

# QUITO, ECUADOR

## RACHEL ORBUCH

**Program:** Ceiba Tropical Conservation Semester, Spring

**Rachel's Majors:** Biology; Political Science

**Academic Life:** The first month of the semester we had biology in the morning from 9-12 and then Spanish in the afternoon. After learning about an ecosystem or adaptations we would take a trip and go see what we had learned about. We spent two weeks in the Ecuadorian Amazon where we designed our own research projects. We learned marine biology in the Galapagos Islands where we again designed research projects and took a one week boat cruise around the archipelago.

**Internship Abroad:** The final part of the program was a conservation internship for three weeks. I worked at Reserva Pambilino, an organic farm located in the Choco bioregion in the rainforest of Ecuador. I participated in daily farm tasks such as harvesting the fresh produce, watering plants, cooking food, and cleaning. I also worked in the greenhouse to create an electronic database of all the plants to help the reserve establish their analog forest. This helped show me one of the many things I could do with a biology major and how I could integrate political science through conservation approaches.

**Advice for Future Participants:** It is an action-packed and extremely busy semester, but we visited all the different ecosystems in Ecuador and learned so much about the flora, fauna, and the best methods for conservation. We also lived with host families in Galapagos and Quito. I would highly recommend this program to a biology major because I was able to complete my major while abroad.

**Understanding Difference:** When you live in the same place, you forget there are many different types of people and cultures in the world. In Ecuador there are over 12 different indigenous cultures and many other people who have moved here from other places. Being open to new cultures and learning how others live is extremely important.



Rachel, with her host family, celebrating Carnival in Quito.

**“I have a greater sense of the diversity in the world and especially in Ecuador.”**

