



volcano bike challenge, q&a

How big is the group?

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 12 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 25 people due to the wilderness environment in which the expedition is taking place

what are the flight details?

You will be flying from a London to Mexico City and returning from Mexico City to a London. The flight will take approx. 10hrs including a transfer. If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm with the Charity Challenge office before paying otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance).

what's the luggage allowance?

Luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum - details on what to pack are provided in your Kit List. 15kgs is the maximum allowance. On your outward journey, please take your cycling gear in your hand luggage in case any luggage gets delayed. Each day when you begin to ride, your personal kit will be transported to the next night's accommodation. You will only need to have a handle bar bag or bum bag with you during the day and you will be able to access your day pack at rest stops.

what will the accommodation be like?

Accommodation will be in 2 person tents. These dome tents will be supplied by us and are lightweight with mosquito netting in the entrance. Our ground staff will erect your tents (although your help will of course be welcome). Hotels and lodge accommodation will be in twin rooms. Please let Charity Challenge know if you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with.

what are the toilet/washing facilities like?

Toilets will be "au naturel" with toilet paper provided, however it may be advisable to bring your own too. Washing will be in the rivers please bring biodegradable soap. If you do not bring biodegradable soap, you will need to collect water from the river and wash well away from the natural water source. The last thing we want to do is pollute the Pescados River.

will my valuables be safe?

While we will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport and money should be kept on you at all times and when on the raft can be put into a waterproof security bag.

what is the food and drink like?

Water will be provided throughout the expedition however if you require soft drinks or alcohol you will have to purchase these separately. All the food is freshly prepared and of local origin – corn, beans and chillies as a base with salsa added to your own taste! Vegetarians are well catered for. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have many dietary requirements or allergies.

who will be leading the group?

We employ a number of first aid qualified expedition leaders, all of whom speak English. They will ultimately be responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. During the biking and white water rafting sections of the expedition, there will also be experienced river rafting guides and cycling guides

what is a typical day?

You will wake early in time for a light breakfast and to prepare your cycling equipment. On your cycling days you will be riding between 4–7 hours per day. You will stop in the shade during the hottest part of the day for a picnic lunch or stop at a restaurant. You will arrive at camp before sunset in order to wash before it gets dark. Dinner will be prepared by the cooks - most of the time we use local community houses, local restaurants or farmers houses, to help support the local communities.

what are the bikes like?

The bikes are 21-speed with front suspension and V-Brakes. They all have a water bottle carrier and a luggage rack at the back.

how fit do I need to be?

Training is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. Don't forget that the temperature and climate is different to the UK and that you will be exercising constantly for a number of days- the heat and distances will be your biggest challenge. Also see Fitness Training notes.

what if I can't keep up?

The event is not a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's cycling abilities. We allow for this. There will always be a staff member at the back of the group to ensure you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. If we find somebody is unable to cycle at all, then we can transport them from one location to the next.

what happens if I fall ill, can't keep up or there is an emergency?

It is policy that participants must wear a helmet, please take your own for comfort reasons. Be aware that cycling can be dangerous and accidents can happen, you must be responsible for your own safety whilst riding. Throughout the expedition, back-up support will be close by, and we maintain radio contact with the back up team. If for any reason any injury should occur, or continuation is not possible, a relief vehicle will be made available. The support bus is there for clients who need to rest, to carry the spare bike parts, and will often contain refreshments such as water, snacks and soft drinks to make riding more enjoyable. The support bus will follow at a discreet distance all the time. During transfer sections, the bikes will be carried in the bus where necessary. The guide will carry water and the first aid kit with them until the trail joins the main track where the bus will be waiting.

what is included in the cost of the expedition?

Your international flights to and from Mexico City, all meals and drinking water unless otherwise stated in the itinerary, entry into National Parks on the itinerary, the bike, all rafting equipment, all transfers in Mexico, all accommodation whether in tents or haciendas, group first aid supplies, an English speaking expedition leader and full local support team, backup, a Charity Challenge T-Shirt, US\$20 to the local community project, and discount from Nomad Travellers Stores for personal equipment. We also make a contribution through Climate Care to offset the equivalent CO2 emissions of your international flight.

what is not included in the cost of the expedition?

Vaccinations, visa, tips for the support team and expedition leader, personal spending money, additional activities and travel to and from UK Airport of departure are not included.

what shall I do about spending money?

You will be in the country side for most of the challenge, far from any foreign exchanges or banks. You will not need large amounts of money during this trip other than at the start and end of the trip. You can change £GBP into Mexican Pesos prior to departure which is advisable as the only place to do this in Mexico is the airport which can be extremely busy. \$USD can also be used for tipping if you prefer, please only bring small denominations. Credit cards should be accepted in the hotels and bank machines with a pin number. A total of £200 for drinks, tips, gifts and souvenirs (jewellery/hammocks etc) should be more than enough.

how much would you recommend for tips?

Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. US\$6 / 65 Mexican Pesos per person per day and this should be given to the expedition leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it evenly amongst the support team.

should I take gifts or clothes for the locals?

We advise against giving small gifts to children as it can encourage begging. However, we will be supporting a local community project in the Veracruz region by providing vital financial support. If you have any small

items or clothing that you would like to donate, your expedition leader will collect it from you at the end of the challenge and make sure that it is distributed where it is needed most.

what do you do to protect the environment?

We are keeping to a small group so that we limit the impact we have on the Veracruz jungle environment. We will ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly and stick to designated trails. We also make a donation (US\$20 per person) on your behalf to a Veracruz community project, Xopilapa and Ixhuacan de los Reye, to enhance the living conditions of the local people. Finally we follow the local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect. Also see Responsible Tourism Notes.

can you recommend any literature about the region?

- *The Rebellion of the Hanged* by Bruno Traven
- *The Lawless Roads* by Graham Green

english

Hello
Goodbye
Good morning
Good night
Please
Thank you
How are you?
Excuse me
I'm sorry!
I don't understand
Yes
No
How much?
When?
Where is...?
Do you speak English?

spanish

Hola
Adios/Ciao
Buenos dias
Buenos noches
Por favor
Gracias
Como esta?
Disculpe
Disculpe/Lo siento
No entiendo
Si
No
Cuanto?
Cuando?
Donde esta/queda...?
Habla ingles?

NB: The information provided above was correct at the time of going to print