

# The Andes



You might imagine that Simón Bolívar himself – that guy for whom nearly every plaza in the country is named – stopped and took a deep breath himself when he marched through the Andes on the ‘Admirable Campaign,’ the final steps in the country’s independence. Scenic Trujillo – where he decreed death to every resistor – and its surrounding villages, like Boconó and Niquitao, retain much of the colonial character of days gone by and make for some great trekking.

But save your breath and energy for Mérida, the adventure capital of the country, where two- and four-wheel vehicles, ropes, pick-axes, hang-gliders and yes – your own two feet – take you higher than you might imagine, soaring above even the condors in a parapente glider, or looking down on the rest of Venezuela from the shrouded mists of Eagle’s Pass. Leap from vertigo-inducing bridges, rappel into canyons, bike down or glide off mountains: you’ll be completely exhausted and exhilarated by your time in the highlands.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Find mountain hospitality in the remote mountain village of **Los Nevados** (p165)
- Caren down waterfalls on a **canyoning trip** (p157), or soar above the condors on a **paragliding trip** (p155), organized from Mérida
- Go mountain trekking to **Pico Bolívar** (p165) and **Pico Humboldt** (p165), Venezuela’s highest peaks
- Watch the mysterious Good Friday passion play in **Tostós** (p173)
- Stare out the eye-holes of the massive 47m statue of the **Virgin Mary** (p169) in Trujillo



