

SUMMER



**pacific  
discovery**  
inspiring educational adventures

# Ecuador & Galapagos Summer Program

BLISSFUL BEACHES  
AND EPIC ECOSYSTEMS

[www.pacificdiscovery.org](http://www.pacificdiscovery.org)



# Overview

**This program combines equal-parts authentic community immersion, adrenaline activities in the rainforest, and exploration of a UNESCO listed ancient volcanic island chain!**

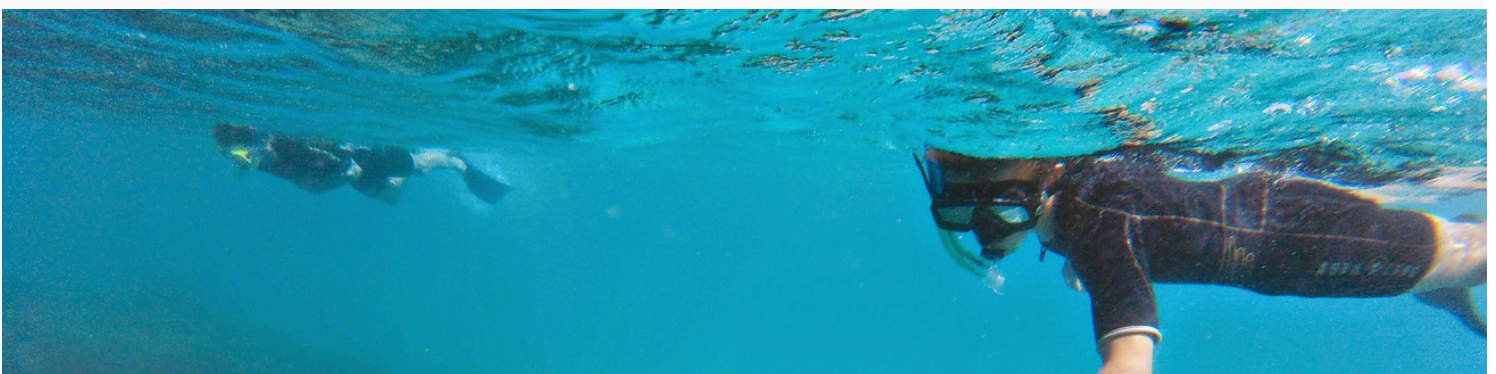
---

Ecuador is a South American treasure. The people are welcoming, the food is delicious and the views are out of this world. After exploring the colonial capital of Quito, we will spend the rest of the week in the northern township of Agato, connecting with a local community on a rewarding service learning project. We will be in homestays, immersing in the culture and supporting a needs-based grassroots initiative. The tasks change according to what the community needs when we visit; all we need to bring is enthusiasm and curiosity! We will walk the rim of the Quilotoa Crater; a pristine lake with a chocolate shop on the ridgeline (yep, chocolate is a big deal in Ecuador). We will spend the rest of the week getting high on adrenaline-filled outdoor activities like zip lining, canyoning and from the adventure capital Baños. Our bodies will appreciate soaking in hot springs before the next leg of the trip.

The focus of our time in the Amazon Basin is to learn about the rainforest and the lives of the indigenous communities who live in this unique environment. Beginning in Tena, we take a safe, though adventurous rafting expedition down the Jatunyacu River. The river takes us to Misuahilli, a small town on the edge of the jungle. We get to stay at an inspiring indigenous women's ecotourism initiative. Sustainability is at the heart of this inspiring center; while our patronage helps sustain the communities' livelihood, we learn more sustainable means of production and consumption

For our final leg of the program we take a flight 600 miles off the Ecuadorian coast to arrive at the Galapagos Islands! Based on San Cristobal and Santa Cruz Islands, we will snorkel with sea lions and turtles at Kicker Rock and Loberia Beach, walk amongst gigantic slow moving land tortoises and climb a volcano to see red bellied frigate birds. Every day we will be getting out hiking, stretching out on beaches, learning from experts about this world-class UNESCO heritage site and boating to diverse locations. Our time spent on the Galapagos is simply phenomenal.

Join this summer program to experience the best of Ecuador with a close group of peers. Participants will receive a Certificate of Community Development and Conservation with 25 hours of service for their valuable efforts, and the memories made will last a lifetime!





## Sample Itinerary

*\*\* The airport hub will be confirmed on student home locations and flight paths at the time of booking.*

*\*\*This is a guide to what you can expect to do on program. The order in which the activities occur might vary\*\**

## WEEK 1 | COMMUNITY PROJECT IN AGATO

Welcome to Quito! We will spend the first days of the program getting acquainted with the group whilst strolling the European-feeling cobblestone streets of the Ecuadorian capital. The Old Town is one of Ecuador's first UNESCO protected sites (along with the Galapagos). It was built in the 16th century on the ruins of an Incan city. We will get an eagle eye view of the beautiful city from the Teleferico, a cable car system set above Quito.

From here, we travel into the northern highlands to a small Andean village, Agato. The people of Agato are Kichwa and proudly maintain a very traditional life, rich in a culture and lifestyle that highly values connection with the earth. The community get their livelihood from farming and the production of various handicrafts.

In Agato, we will work alongside local families on a community-initiated development project while planning fun activities (art/craft/sport etc.) with the children in the afternoon and immersing ourselves in their culture during homestays. We will also participate in daily community life such as food preparation and harvesting quinoa and corn. In all of this, we will build strong relationships with the families of Agato while experiencing a completely different way of life.





## WEEK 2 | QUILOTOA CRATER LAKE, ADVENTURE IN BAÑOS AND SPANISH IMMERSION

Spectacular crater lakes, volcanoes, glacial peaks and lush valleys studded with rural villages are a feature of Ecuador's central highlands. Leaving Agato, we stop at Otavalo, to check out the largest market in South America! This world-famous market bustles with hundreds of stall holders selling textiles, jewelry, musical instruments, art and leather goods. After trawling the market and practicing our bartering skills, we continue upwards to Quilotoa. This is a tiny community of artisans in an area famous for its breathtaking crater lake. We stay in a guesthouse run by a local artist couple and enjoy hiking in and around the pristine volcanic crater.

Baños is a charming town nestled on the flanks of the impressive Tungurahua mountain. Our time in Baños is busy, as there is much to experience between its cloud forest, hot springs, waterfalls and rivers. We will get amongst the action by ziplining, canyoning and horse riding over the course of four days.

## WEEK 3 | SUSTAINABLE LIVING IN THE JUNGLE

The focus of our time in the Amazon Basin is to learn about the rainforest and the lives of the indigenous communities who live in this unique environment. Beginning in Tena, we take a safe, though adventurous rafting expedition down the Jatunyacu River.

The river takes us to Misuahilli, a small town on the edge of the jungle. We get to stay at the Sinchi Warmi Center, an inspiring indigenous women's ecotourism initiative. Sustainability is at the heart of this inspiring center; while our patronage helps sustain the communities' livelihood, we learn more sustainable means of production and consumption. The women will teach us many things about their way of life, including how artisanal chocolate is produced – and we'll get to try the process ourselves, from cacao bean through to chocolate.

Before the week is over we take a flight to San Cristobal Island in the Galapagos. We bus to Guayaquil and spend a night before taking a flight to San Cristobal Island - the first island Darwin visited in the Galapagos Archipelago. The Galapagos is made up of at least 14 islands, and 97% of the area is considered so special that the public has been banned from visiting! Over the 10 days, we visit sites of ecological significance and incredible biodiversity on two distinct islands.

We will swim, kayak and have close encounters with amazing wildlife. It's beautiful to walk around San Cristobal - there are sea lions out your front door and delicious local food to be found at the local markets.





## WEEK 4 | THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

A highlight of any visit to the Galapagos is the incredible snorkeling opportunities available. From Kicker Rock, you'll spot sea lions, harmless reef sharks, rays, turtles and other diverse marine life. We also swim and snorkel at La Loberia beach, a stretch of coastline home to sea lions, yellow warblers, frigates, various species of finches and large Galapagos marine iguanas. We will learn about farming and restoration work whilst here, bringing color to our understanding of the islands with relevant knowledge.

We will spend our final days on the remote and beautiful Isabela Island, exploring our surroundings. This week sees us kayaking in beautiful secluded coves, watching the wildlife, and snorkeling again to make sure you don't miss out on any turtle-spotting opportunities!

In the last days on Santa Cruz, we have our final swim with the sea lions and reflect on the diverse experience we've shared in Ecuador. In the last days on Santa Cruz, we have our final swim in the best swimming spot in all of the Galapagos, the Grietas. Three crystal clear pools in an idyllic setting make this a highlight of the program!

The program instructors will hold an end-of-trip wrap-up, and we will share the lessons we've learned and the tools and techniques we may take forward with us in life. We are sure that you will reflect on how amazing it was to have a chance to take a break from everything. We fly home with a sandal tan, new friends and lots of wonderful memories.

# Program Highlights

- A 5 day community development project with an indigenous community in the Andes
- Ziplining, canyoning, horse riding and hot springs in the jungle near Baños
- Spot turtles and other marine wildlife while snorkeling and swimming in the Galapagos Islands
- Hike the rim for spectacular views of the high altitude Quiltoa Lake
- Walk through the cobblestone streets and colonial architecture of Quito
- Experience homestays in the small Andean village Agato
- Learn about the local culture through working alongside local communities
- Receive a Certificate of Community Development and Conservation with 25 hours of service



## COUNTRY INFORMATION

Ecuador is one of only a few countries in the world that has a little of everything, which makes it so wonderful to explore – high Andean mountains, stunning beaches, jungle, fascinating indigenous culture, cosmopolitan Quito, amazing wildlife on the Galapagos Islands, volcanoes and hot springs. Ecuador has a history of human habitation dating back some 6000 years and currently has a population of 18 million. According to the United Nations Environment Program, it is one of 17 mega-diverse countries in the world.

The Galapagos Islands are simply unique and home to a vast number of endemic species. They are renowned for their distinct fauna and are famous as the birthplace of Darwin's Theory of Evolution. A volcanic archipelago isolated 620 miles off the coast of Ecuador, 97% of the land area of the islands is taken up by the National Park, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Daytrips among the islands and having close encounters with turtles, iguanas, blue-footed boobys and innumerable other terrestrial, avian and marine life is incredible and unforgettable.

---

## CLIMATE

Ecuador is located on the equator. Its climate varies depending upon the region and altitude. Expect some rainfall in all these areas during the program. Please refer to the gear list when planning what to bring.

**Highlands (Quito, Andes, volunteer project): Dry season; Highs of 60°F and lows of 40°F.**  
**Galapagos Islands - Highs of 75°F and lows of 65°F.**

---

## MEALS

Meals are fresh, tasty, healthy and varied. Special dietary requirements and vegetarians are catered for. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included in the program cost. Any snacks are at an additional cost, which we recommend budgeting around \$10 per day for.

Meals are a mixture of eating out at restaurants and food preparation shared by students. An average day on program would consist of the following:

### **Regular food to expect:**

- Breakfast: rice, beans, eggs, toast
  - Lunch: sandwiches, wraps, rice, beans, protein and steamed vegetables, eggs
  - Dinner: tacos, burrito, rice, beans, protein and steamed vegetables, eggs
- 

## TRANSPORT

The itinerary has been designed to maximize comfort and safety whilst also giving you the opportunity to experience local transport and take part in daily life. We will be traveling in minivans for the majority of this program through Ecuador - with the occasional boat thrown in!



## Testimonials

*Pacific Discovery helped me learn a lot about myself and pushed me past my comfort zone. I discovered so many new activities that I loved doing and am looking forward to continue doing. There were so many different things I was tentative about, but kept an open mind and ending up loving! I was exposed to so many new cultures and ideas that allowed me to learn so much about myself and others. I made such great friends and memories! I am so glad I came on this trip and was able to have the experience I did!*

**Devin 2021**

---

*This was an amazing experience with the most incredible people! it was absolutely life-changing, & I absolutely loved getting to immerse myself in different Central American cultures over the span of three months. We got to see incredible sites while eating authentic cuisine as well. It was easily the most fun & adventurous three months of my entire life. It further strengthened my love for traveling & I plan to continue to do so in the future. I loved every activity we did & I'm so glad I got to make thirteen new best friends along the way.*

**Avery 2021**

---

*This program absolutely changed my life. My instructors were spectacular and guided me through so many incredible experiences in Thailand. I can genuinely say this program was everything I hoped for and more. I would recommend this program to any graduating high school student, I feel much more prepared for life and future travel after completing this program. I undoubtedly learned way more in those three months than I did in all of my secondary education. It's the perfect bridge in between high school and college/life!*

**Cabell, 2021**



**pacific  
discovery**  
inspiring educational adventures



**CALL US** Tel. 1 877 636 2603

**EMAIL** [info@pacificdiscovery.org](mailto:info@pacificdiscovery.org)

**[www.pacificdiscovery.org](http://www.pacificdiscovery.org)**

