



ECUADOR TRIP AT A GLANCE

SAMPLE ITINERARY

*Please note that Me to We Trips is happy to customize trips to fit the needs of your group. Dates and activities will be determined together with your coordinator.

Day 1: Travel

Departure from Toronto, Ontario to Quito, Ecuador.

Days 2-3: Quito

Explore historic Old Quito, a UNESCO world heritage site, stand on the equator and volunteer at a school and rehabilitation center. Evening sessions include discussions on the history and current challenges of Ecuador, issues, team-building games and Spanish lessons.

Days 4-11: Chimborazo Province

The Chimborazo province is the site of the first Free The Children school in Ecuador. Teach cooperative games and contribute to education by helping to build a school. Practice your Spanish and Quichua as you get to know some of your Ecuadorian peers. Immerse yourself in rural life, learn about community development and hike the Andes Mountains with local guides.

Days 12-15: Retreat

Spend your days drawing out the connections between your Ecuadorian experience and your world at home with a retreat either to Ecuador's vast cloud forest or Amazon rainforest. Explore the contrast of urban and rural life and delve into global issues such as the Indigenous movement, women's rights and environmental sustainability.

Day 15-16: Travel

After a final hike, group reflection and afternoon at a local market, the group travels back to Quito before flying home.

HIGHLIGHTS

- » Community development: Meet community needs by helping to build a school or volunteering on reforestation projects with local women's groups.
- » Leadership training: Develop and refine the skills and tools needed for successful social action.
- » Issues education: Hands-on exploration of issues including indigenous rights and the environment.
- » Wilderness adventures: Experience Ecuador's unique ecosystem in the Amazon rainforest, one of the world's most bio-diverse.
- » Cultural education: Participate in local traditions through stories, food, song and dance.

COSTS

The total cost of Volunteer & Leadership Ecuador will be determined by your Me to We Trip coordinator based upon your group's desired itinerary. Your trip cost will include:

- » All travel expenses within Ecuador
- » All meals and accommodations during the trip
- » Curriculum materials and tailored leadership training
- » Facilitation and coordination by qualified staff

Me to We Trips can include your airfare and travel medical insurance as well! Ask your coordinator about different quote options. Detailed information on costs, payments and procedures is provided in the application package. The trip capacity is approximately 24 individuals. Space is extremely limited and group applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis.





THE ECUADOR EXPERIENCE

ENVIRONMENT

Ecuador is a country uniquely endowed with dramatic topography and a variety of climates, vegetation, birds and wildlife. Ecuador's landscape ranges from the lush and vast Amazon Rainforest to the high peaks of the Andes Mountains—in the landscape alone, Ecuador has something for everyone. Free The Children's schoolbuilding projects are located in the Chimborazo province, a deeply impoverished rural area with a rich cultural history and breathtaking natural beauty.

Participants will travel extensively through the Andes Mountains and the misty cloud forests, where one finds rainforest-like conditions high in the mountains. Beautiful volcanoes, snow-capped peaks and biologically diverse forests provide a breathtaking backdrop for the trip as soon as the group leaves the bustling capital city of Quito. Alongside the incredible natural beauty, however, you'll also observe environmental degradation, such as the deforestation hindering the agricultural communities of the Andes.

FOOD & WATER

In Ecuador, participants will eat mostly traditional cuisine, which includes beans, rice, meat, salads, soups and potatoes. This food is prepared with great care by our local staff. In Quito, a wide range of both Ecuadorian and North American food is available. Bottled or filtered drinking water will be readily available throughout the trip.

ACCOMMODATIONS

In Ecuador, participants will spend the majority of their nights at community-developed and community-operated tourism projects in the Andes Mountains that provide opportunity for cultural exchange with every meal. These accommodations provide a sustainable source of income for the local community, and profits are regularly invested in the local school to provide vocational training, transport and lunch programs.

The accommodations in the Andes are fully equipped with separate bunk bed accommodations for males and females, a group meeting room and a dining hall.

In Quito, participants will be hosted at friendly and secure hotels where Me to We Trips stay on a consistent basis. The cloud and Amazon rain forest retreats offers world-class facilities as part of an award-winning example of ecotourism grounded in community involvement and sustainability.

LANGUAGE

While Spanish is spoken by almost all Ecuadorians, the first language of the Puruhá people is Quichua. You will have an opportunity to improve your Spanish skills, learn some Quichua and possibly teach English. Your lead facilitator will be fluent in Spanish and therefore able to translate all community-led sessions and guided walks. This also means your lead facilitator will be able to take care of all logistical and medical situations.

