

Volunteering with fhn Ecuador  
 Helpful Hints for Life in Quito, Quinindé, & La Y de La Laguna

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## General Information: Ecuador

**Welcome!** Ecuador is a biological, geographical and cultural hotspot on this planet. Be prepared for a small country with spectacular diversity, including tropical relaxing beaches, wet coastal and Amazonian rainforest, high snow covered volcanoes, colorful indigenous people, well preserved colonial architecture and interesting museums. Most of all, you will be pleasantly surprised by the hospitality and warmth of Ecuadorians. The beauty of their country seems to be reflected in their eyes. You can be sure your stay in this country will be unforgettable. However, you should also prepare yourself as you will witness firsthand the extreme inequality that characterizes many developing countries. You will see accommodation ranging from luxurious houses, five stars hotels and shopping centers to shoddy shacks covered by tin roofs. Children often entertain traffic goers in order to gain some extra cash for education, food, or for their family's wellbeing. Also you will see many old people praying and begging for food or money, as they don't have any form of welfare or governmental support. Many streets and highways are badly constructed, so flat tires are a part of daily life. Traveling by bus is a daily adventure as drivers take many liberties, cutting corners quickly while listening to loud "Cumbia or Salsa" music. In Quito, you can experience two seasons in one day: in the morning you can get sunburned and in the early evening you could experience a downpour or hailstorm. If you are really lucky, the earth will tremble a little and you'll get ash falling from one of the many surrounding volcanoes - it is never boring here! We hope that you embrace these daily challenges and use them as an opportunity to exercise patience and understanding, to learn about different ways of living, and to appreciate what is often taken for granted in our own lives. To explore Ecuador more deeply you will need to be flexible and open-minded and be prepared to open your heart to the friendly Ecuadorian people. ¡Bienvenido a Ecuador!

### **Food & Drink:**

- For the first month, you may want to take care and exercise vigilance with what you eat and drink. Allow yourself time to adjust.
- Do not drink water from the faucet unless you boil it for at least 10 minutes.
- You can buy large containers of water at almost any corner tienda in Ecuador. If you would like to recycle, returnable bottles of Guitig (a brand of water) are usually available.

**Electricity:** 100 volts AC, 60 cycles, US-type flat pin plugs.

**Tipping:** a 10% service charge is usually included and noted on the bill. You can also leave a little extra for good service (the extra change, for example). You do not need to tip taxi drivers, but you can round up.

### **Emergency Phone Numbers (throughout Ecuador):**

- Emergencies: 911 (Quito & Cuenca)
- Fire Department: 102
- Police Department: 101
- Red Cross: 131

### **Phone Calls & Dialing Codes:**

- 09 or 08 for cellular phones
- CITIES: Quito: 02 ; Guayaquil: 04; Cuenca: 07
- PROVINCES: Pichincha: 02; Guayas: 04; Esmeraldas, 06 (check directories for others)
- To make international calls from Ecuador, dial 00 + country code

- To call Ecuador, the country code is +593. All telephone numbers have 7 digits in Ecuador.

### Visa information:

- You may visit Ecuador for up to six months on a tourist visa during any 12-month period. Upon entry into Ecuador, you will most likely be granted a 90-day entry, which can be extended by visiting any *jefatura provincial* of the *Policía Nacional de Migración* or the see below). For extensions longer than 90 days, you must visit the *Jefatura Provincial de Migración de Pichincha* (Isla Seymour 44-174 y Coca). For longer stays, you may apply for a non-immigrant visa (as a volunteer).
- You are required by Ecuadorian law to carry your original passport on you at all times. Some choose to carry copies of their passport instead, but it is up to you – because photocopies are not officially acceptable substitutes.

### Health:

- Please visit your travel doctor and inquire about vaccinations at least two months prior to your departure. We recommend vaccinations for yellow fever, hepatitis A, tetanus and typhoid fever. In most cases, we also suggest that you be vaccinated for hepatitis B and rabies, but this depends on your travel plans while in Ecuador. We highly recommend that all volunteers obtain health insurance before their departure as **fh**n cannot assume financial responsibility in the case of health emergencies.

### Security:

- You should keep extra copies of your passport (including a separate copy of the entry stamp for Ecuador), your vaccination record (especially, proof of yellow fever vaccination), and airline tickets and credit cards. You can keep copies at the office.
- When in public, never leave your bags or belonging unattended. They can be stolen when you least expect it. In cafes and on buses, it is advisable to wrap the strap of your bag around your leg. Also, when walking, never let your bag simply hang off of just one arm or shoulder. At least try to secure it with your hand and keep it close to your body. Money belts can be helpful. Be aware of an old scam in Ecuador, which involves smearing tourists with ketchup or mustard to distract them while a helpful ‘bystander’ robs them.
- Women should be aware that you are going to get many offers for courtship here, at times from strangers. Use your own judgment. Don’t feel obligated to exchange any information.

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## QUITO

Within 25 km of the equator, Quito sits at the foot of Pichincha volcano, nearly 9200 feet or 2800 meters above sea level, and has a population of approximately 1.7 million. In Quito, be sure to wear sunscreen, drink plenty of water and monitor yourself for signs of altitude sickness.

### Transportation:

- *Trolley*: The eco-friendly trolleys both run north to south and are a convenient way to get around as their stops are preset. The Ecovia can be caught along 6 de Diciembre and the Trole

along 10 de Agosto. The trolley is a convenient way to travel between the Mariscal area (the tourist area) of Quito and Centro Historico (Old Town Quito). Cost: 25 cents.

- *Bus*: To use buses in Quito, look at the placard in the front window to determine where the buses are going. Cost: 25 cents.
- *Taxi*: Taxi fares are from \$1-\$4 depending on where you are going. Minimum fare is \$1 and the meters start at 30 cents. You should generally ask the driver to use the taxi-metro (so you are not overcharged). However, taxi drivers generally do not use the meters at night, as trips are a bit more expensive after dark.

### Lodging:

- You have a number of options, including staying with a family or living in one of the many hostals throughout Quito. Staying with a family can be a great way to meet other people, practice your Spanish and get acquainted with Ecuadorians. Many of our volunteers stay with a family, Blanca and Carlos Aguirre, who live approximately 15 minutes away (walking) from our office. They have been strong supporters of the project since the beginning. They do not speak English, but they are accustomed to hosting non-Spanish speaking foreigners in their home. The costs are as follows:
  - \$ 10 per day: includes room, 3 meals, and laundry (*this price is subject to change; please confirm with our office for most current rates*).
    - 3 meals include: breakfast, lunch & light dinner; or breakfast, light lunch, and dinner (depending on your preference)
    - If you would prefer a discount, shared rooms are often available.
- Either Blanca and Carlos, or a staff member from our office, are usually available to pick you up at the airport. Please send us complete flight information and let our office staff know if you would like to reserve a room with the Aguirre's, and for how long.
- If you are on a very tight budget, some hostals offer very cheap dormitory rates. For example, you could inquire at Hostal Alcalá ([www.alcalahostal.com](http://www.alcalahostal.com)), Posada del Maple ([www.posadadelmaple.com](http://www.posadadelmaple.com)), Crossroads ([www.crossroadshostal.com](http://www.crossroadshostal.com)), El Cafecito ([www.cafecito.net](http://www.cafecito.net)), El Taxo (Foch y Cordero), or Hostal Bask (Lizardo Garcia 537 y Reina Victoria).

### Spanish Classes in Quito:

- We have made arrangements with three different Spanish schools from which you can choose. At each school, you can choose between individual or group classes, lasting from 2 to 8 hours per day. Though the choice is yours, we recommend individual classes for no more than four hours per day. Group classes, however, are more economical and can be useful especially for beginner classes of Spanish. *Please check with our office for most current discount rates offered.*

### Options:

- *Apu Inty Spanish school*: <http://www.apuintyspanishschool.com>. Many of our current volunteers are attending this school, which is conveniently located close to our office.
  - Our volunteers pay \$5/hour, but if you take more than 40 hours of class, you will receive a discounted rate of \$4.50/hour.
- *Escuela de Español Guayasamín*: <http://www.guayasaminschool.com/>

- Many our volunteers have gone to this school, which is located very near the Aguirre's home, where our volunteers often stay. Our volunteers receive a discounted rate at \$5.50 or \$6 dollars U.S. per hour of one-on-one class.
- *Cristóbal Colón Spanish School:* <http://www.colonspanishschool.com>. Email: [info@spanishschool.com](mailto:info@spanishschool.com)
  - Our volunteers pay \$4/hour.

### Money:

- You will discover that it is somewhat difficult to use bills greater than \$5. If you can come with smaller change, do so. Also, when you visit the bank, ask for some \$1 and \$5 bills.
- *Useful banks:* near the **fhn Ecuador** office on 12 de Octubre, you can change money at the Suisse Hotel and at the Banco del Pichincha. Also, you can use the Banco de Guayaquil on the corner of Colon and Reina Victoria.
- If you are living on a budget in Quito, you can live on between \$15 and 20 per day. But it is also easy to spend more, especially in the Mariscal area of Quito.

### Communication:

- *Internet:* There are plenty of internet cafes throughout Quito, but they are concentrated in Gringolandia (La Mariscal). Generally, they cost between 70 cents and \$1 per hour.
  - Blue Net: 6 de diciembre y Veintimilla
  - Papaya Net: Juan Leon Mera y Calama
  - Mundi Net: Tamayo y Roca (near the office)
- *Telephone Cabins:* There are also telephone cabins (cabinas telefónicas) throughout the city, where you can make international calls for fairly cheap. Andinatel offices are usually reliable, but cheaper rates can sometimes be found within the internet cafes. Also, internet phones (Net to Phones) are sometimes available. Rates vary, but range from .10 to .25 cents, depending on where you are calling.
- *Public Phones:* These phones are located throughout the city. While some function with change (monedas), others can only be used with a corresponding prepaid card, which can be found in small stores throughout the city.
- *Mail:* Sending snail mail varies, and is not entirely reliable but seems to be improving. Sending mail to Europe is quite expensive and costs almost \$1 for a postcard. One post office (Correos del Ecuador) near the fhn Ecuador office is located on 12 de Octubre – heading south towards Old Town (on the left side). Another useful office is located on the corner of Colon and Reina Victoria.
- *Cellular Phones:* There are many options for cellular phone service in Ecuador. The most common companies are Porta, Movistar, and Allegro. However, if you would like to get a cell phone, or activate your own phone from with a 'chip' (SIM card), we recommend that you use Porta (or Movistar) as they have the best reception in La Y. In Ecuador, most companies use GSM phones (tri or quad-band). If you are staying for a short time, you can activate a phone line for \$5 to \$12, and use pre-paid cards for your phone calls. Using pre-paid cards can be expensive. However you only pay for making calls (not for receiving, as in the US) and you can get cheaper rates by buying prepaid cards in higher denominations (\$10 + up). If you are staying longer, the more economical option is to activate a plan (prices based on number of minutes per month) but the length of contract time varies.
  - Porta office: Amazonas y Robles ; [www.porta.net](http://www.porta.net)
  - Movistar office: Avenida Republica y Calle Pradera ; [www.movistar.com.ec](http://www.movistar.com.ec)

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- Distributors of both Porta and Movistar are scattered throughout the city.

### **Pharmacies & Supermarkets:**

- *Fybeca*: a reliable pharmacy chain, located throughout the city and in major shopping malls. 6 de diciembre y Colon. [www.fybeca.com](http://www.fybeca.com)
- *Supermaxi*: a major supermarket, located at shopping malls or 6 de diciembre y La Niña.

### **Shopping Malls:**

- *Centro Comercial Inaquito* (CCI): Amazonas y Naciones Unidas
- *Mall El Jardín*: Amazonas N6 114 y Av. Republica
- *Quicentro Shopping*: Naciones Unidas between 6 de diciembre y Shyris

### **Laundry:**

- If you are staying with a family, they can do your laundry. There are also laundromats throughout Quito, especially near Foch & Reina Victoria, along Pinto & along Wilson. Burbujas Lavanderias, for example, is located at 6 de diciembre and Juan Rodriguez. Prices are approximately .80 cents per kilogram.

### **Camping & Outdoor Gear:**

- *Camping Sports*: Colon E6-39 y Reina Victoria, 2521 626. To buy rubber boots, for \$6.

### **Movies/Entertainment:**

- *Ocho y medio*: an alternative movie house that we highly recommend. If you are living at the Aguirres, it is very close by on Valladolid N24 353 and Vizcaya. Phone no 29904 720, or check out listings online at [www.ochoymedio.net](http://www.ochoymedio.net)
- The major shopping malls (Quicentro and CCI), have movie theatres. You can check the newspapers, such as El Comercio at [www.elcomercio.com](http://www.elcomercio.com), for listings.

### **Tourist Attractions:**

In Quito, there are many fun ways to spend your time. We recommend the following options:

- *Old Town Quito* (the South): be sure to visit the various churches, plazas, and monuments. Quito's historic downtown declared a World Cultural heritage site by UNESCO in 1978.
- *Museo Guayasamín & la Capilla del Hombre*: home and museum of famous Ecuadorean painter Oswaldo Guayasamín. Jose Bosmediano 543, Bellavista. Tel. 2446 455.
- *Teleférico* (Cable Car): accesible at Avda. Occidental and Avda. Gasca (a Teleférico shuttle runs down Amazonas and takes you to the entrante).
- *El Panecillo*: the hilltop monument to the Virgen de Quito.
- *Guápalo y el Mirador*: an artsy and picturesque neighborhood with cobblestoned streets surrounding a beautiful church and overlooking the Tumbaco Valley
- *La Mitad del Mundo* (The Middle of the World/Equator): 13 km. North of Quito
- *Mercado Artesanal La Mariscal*: if you can't make it to Otavalo (the largest arts & crafts market in S. America, north of Quito), this is an easy opportunity to shop for Ecuadorian handicrafts. On Jorge Washington between Reina Victoria and J. Leon Mera.
- *Casa de la Cultura & Museo del Banco Central*: 6 de Diciembre y Avenida Patria.

### **Recommended Restaurants and Bars** (there are too many to list, but here are a few):

*There is a high concentration of restaurants and bars in the Mariscal Sucre area. Most of these are oriented towards tourists and offer a greater variety of food at higher prices.*

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12 de Octubre y Ramón Roca N21 155, Oficina 709, Quito, Ecuador

\* [www.f-h-n.org](http://www.f-h-n.org) \* [office.ecuador@f-h-n.org](mailto:office.ecuador@f-h-n.org) \* Telefax: (593) 2-254-2278

- *El Pobre Diablo*: (often have live music on weekends) Isabel La Católica y Galavis.
- *La Boca del Lobo*: Calama 284 y Reina Victoria
- *Red Hot Chili Peppers* (Mexican): Foch y Juan Leon Mera
- *Chacha* (Argentinean, Pizza, and other; fairly cheap): Foch y Juan Leon Mera
- *La Cueva del Oso*: Ecuadorian Food in Old Town Quito. Expensive. Chile y Venezuela.
- *La Casa de la Peña*: Traditional fare, live music. Old Town: García moreno y Galápagos.
- *El Arabe* (Middle Eastern): Reina Victoria y Carrion.
- *Salsa-Dancing*: Seseribó (Veintimilla y 12 de Octubre), Mayo 68 (Lizardo Garcia y JL Mera), y la Bodeguita de Cuba o el Varadero (Reina Victoria y La Pinta).

#### **Book Stores in Quito:**

- *Libri Mundi*: Juan Leon Mera N23-83 y Wilson
- *Confederate Books* (best to find used books in English): Calama y Juan Leon Mera
- *Científica*: Colon y Juan León Mera
- *Abya-Yala* (social science literature from Ecuador): Av. 12 de Octubre 1430 y Wilson

#### **Hospitals:**

- *Clinica Pichincha*: Veintimilla E30-30 y Paez.
- *Hospital Metropolitano*: Mariana de Jesus y Av. Occidental. T02-2234004
- *Hospital Voz Andes*: Villalengua Oe2-37 y 10 de Agosto, T02-2262142

#### **Migration Offices (to renew visas, etc.):**

- *Jefatura Provincial*, Isla Seymour 44 174 y Rió Coca. Tel. 2247510
- *Dirección Nacional de Migración*, Av. Amazonas 171 y Republica. Tel. 2454122
- *Dirección General de Asuntos Migratorios*, 10 de Agosto y San Gregorio (for student, volunteer and other non-immigrant visas). Tel. 2227025

#### **Embassies (for a complete list, see: [www.vivecuador.com/html2/eng/embassies.htm](http://www.vivecuador.com/html2/eng/embassies.htm))**

- *Canada*: 6 de diciembre 2816. Tel. 2232114
- *France*: General Plaza 7. Tel. 2560789
- *Germany*: Naciones Unidas y Rep. Salvador. Tel. 2970822
- *Great Britain*: Naciones Unidas y Rep. Salvador. Tel. 2970800
- *Netherlands*: 12 de octubre 1942. Tel. 2525461
- *USA*: 12 de octubre y Patria. Tel. 2562890
- For a list of Ecuadorean embassies worldwide, see [www.mmrree.gov.ec](http://www.mmrree.gov.ec)

#### **Airport:**

- *Departure tax*: please be aware that there is a departure tax of \$31.60, which you must pay in cash when departing from the international terminal.
- Taxis to and from the airport to the Mariscal area should cost approximately \$4-5.

#### **Terminal Terrestre / Main Bus Terminal (Old Town: Maldonado y Cumanda):**

- Buses throughout Ecuador are cheap, costing usually \$1 per hour of bus ride. Be careful and exercise caution with your belongings at Terminal Terrestre. It is best to spend very little time at the Terminal, or to take buses from their central offices (see below for TransEsmeraldas). However, buses leave more frequently from this main terminal.

#### **Leaving Quito for Quindé:**

- Before traveling, you may want to withdraw a good sum of money (there is an ATM in Quinindé, but it is less reliable), purchase rubber boots (especially if you use large sizes), and make major purchases (prices for food and specialty goods are usually higher in Quinindé and La Y). If you are staying with a family, you can usually leave a bag (with your 'city' clothes etc.) behind with them.

### **Traveling by bus from Quito to Quinindé:**

- We recommend traveling to Quinindé on the TransEsmeraldas busline, as it is fairly reliable and safe. There are two routes possible, via Los Bancos or via Sto Domingo. You may use either one, but the Los Bancos route may take slightly longer.
- *TransEsmeraldas*: Santa Maria 870 y 9 de octubre (near Amazonas). Tel. 2505099. Call, or check with our office, for the most recent schedule. When traveling to Quinindé, you should leave early in the morning in order to make it to La Y in one day (sometimes the last truck leaves Quininde for La Y at 3 pm). Sometimes, there are *carros particulares* that leave at 4pm or later, but there is no set schedule, so it is best to arrive early.

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## QUININDÉ

\*Phone code: 06; Population: 23,000 people; also known as Rosa Zaraté

### **Hotels:**

If you have to stay overnight in Quinindé, we recommend that you stay at **Hotel Sans**, located at 6 de Diciembre and J. Anchico. Tel: 062736524.

### **Bank:**

Banco Pichincha: In Quinindé, there is a bank on the main street (6 de diciembre, across from the clinica central) with an ATM outside that usually works with foreign debit & credit cards.

### **Internet services:**

Currently, there are 3 or 4 internet cafes in Quinindé. You should inquire about the most current location, as they often change. One is on 6 de diciembre at J. Anchico (near Hotel Sans, under the bridge). Another is located on J. Anchico across from Hotel Sans. Approx rate: \$1/hr.

### **Travel to La Y de La Laguna:**

- To catch a truck from Quinindé to La Y de la Laguna, you must go to a corner called *Cinco Esquinas* (located where 6 de Diciembre – the main road – merges with another major road at a gas station). On the block where you see a pharmacy and a small store opposite from the gas station, you should find a truck (*camioneta particular*) or a *ranchera* (an open-air 'bus' or 'tram') which goes to La Y (people in this area should be able to direct you if you ask for La Y de La Laguna" or ask "vas a la ye de la laguna?" to a truck driver to confirm).
- Travel time depends on the season and the condition of the road, but it should take between 1 ¼ hours to 2 hours to arrive at La Y. Cost: \$1.50.
- You will pass through other small towns on the way, including San Andres and Herrera, but La Y will be the major stop and, in most cases, the last stop.

## LA Y DE LA LAGUNA

- Though services are limited in La Y, here are a few tips and references to make life easier in this jungle outpost.
- La Y now has electricity (but the rest of the region does not). There is cellular phone reception in La Y, but not in many other parts of the region (including the Laguna, for example). The best reception is offered by the company Porta. La Y also has telephone cabins now, if you would like to make international phone calls. No internet service is available (you must travel to Quinindé to access the internet) and there is no mailing address at which you can receive mail. Please have mail sent to our office in Quito.

### **Room and Board in La Y:**

In La Y, there are two options at the moment:

1. You may stay in the *Casa de Ecoturismo* (Ecotourism House), located next to the Laguna de Cube. This cabin (with private rooms) is located 20-30 minutes down the hill from La Y and the health center. The cabins are clean and the views are gorgeous. If you prefer quiet, natural surroundings and more independence, this might be the best option for you (but we do necessarily recommend that female volunteers stay there alone due to the long walk that is sometimes necessary at night). The services include cleaning of cabins and replacements of sheets (upon request) and access to a kitchen. With this option, you also contribute to a community-based ecotourism project. *Cost*: \$3 per night. Monthly stays are discounted at \$60/month (which includes access to your own private room, the recreation and meeting space, and the kitchen).

2. You can also stay at the *health center* (we prefer this option for medical volunteers). Though we do not have enough room for many volunteers to stay simultaneously, we do have some small private rooms, which adjoin the patient recuperation room (though we rarely have patients who stay overnight). The cost is \$3 per night, including, daily cleaning, changing sheets, etc. Medical volunteers do not pay for lodging in the health center.

### **Health Center Facilities:**

Currently, the health center has rooms dedicated to the following: (1) doctor consultations, (2) nursing consultations, (3) laboratory, (4) dental consultations, (5) pharmacy, (6) office of Health Center administrator, (7) patient recuperation room, (8) nurse living quarters (adjoins the patient recuperation room), (9) volunteer living quarters (adjoins patient recuperation room), (10) extra consultation/storage room, (11) kitchen, (12) rural doctor and dentist living quarters, and (13) four bathrooms with flushing toilets and showers (toilets to be used only during winter months, when water is available). Housing for volunteers is quite limited at this time, but we hope to construct a volunteer/meeting house in the near future.

La Y is now connected to electricity, but the health center also has solar panels which cover most of our electricity needs. As mentioned, bathrooms with flushing toilets are only used during the winter months. We collect rainwater through a large tank next to the health center. When the tank is low (during summer months), we ask that all volunteers, staff and patients use the ventilated latrines located behind the health center. At this time, we only have cold-water showers.

### **Meals in La Y and La Laguna:**

At the health center we have always one person who prepares 3 meals per day for the health center staff (including a fully prepared breakfast and lunch, and a dinner which is left prepared but to be cooked by health center staff). The staff members and volunteers pay \$30/per month for meals (per day, you will be charged between \$2 and \$2.50). Volunteer doctors will pay half this amount: \$15/day. If you live in the laguna, you may also join the health center staff for your meals, or you can use the kitchen available in the cabins. In addition, there are a number of *comedores* (restaurants) in La Y where you can eat lunch and dinner for between \$1-2, while getting to know some of the friendly families in La Y.

## What to Bring to La Y:

### Things to wear

- Rubber boots: A MUST! If you don't bring them from home, you can buy a pair in Quinindé or Quito for USD \$4-\$6. Prices are cheaper in Quinindé, but more sizes are available in Quito. If you need size 43 or higher, you should bring them from home.
- Poncho or raincoat
- Pair of good walking shoes
- Work clothes (pants, shorts, t-shirts, tank-tops)
- Swim suit (for swimming & bathing) in the laguna
- Sandals (cheap sandals can also be purchased in La Y)
- Socks: long socks (such as soccer/football socks) are useful to use with boots.
- Lightweight, quick-dry clothing for La Y (pants, t-shirts, etc). For Quito, bring jeans and warm layers for cold evenings. In La Y, you might also need a fleece or sweater because it can get windy and chilly at night. Bring clothing that is easy to wash by hand, that will dry quickly and resist multiple washes (sometimes it is humid, rainy & cloudy for days & clothes can take a long time to dry). Darker colors recommended (leave your whites at home!).
- Long-sleeved shirts (for La Y, to avoid mosquitoes)

### Toiletries and Medicine

- General toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.). Biodegradable shampoo and soap are preferable, especially for bathing & washing in the laguna or rivers.
- Malaria prophylaxis (such as Lariam, Mefloquine, etc.), if applicable. However, many volunteers choose not to take anti-malaria medication. Instead, they often choose to use other measures to prevent infection. Your chances of getting malaria in La Y are very slim, but definitely possible. The ultimate decision is your own and you are responsible for consulting a travel doctor and for being informed and aware of the risks. Please see *Appendix B* for some malaria prevention recommended by **fhn** staff.
- First-Aid Kits: You do not necessarily need a complete first-aid kit, though they can be useful if you plan on trekking through the region. Bandages (especially for blisters), painkillers (such as ibuprofen), itch-relief cream, (Ciproflaxin), Imodium and Pepto-Bismol (or other diarrhea prevention), can be helpful. Bring water purification tablets if you plan on trekking.
- Sunscreen (with high SPF)
- Tampons (if appropriate)
- Eye care (if appropriate)
- Vaccinations (please visit your travel clinic or GP at least 2 months in advance). Please note that rabies vaccinations are recommended.
- Mosquito repellent (you might also consider spraying your clothing with permethrine as an

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\* [www.f-h-n.org](http://www.f-h-n.org) \* [office.ecuador@f-h-n.org](mailto:office.ecuador@f-h-n.org) \* Telefax: (593) 2-254-2278

- additional preventive measure. Found in outdoors stores).
- A small mirror

#### Other Items

- Camera (some bags of silicate to help prevent damage from humidity)
- Towel(s) (Pack-towels, or quick-dry towels can be useful).
- Durable working gloves (for conservation volunteers)
- Flashlight & rechargeable batteries (A MUST!). If you use regular batteries, please be ready to bring them out of La Y and dispose of them elsewhere.
- A good pocketknife (with can & bottle opener)
- Books or other reading material, playing cards, dominos
- Musical instruments (not top of the range, because it is humid)
- Journal and pens
- Ziploc/plastic bags (to protect your camera etc., and to carry wet clothing).
- Small bags of Silicate, if necessary (to keep electrical equipment dry; available in most hardware shops)
- Finally, if you are able to solicit donations for the project, please refer to *Appendix C*, to see what is needed. Also, please confirm with our office in Quito, as our needs are often changing. We must also check customs regulations, which have become quite strict. However, we can always use condoms, toothbrushes, toothpaste, health education materials in Spanish, and surgical/other gloves of all sizes.

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### APPENDIX A: Helpful Resources about Ecuador

- *Websites of interest about Ecuador:* [www.ecuadorexplorer.com](http://www.ecuadorexplorer.com); [www.viveecuador.com](http://www.viveecuador.com) (Ministry of Tourism, Ecuador); [www.thebestofecuador.com](http://www.thebestofecuador.com); [www.ecuador.org](http://www.ecuador.org) (Intro to Ecuador, Embassy in Washington D.C.).
- *Newspapers:* [www.elcomercio.com](http://www.elcomercio.com) (Quito); [www.eluniverso.com](http://www.eluniverso.com) (Guayaquil); [www.hoy.com.ec](http://www.hoy.com.ec) (Quito)
- For further information, or if you plan to travel beyond Quito and La Y, please conduct online searches, or purchase a recent travel guide (by Footprints or Lonely Planet, for ex).

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### APPENDIX B: Malaria Prevention

In the region of El Páramo, the most common form of malaria is Plasmodium vivax (as opposed to Plasmodium falciparum, but there are definitely some cases of the latter). Your chances of getting malaria in La Y are slim, but definitely possible. You can either choose to *prevent infection* (by avoiding mosquito bites through a variety of preventive measures) or to *prevent the disease*, by consuming antimalarial drugs prophylactically. Fhn recommends that our volunteers prevent infection. Some doctors may recommend measures to prevent the disease through malaria

prophylaxis (such as Lariam, Malarone, doxycycline, and chloroquine). In full consideration of the low malaria prevalence in El Páramo and potential side effects of consistent doses of antimalarial medication, our doctors do not recommend these measures. However, please consult with a travel doctor for specific recommendations and consider the duration of your stay and your individual personal risk. Ultimately, the decision is yours.

Specifically, **fhn** recommends that volunteers pursue the following preventive measures:

- Consistently use insecticide-treated bednets (ITNs)
- Use mosquito repellent (ingredients should contain at least 30% DEET or bayrepel). You might also consider applying repellents, such as permethrin, to clothing, shoes, tents, mosquito nets, and other gear to enhance protection.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats to minimize areas of exposed skin.
- Avoid outdoor activity at dawn or dusk, if possible.
- Be aware of the risk, incubation period, and symptoms (so that you can recognize malaria and respond immediately). You should immediately seek diagnosis and treatment if a fever develops one week or more after entering an area where there is malaria risk, and up to 3 months after departure from a risk area (see WHO document below for more detail).
- Use standby-emergency treatment, if and when necessary. Our doctors suggest either Malarone (usually 12 pills in a packet) or Artemether/Lumefantrine. Another effective option for standby therapy is Lariam, but we do not recommend it due to potential side effects. Please consult a travel doctor for specific recommendations concerning standby therapy. Also note that most of these pills are generally available at our health center, but please bring your own supply in case.

*Some helpful resources for further information:*

Centers for Disease Control, USA:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/travel>
- [http://www2.ncid.cdc.gov/travel/yb/utills/ybGet.asp?section=recs&obj=bugs.htm&cssNav=bro\\_wseoyb](http://www2.ncid.cdc.gov/travel/yb/utills/ybGet.asp?section=recs&obj=bugs.htm&cssNav=bro_wseoyb) (Traveler's Health Yellow Book, Protection Against Mosquitoes)

World Health Organization:

- [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2005/9241580364\\_chap7.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2005/9241580364_chap7.pdf)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Tropenmedizin (information in German)

- <http://dtg.org>

## APPENDIX C: List of Potential Project Donations

Before acquiring or traveling with any of the following items, please confirm with our office in Quito, as our needs are often changing. We must also check customs regulations, which have become quite strict. We may need to submit documentation to customs before your arrival in some cases, so please allow adequate time for processing. Also, please note that we do not accept expired medication.

Since most of these items are in fact available in Quito (and would therefore be labeled in Spanish), we always encourage people to send cash donations so that we may acquire these items locally without having problems with customs. But, if you have access to the following items and are willing to bring them, please let us know and we will be glad to make arrangements.

MOST IMPORTANT (AND EASIEST TO ACQUIRE AND TRANSPORT):

- Condoms, with expiration dates at least 1 year from the date of receipt
- Surgical gloves
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste (mini-tubes preferable)
- Copies of the book “Donde no Hay Doctor” or “Donde no Hay Doctor para Mujeres” or “Un Libro para Parteras” (in Spanish, please!). Published by Hesperian Foundation, USA ([www.hesperian.org](http://www.hesperian.org)).

MEDICINES AND SUPPLIES THAT WE NEED CONSTANTLY:

- Birth control pills—Lo-Femenal (ethinylestradiol and levonorgestrel) is the combination pill we use most, and Exluton (linestrenol) is the progesterone-only pill we commonly use.
- Injectable contraceptives (progesterone only or combination)
- Urine pregnancy tests—with expiration dates at least 1 year from the date of receipt
- Dip stick urinalysis tests—with expiration dates at least 1 year from the date of receipt
- Acu-check “Advantage” or “Active” blood glucose monitor test strips, control solutions, and lancets.
- Bandages—especially individually packaged absorbant gauze types of various sizes. Also self-adhesive bandages of various sizes. We have little need for fancy and expensive types of impregnated bandages, etc.
- Elastic pressure wraps for ankle sprains, etc.
- Gauze compresses and wraps
- Lancets
- Orthopedic splints/braces
- Cloth or micropore adhesive tape for securing dressings, IV’s, etc.
- Suture material, especially non-absorbable thread 3-0 or 4-0 on cutting needles for superficial sutures, but also absorbable 2-0, 3-0, or 4-0 on cutting and/or non-cutting needles for obstetric use or deep wounds.
- Antibiotic ointment for treatment of wounds—large tubes or individual packets to send home with patients.
- Autoclave tape/labels
- Cloth surgical equipment wraps
- Umbilical cord clamp/tie
- Lubricant (e.g. KY jelly)
- Boxes of non-sterile latex or latex-free gloves, sizes S, M, L.
- Individually packaged sterile surgical gloves, especially sizes 7 and 7 ½.
- Metal, re-usable surgical and obstetrical equipment (i.e. forceps, scissors, Kelly clamps, blunt tipped scissors, curved clamps, hemostat clamps, needle drivers both long and short lengths, scalpel handles)
- Scalpel blades (various sizes).
- Ultrasound jelly
- Microscope slides
- Sterile cotton-tipped applicators (small and large-tipped)
- Sterile endocervical brushes for Papanicolau exams
- Sterile exocervical spatulas for Papanicolau exams
- Cloth surgical gowns that can be cleaned and sterilized for re-use (we currently have paper ones but with all that waste we are not being very environmentally conscious)
- Disposable syringes, especially 0.5cc, 1cc, 3cc, or 5cc sizes.

- IV catheters for peripheral venipuncture (we don't need equipment for central lines), sizes ranging from 18 gauge to 25 gauge.
- Butterfly needles 18 gauge to 25 gauge
- Cotton wool
- Alcohol wipes
- IV infusion lines to connect bags of fluid to IV catheters for delivering fluids and medications parenterally.
- Fluids for parenteral administration (Ringers Lactate, 0.9% saline, 0.9% saline with 5% glucose or dextrose) in 1L or 500cc quantities.
- Oral rehydration solution packets (powder for suspension)
- Sanitary napkins (large sized, super-absorbant for post-partum women)
- Disposable masks
- Fluoride tablets

*Medications:*

- Glucantime (antimony) for treatment of cutaneous Leishmaniasis. Comes in vials of 1.5g/5ml for IM injection. This treatment is very expensive and we often have trouble getting the medication for free from the hospital.
- Vitamins, particularly prenatal vitamins containing both iron and folic acid, children's multivitamins (chewable), B-complex vitamins (suspensions or tablets), and ferrous sulfate tablets (125 or 325 mg), vitamin K (injectable) (no expired vitamins please).
- Antihypertensives, especially enalapril, atenolol, methyldopa, hydralazine, and diuretics.
- Hypoglycemic agents, especially glibenclamide and metformin.
- Antibiotics/antimicrobials, especially co-trimoxazol (TMP/SMX)(tablets and suspension), metronidazol (tablets, vaginal creams/ovules, and suspension), ampicillin (tablets and injectable), amoxicilin (tablets and suspension), dicloxacilin (tablets and suspension), doxycycline (tablets and injectable), erythromycin (tablets), chlorophenicol (tablets), penicilin G benzatinica, penicilin G clemizol, gentamycin (injectable), ciprofloxacin (tablets), albendazol or mebendazol (chewable tablets), pirantel pamoate (suspension and tablets), tinidazol (tablets), ivermectin, nystatin (suspension), clotrimazol or other antifungal cream.
- Symptom relief: acetaminofen (tablets and suspension), acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) (tablets), ibuprofen (tablets and suspension), injectable analgesics (opioide and non-opioide), antitussives (suspension), decongestants (tablets), antihistamines (diphenhydramine, loratadine, etc).
- Gastrointestinal relief: hyosine butylbromide (Buscopan), propinox, aluminum hydroxide and/or magnesium carbonate, ranitidine, other antacids.
- Tetanus antitoxin
- Benzyl benzoate lotion (anti-scabies)
- Dexamethasone and hydrocortisone (injectable)
- Antiepileptics (diazepam, carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital)
- Pitocin (oxytocin), methyletergotamine
- Lidocaine with and without epinephrine

ITEMS THAT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL TO ACQUIRE (ONE-TIME DONATIONS)

- New ophthalmoscope/otoscope with rechargeable battery
- Additional sphygmomanometers (blood pressure cuffs, including pediatric size)
- Midwives kit
- Additional stethoscopes (basic, nursing types as well as better, diagnostic ones)
- Additional examination floor lamp (portable, electric)

- Portable balance (scale) for screening children/pregnant women for malnutrition on health brigades
- Additional digital or mercury thermometers in Celcius please!
- Additional personal glucometers preferably Accu-Check brand to match those we already have “Active” or “Advantage” models (for health promoters to use for monitoring patients in their community with Type II diabetes)
- Metal, re-usable urinals/bedpans for men and women.
- Hot water bottle
- Mayo surgical table (one or two)
- Portable IV pole
- Simple, portable, easily-stored stretcher for moving patients between Gynecologic room, for example, and recovery room, or for transporting patients to outside services.
- Laboratory equipment (test tubes, collection jars)
- examination for Typhoid, leishmaniasis, fecal smears, Hematocrit, blood counts (lymphocytes, eosinophils, etc).
- Reference books for laboratory
- Potassium chloride solution for viewing fungi (from various sources) on microscope slides.
- New (or at least new enough to be reliable) laptop computer for the health center, with at least a functioning disk drive and even better if it has a CD-ROM as well as compatible printer.
- Portable refridgerator (car battery powered) that we could take on vaccination brigades to the farther-away communities without risking damage to the vaccines.
- Microscopes that function only on solar power rather than electric power
- Ambubag
- Crutches (one for adults, one for children)
- Dental equipment (dental forceps, gum retractors, syringes)
- Dental compressor
- Metal canisters for storing gauze, sterile equipment, etc.
- Kidney bowls (re-usable metal only please)
- Slide projector or powerpoint projector
- Educational videos in Spanish (health prevention, etc).
- Basic tool/repair kit
- One or two large metal basins
- Cloth or plastic tape measure (one or two additional)
- Tourniquets for blood drawing
- Metal trolley for suturing equipment

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND:**

- Foley (urinary) catheters (we have a whole box of them and rarely use them)
- Equipment for central parenteral line placement
- Equipment for blood collection (i.e. laboratory tubes...we don't have lab equipment for this at this point).
- Equipment for spinal taps
- Equipment for intubation or artificial ventilation (we do not have oxygen available at this time!)