



EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS

# ECUADOR and the GALAPAGOS

## Destination **FACTSHEET**



- Top 5 Things to Know
- ACIS Trip Services
  - Rooming
  - Meals
  - Tour Manager
  - Country Specific Fees
- General Information / Travel Tips
  - Flights
  - Passport Requirements
  - Parental Consent
  - Time Difference
  - Electrical Outlets
  - Luggage Restrictions
  - Tipping
- What to Pack
- Healthcare
- Safety and Security
- Other Important Information

330 Congress Street  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02210  
[info@acis.com](mailto:info@acis.com)  
[www.acis.com](http://www.acis.com)

## TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW

1

There may be luggage fees for checked baggage. Please check with your confirmed airline prior to departure for the most up to date baggage policy so you are prepared. Many airlines do charge extra. As an alternative you may want to consider packing lightly with a carry-on bag.

2

Visit a local travel doctor or your primary care physician with your trip itinerary to get the best personalized medical advice on any vaccinations or special medication needed for the program. Also ask your doctor for recommendations concerning medication and lifestyle tips at high altitude. Quito is 9,400 feet above sea level.

3

Be prepared to transport your belongings on and off boats, busses, and planes. Busses and boats are smaller in Ecuador than in Europe and your luggage may be on top of the bus as opposed to below. Come prepared with small waterproof baggies for technology/valuables and one large plastic (garbage) bag for covering your suitcase in case it rains.

4

Please refrain from touching the animals, disturbing the wildlife or collecting anything from the land or oceans. Ecuador, including the Galapagos, is a land of biodiversity. To appreciate the thousands of species of plants, reptiles, birds, mammals, amphibians and insects, please stay at least two meters from all wildlife in order to maintain their safety and yours!

5

The water is not potable. Ecuador is proud of their eco-friendly policies and prefer not to use disposable plastic bottles, but we advise drinking bottled water throughout the program. Keep in mind all hotels have free water dispensers.



## ACIS TRIP SERVICES

### Hotels

We take pride in the type of accommodations we use to ensure the best experience while on the program. Hotels are likely to be more rustic and secluded than what you are used to in the United States, especially when visiting the Galapagos Islands. As you will be staying in areas of incredible bio-diversity, it is possible or even likely to see insects and small animals around your accommodation.

### Rooming

Students are placed in triple rooms only, not quads. Triple rooms may not always have three proper beds.

### Meals

Continental or buffet breakfasts and dinners are included daily throughout the trip. On the Galapagos Islands, lunch will also be provided. Due to flight schedules, groups often arrive in Quito after the dinner hour. It may be wise to bring a packed lunch with you to the airport as food may not be provided by the airlines during your flight(s).

You'll enjoy typical Latin American food throughout the trip. Andean potatoes are a staple in Ecuador as well as rice, chicken, beef, seafood (found more abundantly in coastal towns) and a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Be careful of food from street-side vendors and open markets.

### Tour Manager

A local Ecuadorian guide will accompany the group throughout the trip. Additional local guides will be with the group during the Galapagos portion of the program. Depending on the group size you may have more than one local guide while in the Galapagos, for example there will be one guide for every 16 people.

### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times or sailing conditions. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to the local conditions.





### Boat Transportation





While in the Galapagos boat transfers will be used to transport from one island to another. We will use a mix of both private and public boats and ferries depending on a variety of factors, including capacity regulations and weather conditions. It is possible a group may be split into more than one boat. Should water taxis be needed the tour manager will cover the cost. **Please see note about seasickness under Healthcare.**

### Country Specific Fees

The program rate includes the tourism fees relating to park entrances and transportation fees which covers:

- All airport taxes, including international and domestic
- Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee: \$100.00 USD per person
- Transit Control Card: \$20.00 USD per person
- Isabella Island Entrance Fee: \$10.00 USD per person

 GENERAL INFORMATION / TIPS	
<b>Flights</b> 	Most flights to Quito are day flights and passengers usually arrive in the evening. Some flights are overnight. Internal flights require passport numbers for all participants to book the group, if we do not have passport numbers you may need to be booked separately and required to pay any increases or additional costs incurred.
<b>Passport Requirements</b> 	<b>ACIS requires your Passport Number 60 days prior to the trip to book internal flight with the group.</b> Passports ARE required for all passengers traveling to Ecuador and must be valid for at least 6 months after returning to the USA and have at least two blank pages. Tourist visas are not required for US citizens traveling to Ecuador. Non-US citizens should check with the Embassy of Ecuador for any specific Visa requirements. In such cases, the passenger will be responsible for obtaining their own Visa. Please make two colored copies of your passport. One for the group leader and one to keep in a location separate from your passport.
<b>Parental Consent</b> 	Parental consent letter is not needed to travel to Ecuador.

<p><b>Time Difference</b></p> 	<p>Ecuador is one or two hours behind Eastern Standard Time dependent upon the time of year. From spring to fall, Quito is on Central Standard Time and the Galapagos Islands are on Mountain Time. They do not change their clocks for Daylight Savings Time.</p>
<p><b>Electrical outlets</b></p> 	<p>Ecuador uses 110-volt, 60 cycle electricity, same as the US. Plugs are typically the 2-pronged flat type so US travelers will not typically need a converter or adapter.</p>
<p><b>Luggage Restrictions</b></p> 	<p>International airlines now charge passengers a fee for their first checked bag. Please check with your confirmed airline prior to departure for the most up to date baggage policy so you are prepared. As an alternative you may want to consider packing lightly with a carry-on bag. Packing lightly is also a good idea to make transport easier. You are responsible for carrying your luggage on and off boats and busses throughout the trip.</p> <p>For domestic flights you are allowed one carry-on bag at no cost with the following weight restrictions; <b>1 Hand luggage:</b> 8 kg (17 Pounds) piece 21-inch-high, 14-inch-wide and 10-inch deep and</p> <p><b>1 checked luggage</b> of 23 Kg (50 Pounds)</p>
<p><b>Tipping</b></p> 	<p>Pre-paid tips of \$13 per person per day will be listed on your account to cover tour manager, local bus and guide tips.</p>



## HEALTHCARE

Please check with the Department of Health and Human Services for specific health concerns when traveling:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Cholera and dysentery are not serious problems in Ecuador. Nevertheless, drink only bottled water to reduce the risk of contracting intestinal parasites. Try to avoid drinks with ice, uncooked food, and unpasteurized milk (including milk products), and drink bottled water. Mild cases of traveler's diarrhea may respond to Imodium (known generically as loperamide) or Pepto-Bismol (not as strong), both of which can be purchased over the counter. Pharmacies are widely available. However, some medications may not be offered or brand names differ from products in the United States.

Consult your doctor before traveling to understand the effects of altitude sickness and how high elevation can affect your current medication. It's advisable to drink plenty of water and stay hydrated starting several days before departure and throughout the trip. Resting and good sleep will also help your body adjust to the high altitude. Your fitness level will not prevent altitude sickness; it can affect all travelers who are not accustomed to the sudden elevation change.

**It's recommended you take a seasickness pill before each ride on the speedboats especially if you're prone to sea sickness. It's also recommended that you carry a small plastic bag with you in case of sickness.** There are no services on board the boats so come prepared with any medication you may need.

In the event of a medical emergency where medical expenses and/or insurance is involved in Ecuador, the passenger must pay the expenses directly and mail receipts to our Boston office for reimbursement. Deductible amounts according to the type of insurance purchased will apply.





## WHAT TO PACK

We advise you to bring comfortable, casual, breathable clothes to Ecuador. Pack in layers. Temperatures are determined more by altitude than by the calendar. Quito maintains moderate temperatures (lows in the mid 40s F, highs in the low 70s F) and the Amazon is always hot and humid. Don't always trust the weather forecast. Rely on average temperatures and plan for all types of weather from humid and warm to rainy and cold.

- ✓ **Basic Medical Supplies** such as sea sickness pills, anti-diarrhea medicine, aspirin, Band-Aids.
- ✓ **Bathing Suit**
- ✓ **Binoculars** for viewing the wildlife.
- ✓ **Games** While staying in Santa Cruz or the Galapagos it's a good idea to have board games or cards for relaxing evenings.
- ✓ **Hat** to block the sun during long days of hiking.
- ✓ **Insect Repellent** with DEET
- ✓ **Jacket/ Lightweight raincoat** Light, water-resistant jacket that will keep you warm on a cool evening yet can be stuffed away or worn loosely on a warm day.
- ✓ **Layers** to accommodate for higher elevation/cooler temperatures and the humidity.
- ✓ **Long Pants** for walks through National Parks and Forests.
- ✓ **Plastic Bags** for wet bathing suits/clothes or keeping valuables dry on boats.
- ✓ **Small Flashlight** for viewing wildlife
- ✓ **Small Suitcase and Carry on** (pack as lightly as possible!)
- ✓ **Shorts/T-Shirts** Often times with the hot weather, you will need a change of clothing.
- ✓ **Sunscreen** Do not underestimate the intensity of the equatorial sun.
- ✓ **Two pairs of walking shoes/sneakers** for hiking in case one pair is wet. Never bring new shoes! Also, be sure they have good grip for walking on slippery, inclined surfaces or lava rock paths. Waterproof shoes, such as Tevas or Reefs can be very useful while on the cruise.
- ✓ **Umbrella/Rain Gear.** It can rain in Ecuador, even if only for brief periods.
- ✓ **Water bottle.** Hotels have drinking water available to prevent plastic bottle waste.





## SAFETY AND SECURITY

**Should you have any issues at all during your trip, please call ACIS and we will rectify the problem immediately.**

It is vital that you notify us as soon as you experience a problem as we can resolve issues very quickly on the spot before it adversely affects your trip.

Ecuador is a safe country and travelers should exercise normal precautions when in Ecuador to avoid pick-pockets and petty theft.

ACIS Emergency number 617-450-5678



## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Currency

Since 2000, the US dollar has been the official currency in Ecuador.

### Buses

While in mainland Ecuador bus capacity is 40 passengers in land area. In the Galapagos the buses have a capacity of 20 passenger. Should a group exceed 20 passengers they will be split into multiple buses.

### Public Speedboats

We recommend that you take a seasickness pill before each ride between islands if you are prone to seasickness. It is also recommended that you carry small plastic bags with you in case of seasickness. The speedboats are public with a capacity from 25-30 people, besides there are not completely covered so please make sure that valuable objects and electronics are stored in a plastic bag. There are no services onboard as the speedboat space is limited and the journey is relatively short. A water taxi ride is sometimes required (depending on the tide) from the dock to the speedboat; the cost is covered by the tour manager

### Wildlife

Most of the animals are not dangerous, but there are many endangered species and a handful of poisonous plants in Ecuador. Please keep a safe distance from all animals as to not disturb them as well as avoid biting or aggravation.

### Credit cards

Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted cards, but other ones have limited acceptance. American Express is rarely accepted. It is best to carry cash with you; there are ATMs in most large towns and cities.