

Ecuador Climbing School

9 Days in Ecuador / Skill Level: Introductory
7 Day Extension Available



Climbing School:

\$2,850

2019 - Jun 1-9, Nov 30 - Dec 8

2020 - Mar 14-22, Apr 11-19, Jun 6-14,
Dec 5-13

Climbing School Extension:

\$1,500

2019 - Jun 9-16, Dec 8-14

2020 - Mar 22-28, Apr 19-25, Jun 14-20,
Dec 13-19

*All costs included with the exception of alcohol, in-town meals

Difficulty Level: *Introductory- Technical climbing and altitude experience are not necessary but this course requires good physical fitness, specifically an ability to move in rugged terrain for long days. Alpenglow can happily provide physical and technical training programs to prepare for this introductory expedition.*

Overview

Alpenglow's guides have been climbing and guiding in Ecuador since 1994. They believe it is an unparalleled destination for learning the essential skills of high altitude climbing. Ecuador also offers a friendly and interesting cultural experience. On this expedition we will focus on education, building technical skills, and gaining mountaineering experience on an attempt to summit Cayambe, the third tallest peak in Ecuador. Cayambe's highest point is at 18,996 feet (5,790 meters) and it is heavily glaciated. Although geographically remote, the mountain is easily accessible. As opposed to the weeks it requires to travel to peaks in Alaska or the Himalayas, we arrive, develop skills, acclimatize, and summit Cayambe in a single week. The main goal of our "school" programs is to ensure that your mountain skills are up to speed. This will help you grow into a confident and active participant on present and future expeditions.



Our expedition begins in Ecuador's capital of Quito. Four glaciated peaks surround the city, which tops out at 9,500 feet (2,896 meters). The high elevation jumpstarts your acclimatization process upon arrival. We will spend the first day exploring the old colonial center of Quito and enjoying fantastic food and hospitality. We continue our acclimatization by taking our classroom out into the field. This entails riding the local telepherique up to 14,000 feet (4,267 meters) on Rucu Pinchincha and then hiking up to the 15,700 foot (4,785 meter) summit. If conditions allow, we will traverse a knife-

edge rock ridge to the summit, implementing technical rock climbing techniques and the use of fixed lines.

We will then venture on to Otavalo and the Hacienda Pinsaqui. The journey takes you through the beautiful Mojanda volcanic lakes -- a great place to stop, sightsee, and climb Fuya Fuya, which tops out at 14,000 feet (4,263 meters) in elevation. This extinct volcano offers exquisite views of the surrounding mountainside and provides for additional acclimatization. After a relaxing night at the historic Hacienda Pinsaqui, we will move up to the high refuge on Cayambe.

The refuge features excellent food, stunning mountain views, and continued altitude preparation. During our stay, we will discuss and practice climbing skills on Cayambe's glacier. These skills include crampon and ice axe techniques, roped team travel, snow and ice anchor placement, and crevasse rescue. This education is vital for your development into a competent team member on the Cayambe mission and future expeditions.

Once we've mastered necessary skills, we will be ready to attempt an ascent of the mountain. We will begin our climb around midnight and complete the round-trip journey in about 7-12 hours. The views from the summit are absolutely stunning and encompass many of the surrounding volcanoes, as well as Cayambe itself.

Upon completion of our climb, we will head back down to Otavalo for some much needed rest and relaxation. Otavalo features one of the largest indigenous markets in South America on Saturdays. As this corresponds with the day of our return, there will be ample time to shop for friends back home and opportunities to experience local Otavalan culture. We will be based again at the Hacienda Pinsaqui - an ideal location to rest and recover from our climb.

You have the option to head home after Otavalo. However, we encourage those who have the time to stay for summit attempts on the neighboring peaks of Cotopaxi and Chimborazo. These climbs will allow you to build upon the foundation of your mountaineering knowledge. The Cotopaxi National Park encompasses Cotopaxi peak, standing at 19,347 feet (5,897 meters) in elevation. Like Cayambe, it is heavily glaciated. The climb is longer than Cayambe and complemented by an excellent icy training ground. This is ideal for increasing your familiarity with crampon and ice axe techniques.

The summit of Chimborazo reaches 20,703 feet (6,310 meters) in height, making it the tallest peak in Ecuador. It is considerably higher than any peak in North America. The altitude combined with technical challenges and a grueling summit day will put your skills to the ultimate test. An ascent of Chimborazo is the perfect conclusion to your trip and will adequately prepare you to climb other big mountains around the globe.

Our Ecuador Climbing Schools are guided by one or more of Alpenglow's AMGA certified lead guides. AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) certification is the most prestigious in the world, attained only by the most experienced and dedicated

guides. Our lead guides have traveled and climbed extensively throughout South America and possess intimate knowledge of Ecuadorian volcanoes. A thorough understanding of Andean culture combined with a passion for teaching others guarantees an experience you won't soon forget.

We combine our guides' experience with the local expertise of our Ecuadorian guide team. This team, based in Quito, are some of Ecuador's most respected guides and they have also guided in Nepal, Peru, Bolivia, and Alaska. Their local knowledge (of the mountains, the markets, and the salsa clubs) is essential to the experience. Our small team size and low ratio of climbers to guides (2:1) highlights an attention to detail, ensuring you're healthy and strong enough to enjoy every aspect of the expedition.

Ecuador Climbing School Itinerary

Day 1	Leave your home for Ecuador, arriving into Quito (9,500 feet/2,896 meters) in the evening. Our guides will pick you up and bring you to our hotel, a local family-run place close to excellent restaurants and the tourist center of the city. (Saturday)
Day 2	Explore the colonial section of Quito. The old city is famous for its beautiful churches, president's palace, and ever-present views of the glaciated peaks that surround it. After touring for half the day, we spend the afternoon preparing for our climb of Pinchincha, practicing fixed line techniques, and organizing gear.
Day 3	After breakfast at the famed Magic Bean (strong coffee, fresh fruit smoothies, and huge pancakes—the perfect pre-climbing meal) we ride the telepherique from the center of the city to 14,000 feet (4,267 meters) on Rucu Pinchincha. Two hours of hiking brings us to the rock ridge which we climb, conditions permitting, to Pinchincha's 15,700 foot (4,785 meter) summit. This climb is a proud peak on its own; it is also important for our acclimatization.
Day 4	We move to the town of Otavalo. Otavalo has some of the best food in Ecuador and is renowned for its local markets. We will spend part of the day climbing Fuya Fuya, a non-technical 14,000 foot peak, and then spend the evening at the Hacienda Pinsaqui, an incredible local farmhouse with excellent food, beautiful gardens and an iconic owner.
Day 5	After a quick grocery store stop for mountain snacks, we drive 2 hours through high altitude farmlands to the refuge on Cayambe, at 15,000 feet (4,572 meters). After settling in, we hike about an hour to the toe of the glacier on Cayambe. We spend the day practicing skills, including self arresting with an ice axe, climbing in crampons, traveling on rope teams, and crevasse rescue. We also take time scouting our summit route. After a full day, we descend back to the refuge for the evening.
Day 6	Today we'll take the morning to continue practicing our skills and letting our bodies further acclimatize before our summit push the next day. We spend the afternoon resting, hydrating, eating, and getting to bed early for the summit of Cayambe.
Day 7	After a midnight wake-up call, we begin our climb scrambling a rock ridge to the upper glacier. From there moderate slopes lead to another steep headwall. Often icy, this slope will require all of our climbing techniques to make it to the top. From the summit, we descend to our van and drive return to Otovalo.
Day 8	Today we sleep in, again in the familiar Hacienda Pinsaqui, eventually waking to the smell of fresh coffee. When we are ready, the hectic Saturday market will be waiting for us, where we can buy everything from grilled guinea pig to hand-woven textiles to handmade silver jewelry. We return to Quito for dinner, and those flying home head to the airport for flights scheduled after 11pm or the following morning. The rest of the team spends the night in our hotel in Quito
Day 9	Depart Quito for home. Flights generally leave early in the morning.

Optional extension

Day 9	Any remaining Cayambe-only team members depart Quito for home. After breakfast, climbers on for the extension head up to the flanks of Cotopaxi and will get ready for a climb in the coming days.
Day 10	We spend the morning scouting our route, and continuing to build advanced glacier travel and rescue skills low on Cotopaxi. In the afternoon we pack for the climb and rest.
Day 11	Waking up around 1am we'll have some coffee and set out for the summit of Cotopaxi. This climb will use all the skills we learned on Cayambe as we travel on snow and ice up to the rim of the volcano. The final section of climbing will be the most difficult before we are rewarded with a stunning summit. After descending and packing up, we drive to the beautiful Hacienda La Cienega.
Day 12	After a morning of breakfast at Hacienda La Cienega, we drive south to a wilderness lodge below Chimborazo called La Estrella del Chimborazo. The lodge is owned by one of Ecuador's original mountain guides – his stories, home, and excellent food will prepare us for our final climb.
Day 13	Today we move to the El Castillo camp at the base of Chimborazo's glacier, 2 hours hike from the car. We scout our route, and get to sleep early ready for our summit push.
Day 14	Our final, and most challenging, climb. The route quickly climbs the glacier, on which the ice is often broken by many crevasses as well as almost vertical ice steps. Eventually we reach the Castillo ridge and follow it over moderate ground to the summit. After taking photos and enjoying the views from the tallest point in Ecuador, we descend to our van and return to Quito for a final celebration dinner.
Day 15	Built in weather day. Due to the unpredictable nature of mountain weather in Ecuador, we build in an extra day into our itinerary.
Day 16	Depart Quito for home. Flights generally late the night before (after 11pm) or early in the morning.

Client Expectations and Timeline

90+ Days to Departure

Reserve Spot	Make your deposit to confirm registration - if you haven't already, head over to our website and click "Reserve Spot" and select your dates. The rest of the process is as easy as buying a book online. Make sure that you select to add an extension if you wish to extend any expedition.
Q&A	Q&A with Alpenglow - time to ask any question about travel, logistics, training and everything in between.
Application	Complete full application including medical questionnaire & travel information.
Reserve Rentals	Reserve rentals if needed within application. For our climbing schools, we have a small rental inventory of boots, ice axes crampons, helmets and harnesses. These are provided at no cost on a first come first serve basis. Please let us know what you plan on renting as soon as possible.

Within 90 Days to Departure

Complete Payment	Full Payment will be collected at the 90 day mark. Alpenglow will contact you prior to taking final payment and once you confirm we'll simply move your booking into the final stages. For international trips, a wire transaction is the best way to send payment. We also accept credit cards with transaction fee of 3% or you can pay by check.
Book Travel	We recommend reviewing flight options outside of 90 days and confirming with Alpenglow on travel times. Use us to guide you to the best flight schedules to make travel as easy as possible. Once you book your flights don't forget to share with the Alpenglow office so we pick you up on time from the airport.
Training	This is the hard part. The hours of training you put in directly correlates to your success in the mountains. Train hard and be ready for the adventure of a lifetime!
Equipment	Compile all equipment using the equipment list as a guide.
Purchase Insurance	Purchase travel and rescue insurance. We recommend Global Rescue and Travel Guard. Click here to find links to each.

General Trip Information

Payment

1. A 20% deposit is required for all open enrollment treks and expeditions. Deposits are due upon registration, and can be paid online or by check made out to "Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC". All check payments should be mailed to Alpenglow Expeditions at P.O. Box 3122, Olympic Valley, CA 96146. If wiring payment, please contact us for bank details and be certain that you are covering all fees. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. This is not a flexible policy. Planning our trips takes significant time and has non-refundable costs as well.
2. Balances are due 90 days before the expedition departs from the United States. Payment should be made as described above.
3. The cost of your trip includes your land costs (excluding in-town meals). This includes: double occupancy lodging while in town, meals on the mountain, scheduled transportation while in the countries we are visiting, group camping and climbing equipment, individual technical climbing equipment (boots, ice axes, crampons, helmets, harnesses), and guides.
4. The cost of your trip does not include: flights to/from the city where the expedition begins, airport taxes, visas, in-town meals, immunizations, tips for guides or local staff, travel, rescue, or any other type of insurance, hospitalization or evacuation costs, single supplement charges, excess baggage charges, alcohol, or other personal expenses.
5. The costs of delays or changes to itinerary that are beyond the control of Alpenglow Expeditions or its agents are not included.

Cancellations

1. We reserve the right to cancel any trip at any time. Reasons for cancellation might include (but are not limited to) political instability, natural disasters, or inadequate enrollment. If we cancel a trip prior to its start for low enrollment, we fully refund your payments. If we cancel your trip prior to its start due to political instability, natural disasters, or other reasons of that nature, we will refund all but non-recoverable costs. Changes to a trip itinerary made by our guides for any reason do not constitute a cancellation, and no refunds will be made in this case.
2. If you cancel your trip more than 90 days prior to departure, Alpenglow Expeditions will refund your payment minus the non-refundable deposit. 60-89 days prior, Alpenglow Expeditions will refund 50% of your payment. Fewer than 60 days prior, there are no refunds or credits.
3. On any trip, our guides reserve the right to remove any person, for any reason. These reasons generally stem from a person jeopardizing the safety of themselves or another team member. This includes a person who is not physically able to climb at the level necessary for the chosen route. In all these cases, there are no refunds whatsoever, and the client will be responsible for any additional costs incurred in leaving the trip.

Flights

We recommend using Kayak.com as a primary source for finding low-fare airfares.

Please confirm your itinerary with Alpenglow Expeditions before you purchase it.

Insurance

We require that all participants carry rescue insurance, travel insurance, and health insurance.

Your policy numbers must be provided to us prior to leaving the USA. Homeowner/Renter's insurance is also recommended.

- Rescue Insurance- For US citizens, we recommend obtaining rescue insurance through American Alpine Club and upgrading that service via Global Rescue. Visit www.americanalpineclub.org to become a member and obtain the appropriate level of coverage based on the altitude of the peaks you will be climbing with us. Helicopter rescues in foreign countries, while unlikely, can cost up to \$20,000. International climbers have several options as well for rescue insurance. Our recommendation is Global Rescue as we have had great success with them in the past. Your insurance must not have a mountaineering exclusion and must cover up to your trip's highest altitude. This coverage is very important.
- Travel Insurance- We recommend using [Global Rescue's IMG Signature Travel Insurance](#). Coverage should include lost/damaged baggage, unexpected delays, accident/life, and trip cancellation. Trip cancellation will cover you for non-refundable air and land costs should you need to cancel your trip due to an emergency. Since our costs are often not refundable, this coverage is very important as well, and should be purchased as soon as possible after registering for an expedition.
- Health Insurance- All members of our teams are required to have current health insurance. This insurance should cover emergency hospitalization abroad as well as domestically.
- Homeowner/Renter's Insurance- While unusual, thefts can occur while overseas. We recommend a policy to cover these losses.

Medical

All of our expeditions and treks are physically demanding. Regardless of the skill level or experience needed, it is essential that you arrive in good physical shape, and prepared to handle extreme conditions, including cold, heat, and long tiring days. Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC and its guides reserve the right to remove any member of our trips at any time if we do not believe they are ready for the rigors of the trip.

Our guides are certified in wilderness medicine, CPR, and are experienced in client care in remote high altitude locations. However, Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC is not a medical facility and Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC assumes no liability regarding medical care.

You are responsible for your own medications, inoculations, and deciding whether you are physically able to participate in an Alpenglow Expeditions trip. You should discuss your participation in this trip, and the dangers involved, with your physician.

Some of the medications you may consider carrying with you include:

1. Tylenol – a simple painkiller for headaches and minor pains.
2. Ibuprofen – mild altitude headaches, along with body aches and pains, are common.
3. A cold and flu remedy of your choice (strong decongestant).
4. Pepto Bismol - for minor stomach upset, best taken in caplet form.
5. Immodium AD – to control diarrhea, when necessary. Again, tablets are preferred.
6. Cough Drops – the air at altitude is very dry, and many climbers develop hacking coughs.
7. A laxative agent of your choice.
8. Dramamine (or equivalent) – an anti-motion sickness agent of your choice as bus/plane rides to our trailheads are often very bumpy.

9. Diamox (Acetazolamide) required – prescription medication often used prophylactically to prevent altitude sickness. You should have a large enough supply to take 250mg/day (best as scored tablets so you can take 125mg twice a day).
10. Z-pack required – a broad spectrum anti-biotic.

Also be sure to discuss vaccinations with your doctor. Often a travel clinic has the most up-to-date information on which shots are necessary for the country you are visiting. Be sure to mention that most of our trips explore only the highlands and capital cities. This might mean that you need fewer immunizations, and anti-malarials are often not necessary. Determine this with your doctor, and refer to your trip itinerary for the exact locations we will be visiting. At the very least, your tetanus shot should be up-to-date and you should have protection against Hepatitis A.

Aerobic Conditioning

We cannot stress enough the importance of being in excellent aerobic condition before arriving on your trip. Arriving fit will increase your safety on the trip and reduce the risk of medical issues. It will also dramatically increase your enjoyment and learning during your trek or expedition. At the minimum, we recommend an exercise regimen that includes a minimum of 3 one-hour workouts per week (biking, running, swimming) along with a few long days hiking as you get close to your departure date. Please call us if you would like to discuss a specific routine to fit your needs.

Money

Ecuador uses the US Dollar, making it easy for American climbers. The countries we visit can still be challenging places to use a credit card or find an ATM. While you may choose to bring these for backup, we recommend you bring enough cash and traveler's checks for your planned spending. Traveler's checks can be exchanged in most of the countries we travel to, however they often have lower rates of exchange and can be a hassle. American dollars are still the easiest way to carry money. Be sure you carry clean, new bills and have some smaller denominations. Carry your money and important documents in a hidden waist pouch under your clothes.

The amount of money you need varies by how many presents you plan on bringing back! In addition to souvenirs and gifts, plan on spending on airport departure taxes, alcohol and snacks, and tips for local staff and your guides.

Additional Notes

- Single Supplement - If you prefer a single room while we are in hotels, please let us know as soon as possible. There will be an additional cost associated for this.
- Cameras – digital cameras are an excellent option. Be sure to bring enough batteries and memory space for your entire trip. We have found that small pocket cameras are much better than big SLR's for summit days. You need a simple light system, and the new generation of digitals take great photos. If you are a photo buff, definitely bring your big SLR or video camera as well. The treks into our mountains and hanging in basecamp are great times to fulfill your photographic aspirations!
- Be sure to create a data sheet of all of your essential information – passport, credit card or ATM numbers, airline ticket information, visa number (if applicable), etc. This sheet should then be photocopied and scattered amongst your luggage. If any of your

- documents are stolen, having this information will be essential.
- Rental Equipment - Alpenglow Expeditions offers a limited number of mountaineering boots, crampons, ice axes, helmets, harnesses, carabiners, perlon, and belay devices for use by our clients. There is no additional charge for using this equipment, but please let us know as soon as possible if you intend to use Alpenglow Expeditions' equipment. Check your expedition's equipment list to see what technical climbing equipment is necessary for your climb or trek. Rental gear from Alpenglow is only available for shipment within the US. Rental gear must be taken home by the renter and shipped back to Alpenglow within two weeks of end of trip at the renter's expense.