



ECUADOR: FACTS AND TIPS

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Welcome to Ecuador

The travel business is a people business. Bricks and mortar, steel hulls and motors, fine linens and

bone china are important. But, at the end of the day, it's the local knowledge of the guides, the warmth and sincerity of the staff, the human bond, that make the difference. And that bond, that connection, is at the heart of everything we do at Metropolitan Touring.

For over 70 years, we have had the pleasure of sharing transformational journeys with our guests, accompanying them on fascinating adventures. Each of you is unique, like the iconic locations that we feature on all of our voyages. Each journey is a story, with a beginning and an end, and your story is now inextricably woven into ours.

It is my fervent hope that, at the end of your journey with us, wherever the road may take you or whomever you may meet on your path of discovery, we'll be able to count you among our friends.

Paulina Burbano de Lara

Executive President

Carlina Zenbarade

One history, a thousand inspiring stories.



Spirit, Vision, Passion:

The Metropolitan Touring

Difference

As pioneers of travel in the Galapagos Islands, our company adopted a strong set of principles inspired by a profound respect and admiration for the uniqueness of the islands—their remarkable and delicate wildlife and ecosystems. Our contact with the natural world and human cultures demands careful interpretation, understanding, and a long-term vision for the health and wellbeing of fascinating destinations and the beings that inhabit them. Couple this with our aim to make every journey memorable and fun and you can understand why we are constantly innovating and investing in our top-notch products and experiences.

In the Galapagos, we offer three world-class expedition vessels with itineraries designed to maximize up-close observation of the incredible BIG15 wildlife. Each of our ships offers the highest quality experience with excellent accommodations, cuisine, multiple certified naturalist guides, small group excursions, an onboard medical officer, and everything you need to enjoy all Park-approved activities daily. Additionally, our awardwinning Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel, with immediate beach access, impeccable service, and a first-rate spa. bar, and restaurant, offers daily tours to nearby islands aboard the hotel's own Sea Lion Yacht

Back on the mainland, we've worked hard to feature the best our country has to offer, starting with our beautiful capital city of Quito and its precious historic quarter—a UNESCO World Heritage Site! As owner-operators of Casa Gangotena Boutique Hotel in the heart of the Old Town, we provide guests with an authentic, elegant, and unforgettable experience, waking up to beautiful views of the city and surrounding mountains that inspire curiosity and exploration.

A short drive from Quito, guests are treated to a oneof-a-kind rainforest hotel in the form of the world-

renowned Mashpi Lodge. This hermetically designed state-of-the-art hotel features floor-to-ceiling windows. Guests embark on expert-guided nature hikes through the surrounding forests of the Andean Chocó, with tranquil streams and stunning waterfalls. Native and endemic flora and fauna feature on every excursion.

These are our spirit, vision and passion, which we share with each of our guests.

In 2007, we expanded our operations south to neighboring Peru, where our locally based team facilitates transformative experiences in notable destinations, like Lima, Machu Picchu, Cuzco, the Sacred Valley, and Lake Titicaca. Peru is also one of the most sought-after places to visit because of its spectacular gastronomy.

2010 saw our company begin operating in Colombia, which is undergoing a genuine renaissance thanks to its incredible diversity of settings and cultural experiences, plus innovative and exciting cities like Medellin, Cartagena, Bogota, and Barranquilla. Everything is new again in Colombia, including impeccably preserved towns that time forgot, like the increasingly popular Mompox on the banks of the Magdalena River.

Everywhere we operate, our spirit drives us to constantly seek out exciting ways to embolden your journey in comfort, safety, and style. Relax while you learn and marvel as you enter a new realm of discovery! This is the spirit, vision, and passion, we share with you and each of our satisfied travelers.

Experience Colombia and Peru With Metropolitan Touring

We create inspiring journeys across the region for our guests. Each one is a tale in the making. And the staff at our regional offices know just what to recommend to make your journey that much more special!

Highlights

Colombia:

South America's best-kept secret

Travel to Colombia, a land of incredible beauty, excitement, charm, and diversity just waiting to be explored. As the fourth-largest territory of the South American continent, it overflows with the diversity of its people, cultures, regions, flora and fauna. The palm-fringed beaches on the Caribbean Sea, the fertile green highlands of the Andes, the rugged yet tranquil Pacific Ocean coastline, and the silent rivers of the lush and tropical rainforest of Amazonia await you. Dance salsa in Cali, explore cosmopolitan Bogota and Medellin, or check out Cartagena, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There is something for everyone in Colombia.

Peru:

An Intense Discovery

Peru is a land of mystery and constant revelation and one of the 12 mega-diverse countries in the world. Outdoors lovers will find much to love about Peru: white-capped mountains, dense rainforests, the deepest canyons and a number of pristine, well-kept national parks. Culture lovers will likewise find themselves right at home because of the well-known hospitality of its people and unique museums, historical sites, ancient ruins and fine restaurants that can be found all over the country. From the lost city of Machu Picchu to the enigmatic Nazca Lines, Peru offers travellers a bottomless wealth of possibilities!





We Love What We Do

Travel is beautiful, inspiring, life-changing. We love nature, pristine ecosystems, fascinating wildlife. Pioneering sustainable tourism is part of our DNA. Our story speaks for itself.

A Culture of Sustainability

From our beginnings, Metropolitan Touring helped draft the regulatory framework for environmentally-friendly travel in Galapagos. Later, we fostered conservation by preserving the forest and conducting scientific research at Mashpi Reserve. At each of our products, care is taken to reuse, recycle, minimize waste, treat our water, preserve our environment and reduce climate change.

We are Stepping it Up

Climate change: it's here, it's real, it needs to be countered. All aspects of travel currently represent 8% of global carbon emissions. So, we have decided to seek carbon neutrality by creating a carbon offsetting product.

We measured our emissions and those of our travelers and came up with a compensation strategy through our carbon offsetting product: allowing our guests to offset their carbon footprint through forest conservation in the Chocó Bioregion, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

We Need You

This is a permanent, far-reaching, and ambitious initiative, and we cannot do it alone.

Through your investment, and ours, we will create "biological corridors" in the Chocó Bioregion-continuous strips of restored land that allow for the absorption of CO2, migration of species, adequate mating strategies, and proper foraging, a nature reserve with an area of over 12,300 acres, equaling the size of over 9,000 football fields

Please invest with us in this forest conservation initiative to offset the carbon footprint left by your travels and be part of the preservation of this, one of the richest, most biodiverse places on planet Earth.

Everywhere Metropolitan Touring goes, we carry with us our banner of deep-rooted social and environmental responsibility and as a result, we have been rewarded with a number of awards, including:

- Winner: Best Hotel in Galápagos 2022- PEOPLE'S CHOICE EKOS
- Winner: Ecuador's Best Hotel Spa 2022- World SPA Awards
- #9 Readers' Choice Awards 2022, Top 15 Resorts in South America - Condé Nast Traveler

- Winner: Ecuador's Leading Design Hotel 2022- World Travel Awards
- Traveler's Choice 2022- Tripadvisor
- 500 List of the Best Hotels of the World 2022- Travel + Leisure
- Traveler's Choice 2021 Tripadvisor
- Badge Travel Awards Accommodation 2021 KAYAK Travel Awards
- Winner: Ecuador's Best Hotel Spa 2021- World SPA Awards
- #27 Readers' Choice Awards 2022, Top 50 Resorts in the World- Condé Nast Traveler
- #4 Readers' Choice Awards 2022. Top 25 Resorts in South America - Condé Nast Traveler
- #7 The Top 10 Resorts Hotels in South America 2021-Travel & Leisure
- Winner: World's Leading Green Hotel 2019- World Travel Awards
- Winner: World's Leading Green Hotel 2018- World Travel Awards
- Winner: South America's Leading Green Hotel 2018-World Travel Awards
- Winner: World's Leading Green Hotel 2017- World Travel Awards
- Winner: World's Leading Green Hotel 2016- World Travel Awards
- Winner: South America's Leading Green Hotel 2016-World Travel Awards
- Winner: World's Leading Green Hotel 2015- World Travel Awards







About **Ecuador**

Embark with us on a journey of discovery through Ecuador, a country with a privileged location straddling latitude 0° on the northwest coast of South America whose compact size belies the mind-blowing number of species residing on its lands: it is one of the world's 17 mega-diverse countries according to the The World Conservation Monitoring Centre (part of the United Nations Environment Programme).

Follow the path of the sun on its daily passage across the Equator (after which the country is named) and its four worlds, each distinct, each inspiring in its own right.

As the sun rises over the humid eastern jungles of the Amazon, explore the rainforest beneath gigantic trees, paddle dugout canoes up creeks and rivers, and meet the people of these forests, learning about their myths and rituals, ancient wisdom and everyday lives.





When the sun reaches its zenith, one can understand why it was sacred to the earliest inhabitants of the Andean highlands. It illuminates every inch of the country: the snow-capped volcanoes and the green valleys, the cloud-shrouded forests and the gleaming facades of the churches of Quito, whose imposing colonial structures bear witness to the heritage left by the Spanish and to the native skill and artistry that created the paintings and sculptures of the Quito School of Art. "The capital city was among the first to be named a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and today, it is the largest and most well-preserved historic quarter in the Americas."

The sun wends its way west, warming the magnificent tropical beaches of the country's little explored Pacific Coast, before it sets over the fabled Galapagos Islands, a harsh, rugged land where species must adapt or perish: this is the archipelago that inspired Charles Darwin in 1835 and has continued to amaze every visitor since.

Ecuador Travel Map here!







Upon Arrival: Important Tips For a Successful Trip

Personal Documents

Please verify that your passport has been stamped with the number of days required for your visit to Ecuador. We recommend that you make copies of all your important documents and leave the originals in the safety box of your hotel. Keep a copy of your passport with you. Please note that while travelling within most of mainland Ecuador, you don't need to carry your passport with you. However, when going to the Galapagos or the Amazon region, you will need to carry your passport.

Luggage

In the event your luggage does not arrive with you, immediately submit your claim with the respective airline at the airport terminal. The airline is responsible for your luggage and should inform you when, on which flight and at what time your luggage is due to arrive. If this situation occurs, please do inform your guide. If you need any additional assistance to travel to or from the airport, do not hesitate to contact us.

For GALAPAGOS flights, passengers are permitted one checked bag with a maximum weight of 50 lb (23 kilograms), and one carry-on item of up to 17 lb (8 kilograms). For more detailed information please check the Galapagos Luggage section on page 92.

Transfer Services

For guests who purchased a transfer service: On your arrival day to Ecuador your guide will be waiting for you outside the arrivals door with a sign with your name or your agency name after you clear migration and customs

For pick-up times we have two options: either your guide will inform you directly or our operations department will send a message to your hotel and call to confirm details.

Departure Data

Due to the added time required for biosecurity, airline policies encourage passengers to be at the airport four hours before departure time for international flights. For guests with transfer services, a message will be delivered to your hotel informing you of the pick-up time. Please keep your carry-on luggage with you at all times; as is the case at most big airports, leaving your luggage on the floor may increase the possibilities of losing it.



Ecuador Facts and Tips

Economy

Ecuador is an oil producer and exporter and member of OPEC. Oil is the country's most important export revenue producer, followed by: bananas (Ecuador is the world's number one banana exporter); shrimp; flowers; cocoa (consistently ranked as one of the best in the world); fish (fresh, frozen & canned); coffee; and tropical fruits. Tourism is also one of the most important contributors to Ecuador's gross domestic product (GDP). This showcases the country's great potential as a destination.

Language

Ecuador's official language is Spanish, but Kichwa (also Quichua, part of the Northern Quechua group of languages) - the lingua franca of the Inca Empire - and Shuar are official languages of intercultural relations.

Religion

The predominant religion is Roman Catholicism. There is complete religious freedom in Ecuador.

Population: 17.89 million (Source: 2016 projection

INEC National Institute of Statistics and

Censuses)



Area: 256,370 km² (99,027 mi²)

Government: Democratic Republic

Ecuador Country Code: 593

Local Time

GMT/UCT minus 5 hours on mainland Ecuador; and minus 6 hours in the Galapagos Islands.

Electricity

The standard electricity voltage in Ecuador is 110-120 volts, 60Hz alternating current (AC). Most outlets accommodate two-pronged flat plugs, types A and B, like those used in North America. For travelers from other parts of the world, we recommend you bring an adaptor.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Weather

Quito & the Highlands: People tend to expect a hot climate due to the equatorial location, but the city's altitude of 2850 m / 9350 ft above sea level makes for great weather year-round. June to September is the dry season with daytime temperatures of around 21 °C (70 °F). Rainy season is from October to May with March and April being the wettest months. This usually means clear mornings and afternoon rain, followed by the sun coming out again, with an average temperature of 19 °C (67 °F).

The Galapagos: The Galapagos Islands, set right in the tropics and crossed by the equatorial line, have two

markedly different seasons that set the tone of what happens on the islands, how the islands look, and how wildlife reacts to it. December to May are considered the hot season. Days are sunny and temperatures range from 24 °C - 30 °C (75 °F - 86 °F) with the occasional shower. June to November are the dry season and the air temperature is slightly cooler, ranging from 21 °C - 27 °C (70 °F - 80 °F). Regardless of the time of the vear you plan on visiting, the wildlife experience will be just outstanding.

Guavaguil and the Coast: The coastal lowlands are tropical and warm all year long. From May to December is the dry season, when one can expect overcast days and pleasantly cool nights. The warmer, rainy season runs from January to April, and often exhibits high humidity.

The Mashpi region on the outskirts of Quito and the Amazon Basin (Eastern Ecuador): Rainforests and cloud forests are, of course, regions that tend to have high rainfall levels throughout the year. Although located in different areas of the country, the Mashpi region and the Amazon Basin, both tend to be sunny in the mornings with afternoon downpours and temperatures around 73°F (23°C). Nights are cool in the rainforest: a windbreaker comes in handy. Please note that in recent years the traditional seasons in Ecuador, as is the case in other parts of the world, have become less predictable.





The Sun

The equatorial sun is very strong and can cause sunburns even through cloud cover. The use of sunscreen with a suitably high protection factor, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses is, therefore, highly recommended for all travellers

Currency

Ecuador has adopted the US Dollar as its currency. However, because many businesses like artisans and street vendors prefer cash, it is highly recommended that you carry bills in denominations equal to or smaller than USD 20. Ecuador issues local 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins which have a similar equivalent to US coins within the country but are not recognized anywhere else in the world. The country also uses the original USD 1 coin, which is accepted, though rarely, around the world. Euros may be changed for US dollars at banks, hotels and money exchange offices.

Credit Cards

Most hotels, restaurants and shops accept Visa, MasterCard, Diners Club and American Express, Cruise ships in the Galapagos also accept most credit cards. Payment for Metropolitan Touring's services can be charged to your card. Take note that travellers' cheques are less and less accepted by establishments, and even when accepted tend to incur onerous transaction charges.

Banks & Businesses

Most city offices and banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, Currency exchange facilities and banks are also open on Saturday mornings and throughout the week only at major hotels and malls. ATMs are easily found throughout the main cities. Cash advances are available at most banks or ATMs. Banking facilities are not available and credit card acceptance is less common in remote areas, so it's advisable to carry cash

Food

Ecuador's diverse geography produces incredible fresh ingredients available year-round including a dazzling range of potatoes and corn from the highlands, bananas and tropical fruits in the coastal areas, and the bounty of the waters of the Pacific, particularly shrimp.

Ecuador has one of the tastiest cuisines in South America. In addition to preparing more traditional recipes, creative chefs in major cities and at hotels today offer contemporary Ecuadorian cuisine: healthy, light and delicious, where a wide variety of traditional, native ingredients are cooked with different combinations of aromas, flavours and colours, And numerous international options are always on offer.



Water and Beverages

The tap water in most of Ecuador is potable, but the chemical content varies from place to place. To avoid problems, we recommend that you always drink bottled water. You will be provided with a reusable water bottle upon your arrival which can be refilled at any of our establishments with purified water. Bottled mineral water, with or without carbonation, is available at all hotels, ships, and lodges, Ecuadorian beer (Pilsener or Club) is excellent and there is a growing craft beer movement producing a wide variety of brews. Bottled soft drinks are available everywhere. In establishments which we include as part of our programs, juices and salads are safe for foreign stomachs.

Restaurants

All major cities have an ample selection of fine restaurants featuring international cuisine or regional culinary specialties. Dining out in Ecuador will be a remarkable experience. See suggestions for restaurants in each city in the next pages.

Clothing

The key is casual and comfortable. In the highlands, dressing in layers, with clothes that you can either put on or take off as required, is ideal: T-shirt, blouse or shirt, and a sweater and a warm jacket, as evenings get chilly. Cotton blends are great for coastal exploration, where you encounter a nice breeze, while lightweight wicking fabrics are ideal for exploring in the rainforest and other humid climates. When visiting churches, monasteries, and shrines, women should not wear shorts or miniskirts. Comfortable, waterproof shoes are a must. Laundry service is available in most hotels

Taxi Rates

Taxis cost around USD 25 to USD 30 per ride from Quito's airport to downtown. Routes within Quito rarely exceed USD 7. The minimum fare is USD 1.45. Rates vary among the main cities. We encourage you to request your taxi at your hotels or restaurant reception in order to ensure your safety.

Children

Ecuador and Galapagos are a wonderful family destination. Children are welcome. The minimum recommended age for passengers aboard Galapagos expedition cruises is 6 years old. Please note that domestic airlines consider children ages 12 and older as adults. Hotels in the major cities cater to children of all ages, providing children's menus, babysitters and extra beds/cribs. We do not recommend that very young children join some of our activities in Galapagos and other adventure destinations due to safety concerns. Please ask your Destination Expert for more information.

Accommodation

The hotels, haciendas and lodges used on our tours are the best available in each location. The excitement of visiting remote areas amply compensates for the occasional lack of luxury or some urban comforts in rural accommodations



Newspapers & Magazines

Local dailies are available in Spanish. Cable TV news is available in main hotels. Most guests choose to get their news from the internet

Calling in and outside Ecuador

- To make a local call, no city codes are necessary and the number will have 7 digits
- When calling from city to city or when calling a mobile phone, respective codes should proceed the 7 digits

Area codes:

- Quito 02
 - Otavalo 06
- Galapagos 05
- Guavaguil 04
 Riobamba 03
- Mobile 09

- Cuenca 07
- Cotopaxi 03

Example for Guayaguil to Quito: 02 123-4567.

 When calling from outside of Ecuador or with roaming from your own foreign mobile phone, the country code and city code are required.

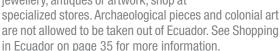
Ecuador country code: 593

Example for Quito: +593 2 123-4567.

Example for a mobile phone: +593 99 123-4567

Shopping

Most shops are open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Shopping malls in main cities are open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Please note that to guarantee the authenticity of your jewellery, antiques or artwork, shop at



Safety

If you must carry valuables, the safest option is to wear a money belt under your clothing. Keep spare cash in a separate purse for easy access. Like in most big cities, heavily loaded wallets or pockets are attractive targets for pickpockets. Remember to leave your documents and valuables in the safety deposit box of your hotel. In the city, you should carry only a copy of your passport. We always encourage you to request a taxi from the hotel or restaurant. Do not take a taxi on the street. See the Taxi section on page 26 for more information.



Photography

Filming and photography are not allowed inside many churches and some museums. Your guide will advise you on restrictions regarding the photographing of people, military and/or government installations. It's advisable to use 'fill-in' flash for portraits in strong sunlight to avoid shadows. The use of flash close to wildlife in Galapagos is prohibited by the Galapagos National Park

Share your best pictures with the world using our hashtags:

#galapagosbig15 #galapagosislands #galapagosphotos #mtmoments #Ecuadortours

Recommended photographic equipment

Your journey to Ecuador and the Galapagos will be a magical trip of a lifetime and you will want to take hundreds of pictures. For this reason, we recommend bringing:

- · A good DSLR camera or good cell phone camera
- Lenses
- Multiple memory cards
- A water-resistant case for your phone
- An underwater camera

Sports Arrangements

If you are a sport enthusiast, arrangements can be made for white-water rafting, mountain biking, trekking and hiking. Please contact your destination expert in advance to learn about the different options available.

Taxes & Service Charges

A value-added tax of 12% will be added to all purchases in Ecuador, A service tax of 10% is almost always added to hotel and restaurant bills. In Quito, there is also a small city hotel tax.

Tipping Policy - Land Tours

Gratuities often represent part of a worker's earnings and are regarded as an incentive to provide the best service possible. Here are some guidelines; adjust them to represent the service you receive and the thanks you want to express. It is common to see a 10% service charge added to your restaurant bill, which is shared equally among employees. Should you decide to leave an additional tip for the waitstaff. that would be separate and at your discretion. Tips for bellboys are usually equivalent to \$1 per bag; chambermaids \$1 a day; for room service, 10% of the bill is already charged as a service charge. Taxi drivers are usually not tipped in Ecuador.

Tips for tour guides and drivers are left to your discretion, but quidelines are as follows:

- For drivers: USD 3 to USD 6 per quest/per day
- For guides: USD 6 to USD 10 per guest/per day

Shopping

in Ecuador

Anyone who puts shopping high on the list of activities that make a destination alluring will find Ecuador not iust desirable, but irresistible. Craftsmanship is skilled, the artistry highly imaginative, and the prices low.

Whether it be a misnamed "Panama hat" (the hats actually originated in Ecuador and continue to be made here), an alpaca sweater, silver jewellery, scarves, flutes, music, leather goods, wood or tagua (vegetable ivory) carvings, ceramics, coffee, chocolate or even a fruit-based liquor, you can't leave Ecuador without at least half of your suitcase full of the country's little treasures. In fact, it's wise to bring a suitcase large enough to cram in all your purchases!

To give you an idea of what to look out for, here's a auick list:

Things

- A poncho from an indigenous market such as Otavalo. Pujilí or Saguisilí.
- An elegant "Panama hat"
- Beautiful ceramics either from the coast, the highlands (particularly from Cuenca) or the Amazon.
- Wood-carved crafts from San Antonio, near Otavalo
- Leather goods from Cotacachi

- Agave liquor
- A "Middle of the World" miniature monument
- Galapagos T-shirts
- Balsa wood macaws and balsa wood exotic flowers, from Puvo
- Beautiful jewellery from Chordeleg in Azuay, near Cuenca
- Silver jewellery with Inca designs
- Textiles from the Otavalo market
- Soft alpaca rugs or covers for cushions
- Folkloric music
- A "Rondador" (pan pipe)
- "Masapan" figures from Calderon, near Quito
- "Melcochas" (hard candy) from Baños
- "Cocadas" (coconut and brown sugar candy) from Esmeraldas
- Ecuadorian coffee
- Ecuadorian chocolate
- "Palo de Lluvia" bamboo rain stick
- Wool sweaters from Imbabura Province (Otavalo and surroundings)
- Branded T-shirts of Ecuador's football (soccer) team
- Zuleta embroidery: clothing and linens
- Tiqua paintings
- Tagua figures and jewellery Good places to head for souvenirs in Quito include:

Where to Find Souvenirs

- La Ronda Street in Old Town Quito
- El Quinde Shop (Palacio Municipal, Plaza Grande, Old Town Quito)
- Mindalae Museum Shop "El Tianquez" (At the corner of Reina Victoria y la Niña, Mariscal Parish of Quito)
- Mercado Artesanal La Mariscal (Jorge Washington y Juan León Mera, Mariscal Parish of Quito).
- The Otavalo Market (Otavalo, Imbabura Province)
- Olga Fisch Folklore (Av. Colon E10-53 v Caamaño in Quito and Paseo San Francisco (mall) in Cumbayá)



Calendar of Important Holidays

Festivity	Province	Place	Date	Brief Description				
JANUARY								
New Year	Country-wide	_	1	Ecuadorians celebrate the New Year with dances, costumes and masked parties, and by burning effigies in the street.				
FEBRUARY								
Carnival	Country-wide	_	Movable	Carnival occurs each year in either March or April. The exact date varies but is associated with Lent and Easter. Many towns celebrate with parades, dances and other festivities. Water and foam are a major part of Carnival, so expect to get randomly soaked or covered in foam.				
MARCH								
Holy Week	Country-wide	_	Movable	The week begins with Palm Sunday. The passion and death of Christ are remembered with masses and processions full of devotion and sadness. In Quito, the biggest procession is that of Jesus del Gran Poder on Good Friday.				
APRIL								
Cuenca Foundation Day	Azuay	Through- out the province	12	Fireworks, artistic presentations, popular celebrations and many other activities.				
MAY								
Labour Day	Country-wide	Coun- try-wide	1	Parades along the streets.				
Battle of Pichincha	Country-wide	_	24	The Battle of Pichincha (1822) that sealed the independence of Ecuador is remembered with cultural parades and activities.				

Festivity	Province	Place	Date	Brief Description		
JUNE						
Corpus Christi	Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Azuay and Loja	Pujilí, Salasaca, Cuenca and Saraguro	Movable	The most important celebration of the central highlands, it varies in each locality. For example, in Salasaca, it is celebrated with music and dances. The dancers get dressed in spectacular embroidered suits, plaster masks and hats adorned with shining tapes and feathers.		
Fiesta de San Pedro y San Pablo	Country-wide	_	Movable	In some communities of Imbabura (Cotacachi and Cayambe), this festivity is celebrated with dances, parades, bonfires and rooster offering ceremonies.		
JULY						
Guayaquil Foundation Day	Guayas	Throughout the province	23-25	Parades, dances in the streets and the International "Pearl of the Pacific" Beauty Contest are held, along with art exhibits and other cultural activities.		
AUGUST						
Ecuador Independence Day	Country-wide	_	10	National Festivity that commemorates the Independence of Ecuador (1809). Military and scholastic parades are traditional for this date.		
SEPTEMBER						
Virgen de La Merced	Cotopaxi, Azuay	Latacunga, Cuenca	23-24	Celebrates Our Lady of Mercy with masked dances, local folkloric bands, fireworks, midnight mass ("Misa de Gallo") and folkloric festivals.		

Festivity	Province	Place	Date	Brief Description				
OCTOBER								
Guayaquil Independence Day	Guayas	Guayaquil	9-12	Guayaquil Independence is commemorated with an international industrial fair, concerts, dances, parades, exhibits and other activities.				
Columbus Day/Native People's Day	Country-wide	_	12	The country commemorates Columbus arrival to America and the encounters between Europeans and Native Peoples.				
NOVEMBER								
All Souls' Day	Country-wide	_	2	Indigenous families eat, drink and leave offerings of flowers in cemeteries across the country. Typical meals are guaguas de pan (bread dolls) and colada morada (a delicious fruit and corn-flour based pudding).				
Cuenca Independence Day	Azuay	Cuenca	3	Cultural processions, dances and other activities.				
Virgen del Quinche	Pichincha	El Quinche	21	A religious ceremony, peregrinations and commercial fairs.				
DECEMBER								
Quito Foundation Day	Pichincha	Quito	1-6	Parades, free concerts, cultural shows and dances throughout the city.				
Christmas	Country-wide	_	25	Nativity scenes in churches.				
New Year's Eve	Country-wide	_	31	The Old Year ends with the burning of effigies, usually representing politicians or famous people.				



Andean Highlands

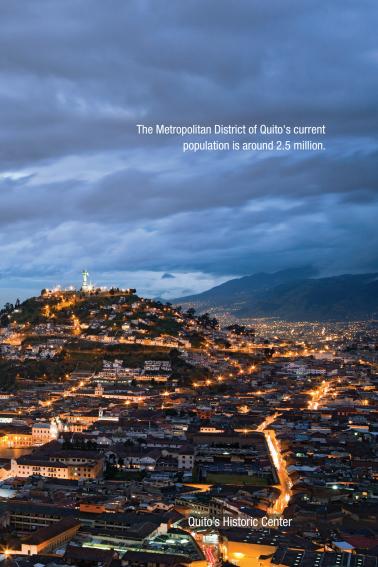
The two Andean cordilleras that run longitudinally through Ecuador from north to south offer a stunning variety of vistas and landscapes: volcanoes and snow-capped mountains, green valleys with impressive colonial cities such as Quito and Cuenca, Indian towns and villages, farmlands, haciendas, lakes and rivers of crystal blue waters.

Setting out from Quito, the traveller is blessed with a wealth of options for exploration, from the cloud forests located to the northwest and east; the handicraft market, haciendas and flower farms to the north; hot springs and snow-capped peaks to the east.

Ouito

The capital of Ecuador has a setting that few cities can match. During the 13th century, it was the prosperous centre of the Kingdom of the Quitus. It later became the northern capital of the Inca Empire. In the 16th and 17th centuries, colonial architects built impressive temples, monasteries and mansions, creating an urban jewel, the first city nominated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1978, Quito's artistic creativity awaits the visitor in cosmopolitan galleries and boutiques filled with contemporary paintings, sculptures and exquisite traditional crafts.







Situated on a corner overlooking Plaza San Francisco in the heart of Quito's famed 'Old Town', this restored historic mansion harbours 31 rooms that are a showcase of how sophisticated design can make tradition come alive. Casa Gangotena's dramatic style and world-class dining, combined with its daily activities - climb to the top of San Francisco Church for an exclusive view of the Old Town, or tastings of local craft beers accompanied by tapas — for an up-close experience of the city's exciting cultural and gourmet offerings.

Of course, location means nothing if you don't take advantage of it. Casa Gangotena offers an unbeatable base for admiring breath-taking Baroque churches, visiting local artisans and craft schools, exploring markets and museums, or simply making surprise discoveries amid the chessboard grid of streets of the downtown historic district.

Or use it as a base for your visits to the capital's modern districts, with their museums, cultural centres, shops and upscale dining, and as a starting point for exploring Ecuador's rich cultural and natural diversity: the volcanoes, mountains, markets and haciendas of the Andes, the Choco biodiversity hotspot, the Amazon's green rainforest, the beaches of the Pacific Coast, or the fabled Galapagos Islands – all surprisingly close and all impressively compelling.





Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards:

Top 20 Hotels in South America 2022 Top 20 Hotels in South America 2021 Top 20 Hotels in South America 2020



Travel + Leisure:

500 list of the Best Hotels of the World 2022 500 list of the Best Hotels of the World 2021

Travel & Leisure: The Top 10 Hotels

in Central and South America 2021



Ecuador's Leading Boutique Hotel 2021



in Central and South America 2020

When in **Quito**... Top 10 Things to See and Do

- Have a glass of champagne on the terrace of Casa Gangotena overlooking the stunning Plaza San Francisco.
- Explore the past: Visit the Casa del Alabado Pre-Colombian
 Archaeological Museum, the Museo Nacional del Ecuador
 (featuring a unique gold collection), or the Mindalae
 Ethnohistorical Museum.
- Enjoy the city's incredible vistas: Take a look from Itchimbía Park and Cultural Center, the beautiful National Basilica, the hilltop Virgen del Panecillo, or the TeleferiQo cable car on the side of Pichincha.
- 4. Have fun while doing some shopping: Check out the merchandise at La Mariscal Artisans Market, Olga Fisch Folklore design shops, and Homero Ortega Panama hat shops.

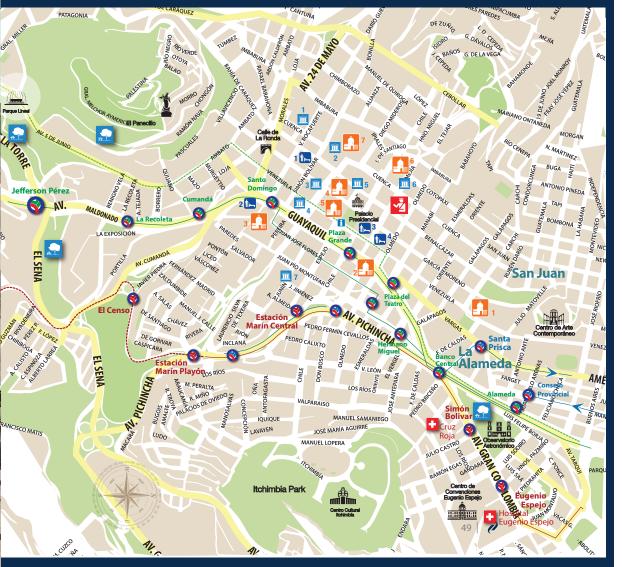
- 5. Look for traditional crafts and snacks: Visit La Ronda street in the historic downtown
- **6.** Take a cultural night out: Enjoy a show at the Jacchiqua Folklore Ballet (Wednesdays only), Teatro Sucre, Casa de la Cultura, or Casa de la Música.
- 7. Night out: Visit a bar in Plaza Foch in La Mariscal.
- **8.** Pamper yourself: Head over to Casa Gangotena Spa.
- **9.** Experience religious life: Visit the churches and convents of La Compañía de Jesús, San Francisco, or San Agustín.
- 10. Learn about modern art: Visit Guayasamin's Capilla del Hombre or the Ileana Viteri Art Gallery.

To complete your experience, ask your guide about special tours and "can't be missed" experiences









Ouito's Historic Centre

MUSEUMS

- 1. Casa del Alabado 2. San Francisco
- 3. Numismatico
- 4. Casa de Sucre
- 5. Metropolitano
- 6. Arte Colonial
- 7. Manuela Saenz

CHURCHES

- 1. Basilica
- 2. San Agustin
- 3. Santo Domingo
- 4. La Compañia
- 5. Catedral Metropolitana
- 6. La Merced
- 7. San Francisco

HOTELS

- 1. Casa Gangotena
- 2. Casona de la Ronda
- 3. Plaza Grande
- 4. Patio Andaluz

TOURIST INFORMATION





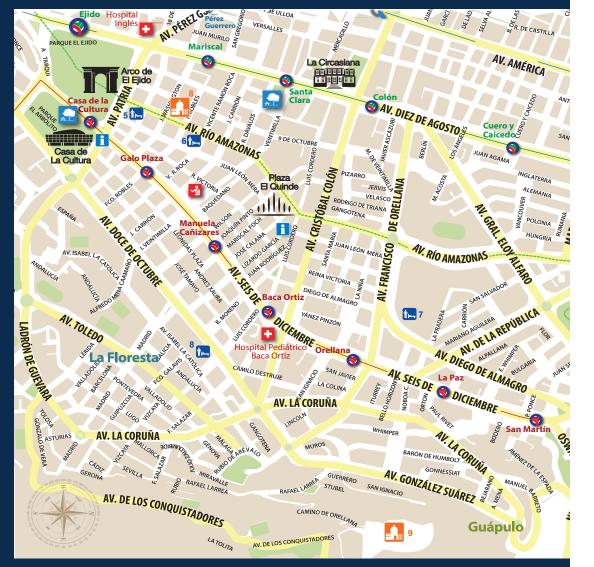






Trolebus

Metrobus



Quito La Mariscal La Floresta and Guapulo

- MUSEUMS
 8. Vivarium Quito
- CHURCHES
- 8. Santa Teresita 9. Convento de Guapulo
- TOURIST INFORMATION
- PARK
- HOTELS
- 5. Hilton Colon
- 6. Mercure
- 7. J.W. Marriot
- 8. Swissôtel
- + HOSPITAL
- Ecovia
- Trolebus
- Metrobus

Ouito's Northwest

Forest

Mashpi Private Reserve

To the west of Quito, moist air from the Pacific Ocean is blown inland where it meets the Andes Mountains. cooling and forming the ecosystem known as a "cloud forest," since many organisms survive on the moisture in the clouds rather than in the soil.

Ecuador's primary cloud forests and montane rainforests harbour immense biodiversity, particularly bird species and some of the highest rates of plant endemism in the world. Beginning a mere hour's drive from the capital city proper, the cloud forest world invites contemplation and adventure, with dramatic landscapes of tumbling mountainsides etched with rivers and waterfalls providing a captivating backdrop. The region is also rich in local customs and history. with several archaeological sites, giving visitors the opportunity to learn more about ways of life amid the clouds and trees.





Mashpi Lodge (www.mashpilodge.com), located within the Metropolitan District of Quito, provides an amazingly accessible cloud forest and rainforest experience. Mashpi Reserve is full of secrets that researchers are just beginning to uncover within its pristine forests. This 7,000-acre (2,800-hectare) biodiversity hotspot forms a part of the Ecuadorian Choco rainforest, stretching from Ecuador's western coast to the south of Panama. It harbours myriad butterflies, translucent jungle frogs, and over one fourth of the bird species of Ecuador - famed for its broad diversity of birdlife.

The sophisticated and strikingly-contemporary lodge is designed to combine levels of comfort, service, guiding and cuisine hitherto unheard of in a tropical forest environment anywhere in the world. The lodge's sustainable materials, minimalist décor and warm earth tones blend beautifully with its surroundings, allowing guests to engage with the forest on their own terms.

Opportunities for exploration and learning abound. Our resident biologist and expedition leader bring the forest's wonders to life for our guests, who can explore the reserve on foot or glide through the canopy on the Dragonfly cable car. Activities include visiting the Life Centre with its butterflies and plants, climbing the eight-story observation tower, riding on the innovative Sky Bike, early morning bird watching, night walks, or simply sitting back to watch the clouds play hideand-seek with the forest. Whether you decide to venture far from your cabin or stay in, the forest experience surrounds and transforms you.





World Spa Awards:

Ecuador's Best Resort Spa 2022 Ecuador's Best Resort Spa 2021

Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards:

Top 15 Resorts in South America 2022 Top 50 Resorts in the World 2021

World Travel Awards:

South America's Leading Eco-Lodge 2022 South America's Leading Eco-Lodge 2021

Travel + Leisure:

500 list of the Best Hoteles of the World 2022 Top 100 Hotels in the World 2021

The Society of American Travel Writers (SATW):

Phoenix Award 2022



Highlights of the Northern Andes

Otavalo Indian Market: Two hours north of Quito, the town of Otavalo draws visitors every week who come to this native community to shop at the world-famous handicraft market. The market, busiest on Saturdays but open every day, features a dazzling array of handicrafts including tapestries, hammocks, jewellery, paintings and colourful native clothing. Otavalo itself lies in scenic northern Ecuador, surrounded by volcanoes, rivers and lakes, For lodging, try one of the wonderful local haciendas: centuries-old estates now converted into elegant hotels.

Papallacta Thermal Springs & Antisana Ecological Reserve: Two hours east of Quito in the Andean Cordillera. the reserve protecting the snow-capped Antisana Volcano and its surrounding ecosystem of moorlands and forests combines both relaxation and adventure. The reserve boasts stunning views of both the peaks of the Andes and the undulating forest canopy to the east.

The Papallacta Hot Springs, located just outside the reserve. are a first-class complex including hotel, restaurant, resort and spa. The springs, crystal clear waters heated by the Earth's geothermal energy, are channelled into pools of different sizes and temperatures. Surrounded by mountains and rivers, Papallacta is an unforgettable part of any visit to Ecuador.

To see the best of this beautiful region, ask your guide about tours.





The Avenue of the Volcanoes

The Andes run longitudinally north-south through Ecuador, scything the country in two and dividing the steamy jungles from the warm, tropical Pacific coast. Along the mountain range rise dozens of volcanoes, several of them active. Visitors delight in the stunning scenery, shopping for colourful handcrafts — which make wonderful gifts — and hearing the guides tell the stories behind each and every snow-capped giant along the way.

One and a half hours south of Quito, explore the moorlands, fauna and vistas of the majestic Cotopaxi Volcano (19,347 feet (5,897 meters) above sea level), with plenty of activities to enjoy, such as mountain biking, horseback riding, or simply relaxing at a nearby hacienda. The volcano is protected by the Cotopaxi National Park, a sanctuary extending over an area of 88,920 acres (35,985 hectares) within which visitors can find out more about the Andean paramo or moorlands at the small Interpretation Centre and at the Limpiopungo Lagoon.

Remember, your guide can help you plan a private tour or join a group to explore the area.

www.metropolitan-touring.com







Central and Southern **Highlands**

Beginning in Quito and heading south along the Andes' spine, one travels along what the 19th century explorer Alexander von Humboldt dubbed the "Avenue of the Volcanoes": a journey full of breath-taking landscapes, cultural discoveries, ethnic encounters and culinary delights. The route passes through the provincial capitals of Latacunga, Ambato, Riobamba, Cuenca and Loja, bringing Andean people and lore to brilliant life as well as affording intimate contact with Ecuador's natural wonders

Highlights of the Central and Southern Highlands

The central highlands of the Sierra region are dominated by volcanic peaks, including the highest in Ecuador, Chimborazo, which, at 20,702 feet (6,310 meters) above sea level, towers over the surrounding countryside, Facing it on the Eastern Cordillera or mountain range are Tungurahua and El Altar. This is a land of remote farming communities, of strong indigenous culture and lively weekly markets.

Taking the road east from Ambato one descends towards the Amazon Basin and the spa town of Baños, where the vegetation rapidly changes to sub-tropical, the roads wrapping round the mountainsides above roiling rivers.

Continuing south from Riobamba, by road, the mountains become more rounded and the countryside more undulating as one enters the provinces of Cañar and Azuay. Here one finds Ecuador's most important Inca ruins, at Ingapirca, about two hours' drive north of Cuenca.

> The Andean Highlands are a must-live experience for visitors to Ecuador. Ask vour quide for more information.





Cuenca

Cuenca, for many Ecuador's most beautiful city, is located in a wide valley at an altitude of 7,650 feet (2,550 meters) above sea level. The capital of Azuay province, the city enjoys a mild climate and a fabulous geographic position. The beauty of its landscape combined with the harmony between old and modern architecture led UNESCO to nominate Cuenca for a World Cultural Heritage Site destination.

Cuenca is famed for its artisans and its crafts, including ceramics, jewellery, and embroidery. It is also home to the famous, if misnamed, "Panama" hat, declared a World Heritage Craft by UNESCO. Heading out beyond the city, the towns of Gualaceo and Chordeleg are also fun for those who appreciate rural experiences, filigree silverwork, colourful markets, and orchids, while Cajas National Park is great for those who love natural scenery full of lakes, birdlife, and walks very close to the city.



When in Cuenca... Top 10 Things to See and Do

- Wander around: Explore the Tomebamba River that winds through the city.
- Learn the history of Cuenca: Witness the city's rich heritage at Todosantos Church, a variety of archaeological museums, gardens, restaurants and bakeries.
- Treat yourself: Buy some sweets at the Convento de las Conceptas.
- People-watch: Lounge around at Parque Calderón and Plaza San Sebastián.
- 5. Get some perspective: Climb up to the Turi hillside.
- Inhale the blooms: Walk around the Plazoleta del Carmen flower market.

- 7. Step back in time: Soak in some history at the Museo del Banco Central and Pumapungo ruins.
- 8. Learn about the city's religious life: Pay a visit to Cuenca's New Cathedral, the neo-Gothic La Imaculada, as well as the Baroque Old Cathedral and the San Francisco and Santo Domingo churches.
- 9. Go window-shopping for traditional crafts: Check out the selection at La Esquina de las Artes, Rotary Market and Casa de la Mujer market.
- 10. Get hatted: Try on a Toguilla straw hat at the Homero Ortega factory.

Bonus: Visit a one-of-a-kind ceramics gallery at Eduardo Vega's workshop.

See why Cuenca is now on the map as a top place to visit and live. Ask your guide for tours that show you the best of the city and take you off the beaten path.





Cuenca

- **MUSEUMS**
- 1. Modern Art
- 2. Casa de la Cultura 3. CIDAP Artes Populares
- 43. Victoria 4. Remigio Crespo Toral

HOTELS

41. Oro Verde

44. Carvallo

46. Santa Lucia

48 Fl Dorado

42. Mansión Alcázar

45. Posada del Angel

47. Casa del Aquila

AIRPORT

TOURIST

INFORMATION

POST OFFICE

- 5. History of Medicine 6. Toquilla Straw
 - Homero Ortega
- 7. Esqueletologia
- 8. Las Conceptas 9 Central Bank
- 10. Native Cultures
- 11. Agustin Landivar
- 12. Folklore Institute 13. Cañari Identity
 - CHURCHES
- 14. New Cathedral 15. Old Cathedral
- 16 San Alfonso
- 17 La Merced
- 18. Las Conceptas
- 19. Todos Santos 20. El Vergel
- 21. San Blas
- 22. Santo Domingo
- 23. San Francisco
- 24. Santo Cenáculo
- 25. San Sebastián 26. Corazón de Jesús
- 27. María Auxiliadora
- 28. Turi
- ARCHAELOGICAL SITES
- 29. The Ruins of Todos los Santos
- 30. Pumapungo
- HANDICRAFTS
- 31. Casa de la Muier
- 32. Plaza Rotary
- 33 Mama Kinua Cultural Center
- 34. San Francisco
- 35. Plaza del Otorongo
- 36. Ceramics
- 37. Homero Ortega (Toquilla Straw Hats)
- 38. Typical Clothing
- 39. Smithery
- 40. Esquina de las Artes Shopping

Cuenca Map here!





Guayaquil

Ecuador's largest city is a vibrant metropolis that stretches along the Guayas River delta, a busy port of commercial buildings and baronial mansions. Guayaquil also has a rich collection of museums, some flagship urban regeneration projects and good dining and nightlife. Enjoy the old quarter of Las Peñas with its traditional architecture as well as the modern and bustling riverfront boardwalk: Malecón Simón Bolívar.



When in Guayaquil... **Top 10 Things** to See and Do

- **1.** Explore the past: Stroll Las Peñas quarter.
- 2. Rewind the clock: Learn about the city's heritage at Centro Cultural Libertador Simon Bolivar.
- **3.** See the city from a different perspective: Take the Captain Morgan boat ride along the Guayas River.
- 4. Get an incredible view: Climb up Santa Ana Hill.
- 5. Take an afternoon stroll: Walk along the riverfront boardwalk on the Malecón Simón Bolívar and don't forget to climb aboard La Perla, the first large Ferris wheel in Ecuador and the highest in South America.

- **6.** Watch iguanas with the locals: Spend time with the unique wildlife of Parque Seminario.
- 7. Discover animals and lore: Visit Parque Histórico.
- 8. See the birds: Go birdwatching at Cerro Blanco.
- **9.** Take an evening out: Visit one of the city's lively bars and clubs in Puerto Santa Ana or check out Malecón del Salado's night-time dancing water show where colours and music show off the beauty of this recognized monument
- 10. Head out of town to the beaches of Playas and Salinas or visit local cacao and banana plantations.

The people of vibrant Guayaquil, the Pearl of the Pacific, await with open arms. Ask your quide for ways to connect with the local culture. www.metropolitan-touring.com





Guayaquil Centre Map

- PARKS & MONUMENTS
 - 1. Centenario Park
 - 2. Seminario Park
 - 3. La Rotonda
- MUSEUMS
 - 4. Casa de la Cultura
 - 5. Municipal
 - 6. Nahim Isaias
 - 7. Naval Museum
 - 8. MAAC 9. The Firefighters Museum
- CHURCHES
 - 10. Cathedral
 - 11. La Merced
 - 12. Santo Domingo
- HANDICRAFTS
 - 13. Handicraft Market Malecon 2000
 - 14. Handicraft Market Loja
- HOTELS
 - 15. Oro Verde
 - 16. Unipark 17. Wyndham
 - BANKS & EXCHANGE
- HOSPITAL
- POST OFFICE



Guayaquil North Map

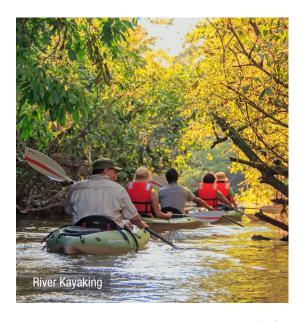
- 🙏 AIRPORT
- A HISTORIC PARK
- TEATRO SANCHEZ
 AGUILAR
- HOSPITAL
- HOTELS
 - 18. Sheraton 19. Hilton Colon
 - 20. Howard Johnson
 - 21. Hotel del Parque
- SHOPPING
 - 22. Mall del Sol
 - 23. San Marino Shopping
 - 24. Plaza Lagos
 - 25. Village Plaza



The **Amazon** Rainforest

The Amazon rainforest is home to the greatest number of living creatures of any ecosystem on Earth. Its richness is staggering. It overwhelms the senses and invites you to experience and treasure all of its exuberance and adventure as you explore it by boat and on foot. It's also home to dozens of ethnic groups, some living lives little changed since the dawn of Man, others becoming more assimilated into the modern world. Meeting, befriending and learning from these people enriches one's experience of their green and fragrant world.

Ecuador's share of the basin begins on the eastern slopes of the Andes, as rainwater rushes down the mountains and into the rivers and streams that make up the mighty river. In the Ecuadorian Amazon, travellers will find comfortable jungle lodges in remote rainforests, where they can visit millenary-old indigenous communities, spot toucans and monkeys in the treetops, and swim with piranhas in the warm rivers.







The **Galapagos** Islands

The Galapagos Islands rank among the world's most extraordinary wildlife destinations. Although every inch of our world has something that makes it 'unique'. the islands are that much more sui generis than other places due to the archipelago's isolation over millennia, which have allowed species to evolve amid the stark volcanic landscapes into new and apparently strange life forms that exist nowhere else on the planet. And on top of that, the creatures one encounters are virtually fearless of humans. It's a truly magical place.

The archipelago began to emerge above a volcanic hotspot in the Pacific Ocean million years ago. The islands were named after the giant Galapagos tortoises that looked similar to the Spanish galápago saddle used by the first explorers in the 16th century.



This alluring ecosystem is located 600 miles (1,000 kilometers) off the coast of Ecuador and boasts a world record of distinctions and official designations, including: Ecuador's first National Park: a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site; its Galapagos Marine Reserve "(2nd largest in the world)" por: (one of the world's largest); a Biosphere Reserve; a Whale Sanctuary; and the Darwin and Wolf Marine Sanctuary (Shark Sanctuary).

In 1835, the young English naturalist, Charles Darwin, visited the Galapagos. His experiences and collections in this "living laboratory" later inspired his writings on natural selection and ground-breaking theory of evolution published in On The Origin of Species. In large part, the islands remain as Darwin would have seen them nearly 180 years ago.

Useful Galapagos Tips

Entrance Fees and procedure

The Galapagos National Park authorities charge an entrance fee of USD 100 for all foreign visitors, and the Galapagos Immigration authority charges USD 20 for a visitors' card. These fees must be paid in cash upon arrival (unless pre-arranged). Traveller check's and credit cards are NOT accepted. These fees are subject to change without previous notice. You will need to fill out some forms upon arrival. Having a pen on hand is useful!

Luggage

Ecuadorian law stipulates that all checked baggage going to Galapagos must be inspected in order to prevent the introduction to the islands of alien organisms that could cause serious damage to the unique ecosystems of the archipelago. Each passenger is allowed one bag of up to 50 lb (23 kg) each, plus carry-on luggage, a photo or video camera and binoculars. Professional film equipment and oversized SCUBA diving gear require special permits and prior arrangements.

Clothes

For travel in the Galapagos, clothing ranges from informal to very informal. Essentials include sneakers, shorts, long- and short-sleeve lightweight shirts, bathing suits, a wide-brimmed hat, long trousers/ pants, light fleece/sweater, and a wind breaker or light jacket for evenings. Be sure to bring a hat and sunglasses and apply your sunscreen. For evening activities, casual attire is suggested. Footwear should give your feet protection, comfort, balance and grip. For this we suggest tennis shoes or mid-ankle hiking boots. The use of sandals, flip-flops or Tevas, may give you practical freedom, but remember your feet will be directly exposed to a rugged outdoor environment.

Download a detailed packing list at: www.metropolitan-touring.com/galapagos/packinglist/

Photography

In Galapagos, everyone always takes far more photos than they thought they would, so bring extra memory cards! Waterproof, underwater cameras are fun and recommended

PLEASE NOTE: Neither flash photography nor the use of drones is permitted in Galapagos.

Purchases on board

US dollars may be used to pay for extras such as beverages, souvenirs, boutique items, tips, etc. Credit cards (Visa, Master Card and American Express) are also accepted aboard the Santa Cruz II, Isabela II, La Pinta and at the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel.



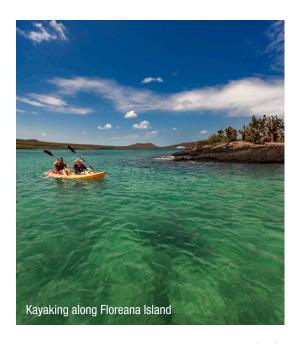
Smoking Policy

Accommodating the interest of smokers and nonsmokers is an important issue in the travel business today. We want every guest to feel as comfortable as possible while we all comply with basic safety and smoking regulations. Please help us by following these quidelines: Aboard ship and at the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel, all cabins and rooms are smoke-free. If you smoke, please use any of the outside decks or areas, and the ashtrays provided.



Important: Changes to Itineraries

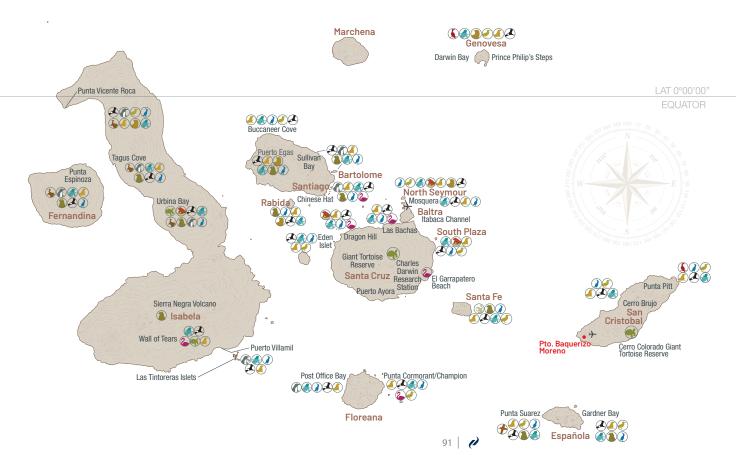
Changes in National Park policies, seasonal fluctuations, safety issues and weather conditions may occasionally require schedule changes in itineraries without prior notice. These decisions are taken with guest safety in mind and in the interests of the islands' conservation.





Galapagos





Galapagos Map here!



What to Expect on Your Travel Day to Galapagos?

Guests on all Metropolitan Touring programs and itineraries (Santa Cruz II, Yacht La Pinta, Yacht Isabela II and Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel) should follow the instructions below for details on their travel from mainland Ecuador to the Galapagos Islands. A link to further instructions that are specific to each program will be provided on the following pages.

For all itineraries, please remember to take your original documents (passport, local identity document) to the airport with you even though this is a local flight. We also recommend that you keep accessible (in hand luggage) the following essentials: A small amount of cash, important medicines, sunscreen, sunglasses, binoculars, a camera, a lightweight jacket, a hat, one pair of sport socks, and a small daypack to carry everything.

Wherever your flight starts (Quito or Guayaquil), visitors to Galapagos must get a Transit Control Card from the Galapagos authorities. On some programs, this is included. On others, pay the fee at the government booth at the airport. Then, all luggage will be screened by quarantine personnel



before being locked with a plastic padlock, which will be removed upon arrival. To protect the delicate Galapagos ecosystem, the national authorities have developed a list of acceptable and restricted items for transport to the islands. For travellers, the most relevant restricted items on the list are certain fresh fruits, flowers, cheese, and anything containing seeds or nuts. Most packaged foods are acceptable. Please consult your guide if you have any guestions or consult this link:

www.metropolitan-touring.com/galapagos/packinglist/

If departing from Quito, your flight will stop first in Guayaguil. This is an approximately 55-minute flight (door-to-door), and before taking off, your plane will stay on the slipway at the airport for about 40 minutes. During this time, restrooms on the plane will not be available for use until platform operations are finished so please use the facilities in Quito or during the flight. More passengers may board the plane before departure for Galapagos.

The flight from Guayaquil to Galapagos takes under 2 hours and food will be available for purchase. There is no complimentary snack service. The airline crew will hand you a an affidavit form which you must fill out while on the plane, as it will be required for entry to Galapagos.

A few minutes before arrival in Galapagos, the cabin crew will spray overhead compartments with permethrin, a World Health Organization-approved insecticide used to prevent the entry of unwelcome insects into delicate island environments. This is the same natural compound used as a repellent on popular outdoors clothing and is both effective and safe. You arrive to a different time zone: The Galapagos Archipelago is an hour earlier than Ecuador's mainland (GMT/ UCT -6). Please make sure you adjust your watches.

Upon disembarking in Galapagos, there are two lines at the National Park counter: one for Galapagos residents, and one for mainland Ecuadorians and all foreign visitors. Please choose accordingly, then show your passport and your Transit Control Card to the authorities. You will be handed a stub which you will need for departure from the archipelago. Please keep it in a safe place.

Next, pay your National Park fee unless it is included in your programme. Whether you pay now or have pre-paid, you will be handed a receipt for your entrance fee. Please keep this receipt. You will need it for departure from Galapagos.

For more information on the Galapagos National Park rules, please consult the following link:

https://www.metropolitan-touring.com/galapagos-informa tion#galapagosnationalparkrules



Leaving Galapagos

The exact steps for departure will depend on your specific itinerary or program. Your guide or hotel staff will give you complete information and are available to answer any questions.

Please remember to take all your personal belongings and documents with you. Keep the Transit Control Card stub and the National Park receipt you received upon arrival within easy reach as authorities will request them upon departure.









Yacht La Pinta

The Pleasure of Luxury Cruising in the Galapagos

A sophisticated, upscale travel experience for 48 quests in 24 cabins that combines modern design, spacious rooms, and gourmet cuisine with top adventure. The ship offers a wide variety of aquatic activities including snorkelling, kayaking and a glass-bottom boat.

Generous Accommodations

Yacht La Pinta boasts among the largest cabins of any Galapagos vessel and features floor-to-ceiling oversized panoramic windows in all cabins for the best views of the islands. All cabins have stylish bathrooms with top-notch

amenities. La Pinta is considered an ideal yacht for families traveling together, with 8 connecting cabins available.

Space for Learning and Relaxing

Join your guides in the lounge for nightly briefings about the next day's activities. On the following day, visit the National Park on carefully planned excursions. In between outings, it will feel as if your connection with the islands never ends, as panoramic windows in our numerous social areas offer almost permanent visual contact with the island landscapes while you are inside the ship. Or step outside with your camera and make the most of the numerous outdoor social areas, including an outdoor terrace for dining when weather permits and an observation deck that is perfect for equatorial stargazing. Relax in the hot tub, work out in the cardio-gym, or lounge on the sun deck.

Expeditions:

7D/6N Western Galapagos - Friday to Thursday 9D/8N Eastern and Northern Galapagos - Thursday to Friday 5D/4N Eastern Galapagos - Thursday to Monday 5D/4N Northern Galapagos - Monday to Friday All expeditions start and end in Baltra.

Capacity: 48 guests

Website: www.lapintagalapagoscruise.com





Yacht Isabela II

An Intimate and Cosy Galapagos Experience

The perfect, intimate space for exploring Darwin's islands in comfort. Explore the coast with your guides on our zodiacs, glass-bottom boat or kayaks, or enjoy the islands' well-known snorkelling opportunities. As on all our vessels, your groups can expect top facilities and equipment, delicious meals, and safe and stimulating expert-planned expeditions on the islands.

Live the Experience in a Relaxed Atmosphere

Our Yacht Isabela II. with its 20 quest cabins, promises a close-up and convivial experience of this unique world. The laid-back atmosphere and deluxe amenities delight guests who enjoy adventure and discovery. On board, our well-knit and long-standing crew takes pride in indulging our guests with special surprises.

Lounges and Deck Spaces

Yacht Isahela II offers handsome installations to perfectly complement the day's outings. Enjoy the fresh air atop the Sun Deck or find fascinating books about nature and history in our library. Delicious meals served impeccably in the dining room or al fresco nourish vour senses as a well-deserved reward after your expeditions. Take a break in the hot tub, stay strong in the fitness room, or have a drink at the bar or outside while you sunbathe.

Expeditions:

7D/6N SouthEastern - Friday to Thursday 5D/4N Northern - Monday to Friday 5D/4N Western - Thursday to Monday

Capacity: 40 guests

Website: www.isabelagalapagoscruise.com





Santa Cruz II

The **Best Balance of Galapagos Exploration and Modern Comfort**

Conceived for operations in remote areas, our state-of-the-art expedition vessel offers the perfect infrastructure for Galapagos exploration and benefits from its crew's decades-long heritage of traversing the islands. At just over 230 feet (70 meters) in length, this spacious, 5-deck craft accommodates 90 quests and features ample, luxury-sized indoor and outdoor social areas that allow quests to make the most of their Galapagos cruise experience.

Lounges and Deck Spaces

The Santa Cruz II offers handsome installations to perfectly complement the day's outings. Enjoy the fresh air atop the Sky Deck or grab a guick BBQ snack on the outdoor terrace. Pound the modern gym or eniov a delightful hot tub soak. Relax in the bar/lounge amid the ship's convivial atmosphere, or find a book to satisfy your curiosity and learn more about island life in the ample reading room.

Expeditions:

5D/4N Northern Galapagos - Monday to Friday 7D/6N Eastern Galapagos - Friday to Thursday 5D/4N Western Galapagos - Thursday to Monday

Capacity: 90 guests

Website: www.santacruzgalapagoscruise.com



Finch Bay FINCH BAY Galapagos Hotel

An enriching, relaxing, rejuvenating land and sea experience... for everyone.

Let Us Be Your Central Headquarters for Galapagos Discovery

There are so many ways to experience Galapagos' fearless wildlife and extraordinary otherworldly landscapes. Cruise, Land and sea, Do-it-vourself itineraries. At the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel, you can eniov the best of all of these choices. Centrally located on Santa Cruz Island, our quests come and go as they please, before or after cruising, in the middle of an island hopping itinerary, or as an exclusive home-base for land and marine exploration. Our recently renovated hotel - featuring beachfront living, a freshwater swimming pool, an intimate spa, hammocks in each room, and plush beds with fine linens - makes our quests feel even more in tune with its extraordinary location and sets the stage for a regenerative stay.

Adventure... your way

Choose from basic, intermediate and full programmes that allow you to create your own journey during your stay with us. Use the hotel as a bed and breakfast if you prefer to explore on your own. Or take full advantage of our expertise and complement your hotel stay with carefully curated activities designed to show you 80% of the islands' quintessential Galapagos BIG15 species. Hike, bike, kayak, snorkel, SCUBA dive, walk on the beach, or embark on a day cruise and enjoy the stunning wildlife. There are different options available each day, all designed by an experienced expedition leader and accompanied by knowledgeable naturalist quides.

Let us take care of you...and the islands!

Our accommodating staff likes nothing better than to make sure you go home feeling relaxed and rejuvenated. Dine in style on fabulous gourmet meals designed by our gastronomy director's team. Enjoy stellar hospitality that has made us the favourite of Trip Advisor's discriminating users. Come home after vour adventure to a staff that knows your name and makes every effort to ensure your safety and comfort. And leave knowing that your visit to the remote and pristine archipelago, 600 miles (1,000 kilometers) from the mainland of Ecuador in South America, leaves only the slightest of footprints. The 27-room Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel has won accolades for its service, but also for its world-class efforts to protect the Galapagos' unique environment. It's so green that even the local wildlife loves to visit!

Enjoy the hotel by itself or add on any of the wonderfully planned activities we have to offer:

- Hiking
- Biking
- Snorkelling
- Kayaking
- SCUBA diving
- Surfing
- Day cruises

Capacity (54 guests): 21 Finch Bay Rooms (42 guests) and 6 Finch Bay Suites (12 guests)

Finch Bay Spa: Gym, Jacuzzis, Yoga Room, and two treatment rooms.

Website: www.finchbayhotel.com



Ecuador's Best Hotel Spa 2022 Ecuador's Best Hotel Spa 2021

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Ecuador's Leading Design Hotel 2022



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Useful Contacts

Airport

- Quito (02) 395 4200
 Flight information Ext. 2001, 2003
 Customer service 2008, 2010
 Customer service supervisor 2718
- Guayaquil (04) 216 9000
 Flight information 1152, 1153, 1177
 Customer service supervisor 1151
 Airport operations information 1800
- Cuenca (07) 286 7120
 Customer service information / Flight information Ext.110
 Airport operations information Ext. 126

Contact your Airline

- Avianca
 - 1 800 237 6425 Domestic flights (02) 942 800 Domestic flights
 - 1 800 003 434 International flights (Local 1 800 number)
- I ATAM Ecuador
 - 1 800 842 526 Ext. 1
 - 1 800 526 328
 - 1 800 526 727

Loss of Traveller's Cheques

American Express: Call 1800 225 528

Car Rental

- Hertz (02) 2 818 410/ (02) 2 818 435
- Avis (02) 6 016 000
- Localiza(02) 6 002 975/ (02) 6 002 976 (02) 6 002 977
- Budget (02) 2 818 000/ (02) 2 818 040
- Thrifty (02) 2 228 688/ (02) 2 244 948

Embassies and Consulates in Ouito

- Argentina Av. Amazonas 477, 8th. Floor. Phone: (02) 2 562 292 Opening Hours 9am / 5pm
- Austria Gaspar de Villarroel E9-53. Phone: (02) 2 469 700 / 099 9554 927 Opening Hours 10am /12pm
- Belgium Av. República del Salvador Phone: (02) 2 273 338
- Brazil Av. Amazonas 1429 y Av. Colón. Phone: (02) 2 277 300 Opening Hours 9am / 6pm
- Canada Av. Amazonas y Naciones Unidas 4153, Ed. Eurocenter, 3rd Floor, Phone: (02) 2 455 499 Opening Hours 9am / 12pm
- Chile Juan Pablo Sanz 3617 v Av. Amazonas. Phone: (02) 2 453 327 / (02) 2 452 752 (02) 459 487 Opening Hours 8:30am / 5pm
- Colombia Calle Catalina Aldaz N34-131 y Portugal entre Elov Alfaro v 6 de Diciembre Phone: (02) 3 281 677 Opening Hours 8:30am / 5:30pm
- Costa Rica Javier Arauz № 111 v Germán Alemán Phone: (02) 2 252 330 Opening Hours 8:30am / 3pm
- Eavpt Tarqui E4-56 v Av. 6 de Diciembre Phone: (02) 2 225 240 Opening Hours 10am / 1pm
- France General Plaza 107 y Av. Patria. Phone: (02) 2 943 800 Opening Hours 8:30am / 4:30pm
- Germany Av. Naciones Unidas y República de El Salvador, City Plaza, Phone: (02) 2 970 820 Opening Hours 8:00am / 11pm
- Israel Av. Coruña E25-58 y San Ignacio, Edif Altana, 5th Floor. Phone: (02) 3 971 500 Opening Hours 10am / 1pm
- Italy La Isla 111 y Humberto Albornoz. Phone: (02) 3 210 565 Opening Hours 8:30am / 12pm

- Japan Av. Amazonas N39-123 y Arízaga Phone: (02) 2 278 700 Opening Hours 9am / 5pm
- Korea Av. 12 de Octubre v Cordero, Edif, WTC, Tower B. 3rd Floor. Phone: (02) 2 909 227 Opening Hours 8:30am / 5pm
- Mexico Av. 6 de Diciembre N36-165. Phone: (02) 5 103 267 / (02) 2 510 273 Opening Hours 8:00am / 1pm
- Netherlands Av. José Larco 1301, Torre Parque Mar, floor 12-, Miraflores, Lima-Peru, Phone: +5112139800 Operator available 24/7
- Peru República de El Salvador N34-361 e Irlanda. Phone: (02) 2 468 410 / (02) 2 468 411 Opening Hours 9am / 5pm
- Russia Reina Victoria 462 y Roca. Phone: (02) 2 526 361/ (02) 2 526 375 Opening Hours 10am / 12pm
- **Spain** La Pinta 455 y Av. Amazonas Av. Amazonas 35-17 y Juan Pablo Sanz Phone: (02) 2 555 733 Opening Hours 8am / 3pm
- Switzerland Av. Amazonas 35-17 y Juan Pablo Sanz, Edif. Xerox, Piso 2. Phone: (02) 2 434 949
- United Kingdom Av. Naciones Unidas y República de El Salvador, Edif City Plaza, Phone: (02) 2 970 800 / 801
- United States Avigiras E12-170 y Elov Alfaro Phone: (02) 3 985 000
- Uruguay Av. 6 de Diciembre 2816 y Paul Rivet, 9th floor, Phone: (02) 2 544 228
- Venezuela Av. Amazonas 30-240 y Eloy Alfaro Phone: (02) 2 557 209

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24/7 OPERATIONAL EMERGENCY NUMBERS OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE ON DUTY AT ALL TIMES TO ASSIST YOU

Please call the number of the city where you need assistance in order to provide you with the best service.

All company telephone numbers listed are Ecuadorian cell phone numbers.

In Ouito:

To call locally: (099) 972 2941 and (099) 972 2942 If you are calling from abroad: +593 99 972 2941 or Email: operations@metropolitan-touring.com

In Guayaquil:

To call locally: (099) 992 9985

If you are calling from abroad: +593 99 992 9985 or Email: operationsqye@metropolitan-touring.com

In Cuenca:

To call locally: (099) 859 0166

If you are calling from abroad: +593 99 8590166 or Email: operationscue@metropolitan-touring.com

Mailing Address:

Av. De Las Palmeras N45-74 y De Las Orquideas Quito, Ecuador.

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