



Your Complete Quilotoa Loop Travel Guide

To fully enjoy all the wonders of the Quilotoa Loop, it not at all necessary to sleep in a different village each night. Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge offers a perfect spot to base yourself for 3 or 4 nights and explore our beautiful surroundings on day hikes, tours & activities, without having to carry heavy luggage from one place to another! We offer a wide range of Day Hikes, trips to the Quilotoa crater, horseback riding, and cultural activities. Add to that our Jacuzzi and sauna & your mountain escape is complete!

For a multi-day village-to-village trekking adventure, Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge is your perfect start or end point. Isinlivi is located at the same altitude as Quito and therefore a great place to acclimatize for a couple of nights before heading to the higher altitude villages. Or if you choose to hike the loop the other way around, Lullu Llama is the perfect place to relax and restore energies after several days hiking.

A village-to-village trek requires a bit more thought and preparation, find below our Quilotoa Loop Travel Guide to help you get started.

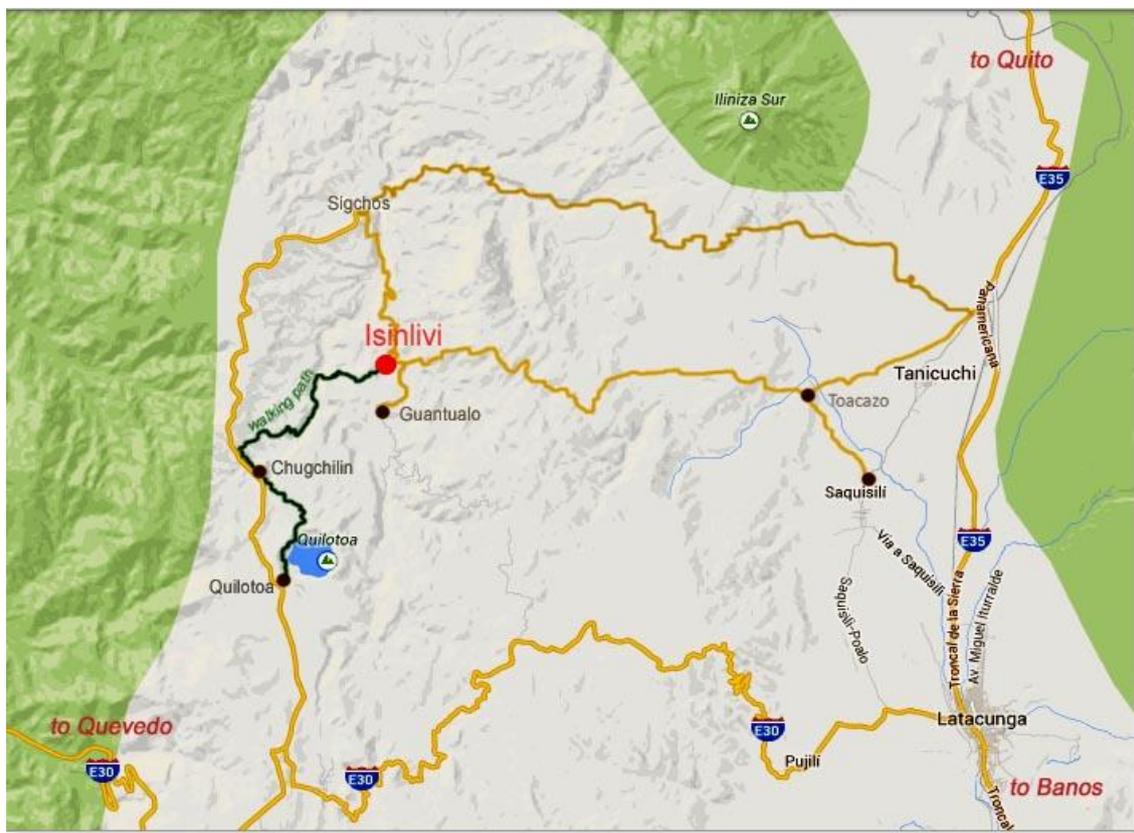
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What is the Quilotoa Loop?

The Quilotoa Loop is the common name given to a roughly 200km loop through the Ecuadorian Andes located 90 kilometers west of the city of Latacunga. The most common trail stretches between the stunning Quilotoa Crater Lake, an extinct volcano caldera filled with alkaline water around 250m deep, through the village of Chugchilan with the quaint hamlet of Isinlivi as its northern terminus. Other beautiful villages to visit on the Quilotoa Loop are Saquisilí, Sigchos, Malingua Pamba, Tigua and Zumbahua...each with its own flavor and charm.

Most villages on the Quilotoa Loop offer lodging and are connected through paved roads, gravel dirt roads, and off-road hiking trails. You can take public transportation, contract a local truck, take the milk truck or your own car...but one of the most popular methods is to hike from one village to another on your own two feet.



The village of Isinlivi is either the start or the end point of a multi-day village-to-village trek, and in between there are several different itineraries possible that show different villages, each with its own Andean flavor and tourist activities. We recommend to spread your Quilotoa Loop trekking adventure over 4 to 6 days, as any less & you will not enjoy the area as you should at a comfortable pace.

Top 5 village-to-village trekking adventures



It is possible to enter or leave the Quilotoa Loop through Isinlivi, Sigchos or Quilotoa, so one of these villages will be your start point, while another village will likely be your end point. It is also possible to start and end in the same village. In between, there is a wide variety of itineraries, activities and hiking trails possible and you can prepare the itinerary that most fits your needs & interests. It will also depend on your physical conditions which itinerary is best for you.

Below we have outlined the Top-5 Quilotoa Loop itineraries to help you choose or turn it into a completely new itinerary that matches your needs & interests! Every itinerary can also be organized the other way around, it is possible to take out several days to shorten the itinerary, or add additional days to be able to visit more villages or take more rest in between hikes. If you can't hike, it is also possible to travel the Quilotoa Loop by public or private transportation.

Need help with your specific itinerary ideas? Don't hesitate to write us an e-mail with your ideas and we will be delighted to advise you!

The Easy Way – 2 Days/1 Night

Sigchos > Isinlivi > Quilotoa

Day 1: Catch a bus from Latacunga to Sigchos (1,5 hr) or the bus directly to Isinlivi. Trek from Sigchos to Isinlivi through the Toachi Canyon (3-4 hr). Ask our staff for a map. **Day 2:** Daytrip to the Quilotoa Crater where you can either hike around the rim (6 hr), or hike down inside the crater to the lake and back up again (1 hr). Overnight in Quilotoa or take the bus to Latacunga.

Tip: Spend an additional night at Lullu Llama for a dayhike to one of the markets, a horse ride or mountain bike tour!

The Popular Route – 3 Days/2 Nights

Sigchos > Isinlivi > Chugchilan > Quilotoa

Day 1: Catch a bus from Latacunga to Sigchos (1,5 hr). From Sigchos you hike through the Toachi Canyon to Isinlivi (3-4 hr). **Day 2:** Hike from Isinlivi down into the canyon, cross the suspension bridge, pass through the village of Itualo and hike up the other side of the canyon to Chugchilan (4-6 hr). **Day 3:** From Chugchilan cross a steep valley, pass through the village of Guayama and gradually hike up until you reach the rim of the Quilotoa Crater. Enjoy a well-deserved view on each side of the rim and hike further until you reach Quilotoa. Spend the night here, or catch the bus to Latacunga.

Tip: Spend another night in Isinlivi to take a day hike to Guantualo market on the Monday, or Sigchos market on the Sunday. You can also take a mountain bike trip or horse-riding adventure. You can also do this itinerary in reverse!

The Paramo Route – 3 Days/2 Nights

Day 1: Catch from Latacunga a bus that goes to Isinlivi over the Guingopana Pass. As the bus driver to drop you off at the Guingopana Pass at 4000m altitude! From here follow the road down until you reach Isinlivi (3-4 hr). You'll enjoy stunning paramo views! **Day 2:** Hike from Isinlivi down into the canyon, cross the suspension bridge, pass through the village of Itualo and hike up the other side of the canyon to Chugchilan (4-6 hr). **Day 3:** From Chugchilan cross a steep



valley, pass through the village of Guayama and gradually hike up until you reach the rim of the Quilotoa Crater. Enjoy a well-deserved view on each side of the rim and hike further until you reach Quilotoa. Spend the night here, or catch the bus to Latacunga.

Tip: Spend an extra night at Lullu Llama's to enjoy a day of chilling or take one of our tours!

Saquisili Market & Quilotoa Route – 3 Days/2 Nights

Saquisili > Isinlivi > Quilotoa

Day 1: Visit the early morning Thursday market in Saquisili and catch the direct bus from the market to get to Isinlivi. **Day 2:** Take a day hike, a horse-riding trip, or a biking adventure with us! You can also visit the cheese factory! **Day 3:** Take a daytrip to the Quilotoa Crater where you can either hike around the rim (6 hr), or hike down inside the crater to the lake and back up again (1 hr). Overnight in Quilotoa or take the bus to Latacunga.

The Complete Loop – 5 Days/4 Nights

Sigchos > Isinlivi > Chugchilan > Quilotoa > Malingua Pamba > Isinlivi

Day 1: Catch a bus from Latacunga to Sigchos (1,5 hr). From Sigchos you hike through the Toachi Canyon to Isinlivi (3-4 hr). **Day 2:** Hike from Isinlivi down into the canyon, cross the suspension bridge, pass through the village of Itualo and hike up the other side of the canyon to Chugchilan (4-6 hr). **Day 3:** From Chugchilan cross a steep valley, pass through the village of Guayama and gradually hike up until you reach the rim of the Quilotoa Crater. Enjoy a well-deserved view on each side of the rim and hike further until you reach Quilotoa (4-6 hr). Spend the night in Quilotoa. **Day 4:** Hike around the Quilotoa crater rim. At the north-west side there is a small zig-zag trail that goes down into the valleys. Pass the old hacienda and the village of Tanguiche. From there it's a climb up to reach Malingua Pamba Community. Spend the night with a local family (we can help you make a reservation). **Day 5:** Hike through amazing landscapes back to Isinlivi. You pass the Tilinte Lake, the village of Salado and Guantualo, and through the green valley back (4-5 hr).

Tip: If you want to shorten this itinerary, you could contract a truck transport in Malingua Pamba to get back to Lullu Llama a day earlier.

5 ways to reach Isinlivi

Our guests often ask about the best ways to reach Isinlivi and start their Quilotoa Loop adventure, we list here the 5 most popular ways to get here:

- 1) Book a daytrip to the Cotopaxi National Park or the Illinizas Reserve from either Quito or Latacunga & ask for a drop off in Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge. Your travel agent will most likely charge extra for the additional distance covered, but it's a quick and easy way to reach us. Contact Happy Gringo travel for more information.
- 2) Visit the Thursday market in Saquisili and take the direct bus from there to Isinlivi.



- 3) Take any bus from Latacunga to Sigchos. If it's Sunday, you can visit the local market in Sigchos as well. From Sigchos to Isinlivi it is a beautiful 4 hour hike through the Toachi canyon to get to Isinlivi.
- 4) Take the direct bus from Latacunga to Isinlivi that crosses over the Guingopana Pass, ask the bus driver to drop you off at the highest point. From there it's a stunning 3-4 hours hike downhill to reach Isinlivi with stunning views and beautiful paramo landscapes!
- 5) Take the morning bus to Isinlivi from Latacunga, and have the full afternoon to go for a hike or relax in the sauna!

Packing List

We strongly recommend travelling light because of the challenging nature of the hikes.

Limit your luggage to one trek bag of 25L + one daypack (to carry on the trail and to keep with you on a day hike). Suitcases are less easy to carry on a trekking adventure, but a luggage transportation can be easily arranged between villages.

Any extra luggage can also be stored at a hotel in Quito or Latacunga. Or, if you plan to hike the complete Quilotoa Loop, you can store your luggage at Lullu Llama and come back to us.

Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge will provide you with hiking information and maps.

We have put together a list of clothing and equipment we recommend, being well equipped is mandatory for a pleasant and enthralling hiking holiday!

Equipment & essentials

- Waterproof trekking boots
- Good quality sunglasses (this helps in case of dust, especially when wearing contact lenses)
- Sunhat
- Sunblock and lip salve
- Small first aid kit e.g. plasters, paracetamol, antiseptic wipes etc.
- Wide necked, plastic water bottle (1Litre)
- Flashlight or solar led light
- Trekking poles / sticks
- plastic bag (for dirt)

Clothing

- Trekking socks (2-3 pairs)
- Comfortable trousers for hiking (full length or 3 quarter length, light weight)
- Base layers of light material (long & short sleeve)
- Shirts
- Warm fleece jacket
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Comfortable clothes and shoes (trainers or sandals are ideal) to wear around the lodge and village after trekking
- Swim suit to use in the Jacuzzi and Spa

Optional



- Camera and film (extra batteries)
- Binoculars
- Pocket knife
- Umbrella
- Hand sanitizer
- Books to read

Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge will provide you with a towel, bedding and biodegradable soap and shampoo.

Use a guide or hike independently?

There are many options on this: should one trek with or without a guide? And if you choose to trek with a guide, should you choose a local Spanish speaking guide or hire a certified English speaking guide?

You will meet many people on the trail who are trekking on their own and that's great! In an experienced guide however you will not only gain a new friend but someone to facilitate logistics and introduce you to the little known about and seldom visited secrets of the area. In the case of contracting a Spanish speaking guide, your guide is from the area you are trekking, he or she will also many times take a horse to carry your belongings except for your day pack which you carry. It's a great way to employ more local people and provide them with a relatively very good income.

Even for the most independent souls using a tour company will save you time, frustration and (with the right company) a peace of mind that all of your arrangements will be made as expected. A reputable tour operator will be able to advice you on every detail of your trip and take care of everything, from transportation to guide, and from hotel reservations to meals, it's the easiest way to book your Quilotoa Loop adventure with the guarantee it's all handled by professionals. If you're thinking about contracting a tour company, we highly recommend contacting Happy Gringo Travel, a highly reputable agency with great knowledge of this area!

A local Spanish speaking guide will usually cost between \$25 and \$35 for the day depending on the distance covered. A local guide is best organized though the hotel you are staying at the night before the hike but can also be booked as part of a travel package through a travel agency.

A certified English speaking guide is a lot more expensive, but they have more knowledge about the flora and fauna as well a cultural traditions & history. These guides usually come from Latacunga or Quito, and your travel agent will have to take care of their expenses for transportation, accommodation and meals on the Quilotoa Loop.

For a visit to the Cotopaxi national park or the Illinizas Twin craters a certified guide is a must!

A typical day on the Quilotoa Loop



Wake up to the sounds of roosters and life high up in the Andes! Pack your bags and get ready for the day then potter down to a leisurely breakfast. After breakfast you'll receive hiking instructions from our lovely staff. It is best to start your hike in the morning when weather is usually warm with clear skies, try to leave the lodge between 9am and 10am. Walk for at least 2 hours or so, before taking a break and of course there are lots of wonderful views, people and interesting things and photo opportunities along the way.

Around lunch time search for a great spot where you can enjoy your box-lunch while looking out over the mountains. Then continue on the trail and rest as many times you feel necessary.

Most of our guests return between 3pm and 4pm, if you would like to make use of the sauna or jacuzzi, it's best to inform our staff before going on the hike and they will make sure the Spa is heated for you as soon as you reach the lodge.

In the afternoon, there is enough time to explore the local village, we highly recommend a visit to the Mama Quilla soap & candle shop, and the Don Bosco wood workshop. In the late afternoon, most guests will group together for drinks around the fireplace or to play games. We finish the day with a 3 course dinner, there will be plenty! After dinner most guests will have a last drink and we tend to drift off to bed fairly early around 10pm, before bedtime, don't forget to peak outside at the night sky, where the heavens are really ablaze with stars, a late night treat before sleep.

Meet the locals

The Quilotoa Loop locals are mainly catholic, but they still have many traditions, customs and beliefs with origins in ancient Andean cultures, some from even before the Inca invasion! The people in the Parrish of Isinlivi are descendants of three different ethnic groups; the Panzaleos, Sigchos and Yambo tribes. People belief in the Pachamama, "Mother Earth", and many festivals and special dates are still dedicated to their ancient deities blended with Catholic religious practice.

People in the Ecuadorian Andes are often shy, polite, and curious at the same time. Greet people in a friendly fashion, dress conservatively (i.e. men keep their shirts on) and speak some words in Spanish or Quechua, you'll likely have some simple conversations and happy smiles along the way. Some villagers may make no contact at all, leave them to come to you, if they wish, and do not approach their houses.

As for pictures, always ask for permission, you would also not like strangers in your country to take pictures of you or your kids without asking. Some people will ask money in return.

Children often greet tourists and they will likely ask for candy's, try to not give them sweets, as this will only cause health issues, a healthy snack is a better option. It's also a great idea to bring crayons, school supplies, soap & shampoo, or used clothes to give away along the trail. If parents are around, always ask for their permission to give a gift to their children.

There are many public holiday celebrations and important religious festivals held in the region of the Quilotoa Loop, you may get caught up in the crazy colorful traditions if you visit Isinlivi, especially during Christmas time. The locals are proud of their traditions and love it when foreigners participate, so don't hesitate to share a drink, a dance & a laugh with them! Find a



list with important dates and festivals on the Quilotoa Loop over here to plan your trip to coincide with a festival date.

What to do with luggage on the loop?

On your trekking adventure you just need a day pack and it's recommended to pack light with only essentials. Any luggage you won't need is best stored at a hotel in Quito or Latacunga where you can pick it up later on. Some hotels will let you store your luggage very safely for free, while other hotels may ask a couple of dollars for it. If you're hiking the complete loop, you can also bring all your luggage and store it for free at Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge for a couple of days.

If you are planning on contracting a local guide, ask for a horse to carry your luggage. A horse can comfortably carry two big backpacks, suitcases are not suitable for a horse's back though! Another good option is to organize a transportation of heavy luggage between villages, this can be organized through your lodge and usually costs between \$20 to \$25 per depending on the distance.

Other trekking lodges on the loop

Depending on your personal trekking itinerary, the accommodation will range from very basic to more comfortable lodges. Don't expect Western standard rooms, bathrooms or amenities. A standard family run lodge will offer a basic to comfortable room, Ecuadorian style meals and a good place to meet other trekkers from around the world.

Most lodges have a mix of different room types and sometimes rooms will have private bathrooms, while other rooms will have shared facilities. Most rooms are very simple, with a bed, small table and lamp. Most lodges offer bedding, towels and soap. There is no need to bring your sleeping bag, unless you are planning to camp. Most lodges have a space where you can put up your tent and pay something extra for the use of toilet, shower and meals. Especially in the higher altitude villages of Chugchilan, Quilotoa and Tigua it can get quite cold at night, so check if your room has heating. Most lodges offer lunchboxes to take with you on your hike.

It is recommended to make your reservations in advance to avoid surprises, especially if you are looking for a specific room type & date during high season. Many lodges though don't have good phone or internet connections and just don't take reservations in advance – in those cases it is usually no problem to just show up without a reservation. In the unlikely event the lodge is full, there will always be space somewhere else or the option of a family homestay.

Check out the following trekking lodges:

Tigua – Posada de Tigua

Quilotoa – Quilotoa Crater Lake Lodge

Quilotoa – Shalala Lodge in the community of Shalala

Quilotoa – Hostal Chukirawa



Malingua Pamba – Family homestay with Paulino Sacatoro (ask us for contact details, we will be happy to guide you to them)

Chugchilan – Hostal Cloudforest

Chugchilan – Hostal El Vaquero

Chugchilan – Hostal Mama Hilda

Chugchilan – Black Sheep Inn

Sigchos – Hosteria San Jose de Sigchos

Latacunga – Hostal Tiana

Drinking water & food

Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge is one of the very few lodges on the Quilotoa Loop that has installed a water purification system, all our fruits and vegetables are washed in purified water and purified water is also used for juices, coffee & tea, so you'll have no health issues when staying at our lodge. At a small additional charge, you can also refill your water bottle with healthy purified drinking water. We do not recommend to buy new bottled water on the Quilotoa Loop as empty bottles are often not recycled.

When no water purification system is in place, most lodges will offer bottled water. They often have one big bottle available where you can refill your bottle at an additional charge. Most trekking lodges understand tourist's needs and will take great care in the preparation of meals. Advise them in advance in case you have any specific dietary requirements and they often surprise you with healthy meal options.

Avoid eating street foods, these are often prepared under unhygienic conditions and can really spoil your hiking holiday!

Money on the Quilotoa Loop

There are no ATM's or banks on the Quilotoa Loop, so it is important to plan your budget ahead. None of the hotels on the Quilotoa Loop will be able to accept your credit-card or bank pass at the hotel, simply because this service is not provided by banks in this area. So be prepared and take out enough cash in Latacunga or another big city before travelling into the mountains.

Depending on how much comfort you would like on your trekking adventure, we recommend to bring between \$25 and \$55 *per person per day* on the Quilotoa Loop. This should be enough to cover expenses such as accommodation, meals, drinking water, a lunch box or lunch, bar drinks, trekking maps, public bus. Bring something extra for souvenirs, tipping, a sauna session, or in case you want to contract a local guide or transportation. It is also recommended to bring something extra in case of an emergency.

Dogs on the trail



Afraid of dogs? Don't panic! Sometimes dogs can be annoying for hikers. Knowing their motives helps to deal with them. Most people have a dog as an alarm system to secure their house or property. If you come too close to a dog owner's property it's their primary job to give alarm and try to keep you away. Some dogs are more enthusiastic than others and do not know that the road is public property.

The best strategy is to keep on hiking and don't pay attention to the dog, don't look directly at the dog, just look ahead or even at the sky and keep on walking. Try to not pay any attention to them. As soon as you pass the owners property, the dog will lose interest in you.

When a dog seems more aggressive towards you, you have 3 options:

1. Find a stick

The longer and thicker the better but you should be able to swing it easily. Impress the attacker by holding the stick up or swinging it.

2. Find a stone

If there are no sticks around look for a stone. The bigger the better but you should be able to pick it up with one hand and throw it easily. Pretend to throw it or if necessary actually do it.

3. Pretend to pick up a stone

If there are neither sticks nor stones around pretend to pick up a stone. Obviously you can only pretend to throw it but it often helps as well.

If there are more dogs always focus on the biggest one. Usually it's the leader and if this one withdraws the others will do the same.

If you think you can't make your way through you can either call for the owner, take a detour or retreat. However do not turn and run away. This would likely encourage the dog to chase you. Go back slowly step by step with confidence but do not look the dog into the eyes.

Internet & phone on the Quilotoa Loop

Internet & phone on the Quilotoa Loop can be very unreliable and it's best to inform family and friends that you are heading to an area with difficult connections for a couple of days to not make them worried.

Some lodges will offer WIFI, but it is likely not a service they can 100% guarantee, when connections break down, it can take days or sometimes weeks for the phone company to come and fix the problem. Electricity cuts are also very common on the Quilotoa Loop, but your lodge will always be prepared and provide candles in case this happens in the evening. The best approach is to leave your Internet & Phone addiction behind and fully enjoy a few days to be completely disconnected! You'll see what a relief that is!

Hot showers on the Quilotoa Loop

In general, water on the Quilotoa Loop is a very scarce resource. Water comes from the high altitude paramo and is recollected into a big water tank above the village from where it is



channeled through pipes to most houses. The water system is fragile and leaks often occur in which case houses are left without water until the leak is found and repaired. In dry season when water levels in the tank are especially low, regular water cuts are common during specific hours each day during sometimes long periods of time. In case of regular water cuts, your lodge will advise you the best time to take your shower. Most lodges will also have collected enough water in big tanks for you to wash your hands and flush the toilet.

Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge is one of the few lodges on the Quilotoa Loop that has built its own water reservoir to guarantee a hot shower at each time in the day, even when there is no water in the village! You will probably not even notice when there is a water cut in the village. We also make use of dry composting toilets that do not use water at all and offer a hygienic solution in case there is no water, while at the same time preserving liters of water to be wasted in a regular toilet.

Most lodges will offer a hot water shower, but due to general low water pressure it can often take several minutes to heat up, so be patient when taking a shower. Water is heated with gas tanks, so often when a shower is not heating up like it should, it's just a question of informing staff to change the gas tank. Please take only quick showers, this way the villagers will not be affected by your visit and have enough water to use to irrigate their land!

Safety on the Quilotoa Loop

The Quilotoa Loop is probably one of the safest areas in Ecuador! People in the area are often very poor, but will not steal. Some villages have a police station and in the more remote villages crime is often dealt with by community justice.

Most robberies don't occur during hikes through the mountains where people live modestly but are very calm and would not even think about doing you harm or rob you!

Most robberies occur at the bus stations in Quito or Latacunga, or while sitting on the bus to Quilotoa, Sigchos or Isinlivi. Do not store your luggage at the below compartments, as the bus can easily stop and your backpack can be taken out along the way. It is best to keep your luggage close to you on the bus and keep an eye on it.

Keep your passport and some money close to you, this way, if you are being robbed you'll be able to quickly get back to the city.

Many tourists hike the mountains by themselves all alone, but we highly recommend to always hike with a travel partner when possible, this way, if you get lost, or in case of an accident, there is someone to get help quickly.

Do not approach cows and horses, as they can sometimes be aggressive, especially when they have babies.

In Isinlivi we have a health center, and in Sigchos and Zumbahua there are bigger hospitals. There is no ambulance service on the Quilotoa Loop. There are small police stations in most villages on the loop.



Altitude sickness

The Quilotoa crater is at 3914m, the village of Chugchilan at 3200m, and Isinlivi at 2930m. When coming from low altitude areas, make sure you give yourself enough time to adjust to the altitude before you set off to the higher altitude areas of the Quilotoa Loop. Isinlivi is at similar altitude as Quito and is therefore a perfect spot to acclimatize for a couple of days before hiking the loop and visiting the highest point in Quilotoa.

Altitude sickness happens most often when people who are not used to high altitudes go too quickly from lower altitudes to altitudes of 2400m or higher. You may get a headache when you drive over a high mountain pass, hike to a high altitude or arrive at one of the trekking lodges on the Quilotoa Loop. Mild altitude sickness is quite common and fitness level doesn't play a role. It can happen to anyone!

If your altitude sickness is just mild, it's best to keep hydrated, eat only light meals and rest. It's best to spend an extra night at same altitude, before travelling to higher altitude areas. The air is thinner high up in the mountains, and your body has to get used to that. You'll need to breathe faster and rest more. As you get used to the altitude, the symptoms will go away.

A headache is common, and sometimes you can have more severe symptoms, such as not feeling like eating, feeling sick to your stomach (you may vomit), feeling weak and tired, not sleeping well, and feeling dizzy. Some people say it feels a bit like a hangover. The best treatment is to rest and spend another night at the same altitude. Your body has to get used to the altitude. Stay another night, and rest. Limit walking or heavy activity. Drink plenty of water, but do not drink alcohol. Do not continue to a higher altitude, until your symptoms go away, this may take from 12 hours up to 2 to 3 days. If your altitude sickness is severe, the only treatment is to go to a lower altitude and leave the mountains.

Altitude can affect your lungs and brain. When this happens, symptoms include being confused, not being able to walk straight, feeling faint, and having blue or gray lips or fingernails. On the Quilotoa Loop, this hardly ever happens with tourists, but if it does, it is important to inform staff and get to a doctor immediately, because it can be dangerous. If you see someone with severe altitude sickness symptoms such as being confused, ask help and never leave this person alone.

If you have a lung problem, heart problems, or other disease, seek medical advice before arriving. The lodge takes no responsibility for ill effects from altitude.

Weather & seasons

Lullu Llama Mountain Lodge is nestled in the beautiful Andes Mountains where weather is hard to predict, in fact, it is not uncommon to experience all four seasons in one day! In general, Andes climate varies according to the altitude: the higher the altitude, the colder it gets.

On the Quilotoa Loop, the village of Isinlivi is located at the lowest altitude of 2800m, therefore featuring a warmer and softer climate than other villages on the loop. The villages of Chugchilan (3200m), and Quilotoa (3914m) are located in higher altitude areas where climate feels



considerably colder, often with stronger winds and heavier rainfall, especially around the Quilotoa crater lake.

In Isinlivi, you'll often wake up to clear blue skies with spring-like weather during the day, year round. On most days, you can comfortably start your hike in a t-shirt and short trousers, but you'll need a warm sweater and long trousers when winds and clouds start to roll into the valleys around 4pm or 5pm. The equatorial sun is very strong on the skin, so you should always think about skin protection, even when it looks cloudy. Cold weather clothing is needed for high altitude hiking in the paramo and in case you are planning on mountain climbing. See our packing list for some indications as to what to bring.

In Isinlivi, daytime temperatures range between 15C and 27C. After sunset, temperatures drop usually between 7C to 12C. Temperatures rarely drop below 7 C and do often go up to even 30C, especially in the dry season months. The warmest month is usually September, while February and March are among coolest months (around 20C during the day!).

We are located close to the Equatorial line so we enjoy 12 hours of direct equatorial daylight 365 days a year. There is usually a calm fresh breeze over the mountains throughout the year, while in August winds may be stronger. The air in the mountains feels very comfortable and is neither too dry nor too muggy, even when temperatures get to 30C. Snow is exceptionally unlikely to fall at any time during the year at this location.

The seasons on the Quilotoa Loop are defined more by rainfall than by temperature, we have a wet season & dry season. The rainy season lasts from October to May, and June through September is characterized by a warmer drier period. In the rainy season it won't rain all the time, and most days start off with clear blue skies and lots of sun, so we recommend to start hiking in the mornings, and plan for a more relaxing activity in the afternoons. Rainy season is characterized by beautiful green mountains with vibrant colors, it's the time when most crops come alive.