

DESTINATION INFORMATION FOR ECUADOR AND THE GALÁPAGOS

What You Need to Know Before You Go

PASSPORT AND VISA INFORMATION

In order to enter Ecuador as a citizen of the United States, you will need:

A signed passport valid for 6 months beyond the completion of this trip.

Make sure your passport has enough blank visa pages available for entry and exit stamps.

Contact our partner, VisaCentral for easy, efficient passport and visa processing. Call 866 788 1100 or visit our Travel Store at abercrombiekent.com/travel_store.

If you are not a citizen of the United States, your entry requirements may vary. Please consult the nearest diplomatic or consular office of the country or countries you will be visiting.

CONSULAR INFORMATION

The US Department of State provides Country Specific Information Sheets for every country in the world, as well as Travel Advisories. Find this information by calling 888 407 4747 or 202 501 4444 or online at travel.state.gov.

CURRENCY

Ecuador's currency is the U.S. dollar.

Bills are the same as those in the United States, but coins are minted and accepted only in Ecuador. Most merchants and banks will not accept \$100 bills due to counterfeiting schemes so be sure to carry a supply of new, crisp bills in small denominations of \$5, \$10, \$20 or \$50. Worn or soiled notes may not be accepted in smaller cities and towns. Major credit cards are generally accepted in larger cities in shops, hotels and restaurants. ATM access is available in larger cities.

If you are carrying currency other than the U.S. dollar, exchange currency only at authorized outlets such as banks and hotels and exchange only what you think you will need during your trip. Save all receipts from any currency transaction. You may be asked to produce them when you exit the country, and they are required if you intend to reconvert local currency.

We suggest travelling with some U.S. dollars and at least two major credit cards. (Some merchants may tag on a surcharge of between 6%-10% for credit card purchases). If you have a "Chip and PIN" card, be careful to shield your number from view while entering it on a keypad; never disclose your PIN verbally. Notify your credit card company of your travel plans prior to your departure to avoid any fraud concerns.

We do not recommend traveler's checks as they are not widely accepted.

HEALTH

It is important to familiarize yourself with any potential health issues or concerns related to your destination, and so we strongly recommend consulting the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for up-to-date information on required and recommended vaccines and medications. Visit them online at wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel or call 800 232 4636. Plan to visit your

doctor or local travel clinic at least 4-6 weeks before departure to allow time for any vaccinations to take effect or to fill any prescriptions.

Required Vaccination

A yellow fever vaccination is required to enter Ecuador only if you are arriving from or have transited through a yellow fever endemic area in South America or Africa. The CDC provides a current list of all affected countries. If vaccination for yellow fever is necessary, you must carry an International Certificate of Vaccination provided by your physician; without it, you may be denied entry. If your physician advises against receiving the vaccination because of your personal medical history, he or she can provide you with the necessary documentation for the country(ies) that you are visiting.

Travellers must carry proof of a medical insurance policy contracted for payment of all costs for hospitalization and medical treatment while in Ecuador. A health insurance card, copy of your policy or invoice, or an internationally recognized credit card with health insurance included, will generally be accepted as proof of insurance to enter the country.

If your journey includes travel to high-altitude Andean destinations in Ecuador including Quito, Cuenca, or Cotopaxi, you may experience altitude sickness. Please consult your healthcare provider for suggestions on prevention and treatment.

Note for flights from mainland Ecuador to Galápagos: Women who are 7 months pregnant and travelling to the Galápagos are required by the airline to present a medical certificate issued within 10 days of the flight date that confirms that there is no risk of travelling by air from the port of origin to the destination as well as a document releasing the airline from any liability. Travel to the Galápagos for women in advanced stages of pregnancy is not recommended as the cruise activities may be too strenuous.

WEATHER

Ecuador has four distinct geographical regions each with its own weather patterns. Generally, Quito tends to get rain in the afternoon and temperatures average between 50 F and 80 F. In the Galápagos, the climate is warm and dry year-round with temperatures averaging around 85 F. It is can be cool and misty from June to December and rough seas are common from July to October. The Amazon lies to the east and is hot and humid with average temperatures in the 80s. The Coastal Lowlands on the west coast experience sunny days and afternoon downpours from January to May, while the months of June through December are usually cooler and overcast. Temperatures are cooler in the Highlands and vary with the altitude.

Use a website such as weather.com to find average temperatures and rainfall during your travel times.

ELECTRICAL SERVICE

Ecuador - 110 volts/50 hertz (same as the United States).

WHAT TO PACK

Daytime attire: Pack comfortable, casual clothing in natural, breathable fabrics. Temperatures will change as altitudes and time of day change, so it's best to bring shorts as well as long trousers, and clothing you can layer.

Evening attire: Somewhat smarter clothing is appropriate for evening dining in city restaurants. Formal clothing is not necessary. Meals on board Galápagos ships are generally a casual affair, though on some vessels shorts should not be worn to dinner.

For travel in the Galápagos, light cotton slacks with long sleeved shirts will offer protection from the sun and dense vegetation (also good for cooler evenings or walks in the highlands). Shorts, tee shirts and similar clothing are appropriate for everyday wear on board most Galápagos cruise boats. Clothing in lighter/neutral colors is recommended. Cruise vessels generally have snorkeling gear for all passengers; however, if you use fins smaller than a size 6-7 or larger than a size 10-11 we recommend that you bring your own.

If also visiting Amazon regions: expedition-type ventilated long-sleeved shirts and pants (including some pants with zip-off legs that convert long-pants into shorts). Light and neutral colors are best; black, navy or other dark colors tend to attract insects.

Comfortable, walking shoes with low or no heels (rubber soles recommended)

Lightweight, waterproof and well broken-in hiking boots that provide ankle support for trekking-related activities in the Galápagos or Amazon rainforest regions.

River/sport walking shoes such as Tevas® optional for Galápagos cruises for wet landings where you will want a shoe with a good grip that you don't mind getting wet

Sweater or sweatshirt and or a lightweight jacket (From June through the fall season it can be cooler in the early morning hours)

Lightweight raincoat or poncho

Swimming suit (bring more than one for Galápagos cruises if you plan on snorkeling)

Sunglasses with strap; a wide-brimmed sunhat that ties on

Sunblock (min SPF 30/ fragrance-free) and lip balm; mosquito repellent

Optional items: Lightweight binoculars, a waterproof daypack, a small flashlight, and a lightweight collapsible walking stick.

Simple first-aid kit

Prescriptions and medications (We recommend you carry these in their original bottles and/or packaging.)

Charging cables for electronics

Voltage converter and adapter plugs

Note: Laundry service is available at your hotels.

Non-native plants and animals pose one of the biggest challenges to the conservation of the Galápagos Islands. **Make sure that your shoes are free of soil and/or seeds.** On arrival at Baltra or San Cristobal airports your footwear is inspected to prevent any invasive and potentially destructive species from entering the islands. The Galapagos Inspection and Quarantine System (SICGAL) is responsible for this inspection. There is a US\$20 per pair fee that is charged if the inspector determines your footwear needs to be cleaned before you continue on your Galapagos trip.

Baggage Restrictions

Baggage restrictions: Passenger checked baggage on domestic flights within Ecuador is limited to one piece weighing no more than 50 pounds with linear dimensions not to exceed 62 inches

(height, width and depth). Hand luggage is limited to one bag weighing no more than 17 pounds with a maximum size of 21 in. x 13 in. x 9 in. and one personal item. Do not pack electronic devices or medications in your checked baggage. Carry important items and documents with you in your hand luggage. Any additional or overweight pieces will be charged on check-in.

As a preventative measure, it is recommended that all luggage be secured with a TSA approved lock.

What You Need to Know When You Arrive

TIME ZONES

Ecuador operates on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) –5 hours.

At 9:00 a.m. in Ecuador, it is:

EST	9:00 a.m. the same day
CST	8:00 a.m. the same day
MST	7:00 a.m. the same day
PST	6:00 a.m. the same day

The Galápagos Islands are one hour behind Ecuador's continental time.

Note: Ecuador does not subscribe to Daylight Savings Time and you might need to account for daylight saving adjustments in the United States.

LANGUAGE

The official language in Ecuador is Spanish. Most highland Indians still speak Quichua as their first language.

Please consult with your guide on translations, if needed.

AIRPORT INFORMATION

At most international airports, passengers cannot be met inside secured areas. This includes Immigration, Customs halls and Baggage Claim. Your A&K representative will greet you as you exit these restricted areas; look for the person holding the distinctive yellow A&K signboard.

Before departing, remember to tag your checked luggage with the A&K luggage tags provided. These brightly colored markers help identify you and your luggage quickly.

PROTECTIONS AND PRECAUTIONS

Use the safes where available in your accommodations to secure your valuables, especially passports, medications, jewelry, money and electronics. If you must carry valuables, keep them on your person at all times. Be mindful of your surroundings and take extra caution in crowds.

Photocopy the personal information pages of your passport; leave one copy with a family member or friend and pack another separately from the passport itself. You may want to scan and email a copy to yourself for easy, online access. This will help speed up the replacement process.

As a preventative measure, it is recommended that all luggage be secured with a TSA approved lock.

ETIQUETTE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Unless you are shooting a crowded public scene, it is considered courteous to ask permission before taking pictures of local people, especially small children. Please be respectful of local people who do not wish to be photographed.

Photography is not permitted at some locations, which may include government buildings, museums, art galleries, private houses, etc. These areas are usually clearly marked. Do not photograph church interiors while there is a service in progress. If in doubt, please ask.

Be sure to pack ample amounts of batteries and memory cards or film for your camera and video equipment, along with the appropriate charging cables. A dustproof/waterproof case or sealable plastic bags and lens brush are also recommended.

FOOD AND DRINK

Do not use tap water for drinking or brushing teeth. Even “purified” water in open containers should be avoided. It is always preferable and safer to use only bottled or canned water.

Regardless of precautions, changes in water and diet can result in mild abdominal upsets and nausea. To prevent serious illness, avoid suspect foods such as uncooked vegetables, peeled fruit, un-pasteurized milk and milk products. Beware of any food or drink sold by street vendors.

SHOPPING

Many A&K guests enjoy the chance to purchase items that reflect their destination, and so as a courtesy, your guide may recommend a particular shop or arrange a shopping visit. Please note, however, that these recommendations should not be taken as A&K’s endorsement of the shop, merchandise and/or pricing. You assume all responsibility for any transactions that take place, including shipping arrangements that are made.

The decision to shop while travelling is a personal choice and shopping is never compulsory. If at any point during your journey you feel pressured to shop or make purchases, please immediately discuss the matter with your Abercrombie & Kent representative.

Throughout South America, prices at hotel shops and tourist shops are generally fixed; however, when shopping at the local markets, bargaining is expected.

To avoid disappointment, we suggest the following guidelines:

- Compute the exchange rate and thoroughly review credit card receipts before signing.
- Take your purchases home with you whenever possible. Airfreight can take many months and actual shipping charges can be excessive. Customs delays, fees and regulations can further complicate the issue. If you choose to ship purchases, we suggest taking a picture of the item(s) and/or marking them in some way to ensure you receive what was purchased. For example, you could write your name on the backside of a rug. Determine if your shipment will be delivered door-to-door or to the nearest customs facility, as is often the case. Most goods shipped from other countries to the United States are subject to Customs duty.
- Duty taxes, if applicable, are paid as you re-enter the United States. Regardless of assurances by merchants, these cannot be prepaid on your behalf. Currently, each person is entitled to an \$800 duty-free exemption, however, may only bring one liter of alcoholic beverages, 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars.
- Keep all sales receipts for items purchased throughout your trip and try to pack all items that you will need to declare together. This will ease the Customs process upon re-entry into the U.S.
- Consult the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website for more details.
<http://www.cbp.gov/>

COMMUNICATIONS

Contact your cellular telephone provider to determine if your phone operates on the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) and what, if any, activation may be required.

If your phone is not GSM-enabled, you may find that renting a phone specifically designed for use overseas is the most practical option.

TIPPING GUIDELINES

While decisions regarding tipping rest entirely with you, we suggest the following gratuities (noted in U.S. dollars) depending on the type of journey:

	All Small Group Journeys and Pre/Post Tour Extensions	Tailor Made and Signature Journeys
Resident Tour Director or Group Extension Guide	\$15 per person, per day	Not applicable
Local Guides	Included	\$15 per person, per day (full day)
Drivers	Included	\$10 per person, per day (full day)
Airport Transfer Drivers	Included	\$5 per person, per transfer
Hotel Porters	Included	\$2 per bag
Cruise vessels	Included	\$10-\$15 per person, per day – Gratuities accepted on board the boat and shared among the staff.
Naturalist guides on board cruise vessels	Included	\$15 per person, per day – Gratuities accepted on board the boat and shared among the guides.
Housekeepers	Included	\$2 per person, per night
Included Meals	Included	10-15% unless already added
Restaurants or Room Service on own	10-15% unless already added	10-15% unless already added

For extra nights or Tailor Made services added to a small group journey, please follow the Tailor Made Journey guidelines for these days only.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

Scuba diving may be available to qualified guests with an open-water diving certificate (PADI, NAUI, CMAS or other). Availability is dependent on your cruise itinerary and National Park restrictions. Optional scuba diving excursions are operated by local dive companies, not Abercrombie & Kent. Dive times, locations and frequency are at the discretion of the Dive Master and are determined by the guest's diving experience and by the environmental conditions on that day. If you are interested in scuba diving while in the Galapagos, please ask your Travel Consultant for details.