



## Ecuador Information

### Travel documents

U.S. citizens traveling to Ecuador must have a passport that is valid for six months after their expected return date. Additionally, the traveler must hold proof of return or onward journey (e-ticket receipts will suffice). No entry visas are required for U.S. citizens. Please check [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) to confirm passport validity requirements prior to your tour. Citizens of all other countries should contact their appropriate embassies to find out what specific documentation is required for them to travel.

Due to internal flights, if traveling to the Galápagos Islands, a complete group passport list must be sent to EF no later than 110 days prior to departure. Please contact your Tour Consultant for further information.

### Vaccinations and health precautions

For the most up-to-date information on necessary vaccinations, we recommend you visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or consult your physician. Because of the high altitude, travelers should consult their physicians regarding what effects high altitude may have on their particular conditions. Many travelers find the seas quite rough while in the Galapagos, so motion sickness medicine is also recommended for those who may be affected.

### Tour Director and bus drivers

You will have the same Tour Director during your entire tour. Bus drivers may change from day to day, so tipping for them should be considered on a daily basis.

## Tipping

It's customary to tip your Tour Director and bus drivers as a token of appreciation. We recommend:

- \$6–8 per person per day for the Tour Director
- \$3 per person per day for the bus driver
- \$2 per person per day for local guides

We recommend using US dollars for tipping. We also suggest you deposit the tip money into your bank account and withdraw it at the end of the tour. Then, present it to your Tour Director in the tip envelope provided by EF.

## Currency

U.S. dollars are accepted in Ecuador. However, only crisp and new bills will be accepted, preferably in low denominations—visibly worn bills will not be accepted. Visit [xe.com](http://xe.com) for exchange rates and more information. We recommend withdrawing money from a bank or ATM machine instead of using credit cards. Although most shops accept credit cards, the phone lines are much slower, which makes using them time-consuming. It may also cause delays in your group's schedule. Traveler's checks are usually not accepted in Ecuador. Be sure to notify your bank or credit card company that you will be traveling abroad and ask what international fees you may have to pay.

## Transportation

Buses in Ecuador are comfortable and modern with air conditioning. Your internal flight information from Quito to the Galápagos Islands and back will be given to you by your Tour Director once you arrive in Ecuador. These internal flights often make a stopover in Guayaquil before reaching the Galápagos Islands. Travelers will remain on the plane during this stopover as other passengers deplane or board.

While visiting the Galápagos Islands, travelers will take 2–3 hour boat transfers between these islands in small motor boats that seat up to 20 passengers. Groups may be split between two different motor boats, depending on the size of the group. Many travelers find the seas quite rough while in the Galápagos, so motion sickness medicine is also recommended for those who may be affected.

## Accommodations

Throughout your stay in Ecuador, you will stay in tourist-class hotels. While in Quito, your hotel will be located in the downtown area, and in the Galápagos, you will stay on Santa Cruz Island. Students under the age of 20 will share rooms with two or three other travelers of the same gender. These rooms will have single or shared double beds (or a combination of the two). Students may share rooms with students in the tour group who are not from their own school. Adults typically share rooms with one other adult of the same gender, and may also room with adults in the tour group who are not from their school. Please note that groups may not all have rooms next to each other (some may even be on different floors) and that hotels may be located outside of the city center. Electrical voltage and outlets in Ecuador are the same as in the U.S., so you will not need an adapter or converter.

## Phones and internet

It's easy to buy an international phone card in Ecuador to make phone calls home, and your Tour Director can help you find places to buy them. If you plan to use your personal cell phone on tour, contact your wireless provider to see what fees you may incur for calling, texting, or using data abroad. Wi-Fi may not be available at all hotels in Ecuador and may be unreliable when available, especially on the road. Wi-Fi may be unavailable for a few days at a time, especially while on the Galápagos Islands. Travelers should plan accordingly.

## Food and water safety

Breakfast and dinner are included daily, and all lunches are included while on the Galápagos Islands. Primary ingredients found in nearly every Ecuadorian dish include soup, rice, chicken, fish, and a salad.

Tap water is non-potable in Ecuador. Travelers should not drink the tap water in Ecuador and should only drink water from pre-sealed containers. Bottled water is available for purchase everywhere for \$1–2. Bottled or purified water will be provided to travelers for all included meals. Travelers should avoid eating any food that is uncooked or may have potentially been washed with unfiltered water (raw vegetables, fruit, etc.).

## Safety

Always inform your Tour Director if you need to break away from the group at any point. Store valuables in hotel safe deposit boxes and refrain from carrying large sums of money or wearing valuable jewelry. Please be sure to read EF's *Travel & Safety Guide* before going on tour. During your stay in the Galápagos, life jackets will be provided for all boat transfers.

Many of the regions that we visit in Ecuador have a higher altitude than most U.S. cities. To avoid altitude sickness, travelers must remember to hydrate more than they normally would at home, snack frequently throughout the day, and remember to apply sunscreen, even if it's cold outside. Medication for altitude sickness can be purchased over the counter in Ecuador or at home if desired.

Many of the locations we stay in are small villages, and by nature do not have many evening activities. Therefore, in the evenings, we encourage travelers to stay indoors and rest up after a long day.

## Weather

In the highlands (Quito, Cuenca, Otavalo, etc.), the temperature averages 70 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter months (from December through April), and 50 degrees Fahrenheit in the dry months (the remainder of the year). The coast (Guayaquil, Galápagos, etc.) has an average temperature of 84 degrees Fahrenheit in the rainy season (from November through May) and 86 degrees Fahrenheit in the dry season (the remainder of the year). When you visit Cotopaxi Volcano, prepare for fall weather and bring a sweatshirt or sweater.

We suggest you use sunscreen at all times, even when it's cooler, since Ecuador is located along the equator. Please check [weather.com](http://weather.com) for your destinations and travel periods.

## Public bathrooms

While public bathroom facilities are generally available in Ecuador, you may have to pay a small amount to use the facilities, which will include buying toilet paper from an attendant before you enter. Travelers are advised to bring travel toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

## **Luggage**

Fees for checking a bag on the international flights between the United States and Ecuador are included in the price of your tour. Please contact the airline for baggage restrictions and regulations. Additionally, fees for checking a bag on any flights taking place while on tour in Ecuador are included.

## **Packing**

You cannot bring more than 44 pounds of luggage on internal flights to the Galápagos Islands. Any additional luggage must be stored at your mainland hotel while you are visiting the islands.

Summer clothes may be appropriate throughout the year, including light t-shirts, shorts, a light jacket or windbreaker, comfortable walking shoes, sandals, hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent. We suggest packing layers due to the varied climates you may encounter. Travelers should also pack travel-size toilet paper, a beach towel, and a bathing suit. If motion sickness is a concern during boat excursions, travelers should consider packing over-the-counter medication.

## **Additional information**

Volume and government regulations will determine your exact island excursions and visits while in the Galápagos. All itineraries are subject to change.