

## ECUADOR AT A GLANCE

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**POPULATION:** 16,290,913 (July 2017 est.)

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish, Quechua

**PREDOMINANT RELIGIONS:** Christian (Roman Catholic, evangelical)

**TIME ZONE:** One hour behind Eastern Daylight Time (New York City)

**TELEPHONE CODES:** 593, country code; 2, Quito and Esmeraldas city code; 4, Guayaquil city code

Ecuador affords the unusual opportunity to travel from the balmy Pacific Coast to the high mountains to a remote corner of the jungle all in one day. The most remarkable species of birds and animals are found on the Galapagos Islands, about 600 miles/1,000 kilometers offshore, including marine iguanas, giant tortoises, sea lions, blue- and red-footed boobies, pelicans and even a few penguins. On the mainland, the Andes Mountains (also known as the Sierra) are home to the capital city, Quito, and the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Cuenca. East of the Andes is the Amazon basin (or the Oriente).

### COMPASSION IN ECUADOR

Compassion's ministry in Ecuador began in 1974. Today, more than 65,600 children are served by more than 225 Compassion-assisted child development centers throughout the country. Compassion's church-based child development centers are places of hope for impoverished children in Ecuador. Under the guidance of caring Christian adults, children's pressing needs for nutrition and medical attention are met. Children also receive tutoring to help with their academics. Health and



hygiene lessons teach them to care for their own physical well-being, and positive social skills are modeled and encouraged.

### WEATHER

Ecuador encompasses four distinct regions: the Oriente (covering half the country, is a region of thick tropical forests in the eastern foothills of the Andes and in part of the Amazon River Basin); the Costa (flat plains along the Pacific coast); the Sierra (Andes Mountains and highland areas); and the Galapagos Islands off the coast. The capital, Quito, is 9,200 feet/2.8 kilometers above sea level on the Sierra plateau.

The climate varies according to region. The rainy season is October through April in the Sierra (April is the wettest month) and January through April on the coast. The coastal rainy season coincides with the warmest water currents for swimming, surfing or snorkeling (in the Galapagos). The June through September dry season is the most popular in the highlands: This coincides with the wettest months in the Oriente, when roads may be washed out.

Temperatures are determined more by altitude than by the calendar, so you should pack accordingly. The Oriente

region and Quito remain constant year-round: Quito is always moderate (lows in the mid-40s F / 6-7 C, highs in the low 70s F / 21-23 C), and the Amazon is always hot and humid.

Lightweight clothing can be worn year-round in the Oriente and Costa, and sweaters and medium-weight jackets are always needed in the Sierra. Bring a sweater for the cool mornings and evenings. Layers and a waterproof/breathable jacket are a very good idea if you will be hiking in the mountains — temperatures can vary greatly and storms occur unexpectedly. It's also smart to bring a rain poncho.

### CURRENCY

The U.S. dollar is the official currency of Ecuador. ATMs are common even in smaller towns, but they can often be out of order, so plan for this possibility when leaving a bigger city.

### FOOD

Most hot, freshly cooked food should be safe, but peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables before eating, choose meat that is cooked thoroughly, avoid local dairy products, and assume the water is unsafe (stick with prepackaged or boiled drinks).



### SHOPPING

If you've ever wanted a genuine Panama hat, Ecuador is the right place — even Panama imports them from Ecuador. Also shop for pottery, handmade filigreed silver jewelry, wool sweaters, straw items, wood carvings, Amerindian belts (*chumbi*), hand-woven shawls (*macanas*) and ponchos. Pre-Columbian artifacts cannot be exported from Ecuador and will be confiscated at the border.

### ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

In-country voltage is 110V-120V, and primary outlet types are A and B. (For up-to-date plug and outlet information, check [whatplug.info](http://whatplug.info), and click on the destination country.) You may also wish to take a universal travel plug adaptor, available in the luggage/travel sections of most big-box stores.

### DO'S AND DON'TS:

- **Do** carry your passport with you when traveling between provinces in Ecuador. By law, visitors are required always to have their passports in their possession, but this is less likely to be an issue if you're not traveling long distances.
- **Do** carry a photocopy of the passport at all times, as well as a copy of the page with your customs entry stamp/printout. Don't point at people with your finger. Use your chin or your entire hand.
- **Do** say *buen provecho* (enjoy your meal) to companions before a meal and to fellow diners when leaving a restaurant. Also say *con permiso* to get past someone.
- **Don't** be surprised to see a lot of uniformed people toting machine guns. They might be soldiers, police or security guards at banks and money-exchange houses.
- **Do** ask for permission before photographing Amerindians.
- **Do** shake everyone's hand and kiss everyone's cheek upon being introduced.
- **Do** remember to bring photos of your family and/or hometown. Ecuadorians are very family oriented, and a chat about your relatives will always get the conversation going.

## DRESS

Be prepared for just about anything. Protect yourself from the sun with sunscreen, sunglasses and a good hat. Sturdy shoes are a must for hiking, while sandals are best in warmer climes. Pack a fleece jacket for the cooler highland temperatures and for the jungle; believe it or not, the Amazon can get chilly at night. Layers work best for colder regions, and a rain poncho and umbrella are smart ideas, as well. A money belt will give you some peace of mind in crowded market areas. Neatness in dress goes a long way, especially in the highlands. Do not wear skirts above the knee or shorts in churches. Skin-revealing dress will draw unwanted attention for women. Anywhere outside of the beach, it is best to go with conservative clothing.

**Women:** Modest, loose-fitting tops (nothing form-fitting) are recommended; sleeveless tops are acceptable, but please cover your shoulders in places of worship; pants, capris, longer skirts and loose-fitting, casual dresses are recommended for women.

**Men:** Button shirts and polo shirts are recommended. T-shirts are allowed in casual settings. Long, non-denim pants are recommended for center visits and church services.

**Both:** Shorts are highly discouraged outside of beachside locations. A light jacket is recommended for cool evenings or rainy days.

**Shoes:** Closed-toe shoes are recommended during the day due to potential unsanitary or uneven terrain.

## GENERAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, Social Security card, library cards and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet. Carry items in front pockets, not back pockets. Do not display large sums of money in public; make visible only the amount of money that approximates your purchase. Never leave items with cash in them (purse, wallet, backpack, etc.) on a bus, car, or any other location. Stay alert and be cautious at all times. Don't take safety and security for granted.

## U.S. EMBASSY INFORMATION

**Website:** [ec.usembassy.gov](http://ec.usembassy.gov)

**Phone:** 593-2-398-5000

**Address:** E12-170 Avigiras Ave. and Eloy Alfaro Ave.,  
Quito, Ecuador

**Guayaquil Consulate Phone:** 593-4-371-7000

**We strongly advise you to contact the CDC ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) or check with your personal physician for more information about your specific health needs while traveling, including any recommendations for immunizations.**

*All information taken from the World Factbook and  
Compassion International.*

## USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

The official language of Ecuador is Spanish. The country's secondary language is English. Some common Ecuadorian greetings include:

Hello	<b>¡Hola!</b>
How are you?	<b>¿Cómo está usted?</b>
Pleased to meet you	<b>Mucho gusto</b>
Very well, thank you	<b>Muy bien, gracias</b>
Goodbye	<b>Adiós (or chou in Bolivia)</b>
What is your name?	<b>¿Cómo te llamas?</b>
My name is ...	<b>Me llamo (name)</b>
How old are you?	<b>¿Cuántos años tienes?</b>
Yes	<b>Sí</b>
No	<b>No</b>
Please	<b>Por favor</b>
Thank you	<b>Gracias</b>
You're welcome	<b>De nada</b>
I do not speak Spanish	<b>No hablo español</b>
Do you speak English?	<b>¿Usted habla inglés?</b>
I don't understand	<b>No entiendo</b>
You can do it!	<b>¡Sí, se puede!</b>
I love you	<b>Te amo or te quiero</b>
I am praying for you	<b>Estoy orando por ti</b>

Jesus loves you

You are precious to God

God bless you

I believe in you

Tell me about your family

Good/OK

I need

How much?

Too expensive

Cheaper

Where is the bathroom?

Where is the church?

Where is the bank?

Where is the hotel?

**Jesús te ama**

**Eres precioso(a) para Dios**

**¡Qué Dios te bendiga!**

**Creo en ti**

**Cuénteme de tu familia**

**Bueno**

**Necesito**

**¿Cuánto?**

**Demasiado caro**

**Más barato**

**¿Dónde está el baño?**

**¿Dónde está la iglesia?**

**¿Dónde está el banco?**

**¿Dónde está el hotel?**

### SPANISH TIPS

The h is silent in Spanish; therefore, *hola* is pronounced “ola.”

The ñ is pronounced ny; therefore, *pequeño* is pronounced “pe-kenyo.”