

ADVENTURE

*The Adventure Starts Here,
Where it Ends is up to You*

Trekking

Ecuador offers some of the most accessible and varied treks in South America, from high paramo vegetation to sub-tropical forests. Dependent on experience and time available, we try to tailor our treks to meet our clients' interests. We have included here three of our most popular treks, which vary in terrain and scenery. We are pleased to use our experience to recommend others, as per individual client requirements.

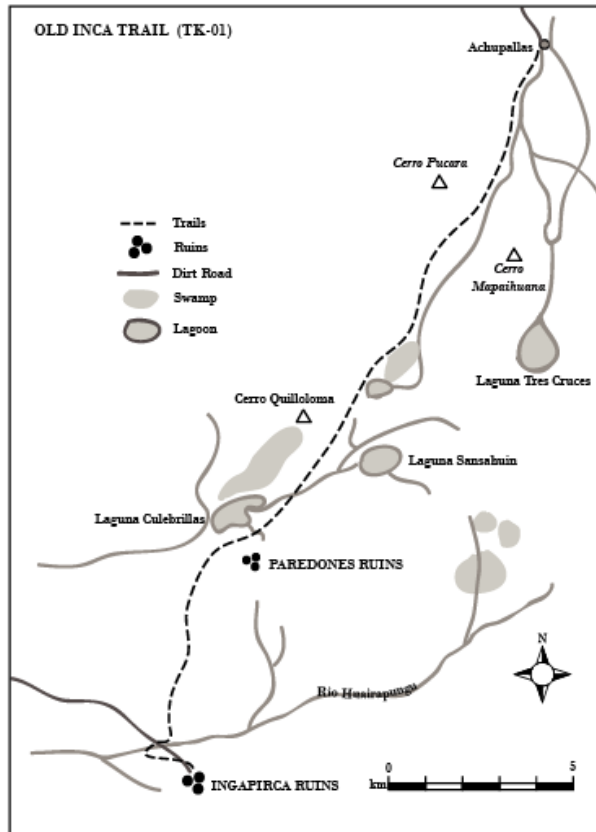
TK-01	<p data-bbox="327 656 805 683">Old Inca Trail - Achupallas to Ingapirca Ruins</p> <p data-bbox="834 656 1300 712"><i>5 days, all meals & accommodation; in two person tents at campsites (airfare Cuenca-Quito not included)</i></p> <p data-bbox="327 734 1300 891">A half-century before the arrival of Columbus in the Caribbean, the Empire of the Incas extended from what is now central Chile Northward into Ecuador. The Inca population centers were connected by an elaborate and well-maintained system of roads, 5.000 kilometers in length; a larger system than that of the Roman Empire. At present, a few remnants of this ancient road network are still visible. Towards the Southern end of Ecuador's central valley lies the third largest city of the country, Cuenca. A charming city located in a fertile Andean valley.</p> <p data-bbox="327 918 1300 1070">This historical treasure is well known for its colonial architecture, ceramics and handicrafts. North of Cuenca is the village of Achupallas, where a 35-Km portion of the old Inca road system begins, leading to Ingapirca. This site is considered the most significant of the Incan ruins in Ecuador (built by Huayna Capac more than five hundred years ago as a fortress or a temple for the worship of the sun). Part of the Ingapirca ruins were probably used as a "tambo" (resting place) for Incan couriers, such as those travelling the Inca road, South from Quito through Achupallas to Paredones and beyond.</p> <p data-bbox="327 1097 1300 1176">Trekking from Achupallas to Ingapirca provides the adventurer with a closer look at a significant native American culture reflected in the ancient ruins, as well as the contemporary lifestyle of the Indian peasants and an opportunity to travel on foot through nearly untouched landscape of great beauty.</p> <p data-bbox="327 1202 1300 1355"><i>Day 1.</i> From Quito, travel by private transportation through the Avenue of the Volcanoes, passing such snow-capped giants as Cotopaxi (5.897m), Illinizas (5.263m) and the tallest peak in Ecuador, Chimborazo (6.310m). On the way to Alausi, from where a small steep mountain road leads to Achupallas (3.400m), we pass through a number of communities where the biggest and most colorful Indian markets in the country are held on specific days each week: Saquisilí (Thursdays), Latacunga (Tuesdays/Saturdays) and Ambato (Mondays). Lunch provided. Dinner prepared at overnight campsite near Achupallas.</p> <p data-bbox="327 1382 1300 1534"><i>Day 2.</i> Awaken in an area which has not changed much in the last five centuries, and begin the trek to Ingapirca. The Inca road follows Rio Cadrul through hilly country on the way to Laguna de las Tres Cruces, passing Cerro Callana Pucara on the West and the pyramidal Cerro Mapaihuana (4.365m) to the East. To reach the lagoon, pass through a natural rock arch and cross the river before climbing to 4.000m. From this point it is only a few kilometers to the lagoon and campsite. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are prepared by our staff.</p>
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(Old Inca Trail.... continued from previous page)

Day 3. Breakfast. Continue Southward through a mountainous pass with fantastic views of Laguna Sanshavin and Cerro Quilloloma. Follow the ancient road to Laguna Culebrillas and the nearby Inca ruins at Paredones, arriving two hours later. Pitch camp and dinner under the stars near the quarry from which the Incas mined Diorite, the igneous stone used in the construction of Ingapirca.

Day 4. Morning devoted to the trek to Ingapirca along a portion of the Inca road, which is up to 7 meters wide. Lunch. Exploration of ruins, visit the on-site museum and question local guides about Incan culture. Private transportation to the charming colonial city of Cuenca for dinner and hotel accommodation.

Day 5. In the morning a city tour of Cuenca. Lunch. Fly to Quito.



TK-02 **Chimborazo - Carihuairazo Area**

*5 days, all meals & accommodation;
(in two person tents at campsites)*

This trek will bring us near to the famous Mt. Chimborazo, the highest peak in Ecuador (6.310m / 20,703ft) and Carihuairazo (5.020m / 16,471ft), its sister volcano. Both snowcapped volcanoes are very well known among mountain climbers, but hiking around in this area for a few days will be an unforgettable experience as well. Our trek will pass between the two mountains among the typical "paramo" vegetation, allowing for great views of these and other volcanic peaks, like Tungurahua in the east and El Altar in the southeast.

Day 1. Private transportation from Quito 150 kilometers South on the Panamerican Highway, also known as the Avenue of the Volcanoes, to our first camp near Mochapata. On the way down visit a typical Indian market.

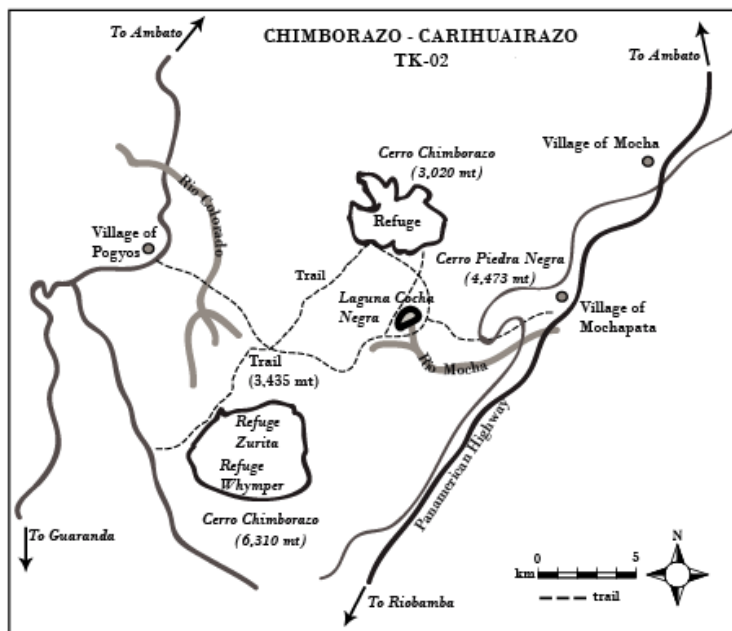
Day 2. Breakfast. AM hike through beautiful highland vegetation. Set base camp around midday. PM hike to Cerro Negro close to the Mt. Carihuairazo glaciers. Pack animals will carry our gear to all campsites.

Day 3. Continue westward, crossing Quebrada (ravine) Aucacan. Set up camp early afternoon. Many interesting side-trips.

(Chimborazo - Carihuirazo... continued from previous page.)

Day 4. Hike to the area around Nido de los Condores (Condor's nest) on the old route to Chimborazo. Possibly see the enormous, ecologically important birds (Vultur gryphus). By midday reach El Arenal. Drive to Chimborazo refuge. Hike. Drive to Baños (1800m), known as the gateway to the jungle. Hotel accommodation in Baños.

Day 5. Visit Baños and its surroundings (subtropical, lush vegetation, waterfalls). Return to Quito.



TK-03 Vilcabamba Valley

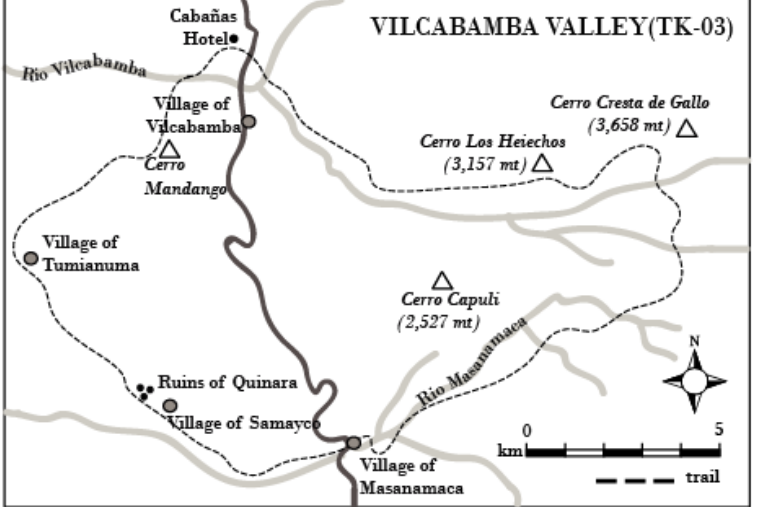
5 days, all meals & accommodation; in two person tents at campsites OR rustic refuge close to Podocarpus National Park (airfare Quito-Loja-Quito not included)

This trekking tour begins in the valley of Vilcabamba (Podocarpus National Park), 50 km from the provincial capital Loja, in Ecuador's most southerly province on the Peruvian border. The valley, at 1500 m, lies in hill country where the peaks generally only rise to 3500 m. In place of snowcapped mountains, the area offers lush vegetation and a mild, warm climate as well as a highly varied animal population. The sights, sounds and aromas in this highland environment equate those of the teeming jungle but without the humidity. Aside from its untouched natural beauty, the Vilcabamba Valley is known in the scientific world for the large number of native people who live well past the age of 100. The climate, the total absence of industry and the clearest, purest water in South America all contribute to this longevity.

Day 1. We take the early morning flight to the city of Loja. Our 2 1/2 hour bus trip to the valley of Vilcabamba will take us through areas growing coffee, tea, sugar cane, papaya and passion fruit, among other crops. Our destination is a charming cabaña resort close to the community of Vilcabamba, where we will receive a warm welcome and brunch. The afternoon will be devoted to local excursions. Dinner and overnight accommodation at the cabaña resort.

Day 2. By the time we have eaten our breakfast, the pack animals will be loaded and ready for the journey. We start on a southeasterly uphill course to reach our goal for today; the Las Palmas reserve located between Cerro Los Helechos (3175m) and Cerro Cresta de Gallo (3658m). Trails explore parts of the midrange cloud forests and lead to the Las Palmas waterfalls. Box-lunch en route. Participants will be grateful for a good rest while our staff prepare dinner.

Day 3. An ancient trail, frequented by animals crossing the Cordillera, leads up to one of Vilcabamba's "sacred lakes" providing the only natural and undestroyed access to the Podocarpus National Park lake & paramo regions from Vilcabamba. PM back to our base camp / refuge at Las Palmas.

<p><i>(Vilcabamba Valley ... continued from previous page)</i></p> <p>Day 4. A hike through the cloud forest, including a visit to some more waterfalls and a tree canopy tour; a zip line into the tree tops, two aerial bridges and a zip back out. All safety equipment is provided! PM back to the village and last night in Vilcabamba.</p> <p>Day 5. Because of the one flight per day schedule to and from Loja, it will be necessary board our bus for Loja airport at about 4 am. We return to Quito in time for breakfast.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">VILCABAMBA VALLEY(TK-03)</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><i>There are also fixed departures for our trekkings. You will find more information in the "Combined Tours for Individual Travelers" section.</i></p>
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Technical Information Applicable To All Trekking Tours

Each trekking party will be in the competent hands of an experienced Group Leader who will be assisted by several local staff to help with the pack animals and campsites. We provide high quality equipment including a complete camp kitchen, 2-person tents and all accessories such as water purification equipment, compasses, altimeters and topographical maps. In most instances we use pack mules to carry our equipment. All of the programs place the trekker in intimate contact with Mother Nature, generally at substantial elevations above sea level. Attire, to be supplied by the trekker, should include clothing appropriate to all weather conditions, from warm sunny afternoons to chilly, damp (or wet) mornings and evenings. A polar jacket with a rain poncho (or Goretex rain gear), a sleeping bag, hat, sunglasses, insect repellent, personal toiletry articles and sunblock are absolutely essential for a comfortable stay and in order to enjoy your holiday to the utmost.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding through the highlands of Ecuador is an unforgettable experience. As you ride on back roads, between the tilled fields, you can observe the indigenous women washing their clothes in the rivers, the ancient agricultural methods used, as well as experience the sights, smells and sounds of life in rural Ecuador.

<p>HS-01</p>	<p>Ecuadorian Highlands</p> <p>We can tailor horseback riding tours ranging from a half-day to several days long, in accordance with your specific interests.</p> <p>Please contact us for more information if you are interested in this unique experience.</p>
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Mountaineering

The Andean mountain range stretches from the North to the South of the country. With over thirty volcanoes and one of the largest concentrations of active volcanoes in the world, Ecuador has something to offer to every would-be climber, from the enthusiastic beginner to the highly experienced.

With proper acclimatization any of these summits can be conquered in a weekend. With the different climatic zones, good climbing is possible all the year round. We would strongly recommend a minimum of two days to acclimatize. Lastly, a note on equipment: we provide crampons, ice axe, harness and rope. You should bring Gortex over jacket and trousers, polar jacket or similar, warm trousers, double skin boots, sleeping bag, a headlamp, gloves, hat, dark sunglasses and rucksack. (All equipment can also be rented at an additional cost)

MO-01	<p>Cotopaxi Volcano (5897m, active)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>2 days, all meals & accommodation. Ice climbing equipment required - suitable for experienced trekkers.</i></p> <p>Cotopaxi is the highest active volcano in the world, the 2nd highest Volcano in Ecuador, located 60km South of Quito.</p> <p><i>Day 1.</i> Depart from Quito. Visit Cotopaxi National Park and Limpiopungo Lagoon. Hike to refuge at (4.800m) . In the afternoon there will be some practical glacier training.</p> <p><i>Day 2.</i> Leave refuge around 1 am, climbing 5-6 hours to crater, crossing several glaciers. Cloud-cover permitting, spectacular views of Quito and nearby volcanoes. Return to refuge (3 hours) then drive back to Quito.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> This tour can be extended by a further day, trekking in the National Park.</p>
MO-02	<p>Chimborazo Volcano (6310m, extinct)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>2 days, all meals & accommodation. Ice climbing equipment required - suitable for experienced trekkers.</i></p> <p>This is Ecuador's highest volcano, now extinct, located between Ambato and Riobamba, 160 km from Quito.</p> <p><i>Day 1.</i> Leave Quito along the Avenue of the Volcanoes, for Ambato and Guaranda; cross a very arid zone to Edward Whymper Refuge at 5.000m.</p> <p><i>Day 2.</i> Depart from refuge at 1 am, climb to summit in 7-9 hours, to see the highlands of Ecuador spread out below us, Cotopaxi and the Ilinizas in the distance. Return to Quito early evening.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> This tour can be extended by one day. Trekking from the Ambato/Riobamba road, walk up through an Andean village, spend the first night camping at 4.000m. The following day climb up to the refuge.</p> <p>Note: The climbing tours can be operated on private or sharing basis. Please contact us for more details.</p>

White Water Rafting

Many of Ecuador's rivers can be run year round, other more technical ones are only navigable during certain seasons. The Toachi and Blanco rivers are a fantastic introduction to the rivers in Ecuador. Flowing off the coastal side of the Andes, these rivers have some of the longest navigable sections of white water in the country.

Combine this with the sights and sounds of the forest environment we pass through and you are guaranteed a time to remember.

RA-01	<p>Toachi & Blanco Rivers <i>1 day, box-lunch included</i></p> <p>Leave Quito very early in the morning, drive west down through beautiful cloud forest to the shores of the river. Trip takes 2-3 hours depending on which section of the river we are going to run - water levels change throughout the year so we choose the best section at the time of your trip with safety and enjoyment as our priorities. Picnic lunch at river bank. Back in Quito at approx. 7 pm.</p>
RA-02	<p>Toachi & Blanco Rivers <i>2 days, all meals & accommodation.</i></p> <p><i>Day 1.</i> Same as RA-01 <i>Day 2.</i> More white water action, amidst splendid surroundings. Return to Quito in late afternoon.</p> <p>Note: These programs can be operated on private or sharing basis. Please contact us for more information.</p>
RA-03	<p>The Headwaters Run <i>2 days, all meals & accommodation.</i></p> <p>The Quijos river is set to become Ecuador's premier white water trip with mile after mile of class IV-IV+ rapids and spectacular jungle scenery. Expect to run more white water in a day than you'd do in a week elsewhere. This trip is for experienced rafters that are confident swimmers.</p> <p><i>Day 1.</i> Depart from Quito, 6h30 am. Drive to Baeza. On arrival you'll be provided with wet-suits, life jackets and helmets. After a short drive to the put-in the Trip Leader will give a thorough safety briefing and conduct a swim test. Then you'll split into groups for an intensive in-boat paddle practice with your guide. Once we set off we're straight into the action but with some easier rapids to warm up. Along the way we'll stop for a riverside picnic lunch. In the afternoon we'll raft through the first canyons of the Quijos running big, technical rapids. At the end of the day we pull the boats into shore and take a short ten-minute walk up to the lodge where we have cold beer, hot showers and a good meal waiting for us.</p> <p><i>Day 2.</i> After a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast we'll pull on our wet-suits again and head back to the river for a lot more white water action. Today you should be prepared for one of the most exciting days of your life. And to top it off you'll be doing it all in one of the most beautiful parts of Ecuador. This river is set to become a legend. From the take-out we'll head back to Quito stopping at Papallacta Hot Springs for a well-earned soak in the volcanically heated mineral waters. Arrive approx. 8pm or spend a night at Papallacta (night at Papallacta is not included).</p> <p>River Grading: IV ~ IV+ October to February. (Minimum 4 pax) <i>Note: We also tailor 3 to 8 day rafting tours upon request.</i></p>