



Cloud Forest Ecological Reserve



Highlights

- Getting off the tourist trail and experiencing community life in an Ecuadorian cloud forest.
- Teaching English to local children, thus equipping them with an important life skill for their future.
- Exploring the forest during the weekends – a stunning place to live, work and travel.

About The Project

The Cloud Forest is located two and half hours north of Quito. The forest is home to over 450 species of bird and some very unique flora and fauna. Located within the cloud forest is a reserve which forms part of the bio-region of 'El Choco' one of the most important biological areas in the world for its high concentration of biodiversity. Its delicate ecosystem needs preserving in order to protect the plant and wildlife.

Volunteer Role

The first Monday at the Academia is an orientation day. All new students and volunteers go on a city tour of Quito to get to know the city and learn how to get around and use the public transport system. In the afternoon there's an information session in which you will learn about the Academia, as well as about important issues such as security, cultural do's and don't etc. You will then have a session all about your project from the project coordinator who will travel to Quito, and then take you to the project the following day.



As a volunteer you will be living and working closely alongside the local community. In the first week, you will be working within the coffee plantation helping to clear, prune, plant and harvest. In week two, you will be working within the local school, teaching English to children. You can also organize extra activities for them after school, such as sports and games. In week three, you will travel to a nearby area in the jungle. The project assists a local community by clearing and maintaining an area of land alongside



the river, which the community uses to grow crops, assisting them in becoming self-sufficient. Some basic construction work may also be required, for example building wooden constructions on which fruits and crops can grow. In your fourth week, you can choose which activity you partake in based upon your preference from weeks 1-3. Throughout your stay, you can also get involved with teaching English to the children of your host family and surrounding homes.

Location

The forest is located 2 hours north of Quito. Weekends are your free time to spend as you wish, but if you would like to continue volunteering and further your integration into the community, you can teach, help out with agricultural work on family small-holdings or work within the coffee plantation. The town is well geared up for tourism, so there are plenty of activities you can partake in at the weekends such as canyoning, canyoning, rafting, horse riding, trekking and tubing! You may also like to visit the nearby town of Nanegalito, or travel three hours to the coast, the nearest beach being Atacames. Volunteers often return to Quito for the weekend too - Quito has plenty to offer in terms of culture and entertainment. The city is brimming with bars, restaurants and clubs, as well as cinemas, shops, museums, art galleries and markets. Nearby there are local attractions such as the 'TeleferiQo' cable car, providing stunning views of the city, and the 'Middle of the World Museum' where you can stand with one foot on the southern hemisphere and one foot on the northern! The area of Quito known as the 'old town' is also a must with incredible colonial architecture. If you enjoy shopping then you'll be pleased to hear that Quito is Ecuador's most important marketing center for the country's artisan products, lying very close to some of the major production areas and indigenous markets!

Accommodation

You will stay with host families. The houses are very basic as most families do not have much money. In some cases you may be sharing a bedroom with family members. The family provides volunteers with three basic meals each day.

Requirements

Volunteers must be able to commit to at least 4 weeks at the project. All volunteers must hold at least a low intermediate level of spoken Spanish. If your Spanish is at a lower level, you must join our Spanish language school prior to commencing your volunteer work. This is vital in order to allow you to build up a good rapport with the local community.

When choosing to volunteer in a developing country such as Ecuador, it is important to remain flexible as the needs of the project are constantly evolving. This is what makes volunteering so rewarding – the fact that you are on hand to lend your support when and where it is needed. By choosing Academia Latinoamericana de Español you will have a comprehensive safety network behind you as we are here to help throughout the duration of your entire stay!

Feedback

"Mindó itself is a fantastic place with lots to do for such a small town. It is totally safe and has a really good sense of community – my time here went really fast especially as I got involved with the local people and their activities. The people who work for the foundation are fantastic, they are so helpful."

Johanna Banks, UK

"I did so much during my time at Mindó – collected bamboo to construct beds, cleared gardens, painted a mural in the public school, helped children with their homework, started a new park in the forest, helped to maintain local areas and visited another nearby community. Mindó is a great place to volunteer, its natural beauty is outstanding and the people are extremely friendly."

Richard Soames, USA

Programme Fee Includes

- Accommodation
- 3 meals per day
- Project Support
- Orientation and city tour
- Pre-departure information
- 24 hour emergency support

Programme Fee Does Not Include

- International flights
- Transportation from your accommodation to the project
- Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Inoculations
- Excursions over and above the itinerary

After Your Project – Travel Ideas

We are fully equipped to you with making weekend travel arrangements, and onwards travel arrangements following your time in Quito. We work with the best tour companies to offer safe, reliable and competitively priced trips. Some of the most popular trips include;

- Otavalo – a famous Saturday market offering a dazzling array of textiles, crafts and jewellery just a couple of hours from Quito.
- Papallacta - 8 natural hot springs in which to soak away the day! A great day trip from Quito.
- Cotopaxi – you can choose to hike this immense volcano, or take a more moderate tour to see it!
- Banos – great for trekking, mountain biking, rafting and taking a dip in the hot baths! This makes for a nice weekend break from Quito.
- The Amazon – A fantastic option for those looking to travel after their volunteer project. Stay in rustic jungle lodges, swim with pink river dolphins, search for anacondas and swing in hammocks!
- The Galapagos! Ecuador's true gem! Experience for yourself the exact places Charles Darwin got his inspiration! Take a cruise around the beautiful islands and spot seals, turtles, sharks, albatross, blue and red footed boobies, iguanas and more as you trek, swim, snorkel and explore! An unforgettable way to end your time in Ecuador!

Apply Now

If you have some further questions about this project, please feel free to contact us at info@latinoschools.ec

If you would like to book this programme, please [click here](#) to complete the booking form. We will be in touch within one week of application to confirm your booking!