



**RIDE ANDES ECUADOR
QUINTESSENTIAL COTOPAXI ONE CENTRE TOUR
Year Round**

Ecuador – picture postcard views around every corner



RIDE ANDES

rideandes@rideandes.com
www.rideandes.com
@ride_andes
facebook.com/RideAndes

WhatsApp, Tel. 24/7:
+593 999 738 221

Introduction

A condensed tour option with all the perks and no packing. Spend 2 to 5 days riding in the shadow of the stunning snow-capped Cotopaxi Volcano, exploring rolling foothills, stretching plains & hidden valleys. There are many opportunities to gaze in awe at the mighty Andean condors and mingle with the wild horses in this incomparable landscape, formed by glaciers and volcanoes.

Testimonial

"Just to say thank you so much for a great ride. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Galloping with the wild horses and Cotopaxi as a back drop was only surpassed by climbing to 4,200mtrs with Condors overhead. Please say a big thank you to all your team." Julie

Quintessential Cotopaxi One Centre Tour

Nights are spent on the edge of Cotopaxi national park at an outstanding location, surrounded by five Andean peaks. Rooms with private bathrooms.

What You Need To Know?

- Not just circuit rides: day 1 ride to the Hacienda, final day ride away
- 3 day itinerary (can be adapted for longer ride or just 2 days)
- Short drive from Quito/Quito Airport
- Breath taking Andean landscapes within a national park
- Riding alongside the wild horses
- Private groups – lots of flexibility on routes, length & pace of rides, and extra days
- Comfortable, remote Hacienda in an idyllic location, on a national park border
- Excellent local guides with lots of knowledge to share
- Season: All year long
- Private groups
- Maximum 10 People
- Solo riders welcome.
- Wonderful option for families
- Routes available for inexperienced/beginner riders – lessons available
- Plenty of activity options for non-riders
- Flexible start day

Quintessential Cotopaxi One Centre Tour Overview:

DAY 1: River Crossings & Iconic Cotopaxi Volcano

Dinner & Overnight at the Hacienda.

L, D from 2-5 hours riding, 1 hour transfer

DAY 2: National Park, Inca Routes & Wild Horses

Dinner & Overnight at the Hacienda.

B, L, D from 2-6 hours horse riding

DAY 3: Glacial & Volcanic Landscapes, Hidden Valley

Final Day

B, L approx. 3-6 hours horse riding, 1.5 hours transfer

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.

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Detailed Itinerary:

DAY 1: River Crossings & Iconic Cotopaxi Volcano

We start with a drive out of Quito, in a south-east direction where we meet the horses (our exact start point depends on the desired length of today's ride). Once guests are comfortable, we ride south towards Cotopaxi Volcano, the 2nd highest active volcano in the world. Crossing a river, we reach wide stretches of pasturelands and a chance for faster-paced riding for those that wish. We traverse the lower slopes of the foothills of Sincholagua and follow the River Pita before fording its clear waters. En route we often see the large Andean raptors – including eagles, caracaras, hawks and smaller kestrels. Frequently we also spot the mighty Andean Condor soaring overhead – with a 3 metre (10ft) wingspan!

We spend the night at a comfortable Hacienda, close to the northern entrance of Cotopaxi National Park, with magnificent views of five surrounding peaks – including the snow-capped Cotopaxi.

Dinner & Overnight at the Hacienda

L, D from 2-5 hours riding (above route 4-5 hours), 1 hour transfer

DAY 2: National Park, Inca Routes & Wild Horses

We ride into Cotopaxi National Park on our adorable, sure-footed criollo horses for some exhilarating canters (for those that wish) across the wide, arid plains at the base of the Cotopaxi Volcano. The horses enjoy the open spaces but have such a calm temperament that they settle into a rhythm without trying to rush. Several herds of wild horses inhabit the park and to ride alongside these long-maned horses, galloping freely across the rugged terrain, is a unique experience. Part of this ride follows the main Inca highway which linked Quito with Cusco, Peru, which we then turn eastward from in order to follow the Inca route leading down to the Amazon. We pause to visit the remains of an Inca fort before continuing on through the gently undulating grassy hills, passing drumlins and moraine – crossing lahars and old lava flows then eventually returning to the Hacienda.

Dinner and 2nd Overnight at new Hacienda

AB, PL, D approx. 2-6 hours horse riding (above route 5-6 hours)



DAY 3: Glacial & Volcanic Landscapes, Hidden Valley

We head up the slopes of Rumiñahui Volcano ('stoneface') with an excellent chance of close encounters with the Andean condor, fox and deer. We pass polylepis trees ('paperbark trees') and alisos and other native plants such as chuquiragua and valeriana and a host of colourful native flowers hugging the hillsides. We climb above 4,000 metres (13,123 ft) then drop down into a hidden valley, cantering across pumice stone to arrive at the base of impressive vertical cliffs for another delicious picnic. Emerging from the valley, the views are unforgettable: ridges and vales as far as the eye can see – yet more indelible memories to take home on this the last day of riding.

AB, PL approx. 3-6 hours horse riding (above route 5-6 hours)
End of Services

2021/2023 Prices from:

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

Length	double/twin per person	Single Supplement	Rider Weight supplement (85- 95 kg. 185-210lbs)
(3D/2N)	from USD 885	Please consult	USD 120

Included:

2 nights accommodations; all meals from lunch day 1 to lunch final day and water; English speaking guide; 3 riding days; horses and grooms services; poncho & saddlebags; all necessary transport including from then back to Quito; all local taxes, private reserve and national park entrance fees.

Not included:

Appropriate medical insurance (mandatory), visa (as necessary), international or national airport taxes, personal expenditure, all services not mentioned in the detailed description.



F.A.Q's

Horses & Tack: During this ride, riders usually stay with one horse (as long as the rider is happy!). Our intention is that riders 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. As always, one or more spare horses will accompany us in case a change is needed. The horses are the local Ecuadorian Andean Criollo breed 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. It is easy to ride 'English style' on these saddles, as well as Western. Each saddle has saddlebags & a poncho. 'English style' (two hand direct reining) & neck reining (Western 'one-hand' indirect rein riding) are both 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 perfect point from which to explore the national park. The Hacienda is very comfortable and situated in tranquil highland scenery on the edge of Cotopaxi National Park, with stunning views of Cotopaxi Volcano. Room options range from private to small dormitories, both with en suite bathrooms.

Meals: The meals at the Hacienda are all delicious home-cooked meals prepared with local ingredients, for example trout. There is a hearty breakfast, varied picnic lunches (not just a sandwich) with hot drinks, and a 3 course dinner. Snacks and bottled water are provided each day, and guests can purchase soft drinks & alcohol each evening.

Climate: The weather in Ecuador – as with all over the world – has become quite variable, but in Cotopaxi NP you can normally expect cool days for riding (15-20 C/59-68F), sometimes a lot hotter; occasionally it feels like a lot of multi-layering is essential. Nights are cold. November-April is officially the rainy season, on some days we expect late afternoon rain. 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.

For further information please contact:
rideandes@rideandes.com
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Important Notes

- We strongly advise guests to arrive 2 nights 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 20% 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.

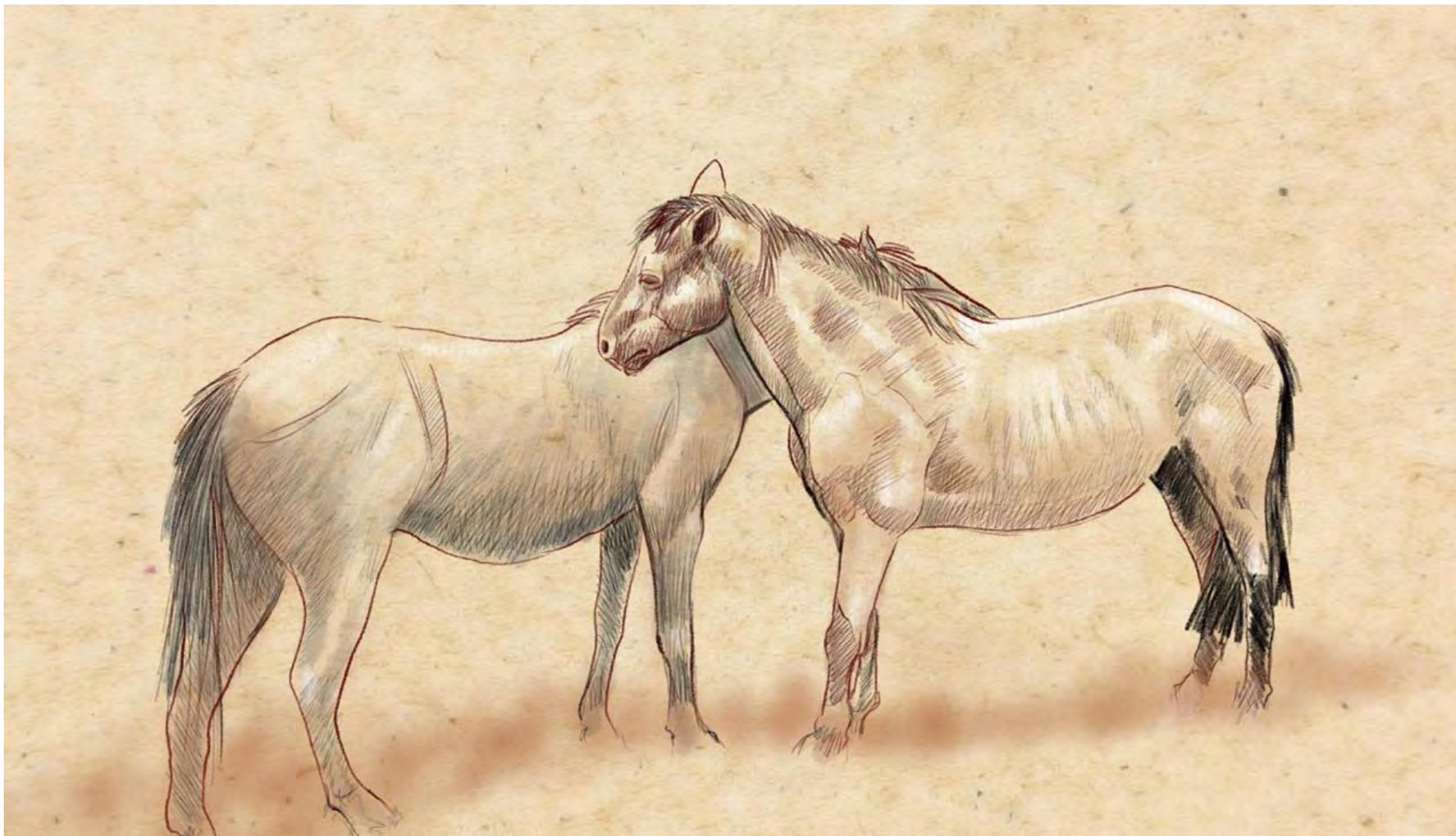
About Ride Andes:

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 & 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.

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