



A Taste of Ecuador: 2-Week Andes and Galapagos

February 12th to 23rd 2025

We are excited to offer a fun YFU experience to staff, volunteers and/or alumni that would like to discover Ecuador in two weeks.

Our idea is for you to taste a bit of what your students do on the different trips they have during their exchange in Ecuador. We will start in Quito, with a short visit to the YFU-Ecuador office, followed by a city tour of Quito and of course a visit to the Equator.

We have planned a three-day visit to the northern section of Ecuador where you will learn about the various traditions of our natives, as well as meet with the YFU students placed in the region.

Afterwards, return to Quito to continue your trip to the Galapagos Islands where you will discover its unique flora and fauna, swim with sea lions, walk with giant tortoises and enjoy this magnificent place that has no equal in the world. You will visit numerous places at the Galapagos National Park and overnight in 2 different Islands. The best snorkeling spots of the Galapagos are included on this trip, as well as impressive short hikes. On this tour you will swim with sea turtles, sea lions and reef sharks and see giant tortoises, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies and other endemic species of the Galapagos.

So, don't miss out on this opportunity to taste a bit of Ecuador, our culture, our landscapes, wildlife, traditions, handicrafts and of course our wonderful food. What better way to help you recruit students to this little part of the world, than to live the experience yourself.

An adventure of a lifetime, all in two weeks!

Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival to Quito

Please, book a flight to Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito. Our staff will be waiting for you at the airport. Transfer to hotel or to host family depending on what you choose. The Hotel Casa Aliso is in the traditional artistic neighborhood of "La Floresta" where you will find several small cafeterias, as well as a variety of restaurants. Of course, we will give you insider tips of the best places to go!

DRIVING: 1 hour

MEALS INCLUDED: none

HOTEL: Casa Aliso or host family

Day 2: Quito City Tour and Middle of the World



Welcome breakfast at the YFU Ecuador National Office. Afterwards, city tour through the old part of Quito, also known as "the Monastery of America" and UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Visit to the towers of the largest church in Quito called "La Basilica" and then walk through the streets of the old downtown to the golden church "La Compañía", the square of "San Francisco", the main square and much more. Lunch at a traditional restaurant with typical food of the city. In the afternoon, Intiñan Museum located at the equator where you will have the chance to step with one foot on the northern hemisphere and the other on the southern hemisphere.

DRIVING: 2hour

WALKING: 4 hours

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast, lunch

HOTEL: Casa Aliso or host family

Day 3: Andean Cosmo vision and Traditions

Depart from Quito to take the Pan-American Highway to the northern Andes. First stop will be at the Cultural Center "Luna Sol", where you will learn about the Andean Cosmo-vision and Spirituality of the natives from the Middle of the World. This Workshop will allow you to understand the indigenous beliefs and how they see the Universe. You will learn how to connect with the energies of "Pachamama" (Mother Nature) through simple breathing and concentration techniques. You will then enjoy a traditional lunch from this part of the Andes.

In the afternoon, visit to two native families in a small artisan village called Peguche to see how some of Ecuador's handicrafts and musical instruments are made. Afterwards, drive to the Imbabura Volcano where you will stay the night in a center run by indigenous families in the village of San Clemente. Each room is an independent small house with a private bathroom. In the evening, we will enjoy live music from the Andes played by local musicians.

WALKING: 2 hours

DRIVING: 3 hours

MEALS INCLUDED: breakfast, lunch, dinner

HOTEL: Indigenous Village San Clemente

Day 4: Cuicocha lake and meeting with YFU inbound students

Another exciting day in which you will spend the morning doing some of the daily activities of the indigenous people, such as feeding domestic animals (lamas). You will also learn about important festivities, farming tasks and community activities of the indigenous people and how these are deeply connected with the seasons and cycles of nature.



After a delicious lunch we will leave the peaceful village of San Clemente and visit one of the most impressive, active volcanoes in Ecuador: the Cuicocha crater-lake. After a short hike around the crater, you will meet the YFU students placed in this region while enjoying our delicious “humitas and quimbolitos”. These are a traditional tamale type dish from the Ecuadorian Andes. Overnight at the village of San Clemente.

WALKING: 4 hours

DRIVING: 2 hours

MEALS INCLUDED: breakfast, lunch, dinner

HOTEL: Indigenous Village of San Clemente

Day 5: Otavalo handicraft market and Condor Park

As we start moving to the south, the first visit will be to the famous handicraft market of Otavalo, considered the largest handicraft market in South America. Then we will stop at Parque Condor, which is an important project that helps rescue birds from illegal hunting. If there is no rain, this private reserve offers a flying show of various species of native birds. You will also learn about the efforts that are being made to protect them.

In the afternoon, enjoy a typical Andean picnic known as “Pambamesa” prepared by a local indigenous family. Then, drive back to Quito. Free afternoon to rest and prepare for an early departure on the following day to the Galapagos.

WALKING: 3 hours

DRIVING: 4 hours

MEALS INCLUDED: breakfast, lunch

HOTEL: Casa Aliso

Day 6: Flight to Galapagos and snorkeling with sea lions

Transfer to the airport of Quito, where you will be assisted to pass the Galapagos Biocontrol and Transit Card formalities. Flight to San Cristobal airport. Galapagos is considered “the most amazing place on Earth” according to the English magazine Wanderlust. We have carefully chosen the best excursion for you to enjoy these fantastic Islands.

After arriving to San Cristóbal Island, check into the hotel and immediately leave to explore the waterfront by foot, where you will see the first sea lions. We will enjoy the view from the “Tijeretas” hill and snorkel for the first time in the same bay where Charles Darwin arrived in 1835. Then continue to Carola beach, a white sandy beach with many sea lions and marine iguanas.



FLYING: 4 hours
WALKING: 2 hours
SNORKELING: 1 hour

MEALS INCLUDED: breakfast, lunch
HOTEL: Katarma



Day 7: Snorkeling excursion to Kicker Rock

In the morning, we will head out to the sea: Will start with a drive to the famous Kicker Rock, which is a small islet where many species of native birds breed every year. After this wonderful panoramic drive, time to snorkel and explore the amazing underwater world. Depending on the current of the sea we may be able to see rays, turtles, sea lions and even sharks!

Lunch will be served on the boat on the way to a nearby beach where you will have time to swim and discover some of the animals before returning to the port in the early afternoon.

Free afternoon to enjoy the island of San Cristobal and its beautiful sunsets.

BOAT DRIVING: 2 hours
WALKING: 1 hour
SNORKELING: 1 hour
MEALS INCLUDED: breakfast, lunch
HOTEL: Katarma

Day 8: Galapagos Giant Tortoises

Take a speedboat to the island of Santa Cruz. After our check-in at the hotel in Puerto Ayora, we will visit the Charles Darwin Station where you will learn about some of the tasks of the national park as well as to get an overall view of the rich fauna. Giant turtles from many islands of the archipelago live in several enclosures. Here you will also learn to distinguish the different shapes of the shells, as well as the importance of breeding the turtles in the research station to ensure their survival.

After a lunch break in Puerto Ayora, we will visit the highlands of the Santa Cruz Island. Here you will visit the Twin Crater formations and walk inside a vast natural Lava Tunnel. Afterwards, search for Giant turtles in the wilderness! One of the best moments you will experience on the Galapagos Islands will be to see these giant reptiles eating, walking slowly or just lying on the grass.

BOAT DRIVING: 2 hours
WALKING: 3 hours
Driving: 1 hour



MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast, lunch
HOTEL: Deja Vu

Day 9: Boat excursion to non-inhabited island

Shared yacht excursion to one of the non-inhabited islands: Seymour, Plazas or Bartolome. We will be picked up at the hotel and cross the Island by bus. At the Itabaca channel, our naturalist guide and the crew of the yacht will be waiting for us.

Enjoy iconic fauna and fantastic landscapes of one of those islands. Of course, snorkeling is on the program as well! And enjoy a delicious lunch on board.

NOTE: This tour depends on the regulation of the Galapagos National Park for non-inhabited islands. We will let you know which island we are visiting as soon as we have confirmation.

BOAT DRIVING: 3 hours
WALKING: 2 hours
Snorkeling: 1 hour

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast, lunch
HOTEL: Deja vu

Day 10: Flight back to Guayaquil or Quito and international flight connection

Unfortunately, it is time to say goodbye to this natural paradise. We drive to the channel of Itabaca and take a short boat ride to Baltra Island where the other airport of Galapagos is located. From here we fly back to Quito.

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast

Day 11: Free day in Quito

A full day free to explore other sites, do some shopping or just relax. Some ideas for half day activities in Quito: ride the cable car and enjoy a fantastic view of Ecuador's capital at 4000 meters high, visit the botanical garden of the city or explore the famous art museum "Casa Guayasamin".

Another alternative would be just to take a walk in the residential neighborhood where the hotel is located and enjoy a coffee in one the traditional shops.

In the evening, we will meet for a special farewell dinner organized by YFU Ecuador.

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast, dinner.
HOTEL: Casa Aliso



Day 12: Transfer to the airport for international flight

It is time to say good bye to Ecuador. We will organize a transfer to the airport according to the schedule of your international flight.

DRIVING: 1 hour

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast

Cost includes:	Not included:	Additional fees:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accommodation in hotels (or HF in Quito)• Meals as stated on itinerary• English tour guide• Private transportation• Entrance to the various museums• Flight Quito-Galápagos-Quito<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ English Naturalist guide Galapagos▪ Transportation on land and water in Galapagos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some meals (as stated on itinerary)• Tips• International flight• Wire transfer fees• Galapagos entrance fee: USD 220 per person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$300 to request a single room for the 11 nights.