

## Culture

The first thing to realize about Ecuadorian culture is that it is not one single culture. Instead it is a whole range of cultures mingled together, representing every level of this very stratified community.

Ecuador's official language is Spanish, but Quichua - an Incan language - is spoken by the Indian population. Besides Spanish, ten native languages are spoken in Ecuador. English is the most spoken foreign language among tourism service providers and professionals.

The Afro-Ecuadorians that are present in Ecuador today are famous for their marimba music and many music and dance festivals. Long before the Spanish conquered Ecuador and even before the rise of Incan civilization, the diverse native cultures of the region had rich musical traditions. Music played an important role in the ancient Andean people's lives and archaeologists have found some very old instruments, such as, drums, flutes, trumpets and other musical artifacts, in ancient tombs.

The Ecuadorians have a distinctive type of dress code. The men and especially the woman in each region of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands can be easily identified by their dress as it displays specific cultural diversities that are characteristic of that particular region. A major aspect of Indian identity is present in Ecuador. People that are familiar with the native dress can often tell roughly where an Indian is from, based on what they wear.

Ecuador has some very tasty and very strange combinations in their cuisine. You can expect to find some lemon marinated shrimps, toasted corn on the cob and a huge variety of pastries filled with all types of different stuffing.

As with all other places in the world, Christmas is celebrated in Ecuador. If you want the best and most original Christmas celebration, you should go to Cuenca on the 24th of December where the Pase Del Nino is held.

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