

Ecuador & Galapagos

Best Things To See & Do



© backpackandsnorkel.com

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Content

1. Overview of Ecuador & Galapagos	5
2.1 Disclaimer	7
2.2 Copyright	7
3. General Information about Ecuador	8
4. When to visit Ecuador & Galapagos	10
<i>4.1 The best time to visit Quito, Ecuador</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>4.2 Average Weather by Month in Quito</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>4.3 The best time to visit the Galapagos Islands</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>4.4 Average Weather by Month in the Galapagos Islands</i>	<i>17</i>
5. Wonderful 11-Day Itinerary	18
6. Day 1: Arriving in Quito, Ecuador	19
6.1 Day 2: North of Quito	20
<i>6.1.1 Quitsato Mitad del Mundo</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>6.1.2 South America's largest outdoor market in Otavalo</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>6.1.3 Downtown Otavalo</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>6.1.4 Las Cascadas de Peguche</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>6.1.5 Laguna de Cuicocha</i>	<i>31</i>
6.2 Days 3 Galapagos slands	36
<i>6.2.1 General Information about the Galapagos Islands</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>6.2.1.1 Entrance requirements for the Galapagos Islands</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>6.2.1.2 Why should I visit the Galapagos Islands</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>6.2.1.3 How to best experience the Galapagos Islands?</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>6.2.1.4 Selecting the Galapagos cruise that is right for you</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>6.2.1.5 Description of a budget class Galapagos cruise ship</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>6.2.1.6 Snorkeling in the Galapagos Islands</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>6.2.1.7 Hiking in the Galapagos Islands</i>	<i>43</i>

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Content

<i>6.2.1.8 Eating on the Galapagos cruise</i>	43
<i>6.2.1.9 Taking photos and videos on the Galapagos cruise</i>	43
<i>6.2.1.10 What to pack for a Galapagos cruise</i>	44
<i>6.2.1.11 Duration of Galapagos excursions</i>	44
<i>6.2.1.12 Weather in April in the Galapagos Islands</i>	44
6.2.2 Detailed itinerary of our Galapagos cruise	45
<i>6.2.3 Day 3</i>	46
<i>6.2.4 Day 4</i>	50
<i>6.2.5 Day 5</i>	61
<i>6.2.6 Day 6</i>	69
<i>6.2.7 Day 7</i>	77
<i>6.2.8 Day 8</i>	87
<i>6.2.9 Day 9</i>	93
6.3 Day 9: Self-Guided Tour of New Town Quito	94
<i>6.3.1 Quicentro</i>	95
<i>6.3.2 Parque La Carolina</i>	96
<i>6.3.3 CCI Centro Comercial Iñaquito</i>	98
<i>6.3.4 Museo Etnohistórico de Artesanías del Ecuador Mindalae</i>	99
6.4 Day 10: Self-Guided Walking Tour of Old Town Quito	100
<i>6.4.1 Plaza Grande</i>	104
<i>6.4.2 Palacio de Carondelet</i>	106
<i>6.4.3 Palacio Arzobispal</i>	109
<i>6.4.4 Catedral Metropolitana de Quito</i>	110
<i>6.4.5 Municipal Palace</i>	111
<i>6.4.6 Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús</i>	112
<i>6.4.7 Casa Museo María Augusta Urrutia</i>	114

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Content

<i>6.4.8 Iglesia de San Francisco</i>	<i>116</i>
<i>6.4.9 Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de La Merced</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>6.4.10 El Panecillo</i>	<i>120</i>
6.5 Day 11: Parque Nacional Cotopaxi	122
6.6 Day 12: TelefériQo and flight home	129
7. Hotels in Quito	130
<i>7.1 Quito Airport Suites</i>	<i>130</i>
<i>7.2 Hosteria Airport Garden</i>	<i>133</i>
8. Hotels in the Galapagos Islands	135
<i>8.1 Sun Island hotel in Puerto Villamil</i>	<i>135</i>
<i>8.2 Hotel Coloma Galapagos on in Puerto Ayora</i>	<i>138</i>
9. Closing Remarks	139

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

1. Overview of Ecuador & Galapagos

Ecuador has long been a favorite for expats especially from the USA, as the country uses the US dollar as currency, has excellent health care, natural beauty and a comparably low cost of living.

Some tourists explore the rich history and natural beauty of the mainland, many come, however, only to visit the Galapagos Islands.



The Galapagos Islands are an archipelago of volcanic islands about 600 miles (1000 km) west of Ecuador in the Pacific Ocean. Renowned for Charles Darwin discovering the concept of Evolution after his 1835 visit, the islands have a sprawling ecosystem of plant and animal species. Many of them are endemic, meaning that they are not found anywhere else on the planet. Among those species are the giant Galápagos tortoise, the marine iguana, the flightless cormorant, and the Galápagos penguin, which is the only penguin species that lives in the Northern Hemisphere.

The Galapagos Islands belong to Ecuador and many people flock to the islands without spending any significant time in Ecuador.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands



In this Ecuador & Galapagos Purple Guide, we provide a detailed 12-day itinerary that will allow you to experience the Galapagos Islands on a cruise and some of the major highlights of Ecuador.

We tell you why we chose these spots and will help you plan for the best things to see and do in Ecuador and Galapagos. To help you find out what best fits you, we have added lots of photos and links to additional reviews.

Due to its compactness, it can be combined with other South American countries or act as a starting point to a more in-depth 3 or 4 week Ecuador experience.

Join us to explore the best things to see and do in Ecuador & Galapagos.

This is not an in-depth Ecuador & Galapagos guide. You can buy those from the big travel guide companies. Our goal is to help you Make Memorable Moments on a relaxing Ecuador & Galapagos trip and help you build the perfect itinerary for your trip.

Please also check out the other exciting destinations and travel guides on our Backpack and Snorkel [website](#).

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

2.1 DISCLAIMER

In this guide I am doing my best to give you the most accurate information. Over time, however, prices, times, and even attractions are subject to change. Therefore, I and backpackandsnorkel.com cannot be held responsible for the experiences of users while traveling. I strongly suggest that you write or call the attractions you plan to visit for confirmation when you make your travel plans.

Also, please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye on your belongings. Pickpockets and other criminals can easily ruin even the best planned vacation.

2.2 COPYRIGHT

This website and its content is copyright of "Rudy at Backpack & Snorkel". All rights reserved. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited. The content on this site (including photos) may not be sold, reprinted, or used for commercial purposes without the written consent of "Rudy at Backpack & Snorkel". You may not, except with our express written permission, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor may you transmit it or store it in any other website or other form of electronic retrieval system.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

3. General Information about Ecuador

Ecuador is one of 17 megadiverse countries in the world and it harbors almost 1,700 bird species (17% of the world's total bird species) and 16,000 species of plants (25% are endemic).

The Galapagos Islands are home to:

- 22 reptile species (20 are endemic)
- 6 land mammal species (83% are endemic)
- 48 bird species (58% are endemic)
- estimated 2300 terrestrial invertebrate species (52% are endemic)
- 600 species of vascular plants (42% are endemic)
- estimated 2,900 marine life species (~20% are endemic) of which approx. 500 are fish species

The first Paleo-Indians settled in what is now Ecuador 16,500–13,000 years ago. In the late 1400s, the Incas started conquering the area and it took them until the early 1500s to complete the conquest. Less than 30 years later, the Inca Empire experienced a civil war which helped the Spaniards conquer the area.

Quito, which is the oldest capital in South America, was founded in 1534.

In 1820, the Department of Guayaquil became the first territory in Ecuador to gain its independence from Spain. Most Ecuadorian coastal provinces declared independence on 24 May 1822, which is now Ecuador's official Independence Day. The rest of the country gained its independence after Spanish Royalist forces were defeated at the Battle of Pichincha, near Quito.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

4.3 The best time to visit the Galapagos Islands

In our opinion, April and May are the best months to visit the Galapagos Islands. Swimming and snorkeling are good, no wetsuits are needed and animal life is abundant. Blue-footed boobies show their famous courtship dances and frigate birds display their bright red gular pouches.

But, to be honest, the whole year is a good time to visit the Galapagos Islands. It purely depends on your preference of what you want to see and do.

Please be advised that the naturally occurring climatic phenomenon El Niño has an impact on the climate and animal life of the Galapagos Islands. El Niño occurs on average every 5 years, but happens irregularly and can occur anywhere between every 2 to 7 years.

During an El Niño event, the nutrient-rich Humboldt Current does not reach the Galapagos waters, strong winds, heavy rains, and warmer ocean currents damage the fragile ecosystem of the Galapagos Islands. Due to the lack of food, sea lions, sharks, fish, and birds search for food in places they typically avoid. Animals depending on fish and algae (Galapagos marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, red-footed boobies, Galapagos penguins, flightless cormorants, etc.) tend to starve during that time.

Due to the increased rainfall, plants on the islands thrive, and thus land iguanas, giant Galapagos tortoises and many land birds thrive.

If you are worried about visiting the Galapagos Islands during the rainy season, don't worry. It typically rains at night and the sun burns off the clouds by 10am or 11am.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Here is an overview of the highlights of the Galapagos Islands by month:

January Galapagos Highlights

- rainy season begins
- water temperature: 76°F (25°C)
- Darwin finches, yellow warblers begin their mating rituals and nest
- Green sea turtles start laying eggs at the beaches
- Española Island: adult male marine iguanas acquire bright green, red, and black colors for the mating season
- Isabela Island: land iguanas begin breeding season

February Galapagos Highlights

- rainy season
- water temperature: 80°F (27°C)
- Cormorant Point (Floreana): flamingos begin to nest and lay eggs
- Isabela and Fernandina Islands: Galapagos penguins return
- Santa Cruz Island: marine iguanas begin nesting

March Galapagos Highlights

- rainy season
- water temperature: 81°F (27°C)
- Española Island: Waved albatrosses arrive and begin their courtship ritual
- Isabela and Fernandina Islands: good places to see Galapagos penguins

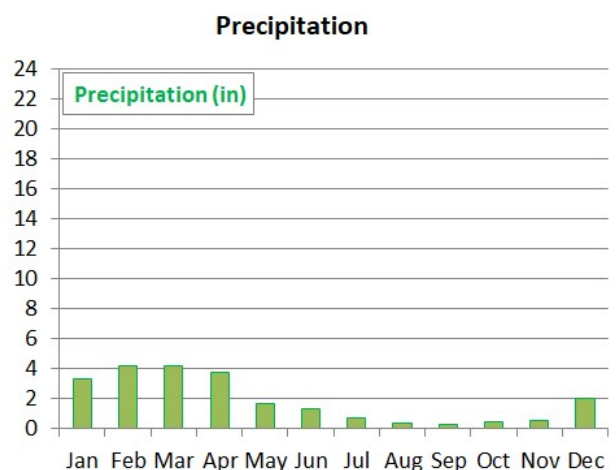
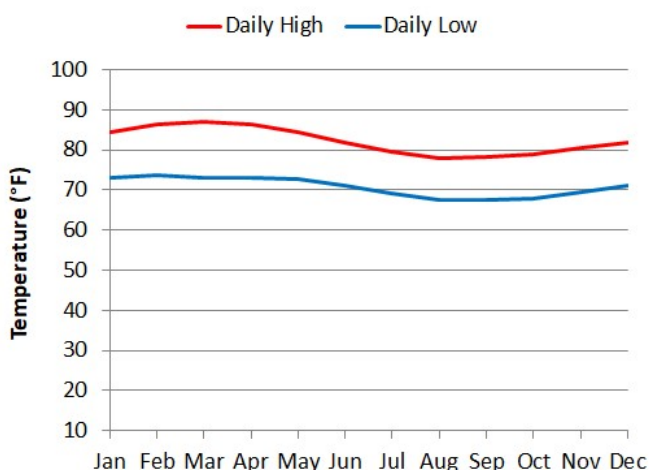
Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Here is an overview of the highlights of the Galapagos Islands by month:

December Galapagos Highlights

- transition to wet season
- foliage slowly turning greener
- water temperature: 73°F (23°C)
- wetsuit needed for swimming and snorkeling
- giant tortoise eggs begin to hatch
- storm-petrels nest for the second time
- Española Island: Galapagos Albatross chicks begin to shed their brown down to show their adult white and gray colors
- Genovesa Island: male frigate birds show their red bags indicating the new breeding season is about to start
- Santa Cruz and Floreana Islands: green sea turtles continue mating

4.4 Average Weather by Month in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

5. Wonderful 12-Day Itinerary of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands

This 12 day itinerary allows enough time to explore the absolute highlights of Ecuador. Due to its compactness, it can be combined with other South American countries or act as a starting point to a more in-depth 3 or 4 week Ecuador experience.

	Day	Night
Day 1	Arrive in Quito	Quito Airport Suites Hotel
Day 2	Quitsato Mitad del Mundo ; Otavalo Market ; Cascadas de Peguche ; Laguna de Cuicocha	Quito Airport Suites Hotel
Day 3	Flight to Baltra (Galapagos); Galapagos Cruise: North Seymour	Cruise Ship
Day 4	Galapagos Cruise: San Cristobal; Puerto Baquerizo Moreno	Cruise Ship
Day 5	Galapagos Cruise: Espanola	Cruise Ship
Day 6	Galapagos Cruise: Santa Fe; South Plaza; Puerto Ayora	Cruise Ship
Day 7	Galapagos Cruise: Santa Cruz; transfer to Isabela; Puerto Villamil	Isabela: Sun Island
Day 8	Isabela "Los Tuneles"; transfer to Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz: Coloma Galapagos Hostal
Day 9	Flight to Quito; Quito (New Town)	Hosteria Airport Garden
Day 10	Quito (Old Town)	Hosteria Airport Garden
Day 11	Cotopaxi	Hosteria Airport Garden
Day 12	TelefériQo ; Depart Quito	

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.1.2 South America's largest outdoor market in Otavalo ([map](#), [reviews](#))

Otavalo is known for South America's largest outdoor market which takes place daily at Plaza de Ponchos ([map](#)).

Saturday is the busiest day at the Otavalo Market

Saturdays are busiest as there are life stock auctions in the morning. From Sunday through Friday, the Otavalo market is takes place at Plaza de Ponchos, but on Saturdays, it spreads out to the adjacent blocks. We counted 5 x 5 city blocks where the streets were full with vendor stalls.

Our recommendation is definitely to come on Saturdays. If you want to avoid large crowds and prefer a more leisurely stroll through the central plaza, you may want to come on any other day.

Street parking is available, but you may need to walk a bit

Since we visited on a busy Saturday, it took us a while to find a parking spot that was 3 or 4 blocks away from the market. We saw plenty of parking farther away, so be prepared to walk a bit.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.1.5 Laguna de Cuicocha ([map](#), [reviews](#))

Laguna de Cuicocha is about a 30min drive from the Otavalo Market. There is free parking and admission to the park is free, too.

What is Laguna de Cuicocha

Cuicocha is a caldera lake at the foot of the Cotacachi volcano. It is 2 miles (3 km) wide and 493 ft (148 m) deep and was formed when a massive eruption occurred about 3100 years ago. The last eruption was at around the year 650 AD and the volcano is now dormant.

What does Laguna de Cuicocha mean?

The name "Laguna de Cuicocha" has two possible meanings. In the native Kichwa language, *Kuykucha* means "Guinea Pig Lake" and *Kuychikucha* means "rainbow lake". Guinea Pig Lake is most often used as the translation, because the shape of the largest island looks like a guinea pig.

Guinea Pigs were important in the everyday life of native Ecuadorians, as they reproduce fast, only need little food and care to survive and provide high protein meals.

What to do at Laguna de Cuicocha

There are two things that you can do at **Laguna de Cuicocha**:

[Take a boat tour on the lake](#)

[Hike around the lake](#)

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.2.1.5 Description of a budget class Galapagos cruise ship

The Guantanamera was a budget cruise ship and we cruised on her in late April.



Tour guides are government approved and frequently change between cruise ships. Walter was our licensed tour guide and this was his last cruise on the Guantanamera. After our cruise he transferred to another boat.

Walter met us and most other passengers at the airport. The Guantanamera had space for 16 passengers (8 cabins) and 8 crew. Walter, who told us he had 30+ years experience in this job, spoke real good English and the rest of the crew spoke either little or no English.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

North Seymour Island ([map](#))

North Seymour Island is a 0.7 sqmi (1.9 km²) flat island with a maximum elevation of 92 ft (28 m). It is named after Vice-Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour from the British Royal Navy.

The island is not of volcanic origin, but was created by seismic uplift. North Seymour Island is covered by low, bushy vegetation and has large populations of blue-footed boobies, magnificent frigate birds and swallow-tailed gulls. The island is also home to some Galápagos land iguanas.

The nature walk follows a 1.2 mile (2 km) visitor trail over rocky terrain and on the beach.

2pm: North Seymour Island: dry landing, nature walk over rocky terrain and on the beach

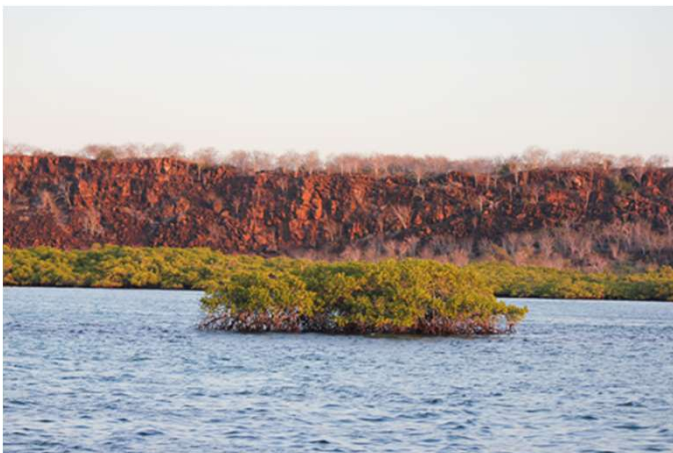


Ecuador & Galapagos Islands



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

4pm: North Seymour Island: optional snorkeling



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.2.4 Day 4: San Cristobal Island ([map](#)) and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno ([map](#)) – Island exploration and snorkeling

6:30am	San Cristobal Island - snorkeling around Kicker Rock (map , reviews)
8am	breakfast
9:30am	San Cristobal Island - Cerra Brujo (map , reviews): wet landing and nature walk and snorkeling
noon	lunch
2:15pm	San Cristobal Island - Isla Lobos (map): snorkeling
3:45pm	San Cristobal Island - Isla Lobos (map , reviews): dry landing and nature walk over mostly rocky terrain
5:00pm	San Cristobal Island: optional snorkeling
6pm	dinner
7:30pm	optional dry landing at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (map) (capital of Galapagos), 1h sightseeing (unguided)

San Cristobal Island ([map](#)) is the easternmost island of the Galápagos archipelago, geologically one of the oldest, and also the most fertile of the archipelago.

It is named after **San Cristóbal / St. Christopher**, the patron saint of seafarers. The island is formed from three or four fused extinct volcanoes.

The size is 215 sqmi (558 km²) and the highest elevation is 2,400 ft (730 m).

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

2:15pm: San Cristobal Island - Isla Lobos: snorkeling



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

3:45pm: San Cristobal Island - Isla Lobos: dry landing and nature walk over mostly rocky terrain



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

7:30pm: optional dry landing at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (capital of Galapagos), 1h sightseeing (unguided)



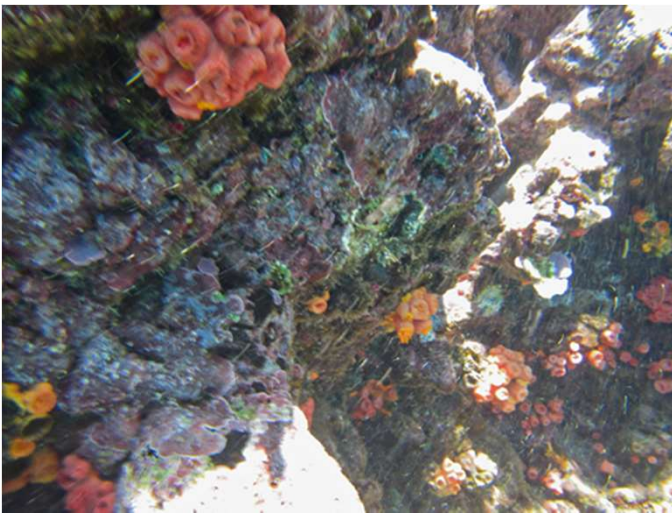
Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

8:00am: wet landing at Gardner Bay on Espanola Island, nature walk



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

10:30am: snorkeling



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

3pm: dry landing at Suarez Point on Espanola Island, nature walk over rocky terrain



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

2pm: dry landing on South Plaza Island and nature walk



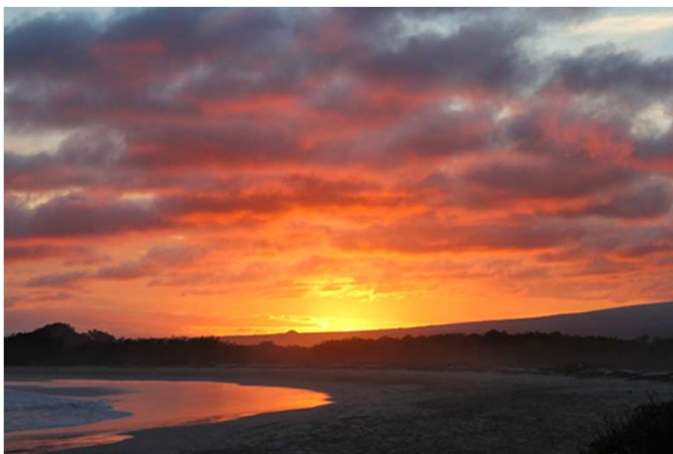
Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

pm: Poza de los Flamings – flamingo lake



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

pm: evening on the beach

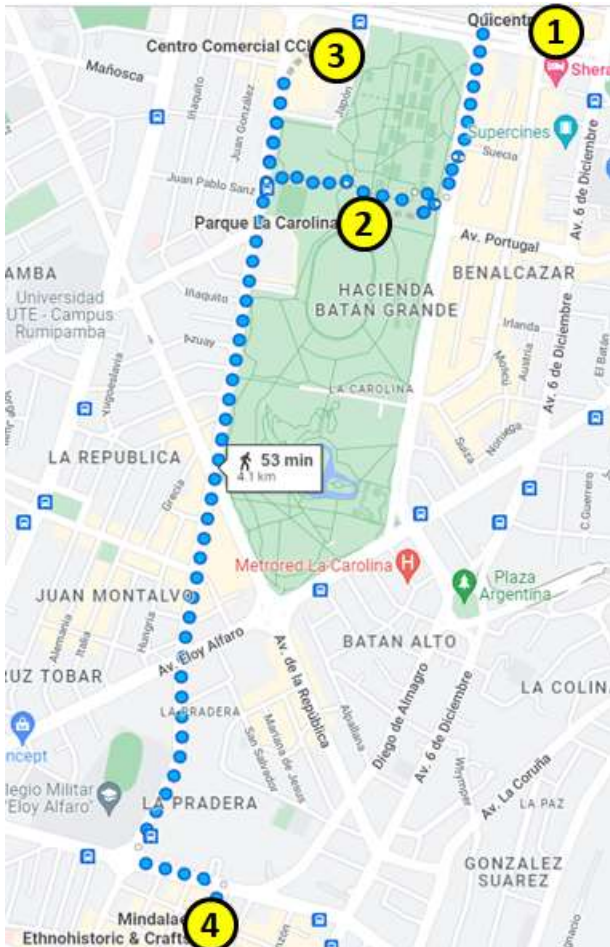


Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.3 Day 9 of the Ecuador Tour: Self-Guided Tour of New Town Quito, Ecuador

Take a taxi or drive your rental car into Quito and find a parking at the Quicentro Shopping mall.

The map below shows the self-guided walking tour:



1. [Quicentro](#)
2. [Parque La Carolina](#)
3. [CCI Centro Comercial Iñaquito](#)
4. [Museo Etnohistórico de Artesanías del Ecuador Mindalae](#)



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.3.2 Parque La Carolina ([map](#), [reviews](#))

Parque La Carolina is a 166acre (67 ha) park that is located on expropriated land from the farm **La Carolina** in 1939.

Located in the Quito central business district, this park gets crowded with families on weekends for all kinds of relaxation, entertainment (artist performances) and sportive activities like playing soccer, basketball, and ecua-volley.

At Laguna Parque La Carolina ([map](#)), in the southern part of the park, paddle boats can be rented.



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.4 Day 10 of the Ecuador Tour: Self-Guided Walking Tour of Old Town Quito, Ecuador

Take a taxi or drive your rental car into Quito and find a parking spot near Plaza Grade.

The maps below show the self-guided walking tour:



1. [Plaza Grande](#)
2. [Palacio de Carondelet](#)
3. [Palacio Arzobispal](#)
4. [Catedral Metropolitana de Quito](#)
5. [Municipal Palace](#)
6. [Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús](#)
7. [Casa Museo María Augusta Urrutia](#)
8. [Iglesia de San Francisco](#)
9. [Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de La Merced](#)
- A. [El Panecillo](#)

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands



The square is surrounded by four large buildings:

- [the Presidential Palace \(Palacio de Carondelet\)](#)
- [the Archbishop's Palace \(Palacio Arzobispal\)](#)
- [the Metropolitan Cathedral of Quito \(Catedral Metropolitana de Quito\)](#)
- [the Municipal Palace \(Municipio del Distrito Metropolitano de Quito\)](#)

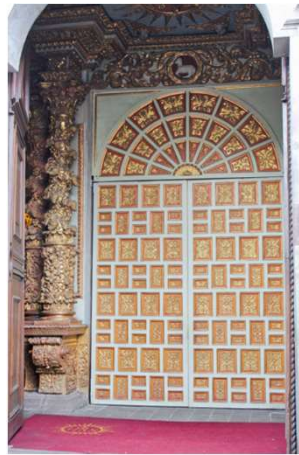
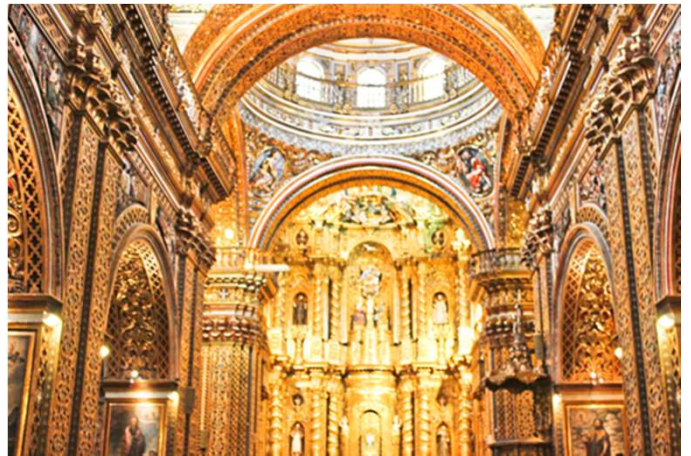
Around the plaza are many stores and restaurants and it seems that nobody speaks English. As almost everywhere in Ecuador, cash is king in stores and restaurants.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.4.6 Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús is also known under these names:

- Church of La Compañía
- Church and Convent of San Ignacio de Loyola de la Compañía de Jesús de Quito
- La Compañía
- Temple of Solomon of South America



Built from 1605 until 1765, Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús with its golden interior ornamentation is probably the most beautifully decorated church in Quito.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.4.7 Casa Museo María Augusta Urrutia ([map](#), [reviews](#))

This museum showcases the life of María Augusta Urrutia Barba (1901-1987). She was born into one of Quito's most influential families. After her father's death, she traveled to Europe where she spent much of her childhood and early adolescent life.

Shortly after returning to Quito in 1921, she married her fiancée whom she had met in Paris.

After her husband's death, she dedicated her life to charitable work for the benefit of those most in need.

After her death, she was enshrined in the crypt of the nearby [Iglesia de la Compañía](#).



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

6.4.9 Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de La Merced ([map](#), [reviews](#))

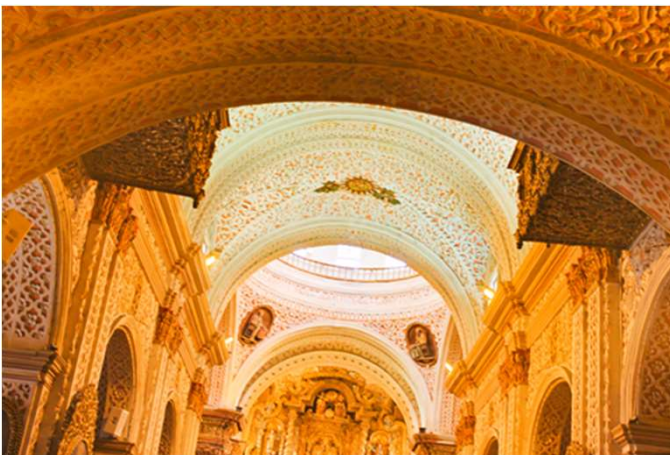
You may be churched out by now, but our advice is to absolutely go and see the Basilica of Our Lady of Mercy as we think it is the 2nd most beautiful church in Quito.

Construction lasted from 1701 to 1736 and the basilica was consecrated in 1747.

The whitewashed plain-looking building has five domes, a square tower and is decorated with Inca and Arabic inscriptions.

The inside is, however, stunningly beautiful decorated.

With 22,000 volumes and more than 40,000 bibliographic records, the Basilica maintains one of the most important historical libraries in Quito.



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

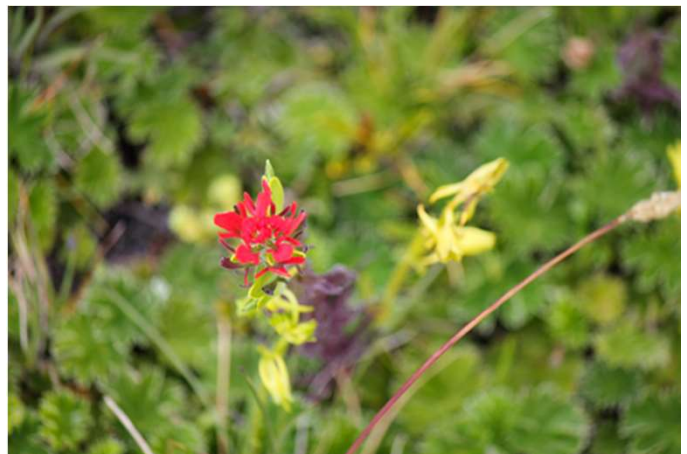
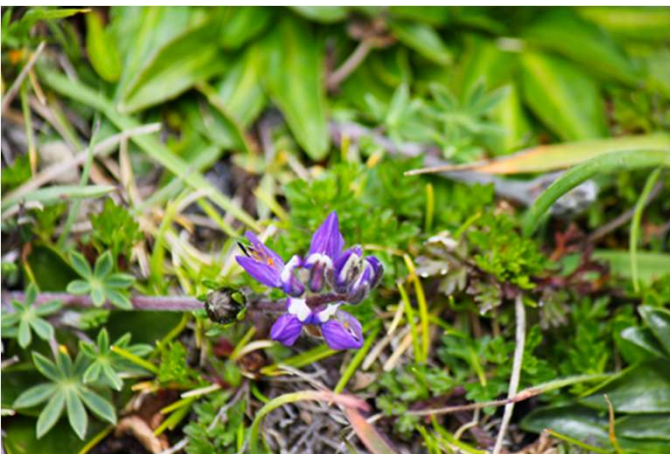
Laguna De Limpiopungo ([map](#), [reviews](#))

Laguna De Limpiopungo is a lake formed by glacial waters. Around the lake is a 1.6 mile (2.6 km) trail that showcases beautiful flowers and scenery and we saw lots of birds.

On a clear day, you can see the Cotopaxi volcano mirroring in the lagoon.



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Long story short: We liked the hotel for its modern design, proximity to the airport, affordable rate and availability of the owners. I can recommend it but you need to be aware that there is no A/C or heating in the rooms.



Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Breakfast was served at a nearby restaurant which opens at 6:30am. Make sure to mention that you are from the Sun Island hostel so that you don't have to pay for it but be aware that they did not speak English at the restaurant.

Pt. Villamil is a small 3,000 soul community with dirt roads and only 3 main roads. It has 2 supermarkets and a beautiful 2 mile (3km) long beach with very fine sand. As this is a very small community, there was no data signal for our cell phones. However, the hotels and restaurants offered free wifi.

The pier is a bit of a walk and so is the flamingo lagoon. The lagoon behind the hotel had barely any flamingoes when we were there. On the walk to the flamingo lagoon, make sure to stop by the giant tortoise breeding center. You will see different tortoise species and also baby tortoises. The interpretive center is also worth a few minutes.

Long story short: The hotel is located near the heart of town and close to the beach. I can recommend this hotel, but you need to be aware that it may be difficult to get ahold of the owners.





9 Closing Remarks

ABOUT RUDY FROM BACKPACK & SNORKEL

I was born in Germany and emigrated to the US in 2003. My wife and I are a truly multinational couple: I, with my German background, and she with her Chinese heritage. Both of us live in the USA.

Sadly, working in the US means we have much fewer vacation days compared to other countries like e.g. Germany and thus we cannot travel very frequently.

Through a lot of trial and error, we have found our ideal travel and vacation style. **Making Memorable Moments** by focusing on important destinations, planning time for meeting the locals and, of course, for relaxation are our priorities.

We have also learned to appreciate local foods and try to eat as many local dishes as possible. Just for fun, we try to eat at one Chinese restaurant in each country we visit. It is absolutely amazing how different Chinese food is all over the planet.



MAKING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

You may take 10,000 photos during your vacation, rush from one attraction to the next, but what you will remember in your heart is how you were **Making Memorable Moments**.

For me, that was e.g. Spider Rock in Canyon de Chelly (ever heard of this US National Park?). When I first saw it, I was blown away by this majestic natural obelisk and the beautiful canyon that it sits in. I have been there two more times and still feel the same.

Or think of Isla Mujeres, a small island outside Cancun, Mexico. On the surface, Playa Norte is supposedly Mexico's most beautiful beach and it is always crowded and the boats that anchor there play loud music. Below the surface, Isla Mujeres is very relaxed, quite walkable and it has friendly locals, good authentic Mexican food and good international cuisine and is often very affordable.

Isla Mujeres is our personal paradise!



PACK YOUR BACKPACK & SNORKEL AND LET'S GO

Our travel style has evolved over the years. We are packing light these days when we travel and typically only need a small backpack per person - see my [Traveling Light Guide](#).

With this guide, I want to provide value to you and help you plan your own relaxing vacations with the goal of **Making Memorable Moments!**

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.