



Galapagos ICE • immerse • connect • evolve • VOLUNTEER

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

This document provides basic information about volunteering with Galapagos ICE, including details about travel, housing, expenses, visa requirements, immunizations, and tips to make your stay in the Islands as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

For all volunteer application forms, please visit our [Volunteer Application Process](#) page on our website. Of course, if you have any questions that are not answered here, please don't hesitate to contact us at volunteer@galapagosice.org. Revised, 2011.

CONTENTS

Overview	2
Volunteer Hotlines	2
Staff	3
Testimonials	4-5
Ten Tips on Working within a Foreign Culture	5
Advice from Volunteers	6
Application Process	7-8
Expenses	9-10
Housing with Local Host Family	11
Housing Etiquette	11-12
Volunteer Responsibilities	13
Getting Here	14-15
General Galapagos Information	16-17
Vaccines/Health Tips	17-18
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	18-19
Packing Checklist	20
Suggested Reading	21
Contact Information	22
FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)	23

OVERVIEW



Galapagos ICE (Immerse - Connect - Evolve) has welcomed volunteers from all over the globe, and their work has been as varied as the individuals themselves. Doctors, nurses, dentists, nutritionists, and other healthcare professionals have worked in local hospitals and clinics. Visiting teachers have led afterschool programs in a variety of subjects, and conducted pedagogical seminars for Galapagos teachers. We have found placements for eco-architects and yoga teachers, muralists and university professors. We have facilitated collaborations between world-class artists and Galapagos students on elaborate art projects, and we have sponsored a host of public lectures on matters of cultural and scientific significance.

We take a very personalized approach to learning about each volunteer’s skills, talents and interests, and connecting them with the local communities and individuals who need their service most. We are eminently grateful for our volunteers’ generosity, ingenuity and dedication, and we strive to make their experiences in the Galapagos as enjoyable and enriching as possible.

Galapagos ICE is different from many other organizations that arrange volunteer placements in the Islands, because our office is located on site in the Galapagos -- not on the Ecuadorian mainland or elsewhere around the world. Our staff is knowledgeable about the area, and is available to answer your questions and help you adjust to your environment throughout the entirety of your volunteer service.

VOLUNTEER HOTLINES

Galapagos Office Phone:

From Ecuadorian mainland/Galapagos cell phone:

0-530-15108 or 0-9387-1332

From Galapagos landline:

530-15108 or 0-9387-1332

Internationally: (593) 052527196 or 0-9387-1332

US Office Phone:

Calling from within the US: 1-434 882 0498

Calling from outside the US: 001 434 882 0498

If you have questions before your trip and wish to speak to someone in the United States, please don’t hesitate to call Eric Caldwell, the Executive Director, at the US Office above.

STAFF

Emily K. Pozo, *President and Founder*. Upon her first visit to the Galapagos Islands in 2005, Emily was dazzled by their unprecedented wonder and beauty, but was simultaneously disturbed by the troubling humanitarian conditions that constantly confront residents of the Islands. After speaking with local fishermen, shopkeepers, local teachers, water taxi drivers, and medical workers, she started to understand the acute nature of their economic challenges, and the widespread implications of their inadequate access to healthcare and education for their families. Emily began organizing programs to address these problems in 2005, and officially founded Galapagos ICE (Immerse Connect Evolve) in 2006.

Her work has not gone unnoticed. Emily is the recipient of the 2009 *Outstanding Alumni Award: Spirit of St. Francis*, from Viterbo University, her alma mater, and received the auspicious *Merito de la Colaboracion con el Gobierno Municipal/ Merit Award for Cooperation* with the Galapagos Municipal Government in 2010. She was interviewed on film by *Dan Rather Reports* in their 2008 broadcast, “How Humans Might Be Loving the Galapagos to Death, and profiled by the *Christian Science Monitor* in the 2009 article, “People Making a Difference: Emily Pozo.”

It is Emily’s belief that a Galapagos population that has greater access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities can serve as a strong bulwark against ecological deterioration.

Emily serves from time to time as the Temporary United States Consular Agent for the Galapagos, and currently lives in Puerto Ayora, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos.

Eric T. Caldwell, Ph.D. *Executive Director*. Eric has been active in the development of Galapagos ICE since its inception in 2005, and was the early guiding force in incorporating the organization, establishing its bylaws, constituting its present board, and acquiring 501(c)3 status. Eric now works closely with Emily in the creation and pursuit of strategic goals and the establishment of organizational policy and procedures. He also engages in marketing and development activities, and, really, attempts to procure anything that Emily needs from Stateside.

Eric is also an avid hiker and world traveler who is passionate about empowering Galapagos residents to take possession of their ecological heritage. Eric endeavors to spend at least two months out of the year working alongside Galapagos ICE volunteers.

Eric is an Assistant Professor of English (Adj.) at Sweet Briar College, teaching 19C literature, and lives in Charlottesville, VA.

VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIALS

[Galapagos ICE's volunteer program] was a very independent program which allowed me to help out in which ever way I liked. I was let alone and didn't have to follow the same schedule as others. I was also able to switch from volunteering at the hospital to volunteering in a school. It didn't have a huge participation fee as does many other international programs. In all, I enjoyed Galapagos ICE because it really wasn't about making money off of volunteers but really more about making a difference in the Galapagos. Jean-Alex, Health & Education Volunteer (Canada)

Through the breadth and depth of your community network, you [Emily Pozo] satisfied not only the logistical considerations of my project [Galapagos Words and Sounds], but also put into place an opportunity for authentic exchange with the local community in Puerto Ayora. In many respects, this project would not have gone forward had it not been for you - not only by connecting us with the teachers and students at Colegio Nacional Galapagos, but also in your willingness to serve as a project advocate, chaperone and translator. Our work with the students was an exercise in finding forms of meaningful exchange during our brief visit. You were a critical connection across language and culture, allowing us to immerse ourselves in the local community to an extent that would not have been possible without your assistance and expertise. Ann, Fine Artist (USA)

Galapagos ICE rocks out...!!! Emily is genuinely fired up about what she is doing and her enthusiasm inspires one to put their heart into whatever project they might be working on. There are clearly many areas in education, and healthcare that could be vastly improved for the residents of the Galapagos, and Emily seems to work tirelessly with that aim in mind. A major part of the appeal of this NGO, is that Emily and the volunteers attempt to empower and inspire members of the community via knowledge, information, skills learning, experience, and hands-on projects, so that they can become the solution themselves to improved health, education, and ultimately quality of life. Lorna, Occupational Therapy (Canada)

I liked the opportunity to identify special areas of need in the community and then address those needs with your own specialty skill set. It was also great that the volunteering hours were relatively flexible allowing time to explore the magic of Galapagos. Barbara, Medical Doctor (Australia)

The fact that I had to send two letters of recommendation gave me the instant impression that this was a serious organization. I actually appreciated the fact that i needed to send a copy of my travel insurance, passport etc., ensured me that i was in good hands with someone who knew what she was doing. Emily was extremely helpful and answered all my emails (with all my millions of questions..) instantly which also made me feel very comfortable already from the beginning. My parents were fairly suspicious towards the idea of volunteering abroad (horror stories of huge fees for basically nothing) so i let them read the emails Emily sent me and the volunteer package and they also agreed that this seemed reliable and professionally handled. Cant think of anything that needs to be improved, it worked out really well for me! Ebba, Community Development (Sweden).

I most enjoyed being involved in several projects and getting to know many aspects of community life in Santa Cruz. I was able to experience first-hand both the joys and frustrations associated with being a foreign volunteer and it made for the best 6 weeks of my life. Barbara, Public Health (USA)

As a volunteer on the Galapagos I was able to live with a family on Santa Cruz, work in the city and fully immerse myself in the archipelago. This meant that the contagious pace of Galapagos life was fully experienced as I got under the skin of the island and became not 'just another gringo' - it was this that I most enjoyed. Patrick, Medical Doctor (Scotland)

[T]he great thing with Emily is that you can talk to her whenever and about whatever concerns you may have relating to work or homestay. I always felt like i could contact her whenever i had any questions and i especially appreciated that she took the time to go through stuff with me and explain how everything works etc. Ebba, Community Development (Sweden)

Ten Tips for Working Effectively within a Foreign Culture (adapted from Americorps' "Starting Strong," Chapter 11, *Diversity and Multiculturalism*).

- Learn about the community, the people with whom you are working, and the people whom you are assisting. Before judging people or organizations, find out what they have to say about their backgrounds, methodologies, and needs
- Respect diverse points of view, even if you don't share them. Different perspectives need not lead to conflict; there may be no need for you to either defend your perspective, or agree with theirs.
- Value and learn from the strengths and the experiences of others. Recognize that you have very little idea about the obstacles they may have faced, and the problems they have yet to overcome.
- Give everyone the same attention & service, regardless of your personal preferences.
- Treat people as your equals. Communicate in words and actions that you do not only recognize their rights, but also value them as individuals, regardless of their personal characteristics, economic status, or power.
- Avoid stereotypes and generalizations. When applied to individuals, they were almost always wrong; instead look at people as individuals.
- Accept that other individuals, families, and organizations may have needs and preferences which are different from yours. This does not necessarily make them any less—or more—legitimate or reasonable.
- Approach requests for services or assistance by trying to see how to say yes, rather than how to say no. Follow the rules, but use them as guidelines to appropriate action, not as shackles which justify doing nothing.
- View differences as opportunities for learning and growth, not (merely) as complications or disadvantages. A friendly, interested first reaction to someone new or different sets the foundation for a positive relationship.
- Listen; engage; act.

ADVICE FROM VOLUNTEERS TO VOLUNTEERS

The lifestyle of the Galapagos is something that one can't really prepare for. It wasn't so much 'hard work' that I needed to know about, but more patience and understanding of the differences of the culture, and why, as a volunteer, we think that we will be able to see change happen, but that is a very unrealistic goal when in a place for such a short period of time. I think that it is very important to inform volunteers that what they are doing makes a difference, but it might not 'happen before their eyes.' Martin, Marketing (England)

Culture has to catch you off guard. I don't know how I'd explain it to someone who hasn't experienced it. Still if there's one thing that's important to understand, it's this: Don't be upset if the person you were supposed to meet with is 15 minutes late. It's really not a big deal. Scott, Information Technology (USA)

[T]he ideal way to volunteer in a place like Galapagos is to see things for what they are, to try not to compare situations to one's own standards all the time, to see that the place has the potential to be better, and to focus on the opportunity that one is about to embark on, as both an adventure, and a time to reflect upon one's own life and what it means to be away from certain things that have become so 'engrained' in one's way of life. Martin, Marketing (England)

The ecological attractions are unique and absolutely amazing. By all means, go visit Isabella and go horseback riding, or Floreana and go snorkeling for those are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. But equally important, embrace the people and culture of Puerto Ayora. Talk to taxi drivers, eat on the street with local vendors instead of Café Hernan every night, play volleyball or basketball with the people, explore the city, etc. David, Medical Student (USA)

MORE SPECIFIC ADVICE

- [For health professionals,] it is probably a good idea to explain the lack of general services available to the community in the Galapagos (e.g. specialist care services / doctors). Ben, Psychologist (Australia)
- Be prepared to adapt and work independently, have at least one clear idea for a project/role when arriving. Liam, ESL Teacher (England)
- Learn Spanish! Even basic Spanish will help you relate better to the locals and have a good experience overall. Greg, Occupational Therapist (Canada)
- [M]ost things take a very long time to get done. One gets used to it but it would be nice to know before hand. Ben, Medical Student (Canada)
- Don't forget your snorkel and have a hobby to get stuck into. Bring plenty of sun cream and don't make the eternal volunteer's mistake of thinking you will change the world: if you can help a little, *that* is a start. Patrick, Medical Doctor (Scotland)
- To be open-minded about everything and to at least be able to understand some Spanish. Ashley, Mechanical Engineer (USA)
- [Understand that] the administration system in the Galapagos isn't very effective, things often just don't happen, and no one is ever on time!!! Philip, Medical Doctor (Ireland)

APPLICATION PROCESS

For all volunteer application forms, please visit our [Volunteer Application Process](#) page on our website.

Stage I

Please email all application materials to the Galapagos Office at volunteer@galapagosice.org.

1. **Complete and return the Volunteer Application**, describing yourself, the type of volunteer opportunity you would like to pursue, and the time frame you are available. If you represent a group, please email the Galapagos Office for a Group Application.
 - **With your application, please send your resume/CV (no longer than four pages, please).** If your application is accepted, we may forward your resume/CV to the appropriate Galapagos hospital, clinic, or institution.
2. **Provide two letters of recommendation**, sent directly from the authors via e-mail to volunteer@galapagosice.org. These letters should describe the author's relationship to you, your general character, your ability to accomplish your proposed project, and why the author believes that you are well suited for international volunteer service. They should also include complete contact information of the letter-writer. References should be from professional, educational, religious or philanthropic contacts who are personally acquainted with your achievements and work ethic.
 - Please be advised that recommenders must have known the applicant for at least two years, and that letters from family members and friends will not be considered for evaluation. For group applications, please email the Galapagos Office (at volunteer@galapagosice.org) for more information about this process.
3. **Submit the \$50 Application Fee (per volunteer).** This non-refundable fee covers our organization's administrative costs for setting up volunteer opportunities and assisting volunteers during their visit.
 - **U.S. residents** may: **(1)** Make a secure on-line credit card payment through our **Donations** page (Visa, Master Card, American express and Discover accepted – for the donation amount, choose “\$50 Volunteer Application Fee”), or **(2)** Mail a personal or certified check or money order (payable to Galapagos ICE) to our U.S. Office: Galapagos ICE, 2702 Eton Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22903 USA. We encourage you to consult a tax advisor to learn how program fees, airfare and other expenses may be tax-deductible. Please note that some individuals and groups have engaged in fundraising activities to help defray costs.
 - **Non-U.S.-residents**, please make your secure on-line credit card payment through our [PayPal](#) Donations page (Visa, Master Card, American express and Discover accepted — in the *Purpose* field, please type “Volunteer Application Fee”).

Galapagos ICE will review your application and try to find a volunteer placement for the time period you specify.

Stage II

If Galapagos ICE approves your application, we will notify you by e-mail. After acceptance, we will ask you to complete all the final paperwork six weeks prior to your arrival. When completing the final paperwork, do not use a scanned signature from your computer, but sign the documents themselves, scan them, and email them to the Galapagos Office at volunteer@galapagosice.org.

1. Email the following documents/information to the Galapagos Office (at volunteer@galapagosice.org):
 - **A completed Housing/Health Form;**
 - **A color scan of each participant's passport.** The Galapagos Government Council regulations require that we keep a copy of your passport on file; and
 - **Your confirmed flight information.** Concerning your flights, consider that
 - i. Your flight from the mainland to the Galapagos (your TAME flight) must be scheduled for a *weekday morning*, i.e., Monday through Friday. As this must be the case, be certain that you schedule your international flight accordingly. Most individuals arrive in Quito/Guayaquil on Sunday through Thursday, stay the night in a hotel, and depart for the Galapagos early the next morning; and
 - ii. Booking TAME, Aerogal, and/or LAN flights can sometimes be difficult and/or unduly expensive. **If you need help booking a flight to the Galapagos from Guayaquil or Quito**, email volunteer@galapagosice.org, and we can help you.
2. Once the above information/documents have been received—which should be no later than six weeks prior to your arrival—the Galapagos Office will email you a **Volunteer Statement of Agreement** that contains a Housing Agreement, a Declaration for the Galapagos Government Council, and a Galapagos ICE Volunteer Waiver. **Complete this form, sign, scan, and return via email** to the Galapagos Office.
3. **Although we do not require it, travel insurance is highly recommended for each participant.**

EXPENSES

Below are some estimated expenses for your travel and stay in the Galapagos Islands. Prices are in US Dollars, and are subject to change.

Galapagos ICE Home stays

We offer home stays for all of our volunteers, with or without meals. For those who are staying more than four weeks, their fees are discounted after the first month.

Initial Housing Fees (for the first month):

<i>Room</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Room and Board</i>	<i>Price</i>
Up to 2 weeks	\$350	Up to 2 weeks	\$450
Up to 4 weeks	\$500	Up to 4 weeks	\$700

After the first month, housing fees decrease to the following rates for every two-week block:

<i>Room</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Room and Board</i>	<i>Price</i>
Every 2 weeks	\$220	Every two weeks	\$300

As we understand that international travel can be quite expensive (and sometimes prohibitively expensive) for families, family discounts are available. Contact Emily Pozo in the Galapagos Office (at volunteer@galapagosice.org) for details.

Please note the following:

- Accommodations vary, from standard rooms, with bed linens, towels, and basic furnishings, to more elaborate situations. All rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Upon arrival in Puerto Ayora, volunteers will be picked up and escorted to their new homes to meet their host families.
- Pricing is per person. Due to our contracts with our host families, we cannot prorate for occupancy less than the specified time periods. The boarding option includes three meals a day, seven days a week. Housing fees are paid in advance (the first payment, directly to the Galapagos ICE office in Puerto Ayora upon arrival), and then on the first of every month thereafter. Galapagos ICE Housing Fees include a Program Fee that helps the nonprofit maintain the office and fund its many projects. If you should decide to cancel your Housing Contract and find accommodations elsewhere, you are still responsible for the Program Fee. If you have any questions about the Program Fee, please contact Eric Caldwell, the Executive Director, at ecaldwell@galapagos.org. Please note that these are 2011 prices, and may change without notice in 2012.
- Food: A number of local restaurants offer inexpensive menus in Puerto Ayora— for example, for the modest sum of around \$4, one can purchase a lunch that includes soup, juice, a choice of chicken, beef, or fish, and rice. More extensive and expensive options are available. We highly recommend the meal plan, however, as it is economical, and will give you an insider’s perspective on Ecuadorian cuisine.

Additional Expenses

Air Transportation

The following are round trip flights from mainland Ecuador to the Galapagos Islands (Baltra airport), during both High Season (HS) and Low Season (LS). (Note that High Season begins 15 June and ends 14 September, and begins again on 1 November and ends 30 April. Low Season begins 1 May and ends 14 June, and begins again on 15 September and ends on 31 October). The airlines that provide service between the mainland and the Islands are Aerogal, TAME, and LAN.

Routes and Prices:

- Quito/Galapagos/Quito: HS \$422 LS \$366
- Guayaquil/Galapagos/Guayaquil: HS \$372 LS \$328
- Guayaquil/Galapagos/Quito: HS \$396 LS \$346
- Quito/Galapagos/Guayaquil: HS \$399 LS \$350

[Updated January 2011. Please note that these prices may change/fluctuate again soon; please contact Galapagos ICE for updated pricing.]

Galapagos Entrance Fees

A fee of \$10 by the Galapagos Government Council is payable at the Guayaquil/Quito airports, and is payable **in cash only**.

The Galapagos National Park Fee of \$100 will be **waived** once we submit your paperwork to the Consejo del Gobierno. Please note the

- Because this is a sensitive customs issue, it is **imperative** that you complete your paperwork with us so that we can submit your name and information to the Galapagos Government Council in time to have it processed. It currently takes **four weeks** to process this paperwork.
- Once your paperwork is complete, we will send you a **waiver** for your \$100 Galapagos Park Entrance Fee. You must present this waiver at the Consejo del Gobierno booth at the Quito/Guayaquil airport, and to the Galapagos National Park official at the Baltra Airport (on the Islands) when you are asked for the \$100 fee.

Exit Fees

The following Airport Departure Taxes are levied on your return home, depending upon the airport from which your international flight departs.

- From the Guayaquil airport – \$28 (cash or credit)
- From the Quito airport – \$41 (cash).

HOUSING WITH LOCAL HOST FAMILY

Galapagos ICE Housing Policies

1. Most host family accommodations include a personal room with a twin bed. Some accommodations are more extensive, featuring a double bed, private bathrooms and kitchens; some require the volunteer to share a bathroom with the host family or other volunteers. Some shower facilities with host families may only provide cold water, which is quite standard throughout the Islands.
2. Housing costs vary depending how long your stay is, and leases are available for two-week and four-week periods. Due to our arrangements with host families, we cannot offer pro-rated leases. For example, if you wish to stay with a host family for 14 days or less, you will be charged two weeks' rent; if you wish to stay with a host family for between 15 days and 28 days, you will be charged four weeks' rent.
3. Payment for housing must be delivered at the Galapagos ICE office in Puerto Ayora before each rental period upon arrival; and then the first of every month thereafter, please see your payment schedule below.
4. There are no refunds for volunteers who leave a pre-booked accommodation early, unless confirmed in writing by Galapagos ICE. If you are unhappy with your housing assignment and wish to relocate to another hosted arrangement, it is your responsibility to inform the Galapagos ICE office immediately with a written statement describing your complaint and requesting new accommodations.
5. It is your responsibility to give Galapagos ICE office sufficient notification before your arrival if you have any special housing needs.
6. Galapagos ICE reserves the right to change your accommodations at any time, whether for the well-being of the volunteer or the host family.
7. Galapagos ICE reserves the right to cancel your accommodations if you have breached your agreement with Galapagos ICE, signed upon arrival. In such cases, we do not offer refunds.
8. Galapagos ICE is not be responsible for any damage or loss of property during your occupation of the accommodations arranged by our office. All volunteers are encouraged to purchase a travel insurance policy that would cover such losses.
9. Galapagos ICE Housing Fees include a Program Fee that helps the nonprofit maintain the office and fund its many projects. If you should decide to cancel your Housing Contract and find accommodations elsewhere, you are still responsible for the Program Fee. Visit the Galapagos Office for details.

Home Stay Etiquette

Beyond anything else, we want volunteers to understand that because they will be staying with host families (or in host family furnished apartments), they will have the status of special guests in these accommodations. Home stays provide an essential part of the cultural immersion that volunteers will experience when in the Islands, and it is important to participate in the environment of common courtesy that flourishes in these homes.

Please abide by the following House Rules:

1. Volunteers usually are not permitted to use the house phone unless given permission by the host family. There are many public phone businesses in the Islands, and cell phones are also available at local shops.
2. Volunteers will be eating typical Ecuadorian meals. If you have specific dietary restrictions, meals can be adjusted; if there are problems, volunteers should consult the Galapagos Office. As Ecuadorian portions are typically large, and food is expensive in the Islands, you should ask your host family to reduce my portions if you are a light eater.
3. For volunteers who have a meal plan, please inform the family if you decide to skip a meal or eat outside the home. Food is expensive in the Islands, and they will appreciate the notification.
4. Similarly, if volunteers will be going away for the weekend, or coming in very late, they should inform the host family; our host families are quite protective of the well-being of our volunteers, and will worry otherwise.
5. Volunteers should ask for permission from the host families before bringing friends into the house or personal rooms. Volunteers should not have friends in the house for any reason past 10pm, as this violates our contract with the host families.
6. Volunteers are responsible for the key to the home. If you lose the key, you must either pay for another key and/or the lock to be changed, at the discretion of the host family.
7. Food, fresh water, electricity, and gas are quite expensive in the Galapagos; because this is so, please do not abuse your welcome through their excessive use.
8. Volunteers should generally respect the family home and the family rules.
9. Lastly, volunteers should understand that although it is rare, sometimes problems arise in home stay situations. In these cases, please communicate the problem to your host family. If the problem is not resolved that way, please contact the Galapagos Office to resolve the problem

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- **HONORABLE SERVICE.** We ask that our volunteers agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, to follow Galapagos ICE procedures, and to remain loyal to Galapagos ICE’s mission and goals.
- **CONDUCT.** Volunteers are expected to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all volunteers, staff, the Galapagos ICE Organization, its agents, directors, and the Galapagos community we serve. The following is an incomplete list of some actions and behaviors that may lead to a volunteer’s dismissal from service:
 - theft or inappropriate removal or possession of Galapagos ICE property, or the property of one of its agents (including host families);
 - failure to cooperate fully in any Galapagos ICE investigation;
 - performing volunteer duties under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
 - unauthorized possession, distribution, sale, or transfer of illegal drugs;
 - creating a disturbance in the volunteer environment which could jeopardize the safety of others;
 - lack of cooperation or other disrespectful conduct;
 - unsatisfactory performance;
 - unauthorized disclosure of Galapagos ICE proprietary or confidential information;
 - violations of the attendance/travel policies below; etc.
- **ATTENDANCE.** Volunteer attendance and promptness is essential to the operation of each of our programs. Volunteers should notify Emily Pozo at the Puerto Ayora Office if they are unable to be present at scheduled times.
- **TRAVEL.** Volunteers are asked to contact the Puerto Ayora Office (either by phone, or writing) if they decide to travel to another island, or go diving. Be sure to include the time and date of departure, where you will be staying, with whom you are travelling, and when you will be returning. In the case of diving, include the name of the diving company. We ask this so that we may respond appropriately should an emergency arise.
- **CESSATION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE.** Galapagos ICE recognizes your right as a volunteer to discontinue your service at any time and for any reason. Likewise, we withhold the right to discontinue our volunteer service relationship with any individual at any time and for any reason. If you choose to discontinue your volunteer service, please endeavor to give us at least two weeks’ notice so that we can find someone to take over your responsibilities. Note, however, that a premature cessation of our relationship may have serious consequences upon your legal status in the Islands, as we cannot sponsor you if you are not a volunteer.
- **LEGAL STATUS OF GALAPAGOS VOLUNTEERS.** In order to volunteer legally in the Islands, volunteers enter the province as transients, and according to the 1998 Special Galapagos Law, Article 30, the following traveling restrictions obtain: volunteers cannot
 - Hold a paying job of any kind in the Islands, or sell goods/services that are outside the direct supervision of Galapagos ICE Organization; nor can they
 - Remain in the province for more than 90 days a year without a special dispensation from the Galapagos Government Council.

GETTING HERE

Travel on the Ecuadorian mainland (Quito or Guayaquil)

Your international flight should place you either in Quito or Guayaquil. Keep in mind that your destination in the Galapagos is BALTRA (Baltra Airport, on Baltra Islands in the Galapagos). This is relevant because airport staff will most often refer to Galapagos flights as flights to Baltra.

1. First, be sure to arrive at the airport at least **two hours** prior to your departure.
2. Proceed to the Consejo del Gobierno counter (which opens at 6am), where you will be required to present your passport and pay a \$10 USD fee (in cash) for a transport card. *Important:* do not lose this card, and keep it with your passport.
3. Pass luggage through the AGROCALIDAD security checkpoint (in Quito, just to the left of the CONSEJO DEL GOBIERNO ticket booth). Your luggage will be inspected to ensure that you are not transporting any prohibited animals or agricultural products to the Islands. CONSEJO DEL GOBIERNO offers an English-version list of prohibited items [here](#). This counter opens at 6am.
4. Check into the airline counter.
5. Proceed through security; after you have done so, there is a lounge in which you can purchase coffee and snacks, and relax until you board your flight.

Travel in the Galapagos

Baltra Airport / Shuttle/ Ferry

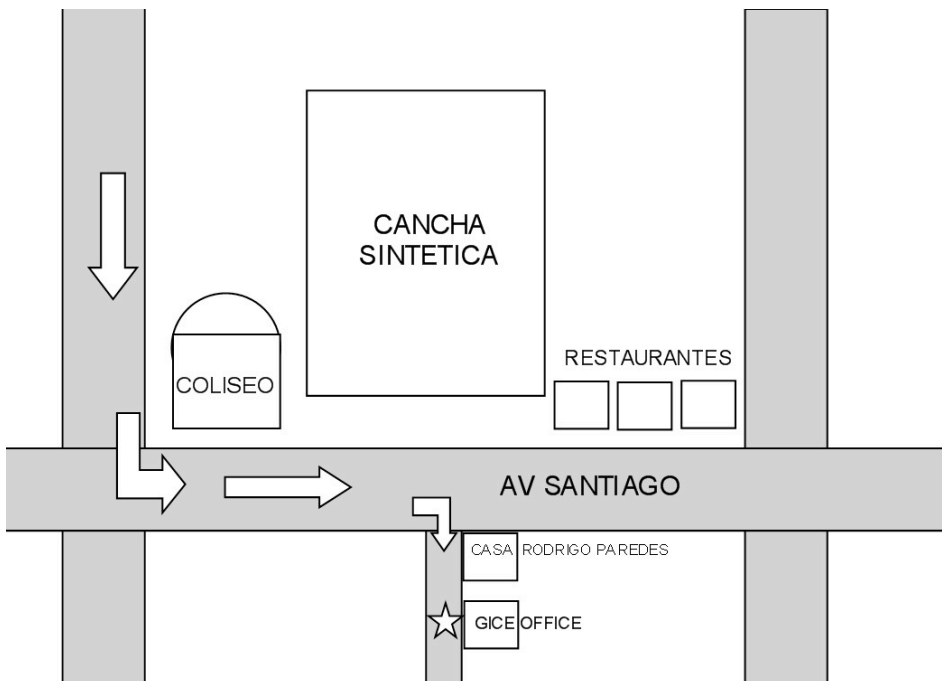
1. When you arrive and deplane at the Baltra Airport in the Galapagos, be prepared to present CONSEJO DEL GOBIERNO officials with two items:
 - a. your completed visitor information form, which should have been given to you at the airport on the mainland or on the plane during your flight; and
 - b. a copy of the Consejo del Gobierno Waiver form sent to you via email. This will waive the Galapagos National Park Fee. In return, you will receive a ticket. *Important:* save this ticket, and keep it with your passport.
2. (If you are planning on taking the bus to Puerto Ayora, this is a good time for you to reserve a bus ticket, as it takes some time to move and order the luggage from the plane. You may reserve a seat at the counter labeled “CITTEG.”)
3. Proceed through another airport security checkpoint, directly to your right, and wait for your luggage. Be sure to have your luggage tags in hand so you can claim your bags.
4. Take the free shuttle bus to the Itabaca Canal. Be aware that there are some shuttles that shuttle people to the Baltra port (or muelle), so make sure that you are on the bus to the CANAL. There are individuals who work for the airport who will help you stow your luggage below the bus. The trip to the canal takes a

little less than ten minutes.

5. The bus will drop you off at the ferry. Walk your luggage up to the ferry, handing it to the ferry employees who will stow it on the top of the ferry. Then proceed to the left to board the ferry. Prices are either \$.80 or \$.50 (eighty cents or sixty cents) per passenger. The ferry ride is about ten minutes long.

Ground Travel to Puerto Ayora

1. After disembarking from the ferry you can take either take a bus, or a private taxi, to Puerto Ayora.
 - a. The CITTEG bus is \$1.80. Hopefully you have reserved your seat when at the airport, but if you haven't, and desire this option, you can sometimes find a seat. Ask for the "CITTEG bus," find a seat, and stow your luggage. The ride takes about an hour, and the bus drops you off near the pier, which is basically the city center.
 - b. Taxi rides to Puerto Ayora are usually \$15. *Important:* this price is per trip and not per person. So if you find other people, you can break up the cost of the taxi considerably. The taxis are the white trucks found when you arrive on the other side of the canal.
2. When you arrive in Puerto Ayora, please get a taxi from the street asking them to take you to el Coliseo en el Barrio la Union. A Galapagos ICE representative will be waiting for you in the Galapagos ICE office to take you to your host family. You can also show the taxi driver the map on the next page.
3. If you have any questions please feel free to call Emily Pozo: 093871332 cell phone or you can call the office number from the mainland or Galapagos at: 5301-5108.



GENERAL GALAPAGOS INFORMATION

Below is some basic information about visiting the Galapagos Islands.

- **Entry/Exit Requirements:** A valid passport is required to enter and depart Ecuador. Tourists must also provide evidence of return or onward travel. U.S. citizens traveling on regular passports do not need a visa for a stay of 90 days or less. For more information, please visit the U.S. Department of State [webpage](#) on travel to Ecuador, or contact your home country's agency for foreign affairs.
- **Water** quality is highly unpredictable, and tap water is only used for washing. Drink only bottled water (which costs approximately a dollar a gallon), and use the bottled water to brush your teeth.
- **Traveler's diarrhea** is the most common health risk for travel in Ecuador. Information about prevention and treatment is available in the *Vaccines and Health Tips* section of this document (page 17).
- **Altitude** may be a problem for some travelers if arriving in Quito. The airport is the highest airport in the world. If you suspect altitude may aggravate a current medical condition, please consult your doctor.
- If you are prone to **sea sickness** or **motion sickness**, bring medication to help with symptoms. Note: the ocean is rougher from the end of July until September.
- **Currency:** US dollar. Bring sufficient cash in small denominations, since at times it will be difficult to use \$50 or \$100 bills. Credit cards and travelers checks are often not accepted at smaller businesses, but most credit cards usually are at larger ones. In the Galapagos, MasterCard and Visa are the only ATM cards accepted.
- It is recommended that you keep the bulk of your money and your passport locked in your luggage or in the hotel safety deposit box. Carry a copy of your passport and the amount of money you need for one day only.
- **Electricity:** 110 watts (i.e., the same wattage as in the United States).
- **Time:** The Galapagos Islands are on Central Standard Time and Ecuador is on Eastern Standard Time. The Galapagos does not use Daylight Saving Time.
- There is a 45 pound **weight limit for luggage** on the planes to the Galapagos Islands. Additionally, if you will be traveling on a cruise, smaller suitcases are recommended. If you are bringing donations for Galapagos ICE, please e-mail info@galapagosice.org for weight limit information.
- Bring plenty of memory cards, extra batteries, disposable underwater cameras, and any toiletries or medications that you might need. The selection of these items on the Islands will be limited, and will be more expensive than if purchased in your home country.
- When using the **washroom**, toilet paper is thrown away in the garbage can next to the toilet. This is especially important on tour boats.

- **Weather:** May to November is the cool season with average temperatures ranging from 68 to 82F. December to May is hot and humid. Also be aware that there may be cold currents in the water; water temperature will be about 65F.
- **Snorkeling:** There is a rental charge for snorkel gear on most boats.
- Though the Galapagos is relatively safe, always be aware of your surroundings.

VACCINES AND HEALTH TIPS

Below is some basic information about immunizations and health precautions for your visit to the Galapagos. We urge you to review the most current [recommendations](#) on travel to the Galapagos/Ecuador available from the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and to schedule a check-up with a Travel Medicine specialist before your trip. Please note that some immunizations require 4-6 weeks or more to become effective, so it is important to schedule them well in advance of your departure date.

Recommended Immunizations

Yellow Fever – Administered as a single shot. Should be given at least 10 days before potential exposure, with boosters every 10 years if there is on-going risk of exposure. Note: Cases of Yellow Fever are extremely rare in the Galapagos, but the immunization is required for travel to Ecuador, of which the Galapagos is a province.

Hepatitis A – Typically administered as 2 shots, 6 months apart. Also available in a combination form for both Hepatitis A and B, which is administered as 3 shots over a period of 6 months. Provides lifetime immunity.

Typhoid – Two forms of vaccine are available: (1) The oral Ty21a vaccine consists of four capsules, one taken every other day, with the last one taken at least 1 week before potential exposure. (2) The ViCPS shot is administered once, and should be given at least 2 weeks before potential exposure. Boosters are required every 2-5 years if there is on-going risk of exposure.

Routine Immunizations

Tetanus – Basic childhood series required every 10 years

Polio – Basic childhood series required.

Hepatitis B – Typically administered as 3 shots over a period of 6 months. A combination form for Hepatitis A and B is available. See *Hepatitis A*, above. Provides lifetime immunity.

Consult the CDC webpage for a full list of [routine adult vaccinations](#).

Optional Immunizations

Malaria – Note that at the time of this writing, the CDC identifies no risk of Malaria in the Galapagos Islands or the cities of Guayaquil and Quito on the Ecuadoran mainland. If you will be traveling to other areas where there may be a risk, consult the CDC webpage on [Antimalarial Drugs](#).

Traveler's Diarrhea Prevention

Most importantly, *never* drink any water that comes from a faucet. *Consume only bottled water, and use only bottled water to brush your teeth.* Be particularly careful of fruits and vegetables purchases in markets and/or grocery stores—they are generally safe if they need to be peeled (like limes, marakuya, papaya, etc.), but need to be washed using antibacterials otherwise (in the case of apples, grapes, etc.). A helpful (if austere) rule to remember is "Boil it, Cook it, Peel it, or Forget it!"

Wash your hands before eating, as this will cut down on consumption of harmful bacteria. Some travelers also use hand sanitizer in the event that washroom facilities are not available.

Most restaurants and street vendors are safe, but some can be a little dodgy; consult with the Puerto Ayora office about advice if you have any questions.

Don't forget to pack anti-diarrhea medication such as Imodium, so that if you do become ill, you will be prepared to treat the problem at the first sign of symptoms.

Heat and Sun Exposure

- Take care not to over-exert yourself in extreme heat and humidity. Rest or nap when needed and drink plenty of bottled water.
- Always protect your skin from sunburn by covering up with lightweight clothing, hats and sunscreen with a high SPF level. Even with a high SPF content, you will leave the Islands with a tan, and so no worries.
- You will likely be doing a lot of walking over varied terrain during your visit. It's a good idea to prepare for your visit with regular, moderate exercise to build up your strength and stamina.

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Is a visa required to visit the Galapagos?

A valid passport is required for any foreign visitors to the Islands. (USA residents, see <http://travel.state.gov> for details.) For those who will be in the Galapagos Islands and/or Ecuador for more than three months, a visa is required. If you are not a U.S. resident, please check your nearest consular office for visa information.

Is there a limitation for how long I can stay in the Islands?

Currently the Galapagos Special Law only allows for transients (the legal designation of volunteers) to be in the Islands for no more than 90 days. This may be extended once in coordination with the Galapagos Government Council.

Are any vaccinations/immunizations required or suggested?

Required: Yellow Fever. Recommended: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio, and Antimalarial drugs. Note: The actual risk of contracting Yellow Fever or Malaria in the Galapagos Islands is extremely low.

Are there any governmental advisories about travel to the Galapagos Islands?

The United States State Department has issued the following statements about travel to Ecuador (of which the Galapagos Islands are territories):

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1106.html.

Will Galapagos ICE handle my travel plans and expenses?

Once volunteers have secured their international flights to either Quito or Guayaquil on the Ecuadorian mainland, Galapagos ICE can help secure your flight to the Islands. These flights should be booked six weeks ahead of time. Please email volunteer@galapagosice.org for more information.

Are there any fees upon arrival to the Galapagos?

At the airport on the Ecuadorian mainland, before you depart for the Islands, you must purchase a transit card from the Consejo del Gobierno counter, which costs \$10 USD per person, and is payable in cash. Galapagos ICE has the Galapagos National Park entry fee of \$100 USD waived for all volunteers.

How do I communicate with friends and family back home when I'm on the Islands?

Internet cafes are plentiful in Puerto Ayora. Many volunteers also bring cell phones to the Islands. (Be sure to check with your cell phone service provider about international coverage from the Islands.) Alternatively, you can subscribe to an international cell phone service in advance of your trip (again, check the coverage), buy cell phone while in the Islands, or you can purchase a phone card to use at public phones.

Do I need travel insurance?

Galapagos ICE highly recommends travel insurance for volunteers. Please contact your insurance carrier or consult the web to find a provider.

What is Galapagos ICE's position on diversity?

Galapagos ICE strives to pursue its mission by providing an inclusive volunteer environment, and selects its volunteers without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, or age.

PACKING CHECKLIST

Volunteers who will be departing from U.S. cities are urged to review the U.S. Transportation Security Administration’s guidelines for checked and carry-on luggage: <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>

CLOTHING		FIRST AID		SNORKEL GEAR	
	Bathing Suit		Aspirin/Ibuprofen		Old socks (wear them with flippers to prevent blisters)
	Light hiking pants		Band-aids		Prescription Snorkel mask (if you do not wear contacts)
	Shorts		Neosporin		Galapagos ICE has limited snorkel equipment available for rental.
	Underwear		Insect Repellent		
	Pajamas		Imodium	OTHER	
	Hat		Sunscreen lotion		Binoculars
	Skirt		Sunburn treatment (i.e., Aloe Vera)		Small travel alarm clock/watch
	Sweatshirt		Antacids		Flashlight
	Rain gear/poncho		Prescription Medications		Notebook with pen
	Blouse		Motion sickness medication		Address book (to send post cards from Post Office Bay)
	Light jacket				Guidebooks (see Suggested Reading)
	Gym shoes or lightweight hiking boots	TOILETRIES			Credit Cards (in the Galapagos only MasterCard and Visa ATM)
	Sandals: TEVA or similar are best for the terrain		Contact lens solution		Toilet Paper
	Socks		Comb & Brush		Fanny pack
	T-shirt: long and short sleeved		Deodorant		Plastic zip-lock bags for items so they do not get wet
	Light shirt to block sun		Shampoo		Passport
	Washcloth to dry feet after wet landing		Skin care lotion		Copies of all your documentation, kept separate from passport
	Sun glasses		Shaving cream/razor		Swiss Army Knife
** Clothing needs will vary depending on the season. Hotter months are from Jan. until May. Cooler months are Sept. until Nov.			Feminine products		Underwater Camera
			Toothbrush/paste		Camera and a lot of film (some suggest 1-2 rolls per day)
			Sun protected lip balm		Rechargeable batteries for camera

SUGGESTED READING

Angermeyer, Johanna. *My Father's Island*.

Boyce, Barry. *A Traveler's Guide to the Galapagos Islands*.

Constant, Pierre. *Marine Life of the Galapagos: Divers' Guide to the Fish, Whales, Dolphins and Marine Invertebrates*. Odyssey Publishers.

De Torre, Octavio. *The Curse of the Giant Tortoise: Tragedies, Mysteries and Crimes in the Galapagos Islands*.

D'Orso, Michael. *Plundering Paradise: The Hand of Man on the Galapagos Islands*.

Fitter, Julian. *Wildlife of the Galapagos*. Princeton Illustrated Checklists.

Hickman, Cevland P. *Galapagos Marine Life Series*. Multiple field guides for marine invertebrates. Sugar Spring Press.

Hinkman, John. *Enchanted Islands: The Galapagos Discovered*.

Humann, Paul. *Reef Fish Identification: Galapagos*.

Jackson, Michael H. *Galapagos: A Natural History*. (This book is used by many guides in the Galapagos.)

Larson, Edward J. *Evolution's Workshop: God and Science in the Galapagos*.

McMullen, Conley K. *Flowering Plants of the Galapagos*

Nybakken, JW. *Marine Biology. An Ecological Approach*. 5th ed. Harper & Row Publishers N.Y.

Weiner, Jonathan. *The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in Our Time*.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Galapagos Office Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Emily Pozo, President and Founder
Galapagos ICE
Puerto Ayora, Galapagos, Ecuador

Email: epozo@galapagosice.org

Telephone:

Calling from Mainland Ecuador (or local Galapagos cell phone):

0530-15108 or

093871332

Calling from a landline phone in the Galapagos:

530-15108 or

093871332

Calling Internationally:

(593) 530-15108 or

(593) 93871332

US Office Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Eric Caldwell, Ph.D., Executive Director
Galapagos ICE Organization
2702 Eton Rd.
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Phone: (434) 882 0498

Email: ecaldwell@galapagosice.org