

# avenue of the volcanoes, q&a



## how big is the group?

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 12 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 25 people due to the wilderness environment in which the expedition is taking place.

## who do we fly with?

You will be getting a connecting flight from Dublin to London, from London you will be flying with LAN airlines to Quito via Madrid. Your flight tickets will be issued upon departure at the airport. If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm with the Charity Challenge office before paying otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact [flights@charitychallenge.com](mailto:flights@charitychallenge.com) for further assistance).

## what's the luggage allowance?

As no formal clothes are needed, luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum - details on what to pack are provided in your Kit List. Your rucksack (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed 15kgs in weight. Each day when you begin to trek, your personal kit will be transported to the next camp and will be waiting for you on arrival. On your outward journey, please wear your trekking gear, hiking boots, and carry a spare change of clothing in your hand luggage.

## do we need special equipment for climbing cotopaxi?

The optional climb of Mount Cotopaxi entails walking on the glaciers of the volcano. You will therefore need to hire a pair of plastic boots with crampons, an ice axe, harness and karabiner. This will cost approx. USD\$20 for the two days that it is required, and you will be given professional instruction on how to use the equipment, as well as half a day's practice before the climb. If you have feet smaller than size 36, or larger than 45, please advise us ASAP as boots may be difficult to hire. You can also hire 100% UV protection eye goggles, gaiters, mittens, balaclavas and other useful items that might otherwise prove expensive to buy.

## what will the accommodation be like?

In Quito, the hotel will be a two to three star family run hotel, located near to the centre of town. Rooms are usually en-suite. During the trek you will camp in two person dome tents (sharing with someone of the same sex). Please let Charity Challenge know if you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with.

Foam sleeping mats are provided, do take your own if you require extra comfort. You should take a good four-season sleeping bag. A four season with liner is ideal.

## what are the toilet/washing facilities like?

Hotels provide facilities, as you would expect in the UK. In camp, toilets will be simple *long drop* toilets with bowls of water for washing. The facilities will be fairly spartan.

Toilet paper is provided (but it is also advisable to bring some of your own with anti-bacterial hand wash).

## will my valuables be safe?

We will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions. The general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes

jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport & money can be left in a safe in the hotel in Quito and collected on your departure. Your passport should be kept in a plastic bag to protect it from damp or water damage.

## what is the food and drink like?

In Quito the food is quite varied. During the trek the food will be cooked on camp cookers and will be fairly simple. We cater for vegetarians; but please remember that Ecuador has a strong meat-eating culture and provision of vegetarian dishes is not as common or comprehensive as in the UK. There will be plenty of soup to keep fluid intake high. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any dietary requirements or allergies.

## who will be leading the group?

We employ a number of first aid qualified expedition leaders, all of whom speak English. They will ultimately be responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. All Ecuadorian guides are qualified members of the ASEGUIM (Mountain Guides Association).

The itinerary may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to maintain the advertised itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say & will act in the groups best interest.

## what is a typical day?

During the trekking days you will rise early and pack up before breakfast, then trek carrying only daypacks for 6-8 hours. There will be a picnic lunch en route and plenty of time to stop and view the remarkable scenery. The trek area is remote and rare flora and fauna will be seen. The evenings are spent in beautifully located, basic camps, where the food and facilities are fairly simple.

## how fit do I need to be?

This challenge is graded as Extreme, and is tougher than the Everest Base Camp or Kilimanjaro treks and so training and a high level of fitness is required to complete the challenge! Don't forget that the climate and the altitudes are different from the UK and that you will be exercising for 6-8 hours each day for over a week. Endurance training should be your primary focus. Walking up hills and stair climbing are both ways to condition your lower body. Begin slowly, without the weight of a pack, eventually adding weight as you increase your training pace. Take some long hikes (5-6 hours) with a weighted pack, up and down hills or on small mountains (weight your pack with water containers and pour out the water before your descent to minimize knee stress). Supplement this activity with running, cycling, or swimming, for additional aerobic conditioning. Also see Fitness Training notes.

## what happens if I fall ill, can't keep up or there is an emergency?

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking ability, which is catered for. There will always be a staff member at the back of the group to ensure you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. If someone is injured and unable to walk, then we

can transport them from one location to the next by horse. Back up support will never be far away and can be called in, in the event of an emergency. Contact will be maintained between guides and the support team where possible.

### **what is included in the cost of the expedition?**

The following items are included in the cost of the expedition: International flights to and from Ecuador, all internal transfers, entry into National Parks, all meals (inc. drinking water) unless otherwise stated in the itinerary, all accommodation (whether in tents, hotels, or other), group first aid supplies, an English speaking expedition leader and full local support team (drivers, cooks, porters, etc), relevant back-up facilities, US\$20 donation to a local community project, a Charity Challenge T-Shirt, and discount from Nomad Travellers Stores for personal equipment. We also make a contribution through Climate Care to offset the equivalent CO2 emissions of your international flight.

### **what is not included in the cost of the expedition?**

The following items are not included in your expedition and will be at your own expense - tips for the local support team, hire of specialist equipment, activities not mentioned in the itinerary, personal spending money, departure tax (US\$25) and travel to and from UK airports.

For the Cotopaxi summit climb the ratio is 3 people to one mountain guide. Some group members request their own mountain guide for the summit climb for an additional cost of \$200. When you are roped up to the guide with other clients, if one person has to go down you all have to go down as you are roped together. So even if you are feeling fit and strong, you might not have the chance to reach the summit. Please inform Charity Challenge at least a month prior to your trip if you would like your own guide.

### **what shall I do about spending money?**

You will not need large amounts of money during this trip and other than at the start and end of the trip, you will be in rural areas away from any foreign exchanges or banks. You will only need money for tips, hiring specialist equipment, additional food & drink, gifts & souvenirs, departure tax and any other additional activity.

### **how much would you recommend for tips?**

Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. US\$8-US\$10 per person per day (approx \$60-\$70) and this should be given to the expedition leader at the end of the expedition who will distribute it evenly amongst the support team.

### **should I take gifts and clothes for the locals?**

We advise against giving small gifts to children as it can encourage begging. However, if you have any small items or clothing that you would like to donate, your expedition leader will collect it from you at the end of the expedition and make sure that it is distributed where it is needed most.

### **what is the weather likely to be like?**

You can expect Andean mountain weather typical for the season of your tour. Daytime weather can change from hot and clear with temperatures around 25 degrees centigrade to cold and damp with temperatures closer to zero. Night times, especially when high on Cotopaxi, will be very cold with temperatures well below zero. You must be prepared for the worst, as mountain weather conditions are extremely unpredictable. Also see Ecuador Fact File.

### **what do you do to protect the environment?**

We are keeping to a small group so that we limit the impact we have on the surrounding environment. We will ensure that all biodegradable rubbish is buried and that all other rubbish is carried out of the area and disposed off responsibly. Finally we follow the local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect. We will also be donating \$20US per participant towards a local community project (educational, health or environmental) to enhance local living conditions, which you will be informed about after your expedition.

### **english**

Hello  
Goodbye  
Good morning  
Good afternoon/evening  
Good night  
Please  
Thank you  
How are you?  
You're welcome  
Excuse me  
I'm sorry!  
I understand  
I don't understand  
Yes  
No  
How much?  
When?  
Where is...?  
Toilet  
What is the time?  
Do you speak English?  
I don't speak Spanish  
Zero  
One  
Two  
Three  
Four  
Five  
Six  
Seven  
Eight  
Nine  
Ten

### **spanish**

Hola  
Adios/Ciao  
Buenos dias  
Buenos tardes  
Buenos noches  
Por favor  
Gracias  
Como esta?  
De nada  
Disculpe  
Disculpe/Lo siento  
Entiendo  
No entiendo  
Si  
No  
Cuanto?  
Cuando?  
Donde esta/queda...?  
Bano  
Que horas son?/Que hora es?  
Habla ingles?  
No hablo Espanol  
Cero  
Uno  
Dos  
Tres  
Cuatro  
Cinco  
Seis  
Siete  
Ocho  
Nueve  
Diez

NB: The information provided above was correct at the time of going to print.