



RIDE ANDES ECUADOR
HACIENDAS OF THE ANDES
Year Round

Ecuador - picture postcard views around every corner



Introduction

Following trails across verdant valleys of patchwork fields, through forests then onto the open plains to gallop with the wild horses beneath the snow-capped Cotopaxi Volcano we ride between fabulous highland haciendas. Varied pace, incredibly diverse scenery, ending each unforgettable day at a unique, idyllic location.

Testimonial

"...the horses were top-notch; the food was delicious; the haciendas beyond belief (I'm trying to figure out how I can add a fireplace to my bedroom at home); ... the scenery was spectacular" JH.

Haciendas Of The Andes

Overnight stops include lovingly restored centuries old haciendas; no two lodges are alike but all are in exceptional locations and absolutely captivating. All rooms with private bathrooms.

What You Need To Know

- 8 day itinerary
- Fixed date departures/Private groups (tour can be adapted)
- Maximum 8 guests on fixed departures
- Single riders very welcome (single rooms available or twin share)
- Pace moderate with long canters in the national park
- Excellent option for families (private groups only) itinerary adjusted accordingly
- Riding in two very distinct Andean regions (2.5 hours drive between)
- Season: All Year (April & May modified itinerary)
- Flexible start day & itinerary for private groups
- Non-Riders welcome! Enormous variety of alternative activities available.



RIDE ANDES

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Haciendas of the Andes Ride Overview:

DAY 1: The enchanting Andes, introductory ride
Overnight at a working Hacienda, six rooms.
PL, D (approx. 2hr drive, 4-5 hours riding)

DAY 2: Patchwork fields, exotic plants, San Pablo Lake
Overnight at Hacienda founded in the early 17th century
AB, PL, D (approx. 5-6 hours riding)

DAY 3: Andean Condors & the beautiful, pastoral Zuleta Valley
Dinner & Overnight at hilltop country hotel; jacuzzi & sauna.
AB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours riding, 2.5hrs drive)

DAY 4: The wild Andes, five magnificent volcanoes
Dinner & Overnight at a Hacienda, spectacular location
AB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours riding)

DAY 5: Open Plains & Wild Horses in Cotopaxi National Park
Dinner & 2nd Overnight at the Hacienda, spectacular location
AB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours riding)

DAY 6: Rugged peaks and incomparable views
Dinner and Overnight at an old Jesuit Hacienda seeped in history
AB, PL, D (approx. 6-7 hours riding)

DAY 7: Andean high pass & Avenue of the Volcanoes
Overnight at a historic Hacienda in large gardens, close to Quito Airport.
AB, PL, D (approx. 6-7 hours riding, 2hr drive).

DAY 8: Breakfast and Farewell
Alternatively, let us help you arrange further adventures in Ecuador
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.



Detailed Itinerary:

DAY 1: The enchanting Andes

Heading northwards from Quito, after a quick stop on the equator line, we meet the horses and, once everyone is comfortable, head out along the grassy lanes. Having admired the magnificent view atop a hill carpeted with wild flowers, we descend to a family run Hacienda in a beautiful pastoral valley. This small working farm with a dairy herd and Andalusian (PRE) horses is the perfect location to leisurely drift into the relaxing Andean atmosphere. Once settled in at the Hacienda, guests can view the collection of Inca and pre-Inca ceramics discovered on site.

*Overnight at a working Hacienda, six rooms.
PL, D (approx. 2hr drive, 4-5 hours riding)*

DAY 2: Patchwork fields, exotic crops, San Pablo Lake

Today, we ride past tiny hamlets of adobe huts, the ladies in their brightly coloured full skirts herding sheep and pigs. We ride through woodlands, and wind our way around the patchwork fields of quinoa, potatoes, maize, lupins and tree tomato orchards. Magnificent views of the jagged Mojanda summit as we cross the slopes of the sacred Imbabura Volcano - the focus of many pre-Inca legends. Nearing the Hacienda, we pass avocados, papaya, passion fruit and, riding into the Hacienda courtyard, graced with bougainvillea, the hummingbirds zoom past us en route to the agapanthus.

A blast of dazzling Andean colour is provided on a visit to the famous Otavalo market.

Overnight at a Hacienda founded in the early 17th century

BB, PL, D (approx. 5-6 hours riding)



DAY 3: Andean Condors & the beautiful, pastoral Zuleta Valley

After a fascinating demonstration by local master weavers and a chance to purchase top quality Andean handicrafts, we ride out of the Hacienda. Climbing out the valley onto the plains, we pick up the pace and, following agave-lined sandy tracks, ride through a landscape frequently described by guests as the most picturesque they have ever seen. Dramatic views of the hanging valleys and rocky ridges as we descend to lush meadows below passing ladies in traditional dress embroidering intricate blouses as they watch their flocks. We stop to see the pre-Inca earthworks dotted around this valley -one of the first highland areas settled, also often pausing in awe at the sight of a mighty Andean condor soaring overhead. Afternoon drive to a very comfortable country hotel located at the trail head of the next part of our ride. Jacuzzi & sauna, dinner & overnight at this very comfortable lodge.

*Dinner & Overnight at hilltop country hotel; jacuzzi & sauna.
AB, PL, D (approx. 6 hours horse riding, 2.5hrs drive)*



DAY 4: The wild Andes, four magnificent volcanoes

First riding along lanes between the meadows, riders get used to their new horses. Alongside the gurgling river, the abundance of lush vegetation is quite surprising: montane bamboo, ferns and native trees dripping with orchids and bromelias. The birds such as woodpeckers and hummingbirds are wonderful to see, the vultures a little unnerving! As we leave the micro-climate of the river valley, extensive views open up before us. Surrounded by four Andean peaks - part of the Avenue of Volcanoes, we ride towards the iconic Cotopaxi Volcano. Riding onto rough grasslands in the Sincholagua foothills there is a good chance of seeing more Andean Condors as well as eagles, hawks, falcons and harriers. At the northern border of the Cotopaxi National Park we arrive at a modern hacienda, often greeted by the llamas. This idyllic location with remarkable views of the marvelous Andean landscape encircling us dominated by the perfectly conical shape of the snow-capped Cotopaxi Volcano will be our base for 2 nights.

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

DAY 5: Open Plains & Wild Horses in Cotopaxi National Park

We ride into Cotopaxi national park on our adorable sure-footed criollo horses for some exhilarating canters 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 an unique experience. Part of this ride follows the main Inca highway which linked Quito with Cusco, Peru, then we turn eastwards 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 before returning to the Hacienda via a canyon.

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

DAY 6: Rugged peaks and incomparable views

We head up the slopes of Rumiñahui Volcano ('stone-face') with an excellent chance of close encounters with the Andean condor, fox and deer. We pass polylepis trees ('paperbark trees'), native shrubs such as chuquiragua and valeriana and a host of colourful wild flowers hugging the hillsides. Rising above 4000 metres (13 123 ft) and experiencing one of the highest canterers in the world we then ride on into a hidden valley often seeing wild horses grazing close to the towering cliffs. The views are unforgettable and the picnic spot unmatched. The trails, marked out by the wild horses, take us back down and on to a once important Jesuit Hacienda recently restored and now a delightful place to stay.

Dinner and Overnight at an old Jesuit Hacienda seeped in history

AB, PL, D (approx. 6-7 hours riding)

DAY 7: Andean high pass & Avenue of the Volcanoes

The final ride takes us on an exhilarating canter across the flat expanses of Cotopaxi National Park close to the volcano where we traverse old lava, volcanic ash and lahars. We then veer westwards and start a long ascent with outstanding views. Riding up through the native grasslands in order to reach the scree slopes and cross over into the Avenue of the Volcanoes we leave the national park and often meet local horsemen ('chagras') checking their cattle – quite a sight, with their colourful ponchos, thick goatskin chaps and intricately plaited bridles. Their stirrups are enclosed – like clogs, and often carved into an animal head. Their lassos seem impossibly long to do anything with – but very necessary when working with their very feisty bulls: they lasso the animal then get as far away as possible! We leave the horses and are driven to a historic hacienda close to Quito Airport for dinner and overnight.

Overnight at a historic Hacienda in large gardens, close to Quito Airport.

AB, PL, D (approx. 6-7 hours riding, 2hr drive).





DAY 8: 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

2022 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)
(8D/7N)	from USD 4175	USD 450	USD 280

Included:

All accommodation (private bathrooms); all meals (from day 1 lunch to day 8 breakfast) and snacks & water while riding; English speaking guide & 2nd local guide; 7 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; 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 horses over the seven 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. 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 accommodation provided in this itinerary includes historic haciendas and country hotels, private bathrooms throughout. They are clean, very comfortable, full of character and provide a very good service. You will be able to get good night's sleep in pleasant surroundings. 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
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 for an ideal riding temperature, and cold nights. Most days we ride valley to valley, each valley/plain with its own microclimate. November-April is officially the rainy season, and 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.

Important Notes

- We strongly advise guests to arrive 1 or 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 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.

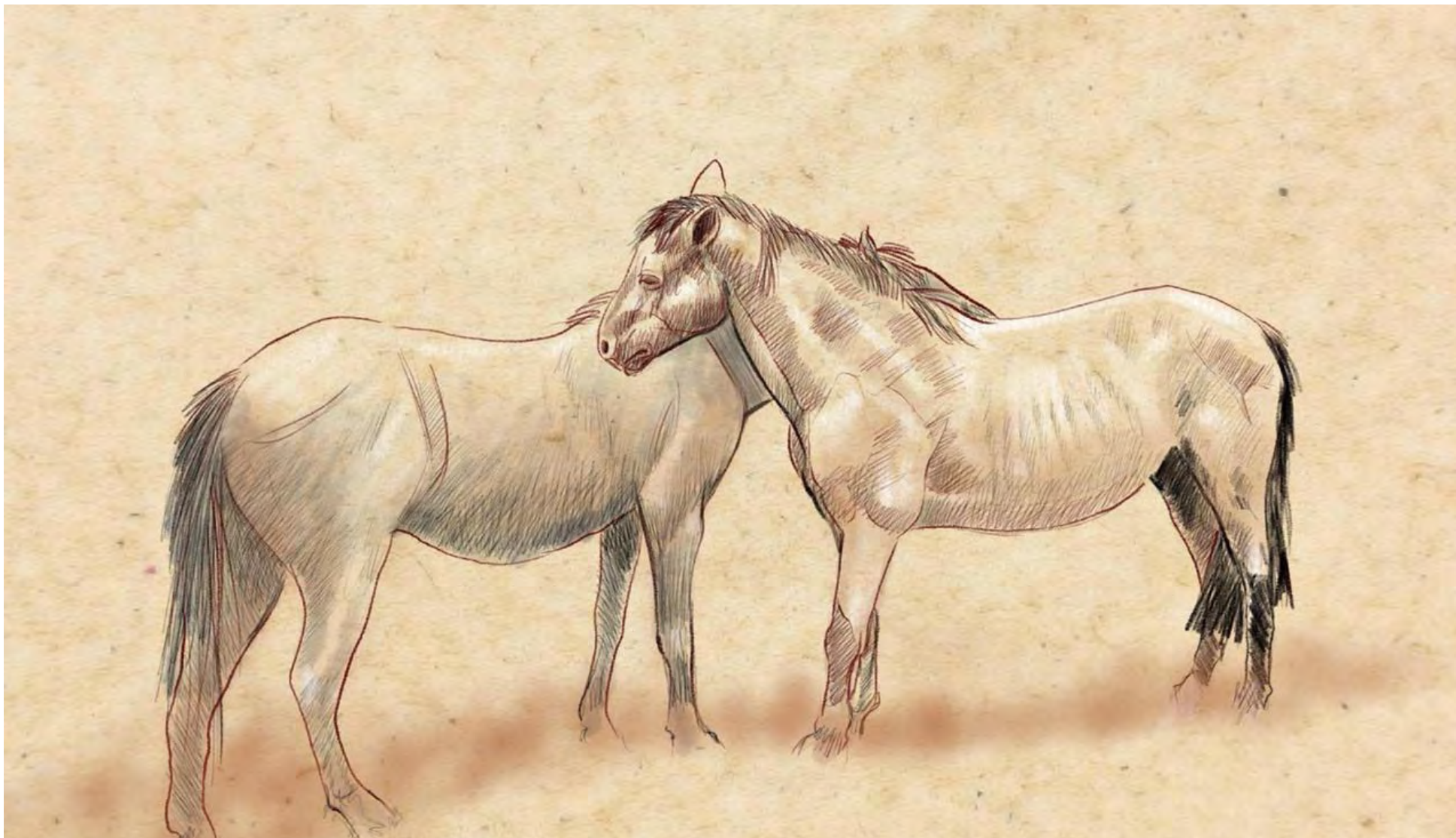
About Ride Andes:

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 & 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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