



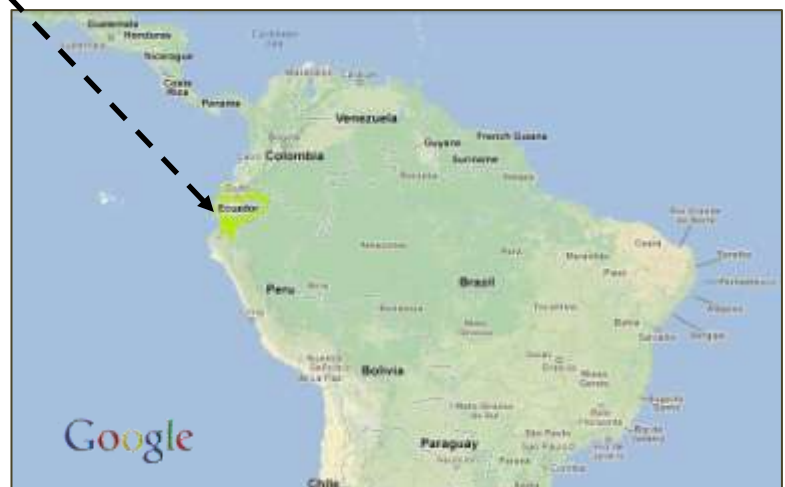
# Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



## Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Manta, Ecuador, located at 1° S and 81° W.
- We have traveled approximately 70,739 miles (113,890 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



## People and Culture

- Today's Ecuador was part of the Inca Empire and Quito was the northern capital in the early 1500s. Ecuador gained its independence from Spain in 1822.
- Founded in 1534, Ecuador's capital Quito is one of the best-preserved cities in South America. Some of its convents and churches feature 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Baroque architecture. In 1978, Quito and Krakow, Poland, were the first World Heritage Sites to be designated by UNESCO.
- Other major cities include Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest, and Manta, an international port.
- Ecuador has South America's second largest indigenous population (about 30% of its 15 million inhabitants), after Bolivia.
- The Panama hat actually has its origins in Ecuador. This brimmed hat is woven in Ecuador from the toquilla straw plant. Sent to Panama before being shipped to other locations, the hat got its name from sales there.
- Food varies by region. In the coastal areas, seafood is common, and consists of fish and shrimp. Guinea Pig is a delicacy in the highlands of Ecuador and is sold in many outdoor markets.
- Sanjuanito is a traditional form of music. It originated in Northern Ecuador and is a part of many festivities.



*Old Town in Quito*  
(source: [OurDistantJourney.com](http://OurDistantJourney.com))

### Did you know?

The official currency of Ecuador has been the U.S. dollar since January 2001. El Salvador, East Timor, Panama, Palau and the Marshall Islands also use the dollar as its official currency.

source:  
[Gocurrency.com](http://Gocurrency.com)



*Panama hat* (source: [Flickr.com/Lint01](http://Flickr.com/Lint01))



*Listen to sanjuanito music and view pictures (4:23)*

## Nature and Environment

- Ecuador is the size of the U.S. state of Colorado and is one of two countries that does not share a border with Brazil (Chile is the other).
- There are three distinct climate zones in Ecuador: the Sierra (Andes), the Costa (a coastal plain between the Andes and Pacific, growing coffee, bananas and sugar) and the Oriente, (Amazon zone). The Oriente comprises about one-third of the country.
- Ecuador means "equator" in Spanish, The equator runs through the country just north of Quito, the capital city. Quito is located in the Andes Mountains and at an elevation of (9,350 feet / 2,850 meters).
- Ecuador has large petroleum reserves that account for about 40% of its export earnings.
- Ecuador has one of the greatest densities of volcanoes in the world. The *Avenue of the Volcanoes* consists of 14 peaks greater higher than 15,000 feet (4,572 meters), running for about 120 miles (193 kilometers) along the Andes. Chimborazo is the tallest at 20,702 feet (6,310 meters). Due to its location near the equator, Chimborazo is actually the closest point on earth to the sun.

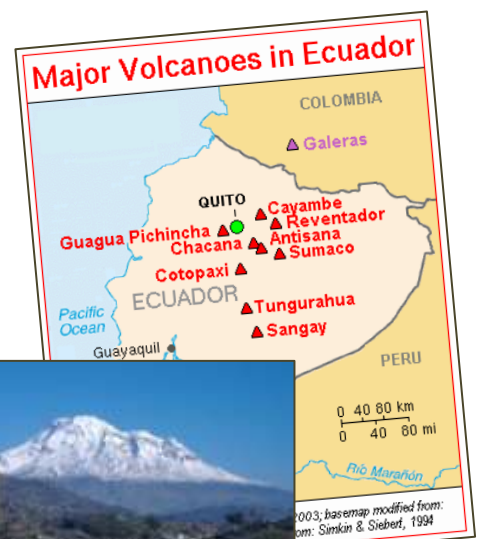
*Chimborazo, located below Cotopaxi on the map (sources: [USGS.gov](http://USGS.gov))*

## The Galápagos Islands

These islands, which are a part of Ecuador, are located about 500 miles (926 kilometers) off its coast. The remote location of the Galapagos provides a home for a number of unique species, such as the Blue-footed booby. A national park and biological marine reserve are located here.



*sources: [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org), [Flickr.com/DerekKeats](http://Flickr.com/DerekKeats)*



## Our Plans

- We are continuing our Pacific Ocean voyage home with a stop in the Ecuadorian city of Manta. We will spend the day here exploring the nearby area. Then we will cross the equator for the final time, sailing back into the Northern Hemisphere.
- Central America will be our next stop, and we will visit Costa Rica and Nicaragua.
- What questions and comments do you have as we continue our voyage home? We look forward to hearing from you.

## The Llama

Llamas are found in the Andes Mountain region. They have been used as pack animals for centuries and can carry loads as heavy as 75 pounds (34 kilograms) over the rough terrain of that region. Llamas are herbivores and can survive eating a variety of plants and requiring little water. Adults can weigh up to 250 pounds (113 kilograms).



*sources:*

*[Animals.nationalgeographic.com](http://Animals.nationalgeographic.com),  
[OurDistantJourney.com](http://OurDistantJourney.com)*

## More Information

- <http://www.ecuador.travel/en/ecuador-travel-guide/northern-andes/northern-andes-destinations-and-attractions/ecuador-avenue-of-volcanoes.html>
- <http://travel-island.com/interesting.places/ecuador.html>
- <http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/facts-about-ecuador-2616.html>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panama\\_hat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panama_hat)
- <http://www.funtrivia.com/en/Geography/Ecuador-9691.html>

## Our Partners



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License.