



NEW VIEW TOURS

From the desk of Ramelle Pulitzer

Travel Tips & Packing Suggestions for Ecuador

Passports:

Expiration date of your passport is to be at least 6 months AFTER departure date. (Please make copies of your travel documents. Leave one set with a friend at home, bring a couple with you in the case you lose the original.)

Money:

Ecuador uses the US \$ dollar. Bring small bills for tips, and spending in the markets. ATM machines are usually available, but inconvenient and sometimes unreliable!

Notify your bank and credit card companies when and where you are traveling.

Hacienda Cusin and most hotels and restaurants accept credit cards. In some cases a personal US bank check is accepted. Be extremely careful writing checks as the smallest rewrite will be reason to be declined by the bank. Sign your check exactly as you did on your passport. There may be discounts for payment in cash in some family stores.

Galapagos:

Visa/entry fees: A Galapagos Park Entry card must be purchased by each traveler upon arrival. Bring new bills to pay this \$100 park fee and maybe a \$20 for a tax (this is sometimes included beforehand!)

Tips:

All fees include 10% service charge and 12% VAT tax (that may be increased to 14% if there is a disaster to pay for). Plan to tip another 10% for good service – about \$10 per day. At some hotels, like Hacienda Cusin, find the tip box at Reception so that your contribution will be distributed to all Staff.

For personal and group tour guides in the High Sierras and on Galapagos cruises, we suggest on average \$10 per day.

Itinerary:

Keep a copy of your travel itinerary with contact information for hotels and contact people along the way. Best to store this information on your smart phone or on paper you have accessible.

Safety:

Hotels and restaurants are safe. But avoid inviting theft: wear a pocket book or satchel in the front; keep correct change and small bills readily available so you don't have to show all your money for small purchases.

Avoid wearing a camera dangling around your neck. Keep it in a bag to the side.

Avoid traveling with jewelry, large bills, fragile items or laptop computers. If you do bring a tablet or phone, be sure to carry it with you with a safe cover. Avoid putting your belongings on the back of your chair or under your table at restaurants.

Altitude:

Adjusting to a new altitude is different for each person and takes about 18 hours for most people. Basically, it is the issue of less oxygen in the air. The body adjusts to this by thinning the blood in order to pump oxygen more efficiently through the circulatory system, including the pathways to the brain.

Some side effects of high altitude is headache, bad dreams and dizziness, rarely vomiting.

To acclimate as quickly as possible: begin drinking more water the day before you travel.

Continue drinking lots through the first two days. Eat small meals since digestion takes a lot of energy! Walk before you run! Test out your tolerance for activity rather than over

doing it. Omit or lower alcohol intake at first. Rest as soon as you feel your heart pounding or you are winded. To recover very quickly, simply lie down (somehow) for almost instant relief because the blood is then able to circulate and oxygenate all of your systems.

See the CDC website for these tips and more:

Take it easy, Stay hydrated, Eat right, Take your vitamins, Hold the beer, Get medicated, Descend into sleep!

More here: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-to-high-altitudes>

Wifi & Phone & Wiring:

Before you go: Check with your cell provider to learn your options for an international calling plan with the services you will want to use: emails, texting and data, etc.

There is usually wifi at hotels, usually free. There may not be service in your room. Email is the best way to stay in touch with friends and family. Consider an international calling/data plan with your phone carrier.

Ecuador uses the same electrical current system as the USA - no need for adaptors. But bring an extra charger in case you forget yours!

Health:

All travelers agree that they are in good health as they undertake the tour!

Bring along your own favorite remedies for headache, stomach upset, etc.

If you should need medical care for any reason, it can be quickly arranged. Be sure to tell your guide, or the Staff at the hotel or on the boat.

Carry hand sanitizer and tissue with you.

Carry a water bottle. These can be refilled at the hotel. **Do not drink the water** out of the tap in Ecuador or Peru - even to brush your teeth. One or two water bottles will be provided in your room each day. They can be refilled, too. Do not eat food from the open

marketplace. Avoid fruit unless it has been washed in purified water (ok at good restaurants)

Make Copies of Travel Documents

Carry copies of important travel documents including passport, credit cards, driver's license and your travel insurance policy. Also, leave a set of your copied travel documents with a friend or relative. You can also scan your travel documents and store them in your phone. If your credit cards are lost or stolen, you will have to call the carrier collect if you are outside of the U.S. since toll-free telephone numbers are only useful inside the U.S. By scanning your travel documents, you will have immediate access to important information if it is lost or stolen. You can even e-mail the details page of your passport to an embassy or consulate when applying for a new one.

Packing:

Don't Over Pack - easier said than done!

One roll along bag; one carry-on should be enough

To keep your luggage slim and trim, a couple of suggestions: down size the number and quantity of toilet articles. Check what the hotels will provide, for example hair dryers.

Pack items and clothes you can mix and match and easily wash.

Bring your own washcloths

Separate Bags - or compartments: When packing for the Galapagos, or Cloud Forest, consider pre-packing whatever you might need in a separate bag. This will prove to be a great timesaver! With prior arrangements, we will ask the final hotel to store your luggage.

You should bring a lock for this one!

TSA screens every passenger's baggage before it is placed on an airplane and sometimes security will review the contents of a bag. To avoid the possibility of your luggage lock being cut, purchase a universal lock that can be opened by security officers using a universal "master" key. These locks are available at airports and travel stores nationwide. So do not pack valuables in your checked luggage.

Clothing Suggestions for Ecuador: the sun is directly overhead! Every Day:

Galapagos

- Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- Water bottle that fits in your carry-on - refill wherever you find purified/boiled water
- Short and long sleeve shirts and pants, sundress with sleeves
- Waterproof sandals for walking on volcanic rock and beeche.
- Light but good walking shoes
- Swimwear - bring 2-3 bathing suits as they get wet on each outing don't have time to dry.
- Rain gear - it is not likely to rain, but a light rain jacket can also serve as an extra layer and be wind resistant.
- Snorkeling equipment is usually available on the boat - please check your itinerary
- Wet suits are usually available on the boat - please check your itinerary.

High Sierras - Dress is casual in the High Sierras

- Layers are good - bring short sleeve and long sleeve shirts
- Fleece or fleece vest - or other sweater
- Light down sweater may be needed - they are good on the airplane, too
- Women: travel skirt or dress or dress slacks for the evening Men: neckties not necessary
- Rain gear that packs easily – it can rain any almost any time in the mountains
- Bathing suit for Papallacta and Intag hot springs.
- Strong walking shoes - cobble stones, uneven dirt roads – hiking boots if you plan to hike.
- Backpack or satchel - best if it can be worn to the front in crowds, comfortable to take for a day or touring.
- Hat/bandana
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen – re apply through the day

And don't forget:

- notebook & pen
- art supplies for journals
- small dictionary English/Spanish
- clock - maybe you have one on a smart phone?
- electric cords for your devices!
- first-aid kit - include prescription drugs you take and over the counter ones you might need.
- needle & thread
- water proof bags for storing shoes or laundry or wet bathing suit
- camera & chips & batteries & camera bag
- walking sticks – collapsible ones are helpful if you need a little assistance.
- **Passport!**

BON VIAJE!

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