



WHAT ARE ECUADOR'S MOST IMPORTANT FESTIVITIES? (CALENDAR)

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START DATE	FESTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
January 1	New Year	Ecuadorians bring in the New Year with dances, costumes, masked parties, and burning effigies on the street.
February Varies by year	Carnival	The exact date of Carnival celebrations depends on the day that Passover falls on each year. Many cities and towns celebrate with parades, dances, and art. Throughout the country, throwing water balloons and shooting silly string at each other (even strangers!) is highly popular, so watch out!
March/April Varies by year	Holy Week	Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday. In Ecuador, the passion and death of Christ are commemorated with church congregations and street processions in major cities and towns throughout the country. In Quito, the biggest procession is Jesús del Gran Poder (Jesus of Great Power), which happens on Good Friday.
April 12	Cuenca Foundation Day	Filled with fireworks, artistic presentations, energetic celebrations, and many other activities, Cuenca commemorates its founding day with boastful pride that everyone is welcome to join in on.
May 1	Labor Day	Parades throughout the streets of certain major cities and towns.
May 24	Battle of Pichincha	The Battle of Pichincha (1822) finalized Ecuador's independence from Spain. It is a moment in history that is celebrated with cultural parades and activities.
June Varies by year	Corpus Christi	The most important celebration of the Central Highlands. Style of celebrations will vary depending on where it is held. For example, in Salasaca it is celebrated with music and dancing. The dancers get dressed in spectacularly embroidered suits, paper mache masks, and hats adorned with shiny ribbons and feathers.
June Varies by year	Fiesta de San Pedro y San Pablo	In certain communities of the Imbabura Province (Cotacachi and Cayambe), this festivity is celebrated with dances, parades, bonfires, and special ceremonies.

July 23-25	Foundation of Guayaquil	A celebration that is marked by dancing on the streets, special parades, and concerts. Cultural exhibitions pertaining to art and activities are also organized.
August 10	Independence Day (Ecuador)	A national festivity that commemorates the Independence of Ecuador (1809). Military and school parades are traditionally held on this day.
September 23-24	Virgen de la Merced (Virgin of La Merced)	Held in honor of "Our Lady of Mercy." Celebrated with masks, dances, traditional bands, fireworks, special congregations, and folkloric festivals.
October 9-12	Independence Day (Guayaquil)	Guayaquil's independence is commemorated with fairs, concerts, dances, parades, exhibitions, and numerous other activities.
October 12	Columbus Day	Commemoration of Columbus's arrival in America.
November 2	All Souls Day	All Souls Day in Ecuador is held in commemoration of loved ones that have passed away. As a result, you will often see that cemeteries are filled with plenty of visitors. Indigenous communities tend to arrive with lots of food that they will often be seen sharing with the rest of their family beside the tombstone of their lost one. Guagua de pan (bread dolls) and colada morada (a sweet, spiced-berry and purple-corn beverage) are readily sold throughout major cities as part of this holiday.
November 3	Independence Day (Cuenca)	Cultural processions, dances, and other activities are held.
November 21	Virgen del Quinche (Virgin of Quinche)	Religious ceremonies, processions, and commercial fairs are held in honor of the Virgin of Quinche.
December 1-6	Foundation of Quito	Parades, free concerts, cultural shows, and dances are widely seen throughout the capital city.
December 25	Christmas	Nativity scenes are displayed in churches. Families and friends get together to read "Novenas."
December 31	New Year's Eve	The "old year" ends with the burning of effigies which usually symbolize politicians or celebrities. A more unusual feature of this holiday is that men will be seen dressed up as women, dancing on the street and asking for money from those that pass them by.