



# Ecuador Expedition.



## **Hello team!**

Welcome to Ecuador: the land of world-class surfing, the Amazon Rainforest, and the Andes Mountains. Ecuador is one of the most bio-diverse countries on earth and one of the most fascinating countries one can visit in South America.

12 years ago, Epic Founder Chris Lininger spent six months exploring Ecuador and fell in love with the country and its people. Now, Chris and Epic Expeditions are heading back to climb some of the country's highest peaks (and active volcanoes).

Our goals will be climbing Ecuador's major volcanoes: Cayambe (5,790m/18,996ft), Cotopaxi (5,897m/19,347ft) and Chimborazo (6,310m/20,702ft).

If you are new to Epic Expeditions – this trip is a great place to start your adventure journey with us.

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# Table of contents.

- 3** **VISA ARRANGEMENTS**  
General information
- 3** **FLIGHTS**  
When do I need to get there
- 4** **ACCOMMODATION**  
What kind of accommodation to expect
- 5** **FOOD**  
Daily Meals Examples and Snacks
- 5** **EXPEDITION SAFETY**  
and Travel Insurance
- 6** **CLIMBING EXPERIENCE**  
Fitness Requirements
- 7** **MONEY**  
How much to bring and Tipping FAQ
- 7** **INTERNET ACCESS**  
WiFi and SIM Cards
- 8** **WEATHER CONDITIONS**  
Packing list and Porter allowance
- 8** **SPENDING EXTRA TIME**  
In cities and during the trek
- 9** **WHAT TO PACK**  
Explore Ecuador beyond the Expedition
- 10** **FINAL NOTES**  
Early client departure protocol, Liability Waiver and Paying the Balance

# Getting ready to experience Ecuador

A few months prior to the trip, we will be sending you a number of Google forms and documents to return in order to collect the necessary information from you.

***Please do your best to fill in and return these in a timely manner.***

*Please check out this blog article for information on how to properly train for a trip like this.*

## Visa arrangements - general information

- MOST nationalities including USA, UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, etc are able to visit Ecuador without a visa or can obtain a visa upon arrival (VOA). Be sure to check the [official immigration website](#) (that link is for USA people) to see if your nationality qualifies.
- All guests coming on the Ecuador Expedition MUST confirm their country's visa agreement with Ecuador well in advance of the start of the trip
- Visa fees are **NOT** included in the tour price and it is your responsibility to obtain the correct visa in a timely manner from Ecuador Immigration if needed.
- NOT EVERY COUNTRY can receive a visa upon arrival. As such, it is a good idea to double-check.

### DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT TO EPIC ASAP

- Please submit a copy of their passport to us via email. This is for our records and/or in case of an emergency.

## Flights to Ecuador

**Arrival Airport:** Quito International Airport (UIO)

**Departure Airport:** Quito International Airport (UIO)

### Quito: The 2nd largest city in Ecuador

Connections to Quito are plentiful from other large cities in the region including Bogota, Guayaquil, Lima, Panama City, etc. Because Quito sits at an altitude of 9,350 feet (2,850 meters), arriving at least one day before the trip starts is a good idea. That way you can be sure to both arrive into the country on time and get a good night's rest before we start the trip.

*Note: Included trip accommodation does not start until the evening of day 1. If you arrive into Quito in the days before the tour starts, you will need to pay for you own accommodation. We can help make hotel suggestions for you if you'd like or we can book you into the same hotel as our guides. The cost is around \$70 USD/night.*

## AIRLINES

- Check the visa conditions of any country you plan to transit through, you may be required to have a transit visa (like the USA for example)
- Please begin the investigation of flights now, this will allow you to get an overview of prices, routes, and possible connections. Keep an eye out for promo fares, particularly with low-cost carriers.

## CONNECTIONS

There are flights to Quito via the following airlines:

- American Airlines
- United, Delta
- Avianca
- LATAM Airlines
- Copa

# When do you need to be there?

- To experience the full itinerary, you need to be in the hotel/meeting place and be rested by the morning of day 1. We will confirm the exact time and meeting place just prior to the start of the trip.
- The expedition ends on day 15 and except for breakfast and airport transfers, no services are included this day, so it makes sense to try and leave by the evening unless you plan on staying in Quito longer on your own.
- Checkout from the hotel is around 11 am.

# Accommodation in Ecuador

We will be staying in a mix of 3-star hotels, Hacienda-style guesthouses, and mountain huts during the climb plus a few nights in tents when we attempt Chimborazo.

In Quito, we will be staying within walking distance of many shops, restaurants, and bars. A nice breakfast is included at every hotel stay. Hotels have been carefully selected to ensure we get a good night's rest at every stop on our journey!

## Mountain Huts and Camping

For Cayambe and Cotopaxi, we will be staying at beautifully located basic, but comfortable mountain huts located along the climbing route and will be launching our summit attempts directly from the hut. For Chimborazo, we stay at one high camp, the night before our summit push.

**Single Supplement hotel room (10 nights): \$850 USD**

# Food in Ecuador

Ecuadorian cuisine is as diverse as the different regions of Ecuador. Rooted in a blend of indigenous, Spanish, and African influences, Ecuadorian food offers a diverse array of dishes that showcase the country's rich culinary heritage.

Our staff has gone out and found the best local restaurants and dishes to try. Believe us when we say food is a big part of this trip.

## **The following meals are included in the trip price:**

- Breakfast on days 2 to 15
- Box lunch or restaurant lunch on days 2 to 14
- Dinner on days 4 to 13

Dinners in Quito are paid on your own (cost is approximately \$13-20 USD per person depending on what you order).

*Please let us know early on if you have any diet restrictions/preferences. If you are vegetarian/vegan, you might want to consider bringing some of your own food (for snacks/breakfast stuff), as it can be very difficult to cater to individuals in a big group, though we always do our best.*

## **PERSONAL SNACKS**

If you have done some hiking or group travel before, then you know how important snacks are! While Epic does provide some snacks and hearty meals, it is always a great idea to bring some of your favorite trekking/travel snacks from your home country.

- It is possible to find snacks in Ulaanbaatar that are similar to those one might find in the Western world. We suggest bringing your favorite assortment of snacks and chow down during long car rides and trail breaks. Gummies, nuts, jerky, energy gels, Cliff bars, granola bars, dark chocolate, superfood powder, bliss balls... These are all solid snack foods.
- Choose high-calorie, low-weight snack foods.

# Expedition safety

## **STAYING SAFE ON THIS TOUR**

- You may have guessed, this adventure tour carries a certain amount of risk since we are traveling and trekking DEEP into the mountains in a developing country. This is not your average holiday per se. There will be no cocktails on the beach.
- Guest Safety is Epic's #1 priority and our experienced ground team does everything within their power to set our group up for a safe adventure.
- The name of the game is security and safety first and being mindful of injury prevention.
- In case of emergency, your Epic trip leader is equipped with a satellite communication device, which can contact outside emergency first responders from any place in Ecuador

## ALTITUDE IN ECUADOR

The biggest challenge you will face on this trip is the altitude. Though our program is designed in away to achieve maximum acclimatization in the time we have - there is no avoiding the fact we will spend some time at 5000 and 6000 meters.

Mild altitude sickness is a common issue, so it's important to:

- Allow time for acclimatization by resting upon arrival for 2-3 days.
- Stay hydrated and avoid strenuous activity for the first few days.
- Consider medication for altitude sickness if you have a history of feeling unwell at high altitude.

## Travel insurance for Ecuador

- Staff pick: [Global Rescue Insurance](#)
- Alternatives: that you use [World Nomads](#) or [Safety Wing](#) - both of those companies now cover "adventure sport" activities up to high altitudes (World Nomads Explorer plan and Safety Wing Adventure sport add-on).
- Make sure the insurance company chosen provides coverage for activities like trekking up to 6300 meters.

## MEDICAL CONSIDERATION

Vaccination can be a contentious issue and ultimately down to the decision of an individual, there are some vaccinations that are recommended for travel to Ecuador so please consult with a travel clinic for further advice. [General Information on health considerations](#) while traveling in Ecuador.

## Climbing Experience / Fitness Requirements

Ecuador is a great place to pick up mountaineering skills. Climbing the volcanoes on this itinerary is relatively straightforward compared to other high-altitude, technical climbs found in regions like the Peruvian Andes, Karakoram, and Himalayas. *There will be challenges* no doubt, but nothing that a strong hiker with the proper support, equipment, and guidance can't handle.

So long story short: you do not need any technical climbing experience to come on this trip to Ecuador. Only an affinity for the mountains, great fitness, and a good attitude.

Trip participants need to be in great shape and capable of trekking/climbing over mixed terrain for long distances (maximum 8-10 hours). Local porters will be present in some cases to help us carry the supplies that will make climbing Ecuador's volcanoes a comfortable and rewarding experience.

The biggest day will be Chimborazo summit day; when the climb will take between 10-12 hours depending on conditions and your fitness level from high camp to summit and back to high camp. So you will be saving some energy for this day for sure!

**For more information on how to prepare for a trip like this, please refer to our [climbing/trekking fitness guide](#).**

# Money In Ecuador

Conveniently, the official currency of Ecuador is the USD, which was adopted in the year 2000 to stabilize the economy and facilitate international trade. Thus, American travelers do not need to worry about exchanging currency upon arrival.

Visitors can easily withdraw money from ATMs, which are widely available in larger cities and tourist areas. Outside of these populated urban areas though, opportunities to withdraw money become scarce. You'll want to have your cash before you leave Quito for the mountains.

Regarding costs, Ecuador can be quite affordable. For instance:

Street food like empanadas or humitas typically costs around \$1 to \$2.

A local beer can be purchased for about \$1 to \$3.

A meal at a mid-range restaurant generally costs between \$5 and \$10.

Tipping is customary but not mandatory. In restaurants, a 10% service charge is often included in the bill; if not, leaving a 10% tip is appropriate.

Money Recommendation for Epic trips: With \$300 USD you should have more than enough to get souvenirs, buy beer and meals during free time, pick up snacks, and extra drinks and meals along the way.

When we return to Quito at the end of the tour, you will have a chance to get out more cash should you need it (for shopping, tipping staff, last-minute purchases, etc).

## **Tipping recommendations (in USD per guest)**

- Lead Ecuador Guide: \$150
- IFMGA climbing guides: \$150 per guest
- Bus driver: \$20 per guest

# SIM cards & internet access in Ecuador

In Ecuador, the primary mobile operators are Claro, Movistar, and CNT.

Claro is the largest operator and offers extensive 4G coverage, particularly in urban areas. Movistar and the state-owned CNT also provide widespread mobile services, including voice and data plans. Tuenti operates as a mobile virtual network operator, providing competitive prepaid and postpaid plans by leveraging existing networks.

You can purchase a local SIM card from these operators at various points such as major airports as well as in numerous retail stores throughout the cities. On average, a charged SIM card will cost around \$5.

It's important to note that cell signal coverage can be limited in mountainous regions.

# Weather conditions in Ecuador

The weather in Ecuador (as the name would suggest) is based on an Equatorial climate with distinct wet and dry seasons. Since this trip will take place in the Andean regions, the weather will be much cooler on average than if this was a surf trip on the Ecuadorian coast.

## January Temperature averages:

**Quito:** Highs around 66°F (19°C) and lows around 48°F (9°C)

**Cayambe region:** 66°F (19°C) and lows around 45°F (7°C)

**Cotopaxi National Park:** 57°F (14°C) and lows around 41°F (5°C)

**6000 meter summits:** 41°F (5°C) and lows around 15°F (-10°C)

# Spending extra time in Ecuador

If you have extra time in Ecuador, consider seeing the rest of the country! Below are some possible extensions you can do on your own after your trip with Epic ends:

- **Explore the Galápagos Islands:** The Galápagos Islands are renowned for their unique wildlife and stunning landscapes. Activities include snorkeling with sea lions, hiking on volcanic islands, and observing giant tortoises in their natural habitat. The islands offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience biodiversity and natural beauty.
- **Visit the Amazon Rainforest:** A trip to the Amazon provides an immersive experience in one of the world's most diverse ecosystems. Visitors can take guided tours to see exotic wildlife, explore river systems, and learn about indigenous cultures. Lodges in the Amazon offer comfortable accommodations and opportunities for night hikes, canoe trips, and wildlife spotting.
- **Cuenca:** Cuenca, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is known for its well-preserved colonial architecture and vibrant cultural scene. Visitors can explore historic churches, museums, and plazas, and enjoy the city's culinary delights. Cuenca also serves as a base for visiting nearby Inca ruins and natural parks.
- **Mindo Cloud Forest:** Located a couple of hours from Quito, Mindo is a paradise for nature lovers and bird watchers. The cloud forest is home to numerous species of birds, butterflies, and orchids. Activities include bird watching, zip-lining, and visiting butterfly farms and chocolate factories.

# What to pack for Ecuador

\*Porter allowance for Chimborazo climb is 20kg per 2 members (we are only going up one night). You might need to carry a few personal items if your weight exceeds 10kg per person.

It's extremely important that you bring the right gear for the trip.

The weather will at times be cold and, especially while we are on our summit pushes at or above 5000/6000 meters - it will be below freezing at night. You will want to be comfortable so it's worth spending money on decent-quality warm gear. Though likewise, it can be very sunny, pleasant and comfortable at lower elevations. It is always best to be prepared for a variety of climates and temperature fluctuations.



TEST ALL OF YOUR PERSONAL GEAR BEFORE COMING TO Ecuador. Please take the time to go out on an overnight backpacking/camping trip at least once before coming on this trip so that you know how your gear performs in the mountains.

## PACKS & BAGGAGE

- Expedition Duffel Bag
- Day Trekking Backpack with rain cover

## SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT

- Trekking Poles
- Headlamp
- Grayl Filter Bottle
- Gaiters
- Summit Socks
- Heavy weight Gortex Gloves with fingers
- 2 climbing slings 60cm
- or safety cord
- 2 Locking Carabiners
- 2 Non-locking Carabiners
- Belay Device (ATC climbing device)
- Helmet \*
- Crampons \*
- Technical Ice Ax \*
- Harness \*

## BOOTS & FOOTWEAR

- Trekking Boots
- Alpine Boots (B1/B2)
- Camp Shoes
- Sandals/Tevas/Keens

## OTHER PERSONAL GEAR

- Dry Bags
- Polarized Sunglasses
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Power Bank
- Chargers/Phone Cable
- Personal snacks

## TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush, Toothpaste
- Sun Cream (50 spf+)
- Spf Lip Balm
- Biodegradable Soap
- Deodorant
- Wet wipes
- Travel Towel

## ESSENTIAL PERSONAL GEAR

- 0F\ -17C Sleeping Bag
- Inflating Sleeping Pad
- Inflatable Camp Pillow \*\*\*

## CLOTHING LAYER SYSTEMS

- Rain Shell Pants
- Hard Shell/Rain Jacket
- Fleece
- Base Layer Top
- Base Layer Bottoms
- Sun Hat and Beanie
- Buff and Bandana
- Gloves Light Weight
- Trekking Shirts
- Trekking Pants
- Synthetic Multisport Pants
- Merinos Trekking Socks
- Underwear / Bras
- Mid weight Down Jacket
- Heavy Weight / Hi Loft Down Jacket

\* Items can be rented

\*\* We do recommend bringing your own 6000 meter boots if you have them.

\*\*\* Optional

## Liability waiver

All tour participants will be required to sign an industry-standard waiver releasing Epic Expeditions from liability related to any aspect of this trip. Waivers are usually issued on day 1 of the tour at our first team briefing. If you would like to request a copy of the waiver in advance, please email us.

## Paying the balance

Final balance payments will be due approximately 3-4 months before the tour begins. If you have a balance owing we will advise you of how and when to pay this. Please remember that deposits are non-refundable.

If you would like to pay the balance sooner, please email us!

Any questions? Email us at [contact@epicexpeditions.com](mailto:contact@epicexpeditions.com)

Again, we are very excited to get to meet you in person in Ecuador soon!

