

## **IAESTE Internship at Awa Nutrition, Ecuador, May – November 2022**

### **IAESTE**

Before applying, I knew that I wanted to go to Latin America to learn Spanish and combine this with working within my field. I studied Food Science at ETH and just graduated at that time from my Masters. I got my first choice from internships I applied to and was more than happy about it. Before I flew to Quito (Ecuador's capital), I had an interview with my managers and was already contacted by the local IAESTE team. All in all, I didn't know exactly what to expect but was very open to the whole experience. On site, I was welcomed by IAESTE and brought to my accommodation. I stayed with an older lady, without other IAESTE interns. My office was in walking distance to the apartment. At the beginning of my internship there were not so many other interns from IAESTE and so I rather did activities with people from my work. There were also protests going on for 3 weeks forcing us to stay at home – welcome to South America! After a few months, trips were organized by IAESTE and I met amazing people from Europe and North America.

### **Work Experience**

My work experience was really unique and it helped me for my future career path. I was in Ecuador much longer than anyone else who came there with IAESTE, so I was able to have my own project and take on responsibility. My role was within research and development but I also learned a lot in the areas of regulatory, sensory science and marketing. My work colleagues became very close friends and we did something almost every day after work and were constantly out and about even on the weekends. We had great times at work and music was playing all day long!

### **Experience of being abroad**

It is of course something very impressive to be so far away from home on another continent, surrounded by a language you don't speak. It is an experience I highly recommend to everyone as it will leave you with a more open mindset towards the world. In the end, we are all not so different. Ecuador has a lot to offer in terms of landscape: there are the Andes, the ocean and the Amazon. Also, the people have a slightly different culture depending on the region but they speak a well understandable Spanish so it is perfect to learn the language there. Ecuadorians have many local specialties, such as encebollado, a fish soup that you eat with popcorn! I loved any dish with plantain in it and will miss the street food. Ecuadorians love to go out to live the good life and will happily take you with them! The only thing I didn't like is that you shouldn't be outside at night because of the security issue and always have to take an Uber. That's when you really learn to appreciate Switzerland and our great public transportation system. I ended my time in Ecuador with a trip to the Galapagos islands, which is a magical place to encounter wildlife. Altogether, I felt welcomed and had amazing experiences each week – I cannot wait to go back to Ecuador!





