# Western Washington University Honors in Ecuador July 1-19, 2024

## MON JUL 1: USA – QUITO

English speaking guide + private transportation to hotel

* Upon arrival in Quito, proceed through customs, meet your program guide,
* **Ana Lucia,** and transfer via private bus to your hotel *(You will have 1 program guide with your group for the program duration on the mainland and 2 different program guides for your time in Galapagos. All transportation is via airconditioned bus unless otherwise specified.)*
* Check-in
* Dinner on own expense
* Overnight at [**Ikala Quito Hotel (standard)**](https://www.ikalaquitohotel.com/en/)

## TUE JUL 2: QUITO

Full day guide, Full day private transportation

* Breakfast at hotel
* Attend your **program orientation** (~45mins), including travel safety recommendations, an overview of Ecuador and your program itinerary
* Enjoy spectacular views of the city of Quito and the Andes mountains from one of the highest aerial lifts in the world, the **Teleférico Sky Rail** (entrance included), a gondola lift that runs from the edge of Quito’s city center up the east side of Pichincha Volcano *(this activity greatly depends on good weather conditions, so if the weather is poor, a visit to the botanical garden will be arranged)*
* Lunch on own expense
* Return to hotel after lunch for a brief break
* Participate in a **Salsa Dance class** (at Ikala Hotel), a dance with multicultural origins in Puerto Rican bomba and plena, Cuban Son, cha-cha-cha, mambo, and other dance forms
* Dinner on own
* Overnight at **Ikala Quito Hotel**

## WED JUL 3: QUITO –QUITSATO –CUICOCHA –OTAVALO

Full day guide, Full day private transportation

* Breakfast at hotel, followed by check-out
* Depart on a scenic drive north through the Sierra highlands, stopping first at the **Quisato solar clock** (near Cayambe) to learn how the Incas determined the center of the Earth (entrance included)
* Next take a **guided tour of a rose plantation** and learn about the cultivation of one of Ecuador’s most famous exports
* Lunch on own
* Continue your journey to **Cuicocha Lake**, located on an extinguished volcanic crater; enjoy a **hike around the lake and panoramic views of the surrounding mountains**
* End at lodging in **Otavalo**
* Meeting with writer **Maria Virginia Farinango** at hotel (to be confirmed)
* Check-in to hotel
* Dinner on own
* Overnight at [**Hotel El Indio Inn**](https://www.hotelelindioinn.com)or [**Hotel El Geranio**](https://elgeranio.com/)(standard rooms)

## THU JUL 4: OTAVALO –COCHASQUÍ (1.25hrs) – QUITO (1.5hrs)

Full day guide, Full day private transportation

* Breakfast at hotel, followed by check-out
* Experience Ecuadorian traditions and culture at the **Otavalo Market**, one of the most important and spectacular markets in Latin America; enjoy a bit of free time to explore on your own
* Lunch on own
* Visit the extensive pre-Columbian and pre-Inca Empire ruins of **Cochasquí,** a complex of pyramids and burial mounds built by the Caranquis more than 1,000 years ago (entrance included)
* Return to Quito in the afternoon
* Group dinner at **Sinners Brewery**
* Overnight at **Ikala Quito Hotel**

## FRI JUL 5: QUITO

Full day guide, Full day private transportation

* Breakfast at hotel
* Enjoy a half-day city tour of the UNESCO recognized **Old Town of Quito,** with visits to Cathedral, Compañia Church and Panecillo Hill (entrances included)
* Lunch on own in the old town
* Admire the former home of one of the most influential Ecuadorian artists at the **Guayasamín Museum**; the artist was also an avid collector of pre-Columbian ceramic, bone, and metal pieces, which are displayed at the museum (entrance included)
* Return to hotel
* Dinner on own
* Overnight at **Ikala Quito Hotel**

## SAT JUL 6: QUITO – TENA –YACUMA (6hrs + stops)

Full day guide, Full day private transportation, Motorized canoe transport from Santa Rosa to Ecolodge, Local Yacuma guide for activities as mentioned

* Breakfast at hotel, followed by check-out
* Early departure to Santa Rosa, located in the Amazon region of Ecuador
* Travel through a high Andes road that reaches almost 4,000 meters above sea level and crosses multiple ecological zones until you reach the Amazon Basin (stops provided on the way)
* Lunch on own in **Tena**
* Afterwards, continue towards **Yacuma Jungle EcoLodge**, an ecotourism initiative created in 1995 with the aim of improving the economy of the Kichwa local indigenous community of the Chontayacu River while preserving their natural environment, culture and heritage through sustainable tourism
* Arrive after a short overland drive through the Amazon jungle and 20-30 minute scenic motorized canoe ride to the Ecolodge, situated in the Yacuma Rainforest Reserve bordering the Chontayacu River
* In the afternoon, visit the **Laguna Escondida** for a short hike ideal for bird watching in their natural surroundings, including perhaps one of the most strange and interesting birds of the Amazon, the blue-faced Hoatzin
* After returning to the Ecolodge, enjoy a delicious dinner
* Optional short night walk to get a glimpse of the insects and snakes that inhabit the rainforest
* Overnight at [**Yacuma Ecolodge**](https://www.yacuma.travel)

## SUN JUL 7: YACUMA

Full day guide, Private transportation as required, Yacuma guide

* Breakfast at eco-lodge
* Head out on a 2-hour comfortably paced **guided hike in the Yacuma Rainforest** to observe and learn about local flora and fauna, including medicinal plants and their usage in shamanic healing rituals; if lucky, see animals such as monkeys, tapirs or capybaras
* After the hike, head out for some **kayaking** (weather dependent)
* Enjoy a **locally produced lunch** at the eco-lodge, followed by a 30-minute break to rest
* At the end of the day, enjoy some **gold panning** and **tubing** in the Napo River (weather dependent)
* Dinner at the lodge
* Overnight at **Yacuma Ecolodge**

## MON JUL 8: YACUMA

Full day guide, Private transportation as required. Local Yacuma guide

* Breakfast at eco-lodge
* Visit the local indigenous **Kichwa community**; learn about their customs, history and traditions; have the option of purchasing handmade jewelry, ceramics, and other artifacts made by individuals in the community, this way supporting them if you choose
* After, enjoy a bit of **swimming** in the Chontayacu River
* Enjoy a **locally produced lunch** at the eco-lodge, followed by a 30-minute break to rest
* Take part in the **making and tasting of organic chocolate**
* Dinner at the lodge, followed by a **farewell campfire**
* Overnight at **Yacuma Ecolodge**

## TUE JUL 9: YACUMA –BAÑOS (3hrs)

Full day guide, Motorized canoe from Yacuma Ecolodge to Santa Rosa, Full day private transportation

* *For those interested in bird-watching, an early hike can be arranged*
* Breakfast at eco-lodge, followed by check-out
* Depart by motorized canoe to **Santa Rosa**
* Meet private transportation and transfer to **Baños**, traveling on a road built in the middle of the jungle
* Lunch on own
* Arrive at hotel for check-in
* Take the remainder of the afternoon off to rest and catch up on laundry
* Dinner on own
* Overnight at [**Monte Selva Lodge**](http://www.monteselva.com/)

## WED JUL 10: BAÑOS

Full day guide, Full day private transportation

* Breakfast at hotel
* Morning excursion along the Ruta de las Cascadas to explore the area’s impressive waterfalls, including **Pailon del Diablo** (entrance included)
* Lunch on own
* Visit the seismic monitoring station at **Casa del Árbol** (entrance included); take in gorgeous views of the active **Tungarahua volcano**, and if you are brave enough, hop on the Swing at the End of the World for a major adrenaline rush
* Return transfer to hotel
* Enjoy a late afternoon **Ecuadorian cooking class**, enjoying the meal youprepared afterwards for dinner
* Overnight at **Monte Selva Lodge**

## THU JUL 11: BAÑOS –RIOBAMBA (3hrs)

Full day guide, Full day private transportation, Local guide for hike

* Breakfast at hotel, followed by check-out
* Depart towards the town of **Riobamba** to the Urbina train station, the highest point of the Ecuadorian Railway and located at the base of Chimborazo, and from here, enjoy a **hike with local guide**; explore the lower slopes between
* Chimborazo and Carihuarazo *(alternate hiking option dependent on weather: hike up 3 hours to the refugios 4800 m, with a 2-hour descent back to the starting point)*
* Box lunch provided in route
* After hike, end at hotel and check-in
* Dinner on own
* Overnight at [**Hotel El Molino**](hhttps://hotelelmolino.com.ec/)(standard rooms)

## FRI JUL 12: RIOBAMBA –CUENCA (5hrs +stops)

Full day guide, Full day private transportation, Entrance and guided visit of Ingapirca ruins

* Breakfast at hotel, followed by check-out
* Early morning departure towards Cuenca, stopping along the way to visit the towns *of* **Alausí, Biblián,** and then **Ingapirca** for a guided visit of the largest known Inca ruins in Ecuador (Archeologic site entrance included)
* Arrive in **Cuenca** in the late afternoon and check-in to hotel
* Remainder of afternoon free to rest from travel
* Lunch and dinner on own
* Overnight at [**Hotel Posada del Angel**](https://hostalposadadelangel.com/)

## SAT JUL 13: CUENCA

Full day guide, Private transportation as required

* Breakfast at hotel
* Enjoy a full-day of cultural and historical visits in the UNESCO-World Heritage city of Cuenca; check out architectural masterpieces like the iconic **Old and New Cathedrals**, stop at **Calderon Park**, and discover exotic and uncommon fruits at the **Cuenca fruit market**
* Afternoon visit to the **Museum of Aboriginal Culture** and view a wide range of artifacts from indigenous cultures around Ecuador (entrance included)
* Lunch included at museum
* Dinner on own
* Overnight at **Hotel Posada del Angel**

## SUN JUL 14: CUENCA – EL CAJAS –GUAYAQUIL

Full day guide, Full day private transportation, El Cajas local guide

* Breakfast at hotel, followed by check-out
* Head northwest to **Guayaquil**, the biggest coastal city in Ecuador
* Along the way, stop at **Cajas National Park** in the western highlands, known for its cloud forests, hundreds of lakes and rich wildlife, including Andean condors and giant hummingbirds
* Visit the interpretation center, meet local guide, and enjoy a short hike around the area
* Lunch and dinner on own
* Overnight at [**Unipark Hotel**](https://www.uniparkhotel.com/es/)

## MON JUL 15: GUAYAQUIL – BALTRA – PUERTO AYORA

Full day guide. GYE-GPS group flight

* **Boxed breakfast or breakfast according flight time**, followed by check-out
* Transfer to airport
* Arrive at Guayaquil airport for your **flight to Baltra Island** in the Galapagos
* Receive your **flight e-tickets**
* Part ways with your mainland Ecuador guide

**LATAM Airlines: TBC**

* Upon arrival in Baltra, meet your **Galapagos program guides, Vicky and Jorge,**
* and transfer by **ferry to Santa Cruz Island** (Galapagos National Park entrance
* included)
* Full day private transportation, Itabaca ferry tickets, Lobito bus tickets
* Meet bus and head to **El Chato Farm** in the highlands for a **group lunch** and where you can enjoy sights of giant tortoises (entrance and lunch included)
* Continue to the **Puerto Ayora**
* Visit the **Darwin Research Center** and gain an understanding of the extensive conservation efforts that have gone into maintaining and improving the environment and biodiversity of the Galapagos Islands
* Participate carbon offset activity - **Escalesia Finnis Reforestation**
* End at hotel and check-in
* Dinner included
* Overnight at [**Lobo de Mar**](https://lobodemar.com.ec)

## TUE JUL 16: PUERTO AYORA – ISABELA ISLAND

Full day guide, Private speedboat to Isabela Island, Entrance to Isabela Island, Aquatic taxi tickets

* **Boxed breakfast**, followed by check-out
* Continue to Puerto Ayora pier
* Board private speedboat to **Puerto Villamil** on **Isabela Island**
* Today’s activities include:

1. Visiting **Las Tintoreras** , a biodiverse chain of small islets, home to whitetipped sharks, sea lions, marine turtles, iguanas, penguins, manta rays and more. Learn about the impact of tourism on the economy of Galapagos. Enjoy a **walk around the islet** before hopping back on the boat to **snorkel** in the waters nearby (snorkeling guide and equipment included))
2. A guided hike up to the rim of **Sierra Negra volcano**
3. Visiting the island’s **Humedales**, or wetlands

**Important:** The boats required for Las Tintoreras have a limited capacity of 16 pax, so the group will need to be split into 2 groups. Each group will have a guide with them.)

* **Morning:**
  + **Group 1:** Take the fast-boat to Las Tintoreras
  + **Group 2:** Visit Sierra Negra and Humedales
* **Break for lunch** (included)
* **Afternoon:**
  + **Group 1**: Visit Sierra Negra and Humedales
  + **Group 2:** Take the fast-boat to Las Tintoreras
* Head back to shore
* Dinner included
* Overnight at [**Hostal la Gran Tortuga**](http://hostalgrantortuga.com/)

## WED JUL 17: ISABELA ISLAND

Full day guide, Full day private transportation

* Breakfast at hotel
* Head out on a guided full day **hike to Minas de Azufre** (sulfur mines)
* Box lunch included
* Return to Puerto Villamil in the late afternoon
* Check-in to hotel and refresh
* Dinner included
* Overnight at [**Hostal la Gran Tortuga**](http://hostalgrantortuga.com/)

## THU JUL 18: ISABELA ISLAND – SANTA CRUZ

Full day guide, Aquatic taxis tickets, Private speedboat

* Breakfast at hotel, followed by check-out (leave luggage with reception)
* Enjoy **snorkeling** in the clear and calm waters of **Los Túneles**, a series of lava flows that have produced unique geological formations and are a habitat for many local species (open to the public; boats have limited capacity of 10 pax so group may be split for 6.5 hours) (snorkeling guide and equipment included)
  + Here you may see seabirds such as the albatross, flamingos, blue footed boobies, the magnificent frigatebird, tortoises, iguanas, sea lions, manta rays, Galapagos penguins, lobsters, sea snakes and white-tipped sharks
* Lunch included
* Transfer back to Puerto Villamil, collect luggage
* Continue by private speedboat to Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island
* Check-in to hotel
* Dinner on own
* Overnight at [**Lobo de Mar**](https://lobodemar.com.ec)

## FRI JUL 19: SANTA CRUZ – BALTRA – QUITO – USA

Full day guide, Full day private transportation, Lobito bus tickets, Itabaca ferry tickets, GPS-UIO group flight

* Breakfast at hotel
* Check-out of hotel
* Transfer by bus, then ferry, to **Baltra Airport** (1.25hrs)
* En route, enjoy a ~45-minute stop at **Twin Craters** (unless running behind), for a short walk with a panoramic view
* Continue to the airport
* Arrive at airport and part ways with Galapagos program guides
* Lunch on own at airport

**LATAM Airlines Itinerary TBC**

* Meet your mainland guide, Ana Lucia, again
* Transfer by private bus to **La Jimenita**, located in Pifo
* Pre-check in for flight should be completed, to allow for 1.5 hours at La Jimenita
* Farm style **farewell dinner at La Jimita,** and learn about traditional foods of Ecuador
* Return to Quito airport via private bus (~20 minutes)
* On the way to the airport, **complete your program feedback form** (provided and then collected by guide)
* Return flight to Seattle