

ECUADOR - MOUNTAIN GUARDIANS TREK



INTRODUCTION

This unique 4 day hike will have you discovering a region of the Andes full of high mystical peaks, volcanoes, spectacular scenery, plants, animals, waterfalls, forest and great walking trails. Cotopaxi National Park offers the impressive, snow-capped volcano of the same name that dominates Quito's skyline. Exploring four different perspectives, you will hike through spectacular valleys and verdant grasslands, travelling from a rocky mountain peak to a volcanic glacier, from working haciendas to cosy mountain lodges. This is truly an adventure by day comfort by night journey.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: The First Peak!

Today, you will tackle the relatively easy climb to the Pasochoa peak at 4,200 metres. Access is not difficult and the hike to the peak will take about three hours over grassland trails. From here you will get a spectacular view of the mountains surrounding Quito, the Pasochoa crater, as well as the impressive surrounding mountain crests: Antisana, Sincholagua, Quilindaña, Cotopaxi, Rumiñahui, Corazón and the twin Iliniza peaks. Begin the descent towards the Pita river canyon, a downhill walk of about three hours through grasslands and low 'Chaparro' forests, ending at the Cotopaxi Pungo Lodge, situated at about 3,200 metres above sea level.



TRIP CODE

ECTSMGT

DEPARTURE

Inquiry for exact departure dates

DURATION

4 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador



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DAY 2: The Pedregal Trail

Today you will embark on a scenic hike across high mountain forests and along the course of the Pita river. The hike will take around six or seven hours, and the descent is gradual from the humid Andean forests through the grasslands of Cotopaxi down to the area known as the Pedregal. The day ends at the Los Mortiños hacienda, a cosy retreat designed for mountaineers, whose walls are covered with stories of famous Ecuadorian mountain climbers. The lodge is located at the entrance to Cotopaxi National Park, at approximately 3,600 metres above sea level.



DAY 3: The Cotopaxi Trail

Continue the journey along the Pita river canyon, but with a change in scenery. Enter the flatlands on the eastern side of Cotopaxi, crossing an arid plain before arriving at the Hostería Tambopaxi. The journey will take about five hours, and along the way you may see the wild horses that run in the area, as well as some of the better know birds such as the Curiquingue and, with a bit of luck, the giant Andean Condor.



DAY 4: On the Snow Line

Travel overland to the Cotopaxi mountain refuge to begin the hour-long walk to the mountaineers' lodge, and hike from there to the edge of the glacier, a walk of approximately two hours. From here, the northern side of the mountain offers a spectacular panorama. You will be able to identify (with the help of the guide) all the ground you have covered since the first day of the adventure: Quito, its valleys, the distant mountains in the north, and the road from Paschocha, through the Pita canyon, to el Pedregal, Sincholagua, Rumiñahui and the magnificent Limpiopungo valley. The descent, which will take approximately two hours, takes the same route back before the transfer to Quito.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard mountain lodges
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Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English speaking naturalist and climbing guide. - Transportation and support vehicle for luggage throughout the program. - Meals as described on itinerary. - Accommodation at comfortable lodges and haciendas (last night in high altitude mountain refuge) - Treks and visits according to the itinerary
Difficulty Rating	4 (average fitness required)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Park Entrance fees. - Alcoholic and non alcoholic beverages. - Gear of any type (rental available for the climb) - Tips
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

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SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.
- 5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structures to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.