

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE



TRIP NOTES

**BELIEVE
ACHIEVE
INSPIRE**

**COTOPAXI SUMMIT - AVENUE OF
THE VOLCANOES
ECUADOR**

Fri 05 Feb - Tue 16 Feb 2021





In aid of your choice of charity

05 Feb - 16 Feb 2021

12 DAYS | ECUADOR | EXTREME

This beautiful trek is not for the faint-hearted as it culminates in a magical midnight glacier climb. You will feel exhausted but elated as you rise with the sun, rewarded with priceless views over the Andes once you conquer Cotopaxi. The trek is at very high altitude, which means acclimatisation is vital. The trip will begin in Ecuador's capital Quito, giving the group time to feel comfortable with their surroundings before venturing off on the challenge of a lifetime. This action-packed itinerary meanders through the countryside and up volcanoes. Above all, however, your ultimate destination is the majestic Cotopaxi.

- Walk through the clouds as you conquer Cotopaxi
- Summit as the sun rises over Ecuador
- Gaze for miles over the magical Andes
- Meander through the landscape up and around volcanoes
- Celebrate your achievements in the cultural capital Quito

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 Fri 05 Feb

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International departure from London

It's finally time for your long-awaited departure to Ecuador. Wave goodbye to friends and family at the airport, before you board the flight and embark upon your challenge!

DAY 2 Sat 06 Feb

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Arrival in Quito and acclimatisation

Today you will arrive in Quito (2,800 metres above sea level) and be transferred to your hotel. You will then have the remainder of the day to rest and acclimatise to the altitude. Dinner and overnight in local hotel.

DAY 3 Sun 07 Feb

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Quito city tour and visit to the Equator

Today is spent touring Quito in order to acclimatise. You will be transported up El Panecillo to your first stop, La Virgen De Quito, from where there is a panoramic view of the city and spectacular views of the volcanoes. You then head to Mitad del Mundo, a monument on the equator dividing the northern and southern hemispheres. Later, at your hotel, the guide will run through a final check list before dinner.

DAY 4 Mon 08 Feb

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Summit Pasochoa volcano (4,199m)

Today you will drive for one hour, towards our first summit, volcano Pasochoa (4199m). The 6-7 hour trek meanders through verdant countryside, before continuing to the volcano's narrow ridge. It's a steep climb, but team spirit will push you through to the summit. You will drive on to a lodge for dinner and overnight.

DAY 5 Tue 09 Feb

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El Corazon hike (4,790m)

After breakfast, tackle the strenuous and rewarding climb that is El Corazon (4790m), it is ideal for acclimatisation. You will enjoy a picnic lunch and return to your previous lodge dinner and overnight.

DAY 6 Wed 10 Feb

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Los Illinizas Camping Site (3,950m)

Today is an early start, take in the scenery as you drive along the Avenue of Volcanoes to reach Los Illinizas arriving at El Chaupi, the town closest to the mountain. The journey continues on to your campsite for dinner and overnight (3,950 m).

DAY 7 Thu 11 Feb

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Illiniza Norte (5,126m) and Cotopaxi National Park

This morning, weather permitting, take in your incredible surroundings and view Cotopaxi, Pasochoa and Ruminahui from the camp. Today's walk is along a ridge of Illiniza Norte up to a height of 5100m. You will continue to walk to the mountain's end, then summit the peak via a rocky gully to take in the views. Following the climb, rest up on the drive to Cotopaxi National Park and your overnight lodge.

DAY 8 Fri 12 Feb

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Rest day – Cotopaxi National Park (3,750m)

Enjoy a well-deserved slower pace today and take part in a gentle hike to Purcara, a pre-Incan archaeological site, and explore el Manantial. After lunch you have the afternoon to relax and gather your strength for the challenge in the days ahead. Dinner and overnight in lodge.

DAY 9 Sat 13 Feb

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Cotopaxi to Jose Ribas Refugio (4,800m)

After a 45-minute drive to the refuge parking area at Cotopaxi 4550m, you will begin your ascent with 1 hour of tough walking to the refuge situated at 4800m. Now is the time to test out your ice hiking abilities and enjoy an early dinner before bed at the the refuge.

DAY 10 Sun 14 Feb

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Summit Cotopaxi (5,897m)

The gruelling 8 hours of glacier climbing to the Cotopaxi summit begins at midnight. Using crampons and ice axes, the peak of the challenge is as tough as it sounds but will offer immensely rewarding views when conquered. Feeling on top of the world, you'll descend back to the refuge for a warm meal. From the parking area, you will return by vehicle to Quito for a hot shower, dinner and to celebrate your accomplishment.

NB: To climb Cotopaxi you will need to hire crampons and ice axes from the local supplier, speak to your Operations Manager 8 weeks pre-departure to organise. They will then be brought out to you for the summit and glacier practice by the climb support team.

DAY 11 Mon 15 Feb

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Quito to London

There will be free time on this final day in Ecuador to explore Quito and pick up some last-minute souvenirs. The flight home is the perfect opportunity to reflect on all you've achieved, before sharing your fantastic journey with

friends and family.

DAY 12 Tue 16 Feb

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Arrive home

You arrive back as victors on home soil. From here it's a heartfelt goodbye to your new friends and trekking partners.

NB

The volcanoes in Ecuador are volatile and as such the itinerary may change for reasons of volcanic activity, as well as the strength of the group. The decision of your leader is final.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.

SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £595.00 when you book
Then a balance of £2935.00 (10 weeks before your challenge)
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £595.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £5990.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

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Registration fee of £595.00 when you book
Then £595.00 towards challenge costs (10 weeks before your challenge)
Raise a minimum of £4775.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- 15% off Cotswold Outdoor, Cycle Surgery, Snow and Rock, and Runners Need
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel insurance, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Sponsorship forms
- Warm up exercise routines
- Fitness training notes
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Public liability insurance
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Fundraising advice

On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- UK-based 24-hour emergency support line
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- An English speaking first aid trained challenge leader and full local support team
- Equipment as per the challenge activity
- Internal transfers (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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On your challenge

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- Visa (if required)
- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines

You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 12 weeks before departure (by 13/11/2020), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 16/03/2021). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

Prices include all known air taxes

We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.

Typical group size

The typical group size is 13 - 20 participants

Small group supplement

The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 13 participants. We can run this trip with 8-12 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £95. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.

Optional extras

Business class upgrades*
Single room supplements*
Extensions at end of trip*
Travel insurance
(*subject to availability)

Travel insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found at <http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/charitychallenge>.

Level of Difficulty

The Avenue of the Volcanoes Challenge is graded as extreme. This challenge is tougher than Everest Basecamp and Kilimanjaro, and anyone undertaking this challenge should have experience with altitude trekking in extreme climates. Training and high levels of fitness and endurance are required.

During the Avenue of the Volcanoes challenge, you will be:

- Trekking between 6-8 hours a day
- Hiking every day at altitudes above 4000 meters
- Reaching a maximum altitude of 5897 metres above sea level.
- Beginning your final summit attempt at approximately midnight and trekking for up to 10 hours.
- Using crampons and ice axes to reach the summit, over some inclines of 30-40 degrees.

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 on route and plenty of time to stop and view the remarkable scenery. The trekking area is remote and home to a wide array of rare flora and fauna. The evenings are spent in basic, though beautifully located, camps and lodges where the food and facilities are simple. On the summit night, you will rise at around midnight and arrive at the summit between 7 and 8am.

Safety Advice for the Avenue of the Volcanoes

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. Challenge Safe formalises our ethos when it comes to safety and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is paramount!

In terms of your Avenue of the Volcanoes Challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- You will be hiking at high altitude (above 4000m)
- You will be sleeping at altitudes between 3000m and 4800m
- You will be sleeping at local refuges, lodges and camps during the trek
- It will be very cold especially at nights, reaching down to below zero degrees
- You will be roped up to a guide on a 2:1 ratio to summit Cotopaxi and as such if your trekking partner has to turn around for any reason (usually altitude sickness), you will also have to return with them. You can avoid this by paying a supplement to hire your own guide if you would like

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local

environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our [Responsible Tourism](#) pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Flights

You will be flying from London Heathrow to Quito. The total flying time is approximately 18 hours. Your flight tickets will be e-mailed to you before departure. If you choose to book your own flights please confirm with the Charity Challenge office first, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance). For more general flights questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#).

Visa

You must hold a full ten-year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your challenge. No visa is necessary for British Citizens for stays of up to 90 days. For citizens of other countries please check travel advice on the Ecuadorian embassy's website.

Insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenges is our main concern which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy that will cover you for the adventurous nature of your challenge. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found by clicking [here](#).

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs](#) page.

Vaccinations & Medication

Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro website:

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>

Charity Challenge team are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting so it

may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Medication

- carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled container, as issued by the pharmacist, in hand luggage
- consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage
- a letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required
- carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications
- take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses

N.B. Some medications are banned abroad so please check you can find further information at

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad>

Climate & Terrain

Climate

You can expect Andean mountain weather throughout your challenge. 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 Cayambe, will be very cold, with temperatures well below zero. You must be prepared for the worst, as mountain weather conditions are extremely unpredictable.

Terrain

The route is mountainous, steep and uneven on all of the volcanoes. During your final summit attempt on Cayambe you will be using crampons and ice axes, roped up 2:1 with another participant and a guide. You will be given a day of technical training to teach you some of the skills required for glacier trekking, however you should be mentally prepared for the ascent as the gradients may reach up to 40 degrees.

Training

Endurance training should be your primary focus. Begin slowly, without the weight of a pack, eventually adding weight as you increase your training pace. Take long hikes (7-8hours) with a weighted pack, up and down hills or 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, and/or swimming, for additional aerobic conditioning. This challenge is regularly undertaken by people who have previously summited Kilimanjaro, who are surprised by the huge step up in terms of the level of mental and physical strength needed. You can also look to join one of our [training weekends](#).

Training Weekends

We offer superb training weekends across various locations in the UK, from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon. These training weekends not only help you become physically prepared for the challenge, but our experienced instructors and leaders will talk you through your clothing and equipment, camp craft, health and wellbeing, trekking skills (walking on different terrain/at altitude/at night/using walking poles), teamwork on expedition and many more themes designed to make you get the most out of your challenge. The weekends are great ways for you to get out into the mountains of the UK, while also meeting other Charity Challengers and sharing your experiences. To read more about our training weekends, please [click here](#).

Luggage Allowance & Valuables

The luggage allowance will depend on the airline we are using for your challenge, but in general it will be one piece of checked baggage at around 23kg. However, we suggest that for our Avenue of the Volcanoes you should only need around 15kg-17kg. If you don't need it, don't bring it, is a good rule. For any valuables, safe deposit boxes are usually provided in Quito for guests' use in the hotels, but will not be available in campsites. Use a padlock on your luggage when in transit to reduce any risks. Carry your passport with you and make sure you have a photocopy of your documents (travel insurance etc.) in case they get lost or damaged.

Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately 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) and you will use these guides on Illiniza and Cayambe ascents.

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

Group Size

Each group is intended to be 13 people minimum in order to operate and a maximum of approx. 20 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 8 to 12 people by charging a small group supplement of £95 per person which will be added to your final balance invoice (self-funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

Clothing & Equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are a high quality gore-tex waterproof jacket and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts.

The climb of 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, helmet and karabiner. This will cost approx. £70 for the days 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.

A full kit list for this challenge can be found [here](#), and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Accommodation & Toilets

Accommodation

In Quito, the hotel will be a two to three-star hotel, located near to the centre of town. Rooms are usually ensuite. During the trek we will be staying in mountain refuges and lodges with one night camping in two person dome tents (sharing with someone of the same sex). If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please ensure you submit this information at the time of booking or email challenges@charitychallenge.com. Foam sleeping mats are provided but do take your own if you require extra comfort. You should take a good four-season sleeping bag for the more basic refuges and camping. A four season with liner is ideal.

Toilets

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

Food & Drink

The food in Quito is varied. During the trek the food will be cooked on camp cookers and will be 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 as 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.

Money

Currency: The Ecuadorian currency is the US Dollar. They do not accept US \$100 bills, and lower denominations are advised. For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com.

Credit Cards: Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted in Quito, but will not be accepted in the rural challenge areas. Check with your bank regarding any charges applicable.

ATMs: ATM's are widely available in Quito, and you should ensure that you have enough cash with you for your trek.

How much to bring: All accommodation and meals are included within the price of the trip, as well as water during the days of your trek. You will not need to carry a lot of money with you during the challenge, and other than at the

start and end of the challenge, 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 additional activities outside of our itinerary.

Tipping: Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff are paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture, and Ecuadorian guides will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. We recommend approx. US\$12 - \$15 per person per day (approx. \$100 - \$120) and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it evenly amongst the support team.

Phone & WiFi

You will have mobile phone and internet signal during your stay in Quito. After that, you will have extremely limited mobile phone or internet reception.

Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking abilities. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. Back up support will never be far away and can be called in should there be an emergency. Contact will be maintained between guides and the support team where possible.

Cotopaxi Ascent

You will be roped up to a guide on a 2:1 ratio to summit Cotopaxi and as such if your trekking partner has to turn around for any reason (usually altitude sickness), you will also have to return with them. Our acclimatisation profile is designed to ensure maximum success, but it is likely that 1 or 2 members of the team will succumb to altitude related illnesses during the summit attempt. If you would like to hire your own guide for the summit this is available at an extra charge of around £225, please let Charity Challenge know at no later than 2 months prior to departure, and we will advise you of any additional supplement.



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The best experience I have had! Tougher than Kilimanjaro, but more rewarding as well. The different experiences of the climbs undertaken will test your mental strength as well as your physical, but once you're on top, there's no other feeling like it.

Matt Kay

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The challenge was extreme and needed a lot of mental as well as physical effort. To reach the summits of all four volcanoes was incredible with each one being more emotional than the last.

Bob Chadwick

“

This was the toughest thing I have ever done, both physically and mentally. I have done Everest Base Camp, Half Marathon's, 10 mile runs and 10Ks but this is way above those in terms of the extent to which you will test yourself. You forget the pain when you see the top though. Well worth it!

Ewan Ross

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Any more questions?

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