

BRINGING YOUR PETS TO ECUADOR



An **International Living** report
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Bringing Your Pets to Ecuador

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
FORMS YOU'LL NEED	4
FLYING WITH YOUR PETS	5
ARRIVING IN ECUADOR	6
PET MOVERS	7
IMMUNIZATION REGULATIONS	7
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	8

INTRODUCTION

Your pet is part of your family, they live with you, eat with you and for most people leaving your pets behind will not be an option when moving overseas.

The U.S. has minimal requirements for animals to be exported to other countries, however, there are some rules and regulations when taking animals into other countries. Fortunately it is not difficult to bring your dog or cat to Ecuador. With a few easy steps your pet can be enjoying your new home with you sooner than you think.

Remember, Ecuadorian importation regulations state that two animals per person can be imported. So if you have more than two pets you may need a travel partner to bring in the rest.

FORMS YOU'LL NEED

Inform your veterinarian that you are taking your pet to Ecuador. The vet will give you a USDA Form 7001 which has the name, breed, and immunization status of your pet. The form has space for multiple animals if necessary.

This form is good for 30 days from the date it is signed. Pay particular attention to the Ecuadorian immunization regulations, especially the rabies shot, which must be given at least 60 days prior to your pet's arrival in Ecuador.

Send the form along with a check for \$38 (this amount is for the entire form regardless of the number of animals) to the area veterinarian in your state. The website for finding your states vet is http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices/. Along with the form and the check include a note stating that your pet is going to Ecuador. Use ground FEDEX and include a prepaid FEDEX return envelope. Your approved form will be returned in a few days. The USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) may tell you that Form 7001 must be translated into Spanish and apostilled—this is not true.

Take or mail (with a postage included return envelope) the approved Form 7001 and a money order for \$50 to the Ecuadorian consulate nearest your home. Here is a link to all the Ecuadorian consulates worldwide: www.embassypages.com/ecuador. The consulate will approve your form and return it with the official document (in Spanish) permitting you to take your pet to Ecuador within the following 21 days. This document is in essence your pet's "visa" and is all the immigration officials in Ecuador want to see.

FLYING WITH YOUR PETS

Make sure you contact your airline for complete information about pet transportation. If your pet is small, you may be allowed to bring it onboard in a pet carrier that fits under your seat, depending on the airline. Larger pets must travel as “checked luggage” in the cargo hold if the pet and carrier weigh more than 100 pounds, or otherwise in the luggage compartment.

Once you understand the flying rules, make sure to let the airline know in advance that you will be traveling with your pet and ask them to provide you with a confirmation number. Make sure your pet carrier meets airline standards. American and LAN do not allow carriers held together with plastic clips even through the manufacturer says they are “airline approved.”

Some North American airlines have a pet travel embargo from Memorial Day to Labor Day, when pets are not allowed to travel because of the threat of overheating. Remember that temperature requirements apply at both your departure city and in Guayaquil and Quito, the sites of Ecuador’s two international airports. If the local temperature is over 85° F in either city most airlines will not allow your pets to travel.

On the day of travel, present your pet and pet carrier when you check in at the airport and ask the airline attendant what time you must kennel your pet. They will usually let you wait until just before you need to go through security checkpoints. Make sure to have the leashes with you at the airport because the TSA, Transportation Security Administration, may bring the kennels out and ask you to remove your pet so they can examine the empty kennel for contraband.

Put a plastic bowl of ice in the carrier with your pet so they will have water but without the chance of it spilling. Most veterinarians do not recommend that pets be given any kind of drugs before flying so please don’t do it unless your pet has a condition that requires medication.



Your pet carrier must meet airline standards

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American Airlines state that they will not transport birds either in the cabin or as checked luggage. Here is the web link for American Airlines pet regulations, some airlines will transport birds but not American: <http://www.aa.com/i18n/travelInformation/specialAssistance/travelingWithPets.jsp>

If you have a service animal, make sure you have a statement from your vet or the agency that trained the animal verifying that you have a service animal. Service animals do not need to be put in travel kennels of any kind. You have to make reservations ahead of time so that the airline can give you a seat just behind the bulkhead so your animal can lie down.

If you are traveling a long way, consider breaking the trip into two days to limit the animal's continuous time in the carrier.



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Service animals do not need to be put in travel kennels

ARRIVING IN ECUADOR

On arrival in Ecuador, have your papers—stamped by the Ecuadorian consulate—handy. The chances are that no one will ask to see them—but they might. If your pet is in the cargo hold because of its size you may have to wait until the following day and go to the cargo office to retrieve your pet.

If you are going to take a national flight after arrival in Ecuador, check with the airline to determine what their requirements will be for boarding with an animal. There is no “10 day rule” on pet travel except for domestic flights and it is an airline rule.

Ecuadorian law does not require an International Health Certificate, although since most vets are able to issue them it makes sense to have one. These certificates are readily accepted by the consulates.

To return to the U.S. with your pet, ask your Ecuadorian veterinarian for assistance. They will be happy to help you through the process.

PET MOVERS

Pet movers can provide an important service. For instance, one of the leading companies, Air Animal (*website: www.airanimal.com*), picks the pet up at your U.S. residence and also helps with export documentation, insurance, customs clearance, airport terminal services, veterinary inspection, and delivery to your overseas residence. The company's charges are typical—\$2,395 for transporting an average-size German shepherd dog from Miami to Latin America. The website of the Independent Pet and Animal Transportation Association International has a directory of pet shippers on their website: www.ipata.com.

IMMUNIZATION REGULATIONS

Ecuador has a list of immunization regulations when traveling with your pet. Please ensure that your pet has done the following:

- Underwent a clinical examination by a licensed veterinarian. This examination should be within 10 days prior to shipment. The animal must be found healthy with no symptoms of infectious diseases and without visible external parasites (mites, ticks, or fleas). The form should also include breed, color, and age of the animal.
- Your pet must be treated against internal and external parasites within 21 days prior to the date of shipment. Include date of application and active ingredient.
- The dog must have been vaccinated at least 21 days prior to the date of shipment against the following diseases: disease carre (distemper), canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, pavovirus,

and rabies. The dog must have been vaccinated for rabies at least 60 days prior to the date of shipment. Include date of immunization, type and brand of product used. A current vaccination card is required.

- The animal must be placed in cages or special carriers that have been cleaned and disinfected before being used.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are there limits to the number of animals I can bring into the country?

Yes, there is a limit of two pets per person. If the airline issues an air way bill for them, the pets will be considered as cargo and they will need to be cleared through customs. You will need a customs broker to do this and you will also have to pay taxes for your pet. The average is between \$250 and \$400, depending on the size of your pet. Customs will consider the value of the pet plus the air freight amount that the airline charged.

When pets fly as cargo, a zoo-sanitary form must be included as part of the paper work, this document has to be signed by the pet's veterinary.

I have a pet that's not a cat or a dog. Can I bring them into the country?

This depends on what type of animal it is. Some pets, like exotic birds, need permits and there are procedures to follow in the origin country and in Ecuador in order for them to be moved to Ecuador.

It takes approximately two months to import macaws and parrots. If unsure whether you can bring your animal into the country check with the ministry of agriculture or your nearest Ecuadorian embassy.

Can I bring an exotic pet into the country?

This depends on which type of exotic pet. It is best to check with the ministry of agriculture or your nearest Ecuadorian embassy before traveling.

I'm from Canada and want my pet to move with me. How do I do this?

If your pet is a cat or dog, all you need to bring them with you is a health certificate stating that their vaccinations are up to date, signed by official government veterinarian in Canada. Make sure your pet travels with you, as accompanied luggage and not as cargo. Otherwise the whole thing becomes a commercial importation which is a BIG hassle

Is there a good variety of pet food available?

There is much less choice available and pet food more expensive than you are used to in North America. Royal Canin, Purina, and Pedigree are the most well known imported international foods in Ecuador.

What is the quality of veterinarian care like?

The quality of veterinarian services largely depends on where you are, and what you need. In general, there are very few specialists and there is a limit in advanced techniques. However in bigger cities it will be easier to find a veterinarian that you are comfortable with.

Are pet-friendly hotels/rentals widely available?

Pet friendly hotels and rentals are not widely available in Ecuador, as a general rule. However, there are exceptions to this rule in individual hostels. It is best to check pet policies with each establishment before you make a reservation.