

# Cotopaxi & Chimborazo - Avenue of the Volcanoes, Ecuador

An exciting trek past snow-capped summits in Ecuador's 'Avenue of the Volcanoes'.



## Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

## Holiday overview

|                         |                                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Style                   | Trek                                 |
| Accommodation           | Hotels, Guesthouses, Lodges          |
| Grade                   | Vigorous                             |
| Duration                | 14 days from London to London        |
| Trekking / Walking days | On trek: 5 days<br>Walks on: 3 days  |
| Min/Max group size      | 5 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 5      |
| Trip Leader             | Local Leader Ecuador                 |
| Land only               | Joining in Quito, Ecuador            |
| Max altitude            | 5,000m/16,405ft, Whymper Hut, Day 11 |

**Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available**



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## Departures

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### Group departures

#### 2021 Dates:

Sat 16 Jan - Fri 29 Jan

Sat 04 Sep - Fri 17 Sep

#### 2022 Dates:

Sat 15 Jan - Fri 28 Jan

Sat 03 Sep - Fri 16 Sep

#### 2023 Dates:

Sat 14 Jan - Fri 27 Jan

Sat 02 Sep - Fri 15 Sep

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 5 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your guide

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Your trip will be led by a fully trained English speaking local guide. In Ecuador these guides are enthusiasts for their mountains and are normally exceptionally highly educated, often in the States or in Europe and have lots of mountaineering and trekking experience. They can provide a fascinating insight into their country and an in-depth view of the area you are visiting. Your trip may be led by Fabien Freire or Pablo Montalvo both of whom are enthusiastic and popular leaders who have led this trip for us in the past.

In the Galapagos you will be accompanied by expert captains and crew including professional Level 3 Naturalist Guides.

## Your trip highlights

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- Visit the old colonial centre of Quito
- Climb Pichincha and Pasachoa volcanoes
- Trek to huts high on Cotopaxi and Chimborazo
- Ride the Devil's Nose Train ride

## At a glance itinerary

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|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Days 1-2   | Fly to Quito. Time at leisure and guided tour of Old Town.                    |
| Days 3-4   | Visit Pululahua Crater and Mitad del Mundo. Walk up Pichincha Volcano.        |
| Day 5      | Trek along Rio Pita to waterfall and lodge by Cotopaxi.                       |
| Days 6-7   | Trek to summit of Pasachoa, 4,200m/13,776ft and trek to Hacienda Porvenir.    |
| Day 8      | Trek to Tambopaxi, 3,750m/12,300ft, via Sarachaurucu Summit, 4,230m/13,880ft. |
| Days 9-10  | Trek to glacier and hut on Cotopaxi, 4,810m/15,784ft. Drive to Chimborazo.    |
| Day 11     | Trek to Whymper Hut, 5,000m/16,405ft and Whymper's Needles. Drive to Guamote. |
| Day 12     | Ride the Devil's Nose train. Drive to Quito.                                  |
| Days 13-14 | Overnight flight back to London.  |

## Trip summary

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This is an energetic and rewarding trip - you will trek up to the mountain hut on Cotopaxi which is at the same height as the summit of Mont Blanc, and to the Whymper Hut on Chimborazo which is even higher. There is plenty of time in the itinerary allowed for acclimatisation and the trekking is very varied. You will walk through a rolling pastoral countryside with its rich tapestry of cultivated fields, and through a landscape of snow-capped peaks and high lagoons. You cross the rolling moorland of the páramo and you trek up through the dramatic lunar landscape on the upper slopes of volcanoes. Grazing llamas and alpacas are common sights along the way and you may also see condor, humming birds, foxes, white-tailed deer and many other species that are indigenous to Ecuador.

Despite being the smallest of the Andean nations, Ecuador has as much spectacular scenery and natural beauty as its larger neighbours and this action-packed holiday takes in all the real highlights. The country lies on the so-called 'Ring of Fire', the highly seismic zone that encircles the Pacific. South of the capital Quito, two parallel chains of the Andes rise to their most dramatic peaks known as 'The Avenue of the Volcanoes'. Eight of Ecuador's ten highest summits are found in this part of the country and on this exciting trip you will trek to two of them: Cotopaxi, at 5,896m/19,347ft, is the highest active volcano in the world and Chimborazo (6,309m/20,702ft) is the highest peak in Ecuador. Chimborazo also has the additional claim that its summit is the furthest from the centre of the earth so it could technically compete with Everest as the highest summit on earth. You should also enjoy good views of many of the other volcanoes in the region - Rumiñahui, Sincholagua, the Illinizas, Pasachoa and many more.

Your accommodation will be as varied and interesting as the country you are trekking through as you will stay in hotels, lodges and a charming guesthouse as well as spending a night in a delightful old hacienda at the heart of one of the largest farms in Ecuador.

As a thrilling finale to your trip you will take the spectacular Devil's Nose Train ride before returning to Quito for your flight home.

You will have a real taste of the colourful culture of this most friendly of South American countries. All in all, this thrilling itinerary has been designed to take you to the heart of this dramatically beautiful and wonderfully welcoming South American jewel.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Quito

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You will depart London on your overnight flight to Quito.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Quito, 2,850m/9,300ft. Group transfer to hotel and morning at leisure. Afternoon guided tour of the Old Town.

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On arrival at Quito in the early morning you will be transferred to your hotel in the heart of the new town. Your room will be ready for immediate occupancy. After breakfast at your hotel you will have the morning to relax and recuperate from your long flight.

Quito is a busy, vibrant city at an altitude of 2850m/9,300ft, and is the second highest capital in the world. The city is located just 20 miles south of the equator in a valley high in the Andes and overshadowed by the dramatic Pichincha Volcano. Nowadays, Quito has two main sections, the old colonial town which is a UNESCO World Heritage site and the new town, where most hotels and tourist facilities are located.



In the afternoon, you will have a guided tour of the Old Town with its fabulous array of colonial churches, monasteries and convents. Firstly, for orientation, you will visit El Panecillo, a hill on the southern edge of the old town topped by a huge statue of the winged Virgin. From here there are great views of the old city and the surrounding mountains. You will then take in some of the major monuments from Quito's colonial legacy, including the vast cobbled square of San Francisco with its adjoining church and monastery and the richly decorated, baroque confection of the church of La Compañía. The streets of the old town throng with local people and there is much more of a feeling of being in the real vibrant South America here than in the rather staid and less characterful newer part of town.

**Overnight: Hotel Reina Isabel**

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## Day 3: Visit Pululahua Crater and Mitad del Mundo.

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Today will be spent in the environs of Quito city to help acclimatise to the altitude. After breakfast you will drive north of the city to the Pululahua Crater, one of the largest volcanic calderas in the world with a diameter of 8km. Here a 40 minutes steep walk down a small path will bring you to the cultivated fields at the bottom of the crater and your first easy introduction to the rural landscape of the Andes. By late morning clouds often blow up from the west to fill the crater. Before returning to Quito city you may visit the Mitad del Mundo (Middle of the World). This is a rather touristy complex marking the equator but it does also have an interesting museum and displays. In the evening your guide may give you an introductory slide presentation on Ecuador.

**Overnight: Hotel Reina Isabel (Meals: B)**

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## Day 4: Walk up Pichincha Volcano.

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To the west of Quito are the two summits of the volcano Pichincha - Rucu Pichincha (4,674m/15,335ft) with its cluster of aerials and Guagua Pichina at 4,794m/15,729ft. Today, as a valuable acclimatisation walk, you will hike to the summit of Pichincha. Firstly you will take the cable car to 4,000m and then walk up to the refuge and finally the final steep section to the summit. From the top the all-round views are tremendous. You will then descend part way and meet vehicles for the return to Quito.

**Overnight: Hotel Reina Isabel (Meals: B L)**

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## Day 5: Trek along Rio Pita to waterfall, and on to your lodge - 5 hours.

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Today you set off on your journey down the Avenue of the Volcanoes. Instead of driving straight to Cotopaxi you will approach it more gradually, with the opportunity to enjoy the charms of the peaceful rural landscape,



pretty farmland and small settlements along the way. You drive out of the city for approximately one hour to the village of Santa Clara at 2,750m/9,022ft, located in the Valley of Los Chillos. You then have a pleasant and easy walk of about five hours with good all round views and the Rio Pita gurgling beside you. For part of the way you walk alongside the river crossing from side to side by 11 bridges which the locals have erected to give access to the river and more especially to the spectacular and beautiful Condor Machai Waterfalls. This river flows down from the glaciers on the slopes of Cotopaxi and there are a lot of birds and other wildlife to be seen along the river, which is also full of trout. You will have lunch in a pleasant clearing next to the river.

You then climb gradually to Cotopaxipungo Lodge, passing the 'Virgin de Piedra' (Virgin of the Rock) on the way. Passing the buildings of a hacienda you climb through trees to your hotel situated in a pleasant meadow at 3,280m/10,761ft.

**Overnight: Cotopaxipungo Lodge (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Trek to summit of Pasachoa, 4,200m/13,776ft - 5 hours.**

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You set off after breakfast to make a day walk to the summit of the eroded, extinct volcano of Cerro Pasachoa. You walk through fields belonging to Hacienda Santa Rita and then ascend the eastern slopes of the volcano. Pasachoa's western side collapsed in an eruption more than 100,000 years ago and the inaccessible crater has some of the last undisturbed native forest remaining in Ecuador. This forest, as well as being rich in native tree species, also shelters more than 110 species of birds. In clear weather there are good all round views from the summit and down into the crater itself. You may also be lucky enough to see condors. You will then return to your lodge.

**Overnight: Cotopaxipungo Lodge (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Trek to Hacienda Porvenir, 3,600m/11,808ft.**

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Your hike now continues toward Cotopaxi. You pass through humid Andean forest where you may see humming birds and other indigenous bird species and then you emerge onto more open 'paramo' terrain with views towards Cotopaxi. Hacienda El Porvenir is surrounded by four volcanoes - Cotopaxi, Sicholagua, Pasachoa and Rimiñahui and is the centre of one of the largest farms in Ecuador. The hacienda is set in rolling hills and there are good views from there back to Pasachoa and the other way towards the symmetrical snow-capped peak of Cotopaxi. The beautiful farmhouse is built of traditional materials such as brick, straw, wood and adobe and has a traditional thatched roof. Downstairs is comfortable with attractive sitting rooms and log fires. Upstairs the accommodation is more akin to a mountain hut, with two-bedded compartments separated by woven walls, but it is clean and comfortable with hot showers. The welcome at El Porvenir is warm and friendly and the food provided here is wonderful.



**Overnight: Hacienda Porvenir (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Trek to Tambopaxi, 3,750m/12,300ft, via Sarachaurucu Summit, 4,230m/13,880ft - 6-7 hours.**

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From El Porvenir you walk through walled fields, climbing behind the hacienda into more open country, across hillsides covered in ichhu grass: typical Andean terrain. In this area you may see some of the many large bulls with huge horns which are run on the hills in this area - best to give them a wide berth! Over to your right is seen the rocky summit of Rumiñahui, named after an Inca General who fought in 1520 against the Spanish who were looking for the Inca treasure which was believed to be hidden in these mountains. You scramble to the highest of three summits of Sarachaurucu for good all round views, especially of Cotopaxi which is right in front of you. You then descend steeply from the summit and walk down the valley eventually turning south to arrive at Tambopaxi, situated just on the edge of the Cotopaxi National Park. Total walking 6-7 hours. You overnight at Tambopaxi Hosteria a substantial, well built and comfortable lodge with a large dining room from where there are panoramic views of Cotopaxi. The Hosteria has hot showers and the food is excellent.

**Overnight: Hosteria Tambopaxi (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Trek to glacier and hut on Cotopaxi, 4,810m/15,784ft - 6-7 hours.**

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From Tambopaxi you trek into the national park across the rolling moorland of the paramo with its tundra-like vegetation. You walk to the base of the mountain and then ascend more steeply to the Jose F Ribas Refuge. Cotopaxi summit now looms overhead. At this hut you are at the same height as the summit of Mont Blanc. From the hut you can walk out to the glacier coming down from Cotopaxi summit and explore the area around. The glacier has been receding rapidly in recent years but is still pretty impressive with its seracs and great broken slabs of ice. Look out round here for the 'lobos de paramo' which are sometimes seen in the area - the locals call them lobos or 'wolves' but they seem to be more like foxes. You may also watch out for condor and white-tailed deer. Depending on how energetic you are feeling you may walk down to the small lake called Limpiopungo where you will see many Andean water birds - ducks, gulls, lapwings and various waders. There are also nearby Inca ruins which you may visit. Return on foot to Tambopaxi Refuge.



**Overnight: Hosteria Tambopaxi (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 10: Drive to Chimborazo.**

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Today you drive from the Hosteria, past Cotopaxi, through the beautiful Cotopaxi National Park and out through the southern park gates. You descend to the town of Latacunga and then drive south along the Pan-American Highway and on to Ambato.

You will then drive up on to the lower slopes of Chimborazo to Urbina, the highest railway station in Ecuador. The buildings of the railway station have now been converted into a quirky mountain refuge. The railway lines still exist in front of the building, but scheduled train services no longer run here and llamas graze all around. You will have lunch at Urbina before continuing around Chimborazo to the bottom of an extremely scenic valley leading up to Chimborazo summit. This is a lovely and remote spot. Your accommodation here is in the attractive lodge, Chimborazo Basecamp Hillstar, built on the site of the 'Tambo de Totorillas', a former roadside inn on the old Inca royal road between Guayaquil and Quito. This lodge is built in traditional vernacular style. The attractive dining room is located in a central building and accommodation is in twin rooms in two thatched buildings just across a small stream.

**Overnight: Chimborazo Base Camp Hill Star Lodge Or Similar (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 11: Trek to Whymper Hut, 5,000m/16,405ft and Whymper's Needles. Drive to Guamote, 2,754m/9,035ft.**

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Chimborazo is a massive volcano and is thought to have last erupted 10,000 years ago. Its snowy peak can be seen from ships on the Pacific, and it is arguably the tallest mountain in the world. Mount Everest is highest if you use height above sea level but if you measure distance from the centre of the earth, then Chimborazo is much higher - by around two miles - since the earth is not a perfect sphere, but bulges considerably around the Equator.

From the lodge you take a little used trail up the very attractive valley towards the summit of Chimborazo, perhaps passing grazing llamas as you go. Vicuñas have been re-introduced onto Chimborazo and you may be lucky enough to see these elegant animals as you ascend. Listen out for them as they whistle to each other across the slopes. The route then becomes rougher underfoot and steeper and more rocky, the vegetation thins and the volcanic nature of the terrain becomes more evident. Higher still the landscape becomes ever more lunar. Finally, the refuge comes into view above you and you ascend to it. From the refuge, if you are still feeling energetic you can climb further to the rocky outcrop known as Whymper Needles for further stunning mountain views.

You will then drive down to Guamote, an attractive small town set on the railway line where you stay at the small, friendly guesthouse, Inti Sisi Art, founded in 2004 to fund local community projects.

**Overnight: Inti Sisi Art Guesthouse, Guamote (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 12: Devil's Nose train ride. Drive to Quito.**

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Today you will ride the spectacular Devil's Nose train Ride, the 'Nariz del Diabolo'. The Devil's Nose Railway was one of the great railway engineering feats of the late 19th/early 20th century. The line initially ran from Guayaquil on the coast to Quito, but now only the section between Riobamba and Sibambe is operational which includes the spectacular ride down and up the Devil's Nose between Alausi and Sibambe. Here the line descends 1,000 metres down a steep slope on a series of switchbacks with sheer cliffs on either side. The train descends through cuttings in the living rock, with thrilling views far below and has to stop from time to time to reverse into switch backs. The entire journey is spectacular, passing through beautiful scenery and market towns before descending the Devil's Nose. Evidently it is no longer permitted to ride on the roof of the train! After the train ride you will drive to Quito.

If for any reason the train is not running you will visit instead the lovely town of Banos overlooked by Tungurahua volcano.

**Overnight: Hotel Reina Isabel (Meals: B L)**

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**Day 13: Free time in Quito. Group transfer to airport for overnight flight back to London.**

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Depending on your flight time you might have a free morning in Quito to sightsee, shop or just relax and watch life in the busy city go by, before you transfer to the airport.

**Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)**

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**Day 14: Arrive in London.**

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Today you will arrive back in the UK.

## Our grading system

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Cotopaxi & Chimborazo - Avenue of the Volcanoes is graded as a Vigorous trekking holiday, as described below.

### **Vigorous**

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

## Trip altitude

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**Important** - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk) as a good source of information.



## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ A Local English-speaking leader
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All internal flights and domestic transfers
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation (usually 3 star) in Quito on a twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Best available lodges and hotels in outlying towns, usually on full board basis
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ The opportunity to join one of our pre-trip meets in the Cotswolds

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Quito
- ✗ Airport departure taxes, excepting UK
- ✗ Departure Tax
- ✗ Tips

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign.](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign)

## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### **Hotel Reina Isabel**

A modern tourist class hotel situated in the new town and close to all amenities



### **Cotopaxipungo Lodge**

The CotopaxiPungo Lodge is situated by Cotopaxi mountain and has tremendous views from all its rooms. The well-proportioned bedrooms have large, picture windows plus either a small balcony or terrace so you can make the most of the vistas. The Lodge has a good restaurant serving traditional meals and you can even join the chef in the kitchen!



### **Hacienda Porvenir**

Hacienda Porvenir is a traditional Ecuadorian hacienda, located in the foothills of Rumiñahui Volcano and it features simple but comfortable accommodation. The hacienda is set in rolling hills and there are good views from there back to Pasachoa and the other way towards the symmetrical snow-capped peak of Cotopaxi. The beautiful farmhouse is built of traditional materials such as brick, straw, wood and adobe and has a traditional thatched roof. Downstairs is comfortable with attractive sitting rooms and log fires. Upstairs the accommodation is more akin to a mountain hut, with two-bedded compartments separated by woven walls, but it is clean and comfortable with hot showers. The welcome at El Porvenir is warm and friendly and the food provided here is wonderful.



### **Hosteria Tambopaxi**

Tambopaxi is a substantial, well built and comfortable refuge/mountain lodge. Your cosy accommodation here will be in comfortable private dormitory rooms with their own bathrooms and hot showers located in a quiet building away from the hurly burly of the main refuge. Food at the lodge is excellent and there are panoramic views of Cotopaxi from the large dining room.



### **Chimborazo Base Camp Hill Star Lodge Or Similar**

Chimborazo Base Camp Hillstar: This lodge is built on the site of the 'Tambo de Totorillas', a former roadside inn on the old Inca royal road between Guayaquil and Quito. Built in traditional vernacular style, the attractive dining room, located in a central building, is thatched, as are the buildings containing twin rooms located just across a small stream. If Chimborazo Base Camp is unavailable you will stay in a nice hotel in the town of Riobamba.



### **Inti Sisa Art Guesthouse, Guamote**

The Inti Sisa is situated in the traditional village of Guamote and is a warm and welcoming guesthouse. Rooms are simple but comfortable and all have private bathrooms. The guesthouse is decorated in traditional style and there is a communal lounge area with fireplaces, magazines and music and in the evening, dinner is taken round a large group table. The guesthouse plays a very important role in the local community as it funds an educational facility for local underprivileged children.

## Meal arrangements

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B&B in Quito and all meals included elsewhere. Included meals: 12 breakfasts, 9 lunches and 7 dinners.

## Flight arrangements

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### **Flight inclusive from price**

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### **Flight upgrades and regional Airports**

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

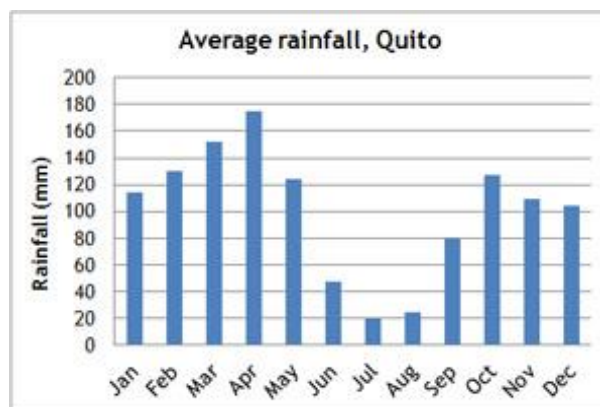
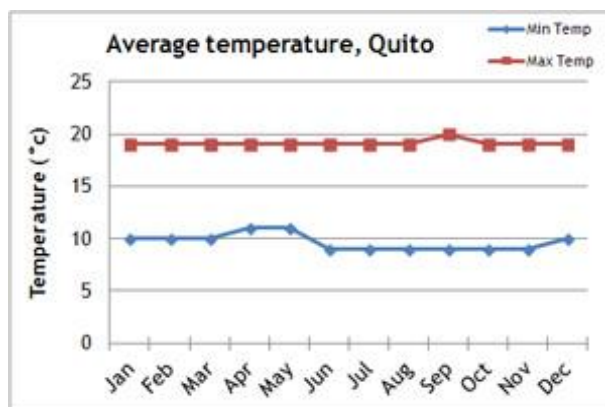
## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

## Climate information

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## Extensions

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### Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra hotel nights at the start or end of your trip, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements. We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

### Galapagos Islands Extension



A cruise amongst the Galapagos Islands is an unforgettable experience. You can join a cruise that best matches your interests and budget. We work with a variety of different sizes of boat, with cruises typically of four to eight days duration.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This is a specially researched itinerary and is unique to Mountain Kingdoms.
- We have included plenty of time to acclimatise in and around Quito.
- There is an excellent programme of walks plus a ride on the Devil's nose Train and a city tour of Quito.
- We use Ecuadorian leaders who have a wealth of enthusiasm and knowledge about their country and its wonderful landscapes.
- Varied accommodation includes hacienda stays, a hosteria, a lodge and a guesthouse, all set in wonderful locations with spectacular views.
- We have a maximum group size of 12 to ensure all the benefits of genuine small group travel and help reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger groups.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

## What our clients say

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*As always, the general organisation and ease with which the trip went off was excellent. Even the packed lunches were superb! We like being able to fully trust all the arrangements and recommendations that you make. We will book with you again very soon!*  
-Mr & Mrs T, Nottingham



*All went perfectly as planned. Galapagos extension was great and would be happy to recommend ... Trek, accommodation and guide all excellent. And my biggest worry, the airport transfers, all very efficient. And you even arranged perfect weather.*  
- Mrs F, Hampshire

*The trip was interesting, varied and challenging. Excellent acclimatisation. Very helpful, knowledgeable, friendly guide. I would definitely recommend it.*  
-Mr & Mrs F, Hampshire



# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### **Carbon Offsetting**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

