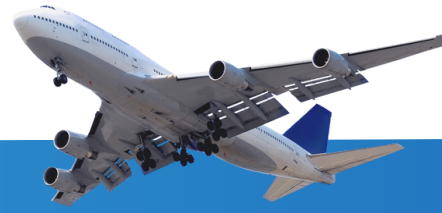


ITK^{voyage}
Ecuador & Galapagos

ECUADOR

TRAVEL GUIDE
2023

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ITK VOYAGE

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& GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS



This travel guide was created by ITK Voyage Ecuador & Galapagos. ITK is a locally based agency that specializes in luxury, tailor-made, customized, family, and tour package travel. Since 2010, we have been providing unique cruises, tours, and stays in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, offering outstanding services in French, English, and Spanish.



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A TRAVEL DESTINATION LIKE NO OTHER

Ecuador, located in South America, is a travel destination offering an unparalleled experience. Its uniqueness lies in the remarkable combination of its culture, history, and diverse landscapes.

Culture and History

Ecuador is steeped in rich culture and a fascinating history. It is home to numerous indigenous communities like the Kitwas, Sionas, and Shuars, who preserve their ancestral traditions. This cultural diversity is reflected in music, dance, art, and cuisine, providing travelers with a deep dive into the country's soul.

The history of Ecuador is equally captivating. The country boasts Incan archaeological remains, well-preserved colonial cities built by Spanish conquistadors, and African influence along the coast. This historical mosaic is unveiled through its monuments, museums, festivals, and local celebrations, allowing travelers to explore both the past and present of Ecuador.

Geographic Diversity

Ecuador is renowned for its unique geography. In a single day, you can go from the lush Amazon



peaks of the Andes, and then to the wild beaches of the Pacific coast. This geographic diversity offers a multitude of travel experiences, from the dense jungle to picturesque mountain villages and tropical beaches. The Galápagos, an isolated archipelago, add a special dimension to this diversity by hosting unique world-endemic animal and plant species. Travelers have the rare opportunity to get up close with the incredibly adapted wildlife.



Useful Tips for Traveling in Ecuador

Language: The official language is Spanish, in addition to 14 indigenous languages, but English is relatively well-spoken in tourist areas.

Health and Safety: Adhere to health precautions in the Amazon, at high altitudes, and in coastal regions.

Climate: Ecuador experiences climatic diversity based on altitude and region. Pack appropriate clothing.

Currency and Payments: The local currency is the United States Dollar (USD). \$50 and \$100 bills are often not accepted. Prefer bills of \$20 or less. Credit cards are accepted in all cities.

Respect for the Environment and Culture: Show respect for nature and local customs. The local population is friendly; feel free to ask them questions.

Transport: Buses and taxis are widely used for city transportation. Domestic flights and guided excursions are also popular.

Food: Try local dishes like *ceviche* on the coast and Andean cuisine. Sanitary standards are good, but avoid tap water and opt for bottled water.

Restaurants, cafés, bars: In restaurants, it's common to leave a tip of 10% to 15% of the total bill if service is not included. In cafes and bars, a small tip of a few dollars or leaving some change is sufficient.

Taxi Cabs: Tips are generally not expected for taxi rides, but rounding up the amount is a nice gesture.

Hotels: In hotels, a tip to the housekeeping staff of 1 to 2 dollars per day is usually appreciated.

Guides and Excursions: During guided tours, a tip can be given to the guide based on the quality of service. On average, consider tipping around 5 to 10 dollars per day.

Porters and Baggage Handlers: If you use the services of porters or baggage handlers at the airport or hotel, a tip of 1 to 2 dollars per bag is appreciated.

Public Restrooms: In some public restrooms, an attendant may ask for a small tip. A symbolic amount is usually sufficient.

Altitude: The Ecuadorian Andes are a spectacular mountainous region with peaks reaching high altitudes. We advise all travelers with respiratory or cardiovascular issues to consult a doctor before their trip and plan for a gradual acclimatization period.

Sea Sickness: Sea sickness can be a concern for some people when traveling by boat in the Galápagos, as the waters can be choppy. Consult your doctor before your departure.

Ecuador, located between land and sea, provides an exceptional travel experience where the majesty of the Amazon rainforest, the peaks of the Andean volcanoes, the wild beaches of the Pacific coast, and the unique flora and fauna of the Galápagos Islands come together to create a captivating cultural, geographic, and historical diversity. Setting out for Ecuador ensures a diverse destination that promises an unforgettable experience.

The Galápagos Islands are also classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site, a true natural laboratory where you can observe species of animals that are unique in the world.





ITK 'S TEAM



Antoine



Carolina



María



Fernando



Vanessa



Fernando



Alex



Giovanna



Angel



Jorge

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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Before leaving, make sure to **check the validity of your passport**. It should be valid for at least **six months beyond your return date to your home country**. This check is essential to ensure a smooth entry into the country and a **worry-free journey**.

On your to-do list, this is the first and most important thing to do!



Vaccines and Vaccinations

Should I get vaccinated against yellow fever, COVID-19, Chikungunya, Dengue, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Rabies, Tuberculosis, Typhoid, Zika, and take malaria prophylaxis? It's advisable; they are **all recommended** (but not mandatory). Regarding malaria, the Amazon and the Pacific coast are classified as zone 3 by global health authorities. Some travelers take malaria prophylaxis, while others prefer appropriate repellent.



Vaccinations are recommended based on **your health condition, age, and specific destination**, as these recommendations often pertain to very localized areas. If you are planning an extended, adventurous, or **remote trip**, especially with **young children**, it is indeed preferable to get vaccinated. However, in the majority of cases, these vaccines will not be necessary. If in doubt, **consult your doctor**.

Visas

Europeans and **US citizens** do not usually need a visa to visit Ecuador, but the rules may change. **Before you depart, inquire with the Ecuadorian consulate in your country.**

Visa is not required for **a tourist stay of 90 days or less.**

Insurance

When paying for your trip with a credit card, you generally receive coverage. However, it is advisable to confirm this information with your bank and, if necessary, consult an insurer or a specialist like chapkadirect.com.

High-Risk Areas

The border areas with Colombia and the province of Esmeraldas pose a high risk due to drug trafficking, in particular. Fortunately, these areas are relatively limited, but it's advisable to be aware of them.

Travelers who book their trips through an agency generally won't have to worry about these issues, as their itineraries are designed with safety considerations in mind, whether related to natural or non-natural risks.



Maps of Watchful Areas

The map above shows the watchful areas (source: Diplomatie.gouv.fr, October 2023). As you can see, only the border area between Ecuador and Colombia is potentially dangerous.

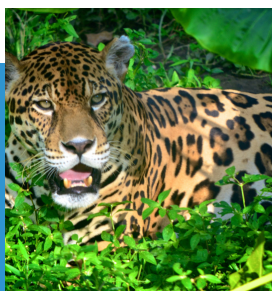
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ECUADORIAN AMAZON

The Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest is an extraordinary ecosystem, rich in biodiversity, culture, and adventure opportunities. It is a place for encounters with fascinating wildlife, flora, and indigenous communities. However, it is vulnerable to threats such as deforestation and oil exploration, underscoring the crucial importance of its preservation for the planet. Exploring the Ecuadorian Amazon is a unique experience that combines discovery, respect for nature, and awareness of conservation.



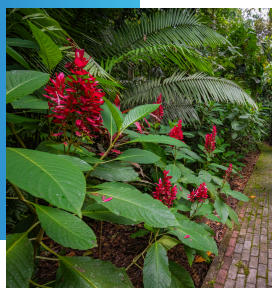
> BIODIVERSITY

The Ecuadorian Amazon is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world. It boasts an astonishing variety of animals and plants, including many rare and endemic species. The wildlife includes jaguars, pumas, tapirs, monkeys, exotic birds, and much more. Observing wild animals in their natural habitat is an unforgettable experience.



> INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Amazon rainforest is home to numerous indigenous communities that have preserved their traditions and way of life for centuries. Meeting these communities provides a unique insight into Amazonian culture and customs. It's also an opportunity to participate in traditional activities like fishing and preparing local dishes.



> FLORA AND MEDICINAL PLANTS

The Amazon rainforest is an invaluable source of medicinal plants and herbs used for generations by indigenous communities to heal various ailments. Local guides can introduce you to the secrets of these plants, as well as the associated traditional medical practices.

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VOLCANOES OF THE ANDES

The mountains and volcanoes of Ecuador create an impressive and diverse landscape that attracts nature enthusiasts, climbers, and adventurers from around the world. The three iconic mountains below offer exciting challenges and breathtaking views for adventure and mountaineering enthusiasts. They are also steeped in history and legends, making them even more mythical.



> COTOPAXI

Cotopaxi is an active volcano located in the Ecuadorian Andes. It is considered one of the most beautiful and dangerous volcanoes in the world due to its regular activity. Climbing Cotopaxi is an epic adventure for mountaineers.



> CHIMBORAZO

Chimborazo is the highest peak in Ecuador and the point farthest from the center of the Earth due to the planet's elliptical shape. It is a symbol of national pride and a popular destination for climbers from around the world.



> CAYAMBE

Cayambe is another volcano in the Ecuadorian Andes. Located on the equator line, this volcano is famous for its stunning glacial cap, making it a popular spot for mountaineering and ice climbing.



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ECUADORIAN PACIFIC COAST

WILD BEACHES

The Pacific coast of Ecuador is famous for its wild beaches. From golden sandy beaches lined with palm trees to secluded coves surrounded by cliffs, this region offers a diverse and authentic coastline. Montañita, for example, is a renowned destination for its surf waves, vibrant nightlife, and laid-back atmosphere.



ABUNDANT MARINE LIFE

The waters of the Ecuadorian Pacific coast teem with marine life. It is a prime location for observing humpback whales during their annual migration from June to September (especially in Puerto Lopez). You can also spot dolphins, sea turtles, manta rays, sea lions, and a wide variety of colorful fish while diving or snorkeling.



The Ecuadorian Pacific coast is an exceptional coastal region characterized by its wild beaches, rich marine life, vibrant coastal culture, and delicious seafood-based cuisine. This region offers an ideal combination of natural beauty and cultural experiences, making it a sought-after destination for travelers seeking relaxation, adventure, and culinary discoveries.



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GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

EXTRAORDINARY WILDLIFE

The Galápagos Islands are renowned for their world-unique wildlife. You'll encounter iconic species like the Galápagos giant tortoises, marine iguanas, sea lions, Galápagos penguins, blue-footed boobies, and many more. This exceptional biodiversity inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.



SPECTACULAR NATURAL BEAUTY

The landscapes of the Galápagos are of unparalleled natural beauty. Volcanic formations, white sandy beaches, crystal-clear lagoons, and rich marine life are breathtaking. Each island offers unique vistas, making it a paradise for nature lovers and photographers.



On a cruise or at a hotel, the Galápagos Islands are a natural treasure in the Pacific Ocean, renowned for their unique biodiversity, their role in the history of science thanks to Charles Darwin, and their spectacular landscapes. These islands offer an extraordinary travel experience where you can observe endemic species, explore a variety of ecosystems, engage in exciting outdoor activities, and contribute to environmental preservation through responsible tourism. It's a destination that combines adventure, wonder, and conservation awareness.



RESOURCES

ITK Voyage Travel Agency

Scuba-Diving in the Galapagos

What to pack for Ecuador

Travel Blog to Ecuador and Galapagos

Galapagos Cruises

Outdoor adventures

Thematic tours

The Galapagos Islands

The Amazon rainforest

The Sierra of the Andes

The Pacific Coast

Quito hotels

Ecuador culinary tour

Trekking & hiking

Ecuador Culture & Heritage

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ABOUT

ITK Voyage Ecuador is a bilingual travel agency located in Quito, specializing in personalized travel experiences in Ecuador and the Galapagos. Our team can be easily contacted through the methods provided below in English, French, or Spanish. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us for any information or inquiries.



(+1) 954-889-7226 (USA/UK)



(+593) 98.735.3936 (Ecuador)



antoine@itkvoyage-ecuador.com



www.itkvoyage-ecuador.com



Río Chinchipe y General Enriquez Sangolquí,
Secteur Métropolitain de Quito, Ecuador



BON VOYAGE



Ecuador and the Galapagos,
an unforgettable adventure awaits!



See you soon!





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