



Visiting the Jama-Coaque Reserve: Frequently Asked Questions

Table of Contents:

- Visa
- Getting to Ecuador from abroad
- Lodging in Quito
- Getting from Quito to Pedernales
- Getting from Pedernales to the Reserve
- Important Phone Numbers
- A note about the phones
- Vaccinations
- Anti-Malaria Pills
- Other Dangers
- Medical Clinics
- Travel Insurance
- Money
- Packing List

Visa: For most countries, a visa is NOT required to enter Ecuador. All you need is a valid passport. Once you arrive in Ecuador, the immigrations desk in the airport will automatically issue you a 90-day tourist visa.

Getting to Ecuador from abroad: There are two international airports in Ecuador: one outside the capital of Quito and the other in Guayaquil. The Reserve is accessible from both cities, but Quito is closer, easier, and recommended. Search for flights on any of the online airfare websites, such as Travelocity, Expedia, or Orbitz. If you're lucky, you can get to Ecuador from the US for less than \$600, although \$700 is probably the average, and sometimes it can cost \$1,000. Flights from Europe to Ecuador are a little more expensive. American Airlines, Delta Airlines, Continental, LAN, British Airways, Iberia, KLM, Avianca, and Taca all fly to Quito.

Lodging in Quito: When in Quito, we recommend El Cafecito, which is an inexpensive yet nice, clean, and professional hostel in the popular backpacking neighborhood known as the Mariscal. A shared room (dorm style) costs under \$7 per person, and a private room costs \$10 per person. You can book a room online [here](#). You can also call them at: +593-2-223-4862. Both Spanish and English are spoken. It is located on Luis Cordero 1124 and Reina Victoria, and any self-respecting cab driver in Quito will know exactly where that is. A cab ride from the airport will cost a fixed rate of \$26 and will take roughly 50 minutes.

Getting from Quito to Pedernales:

- **Direct Bus:** There is a direct bus that leaves from the main bus terminal in the south of the city at 5:30 am and arrives to Pedernales at around noon. The bus company is called Trans Vencedores, and the ticket will cost \$6.50. This terminal, called "Quitumbe," is a brand new building (a modern white steel structure) that is about 45 minutes south of the touristy neighborhoods like the Mariscal. Although there is public transportation to Quitumbe, it won't be running that early in the morning; a cab from Mariscal to Quitumbe will cost about \$12, and it is well worth it. If you are taking the 5:30 am bus, ask the person at the front desk of the hostel/hotel to call a cab for you before you go to bed the night before departure. Order a cab for 4:30 am – no later. Then once you get to the terminal, look for the ticket window for Trans Vencedores. This bus will drop you off in Pedernales shortly before noon.
- **Alternatives:** For seasoned Latin American travelers and/or people who speak Spanish well enough to coordinate travel logistics, there are plenty of other options to get to Pedernales. Halfway between Quito and Pedernales is the city of Santo Domingo. Buses leave from Quito to Santo Domingo every half hour from the Quitumbe bus terminal at pretty much all hours of the day and night. Likewise buses from Santo Domingo leave for Pedernales roughly every 20 minutes.

- There is also an option to take a taxi from a company called Encopaser to transport you from Quito to Santo Domingo (half way to Pedernales). You need to call the Encopaser ([+593993524119](tel:+593993524119)) a day ahead you plan to ride with them. In order to get to Pedernales before 12pm, you need to take the 5am or 6am taxi. The cost is \$13 per person. The taxi driver will pick you up anywhere in Quito you want, and will leave you anywhere in Santo Domingo (Bus Terminal Nuevo preferably since you'll be continuing on to Pedernales). From Santo Domingo you take then a bus to Pedernales.

Getting from Pedernales to the Jama-Coaque Reserve:

- For interns: Once you arrive to the small bus terminal in Pedernales, walk one block west (toward the ocean) to a hotel called Hotel Yam Yam, which is relatively tall building on the corner of the street. Wait here in the lobby of this hotel. One of us will already be in Pedernales buying supplies, and we will periodically visit the lobby of the hotel to see if you have arrived. Once we find you, we will travel to the Reserve together in a truck taxi.
- For other visitors: To be arranged on a case-by-case basis at least two weeks in advance with Reserve Manager Jorj Arteaga (jorj@tmalliance.org).

Important Phone Numbers:

- Pamela Goldhagen (Dir. of Admin.): 099-271-5002; she is based in Quito and will almost always have cell phone service.
- Eva Filipczykova (Intern Coordinator): 096-977-4065
- Jorj Arteaga (Reserve Manager): 098-975-1698
- Uver Vaca & Family (Community Liaison): 05-302-6806
- Ryan Lynch (Research Director): 098-732-5336

A note about International Dialing: When dialing any of these numbers from within Ecuador, dial them exactly as they are written above. However, when dialing these numbers from outside of the country, you need to 1) add the country code, which is 593, and 2) delete the first 0. For example, Pamela's number would be +593-99-271-5002. Depending on which country you are calling from, you will also need to dial a code to "dial out of" that country. For example, in the US that number is usually 011.

A note about the phones: There is no cell phone reception in the community or in the reserve, so if you try calling Eva or Jorj's cell phone number, you will only get through to us if we are either in Quito or in one of the nearest coastal towns. Your best bet is to call Pamela in Quito or Uver Vaca in the community. We are all much more easily reached by email.

Correspondence: If your family and friends would like to keep in touch with you while you are at the Reserve, the best way is through email. If they would like to send mail, we highly recommend limiting it to letters and small packages, to avoid delays or packages going missing. There are two addresses they may use:

Jerry Toth

Guanguiltagua N37-152 y Arosemena

Tola

Edif. LeMarie VI, Dept. 201

Quito

Pichincha

Ecuador

Ryan Lynch / Pamela Goldhagen

Jose Tamayo 1024 y Lizardo Garcia

Quito

Pichincha

Ecuador EC 1071

Vaccinations: NO vaccinations are required to enter Ecuador. In terms of vaccines, our official position is that you should do whatever your doctor recommends.

The Center for Disease Control has a page on Ecuador vaccinations, which you can access [here](#). We are not doctors, and so we officially defer to professional opinion.

Our personal opinion, however, is that none of those vaccinations are necessary, aside from vaccinations that you have obviously already received as children, like measles, etc. Hepatitis is probably not a bad vaccination to have wherever you are. Note: Yellow Fever vaccinations are required to enter some very remote parts of the Amazon region in Ecuador. If you plan to visit remote parts in the Ecuadorian Amazon, you can get a cheap and quick vaccination in Quito before go, or you can get one in the US. Documentation is required.

Anti-Malaria Pills: Malaria is rare in coastal Ecuador, and the strain that exists is easily controlled by locally-procured medicine in the very slight chance that the illness is contracted. While it is up to you whether you choose to take anti-malarials, we suggest you refrain.

Other Dangers: There are a few poisonous snakes in the forest. No members of TMA or interns or other staff have ever been bitten. In the community of Camarones, which has over 300 people, there has only been one snake bite in the last ten years, and this person was properly treated and enjoyed a full recovery. That said, we do have snake anti-venom on-site. In terms of illnesses, as previously stated, malaria is not considered a threat. Over the years, a few people have contracted dengue fever, which is basically a high fever that last four days, with some joint pains, and then goes away. The writer of this FAQ once contracted dengue fever and considers it a positive, strengthening life experience.

Another medical concern is the cutaneous form of Leishmaniasis, which is an infection caused by a parasitic protozoa that is carried by a sand fly vector. Educate yourself further on cutaneous Leishmaniasis (<http://www.ajtmh.org/content/86/3/434.full>), and please speak to your local healthcare provider about any concerns you may have. We recommend that you wear pants, socks, and long sleeves during dusk, night, and dawn hours, and TMA encourages the use of DEET insect repellent to avoid bites (but we insist that you apply it far away from other people, food, food crops, eating surfaces, work surfaces, books, and tools to avoid incidental ingestion of the chemical). Link to the CDC site on Leishmaniasis: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/leishmaniasis/>

As in any other forest, there are also bees and wasps; we have one epi-pen on-site but if you know you are allergic, it would be helpful to bring your own epi-pen. Lastly, there is a white fuzzy caterpillar that, as cute as it may look, you don't want to touch: it hurts.

Note: There are both cats and a dog living at the Bamboo House. The Bamboo House is open air, so allergies shouldn't be much of a problem, but you should know ahead of time.

Medical Clinics: There are medical clinics and doctors in the town of Pedernales (25 km from the site) that are good enough for most things. For a full-service hospital such as you would find in North America or Europe, etc., you would need to go to the main cities of Quito or Guayaquil.

Travel Insurance: As is established by the Release & Waiver of Liability, medical insurance while on this project is your own responsibility. We recommend that you sign up for travel insurance. A cursory Google search reveals many options, many of which seem to cost \$1 or \$2 per day. To date, of the 100+ interns, volunteers and other visitors that have visited the reserve in the last five years, nobody has sustained a serious injury or accident. Nevertheless, it is always wise to take precautions.

Money: Currency in Ecuador is the U.S. Dollar. ATMs are plentiful in any major city and usually a mid-sized town will have at least one bank with an ATM. In our area of operations, there are ATMs in Pedernales and Jama. ATM's in both of these cities are operated by Banco de Pichincha, which carries all major credit card logos and only very rarely do international ATM cards fail to work here. If you wish to verify the compatibility of your ATM card with Banco de Pichincha ATMs, inquire with your own bank before departing. Big bills (i.e. \$20 and over) are difficult to use in Ecuador, so we recommend that at least half of whatever cash you bring be in \$10 bills and smaller.

Packing List

Despite its location on the equator, the temperature in the Jama-Coaque Reserve and surrounding region is spectacularly comfortable. During the rainy season (January – June),

the temperature ranges between 72°-88° F (22°-31° C). During the dry season (July – December), the temperature ranges between 66°-86° F (18°-30° C). The nighttime temperature is always just above or just below 70° F (21° C). The real challenge is humidity, which can be overcome by proper clothing.

As a general rule, pack sparingly. More than one large backpack full of stuff is excessive.

Some notes about textiles: There are no one-size-fits-all recommendations here. Synthetic clothing (polyester etc.) will dry much faster than clothing made with natural fibers (cotton/linen/wool). However, synthetic clothing retains body odor despite determined scrubbing. Loose-knit cotton shirts need good sun to dry (sometimes hard to come by) but they easily shed body odor with simple hand washing. Cotton is susceptible to mold and doesn't breathe as well as "quick dry" synthetics, but many of us still find it plenty comfortable to work in.

Whatever you bring, if you decide that you need to purchase clothing, we recommend that you shop at a thrift store. There is a glut of high-quality used clothing in the developed world, and it would go against our interest as a conservation organization to have short-term visitors buying all sorts of stuff just to visit the forest. Synthetic clothing, made of plastics, will not biodegrade in the conceivable future, and we do not want to encourage its continued production and consumption.

Finally, expect that any clothing you bring will be permanently marked by your time here. Oftentimes, clothing is irrevocably stained when visitors leave, although still quite functional. During the rainy season, mold grows on everything: the walls, your clothes, furniture, etc. Work clothing is sometimes ripped. So, don't bring anything you'd cry to see disfigured. Now, for the list:

Outdoor/Work Clothes (these will get wet and dirty):

- 1 pair of lightweight shorts or swimming shorts (for hiking, work)
- 2 pairs of lightweight pants for hiking and working – these will probably get wet, so "quick-dry" pants that breathe well are easiest, and denim is a big NO. People who hate pants and under-pack them reliably regret this decision and end up buying more pants here in Ecuador, though with fewer options to choose from.
- 2 short-sleeve t-shirts
- 2 pairs of long-sleeve shirts. Loose-knit/light weight button-down cotton and/or linen are often found to be most comfortable.

Night/Comfy Clothes (these will stay dry and clean):

- 1 pair of comfortable pants for lounging. You can get some nice, pseudo-artisanal, breezy cotton pants in Pedernales for \$8-12. A lot of folks end up buying some

anyway as a souvenir. If you think you'll do that too, then you can save some space by not packing a pair from home as well.

- 1 pair of jeans, for colder nights and going into town.
- 1 t-shirt that you only wear inside the house, so that it stays clean and dry.
- 1 long-sleeve shirt that you only wear inside the house, so that it stays clean and dry
- A light jacket (e.g. hoody, fleece, lightweight wool, etc.). The coldest it ever gets is 66 ° F (18°C). You should definitely bring something if you will be here in the summer or fall. During January through April, it is unlikely that you would ever need this.
- “Formal” Wear (for Interns): Although Camarones is a modest community and dress is casual, people take great pride in cleaning up after the work day and looking presentable. A nice outfit and moderately nice pair of shoes is good to have on hand. This outfit will also be useful if you have to make a trip to Jama to meet the mayor or something of that nature. You also might relish putting it on when you go to the beach, just to feel clean and fresh.

Undergarments:

- 4 or even 5 pairs of durable socks; a medium-weight wool blend is recommended. Tall enough that you can tuck your pants into them, to keep out mosquitos.
- Underwear...personal choice

Footwear:

- Sandals or flip-flops, for comfort-wear around the house. Available for \$2-10 in Pedernales. We recommend a pair that accommodates socks – very helpful for buggy nights.
- Pair of rubber boots – these can be purchased at any hardware store in Quito or Pedernales or any big town for \$10.00, so don't bother buying them in your home country.
- Pair of old sneakers or hiking boots – these can be used for some outdoor activities, especially in the dry season, but the bulk of your heavy-duty jungle time will be spent in rubber boots.

Special Rubber Boots Note: RUBBER BOOT FITTING/PURCHASE WILL BE ASSISTED BY THE INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR. You need rubber boots. The boots need to fit a certain way and it is best to wait for staff instruction in Pedernales, where boots are purchased by interns for \$10. In the case that extra boots from the Reserve are available, they will be brought to Hotel Yam Yam for fitting. Do not leave Pedernales without a pair of rubber boots. Unless your shoe size is larger than 13 US (46 Europe), it is cheaper, easier, and generally advisable to purchase rubber boots in Ecuador, as opposed to your home country.

Accessories:

You'll be prepared for anything if you check a large backpack and carry on a school sized one, with a very small lightweight bugger or camelback packed away. The school-sized pack is nice for weekend trips and the little guy is good for carrying water and snacks on long hikes.

- A personal field first-aid kit: all participants are required to take their personal first-aid kit with them on all hikes. This should be small and lightweight.
- Field notebook with pens and pencils
- Watch: weatherproof and digital. Stopwatch function is also useful.
- Project Sampling Gear for investigations – YOU are responsible to make sure you have what you need in terms of field equipment needed for data collection. Check with the Intern Coordinator to ensure that the reserve has the desired equipment or confirm that you will have to bring what you need from your home country.
- A durable pair of garden gloves to protect your hands while working (do not forget this item!). In our experience, form fitting leather gloves are worth the steeper price.
- Swimming suit (for waterfall romping and/or working/hiking in the rain)
- Hat (for sun and for protecting hair from snagging on vegetation)
- Towel
- Headlamp or some kind of flashlight. Hands-free headlamps are highly recommended.
- Rechargeable batteries. There is a battery charger for AA and AAA batteries in the community house. This is an easy way to avoid the nasty waste associated with conventional batteries.
- A USB flash drive for storing & transferring documents, photos, etc.
- If you play music, bring an instrument. As there is no electricity at the Reserve; there will be no stereos, iPods, radios, etc.
- A watch with alarm or small travel alarm clock.

Toiletries: We keep body soap stocked in the shower and we try to have a communal supply of natural toothpaste available, although it wouldn't hurt to bring your own tube just in case. Other than that, we ask that you only use organic, biodegradable products. Sometimes truly organic products are hard to find, but please look for the most biodegradable and "natural" one available. You should pack a bar of soap for doing laundry – Dr. Bronner's bar soap works well. If you need shampoo, you should bring your own organic shampoo. Dr. Bronner's is a versatile option, because it can be used for hair, body wash, and for laundry (although most people end up preferring bar soap for laundry).

Books (Important...please read!): We pride ourselves on our library at the Bamboo House. Non-fiction subjects include ecology, biology, sustainable development (including but not limited to agroforestry, permaculture, land-use, conservation), things like bird and

plant identification books, guides to bamboo use, etc., as well as philosophy, psychology, social sciences, art, etc. Please feel encouraged to bring good books and, hopefully, leave a few behind! Actually, please feel a little bit more than just encouraged to leave a good book or two behind...feel quietly obligated to do so. Our library is a product of books thoughtfully left behind by visitors over the years and it's a tradition and resource that is tremendously important to us.

Optional:

Laptops - We're in a period of re-assessment of our laptop policy. All Interns are required to submit a typed final report and will necessitate the use of a computer, for which laptops are useful. However, there is no energy source at the reserve, so laptops have to be recharged in the community (30 min - 1 hour from the reserve). Internet is available in Pedernales (2hrs from reserve) and most hostels/hotels have free WIFI. So there is a use for laptops. On the other hand, we also don't want to break our own rule about bringing gaudy demonstrations of wealth into the community and into the reserve (see below). So there are some members of our team who advocate NO laptops on-site. For now, we leave this decision up to you, as we continue to assess the situation. If you do not bring a computer, there are plenty of internet cafes in Pedernales that charge \$1/hour of use. We are willing to reimburse you for internet/computer charges in Pedernales while you write your final report. If you do bring a laptop, we ask that you be very careful where and when you use it on-site; ask your internship coordinator to explain parameters. *Lastly, if you have an old laptop that you don't use anymore, we would happily accept it as a donation for the community center.

Insect repellent: For the same chemical reason that DEET is toxic to insects, it's also not great for human exposure. Historically, most full-time staff chose to not use DEET. But for those inclined for extra protection against biting insects and the diseases they can carry, applying DEET during the dusk hours can serve as a useful precaution. Another protection against biting bugs is during nighttime is to put on a long-sleeve shirt and a pair of pants and socks. Some people, especially those who tend to get bit a lot (for some reason we're not all equal in this) find generic antihistamines helpful in relieving insect and plant irritation.

Please do NOT bring:

- Gaudy demonstrations of wealth, as it can send the wrong message to people in the community.
- Non-essential and disposable items (especially plastic) that just makes more trash.
- A note about technology: Technology is important, and things such as camcorders or high-powered cameras or audio recording devices, etc. can be of great use at the Reserve and in the Community. But it's important to try not to overtly display such

items in the Community. Also, although there is a heavy lock box to store valuable items, be forewarned that we will not accept responsibility for any technological equipment that is damaged or lost or stolen.

Disclaimer about valuables: In over five years of operation, there have been just two cameras and one cell phone that disappeared, and all were left in plain sight. The last disappearance, presumed to be theft, happened three years ago. That said, we do not accept responsibility for any items that are lost, stolen, or damaged. We have a large lock-box on-site, in which you can store valuables such as laptops, cameras, passports, and wallets, etc.

