



# Quito, Ecuador.

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## WHY I LOVE QUITO... ECUADOR 0° - 0° - 0° LAT.

Because I can choose between a fun, culture-enriched escapade or a more adventurous trek; immerse myself in the treasures of nature, snap the best landscapes pictures and then indulge in the culinary treats of the region.

## WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT?

It is the second highest capital in the world, nestled in Los Andes offering unique greenery and busy streets, approachable only after going through the mist, ever-present and concealing the beauty of this city. Quito hosts a number of attractions that turn this destination into an interesting option for anyone who loves discovering a new culture. From epic trails for the adrenaline junkies, to the first World Cultural Heritage Site of Latin American, baroque cathedrals adorn the plazas and make way for an excellent afternoon.

## TOP ATTRACTIONS AND THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD...

You can tour the main historical attractions within a single day, and while doing so you will realize that Quito's historic center in one of the largest and least altered, also holding the award for best-preserved site. Main attractions within the area include: Basilica del Voto Nacional, the Cathedral of Quito, the Church of La Compañía de Jesus, La Merced, the Monastery the Church of San Francisco, the Church of El Sagrario, and Church of Santo Domingo.

Just between the central and the southern Quito you can stumble upon El Panecillo, inspired by Quito's Madonna "Virgen de Quito".

For the art lovers there are a number of museums that showcase pre-columbian art, indigenous works, Amazonian facts and religious crafts. Museums worth mentioning: Museo Guayasamin, National Museum at Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, La Capilla del Hombre, Intinan Museum, Casa del Alabado and Museo Templo del Sol Pintor Ortega Maila.

Parks could not be left behind as nature plays a big part in the attractions of not only Quito but also Ecuador itself. Stroll around and choose your favorite spot at either Parque La Carolina, Parque Metropolitano, which features walking trails, Parque Itchimbia or Parque El Ejido. Reserves and zoos are also an option for trips outside the city.

Check-out the best views of the old town from the Mirador de Guápulo, where the first Ecuadorian Marian sanctuary was built. Gasp in awe as you ride the TeleferiQo, the city's mountain landscape will offer a unique sight. Turn around and if the sky is clear you might just catch a glimpse of the Amazon Jungle.

The central city of Quito positions you only 35 kilometers of the equator and the village La Mitad del Mundo (the Middle of the World); so don't lose your chance to snap a picture as you stand in two hemispheres at the same time.

## FOR THE ADVENTUROUS

Did you know? During clear days you can see all the snow capped volcanoes of the Eastern Cordillera (Cayambe, Cotopaxi, Antisana, Chimborazo). Going across the páramo – the Ecuadorian equivalent of the arctic tundra.

**Insiders' Tip:** Before choosing your outdoor activities I recommend to relax and play it safe until adapting to the natural altitude of the city, which is 2772 meters/9,094 feet above sea level.

Your visit to Quito will provide a range of outdoor activities that you can enjoy depending on your love for sports and nature, while some others may require physical preparation. Quito can be the best base city for you to start most of your adventures, a daytrip away from the city or a getaway full of adrenaline that can last a couple of days.

One of the most popular daytime excursions out of Quito is a trip to Cotopaxi National Park, whose volcano erupted over a year ago, but has become less threatening nowadays. Below some noteworthy excursions you may find interesting:

**Bike riding:** ride around Cotopaxi, or explore areas such as Antisana, the fourth highest volcano in Ecuador; or the route Papallacta – Amazon – Chaquiñan which features the Chiche River basin, railroad lines and three tunnels. Many tours explore the mountain range going downhill and through the landscape.

**Climbing:** Some nice climbing spots include: Las Canteras de Cumbaya, only a 10-minute walk away for Quito; the Rocodromo a climbing gym; Sigsipamba with over 20 routes of different style and complexity, located in Papallacta, two hours away from the city; or the best indoor climbing gym in Quito: Campo 4.

**Hiking:** explore a magical ecosystem nourished in a mix of trees, endless bird species, including the golden-headed quetzal and ride inner tubes of pristine waters as you hike your way through the indo and BellavistaCloud Forest Reserve.

**Insiders' Tip:** Want a higher difficulty level? Reach the summit of Chimborazo, the country's highest volcano, or climb up to the peak of Mt. Cayame, the third highest mountain.

## SLOW PACED AND RELAXED

**Otavalo Market:** located in a largely indigenous town and your must-go-to if shopping is on your itinerary. Visit artisan markets, barter your way through beautiful handicrafts and try the local dishes and snacks. The main market is held on Saturdays but daily yours to Otavalo are also organized. A detour to the local leather shops at Cotacachi is often featured in this excursion.

**Papallacta:** lush green sceneries, and mineral-rich thermal springs make this 2-hour trip totally worth it, especially if you've been doing strenuous tours.

**Culinary Walking Tours:** several are organized for travelers to discover the tastes of the local cuisine, which go well beyond the intricacies of the organic markets such as Santa Clara's, also including breweries, natural remedies, and incenses. Where in Mexico there's tequila, in Ecuador you have Pajaro Azul. Don't miss the chance to try the Pajaro Azul chocolate.

## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Quito is only your beginners course when it comes to what Ecuador offers, however being on the highest cities you should take your time to explore it. There are many travel guides that can be found online, including **Lonely Planet's**.

Your next stop in Ecuador may just be the Amazon Jungle, Guayaquil & Galapagos Islands or maybe you will continue the trek of adventures down south the páramo –through the Avenue of Volcanoes, and visit the towns of Baños, Riobamba, Cuenca and finally Lajos.



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