

# American Alpine Institute<sup>Ltd.</sup>

## Illiniza – Antisana Expedition Itinerary

### **Day 1: Arrive Quito (9500 ft)**

Arrive in Quito and meet your guide and other members of the expedition at Hotel Quito. The first day is designated for traveling to Ecuador and becoming situated in country. For those that arrive a day or more earlier, we will provide you with your guide's room number and information on several sight seeing options (e.g., the historic colonial sector of Quito and El Panacillo overlooking the city).

### **Day 2: Acclimatize - Otavalo Market**

After meeting the rest of your group for breakfast, we will drive north, crossing the line of the Equator on our way to the town of Otavalo. We achieve some good, active acclimatization while exploring the market which is filled with indigenous crafts and food. We later take a leisurely walk to Lago de San Pablo and dine on the lakeshore across from the dormant volcano Imbabura (15,255ft). We return to Hotel Quito for the evening.

### **Day 3: Acclimatize – Gua Gua Pichincha (15,728')**

We head north of Quito to the Pichincha Massif for an acclimatization hike on Gua Gua Pichincha. This is a photogenic hike that provides views of the central valley from high above Quito.

### **Day 4: Illiniza Hut**

After enjoying breakfast at Hotel Quito, we drive south to the Illiniza trailhead. Our arrieros and their pack animals carry our gear on horseback to a hut which is beautifully situated at 15,250 feet below the col between Illiniza Sur and Illiniza Norte. To reach the hut we hike through grassy plains following braided streams into the sub-alpine environment. We spend the night in the hut.

### **Day 5: Climb Illiniza Norte (16,817 ft)**

The climb of Illiniza Norte is mostly a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class scramble and an extremely aesthetic climb on high quality rock. Our route begins sharply from the hut and gains a narrow ridge sometimes requiring roped belays. We then drop behind the ridge into a gully system of solid 4<sup>th</sup> class rock eventually opening up onto the jagged summit ridge where we enjoy excellent views of Cotopaxi (19,347') and Antisana (18,891') and our next objective, Illiniza Sur. Night in the Illiniza Hut.

### **Day 6: Climb Illiniza Sur (17,267 ft)**

The glaciers of Illiniza Sur have changed dramatically since we began guiding here nearly thirty years ago. The normal route varies from year to year and often involves steep snow and ice up to 60 degrees. This is an all-day climb, and we will take full advantage of an alpine start (pre-dawn) to ensure our success on this technically demanding and rewarding summit. We will descend from our climb and travel either to Hacienda La Cienega or Hotel Quito for the night.

**Day 7: Saquisilí Market**

Saquisilí is a village an hour south of Quito that hosts an authentic Indian Market on Thursdays. Campesinos come from all around to buy and sell goods, including animals, produce, tools, and other homemaking goods. This is not a market designed for tourists. It offers an untarnished window into the lives of these hardworking mountain people and provides an excellent opportunity to capture unique cultural photos. Night in Hotel Quito.

**Day 8: Anitisana Basecamp.**

We leave Quito, and drive through the remote Andean village of Pujili. We follow a winding mountain road up into the páramo, and through the land surrounding an old private hacienda. We hike a short distance to establish our camp near the base of the glacier at approximately 15,500 ft.

**Day 9: Climb Antisana (18,891')** After an alpine start, we take advantage of the firm route conditions and we begin our ascent to Antisana's highest of four summits. Our route will most likely head toward the saddle between Antisana Cumbre Maxima (highest summit) and Pico Sur (south summit). As we near the saddle route finding becomes integral to finding access to the upper reaches of the mountain. Ultimately our route will involve a combination of moderately angled glacier travel and short, steep sections that require the use of a full range of snow and ice techniques for intermediate terrain. We will spend the night at base camp or descend to a hacienda.

**Day 10 Return to Quito or Climb**

After a brief stop at the Oyachachi Hot Springs, we will return to Quito and enjoy the culture of Ecuador's capital city for a final evening. If we experience inclement weather on Day 9 and conditions improve overnight, we will remain at the Antisana base camp and attempt to climb the mountain today. We will return to Hotel Quito in evening for a final meal, toast to our successes, and undoubtedly plan our future adventures. Final night at hotel Quito before departing home the following day.