

The Life of Ecuador



A guide for travelers made by kids.

Fall 2002 Garfield Campus

Welcome to Ecuador!

We are a group of 5 students doing an Apprenticeship about Ecuador with the Citizen Schools program at the Garfield Campus in Brighton, Massachusetts. We have learned a lot of things about Ecuador that are all compiled in this guide, which we hope will teach other people about life there. The following information is from a variety of very helpful children's books about Ecuador. Also, to find out about life from the inside, we asked a bunch of questions of some email pals in Portoviejo, in the province of Manabi in Ecuador, near the Pacific Ocean. Their names are Lizandro, Gisella, Nacho, Jessenia, Letty, Tatiana, Vanessa, Sylvia, and Viviana. They are adults from the ages of 22-44 and have been taking English classes for 3-4 years. We would like to thank them for their cooperation and friendship as we made this guide!

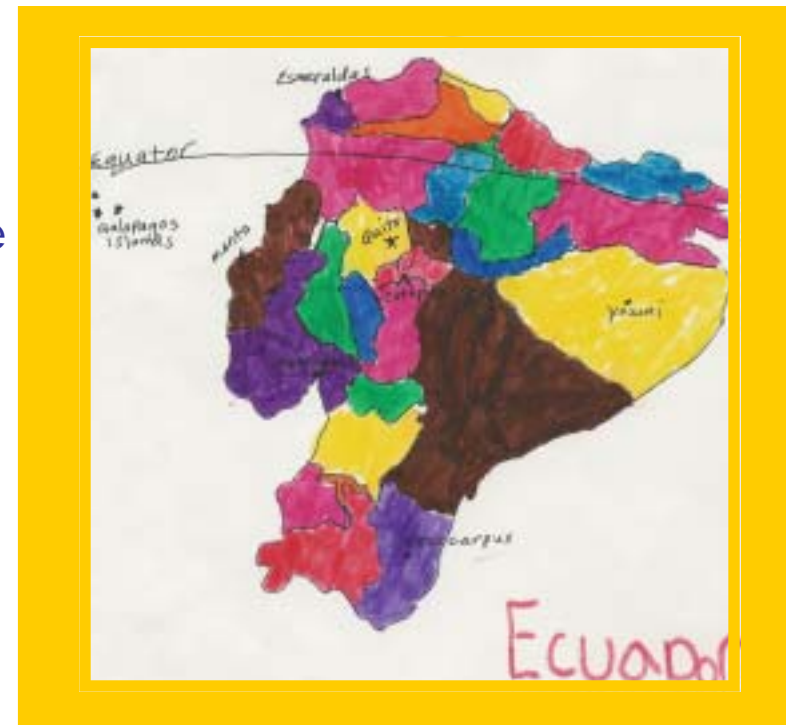


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Cool Things about Ecuador

Galapagos Islands

These 13 islands are off the coast of Ecuador. The islands lay on the equator, but they do not have very hot or very wet climates. The Humboldt Current cools the air, making much of the air and sky are overcast. It is the hottest from January to April when there are rain showers. Cold and warm ocean currents mingle in the area making it possible for both penguins and tropical frigate birds to live on the islands.

There are lots of neat animals living on the Galapagos Islands. There are giant turtles that weigh as much as a quarter of a ton and live as long as 150 years. They can survive for a month without food or water, which allows them to fast during long droughts.

Land iguanas, red-footed and blue footed boobies (2/3 of all the birds on the islands are not found anywhere else in the world), rats, dogs, vultures, 13 kinds of finches and marine iguanas also live there.



More Cool Things



Cotopaxi Volcano

The avenue of the volcanoes is a beautiful valley and is home to one of the highest mountain peaks in Ecuador. Cotopaxi, the world's highest active volcano, stands at 19,347 feet. and is located in the avenue of the volcanoes.

The Equator

The equator crosses the country 14 miles north of the capital city Quito. La mitad del mundo - which means 'half of the world' - is located at the equator. There is a yellow line that goes through the town that stands for the equator and if you put an egg on the yellow line it is supposed to stand up on its end.



When we asked our friends about the coolest things about Ecuador they said "The people! Everyone here is so nice and welcoming. The people are kind and gracious and everyone is your friend."

Even More Cool Things

An interesting New Year's tradition we learned from our e-pals is:

"We party all day on New Year's Eve, all night, and into the morning on New Year's Day. We build paper and wood dummies and put the faces of famous people from the last year on them. Then we burn these in the middle of the streets."



Country Facts

- There are more than 20,000 species of plants in Ecuador, compared to 17,000 in all of North America
- About 95% of Ecuador's coastal forests have been destroyed
- 17% of Ecuador's total export income comes from bananas and 16% from Shrimp
- Ecuador was founded in 1830 when it seceded from Gran Colombia
- Ecuador's national anthem is "Salve O Patria"
- The population of Ecuador is 12,175,000
- Ecuador's Capital is Quito
- The primary language spoken in Ecuador is Spanish

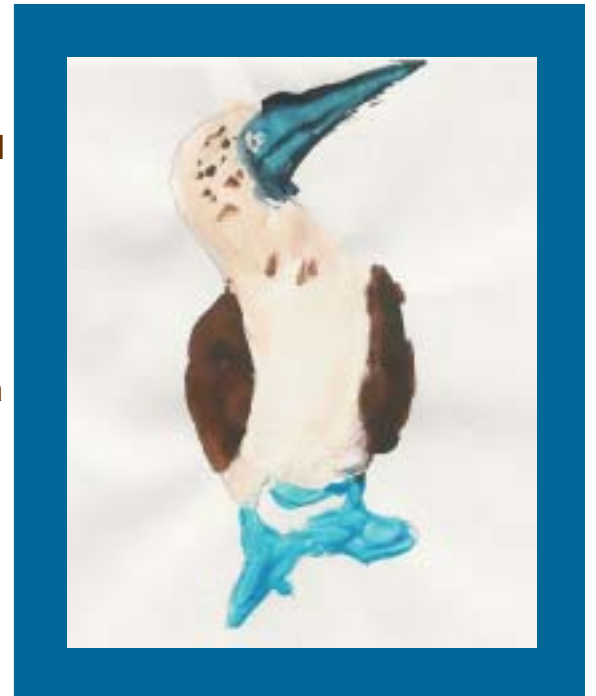
Ecuadorian Animals



We have already talked about the Galapagos Islands, but we wanted to also tell you what our email pals said about the islands when we asked them if they had ever been there: "Only two of us have ever been to the Galapagos Islands, because it is very expensive to go there. Isabella Island is the biggest island in the Galapagos, and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno is the biggest city. There are two seasons in the Galapagos - winter, when it is rainy and very hot (32 - 37 degrees Celsius, about 90 - 100 degrees Fahrenheit), and summer, when it is dry and cooler (20 - 25 degrees Celsius, about 70 - 80 degrees Fahrenheit). There are many interesting animals in the Galapagos Islands.

The best Ecuadorian animals are the Galapagos turtles, which are HUGE - often more than four feet wide!! There are also many iguanas all over the islands. Piqueros (also called blue footed boobies in English) are small birds with white bodies and bright blue legs, they are very pretty. Our friends have seen the blue footed boobies, they live in many places along the coast of Ecuador and the Galapagos. They look like ducks with pointy beaks and blue legs (see our picture!). They eat fish. When they are flying and they see a fish, they drop straight down and splash into the water. There are also little penguins in the islands.

Much of the Galapagos is like a desert, and there are a lot of cacti there. There are also a lot of volcanoes, because the islands were made by volcanoes in the ocean."



Land and Mountains of Ecuador

We asked our friends if they have ever planted a garden and they said: "We haven't planted many gardens. But here, it is common for gardens to have roses, flowers, ferns, mint, anis, cilantro, manzanilla (chamomile), and other herbs. We use these herbs for tea. Our herbal teas are very good when you have a headache, a cold, or are sick."

They told us "There are a lot of great beaches in Ecuador! Our favorites are: Atacames, Frailes, and Salinas. In some beaches, the water is a perfectly clear blue and you can see deep into it. In other beaches, the water is bright greenish-blue. Almost everywhere on the coast, the water is warm and perfect for swimming. Also, there is much biodiversity in Ecuador - there are more plant and animal species in our little country than in all of the United States".

We also asked our e-mail friends about the active volcanoes. They told us that there is lots of activity right now with the volcanoes named Reventador, Tungurahua, and Guagua Pichincha. They are all active and smoking. Until a few years ago, no volcanoes had erupted for many years. So, they are very unpredictable.



Ecuadorian Music

There are several types of music in Ecuador. Some of the different types include Salsa, Merengue and traditional music from the mountains (called Andean). We heard some music by the group called Viento de

Los Andes (Wind from the Andes)- It made us feel happy and we thought it would be fun to dance to. We asked our Ecuadorian friends if any of them played the pan pipes like in Viento de los Andes and they said "We don't play the panpipes. Nacho took lessons once, but he doesn't really play them any more. Panpipes are a kind of Andean music, which is more popular in the Sierra, the mountains of Ecuador. Here on the coast, we like to make salsa music." That's good for us to know in case we travel there.

Songs are about hunting, chopping down trees, planting gardens and sharing meat among everyone. The songs express the emotions felt by people who live close together generation after generation.

The instruments that the Ecuadorians play are very interesting: Drums, rattles, bells, bamboo flutes, panpipes, guitar, violin, harp, conch shells and curling horns are examples of instruments they play.

When we asked our pals what they thought about Rap music, here is what they said:

"Some of us like rap music and some of us don't like it. We don't listen to much American rap music, but there is a lot of Ecuadorian rap music. This music is usually romantic. Our favorite rappers are Au-D ("ow - dee") and Gerardo. We all like reggae music a lot, we listen to it often. Our favorite reggae bands are UB-40, Bob Marley, Los Pericos, and Shaggy. Some of us watch music videos on channels like MTV and HTV, which is a channel from Miami that plays Hispanic and Latino music videos. Our favorite Hispanic musicians are Gloria Estefan, Alberto Plaza, Juanes, Shakira, and Thalía. Our favorite American musicians are Backstreet Boys, NSync, Mariah Carey, Britney Spears, Billy Joel, Jennifer Lopez, Bon Jovi, and Christina Aguilera."

Ecuadorians of African decent play a traditional instrument called the Marimba, which probably originated in South Africa. They like to gather at a Marimba house where they celebrate a currulao, a dance party.

Ecuadorian Dance and Clothing

The Cumbia is a popular dance that is influenced by a Columbian dance rhythm that combines African and Caribbean tunes and Caribbean salsa music . Ecuadorian performers use rhythm inspired by these 2 styles to create their own tunes.

The Spirit of the Anaconda is a warrior dance performed by Amazon jungle dwellers. Dancers wear traditional grass skirts and tell the story of the anaconda, a large powerful snake native to the Amazon jungle. Anaconda performers dance with their hands on the shoulders of the people in front of them and go around like a big snake.

According to our e-pals, "Everybody here dances salsa and merengue. We also have dances to popular Latin songs like "Macarena" and the most popular right now, "Asereje".

We wanted to find out what types of clothes they wear in Ecuador so we asked our friends "We wear casual clothes mostly. Jeans and shirts (T-shirts, blouses, button-down shirts) and sandals or sneakers. Women don't wear dresses or skirts very often. In the mountain part of Ecuador, people dress differently than we do."



Art of Ecuador



We asked our email pals about the popular art in Ecuador and they said: "There is a lot of religious art in Ecuador, because most of the population is Catholic. There are a lot of beautiful ceramics and handicrafts, such as baskets, necklaces, and small paintings, made by native artists. "Panama Hats" are actually made in Ecuador, and the art of hat-weaving is something we are very good at. But the most popular art in Ecuador is COOKING! We like to think of our food as art, because it is so good and so important to the culture."

Much influence on Ecuadorian art comes from the Spaniards. The most famous handicrafts are Panama hats! Also, there are beautiful weavings made in the town of Otavalo. Other art consists of Wood carvings, sculptures and paintings. Some famous Ecuadorian painters include Joaquin Pinto, Camila Egas, Eduardo Kingman and Oswaldo Guayasamin.





We asked our Ecuadorian friends about their favorite foods. They said: "Our favorite food is ceviche. Ceviche is a cold salad made with: pieces of fish, a lot of lemon and lime juice, tomatoes, onions, mustard and ketchup, and a little cilantro. We also like to crush banana chips and drop them into it. Not all of us eat guinea pig, it's more popular in the mountains of Ecuador. Some of us have eaten it, and it's very good, but it looks like a fried rat."

Ecuadorians always begin lunch, (called Almuerzo) with a bowl of soup, sometimes followed by a main dish of meat, potatoes and a salad.

Seafood is mostly eaten on the coast of Africa. Dinner is similar to lunch, but a much small portion, like a snack.

Food is important to those who live in Ecuador. Festivals, funerals, picnics and parties without food would be an insult to the guests. It is a tradition to provide food to a guest at a special occasion.

Some foods they prepare are:

- Mashed potato cakes stuffed with cheese called llapingachos
- Whole roast pig with the snout
- Llapingachos with avocado and roast pork, topped with a hot red pepper sauce
- Corn on the cob with a slice of cheese
- Ground sweet corn cakes wrapped in a banana leaf Empanadas
- Patacones, crisp fried banana slices

Ecuadorian Food (our favorite)

Sopa de Tomatoes con Plantanos



During our Apprenticeship, we made a soup called Sopa de Tomatoes con platanos (Tomato soup with bananas). In the soup were tomatoes, onion, banana, coconut, salt, black pepper, chicken broth, cornstarch and cream. This soup is smooth and creamy. It tastes soothing. It might sound gross, but it's so delicious! You'll want more, but there won't be anymore left! Eat it with tortilla chips.

Authors and Illustrators

We all have done some research and paintings for this brochure. Our names are Kool Kenny, Jazzy Jennifer, Magnificent Manny, Jammin' Joe, Marvelous Marta, Energetic Ellen, and Jovial Jen. Those aren't our real names, but we called ourselves that during the apprenticeship so you'll know more about our personalities. We hope this brochure helps you find out more about Ecuador and that you enjoy your travels!



Citizen Schools, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, was founded in 1995 and has a mission of educating children and building strong communities. The current core business of Citizen Schools is a network of 12 Boston campuses operating after-school and summer programs that engage more than 1,000 students (ages 9 to 14) and 1,000 community volunteers annually in a series of learning Apprenticeships. The Apprenticeships challenge kids and adults alike to gain skills and understanding while creating products and performances that add value to the community. In 2001, Citizen Schools also launched Citizen Schools University (CSU), a national center for curriculum development and training that seeks to significantly contribute to the nation's \$20 billion (and growing) after-school industry. Through CSU, we are sharing our best ideas nationwide and have partnered with local community-based organizations and school districts to launch Citizen Schools affiliate sites in San Jose, CA; Houston, TX; and Worcester and Framingham, MA in fall 2002. Recognized as a national leader, Citizen Schools seeks to lead a renaissance in after-school education and make a significant contribution to education reform and community strengthening initiatives.



WorldTeach is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based at the Center for International Development at Harvard University which provides opportunities for individuals to make a meaningful contribution to international education by living and working as volunteer teachers in developing countries. WorldTeach was founded by a group of Harvard students in 1986, in response to the need for educational assistance in developing countries. It also addressed a growing interest among people in the U.S. and elsewhere to serve, teach and learn as volunteers overseas. Since its inception, WorldTeach has placed thousands of volunteer educators in communities throughout Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe.