



USFQ - OFICINA DE PROGRAMAS INTERNACIONALES (OPI)

Spring 2014: Before your arrival to Quito

The following general information is based on the evaluations and recommendations from our former international students; we hope you find it useful.

Going through Customs and Immigration: It is very easy so don't get nervous. You'll get your visitor card application and a customs form on the airplane. Please fill them out before you land. You'll need the address of your host family for this, so have this information at hand. (If you don't have this information yet, write down USFQ's address: Diego de Robles y Pampite, Cumbayá). Have these documents and your passport at hand once you get off the plane. You'll go through Immigration first, where they will stamp your passport and validate your visitor card. **MAKE SURE THE IMMIGRATION OFFICER STAMPS YOUR PASSPORT WITH THE VISA 12-VIII ENTRY, NOT THE T3 (TOURIST) ONE.**

From there, you'll go pick up your bags and on to Customs. They'll collect your form, maybe ask you a question or two and ask you to put your bags through an x-ray machine. After this you should exit to the lobby. The lobby and entryway are cramped and a little intimidating because a lot of people will be trying to meet others right where you come out. A lot of taxi drivers will be there, offering you a ride. Ignore the taxi drivers and don't let anyone rattle you. Just scan carefully for the sign of your host family or the Office of International Programs. The sign should either say "USFQ" or bear your name. As you are entering the lobby area, please make sure you have your baggage claim tickets. They should be attached to your boarding pass stub(s) or the envelope the airline gave you when you checked in for your flight. An airport employee will take check your claim tickets with those on your bags as you leave this area.

Orientation Day at USFQ:

Your host family will bring you to USFQ campus the first day. They will explain to you how to take the necessary bus(es) to come to the university on your own when classes start. You can also ask your assigned "buddy" or our office about the transportation system.

The orientation will include welcomes from university officials, along with safety talks, information about Ecuadorian culture and history, excursion options during the semester, a campus tour and lunch. Students do not need to bring backpacks for any reason, but a pen and paper might be useful for writing down any tips or questions.

Computers, E-mail and Internet Use:

Students are able to bring personal laptops and can connect to USFQ's wireless internet anywhere on the campus for unlimited access (after registering the computer with "Departamento de Sistemas," located in the Einstein building on the second and third floors). However, the OPI does not suggest doing so for safety reasons and also because it is not necessary. There are many available computer labs for the students on campus and there are also internet cafes for public use on almost every street at very affordable prices per hour. Students can bring laptops for home use – those in USFQ host families will have wireless internet access.

Please be aware that you will not be able to print documents in USFQ computer labs, but can take your assignments to be printed out in our campus copy center (XEROX Center) or in internet cafés near to the university or in Quito (we recommend bringing a USB memory stick to do this).

Use of credit cards and money:

Mastercard and Visa, and to a much lesser extent American Express, are generally accepted in Ecuador. Please make sure before you come to contact the credit card company or your bank to make sure you have permission for international transactions. Please be aware that you will not be able to use your card as a debit card for small purchases, but rather for cash advances from ATM machines.

Managing your money while in Ecuador:

1. How much money should you bring to Ecuador?

By now you should know that Ecuador uses the U.S. dollar. The amount spent per semester reported by former international students' ranges from \$1,000 to \$3,000, but the majority recommend from \$1,200 to \$2,500 (**average \$1,850 per semester**). Some say \$1,000 is a "bare minimum" if you want to travel. Please note: If you want to travel to the Galapagos Islands, it will cost you around \$1,500, so plan accordingly.

2. What's the best way to get cash while in Ecuador?

Students' preferences vary, but most recommend some combination of ATM cards, credit cards, debit cards, and bringing actual cash.

Most students consider ATM cards to be a reliable way of managing their money, while a few consider them unreliable. There are many ATM machines in Ecuador, but be warned that small surcharges usually apply, along with international fees from your host bank or credit card company. We suggest you ask your home bank which ATM network they are on before you leave, since using the same network might help you avoid surcharges. ATM bank cards are convenient because you can easily arrange for someone back home to make deposits in your bank account as needed.

Finally, be aware that in Ecuador there is a shortage of change (Ecuador has minted its own coins in standard U.S. denominations), a shortage of small bills, and complete suspicion of all money for counterfeit bills. Generally, vendors only want \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 bills. Vendors likely will not accept \$50 bills at all. It is advisable not to bring \$100 bills since virtually no one, other than banks, accept them.

3. How much money do students usually spend per month?

About half of the students reported spending **between \$300 and \$600 per month**. Once again, it depends on how much traveling are you planning on doing.

4. How do students tend to dress and what kind of clothing do I need?

USFQ students tend to dress nicely, but there are some that dress in jeans and a t-shirt. Wearing jeans and khakis are generally fine. There's no need for dress slacks, shirts or dresses, except for maybe one or two outfits for special occasions, such as going to clubs. Most of our students wish they had brought more comfortable clothes and fewer formal ones. People only wear shorts for sports, except for the warmer areas like the jungle and the coast.

For travelling between Cumbayá and Quito, which is what you will be doing the majority of the time, you will need comfortable clothing that can be layered for everything from hot sun to rather cool evenings. You will find yourself bringing a light jacket with you everywhere, so bring one you like. Also, don't forget an umbrella!

If you plan to travel to the mountains bring hiking shoes/boots, a warm jacket, sweatshirts, old shoes, and maybe a hat and gloves. More serious equipment, such as carabineers, harnesses, tents, climbing boots, headlamps, etc., can be rented in Quito. Temperatures in the mountains range from 32°F/0°C or a bit lower at night, to 60°F/15°C during the day. Remember that it depends on the wind, rain, clouds, and sunlight. In other words, if it is sunny it might get warmer. Temperatures in Quito range from 46°F–54°F/8°C–12°C at night, to 59°F–77°F/15°C–25°C during the day.

We have been experiencing a lot of weather changes in Quito and at times it rains a lot so we suggest you to bring a rain jacket and an umbrella. Remember that most of you will be walking quite a bit.

If you plan to travel to the coast bring insect repellent, shorts, sandals, flip flops, a bathing suit (probably more than one), and sun block. Temperatures range from 70°F/20°C at night to 90°F/30°C or more during the day.

If you plan to travel to the jungle bring a rain poncho, short-sleeved shirts, cotton pants, a hat and insect repellent. Ask your doctor about the yellow fever vaccine (mandatory if traveling to Tiputini Biodiversity Station). The vaccine should be administered at least 10 days before travelling. **The vaccine is available at the USFQ Clinic for USD\$16.** Humidity is extremely high (close to 100%) and the average temperature is 80°F/25°C.

Regardless of whether you travel to the jungle, coast or highlands, we strongly suggest that you bring a good sunblock of at least 30 SPF or higher. The sun is stronger here and you can easily get burned by being out in the sun for only 30 minutes.

We highly recommend that you bring a good guide book with you. These are especially useful for travelling throughout the country. We recommend Lonely Planet (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>).

5. What else should I bring?

We asked our students what they wish they had brought with them, and they told us the following: Laptop, cable to connect camera to computer, camera and batteries, a USB jump-drive, hiking boots, walking shoes, sports equipment (such as soccer cleats or tennis shoes), climbing equipment (if you do not want to rent it), slippers (are a must), sandals (including water sandals), more clothes for clubs, more warm clothes (winter hats, gloves for trips, socks), clothes to get dirty in, durable clothes (**clothes in Ecuador are expensive**), a sweater or heavier jacket (if you go to the mountains), more casual clothes (shirts, long sleeve shirts and informal shoes like converse), more pants, waterproof pants and shirts for Tiputini, quick-dry pants, school supplies, contact solution, Spanish/English dictionary, flashlight, binoculars, **single dollar bills**, photos of friends and family and other things to share your culture, music/CDs (it's better to bring copies of your CDs, not the originals), favorite foods/candy items, a sleeping bag, bug repellent and anti-itch cream, more sunscreen, alarm clock, a swimsuit (a must), a hairdryer and hair products, a raincoat or umbrella, sunglasses, a big backpack for trips, good duffel bag, chapstick, lots of cardigans, jackets, scarfs for layering, rainboots, good drinking bottle for water, black headphones (not white) for iPods, Tylenol Cold and Sinus, CIPRO, DayQuil/Nyquil/antihistamines, more tennis shoes or flats, vitamins, travel size shampoo/soap/hairbrush, shorts for the beach, and walking sandals.

Note: if you have any special medications, do not forget to pack them. Medicines and toiletries are generally more expensive in Quito. Also, female students will find it hard to get medication for yeast infections. Furthermore, almost all women in Ecuador use only pads, so if you use tampons we recommend you bring a sufficient amount for the complete duration of your stay.

6. What do I probably NOT need to bring?

Nicer clothes (shirts, slacks, skirts, dresses), shorts (except for sports and trips), high heels, formal clothes, notebooks and stationery supplies, original CDs (bring copies), towels and toiletries, unless you have a particular brand you may not find here. Most toiletries are available in Quito. Computer lock, Computer, iPod, phone (especially nice ones that you don't want to lose - you can buy cheap phones or get ones from friends or family), expensive jewelry, rain boots.

7. About Electrical appliances and formats:

Ecuador uses the same 110 volt power outlets as North America, so if you come from regions other than North America you will need to bring an electrical outlet adapter or buy one here. Ecuador's TV system is NTSC (North American System) so again, if you come from another region you may not be able to watch your DVDs (e.g. Europe uses PAL).

Office of International Programs (OPI)

Contact Information:

Office of International Programs:

Telephone: (593-2) 297-1249

Fax: (593-2) 289-0070 Attn: Programas Internacionales

Rebecca Pisano, Ph.D.

Director

rpisano@usfq.edu.ec

Veronica Castelo

Assistant Director

vcastelo@usfq.edu.ec

Adriana Garcés

Student Coordinator

adriana.garces@estud.usfq.edu.ec

Important Websites:

Universidad San Francisco de Quito: <http://www.usfq.edu.ec/>

Courses Offered: <http://ssb.usfq.edu.ec/cursos.html>

Academic Calendar: http://ssb.usfq.edu.ec/usfq_banner.html

Click on 4 (under Información General)

¡BIENVENIDOS!