



**RIDE ANDES ECUADOR  
VOLCANOES & VISTAS RIDE  
Year Round**

*Ecuador - picture postcard views around every corner*





RIDE ANDES

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## Introduction

A spectacular horseback riding experience through the incredibly diverse landscapes of the Ecuadorian Andes. Imagine riding through lush valleys awash with citrus and passionfruit, alongside a bubbling stream, picking coffee beans in the cloud forest then – a few days later – cantering across arid plains just below the snowline. Contrasting landscapes and inconceivably wide-ranging terrain and topography are accompanied by a fascinating variety of birdlife, from the tiniest hummingbird to the mammoth Andean Condor.

## Testimonial

'This trip has been an absolute dream. It has been everything I'd hoped for and more. I've learned so much on this adventure about horses, geology, Latin America etc.. I am leaving this trip feeling relaxed, inspired and with a new perspective on the value of community. I hope to come back as soon as possible... Thank you for the adventure, the wonder and the kindness.' Lucy, USA.

## Volcanoes and Vistas Ride

An exceptional range of charming and unique accommodation: working Haciendas, individual cottages, cloud forest lodges, mountain inns and remote ranches.

## What You Need To Know?

- 11 day itinerary, in very distinct Andean regions: from cloud forest to meadow-filled valleys to arid high Andean plains
- Pace varied, with long canters in the Cotopaxi National Park area
- Season: All Year (March to May - main rainy season, modified itinerary)
- Fixed date departures/Private groups (tour can be adapted)
- Maximum 8 guests on fixed departures
- Twin/double rooms with private bathrooms except days 4, 5 (shared rooms, male & female bathroom & day 6 (twin/double room, 2 bathrooms for the group)
- Single riders very welcome (single rooms available except days 4 & 5)
- Flexible start day for private groups

## **Volcanoes & Vistas Itinerary**

### **Overview:**

#### **DAY 1: Across the Equator Line to Cayambe Volcano**

Overnight at small working hacienda (ranch)

*PL, D approx. 4 hours horse riding*

#### **DAY 2: The Tranquil Pastoral Zuleta Valley**

2nd Overnight at the small working hacienda (ranch)

*AB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours horse riding)*

#### **DAY 3: Pre-Inca Earthworks & Sacred Imbabura Volcano**

Dinner & Overnight at charming adobe and wood cottages

*BB, PL, D approx. 6 hours horse riding*

#### **DAY 4: Into the Wild Country**

Dinner & Overnight at a 3 bedroom 'Hosteria'.

*AB, PL, D, (approx. 7-8 hours horse riding, 1 ¼ hour transfer)*

#### **DAY 5: Piñan Lake & Paramo Grasslands**

Dinner & 2nd Overnight at a 3 bedroom 'Hosteria'.

*AB, PL, D approx. 4-5 hours horse riding*

#### **DAY 6: Cloud Forest and Roasting Coffee**

Dinner and Overnight at Cloud Forest Lodge

*AB, PL, D approx. 7 horse riding*

#### **DAY 7: A Complete Change Of Scenery, 'Tropical To Temperate'**

Dinner & Overnight at Mountain Inn

*AB, L, D approx. 3-4 hours horse riding, 2 + 3 hours transfer*

#### **DAY 8: Cotopaxi National Park**

Dinner & Overnight at a modern Hacienda

*AB, PL, D approx. 5-6 hours riding*

#### **DAY 9: Wild Horses and Open Plains**

Dinner & 2nd Overnight at modern Hacienda

*AB, PL, D approx. 6 hours riding*

#### **DAY 10: Stunning Secret Valley, on top of the world**

Overnight in Quito/near Quito Airport

*AB, PL approx. 7 hours riding*

#### **Day 11: Breakfast and Farewell**

*AB*

### **End of services**



### **Arriving/Departing/Extensions:**

Start & end point: Quito/Quito Airport. We can arrange a host of 'extensions' for you, for example Galapagos Islands, Amazon Rain Forest, Cloud Forest, Cuenca, Natural Thermal Springs – for relaxing retreats or more active adventures, many of which involve very little onward travelling. Please contact us.

[www.rideandes.com](http://www.rideandes.com)





### **Detailed Itinerary:**

#### **DAY 1: Across The Equator Line To Cayambe Volcano**

After an early breakfast, we depart across the equator line for the Cayambe Valley where we meet the horses. Once guests are comfortable with their mounts, we ride onto the Pesillo plains below the magnificent Cayambe Volcano, then descend through forests into another valley. Encircled by meadows, we cross the valley to arrive at a working Hacienda (ranch), usually having to wait on the dairy cows ambling back to their fields before being able to ride into the courtyard.

*Overnight at small working Hacienda (ranch)  
PL, D (approx. 4 hours horse riding)*

#### **DAY 2: The Tranquil Pastoral Zuleta Valley**

Today's ride is varied in pace and terrain as we tour another part of the valley. Along dirt tracks, passing 16th century Haciendas first established by the Mercedian and Jesuit religious orders, we canter along agave-lined avenues and climb up narrow tracks with outstanding views out across this valley carved out at the end of the Ice Age. As always, the 'chagras' that work alongside the guide are there to look after guests' horses as we stop and spread out a colourful tablecloth beneath the branches that is soon filled with all manner of local delicacies. Returning to the Hacienda via a different route, guests can take a tour of farm with the owners or wander into the nearby village to view the embroidery that has made this valley famous.

*2nd Overnight at the small working Hacienda (ranch)  
AB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours horse riding)*





### **DAY 3: Pre-Inca Earthworks & Sacred Imbabura Volcano**

Both the dairy herd and Andalusian horses are just outside the six guest rooms – what a sight upon opening the curtains! Time to visit the collection of Inca and pre-Inca pottery excavated on site before we depart for a very different overnight stay. Riding out the valley to the north, passing Adobe houses and also pondering the pre-Inca earthworks in evidence, guests are treated to yet more dramatic views, the skies often adorned by an Andean Condor. We reach the Imbabura Volcano foothills, arriving at charming cottages – our home for the night. This is an example of a beautifully managed local Indigenous project and, for those that wish, there is the opportunity to learn about the local culture from our hosts – shamans, the Andean calendar, fiestas and also the cuisine.

*Dinner & Overnight at charming Adobe and wood cottages  
BB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours horse riding)*





#### **DAY 4: Into The Wild Country**

We leave our trusty steeds for a few days and head out by vehicle to meet fresh horses at a trail head that will lead us into a very remote hamlet midst acres and acres of rolling hills and wild grasslands. Few venture across the 'paramo' (high Andean vegetation, above the cultivated areas) to this outpost little changed over the centuries but the journey is well-rewarded – not a dwelling in sight for miles around, a tranquility seldom found in this century and an unpolluted night sky filled with stars.

*Dinner & Overnight at a 3 bedroom 'Hosteria'.  
AB, PL, D (approx. 7-8 hours horse riding, 1 ¼ hour transfer)*

#### **DAY 5: Piñan Lake & Paramo Grasslands**

Setting out through a sea of 'paramo' grasses, we ride to a hidden lake. We pass native trees, branches laden with bromelia and orchids, as we follow narrow tracks to the water's edge. The terrain is quite tough but our sure-footed local Criollo horses are ideally suited to this ground and have no problem. After a walk on the lakeshore, we return to our Hosteria for a late lunch and a relaxing afternoon. Guests can cross the little bridge to walk around the hamlet – each group of family huts is surrounded by a traditional stick fence. At the tiny school, a game of football is often underway and it is not long before we are joining in.

*Dinner & 2nd Overnight at a 3 bedroom 'Hosteria'.  
AB, PL, D (approx. 4-5 hours horse riding)*



### **DAY 6: Cloud Forest and Roasting Coffee**

Leaving the mountain settlement behind us we ride westwards down towards to the coast, into the cloud forest. These ancient routes were chronicled in the early 1600s by European explorers as used by the coastal people coming to the highlands to trade and barter. We cross highlands with views out over the hills far into the distance. As soon as we start our descent into the cloud forest the vegetation changes noticeably, and we ride past stands of bamboo and start to see more tropical plants such as passionfruit and citrus. Leaving the horses to return to the highlands, we are driven to the lodge with a lush, jungle-like garden and coffee trees. With the cicadas, crickets, frogs and birds expect a noisy evening as we roast our own coffee ready for breakfast.

*Dinner and Overnight at Cloud Forest Lodge  
AB, PL, D (approx. 7 hours horse riding)*

### **DAY 7: A Complete Change Of Scenery, 'Tropical To Temperate'**

Although covering a relatively small size, the Ecuador Cloud Forests are considered the single richest biodiversity hotspot on the planet, containing approximately 15 -17% of the world's plant species and nearly 20% of its bird diversity. The dawn chorus and the frequent flashes of brightly-coloured feathers in the undergrowth testify to that fact. After breakfast and time for a quick walk, perhaps harvesting some coffee beans, we head off to the famous Otavalo market – a shopping and a photography opportunity – and then on to meet the horses just south of Quito, close to Cotopaxi National Park. We ride to a delightful inn surrounded by unbelievable mountain scenery for a delicious, home-cooked dinner and overnight.

*Dinner & Overnight at Mountain Inn  
AB, L, D, (approx. 3-4 hours horse riding, 2 + 3 hours transfer)*







### **DAY 8: Cotopaxi National Park**

We ford a river and traverse the remains of a lahar – one of the many classic volcanic features that we will see along with glacial features over the next few days. Huge boulders thrown out during an eruption litter the area around Cotopaxi Volcano. Reaching the pasturelands of a private hacienda – carefully avoiding the fighting bulls that have made this ranch famous – there is a chance to speed up as we head towards the national park. Keeping a look out for the Andean condors often soaring overhead, we once again cross the river and arrive at a Hacienda almost equidistant between four major Andean peaks, the snow-capped Cotopaxi filling most of the building's big picture windows.

*Dinner & Overnight at a modern Hacienda  
AB, PL, D (approx. 5-6 hours riding)*

### **DAY 9: Wild Horses and Open Plains**

A faster ride today as we enjoy long canters across the plains of Cotopaxi National Park; there are all too few open spaces left with ideal ground to enjoy such exhilarating riding, but these grasslands are certainly one of them. Usually the wild horses join in, an unforgettable experience as these herds gallop across the pastures alongside us, long manes and tails flowing. The lunar-landscape is fascinating as we approach the magnificent Cotopaxi Volcano along an old Inca route – the main 'highway' between Cusco-Quito. On another Inca road heading down to the Amazon, we pass a reconstructed Inca Fort. Following a picnic lunch, another varied menu, we turn for home, the setting sun lighting up the glacier.

*Dinner & 2nd Overnight at a modern Hacienda  
AB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours riding)*



## **DAY 10: Stunning Secret Valley, On Top Of The World**

On our last day of riding, we ride up into the Rumiñahui foothills, another great place to spot condors, deer and foxes, and affording ever more fantastic views. We start with some invigorating canters across the flatlands close to Cotopaxi Volcano, then the pace steadies as we climb above 4,000 metres (13,123 feet) through the high 'paramo' grasslands to ride into a valley at the base of Rumiñahui peak. This route remains a favourite among guests and a magical way to round off the tour.

The highest canter in the world is an exhilarating experience, forming an indelible memory as we cross the undulating hills following narrow tracks mapped out by the 'chagras' and known by few.

*Overnight in Quito/near Quito Airport  
AB, PL (approx. 7 hours riding)*

## **Day 11: Breakfast and Farewell**

After breakfast guests depart or continue on other adventures in Ecuador (do let us know if we can help).

*AB*

***End of services***





**2021/2022 Prices from:**

Per person in US Dollars based on double/twin room share

Length	double/twin per peson 4 person group	Single Supplement	Rider Weight supplement (85- 95 kg. 185-210lbs)
(11D/10N)	from USD 3950	Please consult	USD 350

**Included:**

All accommodation (private bathrooms except days 4, 5 & 6. Twin/double rooms except days 4 & 5 – 2 to 4 per room depending on number of guests); all meals and water (from day 1 lunch to day 11 breakfast, except day 10 dinner); English speaking guide & 2nd local guide; 10 riding days; horses & spare horses; ponchos & saddlebags; grooms services; all necessary transfers/transport as per itinerary; all necessary local taxes, private reserve & national park entrance fees.

**Not included:**

Appropriate medical insurance (mandatory), visa (as necessary), international or national airport taxes, laundry service, soft and alcoholic drinks (evenings/ dinner), personal expenditure, tips, and all services not mentioned in the detailed description.





## **F.A.Q's**

**Horses & Tack:** During this ride, riders usually stay with two or three horses over the ten days riding (as long as the rider is happy!). Our intention is that riders can build a bond with their horse and enjoy not only the landscape and ride but also the company of their horse – but some riders like the idea of trying as many horses as possible – let us know. One or more spare horses will accompany us in case a change is needed. The horses are the local Ecuadorian Andean Criollo breed, in some places, crossed with numerous other breeds (English, Spanish, Peruvian, Arab...) producing a steed ideally suited to the terrain and with a wonderful temperament. Criollo breeds have developed from horses that were first brought from Spain in the 17th century, developing very different characteristics in each region, depending on terrain and the needs of the local horsemen. We use McClellan saddles, a Western type saddle with low rounded pommel (no horn) and a thick sheepskin atop and Ecuadorian Western saddles – similar to 'full Western saddles' on one section of the ride. It is easy to ride 'English style' on the McClellan saddles. Each saddle has saddlebags & a poncho. Neck reining (Western 'one-hand' indirect rein riding) is mainly used. People adapt very quickly but the guide and 'chagras' are on hand to give some advice. This tack is very suitable for long days in the saddle.

**Accommodation:** The accommodation provided in this itinerary incredibly varied – Haciendas to 'Hosterias'. Private bathrooms except days 4, 5 & 6. Twin/double rooms except days 4 & 5 – 2 to 4 per room depending on number of guests). The lodges are all in idyllic locations and are clean, comfortable, full of character and with hot water showers. If you are sharing your room, please let us know in advance if you prefer twin or double beds.

**For further information please contact:**  
**[rideandes@rideandes.com](mailto:rideandes@rideandes.com)**  
**[www.rideandes.com](http://www.rideandes.com)**

**Meals:** After a full day riding, as well as an excellent lunch (most days a picnic, but quite a menu, never just a sandwich), a great variety of delicious home cooked dinners that reflect the very diverse Ecuadorian cuisine are served. All menus are prepared with excellent Ecuadorian produce from the highlands, the coast and the Amazon. The dishes are not spicy but a local hot sauce is never far away! We can easily cater for vegetarians or any other dietary requirements as long as we are warned in advance.

**Climate:** The weather in Ecuador -as with all over the world- has become quite variable, but you can expect days of warm sunshine -ideal riding temperature and cool nights. November-April is officially the rainy season, on some days we expect late afternoon rain – but by no means 24/7 'monsoon type downpours'. More detailed information is given in the travel notes.

**Clothes and Equipment:** Travel notes will be sent with useful information including a suggested packing list and guide contact details etc.

**Emergencies:** In case of accident, our guides carry a mobile phone so that they can contact assistance (local emergency services/back up vehicle/our Doctor in Quito) – the mobile phone coverage is generally excellent.

**Health Services:** The private health care sector in Ecuador is very good. In the event of illness or accident during your stay, you should be prepared to pay for assistance. Upon return home you can submit a claim for reimbursement according to the specifications of your insurance policy.

**Safety:** As with all over the world, in major cities (for example, Quito & Guayaquil) theft can be an issue hence we prefer that guests take city tours with our guides and we ask guests to use safe deposit boxes and follow the basic common sense rules while out and about. Outside these major cities (Quito & Guayaquil) it is very safe. Risk of disease is minimal in the areas we ride.



## Important Notes

- We strongly advise guests to arrive at least a day prior to the ride start date in order to acclimatize – riders do find that in this way they do appreciate more the first day or two of the ride. We are able to help with hotel/ hacienda options and activities prior to (and after) the ride.
- Booking will be confirmed upon receipt of the corresponding deposit (A 30% payment will be required upon confirmation and balance of payment will be required no later than 45 days before beginning of the tour).
- **Exceptional postponement/cancellation policy** in place due to circumstances directly related to Covid-19, please request full details.
- We reserve the right to alter the itinerary due to circumstances beyond our control.
- Prices can alter without prior notice (preceding a confirmed booking)
- Appropriate medical insurance is mandatory and the responsibility of each guest/booking agent.
- It is the responsibility of the individual guest/booking agent to ensure that participants have the necessary riding skills to take part in the chosen tour.
- Rider weight limits are in place, please refer to each itinerary for details
- Guests are strongly advised to bring and wear their riding helmets while riding during the tour.
- Guests will be required to sign a responsibility release before starting a tour.

## About Ride Andes:

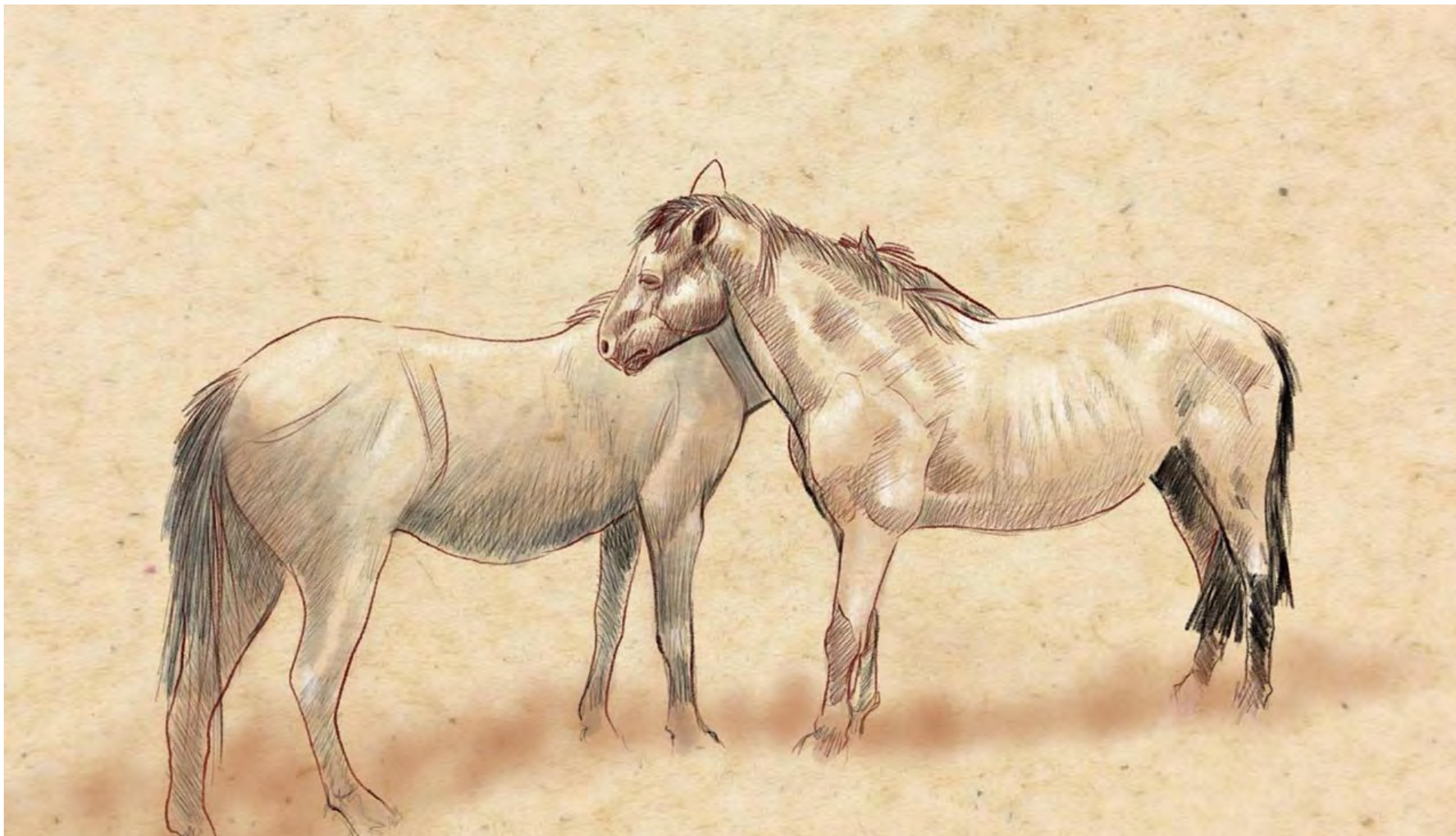
Sally Vergette, an English rider, moved out to Ecuador in 1996 and shortly afterwards founded Ride Andes, specializing in tours 'journeying on' through magnificent parts of South America. In 2003, using her knowledge acquired in Ecuador and with a local business partner, she was the first to set up estancia to estancia riding tours in Uruguay.



Ecuador is still our base but Ride Andes is involved in providing spectacular riding tours – many itineraries designed by Sally – in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Chile-Argentina, Colombia and Uruguay. Sally is still very active in all aspects of the rides in these destinations but is now supported by excellent local guides and only leads a few of these tours.

**For further information please contact:**  
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