

Ecuador Experience

Contribute towards one of our worthwhile local community initiatives before heading off into the steamy Amazon jungle for an epic adventure!

Ecuador is a pocket-sized slice of beautiful South America. Despite its diminutive size, it is bursting with vibrant culture, stretches of white sand beaches, mouth-watering foods, steamy jungles, epic mountain landscapes and exotic tropical wildlife.

Ecuador has a picture-perfect capital painted in pastel colours, alive with cafés, clubs, bars, churches and museums. Markets where friendly locals sell their wares are surrounded by the hustle and bustle of traditional street life. In contrast, the peaceful and serene Andes provide a home for indigenous mountain communities. This captivating country contains a culture that is expressed in an abundance of diverse musical forms and colourful festivals that will enliven your senses.

The Frontier-Ecuador Experience will see you working closely with charming locals in Quito on a community initiative of your choice before heading off on a 5 day trek through the dramatic Amazon rainforest, as you adventure through its lush undergrowth and canoe along its mighty waterways. What better way to experience the incredible travel highlights that Ecuador has to offer!

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Help teach English to lively & friendly children
- Immerse yourself in the language and culture of Ecuador
- Explore the pristine wilderness of the Amazon rainforest

FAST FACTS

Location	Quito, Ecuador
Activities	Assist in creating educational materials Introducing games and activities for children Jungle trek Canoeing Wildlife spotting Help with English language practice
Transport	Airport pick-up
Accommodation	Homestay and Traditional jungle hut

WHAT WILL I BE DOING?

volunteer work

You will spend your first two weeks volunteering at a community project of your choice. Your work programme and schedule will vary depending on the time of your visit and any personal interests or experience, but with a little flexibility and enthusiasm you are sure to have a wonderful experience in the wonderful city of Quito. All volunteers are encouraged to leave their own personal mark on the project work, and the range of activities available to you includes:

teaching

Experience the heartbeat of the future generation of Quito, as you bring your own teaching style to the classroom. Make a difference to the lives of the children who will hang on your every word, and make friends for life with the teachers and students alike.

kindergarten work

With patience and creativity you will begin to develop bonds with the young children at this wonderful day care centre. Limited only by your imagination, your time with the kids could be spent giving general care and affection or you may be involved in activities like drawing and colouring arts and crafts, teaching, games and sports, reading, teaching basic English and singing and dancing.

Amazon Jungle Adventure

Following your two week volunteer placement, you will then head south on an internal flight from Quito to Lago Agrio (cost not included) with your fellow participants towards the Amazon rainforest for you 5 day jungle expedition.

Day One

Your adventure will begin with a 2 hour bus/truck ride to a remote Amazonian village where you will continue your journey onwards by canoe, paddling down the Aguarico River while taking in your impressive surroundings for the first time. Continuing down the Cuyabeno River, approximately 2 ½ hours later you'll arrive at base camp, which will become your home for the next few days.

You will have time to freshen up before meeting your fellow explorers and the knowledgeable guides who will be showing you around for the next week – this is a great opportunity to talk about your ambitions for the week and get to know the rest of your group!

After dinner you'll receive a lecture from the guides explaining about the nature reserve, identify species you should look out for and safety procedures. This is bound to get you excited for your trek the following day!

Day Two

You will rise early for a morning canoe excursion – the brisk morning hours are the best time to see the rainforest's thriving activity! After returning back to base camp for a hearty breakfast, you will begin your trek into the rainforest, accompanied by guides native to the area. Their experience of the rainforest and its species is extensive, so they will be able to answer all of your questions knowledgeably.

Following lunch, you will paddle in a traditional dug-out canoe down the river where you can enjoy the sights and sounds of the jungle, from out-of-this-world insects to the fearsome cries of Howler monkeys, rainbow-coloured birds, caimans, peccaries and even jaguars. You will also have the opportunity to fish for piranha from your canoes!

After dinner you will experience the atmosphere of the forest at night, keeping on the lookout for scampering insects, fluorescent frogs and even snakes as you tread carefully through the undergrowth.

Day Three

Another early morning start will see you enjoying the sounds of the jungle for a spot of bird watching, where you will admire macaws, toucans, parrots and other indigenous species. After a filling breakfast you will again trek into the forest with your guides, this time learning about the practical and medicinal uses of the plants. You will stop for lunch on the way, before manning your canoes again and navigating along the Cuyabeno River appreciating your surroundings. If your energy levels remain high even after the day's fun, then you may also have the opportunity to go on another night walk to see if you can spot any more species lurking in the dark.

Day Four

Starting early in the morning you will spend the whole day exploring. You will navigate downstream to observe the enchanting salt lick (an exposed clay bank) where colourful parrots and parakeets feed to draw toxins out of their bodies. You will return to base camp for breakfast, after which you will trek into the pristine rainforest where the guides will continue their teaching on the medicinal and practical uses of forest flora and fauna – knowledge passed down from their ancestors through generations.

In the afternoon you will visit a 30m observation tower where, above the canopy, you will see a breathtaking view of the surrounding rainforest – see how many different species you can spot, keeping your eyes open for toucans, parrots and monkeys native to the rainforest.

You will then take to the water as you try to spot freshwater pink river dolphins in their spectacular natural scenery. After dinner you will venture out on a night excursion in search of caiman and nocturnal birds.

Day Five

On your final day you will visit the local native Indian community where you will learn about the culture and traditions of their people. You will be welcomed by a local family who will share a part of their lives with you – this experience will undoubtedly be very rewarding for both parties, so it's worth making the most of the indigenous people's generosity by asking all you can.

You will then travel by canoe for a final time back down the Cuyabeno and Aguarico Rivers to your original drop off point, where you will take the bus back to Lago Agrio and either continue your travels or make your way back home.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

You'll fly into Quito where you'll be met by the friendly in-country project staff. You will then be taken to your accommodation, giving you time to settle and adjust to your new environment. You will receive your project orientation and briefing before starting work.

WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?

Throughout the volunteering phase of your placement you will stay at a clean and friendly Quito-based homestay in either your own room or in a shared room with one or two other same sex volunteers. This is a fantastic way to really get to know the local people and experience true Ecuadorian lifestyle.

When in the jungle you will be staying in a traditional Amazonian Indian lodge. Expedition base camp

is located on the Cuyabeno River, towards the lower part of the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, to give you a truly wild experience. Accommodation will be shared with the expedition group and includes a bathroom and shower. Each bed comes with its own mosquito net to keep you safe during the night. Each cabin also has an area for relaxing in hammocks, or just sitting and observing the birds and monkeys playing in the nearby trees. It is the perfect place to enjoy nature early in the morning or to listen to the nocturnal songs of the Amazon.

In addition to the dormitory cabins there is also a central hut where you will eat with the rest of the group and a traditional bar where you can purchase extra drinks. The hammocks here overlook a small lake, which is the ideal spot to rest up and relax after a long day's adventure.

WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Throughout the volunteering phase of your placement you will be provided with two meals a day in the homestay; breakfast and dinner. Your diet will typically consist of a variety of nutritious and delicious local dishes, with lots of tasty options for vegetarians.

Once in the jungle you will be provided with the full three meals per day to keep you energised during your day's exploration. The food will be a combination of traditional Ecuadorian delicacies and more Western-style meals. Get ready for chicken and rice to become a staple in your diet.

You will also be supplied with purified drinking water and soft drinks during the day when you are at base camp.

COSTS

19 days	CA\$ 1,495
Extra week volunteering	CA\$ 495

DEPARTURE DATES

Weekly. Please arrive on the Sunday to start the project on the Monday.

Monthly (please arrive Sunday in order to transfer to the project)

This project is not available on the following dates in 2019:

New year: 1 January

Carnaval: 4-5 March

Good Friday: 19 April

Labor Day: 1 May

Battle of Pichincha: 24 May

Independence Day: 10 August

Guayaquil Independence Day: 12 October

Day of the Dead: 1 November

Cuenca Independence Day: 03 November

Christmas: 25 December - 01 January

DURATION

2 weeks +

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

Before you go

- Pre-departure support
- Travel & medical advice & documentation
- Equipment advice
- Discounted medical kit
- Free Frontier t-shirt

In-country

- Accommodation
- Food
- Local orientation and training
- In-country emergency support
- 24-hour international HQ back-up

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Nearest airport(s): Quito (UIO)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Call us on 020 7613 2422 (UK) / 1 949 336 8178 (US)

Mail us on info@frontier.ac.uk

Check out our social media here:

Project details were correct at the time this document was generated. Price, dates and other details are subject to change. Please see our website for current details for this project.