

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

# Study Abroad

## Faculty-Led Immersion



**GEOGRAPHY AND CULTURE IN  
ECUADOR**  
WINTERIM 2018

*Program Guide*

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**CONGRATULATIONS** on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire study abroad program in Ecuador during Winterim 2018. Living and studying in a foreign culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

*Building upon foreign language skills*  
*Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field*  
*Increasing understanding of different cultures*  
*Enhancing personal development*  
*Developing new perspectives on U.S. culture*  
*Gaining self-confidence and independence*  
*Learning skills for the future international job market*

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure! This program guide is to be used together with the Faculty-Led Study Abroad Handbook. The Handbook has information that is valid for all faculty-led immersion programs. This guide will provide you with specific information for the Ecuador program. It is designed to complement the Handbook, study abroad orientation and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that, although this guide contains all of the information available at the time of printing, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. We strongly encourage you to contact your faculty leaders with your specific questions.

Basic questions only you can answer include:

- 1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common objectives of students studying abroad include advancement in future profession; desire to gain fluency in a second language; wish to expand personal and academic horizons; need for a change; wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.
- 2) Given the way the program is set up, how can you best prepare to meet your goals? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in local culture, yet you are going with a group of UW-Eau Claire students, how can you ensure that you do not spend too much time with other U.S. Americans?

*The information in this guide was current at the time of printing, but changes may occur at any time.*

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## *The Program Goals*

This Faculty-Led Immersion Experience will provide students with the opportunity to learn about and experience first-hand the diverse geographies and cultures of Ecuador. Students will visit two of the four climatic and cultural geographical regions of Ecuador (Andes Mountains and Amazon Basin), and understand how global forces are currently impacting the local environment, including internationally-driven economic development, oil exploitation, and deforestation of the rainforest.

Further, the program explores the diversity of cultures, languages, values and practices within Ecuador through engaging with a variety of Ecuadorians in a socially responsible and mutually beneficial manner, while recognizing histories of racism, marginalization, and discrimination against indigenous peoples. For example, students will witness how the links between oil exploitation and deforestation have fomented the loss of indigenous knowledge and are changing cultural and traditional values and lifestyles. Finally, the program aims to deepen student intercultural competency through global engagement, experiential learning opportunities such as a homestay with Ecuadorian families and a service learning project alongside local community leaders, as well as regular written and oral reflection and group discussions.

## *The Location and Activities*

Ecuador is located on the northwest coast of South America. While geographically small (just over 100,000 square miles) and with a population of 15 million, the country is divided into four distinct geographical regions – Andes

Mountains, coastal region, Amazon Basin, and Galapagos Islands. The country is known for its diverse physical and ecological landscapes, but also its cultural and linguistic diversity with over 10 distinct indigenous populations and 23 individual languages spoken.

The program starts in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador, where students will receive an in-country orientation and learn about its history and culture – exploring the historical district to observe the impact of Spanish colonization, seeing the Presidential Home and other government buildings open to visits, and visiting “Mitad Del Mundo” (“the middle of the world”) where the equator passes just north of Quito as an introduction to the country’s geography.

Then, we will travel from Quito to Tena, a small city 120 miles southeast of Quito, in the Amazon Basin region. We will stop numerous times along the way to investigate the changing geographical landscapes from the Andes Mountains, climbing in altitude into the paramo (alpine tundra), and then descending into the jungle. In Tena, students will visit local farmers who work with the Runa Foundation—a local sustainable agricultural NGO to learn about a social entrepreneurship project of cultivating the guayusa leaf for natural tea and export to a global market. In addition, we will complete a service learning project with Museo Kamak Maki, a small community project working to preserve indigenous Kichwa cultural practices and knowledge through education. We will also have a 4-day homestay while in Tena.

The final days will be spent in Otavalo. Otavalo has a large indigenous population of Andean Quichua, and students will compare and contrast cultural practices to lowland Kichwa families from Tena, and learn how their different geographical landscape impacts lifestyle. Otavalo is also home to the largest indigenous

crafts market in South America, which provides income to the majority of people in the city. Students will visit various local artisans, including small family projects and local businesses, and consider how fair trade efforts and global demand for handcrafted goods have impacted these artisans. In addition, one day will be spent hiking and exploring the surrounding volcanoes and lakes to compare and contrast this landscape with the others that students have already experienced.

### ***Tentative Program Calendar\****

*\*Please do not book your international flight until after orientation on October 7<sup>th</sup>.*

**December 28:** Depart the U.S., arrive in Quito

**December 29-30:** Activities in Quito include exploring the historical district to see the impact of Spanish colonization, visiting the Presidential Home and other government buildings open to visits, and seeing “Mitad Del Mundo” where the equator passes just north of Quito as an introduction to the country’s geography.

**December 31:** travel from Quito to Tena, a small city 120 miles southeast of Quito, in the Amazon Basin. We will stop along the way to investigate the changing geographical landscapes from the Andes Mountains, climbing in altitude into the paramo (alpine tundra), and then descending into the jungle.

**January 1:** Orientation in Tena.

**January 2:** Activities in Tena including a visit to local farmers within a social entrepreneurship project of cultivating the guayusa leaf for natural tea and export to a global market.

**January 3-5:** Service learning with Museo Kamak Maki, a small community project

working to preserve indigenous Kichwa cultural practices and knowledge through education.

**January 6-10:** Homestays with rural, indigenous Kichwa families.

**January 10-12:** Homestay debrief and reflection at Arajuno Jungle Lodge, hike in the primary forest, visit indigenous Huaorani community

**January 13-14:** Free weekend for independent travel.

**January 15:** Travel from Tena to Otavalo.

**January 16-17:** Activities in Otavalo include visits to artisans selling their handicrafts at the largest indigenous crafts market in South America and exploring surrounding lakes and volcanoes.

**January 17:** Return to Quito in the evening.

**January 18:** Final day of activities in Quito.

**January 19:** Program ends, travel home.

## **ACADEMICS**

### ***Program Prerequisites***

To participate in this program, you must **be in good academic standing and have the minimum 2.3 GPA required.** We will check grades at the end of the fall semester prior to departure. If you are on probation, we will need to check with the faculty leader to see if you will be allowed to participate. If you have been suspended, you will not be allowed to participate in the program.



### ***Pre-departure Orientation & Academic Planning***

A mandatory academic prerequisite course for this program is GEOG/LAS 321: Geography of Latin America (unless you have received a specific exception in your acceptance email). In addition, attendance at the October 7<sup>th</sup> study abroad orientation plus some Ecuador-specific preparation sessions during fall semester of 2017 are required. Times and days will be announced by your Faculty/staff Leaders. You will be doing some reading, research, and preparing throughout fall semester.

Upon successful completion of the program, you will earn 3 credits of **LAS 390: Latin American Studies Immersion Experience**. The program also fulfills 30 hours of service learning while in Ecuador.

**For students in catalog years through 2015-16**, the Winterim LAS 390 course fulfills GE-III and 3 credits of Foreign Culture upon successful program completion (*students earning a B.A., B.F.A. or B.M degree in the College of Arts & Sciences cannot use study abroad to fulfill their foreign language/foreign culture requirement. See the university catalog for details*). **For students in catalog years 2016-17 and later**, the Winterim LAS 390 course fulfills the Responsibility Outcome 2 (R2): Global Perspectives requirement upon completion of all course assignments.

### ***Credits and Grades***

Credits earned abroad on this program are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits. The class you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation, **and the grade will be figured into your GPA**. The UW-Eau Claire Faculty Leader will issue grades for the course

using the usual UW-Eau Claire A-F grading scale. Grades are not available until late February after you have submitted your final assignment.

### ***Class Attendance***

Class attendance and participation in fall preparation meetings, in program lectures, and while on excursions in Ecuador are required of all students. The coursework in Ecuador will be experiential and hands-on, comprising lectures from local partners and experts, visits and excursions to local sites, and group discussions. **You are expected to actively participate in all activities on the itinerary.**

## **MONEY MATTERS**

*Information about how payments are made, when they are due, withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, and budgeting is in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### ***Undergraduate Costs Paid to UWEC***

UG tuition/fees (WI res, 3 credits)	\$1102
Program Fee	\$1500
Application Fee	\$30
<b>Total Program Costs:</b>	<b>\$2632</b>
<u>FLIIE Program Subsidy</u>	<u>-\$1500</u>
<b>Total Payment to UWEC</b>	<b>\$1132</b>

### ***Additional Costs***

Passport/photos	\$135
Additional Meals	\$200
Personal Expenses	\$200
<u>Estimated Round-Trip Airfare</u>	<u>\$800</u>
<b>Total Additional Costs</b>	<b>\$1335</b>

**UG Total Costs** **\$2467**

*Minnesota residents may apply for reciprocity, non-residents will pay non-resident tuition.*

### ***FLIIE Funding***

This program is supported by Blugold Commitment FLIIE Funding for undergraduate UWEC students. While students are encouraged to participate in multiple high-impact immersion programs, each student is eligible to receive BCDT funding for only one FLIIE experience. Graduate and non-UWEC students are not eligible to receive this funding. Blugold Commitment funding is not able to cover the costs of tuition, but will include \$1500/student towards the program fee in 2018.

### ***Program Fee: What does it cover?***

- Airport shuttle service for those arriving and departing at designated time
- Housing throughout the program in shared rooms and homestays
- All program lectures, activities, and excursions in the itinerary
- Some meals: all breakfasts, all meals during homestay, a few additional meals
- In-country transportation

**Not included:** the cost of a passport, airfare, some meals, laundry, personal expenses, and independent travel.

### ***Souvenirs & Independent Travel***

You will have one weekend for independent travel during the program. The amount of personal funds to cover souvenirs and personal travel will vary based on your shopping habits, off-program entertainment, personal spending habits, etc. Also, there will be some time after the program ends and before spring semester begins for independent travel.

### ***Program Refunds from UW-Eau Claire***

The \$30 application fee is non-refundable. **The withdrawal deadline for the program is October 1. No refunds are available after October 1, and if you withdraw after October**

**1, you will still be required to pay all program costs and any funds already committed on your behalf, up to the full program cost.** All withdrawals must be in writing.

Undergraduate students who withdraw will lose their FLIIE funding. As such, they will be expected to pay ALL non-refundable program costs paid to UW-Eau Claire. A student who withdraws after the refund deadline would be responsible for paying the \$1500 estimated cost, which is the true cost of the program without the FLIIE subsidy. FLIIE program support is based on student enrollment and can only benefit students actually participating in program.

### ***Currency Exchange***

Fun Fact: The currency of Ecuador is the U.S. Dollar! This is because Ecuador changed its currency to the Dollar in 2000 in an effort to stabilize its economy. Therefore, you will not need to exchange currency before, during or after the program. However, it is recommended that you do not bring any bills larger than a \$20 bill.

### ***Credit Cards***

In addition to the information on credit cards in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should be aware that **credit cards are not as widely accepted in Ecuador as they are in the U.S.** Only major stores, tourist hotels, and travel agencies usually take them.

### ***ATMs: Credit/Debit Card Use***

24-hour ATMs are plentiful in Quito, Tena, and Otavalo as well as other large towns. The most commonly accepted U.S. cards are Visa and MasterCard. You can also draw cash as soon as you land at the Quito airport. You should compare the international transaction fee charged by your bank; the fee can range from 1-3%.

# HEALTH & SAFETY

*Additional information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health Issues and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

## Immunizations

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that travelers to Ecuador discuss several vaccinations with a doctor at least 4-6 weeks prior to travel. Per the CDC, all routine vaccinations should be up to date prior to travel to any location. The CDC recommends that most travelers to Ecuador receive the following vaccines due to risk associated with contaminated water and food:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid

For a full list of immunizations suggested, please visit the [CDC page for Ecuador](#).

UW-Eau Claire's Student Health Services offers some routine immunizations (IG, tetanus, Hepatitis B, etc.) and health education on international travel for a small fee. Tel. (715) 836-5360.

Often, your health insurance will cover the cost of immunizations. **If your immunizations are not covered by your health insurance and you receive financial aid, you may want to meet with the Office of Financial Aid to inquire if these can be added to your total financial aid budget.**

## Yellow Fever

There is the risk of yellow fever in certain parts of Ecuador, including east of the Andes Mountains in the Napo Province where we will

be traveling. Therefore, **the CDC does recommend but does not require a yellow fever vaccine** if traveling to those parts. However, the government of Ecuador requires proof of yellow fever vaccination if you are arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever. This does not include the US. If you are traveling from a country other than the US or have a layover in Sub-Saharan Africa or other yellow fever country, you will be required to show the yellow fever vaccine. Learn more about this recommendation [here](#).

## Malaria

According to the CDC, the risk of malaria is present throughout the country including in the Napo Province, but possesses a low risk to travelers. Learn more about this recommendation [here](#).

You should discuss your malaria prevention strategy with your doctor. The decision about what you will do about malaria is one you must make yourself. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from your physician carefully. Many anti-malaria medications can have serious side-effects. Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you've taken the proper precautions. The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes!

### To minimize mosquito bites:

- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandana around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent (such as Off Deep Woods) on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing.



- Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they attract mosquitos.
- If travelling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito netting elsewhere.
- Avoid local preventatives. Many are unproven, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the U.S., they perform poorly in scientific studies.

### **If you become ill:**

Early treatment is essential if you do contract malaria. Consider any flu-like illness with fever in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. See a physician promptly! Delay in seeking medical care and delay in diagnosis increases the chances of complications. Malaria can occur as early as six days to several months after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Inform your physician of recent travel if you have flu-like symptoms after returning home.

### ***Dengue Fever***

Per the CDC, dengue fever is the most common cause of fever in travelers to the Caribbean, Central America, and South Central Asia. This disease is spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes and cannot be spread person to person. Severe dengue can be fatal, but with good treatment, less than 1% of patients die from dengue.

Symptoms of dengue include:

- fever

- headache
- pain behind the eyes
- joint and muscle pain
- rash
- nausea/vomiting
- mild bleeding, such as nose or gum bleeding or easy bruising

People who have had dengue before may get severe dengue if they are infected again. Anyone with dengue who experiences the following warning signs should go to a doctor or emergency room immediately:

- severe abdominal pain or persistent vomiting
- red spots or patches on the skin
- bleeding from nose or gums
- vomiting blood
- black, tarry stools (feces, excrement)
- drowsiness or irritability
- pale, cold, or clammy skin
- difficulty breathing

As there is no cure for dengue fever, the best prevention in all cases for insect bites is using a good repellent (with DEET) and wearing appropriate clothing. Wear loose, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. For more protection, clothing may be sprayed with a repellent containing permethrin. (Don't use permethrin on skin.)

### ***Zika Virus***

The Zika Virus is a risk in Ecuador, and is spread mostly by the bite of an infected mosquito. There is no current vaccine or medicine for Zika, and therefore ALL travelers should follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during *and* after their travel. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, headache, joint pain, red eyes, and muscle pains. These symptoms can last for several days to a week. However, many infected

people won't have symptoms at all, or have only mild symptoms.

In particular, the CDC recommends that pregnant women should not travel to Ecuador because Zika infection during pregnancy could cause serious birth defects. Partners of pregnant women and couples planning pregnancy should know possible risks to pregnancy and take preventive steps.

### **Common Health Problems**

The most common health problems for U.S. Americans in South America are intestinal upsets. They usually occur as a result of the change in diet, the different meal schedule, and organisms unfamiliar to your system.

A very common ailment is traveler's diarrhea. It can largely be avoided by being careful about where and what you eat, and avoiding dairy products if they are not pasteurized. If you do come down with it, the following suggestions will help speed recovery and guide your decision to seek formal care:

1. It will usually run its course in three to five days. The worst symptoms usually occur the first day. Bed rest may help relieve cramps.
2. The main risk of the illness is dehydration. Be sure to maintain fluid intake. An excellent source of fluid replacement is ORS or Oraltie, a prepackaged liquid sold in many countries. If unavailable, the following recipe will provide similar value: one liter carbonated water, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda (not baking powder), 4 tbsp. sugar.

3. An over-the-counter medicine like Pepto Bismol may help relieve nausea and vomiting.
4. See your physician prior to departing for Ecuador regarding the possibility of bringing along anti-diarrheal medication such as Levaquin or Cipro.

**If nausea and vomiting persist for more than 24 hours, if you develop a fever over 101 degrees F, or if you develop severe abdominal pain, a physician should be contacted immediately.**

### **Altitude**

The altitude in Quito is over 9000 feet, almost double that of Denver, Colorado. You might feel the altitude during the first couple days after you arrive, and signs of altitude sickness include dizziness, fatigue, and headaches. It is very important to stay hydrated, and don't attempt any physical activity until your body has adjusted.

In addition, the high altitude and being located on the Ecuador means that you are much closer to the sun, and therefore the sun is much stronger than in the United States. It's important to always wear sunscreen during the day, and reapply multiple times to avoid sunburn.

### **Water**

In Ecuador, **tap water is considered unsafe.** You should drink bottled or boiled water at all times. Brush your teeth with bottled or boiled water, also.

Carbonated bottled water, soft drinks, hot tea, and coffee are usually safe. Be sure to wipe off the top of a bottle before drinking out of it, or ask for a straw. By making sure that you are drinking uncontaminated water, you can reduce your exposure to many diseases such as infectious

hepatitis, cholera, diarrhea and dysentery. Where water is contaminated, ice is also contaminated—you may wish to learn to order drinks without ice. In general, stay away from any bottled water where the plastic of the bottle is not strong or clear, as this may mean the bottle was reused.

Sometimes during the program, bottled water will be provided, but you will be expected to purchase bottled water on some days. Homestay families will provide clean water, whether bottled or boiled. Traveler's diarrhea can often lead to dehydration. Dehydration can also lead to constipation. Make sure to stay hydrated during the program especially if you are losing liquids through illness or increased perspiration.

### *Other Keys to Staying Healthy*

- Other than malaria, bugs (mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can cause a number of diseases, so you should take general precautions such as covering exposed skin, using insect repellent, and sleeping with a bed net if necessary.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap.
- Keep away from animals such as stray dogs, as they may carry rabies.
- If you are buying food from street vendors, stick to breads or fruits that you peel yourself. (The knives used might be dirty.) Fruits that cannot be peeled, fruit juices diluted with water, raw vegetables and salads that have not been washed with disinfected water should be avoided.
- In addition to bringing anti-diarrheal medication, some students experience the opposite effect. It is a good idea to bring along fiber snacks or constipation medication.

### *Medical Facilities*

There are medical facilities in all cities where we are traveling, so medical care will always be within 15-30 minutes. Larger cities like Quito have larger facilities with more specialties. Our local partners are knowledgeable about quality English-speaking doctors or hospitals in all cities you visit.

### *Alcohol & Drugs*

**Alcohol:** The legal drinking age for alcohol consumption is 18 years old in Ecuador. However, if you are of age to drink, it is recommended that you take precautions to be safe while drinking – such as never leaving your drink unattended, ordering drinks containing ice cubes, or accepting drinks from strangers.

**Drugs:** Marijuana and other 'recreational' drugs can be available in Ecuador, and are **highly illegal**. Courts treat possession of cannabis as severely as possession of heroin. Be aware that the police target foreign drug users in bribe scams. Remember, you will be subject to Ecuadorian laws, not U.S. laws while in Ecuador.

### *Sexual Harassment & Assault*

**Harassment:** Sexual harassment is commonplace in Ecuador. Female travelers have reported everything from staring, lewd and suggestive comments to catcalls, and groping. Often these incidents occur in crowded areas such as market places, bus/train stations, and public streets. Women travelers in Ecuador are advised to respect local dress codes and customs as a way to minimize harassment. When in doubt, dress more conservatively than you ordinarily would while in Eau Claire.

**Assault:** Crimes against women including rape are reported in Ecuador, thus women should

maintain stringent security precautions. Suggestions include:

- Avoid public transport after dark without the company of known and trusted companions.
- Avoid isolated areas any time of day.
- Keep your hotel room number confidential.
- Lock your hotel room and use deadlocks/door chains while in your room.
- Hire only reliable cars and drivers. Avoid traveling alone in cabs at night.
- Keep conversations with unknown men short—getting involved in conversations can be interpreted as a sign of sexual interest.
- Have someone else join you on excursions

### **More Info on Health & Safety in Ecuador**

Detailed information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Ecuador is included in the [State Department Consular Information Sheet](#). It is highly recommended that you read through that information carefully before traveling to Ecuador.

### **Emergency Contacts**

General emergency procedures are described in the *Study Abroad Handbook*, and faculty/staff leaders and local partners are available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times. The information is also on the **Contact Names & Addresses** page of this guide.

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

### **Passport**

General passport information is included in your *Study Abroad Handbook*.

### **Visa**

A visa is official permission to visit a country and is granted by the government of that country. **U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter Ecuador if staying for less than 90 days.** If you are an international student or citizen of another country, please check with your local government about if a visa is needed to enter.

## **PACKING TIPS**

*In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about Ecuador.*

### **Clothing & Weather**

This program includes travel to two different climates in Ecuador. In Quito, you will be in the Andes Mountains at an elevation of over 9,000 feet. Days are mild and nights are cool year round; the average temperature is 64 degrees, dropping to 55 degrees average at night and reaching about 78 during the day. There is often rain in the afternoons in Quito, so come ready with rain gear and layers to put on in the evenings. The weather is similar in Otavalo, where you'll be traveling for the last couple days of the program. Nights can actually get quite cold, because very few houses or hotels are heated, so you should bring warm socks and warm sleeping attire (such as sweatpants).

In the Amazon Basin, weather is what you would expect in a jungle – hot and humid! Daily temperatures reach upper 80s, and drop to upper 60s in the evening, though it often feels much warmer because of the humidity. Heavy rain is common, so good rain gear is essential. Though it is hot, you are expected to wear casual but culturally appropriate dress, which does not include very short shorts or tank tops. For some

excursions, you will want long pants and long sleeves for protection from the bugs.

### *Items to Bring*

In the area of clothing, it is best to be conservative. You should not wear revealing clothing or short shorts. Ecuadorian younger female students are more likely to wear jeans, leggings, skirts (often quite short skirts), or dresses, and usually wear them with dressier shoes than U.S. women might. Most men do not wear shorts in Quito or Otavalo.

Bring clothing that is washable and does not wrinkle easily. Bring garments that can be worn interchangeably, and which you can layer. Dark colors show travel dirt less quickly, although they also attract the sun! The following packing list was suggested by past participants.

#### Clothing:

- 2-3 pairs of pants (jeans, khakis)
- 2-3 pairs of light pants or long shorts (leggings are common in Tena)
- 1 pair of quick dry pants for hiking or working in the jungle
- 1 pair of work pants (which will get dirty during the service learning project)
- Several short sleeved shirts (including some for working)
- 1-2 pairs of long sleeved shirts for bugs
- 1-2 sweater/sweatshirt/light jacket
- 1 swimsuit and cover-up

#### Additional Items:

- 1 pair of sandals (preferably with back straps for swimming or walking in Tena)
- 1-2 pairs of tennis/good walking shoes (might get dirty or wet)
- 1 towel (for bathing)

- Good raingear (at least a jacket, but preferably pants too)
- Inexpensive camera
- Pepto Bismol, Imodium, Tylenol, Cold meds/cough drops/tissues, constipation medications
- Prescription meds (always put in carry-on bags, NOT in checked luggage)
- Personal toiletry articles (not all products, especially feminine, will be available for purchase in Ecuador)
- Hand sanitizer and/or disposable wipes
- Warm socks for evenings in Quito
- DEET 30 mosquito repellant
- Sunscreen

### *Appliances*

The standard electric current in Ecuador is 120 volts, same as the United States so you will not need any adapters. However, many outlets are only two-prong so you will want an adaptor if any electronics you want to bring are three-prong.

## **GETTING TO ECUADOR**

### *Travel Arrangements*

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to arrive at Quito airport--officially known as Mariscal Sucre International Airport with the three-letter airport code of UIO. **All students must arrive at the Quito airport on December 28.** Most flights from Minneapolis will depart in the morning and arrive in Quito in the late evening. Once you arrive at the Quito airport **do not leave the airport until the Pick-up service arrives to meet you. Pick-up service will be arranged to meet students in the late evening.** It is recommended that you consider traveling with another program participant—a



travel companion can make arrival in a new country much less intimidating!

**The program ends on January 18.** Many flights depart Quito airport very late in the evening or early in the morning (11pm-2am). You can book a return flight on January 18<sup>th</sup> in the late evening (after 9pm), January 19<sup>th</sup> in the early morning (12am and on), or anytime on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Some students might want to stay additional days in Ecuador for independent travel.

## SETTLING IN

### *Housing*

During most of the program, you will be staying in hostels in shared rooms. The accommodations are basic, with shared bathrooms. For 4-5 days, you will be staying in pairs with host families. Again, the housing will be very basic compared to what you are used to in the United States. Host families have running water and electricity, though it is less reliable than in the United States.

### *Food*

Some, but not all, meals will be provided during this program. All breakfasts will be provided at our housing, and normally includes eggs, bread, juice and coffee/tea. All meals will be included during the homestay portion, and this will include local foods such as rice, potatoes, yucca, plantains, beans, and meat. Most other meals you will have the choice of various local restaurants, and can expect to pay between \$3-5 for a set lunch or dinner which includes soup, main dish and a drink.

### *Homestays*

All students will live for 4-5 days with Spanish-speaking families in Ecuador. Some students will

be within walking distance of one another. Our partners in Ecuador arrange accommodations with carefully selected host families. In general, two students are placed with one family. The cost of the room and three meals a day (except when traveling) is included in the price of your program.

### *Financial Arrangements*

While our partners in Ecuador screen families carefully to try to ensure that they have cultural interests for participating in the program, **most** participating households do so at least partially for economic reasons. This is only logical, given the general economic situation in the country and the disruption that hosting a student causes to family life.

Even for families who have cultural reasons for participating, it can be challenging to welcome a stranger into your home for a few days. The entire family needs to adjust its schedules and habits to accommodate this new person. In addition, there are very real costs associated with having another person in the home. Receiving some monetary compensation for this is only fair, and most families would not consider hosting otherwise. Keep in mind that any relationship is a two-way street. It is as much your responsibility to fit into the family as it is their responsibility to include you in their daily life.

### *"Your" Room*

You will be sharing a room with the other UW-Eau Claire student in your homestay. The concept of a private room is different in Ecuador than in the U.S. Keep your room neat, and make your bed every day. Just closing the door is not acceptable. In addition, be aware that **it is never proper to entertain guests, regardless of their gender, in your bedroom.**

### *Telephone*

Telephone rates are very high in Ecuador and every call local or long distances charged by the minute. Please do not use the telephone or a family member's cell phone in your homestay. Instead, use a public phone in town or go to an internet café to use Skype, Viber, What's App, or another app-based communication system that requires a wifi signal. Keep in mind it is highly unlikely that your family will have a wifi signal in their house.

### *Water*

Water is a precious resource in South America. Make sure your showers are short, both to conserve water and to keep the bathroom as free as possible. **Hot water is not to be expected.**

### *Meals*

You will be eating typical Ecuadorian foods with your host family. Expect lots of beans and rice, fresh fruits and vegetables, and chicken and beef. The food is not spicy. Unless you have an actual food allergy, it is only polite to try and eat whatever you are offered. Do not expect your family to prepare special meals for you--remember that you should expect to be treated as part of the family, not a special guest. However, do ask your family to peel all your fruits and to cook all of your vegetables. Meals are considered family time. Some U.S. students are in the habit of taking their meals to their rooms at home; this is not acceptable behavior.

### *Guests*

You should only invite visitors to your house if you have first cleared this with your host family. Visitors should never be invited for meals or to stay overnight without prior family permission.

### *Keep Lines of Communication Open*

If you have questions about what your family expects of you, or you feel they do not understand your behavior, talk with them! Open lines of communication are important in building trust in any relationship.

### *Greetings and Addresses*

Observe proper greeting and leave-taking etiquette. Always shake hands or kiss on the cheek when you meet an acquaintance. It is also acceptable for women to kiss friends (men and women) on the cheek; men shake hands. Using titles and addressing people with the "Usted" form is considered polite.

### *Meeting your Family*

Bringing photos of loved ones, pets, your house, Eau Claire, where you grew up, are often a great "ice breaker" in meeting your new family. In addition, bringing a small gift that is unique to our region of the world may also be a great idea to show your family your appreciation for allowing you this opportunity to be a part of their family for several days.

### *Ecuadorian Time*

In U.S. culture, we tend to be ruled by our appointment books. Time is measured differently in Ecuador. There is a sense that what you are doing at the present is important, particularly if you are spending time with a person, and that things planned for later will be taken care of later. In Ecuador, it is not uncommon for a friend to show up a half hour after an agreed-upon meeting time, or for a party to begin two hours later than announced. It would be considered rude to arrive on time if invited to a friend's house for dinner. Relax and try a new style.

**Note:** The more relaxed time concept **does not apply** in academic situations, such as class or a meeting with a professor. In these situations and other more formal business settings, punctuality is expected.

### *Schedules*

Along with the idea of time goes the idea of written schedules. Students who have studied in South America sometimes become frustrated that itineraries for fieldtrips are very loose. For example, if a written schedule is available at all, it most likely lists the time/location you will meet to begin the program, and the general sights that you will see. There will be no times attached to the various sights. Try to understand that this is **not** a lack of organization; it is a completely different cultural framework. In Ecuadorian terms, it would be silly to say that you are going to spend 60 minutes at a specific site, because when you arrive, it could be raining and you'll spend less time there, or you may get into a very good discussion and need to spend more time in a certain location. The focus is on making the most of the present moment, rather than forcing the experience to fit a particular artificial timeframe.

### *Family*

The family plays an important role in Ecuadorian culture. The extended family is often a very large, close circle of relatives and friends. It is not unusual for children to live with parents until they marry--or to continue to live with parents if they never marry. Your host family may include several generations in one house.

Traditional family roles, although not as pronounced as in the past, are still apparent to a U.S. observer. The man is still the authority figure and main provider, while the woman, even if she works outside the home, is usually responsible for running the household and caring for the children.

### *Time Difference*

Though Ecuador is currently on the same time zone as Wisconsin, it does not observe daylight savings time, so it will be one hour ahead in January.

### *Telephone Information*

From the U.S. to Ecuador: To call someone in Ecuador, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you dial 593 (the country code for Ecuador), then the rest of the local number. However, if you are using a cell phone app through a wifi signal such as Skype, Viber, or Whats App, you simply dial as you ordinarily would.

### *Computer/E-mail Access*

It is not recommended that you bring a laptop or tablet to Ecuador, because you will not need it for academic purposes and you do not want it to get stolen. There are tons of internet cafes in all the cities we will be in (including in the jungle), so you can check email or communicate with home. You will have access to wifi in some of the hostels we are staying in, though not all, but often the connection is slow.

# CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES

GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

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## **UW-Eau Claire After Hours Numbers**

(715)839-4972 or (715)577-9045

In an after-hours emergency, please call University Police at (715) 577-9045. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day. You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require.

## **U.S. EMBASSY IN QUITO**

Ave. Avigiras E12-170 y Ave. Eloy Alfaro

Quito, Ecuador

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