



Chimborazo Ascent

Quito, Ecuador

PROGRAM ITINERARY

PROGRAM DETAILS: This program offers you an opportunity to climb Chimborazo (20,703 ft), the highest peak in Ecuador and one of the great climbing goals for alpinists in the Andes. This program must follow an appropriate acclimatization program.

DIFFICULTY GRADE: Intermediate

PREREQUISITES: Climbing to over 20,000 feet on Chimborazo is a significant undertaking. To join a climbing team for this ascent and have a good chance for success, you will need to know the fundamentals of glacier climbing, be in very good physical condition, and be well acclimatized to at least 18,000 feet within seven days of the climb.

Most climbers prepare by joining our ten-day Cayambe-Antisana program. In addition to having an opportunity to thoroughly acclimatize, you will also learn or refresh glacier climbing skills and raise your fitness level as you hike two 13,000 and 15,000-foot peaks and then make ascents of two very beautiful 18,000-foot summits.

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS:

- Long walks of 4 to 10 hours.
- Each climber carries his or her own personal equipment. Staff assistance is provided for group gear. Personal porters can be arranged. The average day pack will weigh between 5 and 15 lbs; climbing bags typically weigh between 25 and 35lbs.
- Moderate to big gains drops in altitude (400 to 1000 m; 1300 to 3200 ft).
- Lodging in camps, in mountain huts, and in town (twin share accommodation).

PROGRAM COST INCLUSIONS & 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.

Exclusions: Airfare; personal equipment; rental equipment; meals in cities, hotels, haciendas, and lodges; gratuities to guides; government and airport taxes; inoculations; personal insurance; excess baggage, airport transfers.

POST-ACCLIMATIZATION ITINERARY

Day 1: Travel to the flank of Chimborazo (3,500 m/ 11,480 ft)

After breakfast, we drive south, down the “Valley of Volcanoes” along the Pan-American Highway through the towns of Latacunga and Ambato. We will stop along the way for lunch.

In the afternoon we continue to travel up onto the flanks of Chimborazo, where we spend an evening in a lodge at about 3,500 m/ 11,480 feet. The Chimborazo Lodge sits picturesquely on a grassy plain below Chimborazo and allows us to rest and enjoy views of the Ecuadorian Altiplano that surrounds Chimborazo and its neighboring peak Carihuairazo (also known as “Chimborazo’s Wife”).

- **Accommodations:** Chimborazo Lodge or similar
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast

Day 2: Travel to Chimborazo High Camp

We leave the lodge in the morning, pass through the small town of San Juan, and steadily gain altitude as we cross open grasslands on Chimborazo’s lower slopes. We enjoy great views of the Chimborazo massif and the surrounding rolling terrain, and we are likely to have sightings of grazing vicuñas and llamas.

Around noon we reach the Carrel Hut (4,800 m/ 15,700 ft) and have lunch there before making a two-hour backpack to our high camp. Climbers carry their own personal gear to camp while porters carry water, tents, and food.

We have an early dinner this evening, in preparation for our alpine start. We go to bed early anticipating a very beautiful and rewarding ascent and with a plan to start our climb at about midnight to get the best possible climbing conditions on the route.

If conditions on the mountain change from what they have been and a direct route is more favorable, the team may stay in the area of Whymper Hut or Carrel Hut and make the summit attempt from there.

- **Accommodations:** High Camp at 5,400/ 17,720ft
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Chimborazo high camp Route

Day 3: Chimborazo Summit (6,310 m/ 20,703 ft)

From the camp, we follow a beautiful ridge line until it reaches the Castle Saddle (5,500 m/ 18,044 ft). By the time we reach the 18,500 foot level (5,640m), we have surmounted most of the technical challenges on the mountain, and on the remainder of our route we ascend compact and moderately angled snow. It will take us approximately six hours of climbing to reach the Whymper Summit (6,310 m/ 20,703 ft) from our high camp.

It is truly exciting to reach the 20,703-foot summit, and in good weather, the views are fittingly spectacular. The Whymper 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, it should be a very enjoyable climb because we will be so well acclimatized from all the high altitude hiking and the two major ascents that we made during Part 1 of our program.

In summary, we will spend eight to ten hours round-trip on route, and during the ascent we will enjoy applying our climbing skills on ice ramps, crossing snow bridges, and working through short sections of seracs. 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 what will feel to us as a very oxygen-rich central valley of Ecuador. Celebratory dinner to follow!

- **Accommodations:** Hotel in Riobamba (or camp/ hut depending on how the climb goes)
- **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 4: Chimborazo Summit Attempt Contingency Day & Return to Quito – End of Part 2

Should Day 3 be needed to wait out inclement weather, we will make our summit climb on this day. If we climb on Day 4, we will hike out after our ascent and drive to Quito where we will spend the night at Ilatoa Lodge.

- **Accommodations:** Ilatoa Lodge
 - **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch
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COVID-19 NOTES:

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take lives and endanger the health and economic vitality of the planet, American Alpine Institute has worked hard to find ways in which we can continue to pursue the mountain recreation we love while minimizing the risk of spreading the infection. Like society's larger effort to grapple with the disease, this is a work in progress. By following the latest news and recommendations for best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health authorities, we have continued to adapt our operations to the changing needs of the moment, keeping our participants and employees as safe as possible, arresting avoidable spread of the disease, and continuing to lead trips into the mountains that build climbing skills and rejuvenate the spirit. You can read a detailed summary of our operating plan [here](#).

ECUADOR-SPECIFIC PROTOCOLS:

In addition to following our base-line protocols outlined in the link above, prior to resuming operations in Ecuador in December 2020, we made changes to the itinerary and to the way in which we operate some aspects of the program.

Lodges: The observations of our staff in Ecuador indicate that the citizens of the country have achieved a high rate of compliance with requirements for face coverings and social distancing. However, because we believe that social distancing is more difficult to achieve with consistency in areas of high population, we have moved our center of operation in the Quito area away from a downtown hotel to the very nice Ilatoa Lodge located to the east in the countryside. Similarly, we have eliminated our traditional stay in the town of Baños at the end of the optional Chimborazo program.

Additionally, we are asking that all climbers who are not part of the same household, stay in single-occupancy rooms and tents, as opposed to our standard double-occupancy rooms and tents.

Lodging in the Mountains: Because of the use of bunk beds and their general close quarters, we consider the use of huts unsafe during the pandemic. Instead all climbers will camp in tents, doubles for climbers from the same household and singles for everyone else.

Food in the Mountains: To limit food handling and clean-up to a single professional, we have hired a cook to prepare meals during the mountain portions of the trip.

Other Fundamental Protocols:

- **Transportation** - reduced seating capacity to eliminate front-to-back and direct side-to-side seating;
- **Reduced group size** - our maximum group size is now six (four climbers and two guides);
- **Social distancing** - we maintain at least six feet of distance between climbers and guides in all settings where practical;
- **Face-covering requirement** - staff and climbers are required to wear cloth face coverings at all times when they cannot maintain a six-foot personal distance, even momentarily as when passing another team on a trail or climbing route, gathering for climbing instruction, or joining other climbers at a belay point.

More [details can be found here](#).

We have regularly reviewed and updated our protocols and will continue to do so based on evolving CDC guidelines and the direct advice of the Institute's three medical advisors, one of whom is an epidemiologist. Please call us if you have any questions.

