

## Ecuador Volcanoes Expedition

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### Dear Climber:

Ecuador is simply a great country to visit. It has everything from 20,000' glaciated peaks to the Amazon Jungle. Why more Americans don't spend time in Ecuador is beyond us. On our two-week trip, we will try to sample as much of this beautiful country as possible. Our two ascents will include Cotopaxi (19,347') and Cayambe (18,990'). Chimborazo (20,561') is available as a 3-day extension for the interested and capable climber.

Our contacts and relationships in Ecuador make this program unique. The climbs themselves are only a piece of the total adventure experience with IMG in Ecuador. This information should answer many of your initial questions and also guide you through the next stages of preparing for the climb. The material is quite self-explanatory but should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

-- Phil Ershler, Program Director

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Time is spent in Quito before and after our ascents. We will also visit the famous Indian market in Otavalo and spend time with a friend who is a local weaver in the town of Peguche.

Our acclimatization schedule is quite good. We hike to the summit of Pasochoa, spend two nights at a beautiful hacienda at 12,000 feet and have a technique review session all before climbing Cotopaxi.

After climbing Cotopaxi, we spend two nights at the old hacienda of La Cienega and visit the market in Saquisilí. We will also have dinner one evening at the Hacienda San Augustin. Built on old Incan ruins, this is an evening you'll long remember.

After Cotopaxi, we head north to Cayambe which is located literally right on the Ecuador. We'll have another opportunity for training on the glacier located near the hut. After our second night at the hut, we climb the mountain and head Papallacta. There we'll celebrate our success while enjoying the thermal baths at the resort. Then, it's time to return to Quito and catch flights home.

An IMG Senior Guide leads each of these programs. We are joined by some of the finest Ecuadorian guides. We've climbed with them for over two decades. They are dear friends and add immeasurably to your Ecuadorean experience. Spending time with them will make the trip even more special.

You will see more of Ecuador than you ever imagined. Our goal is to make this trip so much more than just a mountaineering experience.

### Ecuador: Just The Facts

**Chimborazo:** 20,561'

**Set Your GPS:**

1° 28' S • 78° 48' W

**Size Does Matter:**

Chimborazo is the highest peak in Ecuador. It was believed to be the highest mountain in the world, a belief which was sustained until the discovery of the Himalayan peak Dhaulagiri (26,794') in 1808.

**First Boot-Prints on Top:**

In 1880 by Edward Whymper with guides J. and L. Carrel

**It's Probably Nothing:**

Though there are no records of recent eruptions, and it's long been considered extinct, latest research and seismic activity indicate that Chimborazo is an active volcano with water 25m below the top.

**Ok Maybe It's Something:**

High precipitation has formed a large summit ice cap beneath which is a crater that today is old, eroded, and contorted, suggesting that Chimborazo may have been even higher in its younger years.

**Cotopaxi:** 19,347'

**Set Your GPS:**

0° 40' S • 78° 26' W

**Size Does Matter:**

Cotopaxi is the second highest mountain in Ecuador, and for years was the world's highest active volcano (the summit crater frequently releases steam, and eruptions have been well documented for several centuries,) until Chile's Tupungato (21,489') awakened from dormancy with an eruption in 1986.

**First Boot-Prints on Top:**

First climbed in 1872 by Dr. Wilhelm Reiss and A.M. Escobar

**Bring A Jacket:**

The peak is a symmetrical cone rising over 10,000' above the surrounding plateau. Though fewer than fifty miles from the equator, the high precipitation of the region maintains a perpetual snow cap.

**DATES:**

November 18-30, 2010 (led by Greg Vernovage)  
~~January 13-25, 2011 (Trip FULL; led by Phil Ershler)~~

**LANDCOST:**

\$2,800 US  
\$600 US – Chimborazo extension

**COSTS INCLUDED:**

Included in your land costs are guide fees, double accommodations in hotels, shared accommodations in huts, group transportation, group equipment including stoves and fuel, ropes, cooking gear, group first aid kit, technical climbing equipment, radios, etc., and meals while climbing except for lunches/snacks.

**COSTS NOT INCLUDED:**

Not included are airfare, airport taxes, meals while not climbing, bottled drinks, personal clothing and climbing equipment such as boots, packs, sleeping bag and pad, crampons and ice ax, or items of a personal nature.

**APPLICATION/CANCELLATION**

Cancellation and refund policies are discussed in the General Terms and Conditions sheet that was included in the sign up documents package. <http://mountainguides.com/signup.shtml>

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION**

All climbs involve cramponing on moderately steep slopes and a great deal of glacier travel. The snow level is reached between 15,000' and 16,000' and each of the ascents will require several thousand feet of snow climbing. Crevasse problems should be no more difficult than those encountered in climbing Mt. Rainier. The routes are very exciting and much more involved than those on the Mexican volcanoes.

**CONDITIONING**

You cannot over train for high altitude climbing. Concentrate on your heart, legs and lungs. Climb or hike at any opportunity. You will enjoy the trip more if you are properly prepared. An aerobic program of either running, stair climbing or bicycling, plus a conditioning program for the thigh muscles is strongly recommended. You owe it to your team mates to be in excellent condition for the trip.

**CLIMBING SKILLS**

Prior knowledge of ice ax arrest, cramponing and rope team travel are REQUIRED. Everyone needs to be familiar with these climbing skills.

**EQUIPMENT**

The enclosed PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST is for your guidance. Most items are REQUIRED, a few are optional. Please consider each item carefully and be sure you understand what each piece of equipment's function is before you substitute or delete items from the list. Keep in mind that this list has been carefully compiled by IMG. Check with your equipment outfitter if you are unsure about a particular item. If that doesn't answer your question, call us.

**FOOD**

Breakfasts and dinners will be provided while you are climbing. This includes hot drinks. These meals will consist of 'quick preparation' foods brought from the United States, as well as local foods.

We ask that each climber supply their own lunches/snacks. This gives us a lot more flexibility and this way you'll always have something handy to munch on. Bring things like candy, nuts, granola bars, GORP and powdered drink mixes. Breads, fruits and some other items are available in Ecuador. Each individual will be responsible for his/her own restaurant meals when we are not climbing. We will try to sample several local restaurants.

## **WEATHER**

Historically, November through February and June have proven to be reasonably stable weather periods. We should, however, be prepared for both cold and wet weather. Conditions on the mountains should be comparable to those encountered on Mt. Rainier.

Temperatures in Quito and neighboring towns should be mild with the possibility of an afternoon shower. A light jacket or sweater will likely be needed in the evenings

## **PASSPORTS**

If you do not already have a passport, or if your current passport is due to expire 6 months after the trip, you must obtain a new one. **A CURRENT PASSPORT IS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY INTO ECUADOR.** Also, if you have a 'well-traveled' passport, make sure there are blank pages available.

## **VISA**

An embarkation/disembarkation card is needed and can be obtained from the airline. These cards are usually handed out on board your flight to Quito. You will need to have your passport handy to present to immigration officials in Quito upon landing as proof of your citizenship, along with the above card. You must keep your copy of this card with you and present it upon leaving Ecuador.

No other visa or form is currently required.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

While it's always nice to have a doctor as a participant on our trips, we cannot guarantee one's presence and you should be aware of this. We do ask that you to carefully fill out the Medical Information form that is part of the sign up packet which you completed as part of the registration procedure. We need to be informed of any allergies you may have, medicines you are currently taking and any medical conditions which could possibly affect your ability to safely participate on a climbing expedition.

In addition to the first aid items listed on the equipment list, there are a few additional medications that you should consider. These should be discussed with your personal physician and will require his prescription. We want everyone to bring a course of the prescription antibiotic Ciprofloxacin. You should also bring some Imodium for treatment of traveler's diarrhea. Please consider both of these medications as part of your **REQUIRED** equipment list. We do not recommend the automatic use of Diamox for altitude sickness but you can also discuss this with your physician and he can make this available to you if you and he deem it appropriate. Any medication should be used only if necessary and use should be discussed thoroughly with your physician and with your guide before you take the medication.

Water purification is also very important. An efficient and effective and inexpensive method is the use of iodine crystals. These are available commercially at mountaineering stores as a product called 'Polar Pure'. Iodine tablets, such as 'Potable Agua' are also available and work well. Filters, such as the ones made by MSR, are also good. Either can be used or both can be used in combination. Bottled water is also readily available.

There are some immunizations that you should consider. Your local health department is the best source of information. They are cheap insurance. Start preparations now so that these vaccinations can be spaced out. We strongly suggest receive the Hepatitis A vaccination and a tetanus vaccination. Most people like to be current with these vaccinations regardless of whether they are traveling or not.

We also recommend that each participant brings a small bottle of a hand disinfectant such as Purell. Anything that we can do to stay healthy is worthwhile.

Health issues will be discussed during the expedition and we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions before or during the trip.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

No immunizations are currently required to enter Ecuador. We do recommend that you consider the following:

- Tetanus/Diphtheria:** There is no natural immunity to the tetanus toxin and since it is found throughout the world, immunization is a universal recommendation regardless of age. A combined tetanus/ diphtheria booster is available, good for ten years.
- Hepatitis Vaccine:** New vaccines are available for both hepatitis A and B.

Please consult your physician or local health department for their recommendations.

You should also ask your physician for a prescription for a course of the antibiotic Ciprofloxacin. Please consider this to be part of your required equipment.

### **PACKING AND TRAVELING SUGGESTIONS**

Most of us will pack our gear in two duffle bags. We put our climbing pack in one of these bags. Most airlines limit checked luggage to two pieces each weighing no more than 50 lbs. Use zip ties to close the bags or purchase TSA approved locks. TSA approved locks really are a good idea. These are nice for your peace of mind. They help to prevent pilfering. In addition to these two bags, we like to use a small rucksack as our carry on luggage. You then have this small rucksack available for day hikes, shopping, etc.

We also would suggest that you purchase one of the many light money belts that are available or get one of the pouches that you can hang around your neck and place inside your shirt. This is a little safer way to carry your money and travel documents. Experienced travelers will also carry a couple of extra passport photos with them as well as a copy of the first pages of your passport. These should be carried in a place separate from your passport. Having them available will greatly facilitate the replacement of your passport if you ever lost it.

Get to the airport early and make sure your luggage gets checked through to the correct destination. Also, make sure that your flight connections aren't too tight. Lost luggage is a pain. Try to keep the number of connections to a minimum when you are making travel plans and use the same airline as much as possible.

Leave expensive jewelry and watches at home. We would like everyone to have a wrist watch with an alarm along. They are quite handy. It's convenient to have a pen with you for filling in travel forms.

## INSURANCE

You are advised and encouraged to buy your own life, personal medical, travel baggage, trip interruption and all other types of insurance that may pertain to this trip as they **are not** provided for you. Again, please call if you have any questions.

<http://mountainguides.com/travel-insurance.shtml>

## FLIGHT INFORMATION AND TRAVEL PLANS

Seats can sometimes be in short supply to South America and flight schedules can change frequently. Because of this, we encourage you to make your reservations early and strongly urge you to contact CTT Destinations. They are linked from our web site or you can contact them at: 800 909 6647 or by email at: [img@cttdestinations.com](mailto:img@cttdestinations.com) This is an agency that specializes in group travel. We've worked with them for years and we can highly recommend them to help make your travel arrangements. By knowing our programs, they can do a lot to facilitate your travel plans. It is also beneficial for us to have knowledge of everyone's travel arrangements

Most flights to Quito arrive later in the evening. We encourage everyone to connect with the group flight for the flight to Quito, mainly for the sake of simplicity and your own convenience. CTT Destinations can easily recommend the best routing.

Remember, you are responsible for making all of your own flight arrangements.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Casual attire is the rule for most of our activities. It's nice to have a clean shirt with a collar and a pair of pants for evenings in Quito. Shorts are mostly frowned upon for men in South America.

Cash should be carried in the form of US dollars. Ecuador has adopted the U.S. dollar as their currency. Bring small bills. Well-known credit cards are also accepted at better business establishments in Quito. Plan to take about \$500. That's probably more than you'll spend but it's always nice to have extra dollars. We also ask everyone to bring one blank check. It's easy for us to simply put all group restaurant meals on one bill and divide that by the number of participants and guides at the end of the trip.

We like to put our climbing pack inside one duffel bag and take a second duffel bag as our pieces of check-in luggage. Then, we carry a small rucksack as our carry-on on the airplane. Normally, one duffel is then left in Quito with extra street clothes, etc. for our return and the second duffel is left at the hotel used just prior to the upcoming climb for retrieval upon our return.

We hope all this information will be helpful. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

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*"Phil, you did a great job at providing superb leadership and it's only in hindsight that I realized how much I did learn in the several days that we all worked together. Your concern for safety and the well-being of the group was certainly expressed succinctly and in the end it paid dividends. But, what I particularly liked was your strong emphasis on the fact that we participate together as a team up to the top and back down. We succeeded, and in large part I think, it's due to the fact that you emphasized that we all do it together..."*

—Todd H.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: [www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml](http://www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml)

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## Ecuador Volcanoes Expedition Itinerary

- Day 01** Depart home for flights to Quito. Night will be spent at the Embassy Hotel on Calle Presidente Wilson in Quito.
- Day 02** Morning tour of Old Town Quito. Depart Quito for the town of Otavalo. Lunch will be at a local restaurant on the way. Night will be spent at the Otavalo Hotel. Late afternoon visit to local weavers in the town of Peguche.
- Day 03** Early morning visit to the famous Otavalo Indian Market. Transfer back to Quito in the afternoon for final packing and preparations. Lunch in Quito. Night spent at the Embassy Hotel.
- Day 04** Depart Quito. Breakfast will be in the countryside at a beautiful and unique restaurant. We will then do an acclimatization climb of Pasochoa. The night will be spent at a small hacienda called Tiera del Volcan. It's at about 12,000 ft. making it a great place for us to continue to acclimatize.
- Day 05** Drive to the trailhead on Cotopaxi. We'll hike up to near the Cotopaxi hut and conduct a review session on the glacier nearby. We'll return to our hacienda for the evening.
- Day 06** Drive back to the trailhead and hike to the hut on Cotopaxi. We'll spend the night there.
- Day 07** Ascent of Cotopaxi. Return to the hut, pack gear and transfer to La Cienega for the night. La Cienega is an old hacienda that has been converted to a hotel. It's a beautiful spot.
- Day 08** Day of relaxation and clean-up at La Cienega. We will visit another Indian market in the nearby town of Saquisilí. We will have dinner at San Augustin. This is another old hacienda and you'll find the visit and dinner to be very special. The night will be spent at La Cienega.
- Day 09** Drive to Cayambe, stopping at the Hacienda Guachala for lunch. Continue driving to the hut.
- Day 10** Acclimatization and/or weather contingency day and a great day for additional technical instruction on a nearby glacier. Night will be spent at the hut.
- Day 11** Climb Cayambe, pack and head to the vehicles. We'll return to Guachala for an early dinner and then its off to Papallacta. This is a resort with volcanic fed hot springs. What a way to end a climb.
- Day 12** Return to Quito. Afternoon free in Quito. We'll then have a final dinner at a beautiful restaurant in town. The night will be spent at the Embassy Hotel.
- Day 13** Morning departure from Quito to the U.S. and catch connecting flights for home.

### Chimborazo Extension

- Day 13** Drive from Quito south to Chimborazo. Short hike to Whympner Hut. Night spend there.
- Day 14** Summit attempt or possible high camp move.
- Day 15** Summit bid/weather contingency day. Late evening return to Quito. Hotel night in Quito.
- Day 16** Morning departure from Quito to the U.S. and catch connecting flights for home.

## Ecuador Volcanoes Expedition Equipment List

### Please Read Carefully:

- LARGE size internal frame pack
- ice ax (60-70 cm length is the most useful)
- 12 pt. crampons (must be reasonably sharp)
- adjustable ski poles
- climbing harness
- climbing hard hat is also REQUIRED
- 2 locking and 2 regular carabiners
- sleeping bag (down or synthetic)
- Thermarest pad
- double climbing boots
- gaiters
- light hiking shoes
- 2 sets of wool socks
- light hiking shirt
- light hiking shorts and/or pants
- climbing pants
- Gore-tex wind/snow pants with full-length leg zippers
- Gore-tex wind/snow shell-type parka
- light to medium weight insulated parka (down or synthetic)
- polypropylene underwear -- 2 tops and 1 bottom
- soft-shell or Wind Stopper fleece jacket
- wool or fleece stocking hat
- ski gloves
- polypro gloves
- warm mittens
- bandana
- sunglasses AND ski goggles
- suntan lotion (at least #15 protection factor) and lip salve
- 2 wide mouth plastic water bottles (1 insulated cover suggested)
- plastic bowl, mug with lid and spoon
- good headlamp with 2 sets of batteries
- camera and film
- personal first aid kit to include at least the following:
  - aspirin
  - antacids
  - moleskin
  - band-aids
  - Ciprofloxacin
  - Imodium
  - light weight toilet articles and personal medications
  - iodine crystals or tablets for water purification (these are available at mountaineering stores as a product called 'Polar Pure' or 'Potable Agua'.)
- toilet paper and small bottle of Purell
- 3 large plastic garbage bags
- pocket knife
- alarm wrist watch (Splurge and get an altimeter watch from Suunto.)