An introductory advice:

• By traveling and studying abroad you not only put your body in a different place. Open your mind and let yourself to learn from the richness of other cultures and peoples.
How this trip could be meaningful in your personal life?

• Social realities only talk to you when you ask questions. Make a list of personal questions about today’s Ecuadorian society and culture, and try to answer them during your trip.

• Try to make problematic your own stereotypes, prejudices, and previous wrong ideas about Latin American people in general, or Ecuadorians in specific. Remember that political corruption, violence, ignorance, poverty are social problems and not an unchangeable essence of the Latin American societies.
Ecuador Facts and Figures

- **Official name**: Republic of Ecuador
- **Capital**: Quito
- **Area**: 272,045 sq km
- **Population**: 13,447,494 (2002 estimate)
- **Projected population in 2025**: 19,153,881 (2000 estimate)
- **Largest cities, with population**
  - Guayaquil: 2,117,550 (2000 estimate)
  - Quito: 1,615,810 (2000 estimate)
  - Cuenca: 278,035 (2000 estimate)
  - Machala: 216,901 (2000 estimate)
- **Ethnic groups**
  - Mestizo: 55 percent
  - Native American: 25 percent
  - Spanish: 10 percent
  - Black: 10 percent
- **Languages**
  - Spanish (official), Native American languages (especially Quechua)
- **Religious affiliations**
  - Roman Catholic: 94 percent
  - Protestant: 2 percent
  - Nonreligious: 1 percent
  - Other: 3 percent
• **Life expectancy**
  Total 71.6 years (2002 estimate)
  Female 74.6 years (2002 estimate)
  Male 68.8 years (2002 estimate)
  Infant mortality rate 33 deaths per 1,000 live births (2002 estimate)

• **Form of government**
  Republic
  Voting qualifications Universal at age 18; compulsory for literate citizens aged 18 to 65, optional for other eligible voters

• **Economy**
  Gross domestic product (GDP, in U.S.$) $13.6 billion (2000)
  Agriculture, forestry, fishing 10 percent (2000)
  Industry 40.2 percent (2000)
  Services 49.8 percent (2000)
  Monetary unit 1 United States dollar (US$), consisting of 100 cents
  Major trade partners for imports United States, Colombia, Venezuela, Japan, and Chile
  Major trade partners for exports United States, South Korea, Colombia, Japan, and Chile

• **Energy, Communications, and Transportation**
  Electricity from thermal sources 29.51 percent (1999 estimate)
  Electricity from hydroelectric sources 70.49 percent (1999 estimate)
  Electricity from nuclear sources 0 percent (1999 estimate)
  Number of radios per 1,000 people 348 (1997)
  Number of telephones per 1,000 people 100 (2000)
  Number of televisions per 1,000 people 130 (1997 estimate)
  Number of Internet hosts per 10,000 people 1.7 (2000)
  Daily newspaper circulation per 1,000 people 70 (1996)
  Number of motor vehicles per 1,000 people 46 (1998)
  Paved road as a share of total roads 19 percent (2000)
The Ecuadorian Flag
To keep in mind about Ecuador

ON ITS ECONOMY

• The main national economic resource of the country is oil. It creates a national economy that is deeply affected by the changes in oil’s international prices or eventual problems in the process of oil exploitation.

• Other important national economic resources are: agriculture, fishing, tourism, and the money sent by legal o illegal immigrants to their families. Today, Immigration is becoming a new very important factor not only in national economy but also in how culture is changing.

• Economic poverty is a big issue for the majority of the population. It affects in a very complex way many different aspects of politics, culture and social relations in general.

• The Ecuadorian economy has adopted the American dollar as a national currency. As a result of this process called “dollarization”, people is still getting used to know how to manage dollars.
“The dollarization”
ON ITS CULTURE

• Ecuador is a culturally complex society, which is influenced by the conflictive social relations of different groups: the so-called “mestizos”, the indigenous ethnic communities, and the black populations mainly.

• Traditionally, Ecuador’s national culture has been recognized by the State as a “mestizo” culture, that is, a mixed culture produced by the historical process of racial and cultural mixing between Europeans (Spaniards) and native indigenous Latin Americans. The mestizo culture is now a days criticized as a dominant culture that denies cultural differences.

• The self recognition of Ecuador as a multicultural society is still a problem: cultural differences are generally understood as a justification of economic and social inequalities.
• The increasing political presence of indigenous social movements in Ecuador is a remarkable social phenomenon among Latin American countries. In the last decade, indigenous movements have played an outstanding social role in politics and culture.

• Today, Ecuador has some elected congressmen and majors who are indigenous. Among other candidates, an indigenous leader is also running for president in the next elections of August.
Estimated Indigenous Population of Ecuador

Pacific Coast
- Awa: 1,600
- Chachi: 4,000
- Tsáchila: 2,000

Sierra Highlands
- Quichua: 3,000,000

Amazon Basin
- Quichua: 60,000
- Cofán: 800
- Siona-Secoya: 1000
- Shuar: 40,000
- Achuar: 500
- Huaorani: 2000
Otavalo’s Indian Market
CUENCA, ECUADOR

Picturesque murals and old-fashioned Spanish proverbs decorate walls in the city of Cuenca, high in the Andes mountains of Ecuador. Despite its growth and commercialization, making it the country’s third largest city, Cuenca has maintained its traditional South American character. The city was founded in 1557, and many historic buildings from its early years remain.
Some Useful Web Sites on Ecuador

- **World Bank**
  

- **Encyclopædia Britannica**
  
  [http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=109015&tocid=0](http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=109015&tocid=0)

- **MSN Learning & Research**
  