

# 2026 Class IV Itinerary





## Join us in Ecuador for Class IV This Season



**7-DAY CLASS IV/IV+ ITINERARY (NAPO and QUIJOS VALLEYS) \$1500 per person Plus Equipment Rental.** This trip requires a minimum of 4 people sharing two cabins. Other cabins or rooms may be available at additional cost.

This year we are offering a cataraft, inflatable kayak, and hardshell trip for **advanced** rowers/paddlers. On our Advanced Whitewater Trip you can expect to run some of Ecuador's best Class III+ to IV+ runs in the Napo Valley (Archidona) and the Quijos Valley (Baeza). What could be better than a week of **challenging** whitewater in a tropical paradise? Some of these runs are very challenging and have **legitimate Class IV and IV+ rapids**, some of the IV+ rapids would be considered Class V in our USA guidebooks.

These are small-group (6-8 people max) trips for people that **bring their own equipment** down with them. You will be responsible for bringing your own boating equipment (cataraft, raft, paddle cat, IK, SUP, or kayak) and personal gear (PFD, helmet, skirt, paddle). Rafts (row or paddle), inflatable kayaks and kayaks are available to rent at additional cost from **Kayak Ecuador** if you cannot bring your own equipment. Neil has at least one complete cataraft package available to rent while participating in one of these trips. Personal gear is also available to rent for an additional charge.



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Most of the rivers on this trip are for **advanced paddlers/rowers only** with difficult rapids that will challenge your rowing/paddling ability. Every day on the river, we will be accompanied by an experienced local kayaker who will take pictures and provide support. Neil will also provide additional safety on his cataraft when accompanying groups of advanced paddlers.



We'll stay at the beautiful Pacha Eco Lodge Glamping-Hotel with internet, hot showers, glamping cabins with king-sized beds, restaurant, and a safe place for your equipment. The glamping cabins are beautiful, perched above the Rio Misahualli. Each cabin is private so the occupants can stay in their own space with a small private terrace. Bathroom/shower facilities are located in a separate building on the sprawling estate. The grounds are planted with native vegetation and include a chakra where most of the food is grown. There may be other rooms with private baths available for an additional charge to upgrade. A delicious Breakfast and Dinner will be provided at the hotel and lunches will be provided on the river. The restaurant has a spectacular view of the surrounding hills/mountains and the grounds below.



**PACHA ECO LODGE**  
GLAMPING & HOTEL  
ARCHIDONA, NAPO



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There are a number of Class III to Class IV+ rivers/sections in the area to choose from depending on the prevailing weather, so we will adjust according to suitable water levels for the group. The hotel base is close enough to allow options in both the Napo and Quijos valleys. Possible rivers/runs include:

### **Napo Valley (Tena)**

Jatanyacu (Class III)  
Lower Jondachi/Hollin (Class III+/IV)  
Upper Misahualli (Class III+/IV+)  
Middle Anzu (Class III)  
Middle Jondachi (Class IV+)  
Piatua (Class IV/IV+)  
Upper Anzu (Class IV/IV+)

### **Quijos Valley (Baeza)**

Quijos - Baeza to Borja (Class III+/IV)  
Quijos - Canyon to Canyon (Class III+/IV)  
Quijos - El Chaco (Class IV)  
Quijos - Bombon (Class III+/IV)  
Upper/Middle Cosanga (Class IV)  
Lower Cosanga (Class IV/IV+)  
Oyacachi (Class IV/IV+)

### **SAMPLE ITINERARY**

\*Please note that this is a sample itinerary, actual trips may be different due to changing water levels and the ability level of the group. In Ecuador many of the rapids are rated lower (and more realistically) such that the Class III+ El Reten section on the Misahualli may feel more like Class IV to you depending on the water level. Some sections of the Jondachi and the Piatua are more difficult and have some rapids that would be rated Class V in an American guidebook. We will take this and the groups paddling/rowing abilities into account when determining which rivers to run each day. Some days are leisurely, short river days while other days are longer due to river length and travel time. The trips include 4 days of paddling with a day of relaxation in the middle.





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**Pre-Trip:** Travel and arrive to Quito airport. **You must arrive on or before Saturday**, the day prior to the pick-up in Tababela/Airport hotel so that a single transport vehicle can be used for the entire group. You will need to stay in one of the airport hotels or arrange for airport pickup by one of the nearby hotels in Tababela. We can recommend some places to stay in Tababela or near the airport. If you arrive in Ecuador a day or more before the trip and want to check out the city of Quito, you will need to make your way to Tababela the night before the trip to facilitate meeting with the group and transport on Sunday morning. The Historical Center and Quito South are NOT eligible for pick up. **Hotels and meals before the trip are not included.**

**Day 1 (Sunday):** A private van/truck will pick the group up around 10 am (exact time to be confirmed) and you'll be transported over the 13,000 foot Papallacta Pass and drop down into the Amazon Basin. On the way, check out views of the Class V Rio Papallacta and Class IV+ Rio Quijos. Pacha Eco Lodge is located about 3 hours from Quito. Once here, we will get you set up in your glamping cabin or Pacha Room with private bath. Then you can discover the self-guided trails around the property and help get the boats ready! If time allows, we will paddle the El Reten section of the Rio Misahualli (Class III+) in the afternoon. This gives everyone a chance to make sure their equipment is ready for the challenging whitewater ahead. In the evening, an amazing welcome dinner will be waiting for you in the restaurant. Cold cerveza or bar drinks too!

**Day 2 (Monday):** Today we'll stick close to our base at Pacha and run some sections of the upper Rio Misahualli. There are several access points within minutes of Pacha and we can take out at the beach below Pacha or continue down a bit further to Capoa. The upper Misahualli is classic Ecuadorian creeking and can be difficult with oars due to the low volume and technical boulder-choked rapids. From San Francisco (or even higher up) to Cotundo, the rapids are tight and technical and the gradient is steep, making for challenging Class IV/IV+ whitewater. There is a tricky 2-3 meter drop in the San Francisco section as well. Below Cotundo and El Reten, the river is less steep than the upper sections, but still has numerous fun Class III+ and IV rapids that are technical in nature. If the water is up, these sections can be difficult, but if the Mis is too high, we may be able to run some of the smaller tributaries like the Inchillaqui or Calmitayacu.





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**Day 3 (Tuesday):** We head to Mondayacu where the locals will come running to chase the trucks down to the trailhead in order to carry our boats into the lower Jondachi River. We'll hike with our own gear. Once we reach the river, the group can enjoy a side excursion to the "Gran Canon" while the boats are being inflated. This is one of the premiere Class III/III+ jungle runs in the area. This run is very remote and has beautiful waterfalls spilling into the river, not to mention fun rapids. After joining the Rio Hollin, the volume increases substantially and there are a number of fun pool-drop rapids, including the infamous "Wafflemaker" (Class IV). At the take-out in Santo Domingo de Hollin, we are only a short drive from Pacha and a hot shower before drinks and dinner.





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**Day 4 (Wednesday):** Today we are off to the Rio Piatua. This is technical Class IV/IV+ creeking with clear water and smooth granite boulders. The upper section is full on Class IV/IV+ and comes at you fast. The lower section is a classic mix of Class III+ boulder gardens with occasional harder rapids. The flow in the Piatua can change VERY quickly and we may have to find an alternate. After the river, we may grab a snack of "Volqueteros" at the Cabanas Piatua before heading back to Pacha. If they are open, we can stop at Tsatsayacu on the way back to Tena for some locally grown cacao and delicious chocolate ice cream.



**Day 5 (Thursday):** Today we'll take a break and relax at the lodge, go for a hike or bike ride, or explore the local area with one of the locals from Archidona. If people wish, we can paddle a fun, scenic Class II stretch of the Rio Misahualli downstream of the lodge into Tena.



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**Day 6 (Friday):** Today is a big day on the Rio Quijos, putting in Bridge 4 or at the Sardinias Grande and running the El Chaco, and Bombon sections. In the El Chaco section, there are powerful Class IV/IV+ pool-drop rapids like El Toro and a spectacular mini gorge where the columnar basalt has been twisted in several directions. Once we reach the confluence with the Oyacachi (there are some sticky holes here!) we enter the Bombon section where the rapids ease a bit (Class III-IV). Bombon has more pool drop rapids with one rapid of note. "Curvas Peligrosas" is an S-turn with big boils at the top and a couple of big holes at the bottom. Below Curvas, there is another beautiful, but short basalt gorge. The last rapid, Chuchaqui (meaning hangover) has a great wave train. We'll get back to Pacha in time for dinner.



**Day 7 (Saturday):** After our last delicious breakfast at Pacha, pack up your gear to get ready to travel back to Quito. A private van/truck will transport the group back to the Quito airport. We shoot for leaving Pacha around noon, with plenty of time for an evening drop-off at the airport. It may be possible to stop at Papallacta Hots Springs on the way for a soak (\$10 per person). **Lunch is not provided.**





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**Post-Trip:** Travel and arrive to USA. Many flights out leave very early in the morning. We can drop you off at a hotel near the airport for a flight out the next day; however, you'll need to book the hotel yourself and arrange transport to the airport. We can recommend some places to stay in Tababela or near the airport. **Hotels and meals post-trip are not included.**

**Trip Cost:** All this for \$1500 per person (plus gear rental if you don't bring your own) with a minimum of four people. Other cabins and private rooms may be available at additional cost. In the event that individuals within a larger group cancel, a surcharge of \$300 per person may be added to keep the trip running.

## Trip cost includes:

- Transport from Tababela/Quito Airport to Archidona and from Archidona to Tababela/Quito Airport
- Local shuttles to and from rivers (**4 boating days**)
- Lodging at Pacha Eco Lodge (6 nights)
- All meals while at Pacha
- Support kayaker/photographer on all river days
- Porters to carry gear to the Rio Jondachi
- River/community entrance fees

## Trip cost does not include:

- Flights to/from Ecuador
- Hotels/meals pre- and post-trip
- Entrance fees to side excursions (e.g., Papallacta Hot Springs)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Gratuities for the Pacha staff, safety kayakers and drivers
- Rental of equipment or personal gear – catarafts, rafts kayaks, and inflatable kayaks are available to rent
- Medical Insurance/Travel Protection Plan
- Mandatory clothing and equipment (see "**What to Bring**" below)

## Additional charges for upgrades and add-ons:

- Upgrade to the Pacha Room with private bath with two people \$200 per person, if available
- Upgrade to the riverside Sunset Room with private bath for two people \$250 per person, if available
- Upgrade to one of the more spacious riverside Moon Rooms with private bathroom. Each room can accommodate a maximum of 4 guests (upgrade cost depends on the number of people in room)
- Extra non-boating day, includes night of lodging (glamping) and meals (\$100 per person)
- Extra boating day, includes night of lodging (glamping), meals, and boating (\$175 per person)
- Boat Rental
  - Cataraft Package – 5 days (\$500) plus \$250 damage deposit
  - Paddle Raft – 5 days (\$325)
  - Oar Frame Raft – 5 days (\$625)
  - 2-person Inflatable Kayak – 5 days (\$150)
  - Whitewater kayak – 5 days (\$175) does not include paddle, helmet, PFD, or personal gear



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Neil has scheduled time in Ecuador during February and March 2026 and will accompany trips during that time period. Trips are scheduled to run Sunday to Saturday. With enough people, we may be able to do a two-day add-on to accommodate a Swiftwater Rescue Course where you will receive your ACA Level 3 certification. This adds an additional \$500 per person, which includes 2 nights lodging and meals at Pacha, instruction, and certificate. Trips generally run from Sunday through Saturday, contact Neil ([gearhead@golightoutdoors.com](mailto:gearhead@golightoutdoors.com)) to see what dates are available.

**Booking a Trip:** Contact Neil with your desired trip from the scheduled dates. Once the dates and number of people are set, you will be required to pay a deposit (directly to **Kayak Ecuador**) to hold the dates and reserve the rooms. Full payment to **Kayak Ecuador** is required 60 days prior to the trip date.

**Cancellation Policy:** A 50% per person deposit required to reserve booking. Full payment to **Kayak Ecuador** is required 60 days prior to the trip date. If you cancel prior to the full payment date you will receive a refund of your deposit minus a \$100 per person processing fee. Failure to provide full payment will result in trip cancellation and forfeiture of the entire deposit. Cancellations made more than 30 days prior to the departure of the trip will receive a 50% refund of payments, minus a \$100 per person processing fee. Reservations canceled within 30 days of the trip departure will not receive a refund.

It is your responsibility to be at your trip's scheduled check-in time and departure. If you show up late and miss your trip, you have canceled without notification and will not receive a refund. If space allows we may be able to assess a trip change fee and put you on a later trip; however, this is situational and cannot be guaranteed as an option, therefore it is in your best interest to be on time for your trip's check-in and departure. There are **no exceptions** to this policy so please remember to account for weather conditions, traffic, construction, etc. For this reason, we recommend arriving in Quito the day before your scheduled pick-up date.

We also strongly recommend purchasing a travel protection plan that includes trip cancellation and interruption coverage, baggage loss protection, emergency medical and emergency medical evacuation coverage. A travel protection plan may help reimburse the cost of your pre-paid, non-refundable payments in the event you are prevented from taking your trip for a covered reason. Personal items and cameras are carried entirely at the owner's risk, and we accept no responsibility for lost or damaged property.





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## What to Bring: See the Gear List below

### Recommended and MANDATORY River Gear:

Splash Jacket or Dry Top x 1 (or good neoprene jacket) **\*\*Mandatory** for cooler days on the river

Splash Pants x 1 **\*\*Mandatory** for those cooler days on the river

Wetsuit (shorty or farmer john) or neoprene shorts for those cooler days on the river

Synthetic T-shirt x 1 **\*\*Mandatory**

Synthetic T-shirt (long sleeve) x 1 **\*\*Mandatory**

Shorts x 2

Lycra Tights/Pants (great for sun and mosquitos)

RIVER Shoes. (river shoes with laces, no booties, soft shoes, or open toes) **\*\*Mandatory** (can be rented)

**\*\*Chaco and sandals acceptable for easy river days (Class II)**

Neoprene socks

Gloves for rowing

6-12 Liter Personal Dry Bag **\*\*Mandatory** (this item can be rented)

Water Bottle with safe attachment to boat **\*\*Mandatory**

### Safety for Rafters and IKs

#### These Items are MANDATORY

**PFD: Each participant MUST have a serviceable U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD).**

All PFDs must have a USCG approved label stating the PFD is designed for whitewater rafting, canoeing, rescue, sailing, paddling, and/or kayaking. The label must be readable. The PFD may not have any holes, rips, tears, broken/repared buckles, or broken/repared zippers, and must be appropriately sized for each person.

. **\*\*Your PFD must pass inspection by Kayak Ecuador Staff or it will be rejected (this item can be rented)**

Helmet: river helmet, good fit (this item can be rented)

Flip Line (15 feet) of webbing to be rolled and carried in your PFD with the carabiners (can be rented)

Locking Carabiners (At least 2, automatic or manual locking)

Rescue Throw Rope (50 foot minimum). **\*\*Kayak Ecuador may reject or modify your rope it is unsafe.**

The Safety STAFF of Kayak Ecuador will be carrying additional Hardware, Satellite Phone and First Aid. They might ask the 2 most solid Rafters to carry some long Rescue Ropes.



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## General Clothing Recommended for Comfort On and Off the River:

Cap/visor

T-shirts x 4 (You sweat a lot in the Jungle!)

Shorts x 2

Light pants (Easy Dry, trekking type)

Hoody or comfy Pullover for rides after cold rivers

Long-sleeved shirt for cool evenings

Light rain jacket

Sport Shoes

Sandals

## Other Recommended Items:

Insect repellent (DEET and Picaridin)

Water-resistant sunscreen

Waterproof camera or phone case

Go Pro for video

Extra cam straps for rigging