



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

*Ecuador - picture postcard views around every corner*



## Introduction

A spectacular horseback riding experience through the incredibly diverse landscapes of the Ecuadorian Andes. Imagine riding past passion fruit, tree tomatoes & babaco, along agave avenues between patchwork fields then, a few days later cantering across arid plains alongside wild horses just below the iconic snow-capped Cotopaxi Volcano. Contrasting landscapes, inconceivably wide-ranging terrain and topography, accompanied by a fascinating variety of birdlife from the smallest to the biggest: hummingbirds to the 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

Guests are met at their hotel near Quito Airport (40 minutes out of town) or in Quito, and travel to Cayambe Valley to start this progressive ride. We can meet guests off their flights, arrange pre-tour hotels for them.

## What You Need To Know?

- 11 day itinerary, in two very distinct Andean regions (3hrs drive between) Andean plains
- We groom, saddle up, feed and take care of your horse for you
- Some long days in the saddle (7hrs. 40+ km/25+ miles)
- Some challenging terrain on this place to place ride
- From verdant valleys to arid high Andean plains
- Season: November-April (modified itinerary June-October)
- Maximum 8 guests on fixed departures
- Fixed date departures/Private groups (tour can be adapted)
- Pace moderate with long canters in the Cotopaxi national park area
- Single riders very welcome (single rooms available)

rideandes@rideandes.com  
www.rideandes.com  
@ride\_andes  
facebook.com/RideAndes

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



RIDE ANDES

## **Volcanoes & Vistas Itinerary**

### **Overview:**

#### **DAY 1: Cayambe Volcano, the Equator Line**

*Overnight at small, family run working hacienda  
PL, D; approx. 2hrs drive & 4hrs riding*

#### **DAY 2: Pastoral Valley & Farm Stay**

*2nd Overnight at small, family run working hacienda  
B, PL, D; approx. 6hrs riding*

#### **DAY 3: Local Life & Pre-Inca Earthworks**

*Dinner & Overnight at charming Cottages, B, PL, D; approx.  
6-7hrs horse riding*

#### **DAY 4: Colourful Otavalo Market**

*Dinner & Overnight at very comfortable Mountain Inn  
B, PL, D, approx. 4-5hrs horse riding, 3hrs drive*

#### **DAY 5: Valleys to the Highland Plains**

*Dinner & Overnight at Hacienda  
B, PL, D; approx. 6hrs riding*

#### **DAY 6: Wild Horses & Cotopaxi National Park**

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

#### **DAY 7: Iconic Cotopaxi Volcano Up Close**

*2nd overnight at Hacienda in idyllic location  
B, PL, D; approx. 5-6hrs riding*

#### **DAY 8: Inca routes, Andean Back Country**

*Dinner & Overnight at Hacienda  
B, PL, D; approx. 7hrs riding*

#### **DAY 9: Stunning Scenery in these Remote Lands**

*Second Overnight at the remote Hacienda  
B, L, D; approx. 4-5hrs riding*

#### **DAY 10: Glacial & Volcanic Landscapes**

*Overnight near Quito Airport  
B, PL, D; approx. 7hrs riding & 2hr drive*

#### **Day 11: Farewell**

*After breakfast, guests depart  
B.*

***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: Cayambe Volcano, the Equator Line**

We set off early to meet the horses. Once guests are comfortable with their mounts, we ride out along the tracks between the patchwork fields below the magnificent glacier covered Cayambe Volcano straddling the equator line. Crossing the Hacienda pastures, we arrive at the farmhouse in time for tea.

*Overnight at small, family run working hacienda  
PL, D; approx. 2hrs drive & 4hrs riding*

### **DAY 2: Pastoral Valley & Farm Stay**

Today's ride is varied in pace and terrain – through eucalyptus forests, along agave lined grassy tracks, and passing a 16th century Hacienda. This beautiful valley is frozen in time with the ladies still tending their cows, sheep and pigs in brightly coloured traditional skirts and embroidered blouses.

The dairy herd and Andalusian horses are close to our accommodation; the English-speaking owners are delightful and informative, showing guests around including the collection of pre-Inca ceramics found on the farm.

*2nd Overnight at small, family run working hacienda  
B, PL, D; approx. 6hrs riding*



### **DAY 3: Local Life & Pre-Inca Earthworks**

Riding along sandy tracks, cobblestone roads, narrow forest trails then passing adobe houses, we arrive at charming cottages, our home for the night. This is an example of a well-managed community project, an indigenous family host us; for those that wish, it is an opportunity to learn about the local culture - shamans, Andean calendar & fiestas. For everyone, a chance to taste delicious local cuisine.

*Dinner & Overnight at charming Cottages, B, PL, D;  
approx. 6-7hrs horse riding*



#### **DAY 4: Colourful Otavalo Market**

Today's journey takes us through hamlets then dry gulleys, over a ridge and into the neighbouring valley, with excellent views of the San Pablo lake below. As the land flattens out, a chance of canters along the grassy trails, often under the nonchalant gaze of tethered animals. A vehicle takes us to the famous Otavalo market and then southwards to our next, very distinct, riding area.

*Dinner & Overnight at very comfortable Mountain Inn B, PL, D, approx. 4-5hrs horse riding, 3hrs drive*

#### **DAY 5: Valleys to the Highland Plains**

Today, we leave the verdant valleys behind us and ride up onto the altiplanos surrounded by mighty Andean peaks. Often we see condors, caracaras, eagles, harriers and hawks patrolling the skies overhead. Late afternoon, we arrive at a traditional adobe and thatch Hacienda on lands once farmed by the Jesuits.

*Dinner & Overnight at Hacienda B, PL, D; approx. 6hrs riding*

## **DAY 6: Wild Horses & Cotopaxi National Park**

Today, we ride high into the Andes through vegetation known as 'paramo' with tall grasses, native bushes and wild flowers. Passing dramatic cliff faces we enter a secret valley, often seeing nesting condors. A good chance of meeting herds of wild horses as well as white-tailed deer and Andean foxes. The legendary snow-capped Cotopaxi Volcano dominates the landscape. Dropping down onto the plains below we can pick up speed as we head to another Hacienda in an idyllic location.

*Dinner and Overnight at Hacienda  
B, PL, D; approx. 6hrs riding*

## **DAY 7: Iconic Cotopaxi Volcano Up Close**

A day enjoying exhilarating canters across the plains beneath the iconic Cotopaxi Volcano. Surrounded by mountain peaks, firm ground allows us to spread out on these magnificent plains and enjoy the grasslands carpeted with wild flowers. At one point we follow the main Inca highway between Cusco and Quito.

*2nd overnight at Hacienda in idyllic location  
B, PL, D; approx. 5-6hrs riding*





## **DAY 8: Inca routes, Andean Back Country**

Today we take the same route towards the Amazon as the Incas did centuries ago. We ride over 40km (25miles) of varied terrain, at times cantering, at times slowing over challenging terrain. Passing over a ridge dotted with small lakes, the direction of the streams changes completely – we have crossed the continental divide and the water no longer flows east to west but now flows west to east to eventually end up in the Atlantic Ocean. Across a wide valley we spot the thatched rooves of a cosy Hacienda that awaits.

*Dinner & Overnight at Hacienda B, PL, D; approx. 7hrs riding*

## **DAY 9: Stunning Scenery in these Remote Lands**

A long morning ride across the 'paramo' grasslands and up into the hills, accompanied by the 'chagras' (local horsemen) that live on the Hacienda tending the cattle. The array of native flowers and shrubs is surprising as are the Ecuadorian Hillstars– a high altitude hummingbird- zooming past. In the afternoon, riders can head to the river with the chagras to fish for trout, help hand milk the cows or relax in front of the log fires.

*Second Overnight at the remote Hacienda B, L, D; approx. 4-5hrs riding*



## DAY 10: Glacial & Volcanic Landscapes

On our last day of riding, we take a different route through the national park riding close to Cotopaxi Volcano. The topography -molded by glaciers and volcanic activity- is fascinating as we approach the Volcano; we ride pass moraine, drumlins, old lava flows and lahars. After lunch by a lake, the terrain allows for a faster pace to complete the 40km (25 mile) ride. The thrilling canters across the grasslands, often alongside wild horses, are a great way to end the tour. Riders say goodbye to the horses and are driven to accommodation close to Quito Airport.

*Overnight near Quito Airport  
B, PL, D; approx. 7hrs riding & 2hr drive*

## DAY 11: Farewell

After breakfast, guests depart for 'extensions' (that we can help organise – Galapagos Islands, Amazing Rain Forest, Cloud Forest...) or for their homeward journey. B.

Key: B= cooked breakfast, PL= picnic lunch (different menus, not just a sandwich), D=dinner.



**Ride Cost:**

US Dollars 3950 per person (4 riders or more\*) based on double/twin/triple room share. Scheduled group departures: maximum 8 riders almost all year round (please refer to separate date sheet, [www.rideandes.com](http://www.rideandes.com) or email us for update on availability).

**Included:**

All accommodation; twin/double rooms (private bathrooms except days 8 & 9 where 2 full bathrooms for the group; no double rooms days 8 & 9); 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; groom 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.

If less than 4 riders have booked one month prior to the ride start date, we offer to:

-MAINTAIN the 4 or more rider price (even though less than 4 riders participating) & provide an excellent alternative itinerary that reduces our operating/logistical costs. Guests still stay in high standard accommodation with en suite bathrooms, or operate the above itinerary at an additional cost.

Please request options for PRIVATE groups, private departures possible almost all year. The above itinerary can be adapted to suit each individual group.



Please request details of the options for small groups.  
Private rides possible, 1 or more riders.

**Single supplement, for single room:** USD395

**'Weight supplement':** due to the altitude & difficult terrain a weight supplement of USD430 applies – to provide riders of 85-100kg (185-220lbs) with two horses (as well as the spare horses for the group).

Agreement prior to booking is necessary.

Please request options for PRIVATE groups, private departures possible almost all year. The above itinerary can be adapted to suit each individual group.

**How to book:**

Riders will be asked to complete and return a booking form to secure their place on the ride (so that we can select horses and understand any dietary requirements/allergies etc.) & a 30% deposit will be requested.

**Travel Notes:**

Following a confirmed booking travel notes are sent out including travel advice and a suggested packing list.

**Meeting point:**

Quito/international airport Quito. We can take care of all your travel arrangements during your stay – booking extra tours etc.

**Arrival:**

We can meet you at Quito Airport and also book hotels and city tours etc in Quito for you, taking care of all your travel arrangements throughout your stay in Ecuador.

**Food & drinks:**

Hot breakfast, varied picnic lunches with hot drinks, 3 course dinner. Snacks and bottled water provided each day. Guests can purchase soft drinks (if not included) & alcohol each evening.

**Accommodation:**

10 nights in double/twin bedded rooms (8 nights rooms with private bathrooms, 2 nights group shares two bathrooms).

**Single supplement:**

Single room possible (extra charge applies). Single supplement unfortunately also applicable if no sharer is available.

**Rider weight:**

Rider weight limit 85kg (185lbs)/85-95Kg (185-208lbs)\*. \*We can, by prior agreement, accept riders 85-95Kg (185-208lbs) but a supplement is applied for second horse. It is important to have accurate weight of each rider at the time of booking.

**Riding ability:** intermediate and above – able to canter comfortably in open spaces and also be prepared to ride on steep slopes and tricky terrain. Guests need to be riding fit – long days in the saddle with some tough riding.

**Tour route dependent on weather conditions** – if adverse weather conditions prevail, we may alter the route. We do have a lot of excellent alternatives.

Guests may have to lead their horses (but not normally over long distances). Please consult with us if you have any doubts.

**Group size:** maximum 8 on fixed date departures, no minimum (price may vary depending on group size). Available as a private ride.

**Private groups:** no surcharge for private groups. Itineraries adapted to suit the group's specific requests.

**Acclimatisation:**

It is important that riders are acclimatised before the ride. As all the rides are now scheduled to start at 2800m/9185ft above sea level (same altitude as Quito) then we recommend at least 24 hours in Quito/at same altitude as Quito prior to day 1 of the tour. Please note that the Quito airport hotels are several hundred metres LOWER than Quito.

Please note that the ride takes place above 2800m/9185ft then, during the 2nd half of the ride, we ride at around and even above 4000m/13125ft (up to approx. 4250m/13945ft) & sleeping at altitudes of approx. 3500m/11500ft. Guests must seek medical advice if they have any doubt as to whether they are able to be at these altitudes.

**More details:**

Please refer to the travel notes (sent following a confirmed booking) for further details about suggested packing lists and the general notes to learn more about the horses, tack etc. Do send us any questions. Please request Ecuador General Features document for details about horses, pace, climate and many other aspects.

**'De-rust' / introductory ride:**

Guests can arrive early and enjoy a variety of circuit rides in the stunning Andean scenery surrounding the farm where the horses live. 75 minutes from the airport, 90 minutes from Quito.

Accommodation can be arranged, various options depending on budget.

**Horses:** local criollo breed crossed with Andalusian, Arab, Thoroughbred, Peruvian Paso – ideally suited to the terrain.

**Equipment/tack:**

'McClellan' style saddles are used with sheepskin seats (easy to ride either 'western' or 'English' style), horses used to neck reining and some English style '2 hands'. Ponchos (wool) and saddlebags for each rider. Do not need to bring towel & all beds have sheets.

**Guides:**

Expert rider leading the trip, bilingual with much experience. Also a skilled, local horseman that knows the backcountry accompanies the group.

**Grooms:**

Will be present to help guests with the horses. Guests are not expected to clean, feed, tack and untack their horses.

**Trip extensions/add-ons:**

With our extensive knowledge of Ecuador and excellent contacts, we are able to book a range of 'add-ons' for guests including the Galapagos Islands, Amazon rain forest lodges, cloud forest lodges, bird watching trips, thermal springs/spa hotel, Cuenca and much more.

The 'cut off' point is one month prior to the start date – i.e the itinerary (and/or cost) will be determined depending on numbers booked one month prior to the tour start date.

## Please note:

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- We reserve the right to alter the itinerary due to circumstances beyond our control.
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- 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:**  
**[rideandes@rideandes.com](mailto:rideandes@rideandes.com)**  
**[www.rideandes.com](http://www.rideandes.com)**



RIDE ANDES

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

 @ride\_andes  
 [facebook.com/RideAndes](https://facebook.com/RideAndes)

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