RIDE THE ECUADORIAN ANDES 8 DAYS

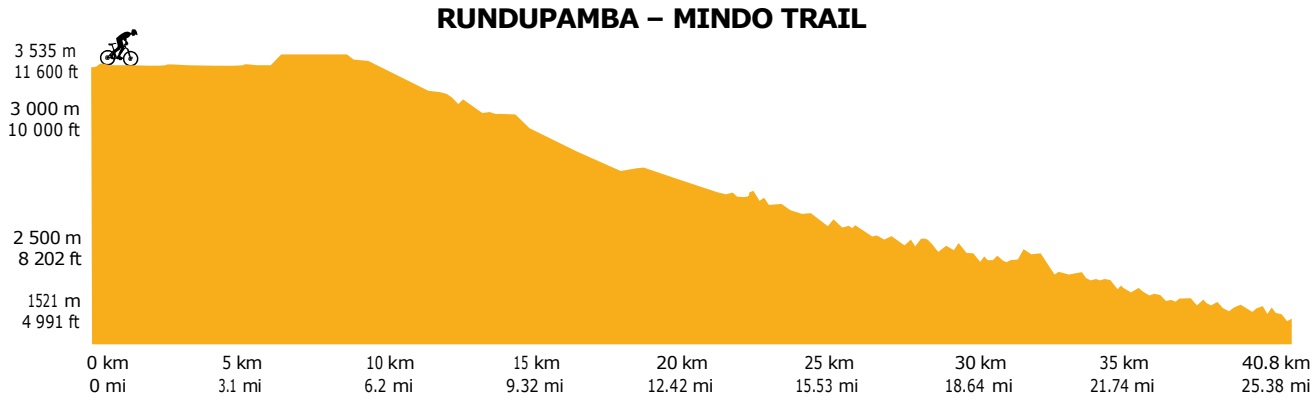
Our Mountain Biking tour along the Andes is one of the best options. Enjoy a nice cross country trip through indigenous little towns and local crop fields sharing with local people and local guides that make this experience completely unbelievable. Spend nights in indigenous homestays and historical haciendas is the plus that we offer in our magical tours.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

- Explore rural villages and mountainous landscapes on Ecuador's best biking routes.
- Mountain bike on the slopes of one the world´s highest active volcano.
- Learn the ancient meaning of the equator
- Bargain for handicrafts at Otavalo, one of the largest markets in Latin America.
- Enjoy riding the best mountain bikes and top quality equipment.
- Visit a Zuleta indigenous communities and participate in cultural activities.

DAY 1: RUNDUPAMBA – MINDO

We begin our adventure driving from Quito up and around the west face of Guagua Pichincha, the huge volcano that looms over the city. Once we reach the trailhead, we fine-tune our mountain bikes and start cycling north. At first, the trail climbs a smooth, steady incline to 3,300 meters of elevation. We enjoy beautiful highland scenery as we climb. After we crest the high point, we begin a thrilling downhill ride. As we descend, we can see the ecosystem around us change from high grasslands into montane cloud forest. This is one of the most biodiverse places on earth, as species from the Amazon, Choco Rainforest, and Andes all converge here. The plant and animal diversity is a wonder to behold, especially in the protected Mindo cloud forest reserve, where we will be spending the next two days. We bike through this beautiful environment until we reach our handsome eco-lodge near the reserve, where we enjoy a gourmet dinner and spend a relaxing evening taking in the tranquil atmosphere of the forest night. (BL)

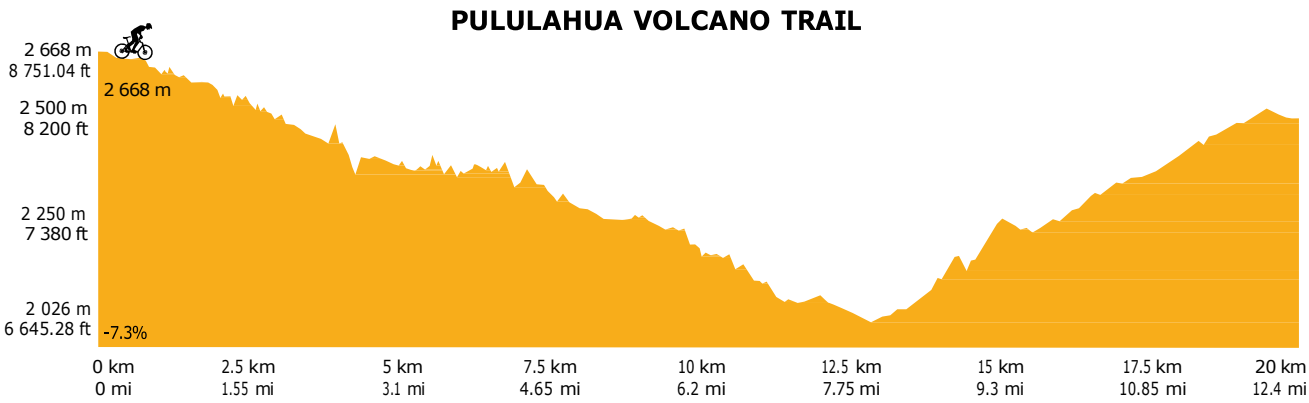


Distance: 40.8 km (25.38 mi) **Elevation gain/loss:** 1420m (4 659ft) / -3 314 m (-10 873 ft) **Max. inclination:** 28.2% / -41.8% **Average inclination:** 5.8% / -9.9%

[redacted]

DAY 2: PULULAHUA VOLCANO

We set out from Mindo, where we continue east along latitude zero to the Pululahua Geobotanical Reserve. Pululahua means "Cloud of Water" in Kichwa, so named because the area is home to great, humid cloud forest in the midst of a relatively dry area. Ages ago, a massive eruption blew off the entirety of Pululahua's Volcano cone, leaving nothing more than a massive caldera surrounded by a ring of steep hills, the only remnants of Pululahua's once-mighty cone. The reserve is located on the hills surrounding the caldera. Small farms cover the inside of the caldera itself, taking advantage of the rich, volcanic soil. Our ride begins from Yungilla, a nearby town along a small road that heads into the caldera. We begin riding through farmland, which quickly gives way to cloud forest and impressive views into the caldera below. We ride a smooth downhill along the rim of the crater, descending over 800 vertical meters by the time we reach the caldera floor. Here we ride around the tranquil farmland and take in panoramic views of the imposing caldera walls. Depending on time and interest, we can stop for a number of short walks at several points along the ride. We enjoy a delicious, scenic picnic lunch inside the caldera before continue by car closer to Imbabura province in the afternoon. (B, BL)

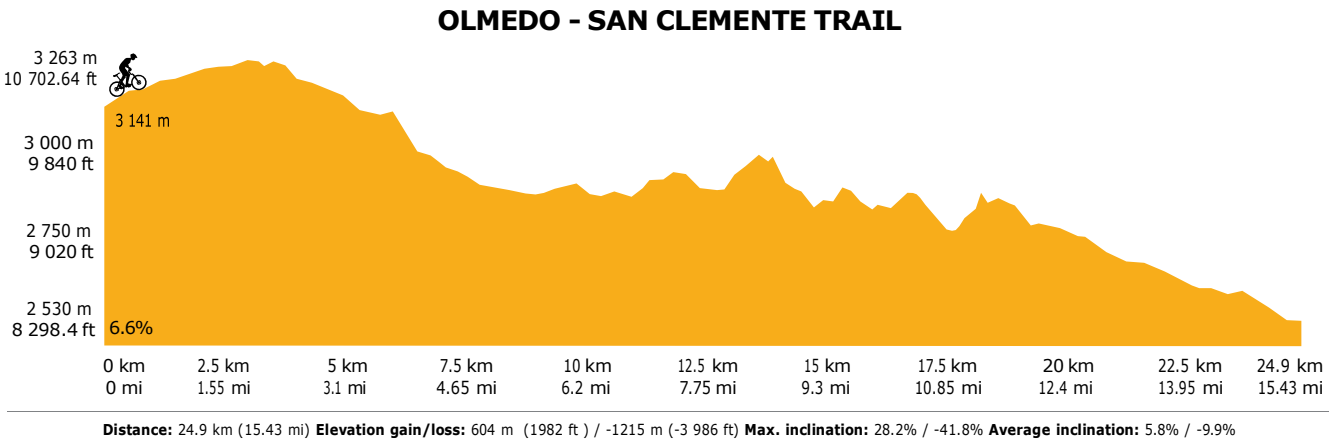


Distance: 20 km (25.38 mi) **Elevation gain/loss:** 56,9 m (194 ft) / -776 m (-2 546 ft) **Max. inclination:** 48.5% / -46.9% **Average inclination:** 9.6% / -9,8%

[redacted]

DAY 3: OLMEDO – SAN CLEMENTE

After a deserve breakfast we start our day with a nice drive through little indigenous towns until arrive to Olmedo where we are going to start our 2 wheels' adventure. After a safety briefing will be given before our departure towards the interandean valley bound to the highlands of Agonchagua where we will be able to observe small farmlands called chacras, adobe houses, livestock such as llamas, sheep and others. From here we will take secondary roads and paths that the locals use to walk between communities. Following the mountains foothills, we arrive to the highland of Zuleta where we can see the real indigenous lifestyle. Through crop fields and grasslands, we arrive to the Imbabura volcano that in the indigenous people Cosmo vision is consider the father because is the main volcano in the province. Here we will have the las section on 2 wheels before to arrive into the community where we share and stay with local indigenous Zuleta family. Here we can learn how to prepare the best local and fresh food and have a nice night sharing a local drink if front of the fireplace in this Andean night. O/N Comunidad San Clemente (B, BL, D)

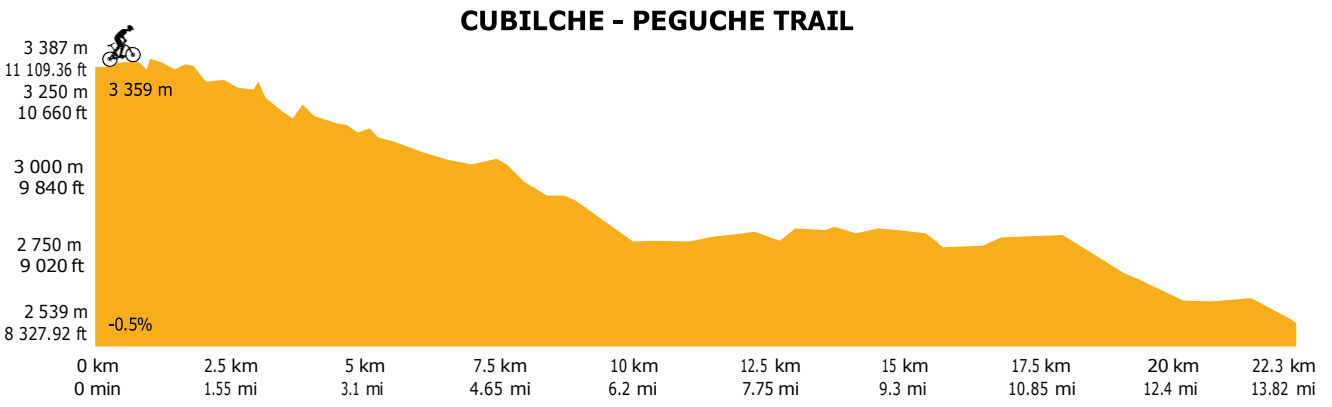


Distance: 24.9 km (15.43 mi) **Elevation gain/loss:** 604 m (1982 ft) / -1215 m (-3 986 ft) **Max. inclination:** 28.2% / -41.8% **Average inclination:** 5.8% / -9.9%

[redacted]

DAY 4: CUBILCHE – PEGUCHE

After enjoying views of Cayambe during breakfast, we head to the nearby village of Zuleta, home to some of the most renowned indigenous embroiderers in Ecuador. As we appreciate their work and learn about their techniques. After a pleasant visit, we begin our ride, passing through indigenous farmland as we cruise down the slopes of Volcan Imbabura. As we ride, we admire magnificent views of Lago San Pablo and the surrounding volcanic peaks. We then continue down a narrow path past the town of Peguche and on to Otavalo, home to one of the largest indigenous markets in Latin America. The Otavaleños are particularly famous for their textiles, and the market is full of ponchos, sweaters, tapestries, and blankets. Artisans also sell panama hats, paintings, jewelry, and more. On the edges of the market, restaurants serve local dishes like fritada and llapingachos. With its delicious aromas, bright colors, and traditional music, the Otavalo market is a true feast for the senses. After getting our fill of shopping and bargaining, we head to Hacienda Pinsaqui, a colonial hacienda with over three centuries of history, for the night. (B, BL)

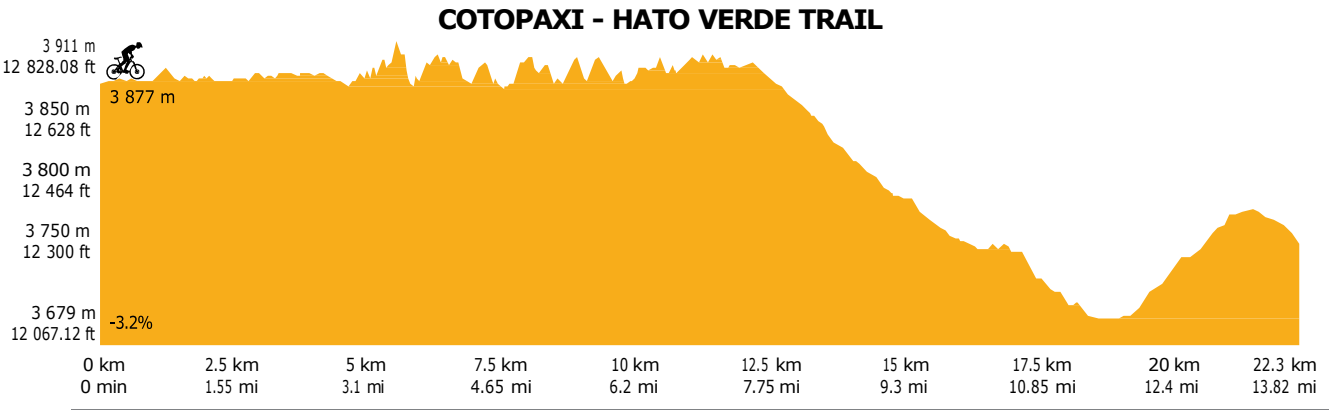


Distance: 22.3 km (13.82 mi) **Elevation gain/loss:** 351 m (1152 ft) / -1170 m (-3 839 ft) **Max. inclination:** 26.1% / -33.9% **Average inclination:** 3.5% / -7.6%

[redacted]

DAY 5: COTOPAXI - HATO VERDE

We begin our journey driving south from Imbabura through the famed "Avenue of the Volcanoes." If the skies are clear, we will be able to see the peaks of several volcanoes from the road. Once we arrive in Cotopaxi National Park, we start out with a short hike around Limpiopungo Glacier Lake. This mountain lake is home to a wealth of highland waterfowl, and we observe the local gulls, ducks, and falcons while learning about the park's highland paramo ecosystem. We then begin an amazing ride through the park. Our path will take us from the base of Volcan Rumiñahi, where Limpiopungo is located, across the high plain and around to the south side of Cotopaxi, then on to the Pucara Inca ruins. The ride is mostly downhill with some flats and a few short, easy climbs. As we ride across the high plain paramo, we keep an eye out for native highland wildlife and take in incredible views of Cotopaxi's massive, glaciated cone looming above us. We sit down to a scenic and delicious box lunch during the ride before driving to the hacienda. (B, BL)

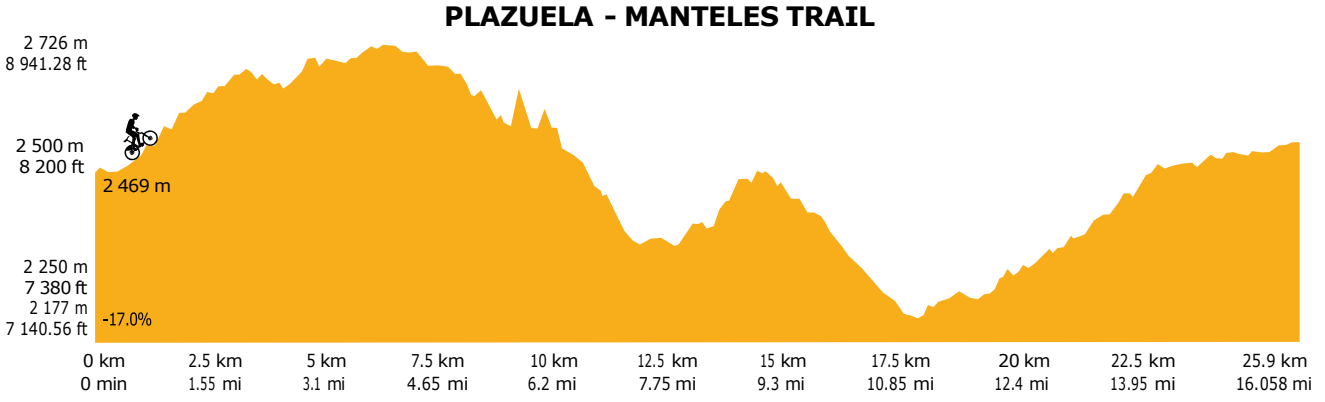


Distance: 22.3 km (13.826 mi) **Elevation gain/loss:** 426 m (1398 ft) / -560 m (-1837 ft) **Max. inclination:** 19.8% / -19.4% **Average inclination:** 3.5% / -3.8%

[redacted]

DAY 6: PLAZUELA – MANTELES VALLEY

This morning, we continue our journey driving through the Avenue of the Volcanoes up to the Manteles Valley. We enjoy spectacular views of the Tungurahua Volcano and the Patate River. Today our bike ride is along Patate River gorge where we can see the beautiful landscapes that we have in this area through beautiful small towns. In this area is very common to see fruit fields because the weather conditions are the best because this river valley is receiving the amazon basin humidity. During our bike ride we have the chance to try all of this fruits, mainly citrus. After a nice bike ride we reach a cozy Andean Hacienda to relax and dinner (B, BL)

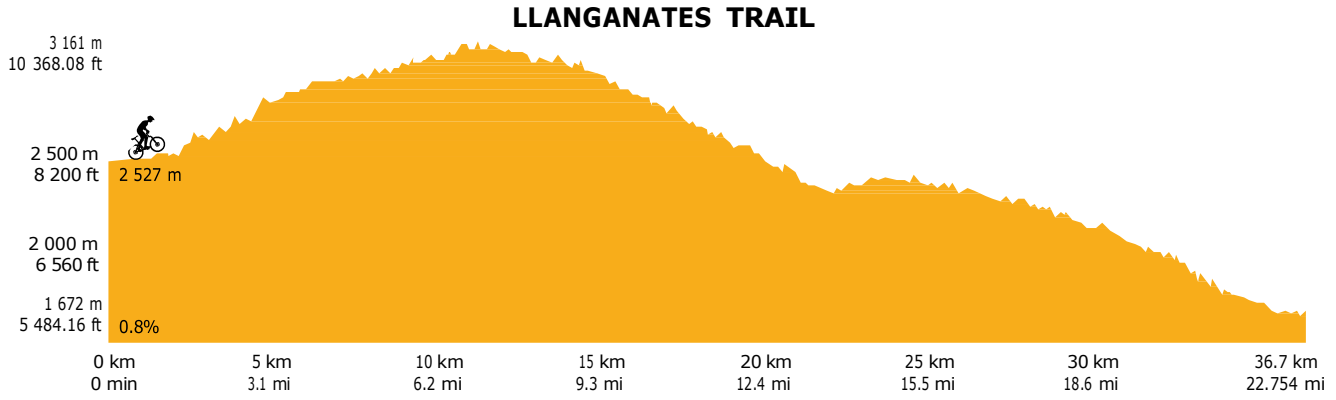


Distance: 25.9 km (16.058 mi) **Elevation gain/loss:** 1237 m (4 058 ft) / -1177 m (-3 861 ft) **Max. inclination:** 44.2% / -37.0% **Average inclination:** 7.8% / -8.3%

[redacted]

DAY 7: LLANGANATES

In the morning, we drive to the edge of Llanganates National Park, gaining altitude until we reach an area with one of the best views of the - often fuming - Tungurahua Volcano. Here, we set up our mountain bikes for a scenic ride through highland paramo, which gradually melds into mountain cloud forest, and then lowland rainforest. We pass through a dry basaltic gorge that is a great spot to look for wild orchids. We continue our ride along the Pastaza River Gorge, one of the principal waterways that feed into the Amazon Basin. This is an especially scenic route, with high rock walls giving way to deep cloud forest canyons. We stop to admire some of the spectacular waterfalls in the area, such as Pailón Del Diablo (Devil's Cauldron) and Manto de la Novia (Bride's Veil). O/N La Floresta (B)



Distance: 36.7 km (22.75 mi) **Elevation gain/loss:** 2 022 m (6 634 ft) / -2 853 m (-9 360 ft) **Max. inclination:** 36.0% / -35.3% **Average inclination:** 8.8% / -9.3%

[redacted]

DAY 8: CANYONING – UIO

The last morning in our tour, we have one of the best activities here in Baños, canyoning or waterfall rappelling. We will visit Rio Blanco canyon, Rio Blanco canyon is located 10min from Baños city, this is a beautiful canyon in the middle of the cloud forest landscape, here we will find 5 waterfalls between 7-28mts high, they are perfect for practicing this adventure sport. A relatively easy route however you always need a briefing and a short practice to do it better. We will have a safety briefing then our guides will give us our personal equipment (wet suit, harness, helmet, shoes) and we will head towards Rio Blanco, which will give us a strong adventure and adrenaline on this day. After driving for 10-15min more or less, we arrive at the parking place where we found booths to put on our equipment. Our guide will check that everything is fine and will give us an explanation to learn basic but necessary techniques for the activity. During the safety talk we will learn how to control the rope, how to walk backwards, how to jump and how to maintain balance in the descent. we finish with the practice and We walked uphill for 10min to the entrance of the canyon; from where we start our exploration that will take us 2hrs on average. We start with the small waterfalls until we reach the highest, in all we will rappel and at the end we find a natural slide by which we slide down to get out of the canyon.

After this wet adventure, we go back to Baños to have a nice lunch then we will drive to Quito where we will finish our tour (B).

[redacted]

INCLUDED

- Experienced & Certified English-Speaking Guides
- Private Transport
- Accommodation
- Meals as listed in the Itinerary
- Water and snacks available whenever
- Water bottle
- Biking gear: Hardtail bikes and protective gear (helmets and gloves).

NOT INCLUDED

- International or domestic flights
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips for guides and drivers
- Travel Insurance – mandatory
- Airport Transfers

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

LEVEL OF ACTIVITY: This trip is considered as intermediate, meaning you need to have some experience, however your guides will teach you every day how to ride on the varying terrain. The whole trip involves a mix of trails and roads, some on dirt, rocks, grass and gravel. Every ride is about 20 miles, and the elevation gain can be 1000 feet a day, if people want to do more elevation gain, our guides will be happy to do longer rides. There will always be transport support close to the trails, and guides will be in contact with the driver by radio.

WEATHER AND ELEVATION: In Ecuador the weather can be very variable depending on which side of the Andes you are traveling to, so it is highly recommended to come ready for all kinds of weather. When they say "Ecuador, All in One Place" they mean it! The altitude determines the temperature and the higher you go the colder it gets. Don't let the geographic location of the country fool you. Even at a mere 15,000 feet the temperatures can feel like those of a winter in the northern United States. The coastal lowlands in the western part of Ecuador are typically warm with temperatures in the region of 25 °C (77 °F). Coastal areas are affected by ocean currents and between January and April are hot and rainy. The weather in Quito is consistent with that of a subtropical highland climate. The average temperature during the day is 70 °F (21 °C), which generally falls to an average of 50 °F (10 °C) at night. The average temperature annually is 64 °F (17.8 °C). There are only really two seasons in the city: dry and wet. The dry season runs from June to September and the wet season is from October to May.