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Ecuadorian Way of Life

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Quito, Ecuador and Galapagos, Ecuador

April 2, 2019

Ecuadorian Way of Life

I chose to interview my host mom, Julia Quispe. While interviewing Julia, I was mostly surprised by the pace of life. Everything seems to move faster, even though people are on “island time.” For example, even on weekends, sleeping past 9 am is viewed as lazy. Julia is always busy doing something and is hardly ever sitting still. This is much different than culture in the United States, where it isn’t necessarily viewed as a bad thing to relax and sleep late. Another difference that I have noticed is that Julia does not often go on outings with her family. Even on weekends, most of her time is spent at home rather than going to the beach, out to eat, etc. This is much different than my own family experience, where we often spent time on outings to the movies, hiking, to dinner, or simply walking around town.

Regarding cultural similarities and differences, there are many. As is common in many South American (and other) countries, children often live with their parents until their late twenties/early thirties. Julia’s son, Enrique, still lives with her at home. Contrarily, both my brother and I moved out of our parents’ home when we were 18 and are not planning to move back in. Another big difference is food preferences. I believe that this is more just a matter of location and food availability, but we have very different food preferences. Julia’s diet consists largely of rice, beans, broth-based soups, fish, and some meats. Coming from the United States, where I am able to buy virtually any food I could want at any time, this was a shock to adjust to. I also think that the mindset of Julia, and many people on the island, is more one of survival. This is perpetuated I believe by living in such a rural, developing nation; there is less availability to some basic necessities, and people put responsibilities, work, and security before fun.

This interview process did not greatly change my perspective of the Galápagos, as I noticed that almost everyone here is similar to Julia after being here for a couple weeks. However, there is definitely a difference between continental Ecuador and the islands. From previous travels, I have come to know that the United States is very structured and incredibly lucky to have the resources and freedoms that it does. My time here has both furthered that view and made me realize my own reliance on the luxuries I have there.