



Guidelines for Short-term Missions Trips

Required Travel Documents

To travel to Ecuador you must have a valid passport. A visa is not required. If you do not have a passport you should apply for one immediately. For information regarding passport application, visit: <http://travel.state.gov/> and click on the "Passports" button at the top of the page.

If you currently have a passport, check the expiration date. Ecuador does not allow anyone into the country whose passport expires within 6 months of your trip. You will need to renew your passport before your trip if your passport expires 6 months or less from the date of your trip. Once you begin your trip to Ecuador, you must have your passport with you at all times.

Vaccines and Inoculations

There are no vaccinations REQUIRED for travel to Ecuador, however there are some vaccinations that may be suggested by your family physician depending on your physical condition and medical history. Parts of Ecuador are considered at-risk areas for malaria, and San Lorenzo is one of these areas. When speaking with your physician about malaria medication, make sure he/she knows that the malaria in Ecuador is chloroquine-resistant, and anti-malaria medicine should not contain chloroquine. Also, in making your decision about which vaccinations may be appropriate for you, please note that the group will be remaining in an area where the food will be prepared with bottled or filtered water and water for drinking will be from a filtered system or bottled. You may decide to bring along an anti-diarrheal medication in the case that you experience "travelers' diarrhea".

Travel Arrangements

Latin American Missions Board (LAMB) will make reservations for your air travel and arrange for ground transportation to and from the airport once you arrive in Ecuador, and to and from the San Lorenzo Clinic. A copy of your itinerary, including the Record Locator for your flights, will be e-mailed to you or sent by regular mail if you do not have e-mail.

Lodging Arrangements

LAMB will arrange for your lodging while in Ecuador. Typically you will stay in a guesthouse or hotel the night you arrive in Quito and the night before you return to the States. While you are in San Lorenzo, you will stay on the Clinic grounds in dormitory-style housing.

Meals

Meals will be provided during your stay at the Clinic. While in San Lorenzo, your meals will be prepared on the Clinic grounds by an employee of the Clinic. Water used in the preparation of meals is bottled or filtered and does not come directly from the tap. Food prepared for you will be typical local food, including rice, plantains (green bananas), pork, chicken, beef and seafood.

On travel days, you will be responsible for your own meals. This typically includes lunch and snacks while traveling to and from the Clinic and supper at a restaurant in Quito on the evening before your departure.

Checking In for Your Flight to Quito

Baggage Requirements

Make sure you follow all current travel and security requirements. Baggage requirements vary between airlines and can change depending upon the time of the year. In some cases, airlines may charge a fee for checked baggage. We will tell you in advance if there will be fees for checked baggage. These will be additional fees that will NOT be included in the cost of the trip. If they apply, please remember you will need to pay the checked baggage fees at the airport when you depart for Quito and again when you return to the United States.

We have found that one suitcase is usually enough for the clothes and personal items you will need for the week. Group members are usually asked to carry a second suitcase containing supplies for the Clinic.

Most airlines allow you to take a personal item (purse/small bag) in addition to a carry-on bag that fits in the overhead bins. Please remember that space in the overhead bins is often limited and plan your carry-on items accordingly.

Save your baggage claim stickers. They will be checked in Ecuador.

Meeting Other Members of the Group

If the members of your group are originating their trip from different locations, every effort will be made so the group travels together for the last leg of the flight into Quito. For instance, if part of the group begins the trip in Fort Wayne, IN and part of the group begins in Chicago, IL, LAMB will make every effort for the group to take the same flights from Chicago and on. If members of the group are also coming from Detroit, the group may meet up in Miami and continue as a group from there.

It is the responsibility of every individual to make sure he/she is in the right spot at the right time. The trip leaders are available to make sure you know from which gate and at what time your flight is leaving. It is YOUR responsibility to make sure you are at the gate at the right time. If you feel nervous or unsure, please make sure to stay with the trip leaders. The trip leaders are NOT responsible for looking for you if you are not at your gate at the right time. If you miss your flight because you have separated from the group, ALL costs and consequences from that action become your responsibility.

Your Flight to Quito

On the flight to Ecuador, the flight attendants will distribute forms for customs and immigration which you must complete. Most of the questions are self-explanatory. However, there are a few questions which are not. On the customs form, use the following answers:

Number of entries to Ecuador in the last 12 months: Unless you have been in Ecuador previously in the last 12 months, enter "0"

Purpose of your trip: answer "other"

Address in Ecuador: "La Clinica San Lorenzo, Esmeraldas"

Phone (in Ecuador): Will be provided to you prior to your trip

Are you carrying currency in excess of \$10,000?: "No"

Do not complete the question that asks how much money you are carrying if you are carrying less than \$10,000,

The immigration form is much simpler. When it asks for your "Intended Address," use the same address listed above ("La Clinica San Lorenzo, Esmeraldas").

You will have plenty of time to complete these forms and can ask the trip leader(s) if you have questions.

Arriving at the Airport in Quito

Immigration – After you deplane, the first area you will enter (after a long walk) will be immigration. There will be a line. A digital sign will display a number and an arrow that points to the next available agent. When it is your turn, give the immigration agent your passport and both forms (the immigration and customs forms). The agent will return your passport and the customs form.

Baggage Claim – After immigration you will go to baggage claim and collect your luggage. There is an area where you can rent a cart for \$2.00. If you have more than two bags and a purse/small bag it often makes things easier to rent a cart. If you prefer, two of you can rent a cart together and take your bags through customs. It is a short walk down the ramp to the customs area.

“Stoplight” - After baggage claim, there is a light which indicates if you need to proceed to the customs area, or if you can exit the airport. Place your hand in front of the sensor. If the light turns green, exit the airport. If the light turns red, proceed to the customs area, where the large x-ray machines are located.

Customs – In the customs area, your bags will be x-rayed. Give your customs form to the agent and place your bags on the conveyor belt. As long as you are not carrying anything questionable, you will not have any problem in customs. As your bags come off the conveyor, take them off the belt. The exit for the airport will be straight ahead.

Baggage Check – As you clear customs, you will be asked to show your baggage claim stickers.

Exit the Airport – A representative from the Clinic will meet the group and have transportation to the hotel or guesthouse where you will be spending the night. There will be “helpers” who may offer to transport your bags for you. It is fine to let them do this, if you would like the help. A tip of \$2.00 is suggested if you have them help you. You will be directed to a bus or van for the trip to the hotel.

Summary of Trip—Quito, San Lorenzo, Otavalo

The night you arrive in Quito you will stay at a hotel or guesthouse in Quito. A continental breakfast will be provided the next morning. Depending on the size of the group, you will travel to San Lorenzo in a bus or van. The trip will take you along winding mountain roads through beautiful scenery and takes approximately five hours. About half way through the trip, you will stop to get lunch, which will be at your own expense.

Upon arrival at the Clinic, you will be shown to your room and given a chance to get settled. You will spend the week on the Clinic grounds, which is surrounded by a 10-foot concrete block security wall. You will be given a tour of the Clinic and the grounds and the group will meet to discuss and get started with the projects.

Each morning the group will join the Clinic staff for devotions and breakfast. The schedule for the rest of the day will vary based on the group’s projects. Generally, you will work on projects for 3-4 hours in the morning, have lunch, work on projects, have supper, then have free time for individual relaxation and/or group activities after supper.

The projects for your trip are listed on the Fact Sheet.

At the end of the week, on the trip back to Quito, the group will stop in Otavalo, Ecuador. Otavalo has a marketplace that includes many hand-made items. After spending time in Otavalo, the group will travel on to Quito. You are responsible for paying for your lunch in Otavalo. That evening will include a group dinner out (at your own expense), and a stay in a hotel or guesthouse, leaving for the U.S. the following day. The dinner out is typically at a restaurant similar to “Fridays” where entrees are around \$10-\$15.

The Flight Home

Upon arriving at the Quito airport, you will proceed through a checkpoint where you will be asked to show your passport. As you clear the checkpoint, you will see the airline counters in front of you.

From the checkpoint, proceed directly to the check-in counter for your airlines to check your luggage and receive your boarding pass. You will also receive an immigration form which you will need to complete.

You will fill out the migration form (immigration) and proceed through the migration area. The process is the same for departing as it was for entering the country. A digital display will show the number of the next available lane/agent and you will proceed to this line. Hand your form and passport to the agent. This agent may also give you a customs form. If not, you will receive one on the plane.

Next, proceed to the security area where your carry-on items will be x-rayed and examined. After clearing security, proceed to the gate for your flight.

If you need to use the restroom, do so before entering the waiting area for your gate. Before you are allowed to enter the waiting area for your gate, a security official will check your purse or carry-on bag, again. If you leave the waiting area, your carry-ons will need to be re-checked.

Once on the plane, the flight attendant will give you a customs form, if you have not already received one. Complete the form in the same manner you did on your trip to Ecuador.

Landing in the United States

You will be required to clear customs and re-check your baggage once you land in the United States. Your point of entry will likely be either Atlanta or Miami. Once you deplane, proceed through immigration/passport control, then on to the baggage claim area. You must retrieve your bags and have them cleared by U.S. Customs. There are carts available in the baggage claim if you need one. Once you have all your bags, proceed through customs. Give your customs form and passport to the agent and from there follow his/her instructions.

Next, take your bags to the check-in area. This may be a bit of a walk. Then, turn your luggage over to the airline personnel who will get your bags on your next flight. Most times your bags are not hand-inspected. If they are chosen for inspection, just follow instructions, and your bags will be moved on to be checked for the rest of your trip.

If you choose to bring back anything of an agricultural nature, such as roses, please be aware that these items must be hand-inspected by an agent. This process can be time-consuming as the line for this inspection is typically quite long.

You will go through airport security again, then proceed to the gate for your flight.

Miscellaneous Information

You will most likely want to bring your cell phone along. It may or may not work in Ecuador. However, you may want to have it to make calls as you travel in the U.S., especially once you land on the trip home.

In addition to money for lunches on the trips to and from San Lorenzo, you may also want to bring money to purchase souvenirs in Otavalo, snacks in airports, etc. There is also a small store across the street from the Clinic where some people like to purchase snacks and drinks. It is a good idea to keep your money in two or three different spots (pocket, purse, carry on, etc). Do not put money in your checked baggage. We also recommend carrying smaller bills, especially ones because many stores and vendors in Ecuador do not have a lot of change on hand.

It is hot and humid in San Lorenzo, so you will want to pack lightweight clothes to wear. However, attire in San Lorenzo is conservative so, please dress modestly. Examples of inappropriate attire include short shorts and spaghetti strap tops. Shorts that fall just above the knee (or longer), capri pants, and tank tops with wider straps are examples of appropriate attire.