



American
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The Spirit of Alpinism

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Cayambe-Antisana Skills Expedition and Chimborazo Climb Program Itinerary

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Part One: Cayambe-Antisana Skills Expedition

Day 1: Arrive - Quito

This is the first scheduled day of the program. Arrive in Quito and meet your guide and other members of the expedition at Hotel Reina Isabel at 19:00. The first day is designated for traveling to Ecuador and becoming situated in the country. For those who arrive early, we will provide you with a variety of sightseeing options including a tour of the historic colonial sector of Quito and El Panecillo overlooking the city.

- **Altitudes:** Quito: 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** n/a
- **Travel times:** n/a
- **Walking distance:** n/a
- **Accommodations:** Hotel Reina Isabel
- **Sleeping elevation:** 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Meals included:** Breakfast*

Day 2: Acclimatize - Quito City Tour

After meeting the rest of your group for breakfast at 08:00 am at the hotel, the guides will brief you on the details of the expedition and conduct a gear check. We will then leave the hotel to visit the colonial part of town including the Basilica, la Compania, San Francisco, the first religious building constructed by the Spanish in South America by the Spanish. If time allows, we can also drive up the hill of El Panecillo where there is an impressive statue (the Virgin of Quito) and a great view of the whole city. In the afternoon, you may also have the chance to visit the Native South American souvenir market.

- **Altitudes:** Quito: 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** n/a
- **Travel times:** n/a
- **Walking distance:** Varies
- **Accommodations:** Hotel Reina Isabel
- **Sleeping elevation:** 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Meals included:** Breakfast*

Day 3: Acclimatize Hike - Cerro Pasochoa (13,776 ft)

Today we will go on our first acclimatization hike on Cerro Pasochoa. The Pasochoa

Wildlife Refuge has been protected since 1982, and exists as it did in pre-Colombian times. In the forest below Cerro Pasocha, we will hike among stands of pumamaqui, polyapis, podocarpus, and sandalwood trees as we watch for some of the more than one hundred species of native birds.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Quito: 9350 ft / 2850 m; Cerro Pasocha: 13,776 ft / 4200 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 2296 ft / 700 m
- **Travel Time:** 2 hours driving time; 4-5 hours walking time
- **Walking Distance:** 5 miles
- **Accommodations:** Hotel Reina Isabel
- **Sleeping elevation:** 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 4: Acclimatize Hike - Rucu Pichincha (15,413 ft)

On day four, we head to the East of Quito to the Pichincha Massif for our final acclimatization hike on Rucu Pichincha. This hike involves first taking a cable car ride above the city, then hiking on trail through rolling hills with a few rock scrambles for good measure. The summit provides views of the central valley from high above Quito. In the afternoon, we travel to one of the oldest haciendas in Ecuador, Hacienda Guachala (built in 1580). The hacienda is a beautiful property, maintaining its rustic charm, and was used by Edward Whymper before his first ascent of Cayambe in 1880.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Quito: 9350 ft / 2850 m; Rucu Pichincha: 15,413 ft / 4698 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 2673 ft / 815 m
- **Travel Time:** 3 hours driving; 4-5 hours walking
- **Walking Distance:** 6 miles
- **Accommodations:** Hacienda Guachala
- **Sleeping elevation:** 9199 ft / 2804 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 5: Travel to Cayambe Refuge

We make our way through the small village of Cayambe to have a close look at the simple rural architecture, which typifies villages in the Andean foothills. The road changes as we gain more elevation becoming more and more rigorous. Depending on road conditions, we may hike the last section of road and allow the jeeps to go on ahead with our equipment. When we reach the famous Cayambe Refuge, we will be treated with breathtaking views of the precipitous Glaciar Hermoso ("beautiful glacier"). In the afternoon, we will take a short hike above camp as far as the entrance to the upper glacier. This trip may take up to two hours in total. In the evening, if the skies are clear, we will enjoy the alpenglow at sunset showing our route up the south and western flanks of Cayambe.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Hacienda Guachala: 9199 ft / 2804 m; High point of hike: 15,600 ft / 4648 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 5904 ft / 1800 m (mostly via driving to the hut, potential to hike approx. 250 ft / 76 m vertical elevation gain)
- **Travel Time:** 2 hour driving; 2 hours + 45 minute walking
- **Walking Distance:** 1 mile (carrying all gear)
- **Accommodations:** Ruales-Berg-Orleas Hut
- **Sleeping elevation:** 15,080 ft / 4600 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6: Skills Practice - Cayambe/ Glaciar Hermoso

Much of this day will be spent discussing and practicing alpine climbing skills to prepare

for our summit attempt on Cayambe. The glacier above the hut provides an excellent classroom for learning and reviewing basic glacier travel skills, ice axe and crampon technique, and self arrest. After spending the day on the ice, we return to the comfort of the refuge and discuss our plan for summit day.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Ruales-Berg-Orleas hut: 15,080 ft / 4600 m; Glacier Hermoso: 16,072 ft / 4900 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 984 ft / 300 m
- **Travel Time:** 1 hour walking
- **Walking Distance:** 0.5 mile
- **Accommodations:** Ruales-Berg-Orleas hut
- **Sleeping elevation:** 15,080 ft / 4600 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7: Cayambe Summit Attempt (18,996 ft)

We start our climb in the middle of the night, making use of the firm snow conditions caused by the cooler night time temperatures. The route takes us up varied terrain on rock until we reach the glacier; we then configure our teams for glacier travel. The snow and ice climbing on Cayambe is moderate, and the steepness tops out at a comfortable 35 degrees. Our first major landmark is the Picos Jarrin (17,390 ft), a big rock outcrop where we have a good opportunity for a break. Above this point the route becomes a bit steeper and more exposed to weather. As we near the summit, the final obstacle presents itself as a steep face passable through good route finding. We usually need to traverse around seracs and crevasses in order to gain the summit. The traverse creates an exciting finish to one of the great classics of equatorial climbs. Descend and spend the night at Hacienda Guachala.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Ruales-Berg-Orleas hut: 15,080 ft / 4600 m; Cayambe Cumbre Máxima: 18,996 ft / 5790 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 3936 ft / 1200 m
- **Travel Time:** 8-12 hours walking
- **Walking Distance:** 4 miles
- **Accommodations:** Hacienda Guachala
- **Sleeping elevation:** 9199 ft / 2804 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 8: Travel to Antisana Reserve (Recovery Day)

This day allows for rest and recovery after our ascent of Cayambe. We leave Cayambe and drive south, passing through the remote Andean village of Pintag, following a winding mountain road up into the páramo. On our way, we will stop at a restaurant for lunch. We arrive at our hacienda in the mid-afternoon with time to explore the property, play games, or catch-up on sleep. Parts of the Antisana area were privately owned as recently as 2012, when the government bought out the private landowners to expand the Antisana Reserve. In addition to protecting a beautiful wilderness area, the government has strong interest in the region as a water source; water from the mountain is being used as the principal potable water supply for the south part of Quito. The reserve provides wildlife habitat for deer, foxes, and bears. We commonly see condors here, the largest flying bird in the Andes. Night in a local hacienda.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Hacienda Guachala: 9199 ft / 2804 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** n/a
- **Travel Time:** 3 hours driving
- **Walking Distance:** n/a

- **Accommodations:** Hacienda Guaytara
- **Sleeping elevation:** 11,519 ft / 3511 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast*

Day 9: Travel to Antisana Base Camp

We have a second easy day as we cross open grasslands and drive through a remote region of old hacienda lands, enjoying great views of Sincholagua (15,988 ft) and Cotopaxi (19,347 ft). We visit the Nature Reserve's office at La Mica Lake where we present our climbing permits and then drive further before establishing our camp near the base of Antisana (13,448 ft). Our camping and climbing equipment will be taken to camp via jeep, and the team will walk the final 2km of approach before reaching camp.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Hacienda Guaytara: 11,480 ft / 3500 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 984 ft / 300 m
- **Travel Time:** 1 hour driving; 1 hour walking (vehicles transport gear)
- **Walking Distance:** 2-3 miles
- **Accommodations:** Antisana base camp
- **Sleeping elevation:** 15,080 ft / 4600 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10: Antisana Summit Attempt (18,891 ft) and Return to Quito – End of Part 1

Rising in the middle of the night, we will have some light food and hot beverages before starting our climb. We will climb on easy terrain for about forty-five minutes before donning our crampons for ascending up the glacier. The alpine start allows us to take advantage of the firm route conditions during the early morning hours. We gradually make our way up the impressive glacier to the saddle between Antisana Cumbre Maxima (highest summit) and Pico Sur (south summit). Near the saddle, route finding becomes integral to finding access to the upper reaches of the mountain. Ultimately our route will involve a combination of moderately angled glacier travel and short, steep sections that require the use of a full range of snow and ice techniques for intermediate terrain. The varied gradients and glacial configurations make this a particularly interesting and enjoyable ascent. If conditions allow, we enjoy food, drink, and a rest on the summit while photographing Cayambe to our north and rumbling Cotopaxi to our south. Upon descent we return to our vehicles, and drive back to Quito where we will have dinner and celebrate our successes. Night at Hotel Reina Isabel in Quito.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Antisana base camp: 15,080 ft / 4600 m; Antisana Cumbre Maxima: 18,891 ft / 5758 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 3739 ft / 1140 m
- **Travel Time:** 2 hours driving; 8-12 hours walking
- **Walking Distance:** 4 miles
- **Accommodations:** Hotel Reina Isabela in Quito
- **Sleeping elevation:** 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch*

Part Two (optional): Chimborazo Climb

Day 11: Travel to the flank of Chimborazo

From Quito we drive south, down the "Valley of Volcanoes" along the Panamerican Highway through the towns of Latacunga and Ambato. We will stop along the way for lunch. In the afternoon we move up onto the eastern flanks of Chimborazo where we

spend an evening in a lodge at 11,480 feet. It sits picturesquely in grassy plains below Chimborazo and allows us to rest and enjoy views of the Ecuadorian Altiplano surrounding Chimborazo and Carihuairazo (also known as “Chimborazo’s Wife”).

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Hotel Reina Isabela: 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** n/a
- **Travel Time:** 4 hours driving
- **Walking Distance:** n/a
- **Accommodations:** Urbina Mountain Lodge
- **Sleeping elevation:** 11,523 ft / 3512 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast

Day 12: Travel to Chimborazo Basecamp

From the lodge on the eastern side of Chimborazo we drive to the western side of the volcano passing through the town of Riobamba. Chimborazo Province is very hilly and is populated by a very high percentage of indigenous people. Great views of the Chimborazo massif, the surrounding rolling terrain and wild vicuñas and llamas will be had during our drive. Around noon we will reach the Carrel hut (15,700 ft / 4800 m) for lunch. The afternoon will be used to complete a two-hour hike to the Stubel Camp. Climbers carry their own personal gear to camp while porters carry water, tents, and food. In preparation for our alpine start, around midnight we will have an early dinner. Despite the building excitement for the next day’s summit climb we will go to bed early, with anticipation for a safe and rewarding climb in the morning. If conditions on the mountain are different and a direct route is more favorable, the team may stay in the Whymper or Carrel huts and make the summit attempt from there.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Urbina Mountain Lodge: 11,480 ft / 3500 m; Stubel Base camp: 16,564 ft / 5050 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 820 ft / 250 m
- **Travel Time:** 2 hours walking
- **Walking Distance:** 2 miles
- **Accommodations:** Stubel Camp
- **Sleeping elevation:** 16,564 ft / 5050 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13: Chimborazo Summit Attempt #1 (20,703 ft)

From Stubel Camp, we follow the Stübel glacier until it joins the Castle Saddle (18,044 ft). It takes an average of eight hours to get to the Whymper summit from Stübel Camp. By the time we reach the 18,500 foot-level (5640 m), we will have surmounted most of the technical challenges on the mountain, and on the remainder of our route we will ascend compact and moderately angled snow. The summit crater area is a vast one that is normally covered in its entirety either in soft snow or nieve penitentes. Although this is our longest day, we will be well acclimatized from the conditioning we have achieved on our previous climbs. Round trip we will spend 10 to 12 hours on route, which includes some ice ramps, snow bridges, and sections of icefall. It is a very interesting route on an impressively large mountain. We will descend to the Carrel hut and then continue in our vehicle to the lower altitude and oxygen-rich town of Baños at the edge of the Amazon Basin.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at Stubel Camp: 16,564 ft / 5050 m; Chimborazo Cumbre Máxima: 20,703 ft / 6310 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** 4034 ft / 1230 m
- **Travel Time:** 10-12 hours walking

- **Walking Distance:** 4-5 miles
- **Accommodations:** Hotel in Baños (or camp/ hut depending on how the climb goes)
- **Sleeping elevation:** 6227 ft / 1898 m (or other)
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14: Chimborazo Summit Attempt #2 (20,703 ft)

This day is a cushion day in our itinerary. Should Day 13 be needed to wait out inclement weather, we will make our summit climb on this day. If we climb on Day 14, we will hike out after our ascent and drive to Baños where we will spend the night in a hotel. Once in the semi-tropical town of Baños we will rest, relax, enjoy good food, and some time in the hot springs.

- **Altitudes:** *if successful summit on Day 13* Begin at hotel in Baños: 6232 ft / 1900 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** n/a
- **Travel Time:** n/a
- **Walking Distance:** n/a
- **Accommodations:** Hotel in Baños
- **Sleeping elevation:** 6227 ft / 1898 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch*

Day 15: Return to Quito – End of Part 2

This is the last scheduled day of the program. We will have an easy morning in Baños and return to Quito in the afternoon. The last evening is usually spent recounting, celebrating our successes, and discussing plans for future adventures. The final night will be spent at the Hotel Reina Isabel in Quito before departing: fly home, continue your exploration of Ecuador in the Amazon Basin, or fly to the Galapagos Islands.

- **Altitudes:** Begin at hotel in Baños: 6227 ft / 1898 m; Quito: 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Vertical gain during the day:** n/a
- **Travel Time:** 3 hours driving
- **Walking Distance:** n/a
- **Accommodations:** Hotel Reina Isabel
- **Sleeping elevation:** 9350 ft / 2850 m
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast*

Program Cost Inclusions and Exclusions

Inclusions:

Lodging in hotels, haciendas, huts, and tents on a shared basis for the dates of your program (available on a private basis by special arrangement, subject to availability, and at added cost), meals while at huts and while climbing, group cooking equipment, admissions to museums and national parks, group climbing equipment, transportation during trip, and porters for communal supplies on Chimborazo.

***Exclusions:**

Airfare, transportation to/from airport, personal equipment, meals in cities, hotels, haciendas, and lodges, single supplement for lodging as requested (as available), gratuities to guides, government and airport taxes, inoculations, personal insurance, excess baggage, personal porters for personal gear on Chimborazo. *You can plan to spend approximately \$12-16/meal, and you will be on your own for up to nine meals on the trip. We offer airport transfers for \$50 per transfer vehicle (1-3 climbers + gear).*

