

# Quito

*The Capital of the Andes*

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• CULTURE

• HACIENDAS

• RAILWAY

• FLOWER TRAIL

# Discover Quito!

Quito, capital of Ecuador and the province of Pichincha, is located at the foot of Pichincha Volcano, 13 km south of the Equator, at 2,850 meters above sea level (9,200 feet).

With an area of over one million acres, a population of approximately 2.2 million inhabitants, and a temperature that ranges between 9 and 20 degrees Celsius, Quito is agreeable and charming, with a deeply intriguing history and the gorgeous Andean backdrop. Snow-capped mountains, cloud forests and "patchwork" valleys surround the city.

Quito is also known to possess priceless colonial treasures. The interiors of temples and monasteries are true museums where you can admire sculptures bathed in gold, the marvelous details of Baroque design and masterpieces of the colorful Quito Art School.





Detail La Compañía church ▲

## Tradition and history

Walk the almost 800 acres of the largest historic city center in the Americas. Visit churches, chapels, monasteries, convents, colonial plazas, museums and lovely estates with sumptuous courtyards and balconies lined with geraniums.

Wander along narrow cobblestone streets, escorting you through the architectural magnificence of the eighteenth century.



▲ Cathedral's main dome



▲ Old town - close up

Metropolitan Cultural Centre ▼



▲ Detail San Agustin door



Hear the tolling of the San Francisco Church bells at dawn. Discover the sweet aroma of panela and the delicious colaciones and mistelas of Bolívar Street.



▲ Old town - García Moreno street



▲ Independence monument - close up

Bordering this traditional square, you will find food stands that serve ham, cheese and pulled pork sandwiches with a wide array of endemic fruit juices. Arup trees emerge from stone and adobe, while pink flowers blossom like the clouds.

In the evening, you can visit García Moreno Street (also known as Calle de las Siete Cruces - Street of the Seven Crosses) on a romantic carriage ride, or enjoy the gentle strumming of a requinto guitar in the bohemian quarter of La Ronda.

Old town - García Moreno street ▶





## Exciting, traditional and fun

Plaza El Quinde known as "Plaza Foch" - La Mariscal ◀

San Juan remains an outstanding vantage point from which to admire the historic center. Enjoy fine dining in La Floresta, walk the train tracks in Cumbayá, visit old factories converted into museums at Chimbacalle, admire the paintings of Oswaldo Guayasamín in Bellavista.

La Mariscal is where the nightlife is. Music, dancing, and a riveting party atmosphere lies alongside the wide range of hotels, hostels, restaurants, bars, and souvenir shops that fill Quito's "red-light" district. A cosmopolitan atmosphere is expressed in its diverse cuisine, culture and burgeoning art scene.

The eclectic musical cosmos of a deeply mixed cultural legacy brings to you the sounds of salsa, merengue, ska, rock and the traditional Ecuadorian rhythms that seep through to the streets from bars and live performance venues throughout La Mariscal.



◀ Mari's chapel - Guayasamin

Teleferiqo - Quito's cable car ▼



Admiring Quito from above is an inspiring experience. Lookout points can be encountered at every corner, due to the dizzying relief upon which the city was built. Spectacular views of the colonial center, illuminated to showcase Quito's most precious monuments, is a treat to the senses under the crepuscular light that meanders across the towering mountains of the "Avenue of the Volcanoes".

Many of Quito's viewpoints, such as "Panecillo", San Juan or Itchimbia, were pre-Columbian ritual sites, while Cruz Loma, Lloa, the Metropolitan Park and Unguia Hill represent an unforgettable stage from which to enjoy the admirable mountainous geography of the city.

Quito's neighborhoods are filled with magic, legends and tradition. Time seems to have stood still in some of them: old-timers play games like "bolas" and "zumbambicos" in San Juan; candle-making in the area of Dos Puentes or the laundry "mats" of La Tola continue to run just as they did half a century ago.

Hand made bread dough figures ▼



Itchimbia Cultural Centre ▼



▼ Biggest and best preserved old town in Latinamerica





Theatre and music ▶

The city of Quito has been considered cradle of art and civilization, historically recognized as the Light of America, UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, Spanish American Cultural Capital and this 2011, Cultural Capital of the Americas.

Its historic center, the largest in the continent, is filled with life, commercial activity and the placid, laid-back atmosphere of colorful plazas surrounded by a stunning architecture preserved since colonial times.

The distinction of Cultural Capital of the Americas is testimony to Quito's fascinating historical, architectural, natural and cultural wealth.



## Quito, Symbol of Culture 2011

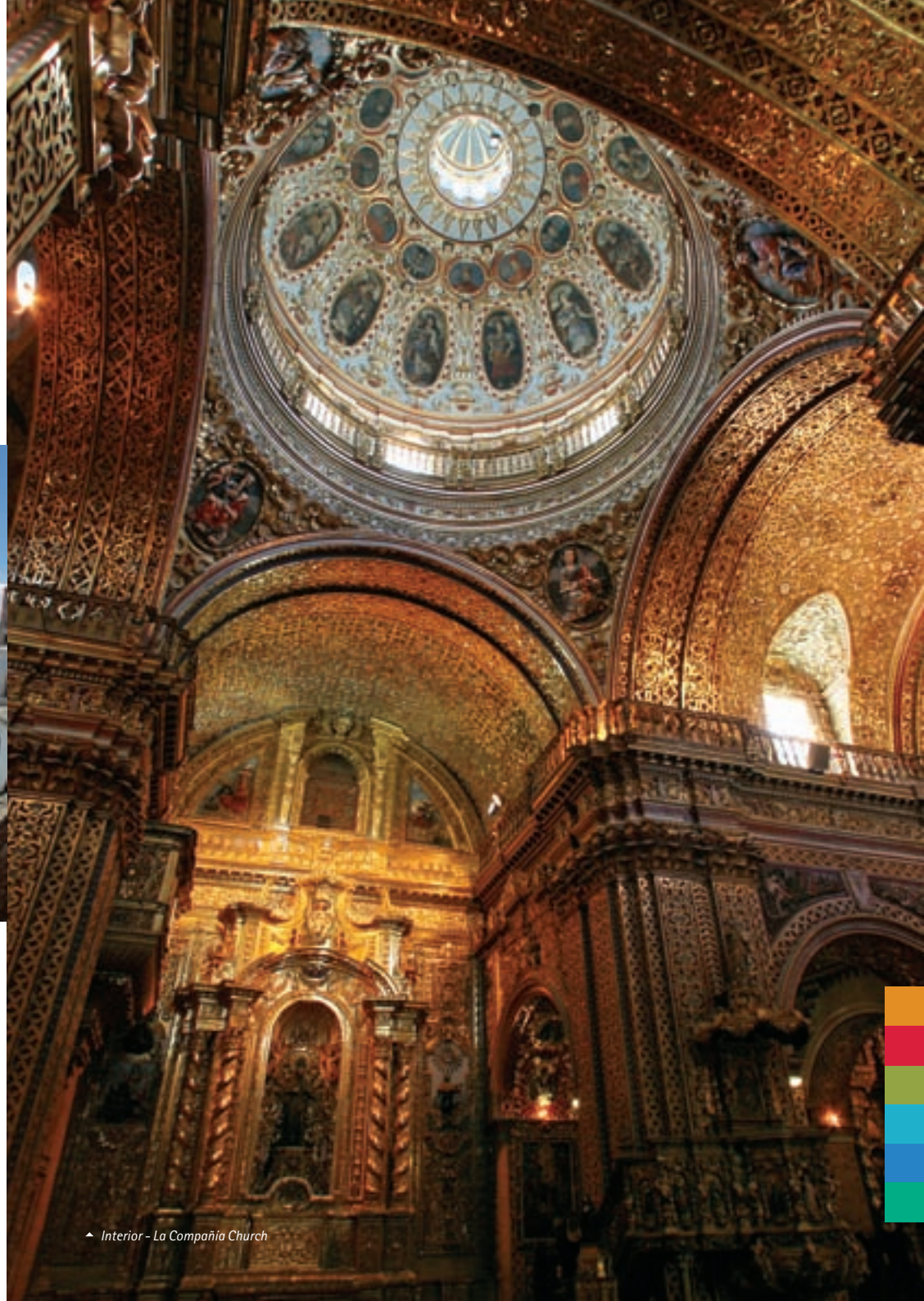


▶ Top view of The Cathedral

Santo Domingo square ▼



▶ "Cucuruchos" - Quito's holy week



▶ Interior - La Compañía Church





Horse back riding - Volcano land ◀



▶ Metropolitan park



# Wildlife and adventure in the outskirts

hot springs flowing from volcanic soils, tundra-like moorland vegetation, pine and eucalyptus forests.

You will reach world-renown Andean markets and remote villages pitted against the backdrop of colossal volcanoes.

**A memorable adventure for those who cherish nature!**



▶ Rafting in the "water trail"



▶ Antisana volcano



▶ Otavalo handicrafts market

▶ Trekking at Rucu Pichincha

▶ Papallacta hot springs

▶ San Pablo lake and Imbabura volcano

Just an hour's drive from Quito, enjoy horseback riding, hiking and visits to snow-capped mountains. Pump your adrenaline on a mountain bike, trekking, canyoning, abseiling and white-water river rafting.

The variety of habitats encompassed in such a small area is truly dazzling: snow-capped Andean peaks, spring-weathered valleys, jungles, mountain rivers, crater lakes and marshlands,





Quito's train:  
freedom in the Andes

[www.ferrocarrilesdelecuador.gob.ec](http://www.ferrocarrilesdelecuador.gob.ec)





Train on Ibarra - Salinas route



Train on Durán - Yaguachi route



Getting on board

One of the most exciting portions of the ride lies at El Boliche, at the foot of Cotopaxi Volcano. As the train makes its way into an extensive pine forest, rabbits, squirrels, deer, llamas and birds can be spotted at close range, as passengers experience the peace and beauty of intimate contact with nature.

**¡Hop on the train and let yourself go!**



Detail of a train

The Ecuadorian Railroad is a freewheeling journey into the untamed beauty of the Andes.

Experience a train ride whose first departures date back to 1908. A work of sheer engineering genius, it is considered one of the most challenging train-rides in the world, cutting across dramatic mountain ridges and drawing its meandering path through the Andes in such winding zigzags as the world-renowned Devil's Nose.

This adventure along the cordillera is a truly penetrating experience, as the railway continually advances and retreats, slowly tobogganning its way down the steepest of ravines.



Passing a bridge on Ibarra - Salinas route



Inside the train





# Haciendas: home to bygone prosperity





Hacienda's detail ▾

Experience the history and majestic beauty of a Spanish colonial hacienda, surrounded by the layered contours of the Andean landscape and snowy peaks that rise up to over five thousand meters above sea level.

More than 25 haciendas of great historic and ecological importance are distributed to the north and south of Quito, many of which boast exquisite architecture that dates back to the XVI century, while others zealously keep the relics of a remote Incan past.



La Mirage ▲



Local women ▲



Horse back riding - Cotopaxi ▲



Hacienda entrance ▲

Make yourself at home, colonial style; feel the splendor of lush gardens and Late Romantic décor; roam the historical legacy of ageless mansions, once home to independence heroes, worldly scientists, poets and lovers.

**Your soul will simmer in the sublime colonial prosperity of an Ecuadorian hacienda!**

San Agustín de Callo - room ▾



These lavish estates offer a chance to rediscover the beauty of simple pleasures: admire a sunset, breathe the clean mountain air, horseback ride into páramo wilderness and enjoy a warm campfire under the star-studded Andean night.



San Agustín de Callo ▾



A petal for every color  
on the Equator

[www.flowertrailecuador.com](http://www.flowertrailecuador.com)



Export quality roses ▾

of their exquisiteness and diversity.

The equatorial location of Ecuadorian flower plantations means warm days, cool nights and 12 hours of sunlight every day throughout the year, ideal for making the entire zone a flower production paradise. Floriculture is the region's most important financial activity and the country's number one non-traditional source of income.

**Marvel at the beguiling variety of smells and colors along the Flower Trail!**



Organic roses plantation



Red rose close up



Ice cream and petals ▾

Only an hour's drive from Quito, admire the kaleidoscope of over 300 varieties of roses grown in the plantations of the province of Imbabura.

Rose production in Ecuador began only a decade ago, but the excellent quality of Ecuadorian roses has captured the attention of experts, and the most demanding importers have catalogued them as some of the world's most beautiful. Today, Ecuador is the world's third most important flower exporter, but tourists consider it number one in terms

Variety of roses and colours ▶





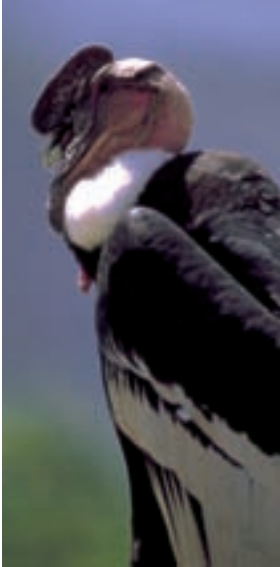
# The bird capital of the world



Black-breasted Puffleg ▶

Quito is a prime site for birdwatching. From city parks at Itchimbía, La Carolina, Metropolitano and Alameda and the subtropical zone of Nanegal, Pacto and Gualea, to the moorland habitats on Pichincha, **there is no other capital in the world that possesses the biological diversity of Quito.**

Just two hours from the city center, you can visit the Pachijal Ecological Reserve in Mindo, home to toucans, quetzals, and more than a dozen hummingbird species. The highlands of Antisana and Cotopaxi are also magical bird sanctuaries, where a completely different set of species can be found, including the Andean Condor, guaranteeing the entire area as a bird lover's paradise.



▶ The andean cóndor



▶ Hummingbird



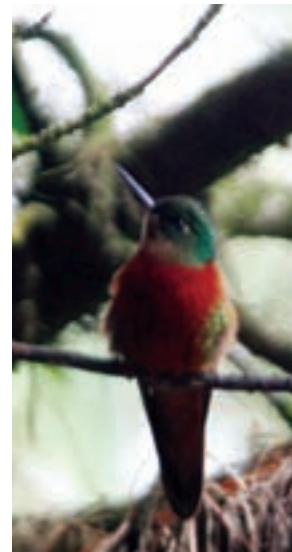
▼ Bird watching - Antisana

Hummingbird ▼

Hummingbirds are probably the most emblematic birds found within the Metropolitan District of Quito. Their supernatural flying capabilities, a most delicate long bill and an array of bright colors that change with the sunlight is why they are referred to as "Jewels of the Sky".

Quito's flagship is the Black-breasted Puffleg. Extremely rare, once thought to have become extinct until recently rediscovered, this hummingbird has become a conservation icon, reminding us of the need to protect the many unspoiled forests that are still found within and around the city.

Hummingbird ▶





Altar La Compañía church



Menu of experiences to enjoy Quito

## Experience history



- Quito's Historic Centre boasts fascinating art and culture. Start your visit at Basilica's main tower and get a complete view of the urban and natural environment that surrounds this gothic church built in 1873.
- Let yourself be amazed by the architectural structures and magical patios that make of Quito's Metropolitan Cultural Centre a perfect scenario for cultural events. Besides visiting the exhibit halls that hold Ecuadorian and international art, you can enjoy the Alberto Mena Camaño Museum, which gathers a magnificent collection of wax figures representing significant episodes of the country's history.
- Another place to visit is "La Compañía de Jesús" Church, one of the highlights of the Baroque style in South America.

- Live a unique experience visiting the city's colonial churches of San Francisco, San Agustín and Santo Domingo.
- At "Plaza Grande" you can boost your energy with a delicious fresh fruit juice and pork ham sandwich made in traditional stands located in this area, locally known as "covachas".
- If you are interested in the work of Ecuador's most renowned and outstanding painter Oswaldo Guayasamín, you should visit the "Capilla del Hombre".
- Just north of the city, experience the thrill of being in two hemispheres at the same time at the Equatorial Monument!





## ✦ Experience mega-diversity

- Visit remote villages located at the flanks of imposing mountains along the "Avenue of the Volcanoes".
- Just a few hours from Quito, visit Otavalo, the second largest handicraft market in Latin America. Here you will find a large variety of unique knits and handicrafts.
- At Papallacta relax and enjoy hot springs that rise from the volcanic floors.
- Observe more than seventy bird species in city parks such as "Itchimbia", "Carolina", Metropolitan Park and "La Alameda", and the outlying subtropical zone near Nanegal, Pacto & Gualea.
- From Cruz Loma, Lloa, the Metropolitan Park and Ungüi hill, enjoy the view of Quito's spectacular Andean geography.

## ✦ Experience Adventure

- Just an hour north of Quito, experience a surprising 300 varieties of roses of all colors and kinds.
- Experience a voyage by train through the impressive Ecuadorian Andes all the way to the refreshing coastal plains.
- Rest in colonial haciendas along the "Avenue of Volcanoes" and rediscover the beauty of simple pleasures like admiring the sunset, breathing the fresh air, horseback riding through prairies or enjoying a bonfire.
- Visit Quito's Teleferiqo (cable-car) and admire the city at 4.050 meters (13.287 ft.) above sea level.
- You will be able to observe impressive snow peaks such as Cayambe & Cotopaxi.



Otavalo handicrafts market ▼



▼ Cotopaxi National Park





## Quito & Ecuador Fast Facts

- Quito is the second-highest capital city in the world. It lies at 2,800 metres (9186 ft.) above sea level.
- Quito is some 50 kilometres long but only around 5 kilometres wide, with a population over 2.2 million inhabitants.
- Quito was the first city to be declared as a World Heritage Site in 1978
- The official language of Ecuador is Spanish, although several million Ecuadorians speak Quechua as their mother tongue. English is widely spoken within the tourism industry.
- Time: GMT -5 hours
- Voltage: 110 volts AC; plugs are American-style flat pins.
- No visa required for nearly all nationalities.
- Quito is a mere two hours from the Amazon Basin and is surrounded by 12 volcanoes, many of which are still active.
- Galápagos is located 1,000 kilometres away from the continent. Daily flights leave from Quito, it takes around 2 hours to get there.
- Ecuador obtains its name from the Equatorial Line, which cuts through the country just 12 miles to the north of Quito.
- Ecuador uses the US Dollar as its currency.
- Quito has three main celebrations in the year: Easter, Summer in the City (July and August) and Fiestas de Quito in the last week of November and first week of December.







*The spell of the Andes begins in Quito, capital of Ecuador.*

*Quito is home to colonial haciendas, ageless and peaceful, at the foot of monumental volcanoes.*

*Quito seduces with the best roses in the world: the untamed beauty and brilliant colours that can only shine under the equatorial sun.*

*Quito is home to the only train that cuts across the Andes, down the winding brinks of "The Devil's Nose".*

*Quito, a most zestful experience for your senses.*



[www.QUITO.COM.EC](http://www.QUITO.COM.EC)