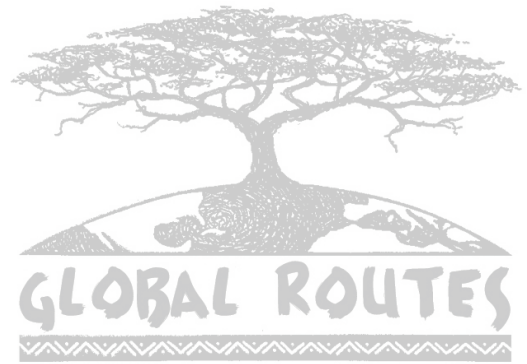


# ECUADOR

## FROM THE ANDES TO THE AMAZON



Contained within the borders of one small country are the headwaters of the Amazon, the snow-capped volcanoes of the Andes and Darwin's Galapagos Islands. Ecuador is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world! It has a remarkable variety of habitats, and is as rich culturally as it is geographically. Discover Ecuador firsthand as you meet the indigenous peoples of the High Sierra, trek through remote jungle, paddle along tributaries of the Amazon, and celebrate the vibrancy of rural family life.

"I really wanted to leave all of 'home' behind and gain perspective on my future and what kind of person I want to be. My leaders' love and support made this goal easier than I ever expected."

**-Liza Sherretta, Ecuador Galapagos 2011**

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Experience Otavalo**, an Andean mountain village famous for its volcanic crater lake and artisan markets.

**Become an integral part of your rural Ecuadorian home**, harvesting fresh bananas or playing soccer with your siblings.

**Improve your Spanish** as you work side by side with locals on the construction of a school.

**Explore the Galapagos Islands**; sight the famous blue-footed booby (Galapagos only) or **paddle through the Amazon rainforest** (Amazon only).



# ECUADOR DETAILED ITINERARY

## IN-COUNTRY ORIENTATION

Travel north from Quito across the equator past dramatic Andean peaks to the high altitude mountain town of Otavalo. Hike through spectacular scenery up the steep mountainside of Fuya Fuya and around the deep blue crater lake of Cuicocha. Admire the beauty and culture of the Otavaleño Indians with frequent glimpses of intricately embroidered blouses and distinctive golden necklaces adorning the women. Spend your nights in an idyllic hostel nestled in the rugged terrain of the Andean countryside and your days visiting textile markets, trying your own hand at tapestry weaving with local artisans and playing outdoor games with schoolchildren.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Become deeply rooted in a remote rural village in Ecuador's western lowlands as you live with a family in a simple home and personally experience Ecuadorian warmth and generosity. For two weeks you work with locals in the restoration of a school building or the construction of a *salon comunal* (community center). Your contributions are forever remembered during future village fiestas or school graduation ceremonies held within this building. Discover a new culture and improve your conversational Spanish as you fry patacones (plantain chips) with your host family or challenge the local volleyball team to an informal tournament.

## AMAZON OR GALAPAGOS TRAVEL ADVENTURES

### **Amazon Program:**

Travel to the scenic town of Baños for a relaxing dip in natural steam baths. You continue on to the small jungle town of Misahuallí where you embark on a three-day guided journey into the Amazon. Traveling by canoe and foot you are surrounded by a jungle ecology where rainforest wildlife and rare plant species flourish. Complete your Amazon adventure with a whitewater rafting trip on the Upper Rio Napo, where the surrounding steep cliffs display a majestic array of tropical forest, orchids and waterfalls.

### **Galapagos Program:**

Few have the opportunity to visit the geological wonders of the Galapagos Archipelago, famed for the blue-footed booby and giant 500-pound tortoise that make their home here. Joined by bilingual naturalist guides, you visit several islands, each host to a unique set of seabirds, reptiles, mammals and plant life. Spend a week exploring these exquisite volcanic islands as you swim among playful sea lions, witness the underwater grace of giant sea turtles and view countless exotic sea birds diving for fish.

## THE BASICS

**Dates:** TBD.

**Starting/Ending Point:** Quito, Ecuador

**Program Fee:** TBD, depending on group size.