

Top Places to Visit in Ecuador



From dense jungles to sandy beaches to historical colonial cities to ancient ruins, Ecuador is a diverse and exciting destination that will delight your senses. And thanks to its relatively small size, it's possible to [experience a lot on a trip to Ecuador](#) in a short amount of time. This South American destination has a little bit of something for everyone to enjoy whether you crave adventure or just want to chill.

When you think of the Amazon jungle, you may think of Brazil, but Ecuador also has plenty of Amazon within its borders. This can be one of the most affordable places to experience the magic of the rainforest, learn about the indigenous forest peoples and their life among abundant plant and animal life.



You can also go trekking in the Andes where you will discover small villages and stunning mountain scenery. Or watch the sunset on one of Ecuador's laid-back beaches where surfers ride the swells and chill out in backpacker cafes. There are great places to visit and we're sure you will fall in love with Ecuador and not want to leave.

Begin in Quito

Your journey will likely start in Quito, a vibrant city that is filled with great food, stunning cathedrals and intriguing historic colonial architecture. One of the most stunning buildings in Quito that you must visit is the Basilica del Voto Nacional. It is the largest neo-Gothic basilica in the Americas. You can climb the narrow stairs that lead up to the tower and admire the breathtaking view of the entire city.



From Quito, you can take a day trip to the equator and stand with one foot in each hemisphere. Did you know there are two monuments marking the equator about 100 meters away from each other? The first was built before accurate location measuring technology existed.

Everyone Loves Cuenca

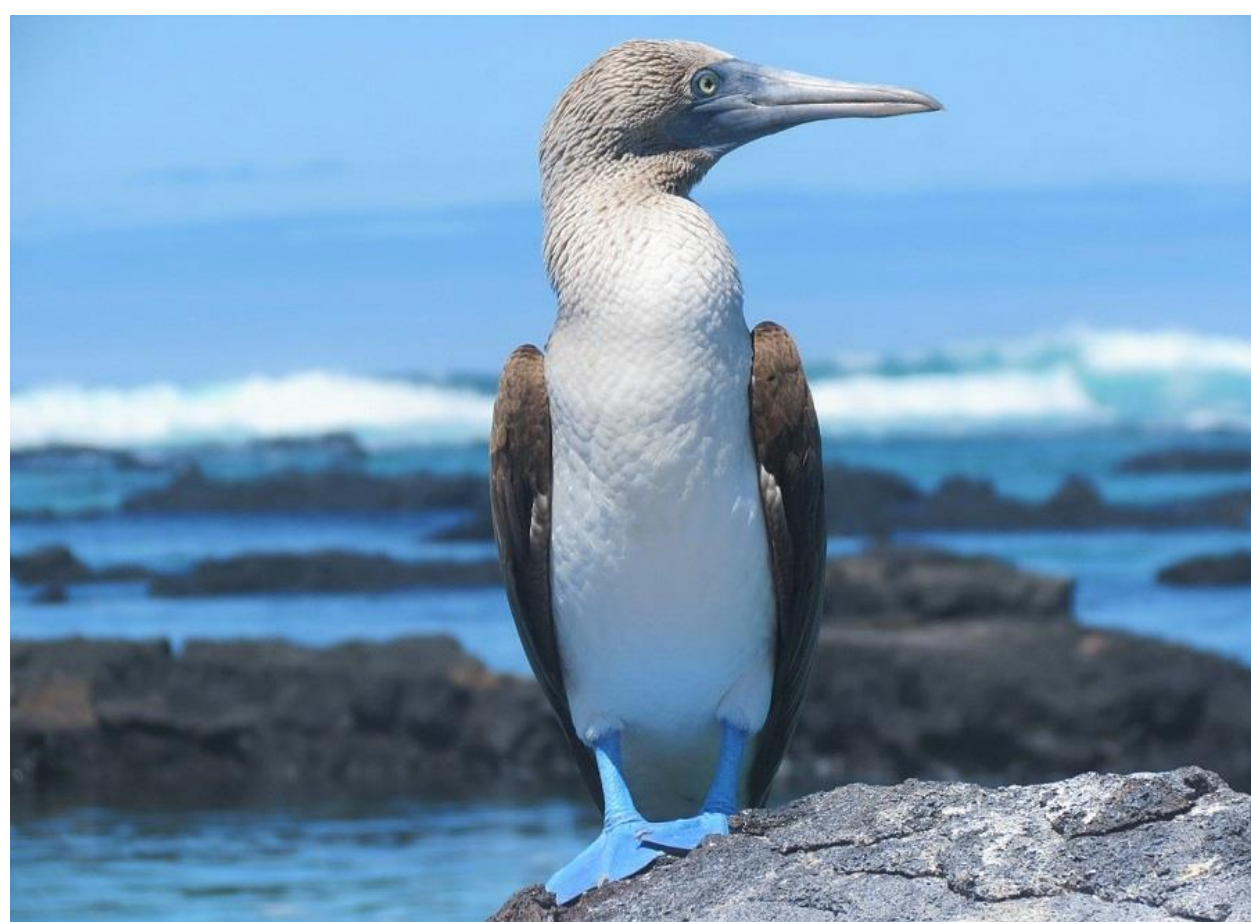
Be sure to visit Cuenca, which is one of the loveliest cities in Ecuador. The [Historic Walled Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site](#), is filled with gorgeous colonial buildings and green parks. It is also a great place to sample cuy (guinea pig) which is a local delicacy.



Cuenca is considered one of the best places for Americans to retire and has a large expat community. You might just want to spend an extra free day or two getting to know the city. It's easy to do without worrying about transportation. Cuenca is a perfect city to walk around safely on your own.

Must-See Galapagos Islands

An absolute must-visit location in Ecuador is the Galapagos Islands, the incredibly biodiverse islands where Charles Darwin first conceptualized his theories of evolution.



The Galapagos is a fun and educational for kids, making it a perfect destination for families. Here in this natural wonderland you can see a dazzling array of unique and endemic plant and wildlife species. You'll be amazed by blue-footed boobies, sea lions, giant tortoises, flamingos, marine iguanas and so much more.

Famous Otavalo Market

This is a great place to learn about the indigenous peoples of the Andes and find those favorite items to take back home. This bustling marketplace located a 3-hour bus ride north of Quito is the largest and most famous market in South America. You can practice your barter skills which involves playing fair and being respectful to the skilled artisans who bring their work to the Otavalo Market. We recommend going on a Saturday for the best experience even though it's the busiest day. The market fills up with vendors from all over the region, offering an amazing selection of beautiful textiles.



Unusual Places to Visit in Ecuador

If you have a taste for adventure, Banos is an exciting place to explore. This small town in the mountains offers the opportunity for mountain biking, whitewater rafting, climbing a volcano, paragliding and rappelling down waterfalls. After a full day of exploring you can relax and recharge in the natural hot springs.



Ecuador is also home to one of the most scenic train journeys in the world called the Devil's Nose Train Ride. The train will zig zag up a steep 330-foot cliff face from Riobamba, offering stunning views.

Another place not to miss is Mindo, a small and quiet town in the lush, humid and green cloud forest. Here you can escape the hustle and bustle of Quito, dine on fresh trout, go on a zipline adventure through the forest canopy and hike to the nearby waterfalls.

Ready to Book a Trip?

Are you ready to choose your places to visit in Ecuador? We can plan the ultimate trip to Ecuador with the activities and experiences that you would like to include. To learn more about our great adventures in Ecuador and start planning your trip, [get in touch today](#).

Click here to see an 11-day suggested itinerary for a [Ecuador and Galapagos Islands Adventure](#).