

# ECUADOR

ONE OF THE MOST BIODIVERSE COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD

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# General Facts

**CAPITAL CITY: QUITO**

**CURRENCY: US DOLLAR**

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: SPANISH AND KICHWA**

**GOVERNMENT: UNITARY PRESIDENTIAL**

**CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC**

**PRESIDENT: LENIN MORENO**

# Geography

**STRADDLING THE EQUATOR IN WESTERN SOUTH AMERICA, ECUADOR HAS LAND IN BOTH THE NORTHERN AND THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE IT BORDERS COLOMBIA IN THE NORTH AND PERU IN THE SOUTH AND THE EAST. THE PACIFIC OCEAN IS ECUADOR'S WESTERN BORDER. THE LAND AREA TOTALS 283.560KM<sup>2</sup>, INCLUDING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS. THE BORDER WITH COLOMBIA IS 590KM AND THE BORDER WITH PERU 1.420KM LONG. ECUADOR'S COAST LINE HAS A LENGTH OF 2.237KM. THE "MITAD DEL MUNDO -CENTER OF THE WORLD" IS WHERE THE EQUATOR CROSSES ECUADOR AT LATITUDE 0°0°0.**

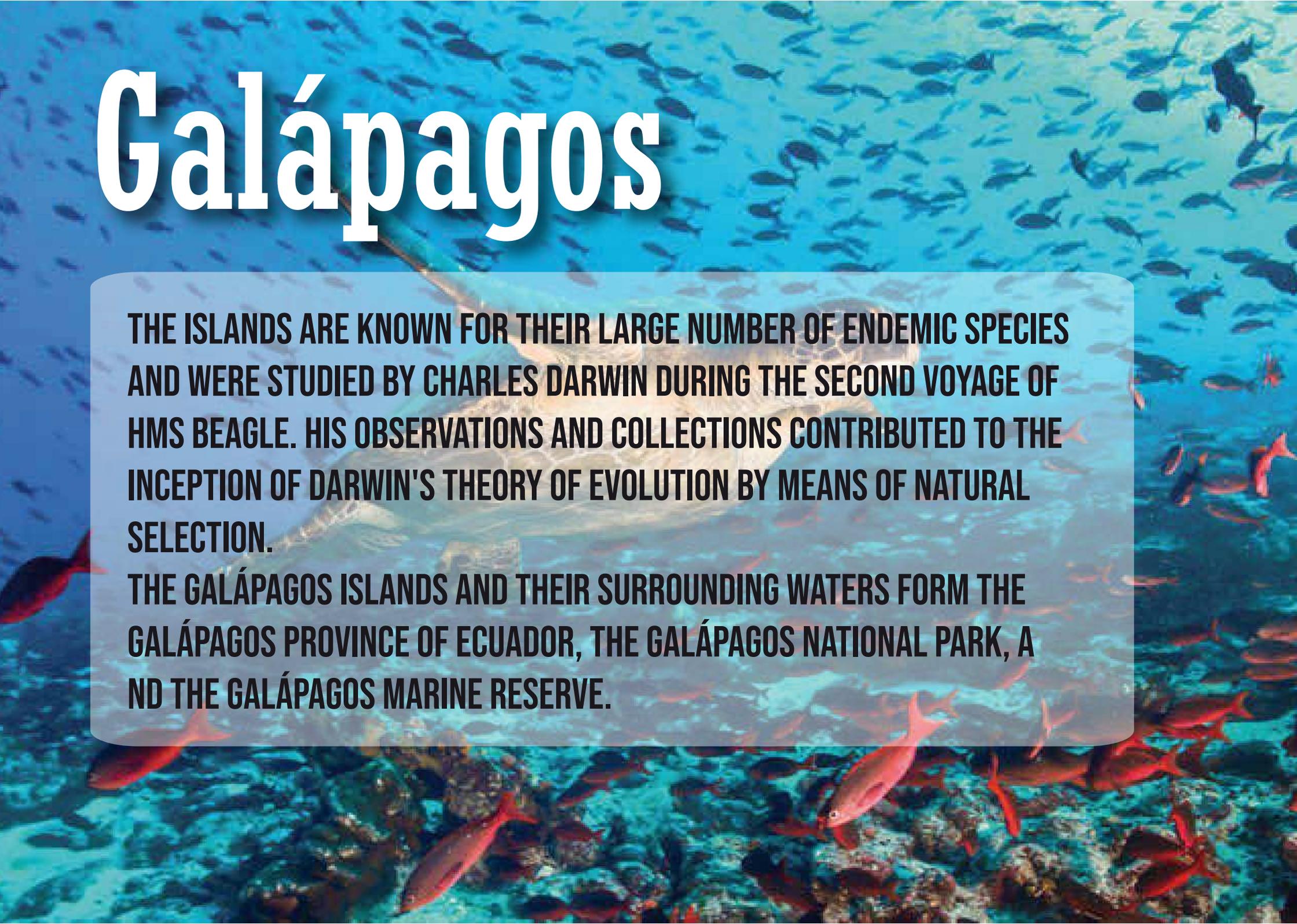


# Geographic Regions

**GALAPAGOS ISLANDS - COSTA (COAST) - SIERRA (ANDES) - AMAZONIA (RAINFOREST)**



# Galápagos

An underwater photograph showing a large sea turtle swimming in the center. The water is clear and blue, with numerous colorful fish, including many bright orange ones, swimming around. The background shows a sandy seabed with some coral or rocks.

**THE ISLANDS ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR LARGE NUMBER OF ENDEMIC SPECIES AND WERE STUDIED BY CHARLES DARWIN DURING THE SECOND VOYAGE OF HMS BEAGLE. HIS OBSERVATIONS AND COLLECTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO THE INCEPTION OF DARWIN'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION.**

**THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS AND THEIR SURROUNDING WATERS FORM THE GALÁPAGOS PROVINCE OF ECUADOR, THE GALÁPAGOS NATIONAL PARK, AND THE GALÁPAGOS MARINE RESERVE.**

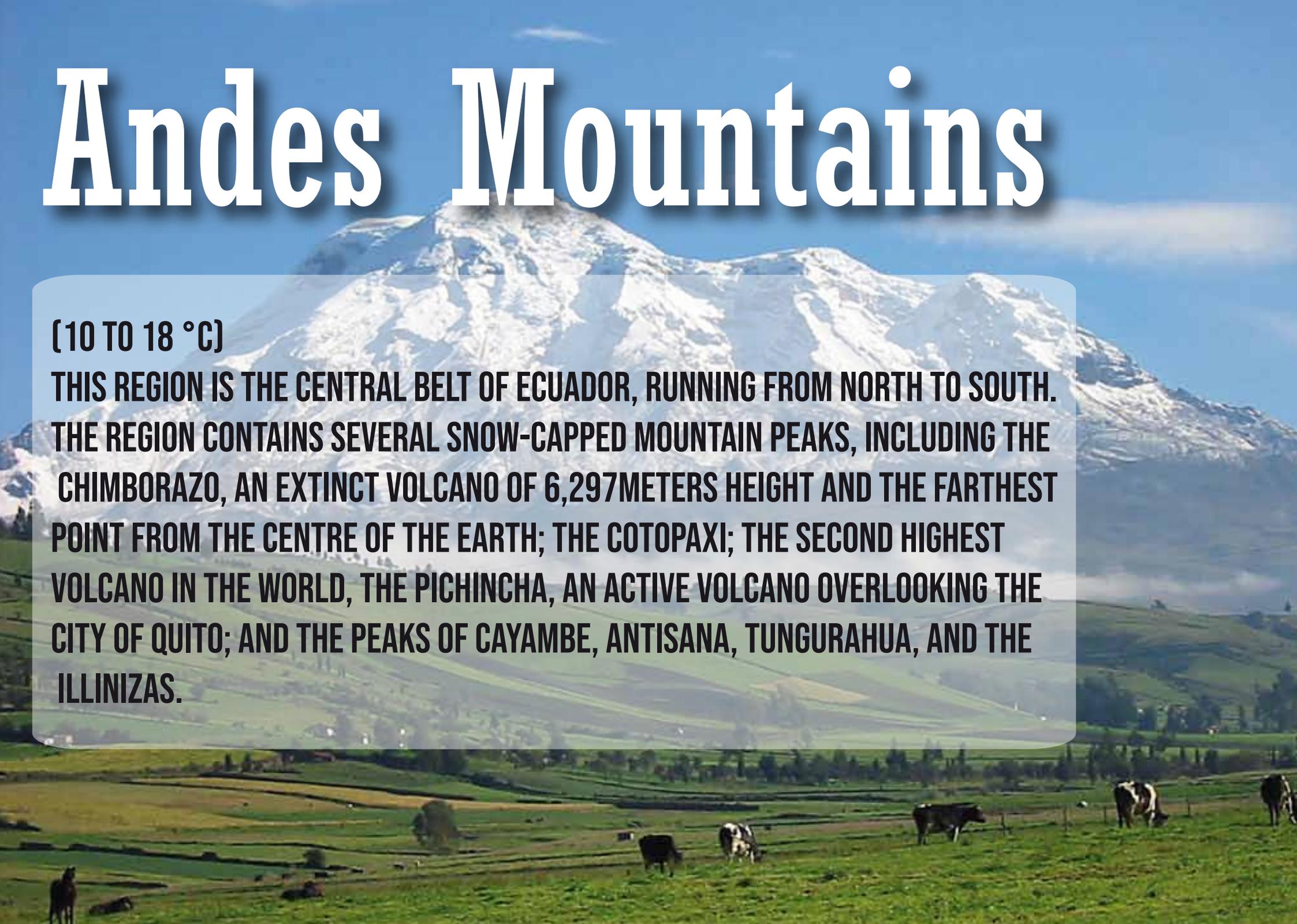
# The Coast

**(TROPICAL WEATHER, 23-26°C )**

**THIS REGION CONSISTS OF THE LOW-LYING WESTERN PART OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING ALL OF THE PACIFIC COASTLINE. THE COASTAL PLAIN EXTENDS FAR INLAND, AS FAR AS THE FOOTHILLS OF THE ANDES MOUNTAIN RANGE. THE REGION ORIGINALLY WAS FOREST, BUT MOST OF THE WOODLAND HAVE BEEN CLEARED FOR TIMBER, CATTLE RANGING AND AGRICULTURE. THERE ARE REMAINING FOREST FRAGMENTS, INCLUDING TROPICALLY WET AND DRY FORESTS THAT FORM PART OF ONE OF THE MOST BIODIVERSE COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD.**



# Andes Mountains



**(10 TO 18 °C)**

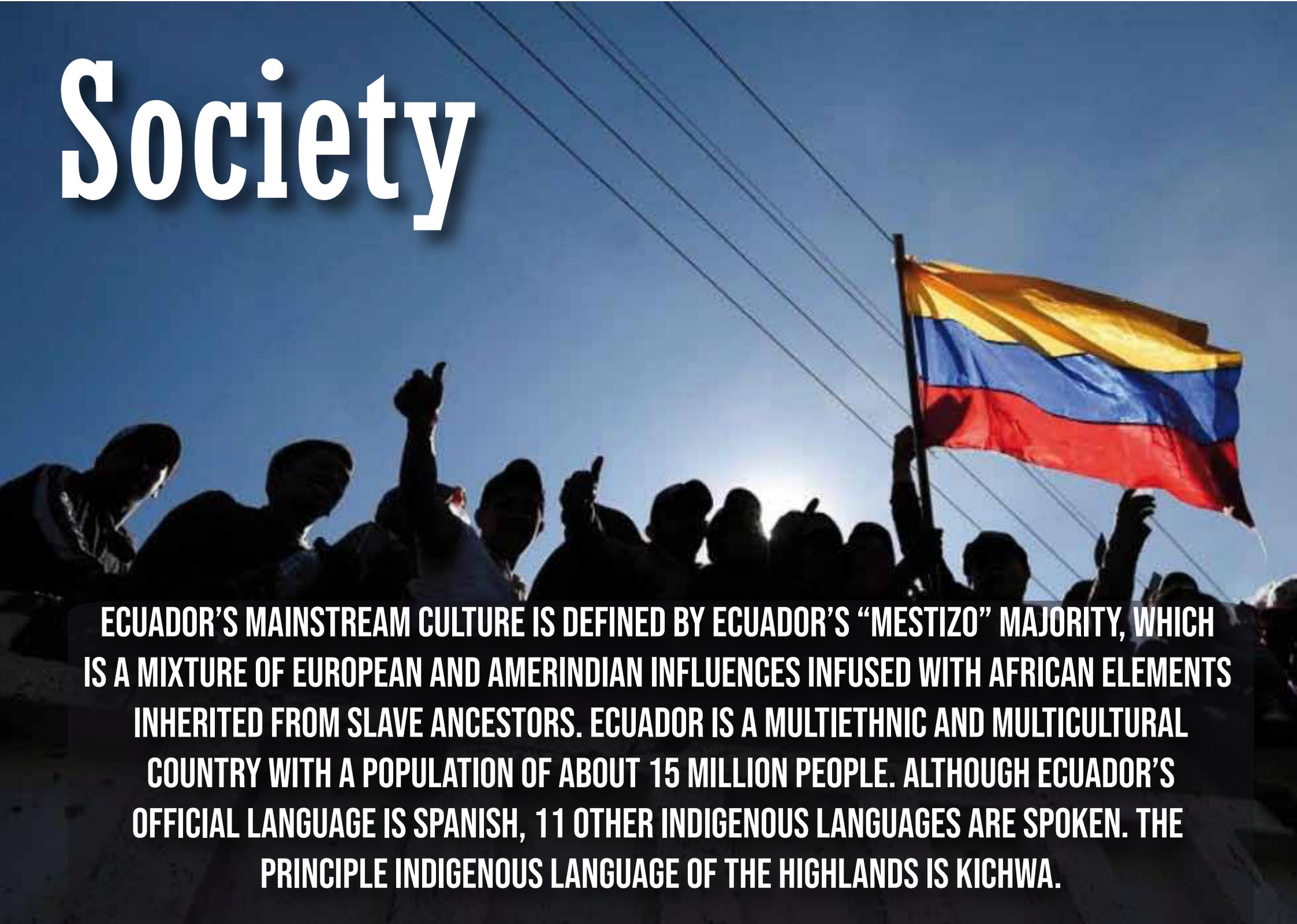
**THIS REGION IS THE CENTRAL BELT OF ECUADOR, RUNNING FROM NORTH TO SOUTH. THE REGION CONTAINS SEVERAL SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAIN PEAKS, INCLUDING THE CHIMBORAZO, AN EXTINCT VOLCANO OF 6,297 METERS HEIGHT AND THE FARTHEST POINT FROM THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH; THE COTOPAXI; THE SECOND HIGHEST VOLCANO IN THE WORLD, THE PICHINCHA, AN ACTIVE VOLCANO OVERLOOKING THE CITY OF QUITO; AND THE PEAKS OF CAYAMBE, ANTISANA, TUNGURAHUA, AND THE ILLINIZAS.**

# Amazon Rainforest

**(TROPICAL WEATHER, 23 TO 36 °C)**

**THE AMAZON REGION EXTENDS FROM THE EASTERN SLOPES OF THE ANDES INTO THE AMAZON BASIN, INCLUDING CLOUD FORESTS OF THE EASTERN SLOPES OF THE ANDES AND THE LOWLAND FORESTS, MOSTLY TROPICAL MOIST BROADLEAF FORESTS. THIS REGION INCLUDES BOTH THE CUYABENO RESERVE AND THE YASUNI NATIONAL PARK, THE LATTER DESIGNATED A WORLD BIOSPHERE RESERVE. IN SPITE OF SEVERE DEGRADATION DUE TO OIL DEVELOPMENT IN MANY AREAS, THIS REGION REMAINS AMONG THE MOST BIODIVERSE ON THE PLANET, CONTAINING LARGE UNSPOILED AREAS OF PRISTINE PRIMARY FORESTS AND AMAZING NATURAL BEAUTY.**

# Society

A photograph showing the silhouettes of a crowd of people against a clear blue sky. Several individuals are raising their hands, and one person on the right is holding a flag with horizontal stripes of yellow, blue, and red. Power lines are visible in the upper portion of the frame.

**ECUADOR'S MAINSTREAM CULTURE IS DEFINED BY ECUADOR'S "MESTIZO" MAJORITY, WHICH IS A MIXTURE OF EUROPEAN AND AMERINDIAN INFLUENCES INFUSED WITH AFRICAN ELEMENTS INHERITED FROM SLAVE ANCESTORS. ECUADOR IS A MULTIETHNIC AND MULTICULTURAL COUNTRY WITH A POPULATION OF ABOUT 15 MILLION PEOPLE. ALTHOUGH ECUADOR'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IS SPANISH, 11 OTHER INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN. THE PRINCIPLE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE OF THE HIGHLANDS IS KICHWA.**

# Family

**ECUADORIANS ARE KNOWN AS FAMILY-PEOPLE. THE FAMILY LIFE PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE AND CHILDREN NORMALLY LIVE WITH THEIR PARENTS UNTIL THEY GET MARRIED. FAMILIES OFTEN SPEND THE WEEKENDS TOGETHER.**

**GENDER ROLES ARE DIFFERENT THAN IN EUROPE, PLACING AN EMPHASIS ON THE WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE HOUSEHOLD, WHICH CAN BE QUALIFIED AS A "MACHISMO" MENTALITY.**

# Gender

# Children

**PRIMARY EDUCATION IS OBLIGATORY IN ECUADOR, HOWEVER ONLY ABOUT 50% OF THE POPULATION CONTINUE STUDIES IN HIGH SCHOOL. ALSO, MANY CHILDREN WORK ON THE STREET AS VENDORS, SHOE SHINERS OR PERFORMERS.**

# RELIGION

RELIGION IN ECUADOR IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE DIFFERENT CULTURAL HERITAGES IN THE ECUADORIAN CULTURE INCLUDING THE SPANISH COLONIZATION, THE NATIVE AMERINDIAN AND THE AFRO-ECUADORIAN. ACCORDING TO THE ECUADORIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS AND CENSUS.

91.95% OF THE POPULATION HAVE A RELIGION:  
80.44% CATHOLICS  
11.30% PROTESTANTS  
1.29% JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES  
6.97% OTHER  
7.94% ATHEISTS  
0.11% AGNOSTICS.

# Food

The background image shows a wooden table with several white plates of food. In the foreground, there's a plate with a bowl of white soup topped with shredded cheese and a side of fried items. To the right, another plate features a slice of avocado, a tomato slice, and some meat. In the background, there's a plate with several golden-brown fried items, possibly fritters or small breads. The overall scene is a well-lit dining table with various Ecuadorian dishes.

**ECUADORIAN CUISINE INCLUDES A GREAT VARIETY OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, AS THERE ARE PLENTY OF THEM. ECUADOR IS ALSO GREATLY RECOGNIZED FOR THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS FISH AND SEAFOOD AND THE INNUMERABLE VARIETIES OF ANDEAN POTATOES.**

**THE REGULAR DIET INCLUDES RICE, POTATO, MEAT SUCH AS BEEF AND CHICKEN, PORK IN THE SIERRA REGIÓN, AND MANY KINDS OF SOUPS. THE MOST IMPORTANT SAUCE IN ECUADORIAN CUISINE IS AJI. MOST HOMES AND RESTAURANTS IN ECUADOR HAVE THEIR OWN VERSIONS OF THIS SAUCE.**

# Economy

**ECUADOR HAS A VARIETY OF NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS THAT ALLOW THE GROWTH OF MANY PLANTS, FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND CROPS. THAT IS WHY THE COUNTRY'S MAIN PRODUCTS ARE OIL, BANANAS, FLOWERS AND SHRIMP. DETERIORATING ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN 1997-98 CULMINATED IN A SEVERE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS IN 1999. THE CRISIS WAS PRECIPITATED BY A NUMBER OF EXTERNAL SHOCKS, INCLUDING THE "EL NIÑO" WEATHER PHENOMENON IN 1997, A SHARP DROP IN GLOBAL OIL PRICES IN 1997-98, AND INTERNATIONAL EMERGING MARKET INSTABILITY IN 1997-98. IN 2000, THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THE ADOPTION OF THE UNITED STATES DOLLAR AS THE NATIONAL CURRENCY. DESPITE BEING DEBATABLE, IT HAS HELPED THE COUNTRY GAIN ECONOMIC STABILITY AS WELL AS A BETTER INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION.**

**NEVERTHELESS, ECUADOR NOW DEPENDS ON THE MONETARY POLICY OF THE USA DUE TO ITS CURRENCY. IN 2011, 28.6% OF THE POPULATION LIVED BELOW THE POVERTY LINE (LESS THAN USD\$2.47 DAILY). THE SITUATION IS IMPROVING RAPIDLY AND GENERAL POVERTY HAS DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE LAST YEARS, HOWEVER THERE ARE STILL BIG DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN POVERTY RATES AS WELL AS BETWEEN DIFFERENT MINORITIES.**

# Government

ECUADOR HAS BEEN A DEMOCRACY SINCE 1979. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE LATE 1990S AND EARLY 2000S WAS VERY UNSTABLE, A CONDITION WHICH LED TO NUMEROUS PRESIDENTS' OUSTINGS. DURING THE TERM OF RAFAEL CORREA, THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF ECUADOR, IN OFFICE FROM 2007 TO 2017, AND THE 9TH TO OCCUPY THE POST SINCE 1996, THERE WAS AN INCREASED STABILITY. HIS MAIN GOAL WAS TO TRANSFORM THE ECUADORIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM THROUGH A CITIZEN REVOLUTION ("REVOLUCIÓN CIUDADANA"). HE MANAGED TO CREATE A NEW NATIONAL CONSTITUTION WHICH WAS APPROVED BY MORE THAN 63% OF THE POPULATION. IN 2017, AFTER CORREA'S SECOND TERM IN OFFICE, THE GOVERNING LEFTTIST PARTY ALIANZA PAIS (COUNTRY ALLIANCE) PRESENTED FORMER VICE PRESIDENT LENIN MORENO AS PRESIDENCIAL CANDIDATE. AFTER WINNING THE ELECTIONS, MORENO SET OUT TO IMPROVE THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. DURING HIS CAMPAIN, HE PROMISED TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ENSURE THAT ALL ECUADORIANS HAVE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCACION. OPINIONS ON HIM VARY STRONGLY AND THE COUNTRY IS SPLIT INTO HIS SUPPORTERS AND PEOPLE STILL FAVOURING CORREA. PEOPLE'S MAIN CRITICISM OF ALL ECUADORIAN GOVERNMENTS IS THEM BEING CORRUPT WHICH SADLY CANNOT BE DENIED.



**FUNDACIÓN DE VOLUNTARIADO PARA LA AYUDA SOCIAL DEL ECUADOR**

**LOCATION: CENTRAL QUITO, ECUADOR**

**WORK: PROVIDE INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEER /COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**PROJECTS: AREAS SUCH AS: EDUCATION, DISABLED PEOPLE, ELDERLY, GENDER, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT. ALL THE PROJECTS AVAILABLE CAN BE FOUND IN THE VASE WORK PROFILE.**

**AFFILIATIONS: NON-PROFIT, NON-GOVERNMENTAL, NON- RELIGIOUS**

# Mission:

PROVIDE VOLUNTEER SERVICE SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY, CHILDREN, WOMEN, INDIGENOUS GROUPS, HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY CENTERS

IMPLEMENT INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND INSPIRE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

PROCLAIM PEACE, SOLIDARITY, FRIENDSHIP, TOLERANCE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AS BASIC VALUES FOR MANKIND.

PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

CREATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES IN ECUADOR

# Volunteer Service

A smiling woman with dark hair, wearing a bright yellow sari with a floral pattern, is shown from the waist up. She is looking towards the right of the frame. The background is a blurred view of a building with many windows, suggesting an urban or institutional setting.

## **VOLUNTEER PROFILE:**

**OLDER THAN 18, ENTHUSIASTIC AND MOTIVATED TO WORK WITH PEOPLE IN NEED, FLEXIBLE, HONEST, PATIENT, COMMUNICATIVE, COMPASSIONATE, PROACTIVE, SHOW SOLIDARITY AND EMPATHY WITH UNDER-PRIVILEGED PEOPLE**

## **PROJECTS:**

**AREAS SUCH AS: EDUCATION, DISABLED PEOPLE, ELDERLY, GENDER, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT. ALL THE PROJECTS AVAILABLE CAN BE FOUND IN THE VASE WORK PROFILE.**

## **ACCOMODATION:**

**EITHER IN A FAMILY (HOST FAMILIES ARE DIFFERENT, SO BE PREPARED TO ADAPT TO A VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH AS NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE HOUSE, INCOME LEVEL, ETC.) OR IN THE PROJECT (THERE ARE SOME PROJECTS THAT REQUIRE THE VOLUNTEERS TO LIVE ON SITE, MOSTLY THE ECOLOGICAL ONES).**

# Camps

(for 6-12 month volunteers only)

**ARRIVAL CAMP:** YOU WILL BE TAKEN DIRECTLY TO THE ORIENTATION VENUE UPON ARRIVAL TO QUITO. YOU WILL HAVE AN INTENSE, THREE-DAY ORIENTATION WHICH COVERS THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: VOLUNTEERING, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING, SAFETY AND ECUADOR'S CULTURE. YOU WILL ALSO BE TAKEN ON TRIPS TO THE HISTORIC DOWN TOWN OF QUITO AND INDIGENOUS VILLAGES. AFTER THE ORIENTATION, YOU WILL HAVE TWO WEEKS (30 HOURS) OF SPANISH CLASSES BEFORE STARTING TO WORK IN THE PROJECT.

**MIDTERM-MEETING:** VASE WILL TAKE YOU ON A RETREAT FOR FIVE DAYS, DURING WHICH YOU WILL EVALUATE AND REFLECT ON YOUR LIVING AND WORK SITUATION DURING THE FIRST MONTHS. YOU WILL BE PREPARED FOR THE SECOND HALF OF YOUR STAY IN ECUADOR.

**FINAL EVALUATION:** THE FINAL EVALUATION WILL CONSIST OF A TWO DAY RETREAT WHERE ALL THE VOLUNTEERS AND VASE STAFF WILL UNITE TO DEBRIEF ON THEIR TIME IN ECUADOR, REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES, AND PREPARE FOR DEPARTURE TO THEIR HOME COUNTRY.

# Money

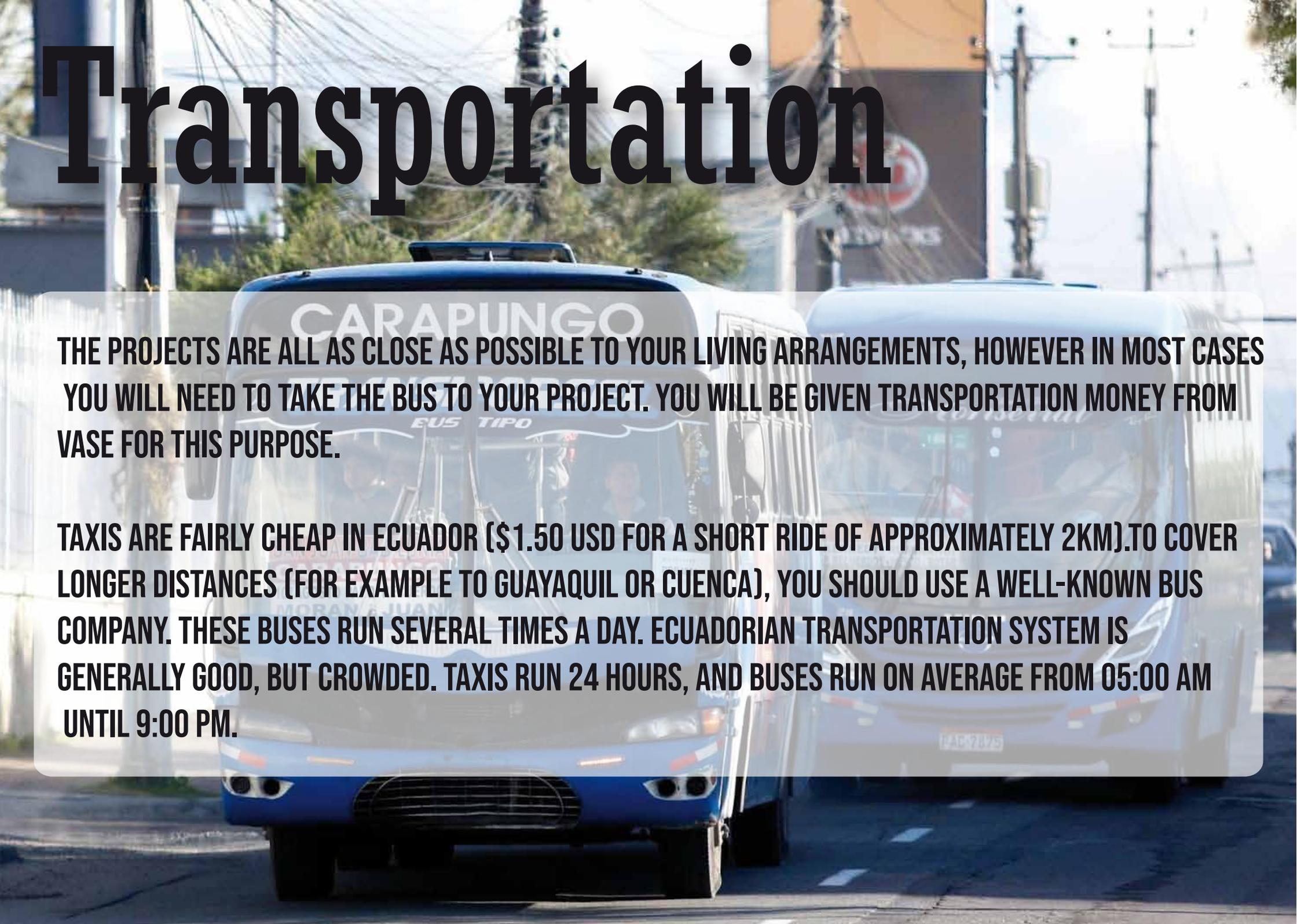
Item	USD
Hamburger Combo	5.50
Bus ride	0.25
Coca Cola (1L)	1.50
Letter to Europe	3.00
Bottle of water (1L)	0.70
Cinema ticket	4.00-5.00
Beer	2.50
Hour of internet	0.70
Newspaper	1.00
Shampoo	6.00
Entrance to a club	Free-15.00

**MANDATORY EXPENSES  
ABOUT \$50 USD FOR A CELL PHONE**

**POCKET MONEY**

**ICYE LONG-TERM VOLUNTEERS WILL BE GIVEN POCKET MONEY AT THEIR ARRIVAL AND MID-TERM CAMPS FOR BASIC PERSONAL EXPENSES. THIS MAY NOT APPLY FOR SOME PROGRAMS, INCLUDING WW AND IJFD.**

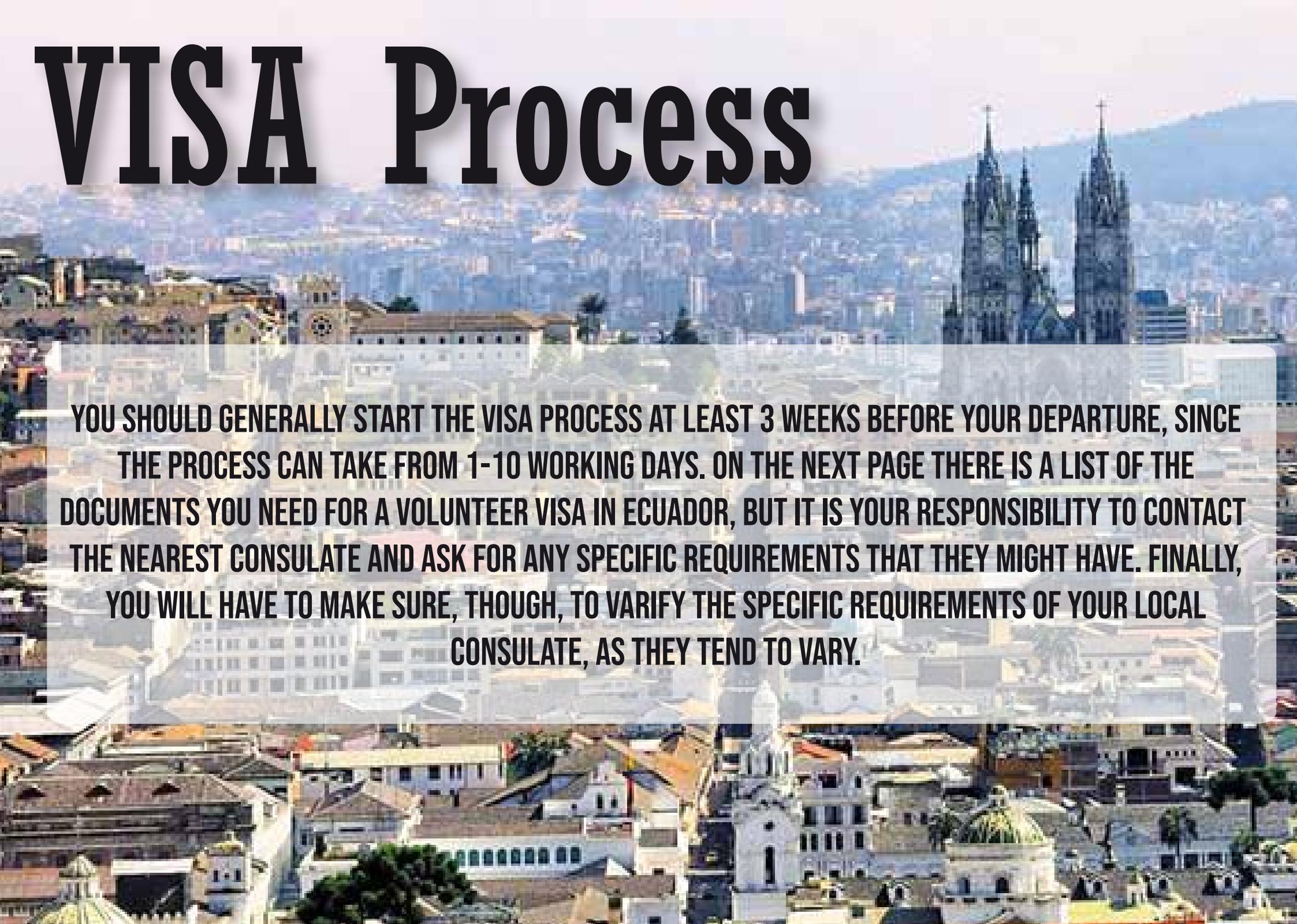
# Transportation



**THE PROJECTS ARE ALL AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO YOUR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, HOWEVER IN MOST CASES YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE THE BUS TO YOUR PROJECT. YOU WILL BE GIVEN TRANSPORTATION MONEY FROM VASE FOR THIS PURPOSE.**

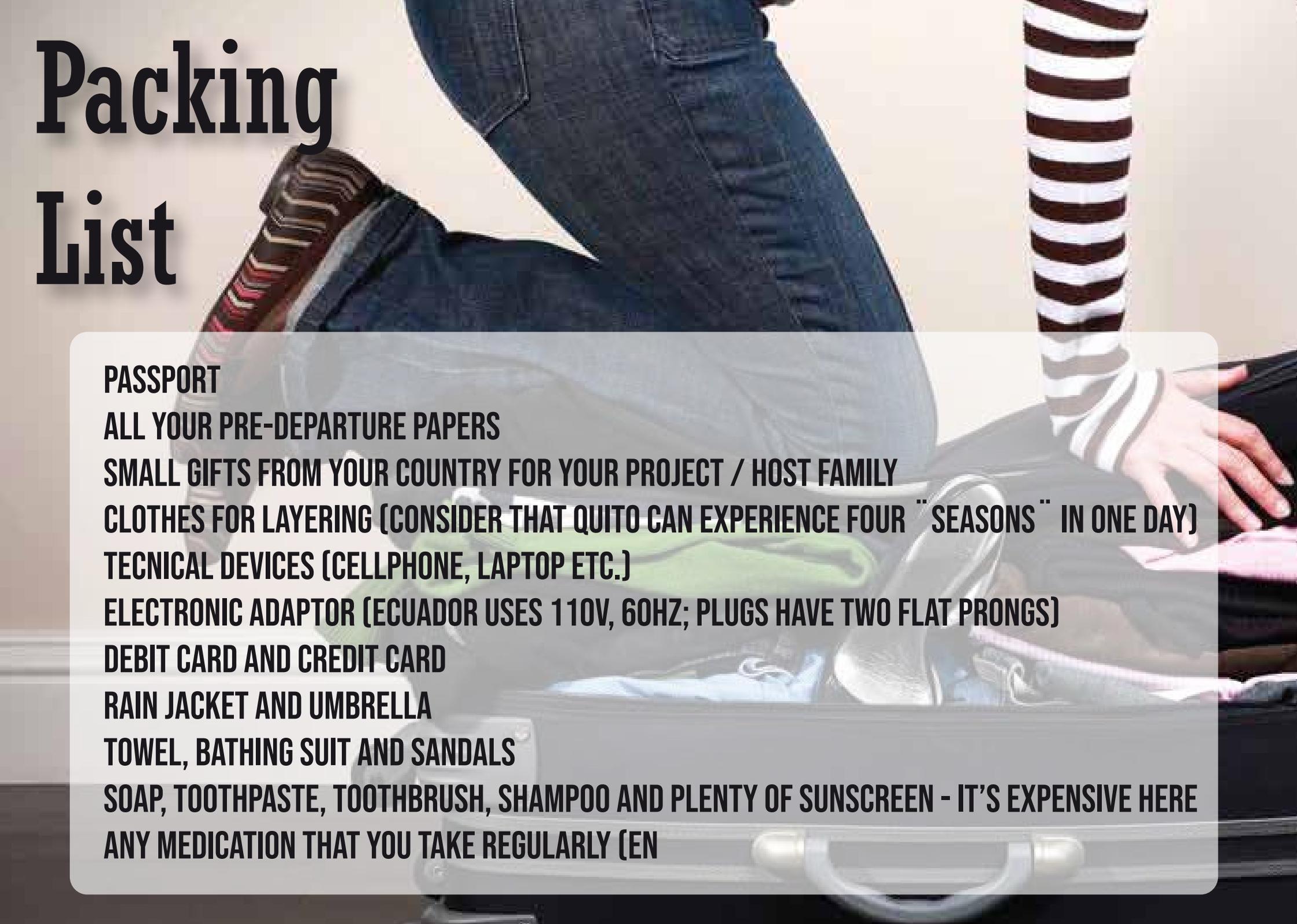
**TAXIS ARE FAIRLY CHEAP IN ECUADOR (\$1.50 USD FOR A SHORT RIDE OF APPROXIMATELY 2KM). TO COVER LONGER DISTANCES (FOR EXAMPLE TO GUAYAQUIL OR CUENCA), YOU SHOULD USE A WELL-KNOWN BUS COMPANY. THESE BUSES RUN SEVERAL TIMES A DAY. ECUADORIAN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS GENERALLY GOOD, BUT CROWDED. TAXIS RUN 24 HOURS, AND BUSES RUN ON AVERAGE FROM 05:00 AM UNTIL 9:00 PM.**

# VISA Process

An aerial photograph of Quito, Ecuador, showing a dense urban landscape with various buildings and a prominent church with two tall spires in the background. The city is built on a hillside, and the background shows more of the city and distant hills under a clear sky.

**YOU SHOULD GENERALLY START THE VISA PROCESS AT LEAST 3 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE, SINCE THE PROCESS CAN TAKE FROM 1-10 WORKING DAYS. ON THE NEXT PAGE THERE IS A LIST OF THE DOCUMENTS YOU NEED FOR A VOLUNTEER VISA IN ECUADOR, BUT IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTACT THE NEAREST CONSULATE AND ASK FOR ANY SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE. FINALLY, YOU WILL HAVE TO MAKE SURE, THOUGH, TO VERIFY THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF YOUR LOCAL CONSULATE, AS THEY TEND TO VARY.**

# Packing List

A person is shown from the waist down, wearing blue jeans and a brown and white striped shirt. They are sitting on a suitcase and packing items. The suitcase is open, and various items like a green shirt, a blue shirt, and a pair of shoes are visible inside. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**PASSPORT**

**ALL YOUR PRE-DEPARTURE PAPERS**

**SMALL GIFTS FROM YOUR COUNTRY FOR YOUR PROJECT / HOST FAMILY**

**CLOTHES FOR LAYERING (CONSIDER THAT QUITO CAN EXPERIENCE FOUR "SEASONS" IN ONE DAY)**

**TECHNICAL DEVICES (CELLPHONE, LAPTOP ETC.)**

**ELECTRONIC ADAPTOR (ECUADOR USES 110V, 60HZ; PLUGS HAVE TWO FLAT PRONGS)**

**DEBIT CARD AND CREDIT CARD**

**RAIN JACKET AND UMBRELLA**

**TOWEL, BATHING SUIT AND SANDALS**

**SOAP, TOOTHPASTE, TOOTHBRUSH, SHAMPOO AND PLENTY OF SUNSCREEN - IT'S EXPENSIVE HERE**

**ANY MEDICATION THAT YOU TAKE REGULARLY (EN**



# For more information

**OFFICE: FUNDACIÓN VASE  
AV. DE LOS SHYRIS N37-27 Y NACIONES UNIDAS.  
EDIFICIO SILVIA NUÑEZ,  
OFICINA 303, CÓDIGO POSTAL: 170506  
QUITO, ECUADOR.  
(593-2) 265932  
E-MAIL: [INCOMING.FUNDACIONVASE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:INCOMING.FUNDACIONVASE@GMAIL.COM)  
WEBSITE [WWW.VOLUNTEERVASE.ORG](http://WWW.VOLUNTEERVASE.ORG)**