



The Local Dreamers Guide

insider tips on interesting and fun stuff
in Quito and the rest of Ecuador

What to do in Quito?

*Take in mind that opening hours and prices often change!
Cab prices are based on cabs WITH a taximeter (unless stated otherwise). Cabs in Quito and Guayaquil are legally required to use a taximeter between 6am and 6pm. So insist on this. After 6pm you'll have to haggle, this regularly means you add around 50%-100% to the regular price. In this document all travel times and travel costs under the section 'how to get there', are calculated from our office in La Villaflora.*

(OUTSIDE) ACTIVITIES

Telefériqo

You'll be on top of the Pichincha volcano (4000+ m) and have beautiful view over Quito. There also possibilities for great hikes on the volcano and for horseback riding.

When

Opening hours: 9am to 6pm (weekends open until 8pm).

How to get there

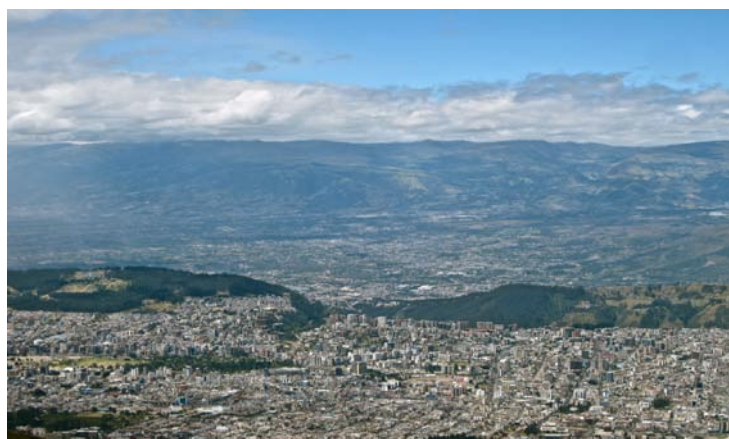
Easiest to take a cab (just say 'Telefériqo') but because it is a touristic place, lots of cab drivers will rip you off. Insist (as you should always do) that they have their taximeter on. The trip there shouldn't cost more than \$7. Other option: take the Trolley Bus until the stop 'Colón' and get a cab from there. This cab shouldn't cost more than \$2,5.

Costs

Entrance and lift up the volcano for foreigners \$8,50 (but it is possible that they have raised the price, updates are welcome!).

Extra remarks

1. This is really a must when you are in Quito!
2. Best to go in the morning when it's less cloudy so you'll have better views.
3. Bring warm clothes, can be cold there when the sun is not shining. If the sun shines, however, sun block is recommended.
4. You can buy food there, but it's quite expensive and basically shit, best to bring something yourself.



Volcano Park

Quito's amusement park. Also possible to cart there!

When

Opening hours: 9am to 6pm (weekends until 8pm).

How to get there

See Telefériqo.

Costs

Entrance = free, you pay per activity.

Mitad del Mundo

El Mitad del Mundo is a place in the north of Quito where you can stand on the Equatorial line. It's a very touristic thing but according to many a must when you visit Quito. You could also do Mitad del Mundo as part of your stay in in the Geobotanical reserve Pululahua (see weekend trips).

When

It's open all year round. 9am until 5pm.

How to get there

It's far. A taxi there will cost around \$20-25 and it will take a little less than an hour to get there. You can also take the Trolley until its last stop and ask there for a bus to the Mitad del Mundo or take a cab (\$10-15) from there.

Costs

Entrance costs about \$4.

Football match

Going to game here is a real experience! Spanish teacher Vladimir is a diehard fan of Liga de Quito and knows everything about when and where what games are. If you are lucky he will take you to one. Ask him or Jesse and Aldert for more info. Most games between national teams are about \$20 and the others around \$8.

CULTURAL

Historical center

Quito has one of the largest, least-altered and best-preserved historic centers in the Americas. Quito, along with Kraków, were the first World Cultural Heritage Sites declared by UNESCO in 1978. Not only because of the amazing architecture it is worth a visit, but also because of the numerous churches and museums.

When

You can go basically any day, but best is on Sunday when big parts of the center are car free and you can walk on the streets. At night the historical center is really beautifully lit, but beware, some parts are not that safe and pickpockets are everywhere.

How to get there

Take the Trolley bus until Plaza Santo Domingo (10 mins).

Costs

None. Cathedrals, churches and museums charge \$1-4 entrance.

Extra remarks

1. If you like gold you should definitely take a look inside the church La Compañía de Jesús.
2. You have some amazing sights if you climb all the way up La Basílica Cathedral (at the north of the historical center), but beware that la Basílica already closes early, around 4 pm.
3. Try to visit the Panecillo by night or by sunset. The views are amazing. A cab from the historical center should not cost more than \$3.



Check out the President!

Every Monday morning the president stands outside his Palacio de Gobierno on the Plaza Grande to say a few words to his followers. Many people, a parade of fancy-dressed soldiers and horses and much chaos. Worth a visit. (but be extra aware for pickpockets!)

When

Every Monday morning at 11am.

How to get there

Take the trolley until Santo Domingo (10 minutes) and walk from there two blocks to the north and then on two blocks to your left you'll find the Plaza Grande.

Museo de la Ciudad

On one side, the Museo de la Ciudad occupies the beautifully restored San Juan de Dios hospital (built in 1563, it functioned as a hospital until 1973). The museum depicts Quito's daily life through the centuries, with displays including dioramas, model indigenous homes and colonial kitchens.

When

Tuesday to Sunday from 9u30 to 17u30.

Costs

Adults \$3, students (with student card) \$2. Every last Saturday of the month it's free!

How to get there

It's in the historic center at García Moreno S1-47 y Rocafuerte. Get out at the Santo Domingo Trolley stop and walk towards the street Rocafuerte (on the other side of the plaza) from there it's two blocks to your right and half a block to your left.

SHOPPING

There are a lot of opportunities to shop in Quito. You have the most options in the shopping malls. The biggest malls in Quito are El Recreo en Quicentro Norte. El Recreo is the closest one with a lot of cheaper clothing stores, shoe stores, pharmacies and restaurants. Quicentro Norte is a bit smaller, but a lot fancier with some nice restaurants and stores like Mango, Zara and Bershka.

If you want to buy some souvenirs for your family, friends or yourself, the best place to go is Otavalo (see the one day tours), but the second best place to go is the Mercado Artesanal in Quito.

When

Most malls are open from 9am to 9pm, most shops are open at 10am and close at 7pm. They are also open on Sundays.

How to get there

El Recreo: walk 10 minutes to the south on the Maldonado.

Quicentro Norte: take the Ecovía and get out at the stop 'Naciones Unidas'. Should take you about 40 minutes. Or take a cab, should cost \$4-5 and it takes about 30 minutes.

Mercado artesanal: you take the Trolley and get out at the stop 'La Mariscal' and walk a little back until you see the street 'Jorge Washinton' on your left and walk like four blocks and there you'll see the Mercado Artesanal. Or take a cab, should cost around \$3 dollars.

ENTERTAINMENT

La Mariscal

You probably already heard of La Mariscal. It's where the magic happens. La Mariscal is the main touristic center and home to most of the clubs and bars of Quito. Especially the club "Bungalow 6" is a Local Dreamer favorite.

When

Most parties kick off around 11pm & end at 2.30 am. Party nights are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

How to get there

Both Ecovía (get out at Manuela Cañizares) and Trolley (get out at 'Colón') will bring you there. The Ecovía is not direct but will drop you closer, the Trolley is direct but you'll have to walk a little more. Both take about 30 to 40 minutes. A taxi there should cost around \$3 in the daytime and around \$6 at night. Takes about 15 minutes.

Costs

Often girls get in for free before 10 or 11pm, otherwise girls and guys pay between \$5 and \$10 to get in a club.

Extra remarks

1. The Bungalow has its famous ladies night on Wednesday, girls get in and drink for free before 10pm. Guys pay \$5 before 10pm and \$10 after. Before 10pm guys and girls are separated (girls on the ground floor and guys on the first and second floors). It's weird, but you can't leave Quito without having been to a Bungalow ladies night. ☺
2. Always bring a copy of your passport, otherwise you won't get in in almost all clubs and even some bars.
3. La Mariscal is a lot of fun but not without its dangers. First of all stay on the main streets, don't go into the darker alleys. Second of all, people will offer you drugs. As already mentioned by the coordinators at your arrival, Local Dreamers has a zero tolerance policy on drugs. Not only because it is not the healthiest option, but also because it automatically brings you in dangerous circles. Buying or taking drugs in Ecuador is not the same as in the Netherlands



Irish Pub Fin McCools / Pub Quiz

Located in the heart of the Mariscal, on the corner of the Bungalow is Fin McCool, the go to bar for our Friday afternoon/night drinks. It has nice food and snacks (\$2 – 7), a good vibe and a Happy Hour until 20:30 where you can drink a Cuba Libre for \$1,75. They also have a big screen where you can watch football and American football.

When

Open everyday from 11 am until 3 am

How to get there

It's at the corner of Diego de Almagro and Pinto in the middle of la Mariscal, one block from the Bungalow.

Extra remarks

Every Tuesday CENIT (our partner NGO in Quito) holds a fun pub quiz (in English of course) in order to raise money for their projects. It costs \$3 to play and there is a first prize of \$50 to spend on the bar and jugs of beer for the second and third placed teams.

La Ronda

La Ronda is the main entertainment street of the historic center. In the day it seems a street like any other, but at night it comes alive. There are lots of nice local bars where you can try Canelazo, a very nice local alcoholic cinnamon drink. La Ronda offers also several places where you can practice your salsa skills or eat traditional dishes.

When

You can go all day, but all the bars open around 6pm and close around 1am.

How to get there

Take the trolley and get out at Plaza Santo Domingo (10 minutes). Or take a cab, should be around \$2 in daytime and \$4 night time.

Extra remarks

La Ronda is one of the safest streets of Quito, but once you leave the street it immediately becomes dangerous. So stay in La Ronda, don't start walking around in other streets but La Ronda.

Salsa classes

Salsa is one of the most important dances in Central America and the north of South America. Quito has tons of salsa schools and it's really worth a try! We recommend Academia Salsa & Merengue, a lot of our interns and volunteers have had good experiences there.

When

You call them on 0998805372 or 2220427 and make an appointment.

How to get there

It's in La Mariscal, Foch E4-256 y Amazonas.

Get the Trolley, get out at 'Colón' and walk five minutes. It takes about 30-40 minutes to get there. A taxi there should cost around \$3 in the daytime and around \$6 at night. Takes about 15 minutes (without traffic).

Costs

Private classes are \$10 per hour, duo classes are \$8 and group classes \$6. Our ex-volunteers really recommend the individual classes because you'll learn everything at least twice as fast.

Cinema

There are a lot of cinemas in Quito. The closest one, Multicines, inside shopping mall El Recreo, only have dubbed films. Other options are Cinemark or Supercines.

When

Check their websites for films & timetables:

- <http://supercines.com/quito.aspx>
- <http://www.multicines.com/ec/>
- <http://www.cinemark.com.ec/default.aspx>

Costs

It depends on the cinema, but generally it costs \$4-6.

How to get there

This really depends on what film you are seeing. But most films are in

- Quicentro Sur: take the trolley bus until Moran Valverde (or a cab – should be around \$4)
- Plaza de las Americas: take the Blue Metrotrans bus going to the north on the street where the Pichincha bank is and ask that they notify at Plaza de las Americas (after 20 – 30 minutes) or take a cab (\$5-6).
- 6 de diciembre: take the Ecovía and get out at Naciones Unidas (where Quicentro Norte is) or take a cab (\$5-6).

Bowling

Although there are probably closer bowling centers, we used to go from time to time to the one in Quicentro Norte.

When

Everyday until 21h (Sunday until 20h)

Cost

You'll pay 6-8\$ for an hour per bowling alley.

How to get there

Quicentro Norte: take the Ecovía and get out at the stop 'Naciones Unidas'. Should take you about 40 minutes. Or take a cab, should cost \$4-5 and it takes about 30 minutes.

GOOD FOOD

Sushi

NOE sushi bar: it's not the cheapest option, but if you want to spoil yourself with some amazing sushi, this is the place to be. (<http://www.noesushibar.com/>)

When

Monday – Thursday: 12u30–15u30 & 18u30–23u30

Friday – Sunday: 12u30 – 23u30.

Costs

Sushi rolls (8 pieces) are between \$7 and \$14.

How to get there

Noe has various restaurants but the best & closest is at Isabel la Católica N24-6274 y Coruña. A cab there should cost around \$3. You can also catch a blue bus that says "12 de octubre" or "U. La Católica" at the Napo street (where the Ecovía is). Ask the chauffeur that they notify you when you arrive at the roundabout 'Plaza las Artigas' from there you walk up two blocks on La Coruña and until the street 'Isabel la Católica', make left walk 50 meters and at your left hand you'll see the NOE sushi bar.

Crepes/waffles

If you feel like some good crepes, ice cream or waffles, sweet or salty, Crepes&Waffles is a definite must. (<http://crepesywaffles.com.ec/menu>).

When

Monday – Saturday: 12u-22u. Sundays: 9u30–21u.

Costs

Salty crepes are \$7-15, sweet waffles/crepes are \$3-6.

Where

The closest one is just outside La Mariscal: Rábida N26-249 y av. Francisco de Orellana. A cab should be around \$4.

To go there by bus it's best to take the Ecovía and get out at the stop 'Orellana', walk a little further on the 6 de diciembre street until you arrive at the big street 'Orellana'. Take a left and walk four blocks. On your left you will see the restaurant Crepes and Waffles.



Mexican

Some of the best Mexican dishes you'll find at 'Casa de Eduardo'.

Costs

Main dishes between \$9-15, Checkout the menu:

<http://www.lacasadeeduardo.com/menueduardo.pdf>

How to get there

It is in La Mariscal: Reina Victoria N21-238 y Carrión. A cab should cost around \$3. With public transport: take the Ecovía and get out at Galo Plaza. From there walk a little further on the 6 de diciembre and take a left at 'Vicente Ramón Roca', walk one block and take a right at 'Reina Victoria'.

Italian

Go to 'Cosa Nostra' for some exceptional pizza's, pasta's and tiramisu's.

When

Tuesday – Sunday: 12u30-15u30 & 18u30-23u.

Costs

Their (big) pizza's are between \$8-15 & pasta's \$9-14.

How to get there

It is in La Mariscal: Baquerizo Moreno E7-86 and Diego de Almagro. A cab should cost around \$3.

Ecovía: get out at 'Baca Ortiz' and walk two blocks back on the 6 de diciembre until Baquerizo Moreno take a right and walk one block along Baquerizo Moreno.

Last but not least – Ecuadorian food

Ecuador has a very rich cuisine and is definitely not only about 'arroz con pollo'. Every region in Ecuador has numerous typical dishes. This is our top 10 of stuff you should definitely try when you are in Ecuador:

1. Ceviche

This is a delicious cold fish dish marinated in lemon with onion, tomatoes and parsley from the Ecuadorian coast. You can get it with shrimp, fish, shellfish, etc.

2. Hornado

This is a tasty dish from the Sierra with pork, *mote*, avocado, plantain, corn and potatoes.

3. Chuchucara

This is the typical dish from Latacunga, a town close to the Cotopaxi (otherwise not really worth visiting). It contains pork, potatoes and *mote con chicharron*.

4. Camarón apanado

This is basically fried shrimp with a side of rice, some tomatoes and *patacones* (fried, salty plantains). Definitely worth a try when you're at the coast.

5. Trucha

You can find the absolutely best trout at Papallacta,

there is a place near where you can fish your own trout which they then prepare for you. Amazing.

6. Llapingacho

Thick, crispy potato pancakes stuffed with cheese accompanied by a tasty peanut sauce or *salsa de maní*, fried egg, chorizo style sausages, pickled onion and tomato salad, some lettuce, avocado slices and *ají*.

7. Empanadas

A snack of dough prepared with salty or sweet fillings.

8. Pan de yuca

Also known as cheese bread, yummy melt in your mouth warm breads made with cheese and *yuca*.

9. Cuy

Roasted guinea pig – if you're in for it.

10. Locro soup

Locro de papa or potato soup, a traditional Ecuadorian soup made with potatoes, onion, garlic, cumin, *achiote* or annatto, milk, cheese and cilantro.



Ceviche



Hornado



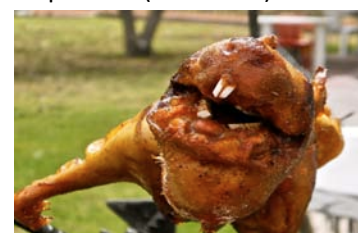
Llapingacho



Empanada (de viento)



Pan de yuca



Cuy

Drinks with a view: Guapulo neighbourhood

Guapulo is a picturesque neighborhood in the north of Quito on the border of the valley with some amazing views. Although there are a lot of bars, we especially recommend Ananké, a very cosy bar with some amazing gluhwein and tasty snacks. Also perfect for a romantic date. ☺

When

Monday – Saturday from 18h – late. Closed on Sundays.

Costs

A bit pricier than the regular bars in La Mariscal, but definitely worth it.

How to get there

Best to take a cab and say you want to go to Guapulo, Camino de Orellana 781, *tres curvas hacía abajo del Hotel Quito*. Ananké will be on your right. Cab should cost +/- \$6.

One-day trips outside Quito

These are some of our suggestions, for a more complete oversight look inside the Lonely Planet. Most trips are best to do on your own with public transport, but some trips are only possible with a travel agency or a bit more comfortable (sitting in a minivan with a guide vs. taking 5 buses in the hope you are going to the right place).

Gulliver (<http://www.gulliver.com.ec/>) is a travel agency that our ex-volunteers recommend for its great price/quality ratio. Book a few days ahead in their Mariscal office.

Cotopaxi

The Cotopaxi is the highest active volcano in the world and definitely worth a climb. This is a trip you definitely have to do with a travel agency. You have two options: you can do the one-day trip (on Saturday if you choose to go with Gulliver). On the one-day trip you'll climb to the first glaciers at a height of 5000 meters and you'll descent on mountain bike. The trip costs about \$45 and includes lunch, park entrance, transportation, a guide, etc. The second option is to climb until the top. This is (at least) a two-day trip (see 'Ideas for weekend trips') and logically requires you to be fit and already used to the high altitude.



Otavalo

Otavalo has been an Andean crossroad since pre-Inca times, when jungle traders would journey here on foot. Today's market is a hyperbolic version of the same tradition: buses arrive from Quito delivering droves of visitors from around the globe. While the tourists bargain for rugs and sweaters, the local artisans take their market earnings to fill up on staples such as rice and meat. We really recommend you go on Saturday morning to see the animal market.

If you don't want to get up at 4am, it's best to go Friday and overnight there. This is a trip you can do very easily yourself. Take a cab to the north bus terminal, Carcelén, (+/- \$10) and from there buses leave every 15 mins to Otavalo. Carcelén – Otavalo is 2-3 hours. Instead of taking a cab you could also take the trolley until the last station and

from there ask for a bus to Carcelén. This trip would cost you 0,50 but will take 1,5 hours



Laguna Quilotoa

The famous volcanic-crater lake of Laguna Quilotoa is a gasp-inducing sight. A lookout on the precipitous crater rim offers stunning views of the mirror-green lake 400m below and the snowcapped peaks of Cotopaxi and Iliniza Sur in the distance. When you ask the locals how deep it is, they inevitably say it has no bottom, which seems entirely plausible given its awesomeness (the geologists say 250m). Travel agency Gulliver offers trips there for \$45, which includes lunch, transportation, a guide, a visit to the Pujilí market and an indigenous family. Otherwise, you could go there on your own (see the Lonely Planet for which buses you should take), but this is a LOT of bus for one day. We recommend that if you want to go there on your own, you make it a two-day trip.



Papallacta hot springs

Very nice thermal baths in the mountains just a few hours away from Quito – perfect for a daytrip and also the place to be for the best trout. If you can, try to go on a weekday, in the weekends it is packed. Entrance is \$7. Take the Trolley, Ecovía or a cab (\$5) to Quitumbe and from there take any bus (\$3) going to the Oriente (=jungle), all of them pass Papallacta. Ask the driver to notify you when you are at Papallacta. From there leave vans to the thermal baths.



Horseback riding in the Cotopaxi area

Horseback riding is one of the best ways to discover the beauty of Ecuador's Sierra. Gulliver offers a variety of trips from beginners to advanced and from a few hours to a few days. Take a look on their website: <http://www.gulliver.com.ec/index.php/Horseback-Riding-Tours-Ecuador/>



Ideas for weekend trips

Make sure to book your bus tickets beforehand, as buses get full quite fast. Especially when you are travelling with a group or before a national holiday.

BEACH FUN

Montañita

Hippie, party-hardy surfers paradise. If you didn't have a completely crazy night here, you didn't do it right. Take a bus from bus terminal Quitumbe to Guayaquil (7-9 hours) and from there take a bus to Montañita (2,5 hours).

Tonsupa

Tonsupa is a lot closer to Quito and no foreigners, only local tourists mainly from Quito. Not as crazy as Montañita, but there are some great opportunities to practice your salsa skills. They also have amazing seafood here. Take a bus to Esmeraldas (about 6 hours) and from there take a bus to Tonsupa (0,5-1 hour).

Canoa

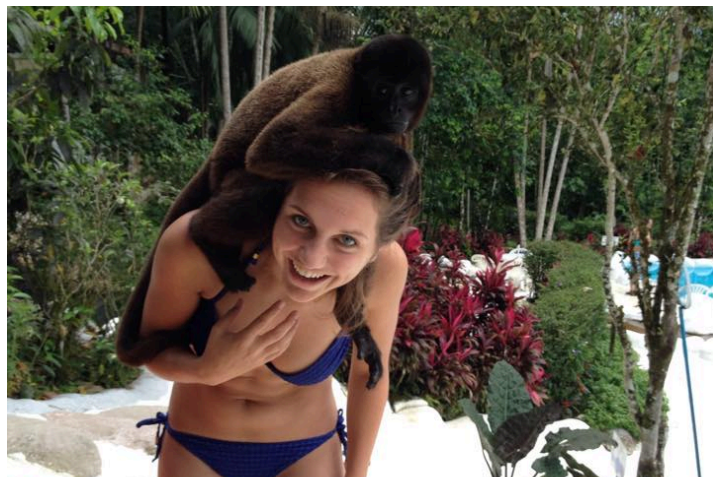
A mix between Montañita and Tonsupa: not as crazy as Montañita, but with more foreigners than Tonsupa. It is the perfect place to have a laid-back weekend. There leaves a direct bus from Quitumbe once or twice a day and it takes more or less 8 to 9 hours to get there.



JUNGLE

Tena (& Misahuallí)

Tena is perfect if you just want a taste of the jungle. You can go on jungle walks, there are some amazing rafting possibilities and just an hour away lies Misahuallí, whose beach is home to so many monkeys that will try to steal your food. From there you can take the canoe to visit some indigenous communities. Tena is a 5-6h bus ride from Quito.



Mindo

Only 2,5 hours from Quito lies picturesque Mindo. A birdwatchers paradise and great for zip-lining, tubing and spotting waterfalls. There is also a chocolate factory there that is (according to them) the only place in the world where they do the whole process, from growing the cocoa beans to making delicious chocolate brownies.

Buses leave from the northern terminal La Ofelia (cab \$10). Best way to go to La Ofelia by bus is to take the Ecovía to La Marin. From there leaves a direct bus to La Ofelia. There only leave a few buses a day to Mindo and in the holidays and even weekends they get full pretty fast. It's wise to arrive a little early in Ofelia. Timetable for buses to and from Mindo:

<http://ecuadorcloudforest.com/html/transportation.html>.

Another option is to take any bus going to the Esmeraldas province and to get out at 'la Y de Mindo' (ask the driver to notify you) and from there get a cab for \$3 to Mindo.

ANDES

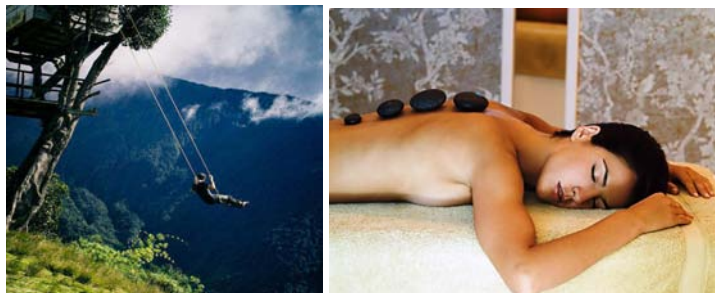
Cotopaxi

Climbing the Cotopaxi until the top is an amazing accomplishment. The climb up Cotopaxi requires a pre-climb glacier travel course with crampons, ice axe and ropes that you'd get in the afternoon before summiting. Then leaving around midnight, arriving to the top of Cotopaxi after sunrise at 6am. More info:

<http://www.gulliver.com.ec/index.php/Climbing-Tours-Ecuador/Cotopaxi-Climb.html>

Baños

An all-time favorite. There are so many things to do in Baños, from relaxing in the numerous spa's to bungee jumping and enjoying the town's great food. Buses leave every 20 minutes from Quitumbe and it takes between 3 and 4 hours to get there.



Cuenca

Cuenca – the colonial jewel of the south – takes the cake when it comes to beauty. Its narrow cobblestone streets and whitewashed red-tiled buildings, its handsome plazas and domed churches, and its setting above the grassy banks of the Río Tomebamba, where women still dry clothes in the sun, all create a city that's supremely impressive. Though firmly anchored in its colonial past, Ecuador's third-largest city also has a modern edge, with international restaurants, art galleries, cool cafés and welcoming bars tucked into its magnificent architecture. It has a large student population and (unsurprisingly) is popular with foreigners. Not far from Cuenca you will find Ingapirca, the largest Inca ruins of Ecuador. On the west side of Cuenca lies National Park Cajas. Definitely worth a visit if you love nature. Buses leave frequently from Quitumbe and take between 10-12 hours to get to Cuenca.



Pululahua

Pululahua is a geobotanical reserve very close to Mitad del Mundo. The reserve is situated in and around the crater of an extinct volcano also named Pululahua. It is perfect place to unwind in nature, great possibilities for mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking and bird watching. Inside the reserve lies the Pululahua hostel / ecolodge / restaurant. For more information on activities and prices, take a look at their website: <http://pululahuahostal.com/index.html> The hostel provides transport to/from La Mariscal \$45 for 1-3 people and \$12 pp for 4 people or more. Otherwise

you can go to Mitad del Mundo en from there catch a cab/bus to Pululahua (only about 15 km further north).



Week trips

If you have the time & money, these are definitely worth your while:

Cuyabeno Jungle Tour

Witness some amazing nature and wildlife and see other ways of living in the Ecuadorian amazon! Best to go five days. All-inclusive prices range around \$250-350.



Last but certainly not least - The Galapagos!

Absolutely incredible. But pricy. Best to go 5-8 days. All-inclusive prices for budget tours/cruises range from \$ 1200-2000.

