

Cotopaxi Rapid Ascent

5 Days in Ecuador / Skill Level: Introductory



June 3-7, 2017
November 22 - 26, 2017
January 8-12, 2018
June 2-6, 2018
November 19 - 23, 2018

\$3,550

*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

We combine our most popular mountaineering school with Alpenglow's Rapid Ascent system to create an ideal long-weekend climbing expedition. It has never before been possible to safely and comfortably climb to over 19,000 feet in less than a week. This has meant that many busy climbers did not have the time to attempt a high altitude peak. We change that by utilizing Hypoxico pre-acclimatization tents at home for 4-weeks prior to the expedition, along with unparalleled logistics in Ecuador perfected over decades of leading expeditions here. This pre-acclimatization system is the same one used by all of our Everest teams since 2012, successfully shortening their climb by 50%, and increasing our safety and success.

Cotopaxi, the world's highest active volcano (19,347 feet/5,897 meters), is heavily glaciated and remote yet also easily accessible. It is the ideal peak to learn and practice the skills essential to high altitude climbing, in a long weekend.



Climbers meet in Ecuador's capital of Quito. After a night to settle in and meet the team, we move to a luxurious refuge high in Cotopaxi National Park. The lodge provides incredible food and stunning views of Cotopaxi while we practice skills and prepare for our summit push. We spend the afternoon of our arrival and the morning of the next day learning and practicing mountaineering skills: crampon and ice axe techniques, rope team travel, snow and ice anchor

placement, and crevasse rescue. This training is essential in becoming a competent team-member on Cotopaxi and other peaks in the future.

At this point, we are ready to climb. We wake around midnight and climb in small rope teams, each led by an Alpenglow guide. The terrain varies from hiking on trails, to moderate crevassed glaciers, to a final steep summit headwall. The views from the summit are stunning, encompassing many of the surrounding volcanoes as well as the active crater of Cotopaxi itself. After enjoying the summit, our descent and arrival back to Quito is quick, in time for a celebration dinner with the team before catching flights home.

Our Cotopaxi Rapid Ascent climbs are guided by one or more of Alpenglow's AMGA certified lead guides. AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) certification is the highest possible training available to guides, and only the most experienced and dedicated attain it. We combine our guides' experience with the local expertise of our close friend and expert Ecuadorian logistics operator, Jaime Avila. Jaime is one of Ecuador's most respected guides, and also guides with us in Nepal, Peru, Bolivia, and Alaska. Our small team size and low ratio of climbers to guides (2:1) ensures that you stay healthy and strong, and are able to enjoy each component of your experience.

Alpenglow's combination of pre-acclimatization at home with the best guiding and in-country logistics has revolutionized Himalayan expeditions. The same system has reduced expedition length on peaks like the Seven Summits by 30-50%. On this Ecuadorian expedition, we utilize the same pre-acclimatization, quality of logistics, and guiding team. We work with you not only on the mountain, but also throughout your pre-acclimatization and preparation. Our goal is for each climber to be healthy, strong, and prepared for their summit climb of Cotopaxi. Join Us.

Cotopaxi Rapid Ascent Itinerary

Day 1	Arrive 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.
Day 2	After a big breakfast, we drive to Tambopaxi, at about 14,000 feet (4,267 meters) in Cotopaxi National Park. From the dining room of this beautiful lodge, we have a perfect view of our entire route on Cotopaxi. In the afternoon we practice a full gamut of big mountain skills including rope team travel and crevasse rescue. We also prepare all of our equipment for the climb.
Day 3	We wake early to hike about an hour to the toe of the glacier on Cotopaxi. We spend the morning practicing glacier travel skills, most importantly self-arrest with an ice axe and efficient climbing techniques in crampons. We descend back to Tambopaxi for lunch, rest, and to prep for our summit attempt.
Day 4	Summit Day! We wake at around midnight, have a hot drink and perhaps a snack, and then begin our climb. The route takes us across scree to the glacier, and then winds up through progressively steeper slopes and heavily crevassed areas. By dawn, we should be below the final headwall, 800 vertical feet (250 meters) of the steepest climbing on the mountain. In daylight, we work our way up this slope until we are standing on the edge of Cotopaxi's crater, with stunning views in every direction. After a few photos, we descend back to the refuge, and then continue our descent all the way to our hotel and a well-deserved celebration in Quito. (Saturday)
Day 5	Depart Quito for home. Flights generally leave early in the morning and arrive home in the afternoon. (Sunday)

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.

90+ Days to Departure

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.
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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. If you prefer to work with a travel agent, we recommend Jane Chauvin at Penny Pitou travel: (1-888-526-4488) or jane@pennypitoutravel.com. She is fast, efficient and affordable and intimately aware of the challenges of booking mountaineering trips.

****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- 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

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.