGCHOS - QUILOTOA CRATER LAKE - 8 hours riding

 Quilotoa Inn

Your destination is Quilotoa a crater lake (a water-filled caldera) and the most western volcano in the Ecuadorian Andes. The 3-kilometre-wide caldera was formed by the collapse of this volcano following a catastrophic eruption in 1280.

On the day's ride, you will be able to enjoy breathtaking scenery and views of the lake.

You will spend the night at Quilotoa Lodge on the edge of the Quilotoa crater.

Day 7 — 7: QUILOTOA - GUAMBAIN - 8 hours riding

Leaving Quilotoa behind, you will ride to the nearest village - Zumbahua the start point of your long trek into the high Andes.

This village is a small, isolated homestead of about 50 families - there are no roads and the only connection to civilisation is along a 3 hour path to Angamarca.

You will see herds of llamas which are used as pack animals, as well as sheep being cared for by children working as shepherds.

This will be an intense riding day and will be the climax of your adventure.

You will be some of the very few tourists to visit this area and will camp in tents whilst using one of the grass huts as a kitchen.

Your guides built a path to the east to help this community cross the mountain chain enabling the locals to sell their products at larger markets and allow them to achieve better prices for their products such as cheese, potatoes, broad beans and barley.

Day 8 — 8: GUAMBAIN - EL SALADO - 7 hours riding

Early in the morning you should have the opportunity to admire the extraordinary combination of the sunrise and the clouds arriving from the western cloud forest.

Today you will encounter a dramatic change in the ecosystem. Riding from the high mountains to the low valleys, you'll see thousands of small farms - a lot of them produce milk (50% of the milk produced in Ecuador is from farms of fewer than 3 hectares).

You will ride past a ravine which originates from Chimborazo volcano (6,300m and the highest volcano in Ecuador). You will ride along the river bank on old road built in the 1830's called "Camino de Flores" - this was the first road to connect the highlands with the coast.

In the afternoon, you will arrive at Salado hot springs where you will set up camp and prepare a BBQ.

Today you will have a support vehicle.

Day 9 — 9: EL SALADO - CHIMBORAZO - 8 hours riding

Your expedition continues and today will be a challenging ride around the skirt of the Chimborazo volcano.

Chimborazo is a currently inactive stratovolcano in the Cordillera Occidental range of the Andes. Its last known eruption is believed to have occurred around 550 AD and it is 6,268m high.

You will ride in an easterly direction following the southerly edge of Chimborazo, with Carihuaizrao volcano on your left. The scenery changes from a desert full of running vicunas (small relative of the llama) to the swampy, green paramo.

This is an area full of climbing/hiking paths and you will finish the day on the eastern face of Chimborazo at a guest house (dormitory).


Day 10 — 10: CHIMBORAZO - BANOS-8 hours riding - 8 hours riding

Your last day's ride will lead you to Banos, a city located at the foot of the volcano Tungurahua, well-known for its eruptions, smoke and ash expulsions over the last 14 years. The ride will start at an altitude of 4000m and you will ride down little by little, to the Chambo Canyon, through potato and bean plantation.

After a 1600m descent, with glorious views and changes in the scenery, you will reach Banos at 2400m. Here, the horses will be driven back to the Hacienda Aloag and you will enjoy the charming city of Banos.

You will have dinner and stay the night in a hotel in Banos.

Day 11 — 11: TUNGURAHUA - ALOAG - No riding

 Hacienda La Alegria

After breakfast there is time to visit Banos and enjoy its waterfalls, hot springs and do some shopping.

You will be collected from Banos and be driven back to the hacienda to for lunch. You may chose to stretch out your muscles by going for a walk around the hacienda before a final group dinner to recount your adventures.

Day 12 — 12: ALOAG - QUITO - EUROPE - No riding

After breakfast you will be transferred to Quito in time for your flight home. Depending on your flight route you may arrive home tonight or tomorrow.

DATES & PRICES

We are currently updating our dates and prices they will be online soon. If you want details of this holiday, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Price details

No departure for this destination. Please contact our travel advisers for more information.

- International flights are not included but are bookable upon request.

- The group is composed of 2 - 6 riders plus guides. There is a supplement of £130/\$150/€140 per rider if there are only 2 riders in the group. This will be invoiced at the time of the booking and reimbursed once a third rider signs up.

- Airport transfers are not included and are at a cost of \$100 return (approx. £75), divided by the number of riders on the transfer, payable locally.

- There is a single supplement of £130/\$150/€140 payable if you are not prepared to share a room with another rider of the same sex.

- Children are welcome as long as they are competent riders and able to ride horses. There is a discount of c. £270/\$330/€300 of for children of 15 years and younger (minimum 12 years old).

- There is a possibility to extend your stay. The cost is £200/\$250/€240 pers/night (sharing). This price includes full-board accommodation and riding lessons or a trail ride.

- There is a rider weight limit of 90kgs. If you are over this limit please contact us

- Non-riders are welcome on this ride for the same cost

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English speaking horse guide

A team of chagras to look after your horses

LOGISTIC

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle

1 support vehicle

ACCOMMODATION

Double or triple room in Guesthouses/haciendas on 6 nights

Hostel accommodation on 2 nights

Mountain Huts/Refuge on one night

2 person tents on 2 nights

MEALS

Full board from first dinner to last breakfast

Snacks and drinks

Price doesn't include

TRANSPORT

Return airport transfers, payable locally (see "dates and prices")

International flights

EXTRA

Tips to local team

EXTRAS

Small group supplement - see above for details

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room/tent supplement

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

You ride local Criollo horses which are sure footed and ideally suited to the terrain and altitude. You can ride in traditional Argentine tack which comprises a basic wooden frame covered with sheepskins, or you can opt to ride in a cavalry, western or Mclellan saddle if you prefer.

Guide & local team

Gabriel is your host and owner of the hacienda. He speaks good English, is very knowledgable about his country and delighted to share it with his

guests. He will be supported by local chagras.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a capable rider who is comfortable in all paces across varied terrain.

There is a rider weight limit of 90kgs.

PACE

The pace is varied depending on the terrain, with long periods of walk due to the altitude. There are some opportunities to canter.

You will be required to get off and lead your horse over some of the technical sections.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be asked to help groom, tack and untack your horse but help is on hand if required. You are also welcome to assist with feeding and watering the horses if you wish.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be physically fit with good endurance. This ride is at high altitude (4,500 - 5,000m) and there is a possibility of altitude sickness.

You need to be an adventurous person and accept that things might go to plan.

Previous experience of trail rides over a number of days would be beneficial but is not required. Riders who do not ride regularly are required to get fit before joining the trail.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

The saddles are similar to western but have a basic frame over which sheepskins are placed for comfort. Bridles are usually simple snaffles. Ponchos and waterproof trousers are provided to help in cold weather but you should still take your own warm clothes and jackets. Saddlebags are provided on the horses.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

Accommodation is varied on this ride.

You spend three nights in your guide's hacienda in comfortable double/twin rooms with private bathrooms. The hacienda is tastefully decorated.

There are four nights in hostels and one night in a guesthouse, in sharing rooms with bathrooms. You spend one night in a refuge (mountain hut with dormitory accommodation) and two nights camping in two man tents.

MEALS

Meals are produced each day by your guide. Lunches are taken as picnics in the saddle bags and dinner will be warm and hearty. Local produce is used wherever possible and is of high quality.

Be careful if drinking water from unknown sources and ask for boiled water or mineral water if you are unsure. You could also take purification tablets.

CLIMATE

The weather can be unpredictable and it is not unusual to experience all four seasons in one day. It can be sunny, windy, cloudy or rainy and the whole range of variations can occur within a matter of hours. Temperatures can fluctuate from 7c - 10c or even as high as 25c.

At lower altitudes the weather is less variable and can be warm and sunny throughout the dry season, which is usually around June - September and December.

TIPS

It is customary to tip in Ecuador. Porters in airports and hotels will expect c. USD 1 per bag. City restaurants will include both tax and a 10% service charge, but smaller restaurants may not include tax or tips so you will need to add them.

We would recommend tipping c. USD 5 per person per day for your guide and USD 3 per day for your driver.

PACKING LIST

Please note: if you wish to pack lighter, Gabriel can provide ponchos and a limited supply of long chaps. Please let us know in advance.

Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun and dust
- Warm hat

Upper body

- Thermals in case of cold weather (can also be worn at night)
- Down jacket or warm coat for the cold evenings
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm polar fleece or equivalent (plus a spare in case one gets wet)
- Waterproof jacket - rain can be difficult to predict and it's better to be prepared.

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Waterproof over trousers
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- Thermals in case of cold weather

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Good walking boots (or hybrid walking/riding boots)
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Nightwear

- Sleeping bag with a comfort rating of at least minus 5c, preferably minus 10c. We also suggest adding a liner, such as silk or fleece for extra warmth
 - Thermarest pad or similar self-inflating mattress
- (These items can be hired at extra cost - payable locally, but must be requested in advance).

Other useful items

- Swimsuit - for swimming/bathing in rivers
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)
- Water bottle - 2 x 1 litre, or equivalent
- Wet wipes for when washing water isn't available

Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Micropur or similar water purification tablets
- Re-hydration sachets

- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel
- Toilet paper

Our Recommendations

- You should use a soft sided suitcase which can easily be transported - we recommend a large backpack or rucksack of c. 60-80 litres
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .