

Discovering Ecuador's Hidden Gem

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Quito, the capital of Ecuador, is often overlooked by travelers en route to the Galapagos Islands. However, this vibrant city is a treasure trove of history, culture, and culinary delights that rival its renowned archipelago counterpart.

With its well-preserved UNESCO-recognized historic center, Quito's colonial charm is truly captivating. Founded by the Spanish in 1534, the old town showcases splendid examples of colonial Spanish architecture and was the first capital city in the world to be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Start your exploration at the Plaza de la Independencia, where you can immerse yourself in the local ambiance and witness the captivating changing of the guard.

As you wander through the cobblestone streets, architectural wonders await at every turn. The Church and Convent of San Francisco, the neo-Gothic Basílica del Voto Nacional, and the resplendent La Compañía are three remarkable churches not to be missed. Each boasts its own unique features and offers a glimpse into Quito's rich heritage.

Beyond its architectural marvels, Quito's Plaza Grande is a microcosm of local life. Here, families gather, street performers entertain, and street vendors offer delectable treats like fried plantains with cheese and fluffy meringue confections.

Don't let Quito be just a layover destination. Dive into its history, indulge in its culinary delights, and immerse yourself in its vibrant culture. Quito is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered by those willing to give it a chance.

Conversation Questions

- Have you ever heard of Quito before reading this text? What was your impression of the city?
- Why do you think Quito is often overlooked by travelers as a destination?
- What makes Quito's historic old town unique and significant?
- Can you describe the atmosphere and activities in the Plaza de la Independencia?
- Which church mentioned in the text would you be most interested in visiting? Why?
- How do you think the neo-Gothic Basílica del Voto Nacional stands out among other churches?
- What are some possible reasons for the lavish interior of La Compañía church?
- If you could visit Quito, which place mentioned in the text would you be most excited to explore? Why?

True or False (T / F)

- Quito is the capital of Ecuador.
- The Galapagos Islands are often visited by travelers on their way to Quito.
- Quito's historic center is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The Plaza de la Independencia is a popular gathering place in Quito.
- The Church and Convent of San Francisco is one of the remarkable churches in Quito.
- The Basílica del Voto Nacional is a modern architectural wonder in Quito.
- Plaza Grande in Quito is a hub of local activity and culture.
- Quito is only worth visiting for a layover, not for an extended stay.

Synonym Match

1. overlooked	A. assigned
2. travelers	B. past
3. vibrant	C. imperial
4. treasure	D. gem
5. history	E. lively
6. culinary	F. tourists
7. colonial	G. enchanting
8. captivating	H. unnoticed
9. designated	I. legacy
10. heritage	J. gastronomic

Rank your favorite cities

London - Tokyo - New York City - Paris -
Sydney - Istanbul - Rio de Janeiro - Dubai

Answers:

True or False (T / F)

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. False

Synonym Match

1H, 2F, 3E, 4D, 5B, 6J, 7C, 8G, 9A, 10I