

WORLD CONNECT

TRAVEL GUIDE | WORLD CONNECT 2019 JOURNEY TO ECUADOR



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Emergency Numbers

- Local support in Ecuador during business hours 9am to 5pm EST: **+593 2-2463-327**
- After hours emergency support: **+593 95-888-3343**
- Elevate Destinations 24/7 emergency line: **+1 857-285-1618**

U.S. Embassy - Quito, Ecuador

E12-170 Avigiras Ave. and Ave. Eloy Alfaro
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm
Calling from the U.S.: (011-593-2) 398-5000, or after hours: (011-593-2) 398-5000
Calling from other Ecuadorian provinces: (02) 398-5000, or after hours: (02) 398-5000
Calling from a landline in Quito or Pichincha province: 398-5000, or after hours: 398-5000
Email: ACSQuito@state.gov

U.S. Consulate - Guayaquil, Ecuador

Calle Santa Ana y Av. José Rodríguez Bonin
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm
Calling from the U.S.: (011-593-4) 371-7000
Calling from other Ecuadorian provinces (including from Cuenca): (04) 371-7000
Calling from a landline in Guayaquil or Guayas province: 371-7000
Email: ACSGuayaquil@state.gov

If you are in Ecuador and need to call a number outside of the country, dial 00, then the country code and local number. The country code for the US is +1. The country code for Ecuador is +593.

HOTELS

	<u>Molinos de San Juan (Cayambe)</u>	<u>Casa del Suizo (Ahuano)</u>	<u>Hosteria El Jardin el Valle (Puyo)</u>	<u>Mansion Alcazar (Cuenca)</u>	<u>EB Hotel (Quito)</u>
Address & Contact	Panamericana Norte E35, via Otavalo, pueblo de Santa Clara T: + (593)2214-0154	Ahuano, Napo T: +593 99 414-8930	Calle Ramiro Fernandez, Puyo T: +593 99 140 9096	CALLE BOLÍVAR 12-55 Y TARQUI, Cuenca T: +593 72823-918	24 de Septiembre S2-389 and Conector de Alpachaca, Quito +593 23 941020 T: (593)2214-0154
Shampoo, soaps, hairdryer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
In-room safe	*safe box available at reception office		✓	✓	✓
Restaurant Gym, Spa	✓ (Restaurant, Bar, lounge)	✓ (Restaurant, Bar, lounge, pool)	✓ (Restaurant, Bar, lounge, hot tub, massage)	✓ (Restaurant, Bar, lounge, spa services)	✓ (Restaurant, Bar, lounge, gym & pool)
Cash exchange, ATM	ATM in Cayambe village, 20 minutes by car		✓ (ATM walking distance from hotel)	✓ (ATM walking distance from hotel)	✓
Wifi in lobby & rooms	✓ (in lobby only)	✓ (in central lodge only)	✓	✓	✓
Laundry service	✓ (at extra charge)	✓ (at extra charge)	✓ (at extra charge)	✓ (at extra charge)	✓ (at extra charge)

IN-COUNTRY INFORMATION

Communications

Wifi: Wifi is available at all hotels on this trip. Please note that the speed and reliability of the Internet service may vary and sometimes may only be available in the lobby.

International Calls: If you are in Ecuador and trying to reach a number outside of the country, dial 00 before dialing the country code and local number. (The country code for the US is +1).

Staying connected: Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone apps:** Apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, and Viber (when Wifi is available).
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Use a local phone/ SIM card:** Best for making calls within Ecuador as international calls can get expensive. Local SIM cards are inexpensive, can be found at the airport, and often have pay-as-you-go plans where you can “top up” your credit for use in the country. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). Please also let us know in advance if you would like assistance purchasing a local phone.
4. **Call from hotel or internet café:** Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can be more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from a hotel.

Documentation

In case of emergency, it is advisable to record all of your important information on one sheet of paper, photocopy it, and distribute a few copies in your luggage, your money belt, and amongst relatives or friends at home. Also email a scanned copy to yourself to have available online anywhere. Here are some ideas on what to include:

- A photo copy of your passport,
- Travel insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number,
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency,
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers etc.

Money

Ecuador uses the United States dollar as an accepted currency, so there is no need to exchange money. It is best to pay with smaller denominations such as 1, 5, 10, or 20 dollar bills.

Cash Vs. Plastic

***Please be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, in case they view your activity as fraudulent and block your card.**

****Please be aware that credit card fraud is possible. Be sure to monitor your accounts closely if you choose to use credit card.**

- **Credit/debit cards:** Credit cards (primarily Visa and American Express) are accepted at most places in Quito and Cuenca. Cash is more appropriate at markets and smaller stores. Most merchants will charge an additional 3-5% of the bill for a credit card transaction.
- **Cash:** Recommended for smaller stores and markets. If you plan to bring USD bills with you, be sure to bring newer bills that are in pristine condition (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc). Note that travelers checks are no longer commonly used.

Getting Cash In-Country

- **Cash:** Your guide will be able to advise you on the best place to withdraw cash. Ask for smaller bills when getting cash, as some smaller vendors may have a hard time giving change for bills larger than USD 20.
- **ATMS:** ATMs are easily accessible and available in Quito and Cuenca. There is usually a small fee per transaction (on top of what your own bank charges). There is a daily withdrawal limit of USD 400 in Ecuador.
- **Spending Limits & Fees:** We advise you to call your bank and credit card company to notify them of your travels; otherwise a block may be placed on your card. Be sure to ask about your spending limits and what fees you may incur by using your credit/debit cards abroad.

Spending Money

The World Connect trip officially begins on April 7th and ends the morning of April 13th, 2019. Please note that most expenses have already been covered in the cost of the program. See below for the full list of inclusions and exclusions. For your extra personal costs (laundry, alcohol, etc) and shopping, USD \$20 - \$50 per day is a good rule of thumb.

Inclusions:

- Accommodations in listed hotels or similar
- All meals listed
- Transport in a/c vehicles with water bottles
- Internal flight within Ecuador
- English speaking guide/translators
- Outlined excursions
- Local taxes
- Gratuity for guide & drivers
- 1 non-alcoholic drink at each meal

Exclusions:

- International Flights to/from the US
- Insurance
- Personal expenses
- Alcohol
- Other expenses not mentioned in the itinerary

Tipping

Tipping is always appreciated but not required. Note that tips for your guide, driver, and restaurant staff at group meals have already been included. We do encourage tipping of hotel porters and cleaning staff which has not been included.

- **Restaurants and bars:** In Ecuador, a 10% service charge is often included, and an additional 5-10% more may be added for exceptional service even when service is included.
- **Hotels:** USD \$2-3 per day for the cleaning staff, and USD \$1 per bag for porters.

- **Taxis and tours:** It is customary to tip tour guides \$10-25 per day, and tour van/bus drivers \$5-10 per day. Note that the gratuity is already included for guide and drivers for the length of the World Connect tour.

Bargaining

Bargaining for curios & souvenirs at markets can be an enjoyable way to engage with some of the locals you will encounter on this trip. Prices in hotels, restaurants and shops are generally fixed and bargaining is not required. Here are some bargaining tips:

- Be prepared to take your time in reaching a deal. You need not feel obliged to buy something.
- Let the vendor share their asking price first. It will seem rushed for you to come right out asking the price of items, and lower your esteem as a good bargainer!
- Begin bargaining over an item you don't necessarily care for, and then move to the item you actually wanted as a "good-enough" alternative when the price for the first item is too much.
- Ask for another item or two to be thrown in. This way you can often find a really good deal and the vendor gets to move more goods.
- Pay a fair price. Bargaining is acceptable on this trip and a great way to engage with locals. Try to have fun and not be overly aggressive in bargaining for souvenirs.

Time

Ecuador follows GMT-5, which is the same time zone as Central Standard Time in the United States. Therefore, time in the locations of your visit will be 1 hour behind Eastern Standard Time, and 2 hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time in the US.

For example, when you're enjoying a delicious dinner at around 8:00pm in Cuenca, it will be 9:00pm in New York and 6:00pm in Los Angeles.

Electricity

Throughout Ecuador the electrical current is 110 volts, 60 cycles, AC which is the same standard as North America. Most outlets accommodate the same two-pronged plugs used in the US and Canada, so you will not need to purchase a plug adapter.

Driving

The World Connect staff and local guide will be able to provide context and information on all field sites you will visit. While visiting World Connect sites, some of the terrain, although beautiful, can be challenging for travelers. Besides bumpy, winding, long car-rides, we will have some short walks to get us from the roads to the field sites.

Water

We strongly recommend not drinking tap water anywhere in Ecuador unless boiled. Bottled water is cheap and easy to find. Some people also choose to brush their teeth with bottled water but this is up to personal preference based on how hardy you feel your stomach is. Do not use ice unless you know it was made from bottled water. Bottled water and soft drinks will be supplied at all meals and water will always be available in the van. We also recommend that you do not consume

unwashed or uncooked fruits or vegetables from local markets, or any drink that contains ice or unpasteurized dairy.

Toilet Paper

We recommend carrying toilet paper or tissues with you as some bathrooms, especially in more remote areas or restaurants, may not have any. Please also remember to throw the toilet paper into the bin provided and **not into the toilet** itself, as this can cause problems with the delicate sewage system.

Things to be Careful About

As with any other travel location, it is good practice to be mindful of your belongings and never leave items unattended, especially in markets. When in restaurants/cafes, it is best not to leave bags on the floor or on the back of your chair. Please do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling in these countries – just in case. Be vigilant when crossing roads, stick with the group, and always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.

Photography

Ecuador is a beautiful country and you will want to take lots of pictures. It is respectful to ask before you shoot. You can do this with gestures or ask one of the World Connect staff or guides to translate. Some people may actually refuse you; and in the cities, a few may even ask you for money. Try not to be offended if this happens. People are struggling to get by and sometimes conclude that, if someone is getting their picture, they might as well get something too!

Local Cuisine

Ecuador has extensive and unique culinary traditions that combine indigenous cuisines and Spanish influences.

Ecuador is famous for its soups and you can expect to enjoy other local specialties such as shrimp ceviche and dishes that include fried pork, lamb, potato tortillas, bananas in all styles, and quinoa.

*We at Elevate have made note of all allergies and dietary restrictions as per your guest profile forms, and have passed said information along to our local team to ensure the dishes you are served are safe. If there are any other dietary restrictions you would like to ensure we are aware of please email megan@elevatedestinations.com.

Altitude

The altitude in Quito, Ecuador is a little over 9,000 feet above sea level, and some passengers may experience altitude sickness, which results in shortness of breath, nausea, and headaches. In most cases, symptoms will gradually lessen as one's body adjusts. Resting and drinking plenty of water or tea helps to lessen symptoms. Cuenca is at a slightly lower altitude, at about 8,000 feet.

Language

Spanish is the national language of Ecuador and several indigenous languages are spoken by locals. English is also widespread, especially in cities and tourist areas.

Here are a few key phrases to help you connect:

English	Spanish
Hello.	Hola.
How are you?.	Cómo estás?
I am fine	Estoy bien.
My name is _____.	Me llamo _____.
Excuse me.	Perdón.
Please.	Por favor.
Thank you.	Gracias.
You're welcome.	De nada.
Where is _____? -the bathroom -the hotel	Dónde esta _____? -el baño -el hotel

Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A “child” is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email protect@ecpat.net to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate’s [values & vision](#), our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at www.elevatedestinations.com. Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that to maintain truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [Sustainable Travel International's Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well. Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Pay a fair price:** Bargaining is acceptable on this trip and a great way to engage with locals. Try to have fun and not be overly aggressive in bargaining for souvenirs.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Properly dispose of trash:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!
- **Don't feel pressured to give away money or material items:** You will likely encounter instances of poverty and people asking for money. We try to discourage giving away money or items as it can actually accentuate an unequal relationship between visitors and locals. Additionally, children that receive money, gifts, and sweets from you are encouraged to stick around for more rather than to be in school. Some beggar children work for thieves or in situations where the money actually never benefits them directly. As difficult as it can be to turn down direct requests, sometimes giving your friendship and respect to locals can be the best gift of all.