



World Bound Youth: *ECUADOR*

Where Outdoor Leadership Meets Indigenous Climate Change Education

Information Package

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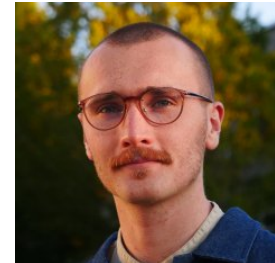
WELCOME / IMANALLA / BIENVENIDO

You've just taken your first steps on an unforgettable journey into self-discovery. Before long, you'll be savouring handmade humitas and empanadas in the markets of Quito; learning how to weave, farm, and better understand the natural world from the pre-Incan Indigenous cultures of the Otavalo, Caranqui, and Sinchi Warmi; all through an Indigenous lens of learning and perspective. A cultural and ecological 'mega-diversity hotspot', Ecuador is home to endless fun, adventure and fascination!

World Bound is about more than thrilling new experiences, it's about figuring out who you are and how to apply to your leadership potential. This experience is driven by our [World Bound Climate Change Curriculum](#), founded upon Four Pillars: **Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives, Western Climate Science, Connection and Relationships, and Outdoor Leadership.**

Meet your lead instructor Liam "Barnsy" Barnes

"Ecuador has been very close to my heart ever since I first visited with a group students from Vancouver Outdoor School. The generosity of our Ecuadorian hosts (including Equator Face, Huasquila Lodge, other partners, homestay families, and community members) left us speechless and the food, music, and culture was out of this world.



I started at Fireside as a junior instructor. Since then, I've led many epic adventures spanning BC, Yukon and Ecuador. Now that I am Director of Fireside Adventures, I only embark on expeditions that are of the highest importance. I wouldn't miss World Bound Ecuador for anything. This year there will be so many new experiences. One new adventure I'm looking forward to is sleeping under the stars nearer the ancient pyramids of Cochasqui"

Trip Overview

Date: Summer 2025

Trip type: Youth Leadership Expedition

Meeting place: Our instructor will meet you at [Quito International Airport](#).

You are responsible for booking your own flight. [Contact us](#) if you have any questions!

Travel: If you would like your youth to travel with our instructor Liam Barnes departing from [Vancouver International Airport](#), please contact us. An additional fee is required. We will connect you with our travel agent who can help book your youth on the same flight as Liam.

Locations: [Quito: Ecuadorian capital](#), [Otavalo: largest Indigenous settlement in Ecuador](#), [Cuicocha lagoon](#), [Cochasqui archaeological site](#), [Cayambe volcano](#), Banos and Cotopaxi

Accommodation: [Cotacachi Homestay](#), [Huasquila Eco-Lodge](#)



Itinerary

Day 1: Welcome to Ecuador

Accommodation: Quito International Airport layover lounge

Departure from Vancouver YVR: Embark on an exciting journey of discovery and growth. Enjoy the comfort of the Quito International Airport layover lounge as you rest and prepare for the adventures ahead.

Day 2–10: Stay at Huasquila EcoLodge

→ Shuttle from Quito to [Huasquila EcoLodge](#) (180km)

Our partners at Huasquila EcoLodge will meet us at the airport and shuttle us to their vibrant eco-sanctuary in Ecuador's Amazon Rainforest. Here, modern comfort blends with Indigenous Kichwa culture and environmental sustainability. When we arrive we'll be greeted with a hearty meal and time to rest while familiarizing yourself with the stunning surroundings.

Mingas (community projects) and other contributions: To practice what we've learned about Climate Leadership, we'll participate in daily community work projects called *Mingas* that support local reforestation and agriculture. In line with the World Bound principle of Connection and Relationships, we'll build reciprocal bonds with the community as we refine our leadership skills:

- ❖ Learn how to speak Spanish and the local Indigenous language *Kichwa*.
- ❖ Work on local family farms and learn about the use of medicinal plants like Guayusa, Luisa, and Dragon's Blood.
- ❖ Have access to unique opportunities such as helping set up wildlife cameras to observe local wildlife as part of a local conservation/reforestation project and engaging in a unique community project focused on Petroglyph Maintenance.
- ❖ Converse with locals about their perspectives on Climate Change and sustainability.

Other adventures at Huasquila (beyond Mingas):

- ❖ Venture into the mysterious Bat Cave and experience a magical night walk in the Amazon (feel one billion heartbeats all around you).
- ❖ Join in a community sports activity, such as soccer, followed by relaxation time at the swimming pool or learning to make chocolate.

- ❖ A day dedicated to solo self-reflection and Climate Change Education. This introspective time is balanced with nourishing meals for lunch and dinner.

Rafting Adventure

Oh yes, it's true: brace yourself for a full day of thrilling rafting adventures, an opportunity to bond with peers and embrace Ecuador's natural beauty.

Sinchi Warmi Experience

Dive into the Sinchi Warmi Experience, a culturally rich and enlightening activity that promises to be memorable. Experience a matriarchal Indigenous Ecuadorian Community as they enlighten you about their ways of life.

Day 11–13: Enter the Indigenous Experiential Realm of Knowing through and epic pan-Ecuadorian Road Trip

Now it's time to meet with our colleagues Sisa and Diego, owners of Equator Face, a local Indigenous-run tour operator. For the rest of the trip we will have the honor of being welcomed into their community and family traditions.

→ **Shuttle from the Amazon into the volcanic highlands (Equator Face)**

Your journey continues as you are whisked away to Baños by Equator Face, signaling the start of yet another chapter in this remarkable expedition. During your road trip, you'll:

- ❖ **Spend one night in Baños where we'll settle into a cozy hotel** after exploring the vibrant [Baños](#) nightlife, enjoying local music and dance.
- ❖ **Spend two nights in Zuleta with a welcoming Cayambí family**, immersing in a genuine family atmosphere. In Zuleta, we'll explore the historic [Hacienda Zuleta](#) and the Los Cóndores project (condor conservation). Culinary Experience: Join Chef Antonio in preparing a traditional dinner.
- ❖ Hone your Kichwa (Diego and Sisa's native language) through songs, jokes and common phrases
- ❖ Embark on a 3-hour hike to serene [Cubilche Lagoon](#) lagoon and cycle to the picturesque [San Pablo Lagoon](#).
- ❖ Marvel at the majestic [Pailón del Diablo Waterfall](#).
- ❖ Learn about Ecuador's commitment to sustainable energy while visiting Agoyán Hydroelectric Dam.

Day 14–19: Homestays in Otavalo

Our road trip will end in [Otavalo](#), where we will enter the nearby Indigenous community of Cotacachi. Over the next four days we'll enjoy a totally immersive experience living with welcoming homestay families. Each day, we'll meet up for excursions including:

- ❖ Otavalo Animal Market: Discover local trade at the bustling market.
- ❖ Cultural Tour: Dress in traditional attire and explore Otavalo with local girls as your guides.
- ❖ Musical Experience: Enjoy Andean folk music performance and learn knitting with Don Manuel.
- ❖ Full day trip to [Cotacachi Cayapas](#), a massive nature reserve. Learn about the plants and their medicinal uses, as well as the impact that ecosystem degradation and Climate Change have had on the flora and fauna that are protected here. Some are still used to dye or give colour to textiles.
- ❖ Visit to the community of Ugshapunko, here women are waiting for us ready to enter the culinary activity, we will prepare cui (guinea pig) in a traditional way, we will have lamb or river trout. We will help with proteins, salads and sauces.

Once-in-a-lifetime experience: sleeping under the stars at Cochasquí

For one night during our Otavalo stint, we will visit Mojanda Lake and the ancient [pyramids of Cochasquí](#). Camping Experience: Choose between tent camping or a shelter stay near [Mojanda Lake](#) (4000 meters above sea level!).

Final celebration

On our final night, we'll have a small party with a village band or folk group. In Cotacachi, it is a tradition to say goodbye or receive friends in this way.

Day 20: Horse riding experience in the Haciendas of Cotopaxi

→ Shuttle from Otavalo to Cotopaxi (Equator Face)

As we reach the final stretch of our journey, we will arrive in one of our favourite places - the majestic and all-powerful volcano, Cotopaxi. Here, we'll learn how the locals use Western Climate Science to successfully conserve and sustain a massive and unique part of Ecuador's land. Other unique experiences await in this landscape including:

- ❖ A sunrise walk along the volcano after milking the cowsworkshop.
- ❖ Unwinding (choice between rock climbing, resting, or board games).

- ❖ Finally, explore Cotopaxi on horseback or partake in a healing boding experince with the majestic creatures.

Day 21: Explore historic Quito

→ Equator Face will shuttle us from Cotopaxi to [Quito](#). Along the way, we will:

- ❖ Visit a pool of crystal-clear water in [Papallacta](#).
- ❖ Tour of the historic center of Quito including Basilica of the National Vow.
- ❖ Enjoy lunch in town and continue tour of Quito on your own.

This evening or in the early morning of Day 21, we will be flying home.

Day 21: Farewell to Ecuador!

Departure: Depending on flight schedules, depart in the early morning. We will return home, bringing with us newfound skills, knowledge, and self-confidence, as well as a wealth of fantastic experiences and life-long friends.

Packing list

Gear Must-brings

- 35L+ day backpack (items you'll need throughout the average outdoor day)
- Large 65-80L+ backpack (needs to fit well) or duffle bag or **suitcase with wheels**
- Sleeping bag (0–15°C recommended)
- Small travel pillow
- Sleeping pad (provides comfort and insulation, very important)
- Two 1L water bottles (not squirt-style)
- Headlamp (extra batteries)
- Travel towel
- Whistle
- Sunglasses (two pairs)
- Waterproof stuff sacks (10-20 L plus a small one for electronics)
- Sun hat and toque
- Personal first aid kit
- Pocket knife
- Compass
- Lighter
- Mobile phone
- Journal
- Writing utensils + coloured pencils

Clothing Must-brings

- Rain jacket
- Warm jacket/fleece
- Sturdy running shoes/trail runners
- Outdoor sandals with back straps
- Underwear/socks
- Shorts
- Long quick-dry pants (x2)
- Comfortable camp clothing
- Long-sleeved shirt
- T-shirts (avoid too many cotton shirts)
- Swimming suit (x2)
- Sleepwear
- Nice clothes for flying and/or town days

Packing list (continued)

Toiletries

- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Soap (Castile recommended)
- Sunblock (SPF 30)
- Bug repellent
- Menstrual products
- Eye care (if required)
- Aloe Vera cream
- Personal first aid Kit
- Medication (x2)
- Mesh laundry bag

Optional (recommeneded)

- Camera
- Bandana
- Inexpensive but sentimental gifts from home to share with homestay family and other youth

Do Not Bring

- Portable video games
- Narcotics, alcohol, cigarettes, vapes
- Big bulky clothes
- Cotton clothing
- Jeans
- Inappropriate clothing
- Aftershave/cologne/perfume
- Hairdryer/hair products
- Anything requiring electricity

Recommendations

- Purchase gear at second hand stores or large department stores.
- Pack well but as light as possible.
- Everything you pack, you carry. Please pack accordingly.
- Try out gear before departure, including packing and carrying your bag.

Travel & Safety Info

Medications and Medical Conditions

If you are bringing personal medication, please ensure that it is stored safely (waterproof) and an extra dose is given to our staff upon arrival for safe keeping. You'll keep one dose of your medication and we will keep another just in case your medication is lost or damaged.

For life-threatening allergies, please connect with our office (office@firesideadventures.ca) to go over a plan of care. Please be sure to include any issues you could experience while on trip (i.e., side effects of medication, susceptibility to heat stroke, sensitivity to mosquito bites, problems with anxiety, etc).

Our team keeps fully equipped medical kits with us at all times and is well-trained to use them. We will also have access to Ecuador's public health care services in case of emergencies. If a camper becomes unable to participate in our activities, they will be accompanied and/or transported by staff while the rest of the group carries on.

Communication

We understand that you might be curious about how your youth is doing while they are away. Although we insist on a digital detox for our adventurers, we will create a WhatsApp group account to send out photos and messages to parents. If for any reason you need to connect with your youth, please contact our staff directly on this Whatsapp group. In Ecuador, we will have wifi at most of our lodging for staff to follow up. However, when we are deep in the Amazon, there will be no wifi.

Spending Money

The official currency of Ecuador is the US Dollar. We recommend sending \$300 USD (cash) with your youth for them to explore Ecuadorian cuisine or purchase souvenirs.

Food on the Expedition

Do **not** send any food with your youth, unless it is for dietary purposes (please inform staff if this is the case). Campers receive 3 nutritious meals a day, in addition to healthy snacks (unless otherwise stated in the trip plan). An important part of the experience is participating in the preparation and execution of all meals. We are able to accommodate special diets, provided that dietary requests are made well in advance. If this information was not filled in during youth registration, please contact our office administrator at least two weeks prior to the course for us to make the necessary adjustments. At times, there will be opportunities for youth to purchase food while visiting communities and stores. Ecuador has a lot to offer, especially fruits and veggies not found in typical western grocery stores.

Independent Airport Travel

Please connect with your instructor and our office staff to ensure we have all your flight details and to coordinate one of our staff at the airport to greet you. Please arrange flights close to our Fireside Adventures flight times.

Travel Insurance and Documents

To enter Ecuador, **youths will need a passport with at least 6 months of validation after when they expect to leave Ecuador**. Most countries (including Canada and the US) do **not** need a visa to enter and stay in Ecuador for less than 90 days. A negative COVID-19 test is **not** required to enter Ecuador. For more information on visa requirements, see [here](#). For more information on Covid requirements, see [here](#).

Payment and Cancellation Policy

A deposit of \$500 USD will be required to secure your spot. If the program is cancelled by Fireside Adventures, any funds submitted will be 100% refunded. If you wish to cancel your booking, Creative Toolbox Consulting Inc. will withhold from 50% up to 100% of the funds submitted depending on the date of the request. Contact us for more details.