



THIRD MILLENNIUM ALLIANCE

Preserving the last remnants of coastal Ecuador's Pacific Forest,
and empowering local communities to restore what has been lost

Visiting the Jama-Coaque Reserve Frequently Asked Questions

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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, which is sufficient for most of our internship programs.

For individuals attending our Semester Abroad or Professional Apprenticeship programs, a visa extension is required. To obtain a visa extension you will need to provide the visa office in Quito with a bank statement showing you have enough money in your account to survive without a job, a copy of your passport, and \$450. The length of the visa extension depends on the amount of money available in your personal account. If you have \$1,200-\$2,500 in your account they will give you a 3 month extension. If you have more than \$3,000 in your account they will give you up to a 6 month extension. TMA staff will assist all Semester Abroad and Professional Apprenticeship interns with the visa extension process.

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.

A cab ride from the airport to the main part of Quito will cost a fixed rate of \$25 and will take roughly 30 minutes.

Lodging in Quito: When in Quito, we recommend El Cafecito, which is an inexpensive yet nice 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: <http://elcafecitohostel.wix.com/elcafecito>. 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.

Other hostels in Quito used by interns include:

- Secret Garden – www.secretgardenquito.com
- La Guayunga Hostel – www.laguayungaquito.com

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.

Getting from Pedernales to the Jama-Coaque Reserve:

For interns: TMA staff will meet interns at the bus terminal in Pedernales to make the trip to the Reserve. The trip is made either by bus or a truck taxi

that makes trips to Camarones twice a day.

If you are traveling to the Reserve on your own you would take a bus traveling South from Pedernales to the entrance road of Camarones. The town of Camarones where we work is off the main highway, so buses do not enter Camarones. You would take any bus heading South from Pedernales going towards the cities of Jama, San Vicente, or Bahia. Tell the driver or chofer that you want to get off at the entrance to Camarones (la entrada de Camarones). From here you will either need to catch a ride with someone entering Camarones in a car or make the 30 minute walk into Camarones. The walk is down a dirt road that passes through a couple of small streams. You know you have arrived to the center of Camarones once you see a basketball and soccer court on your left. The large brick and bamboo structure just past the court is the community house, where we have a storage room and where you can meet with community manager Uver Vaca. Uver is the only local who speaks English.

- For other visitors: To be arranged on a case-by-case basis at least two weeks in advance with our current Manager. Please contact us at info@tmalliance.org for arranging visits.

Important Phone Numbers:

- Ryan Lynch (Executive Director): 0987325336
- Uver Vaca & Family (Community Liaison): 05-302-6806

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, Ryan's number would be +593-98-732-5336 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 our field team's cell phone numbers, 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 Ryan in Quito or Uver Vaca in the community. We are all much more easily reached by email.

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 and travel information. We are not doctors, and so we officially defer to professional opinion. Proof of Yellow Fever vaccinations are required to enter some very remote parts of the Amazon region. If you plan to visit remote parts in the Ecuadorian Amazon, you can get a cheap and quick vaccination in Quito before going, or you can get one in the US prior to arrival.

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

Other Dangers: There are a few venomous snakes in the forest, however no members of TMA or interns 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. We do not carry anti-venom on site for the reason that anti-venom can lead to a more serious medical emergency than the snake venom itself when in remote areas like our Reserve. In terms of illnesses, as previously stated, malaria is not considered a threat. Over the years, a few people have contracted dengue fever, which causes a high fever that last 2-3 days, with some joint pains, before going away.

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. Leishmaniasis results in a skin ulcer at the site of the bite. Educate

yourself further on cutaneous Leishmaniasis by reading the CDC's website. We had a number of cases in 2014, but then took action and have not had any cases since. 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). Treatment of Leishmaniasis is available in Ecuador and abroad.

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, please bring 1-2 epi-pens of your own.

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 highly 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 150+ 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.

Cancellation & Refund Policy: We at TMA understand there are times when interns or other visitors may be forced to cancel their participation in our program. It is unfortunate when this happens, especially when the participant has been looking forward to their stay for a long time. TMA puts a great deal of time and effort into planning, organizing, preparing, and executing our internship program, so these cancellations take a significant toll on us as well. For this reason, we must strictly adhere to our Cancellation & Refund Policy for all participants. We appreciate your understanding on this matter, and we

strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance to recuperate as much of your investment as possible in the event of an unforeseen cancellation. The following points outline TMA's Cancellation & Refund Policy for all programs:

- A 50% non-refundable deposit of the total program cost is required to confirm participation in our programs.
- All cancellations must be delivered to TMA in person and/ or via email: info@tmalliance.org
- All cancellations made at least 30 days before the start date of the program will receive a 50% refund.
- All cancellations made between 1-30 days prior to the state date of the program will receive a 25% refund.
- Cancellations made after starting the program will not receive any refund.
- If an intern needs to leave the program at any point in time, they are welcome to return to the reserve to complete their program at no extra cost when they are able.

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. To use ATM machines it is important to bring a debit card to Ecuador – not just a credit card. It is difficult to get cash quickly in Ecuador without a debit card. In our area of operations, there are ATMs in Pedernales and Bahia. 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 small town 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. One large backpacking backpack and one daypack is plenty sufficient for two months. Note: the reserve is remote and the road up is not paved, so wheeled suitcases are not recommended; hiking backpacks will make your life a lot easier!

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.

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 (and this is just a suggested list to get you thinking about what you'll need):

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.

- 2-4 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.
- 1-2 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): It wouldn't hurt to bring one modest collared shirt in the case any formal activities happen to occur in the local town of Camarones during your stay in the reserve. Even if no formal events happen during your stay, it's always nice to have a clean shirt for town visits.

Undergarments:

- 4 or 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:** Our intern managers will assist interns in purchasing rubber boots on the first day of the internship. You need rubber boots in the reserve. 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 bottle or camelback packed away. The school-sized pack is nice for weekend trips and 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 but contain all of the vital medical items.

- 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.

Examples of field equipment that will be useful during your time in the Reserve includes: a good pair of binoculars, a GPS, a foldable field chair/stool, rite-in-the-rain notebooks, and digital camera.

- 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 (quick dry towels work best!)
- Headlamp or some kind of flashlight. Hands-free headlamps are highly recommended over flashlights, but both work well. After years of nocturnal field work we recommend Fenix Headlamps.
- Rechargeable batteries – Bring plenty! 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. We highly recommend the Eneloop brand rechargables and bring plenty of back-ups because charging is only available via solar panel (weather dependent) and in the community.

- 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.

Toiletries: We keep natural body soap stocked for emergencies, but we ask that each intern bring their own natural tube of toothpaste and body soap/shampoo/etc. We ask that you only use organic, biodegradable products. 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 - All science/ research interns are required to submit a typed final report and will necessitate the use of a computer, for which laptops are useful. Permaculture interns have less of a need for laptops. 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). If you do not bring a computer, there are plenty of internet cafes in Pedernales that charge \$1/hour of use. 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 but working laptop that

you don't use anymore, we would happily accept it as a donation for the community center.

A note on electronics care: Living and working in the tropics means that humidity is a daily and constant issue. The humidity in the tropics can very quickly ruin fancy and delicate electronics, so we highly recommend you come prepared if you plan to bring electronics. A good solution to protect your electronics is to bring a sealable drybag or pelican case and a bunch of rechargeable silica packs. We have some silica packs available on site, but having personal packs available will ensure daily protection of your own gear. We keep our electronics (cameras, laptop, audio recorder, etc) in hermetically sealed plastic tupperware boxes loaded with silica packs. If you search 'Dry Packs Silica Gel Desiccant, 40gm' on Amazon.com you'll find a number of options.

Insect repellent: For the same chemical reason that DEET is toxic to insects, it's also not great for human exposure 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.

Shipping/ Mail: Shipping and mail in Ecuador are significantly behind the US or Europe systems. While it is possible to send things to and from Ecuador, it usually arrives significantly later and ends up costing significantly more than shipping in other countries (postcards being the exception). Packages that have been sent to our office in Quito for past interns have arrived 5-6 weeks after they were sent and in general wound up costing about \$100 in shipping and \$100+ in Ecuadorian taxes/ custom fees. So we highly recommend that you DO NOT have things sent to you while in Ecuador. In the case that you desperately need something from outside of Ecuador sent to you during your stay in the reserve you may use the TMA address in Quito (provided below). Please know that you are responsible for paying all shipping costs, taxes, and fees, which are very likely to exceed \$200 for even the most modest box (i.e. the size of a small laptop).

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