

# Ecuador School Expedition

Scuba



Camps International runs award-winning volunteer and enrichment trips to Africa, Asia and South America for young people. We run all our own camps and have established long-term relationships with the communities in which we work. Our projects are worthwhile, sustainable and meaningful to those undertaking them.

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ETHICAL JOURNEYS WITHOUT COMPROMISE



# Ecuador School Expedition: Scuba

## Highlights:

- 1 month all inclusive expedition
- Spend time in Ecuador's cloud forest, Andes and the Pacific Coast
- Work on important projects to improve the standard of living for rural communities
- Participate in ongoing conservation initiatives to protect valuable wildlife and the environment, including supporting spectacled bear conservation
- Work on exciting marine conservation projects
- Learn to speak basic Spanish or build on your existing knowledge
- PADI Open Water Diving Course
- Opportunity to gain 70 UCAS points on completion of an expedition portfolio

## Benefits:

This expedition provides you with extraordinary opportunities. Life on an expedition will place you in situations that cannot be replicated in the classroom and will set you apart from the rest of your peers in the eyes of future employers or colleges/universities. Whilst travelling to an exciting part of the world, you will contribute to very important and rewarding community, wildlife and environmental projects that are fun, memorable and exciting and will give you unique opportunities to integrate with new cultures, speak new languages, gain a deeper understanding of other communities, make new and lasting friendships and improve your leadership and team-working skills. You will be taking on new challenges, many of which will push you further than you think you can go, but you'll soon realise you can achieve anything you set your mind to. It may only be one month, but you will have an experience that will last you a lifetime. So what are you waiting for?

## About Ecuador:

Ecuador is South America's best-kept secret. It may be the continent's second smallest country but its offerings are astounding. Nowhere else can you experience so much natural diversity – and all the excitement that comes with it – in such a small place. Ecuador offers startling contrasts of scenery, from misty tropical cloud forests, windswept highlands and snow-capped volcanoes of the Andes, to the mighty Amazon rainforest and palm-fringed beaches of the Pacific coast. This amazing country really does have something for everyone!

It is also a multi-cultural wonder, with 17 distinct indigenous groups and 27 ethnic groups, many of which preserve their languages, traditions and dress to a remarkable degree. The people of Ecuador are descendants of the Inca Empire and later Spanish conquests. The Indian descendants, known as Quichuas, inhabit the highlands in Central Ecuador and the jungles of Eastern and Southern part of the country. The European descendants, or 'mestizo' (mixed Amerindian and white) populate most of the larger northern cities. Spanish is the official language and Amerindian languages are also spoken, especially Quichua.

## Life on Expedition:

You will spend your expedition living with your team and visiting a few of our camps, which will give you the opportunity to see exciting parts of the country. No matter which camp you stay in, you'll wake up to awesome vistas and an orchestra of wildlife. The camp staff will become your extended family as they guide you through various projects. You may not see all of these through to the end, but be assured you will be contributing to the ultimate long-term goals of the area. Simply getting to your project is an eye opener in itself, whether you are on one of our vehicles getting the chance to spot wildlife as you travel, walking through the village with your new neighbours or even entering the school grounds to be met by eager children who want to practice their English. Don't forget to take some time to relax after a hard days project work: for some this means challenging the locals to a football match, for others this is the ideal time to give hand washing your clothes a try! The food in camp is varied, rich in flavour and gives you a chance to sample the delicious local cuisine as well as some well-known favourite western dishes. Finish your day with some evening games or by taking part in some traditional singing and dancing.



## Community

Your main base is set in the heart of Ecuador's stunning cloud forest, in one of the charming rural villages here. Due to habitat destruction and lack of employment opportunities, there are high levels of poverty in the community and many people emigrate to the city in search of work, resulting in the breakdown of family units. The core projects focus on improving community facilities, refurbishing the local school and creating employment opportunities for the local people. Project work may include low level construction work, refurbishing school and community buildings, teaching conversational English, working with the women's group to make and sell goods, supporting organic coffee and cacao (chocolate) farming and playing sports with the local children. Your team will spend a few days in and around Otavalo, learning about the local culture and visiting the world-famous markets. You'll also get the chance to explore the fascinating capital, Quito – the second highest capital in the world – with its impressive buildings and steep cobbled streets.



## Wildlife and Environmental Projects

The camp is situated within a 14,000-acre reserve in one of the most beautiful and ecologically important areas in the world and home to an incredible variety of animals and plants, including spectacled bears that can be seen between July and September each year. However, the future of this area is under threat due to the highest rate of deforestation recorded in South America. Wildlife poaching is also rife. You will get involved in a wide variety of projects that may include planting food trees for bears, addressing human-bear conflict, reforestation, nature trail development, habitat protection, recycling activities and teaching environmental education to children. Your team will then participate in our marine conservation programme where projects may include protecting mangroves, improving a community run aquarium and enhancing a small island for the benefit of wildlife. If you are very lucky you may also get the chance to spot humpback whales during their migration between June and September.



## Adventure

**PADI Scuba Diving Course:** Experience the wonder of diving in warm, tropical waters and coral reef, surrounded by brilliantly coloured tropical fish and a chance to see turtles, dolphins and whales by challenging yourself to undertake a PADI Open Water Diving Course, the most widely recognised and respected diving course in the world. Upon successful completion you will have the freedom to dive with a buddy, independent of a professional, almost anywhere in the world! You will learn the fundamentals of scuba diving, including equipment and techniques, before completing a number of confined and open water dives. There are plenty of alternative activities for those of you that don't want to take part.

**Rest and Relaxation:** The idyllic golden-sand beaches of Ecuador's coast provide the perfect place to relax and socialise with your team. This is a very social time when teams organise lots of different events, from football matches and BBQs to fancy dress parties. There are also souvenir shopping opportunities and many teams choose to go to one of the local restaurants for a team meal. All in all a great reward for all your hard work!



# Inclusions

## Included:

- Pre-expedition support
- Flights and in-country transfers
- Insurance
- Food and Accommodation
- Adventure Challenge
- Project costs
- Leader/staff costs
- Orientation and language lessons
- 24-hour emergency support

## Not Included:

- Visa
- Vaccinations
- Passport
- Travel insurance excess
- Travel to airport
- Spending money, tips and gratuities
- Equipment

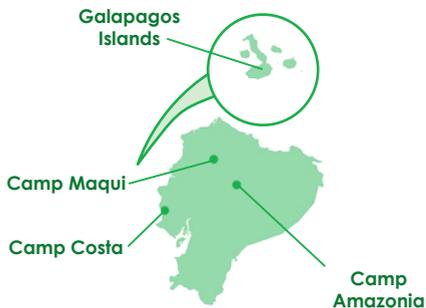
## Weather:

Ecuador's position on the equator results in spring-like conditions for most of the year, making it perfect for travelling all year round. Although the weather can be unpredictable and there are significant variations between regions, the general rule is the higher you are, the cooler it will be. The temperature of the capital Quito can fluctuate from 5°C in the evenings to 28°C during the day. The Amazon is generally warm and humid with temperatures ranging from 20°C-28°C. The coast enjoys hot and sunny weather most of the time, with temperatures between 24°C-30°C.



## Our Location:

We have camps located in the cloud forest northwest of Quito, in the Amazon basin and along the Pacific coast, near Montanita.



**CAMPS**<sup>®</sup>  
international

Unit 10, Kingfisher Park  
Headlands Business Park  
Salisbury Road  
Blashford | Ringwood | BH24 3NX

Phone: +44 (0)1425 485390  
Fax: +44 (0)1425 485398

[info@campsiinternational.com](mailto:info@campsiinternational.com)  
[www.campsiinternational.com](http://www.campsiinternational.com)