

the shrewd deception of Pizarro, eventually enabled the Spanish to overtake the Inca army, which was estimated at over 5,000, with only a few hundred men. For a memento of this historic battle, just stop by almost any local outdoor market, where you can pick up Inca versus Spanish chess sets, complete with llamas on the Inca side and horses on the Spanish side.

Today, the Centro Histórico (p. 77) has the best display of colonial Quito, with many original structures dating back to the mid- to late-1500s and built on Inca foundations. The Plaza San Francisco, for example, has a beautiful monastery and plaza built in the same spot that the pre-Inca tribes held their tianguéz. The Spanish introduced many changes to the indigenous population; among them, violent and obligatory conversion to Catholicism as well as an oppressive feudal system. The new system placed social status on race. Spanish were on the top rung of society, then the *mestizo*, or mixed population, followed by the indigenous groups and the African slaves the Spanish brought with them.

The Catholic Church, faithful to the Spanish Crown, dominated economically and socially during the Colonial Period until the beginning of the 19th century, when a common desire for liberation began to brew in Quito. On August 10, 1809—still celebrated today as Ecuador's Independence Day—the first cry for independence was proclaimed in Quito. Thirteen years later, rebellious forces under the command of José Antonio de Sucre defeated the Spanish in the decisive battle of Pichincha. Ecuador was part of liberator Simón Bolívar's Gran Colombia, along with parts of Panama, Venezuela and Colombia until 1830. The first constitutional government was headed by Juan José Flores that same year. For more details on the political history of Ecuador, see our History of Ecuador section.

### LODGING IN QUITO

From a mattress on the floor to a suite at a high-end international chain, Quito has a hotel to meet everyone's needs. The prices tend to be a little higher than in other parts of the country, but so is the overall quality. There are some basic things to look for in a hotel in Quito. With cool evenings year-round, hot water and thick blankets are a necessity. Location is also important and will greatly impact the kind of experience you have. There is a good variety of hotels in every neighborhood, so if you want a non-touristy experience, it is worth it to venture out of the Mariscal area. If you are willing to spend a little more money on lodging, consider staying at one of Quito's many independently-run hotels. They offer similar services as international chains at lower prices, and you get a hotel with much more personality. Also, many hotels have rooms with beautiful views of the Pichincha volcanoes or city skylines at no extra charge, so it never hurts to ask. Quito is a large city with much to see and do. If you stay for more than a day or two, ask for a discount on your room. Bargaining is always appropriate.

### TOUR OPERATORS IN QUITO

A popular spot on any traveler's itinerary, Quito boasts more than its fair share of travel operators with the majority clustered around the Mariscal. Many places can organize day trips in, around and outside of the city. Some can also organize longer trips through the Andes and to the jungle or the coast. If you're lucky (and if you have a flexible travel itinerary) you might be able to take advantage of last minute deals to the Galápagos and other exciting places around Ecuador.

#### ADVENTURECUADOR

AventurEcuador, based in Quito and run by an Ecuadorian-French couple, specializes in tours around the country geared toward your individual interests. They offer multi-day tours with an emphasis on Culture and Tradition, Adventure and Discovery, Trekking, Climbing, Paragliding, Mountainbiking and the Galapagos Islands. A family-friendly tour company. Email: [info@aventurecuador.com](mailto:info@aventurecuador.com) Url: [www.aventurecuador.com](http://www.aventurecuador.com)

#### ADVENTURE PLANET ECUADOR

Adventure Planet Ecuador offers tours all over Quito and the Galápagos Islands. Their tours range from biking to hiking to trekking through the jungle to climbing the Andes. They have

decades of experience in showing Quito off to natives and tourists alike. Club Los Chillóns Portal 2 No. 42, Quito, Tel: 593-2-287-1105, Fax: 593-2-287-1605, Cell: 593-9-811-2154, E-mail: [info@adventureplanet-ecuador.com](mailto:info@adventureplanet-ecuador.com), URL: [www.adventureplanet-ecuador.com](http://www.adventureplanet-ecuador.com).

#### BAREFOOT EXPEDITIONS

Barefoot Expeditions is an operator based in Quito, offering a variety of tours all over Ecuador. Choose from cultural tours, jungle adventures and climbing trips to summit Cotopaxi, one of the world's highest active volcanoes. Barefoot's specialty is rafting / kayaking, and with more than 10 years of experience paddling Ecuador's waterways and seas, talented guide Diego Altamirano will be sure to make your trip a memorable one. Special trips include a nine day "paddle Ecuador" tour. J. Pinto E4-385 and Juan Leon Mera of. 205, Tel: (593) 91899067 (Ecuador) or 1-650-561-3907 (USA), E-mail: [Info@barefootexpeditions.com](mailto:Info@barefootexpeditions.com), URL: <http://www.barefootexpeditions.com>.

#### COLUMBUS TRAVEL LTD.

Columbus Travel Ltd. is an Ecuador-based company under Norwegian management. They specialize in tours of the Galápagos, the Andes Sierra and Peru and the Amazon jungle. Calle Leonidas Plaza 353 and Roca, La Mariscal, Quito, Tel: 593-2-223-6688, Fax: 593-2-250-4977, E-mail: [info@columbusecuador.com](mailto:info@columbusecuador.com).

#### ECUADOR EXPERIENCE

Ecuador Experience is a tour operator based in Quito. Their tours specialize in birdwatching due to the great number and variety of species throughout the country. Guides speak French, Spanish, English and German. The tours can be modified to suit travellers' needs. Ulloa 3045 and Moncayo, Quito, Tel: 593-2-243-5692, Cell: 593-9-812-3023, E-mail: [ecuadorexperience@yahoo.fr](mailto:ecuadorexperience@yahoo.fr), URL: [www.ecuadorexperience.com](http://www.ecuadorexperience.com).

#### ECUADOR TIERRA VIVA TRAVEL COMPANY

Tierra Viva Travel Company specializes in ecotourism. Their tours stay off the beaten path a bit (something that's easy to do in Ecuador) and visit mostly small communities, national parks and nature reserves. It's most definitely not the company for the five-star tourist, but for a more nature-loving patron. Contact: Peter Rodriguez. Diaz de la Madrid 612 and Diego Utreras, Quito, Tel: 593-2-223-9786, E-mail: [peter@ecuador-tierra-viva.com](mailto:peter@ecuador-tierra-viva.com).

#### EQTOURING

Eqtouring has been traveling Ecuador and the Galápagos as an independent company for the past five years. They specialize in luxury Galápagos cruises and multi-day tours of the Amazon Basin. Panamericana Norte, Jardines de Carcelén A34, Quito, Tel: 593-2-248-6685, Cell: 593-9-944-3139, E-mail: [info@eqtouring.com](mailto:info@eqtouring.com), URL: [www.eqtouring.com](http://www.eqtouring.com)

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