



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

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START DATE	FESTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
January 1	Entrega de Varas	In Cusco and the surrounding areas, each village, dating back to the pre-Hispanic era, commemorates the assumption of power by the highest authority, otherwise known as the Varayoc, who receives (from their predecessor) a scepter that symbolizes power. The scepters, made of native wood, measure approximately 1 foot (approx. 0.3 meters) in length and have silver and gold inlays.
January 16	Lima's Foundation	Civil and cultural festivities attended by public officials and the general public commemorate the foundation of the city of Lima in 1535 by the Spanish Conqueror Francisco Pizarro. Common activities include art exhibitions, guided tours, night-time parades in the main square, open-air concerts, and fireworks.
January 20	Chiaraje	A war game, or pucllay, in which the peace-loving members of the community playfully battle to enhance the richness of the soil. Those who occupy the largest area of land and force the enemy to retreat win. The war game takes place on the Chiaraje Plains (15,416 feet/4,700 meters above sea level) in the Canas Province, which is accessible by road.
January 20 - February 2	National Marinera Contest	The National Marinera Contest, which is held in Trujillo, is a very dynamic dance with elegant moves and complex choreography. A couple flirt as they wave a white handkerchief in the air with their right hand, which is used to keep the pace. This dance is deeply rooted in the Peruvian region of La Libertad, and this is the reason why the contest—celebrated annually—has become one of the most important events in this region. Couples and institutions from all over the country participate in the contest. A queen is chosen, in addition to awarding prizes to the best couple and best typical dress. Many Peruvian and foreign tourists gather for this contest, as it is the best time to enjoy this beautiful dance.

February Varies by year	Loreto Carnival	Held in Iquitos, this is a popular festival where legend has it that demons tend to wander around. It consists of a street pageant, a parade in honor of the humisha—a palm tree that is decorated using various objects, food, and flags. People dance to rhythms and melodies provided by colorful folk musicians.
February 26- March 2	Huaraz Carnival	Festivities during this fun carnival include lively marches, street parades, the inauguration of the Ño Carnavalón figure, and a tree cutting ritual (known as yunza) performed in every neighborhood.
January 24- February 12	Feast of the Virgen de la Candelaria	Along the shores of Lake Titicaca, in the town of Puno, locals gather to celebrate the feast of the Virgen de la Candelaria. It lasts for two weeks and includes all sorts of spectacular costumes, dancing, and folk music.
First week of March	Adventure Sports Festival	Lunahuaná, located 75 miles (170 km) south of Lima (in Cañete Province), is a veritable paradise for adventure sports such as: whitewater rafting, parasailing, trekking, hang gliding, mountain biking, and fishing. This area is also one of the main wine producers in the region.
Second week of March	Wine Festival	La Fiesta de la Vendimia includes an entire program of traditional celebrations in the district of Surco. Events include trade fairs, dances, beauty pageants, and visits to wine cellars to taste the local varieties.
Late March/Early April	Easter Week	This religious festival is a core component of traditions in Peru. It includes several processions, the most important one being the Friday Procession, and that of the Resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday. It is a movable feast that sees the faithful visit their respective city's/town's churches to reaffirm their religious devotion.
Late March/Early April	Señor de los Temblores	Held in Cusco, this special Monday sees the worshipping of the Taitach Temblores (Lord of Earthquakes) effigy. This ceremony is an expression of Andean-Christian syncretism. The effigy is taken out in a procession from the Cathedral of Cusco, which was built on top of the temple of the Wiracocha God and is paraded around the streets of the city. The faithful throw ñucchu flowers, which, in ancient times, were used as an offering to the Inca gods but now symbolize the blood of Christ.
Late March/Early April	National Surfing Championship	This surfing event is celebrated every year in Chicama/Malabrigo. It is one of the main sporting events during Easter, as it attracts surfers from the different parts of Peru and abroad. This great surfing competition involves surfing one of the world's tallest waves. There are also longboard and bodyboard competitions.

Varies by year, typically mid-April	National El Paso Horse Tournament	This is a superb occasion to admire the Peruvian Paso Horse and its elegant gait—a simultaneous trot of fore- and hind-legs on the same side—directed by the chalán or rider. It is usually held at Mamacona over in Lima’s Lurin District.
April 29-May 2	The Virgin of Chapi	Crossing the desert on foot and traveling 28 miles/45 kilometers for approximately 15 hours from Arequipa, pilgrims make their way to the Sanctuary of Chapi. Followers pay homage to the image of “Our Lady of the Purification,” more intimately known as the Virgin of Chapi. In 1790, parishioners of Pocsi wanted to take the statue elsewhere, but it “suddenly” became so heavy, that it was impossible to move. During the main day of this event, the Virgin is carried out in procession over a carpet of flowers; and at night, next to the sanctuary, there are fireworks and various food vendors.
May 3	Fiesta de las Cruces	Held in Cusco and the surrounding areas, this is a ceremony in which the local communities decorate the cross of their respective churches and prepare them for a procession that takes them to the churches in neighboring communities. This celebration, held to commemorate and thank the pre-Hispanic gods for a bountiful harvest, also serves as the setting for folklore shows.
Varies by year, typically end of May or early June	Qoyllur Rití Pilgrimage	The largest indigenous festival in the Americas held in the valley of Sinakara, near Cusco. It consists of the mass pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Sinakara, on the day of the Holy Trinity. Onlookers will witness a massive group of villagers as they climb up the snow-capped Ausangate Mountain (20,867 feet/6,362 meters above sea level) in search of the Estrella de Nieve (Snow Star) that resides in large blocks of glacier ice, which will then be taken by the villagers and carried on their backs to their communities in order to irrigate their land.
May 3	Feast of the Lord of Solitude	Many people from the different nearby villages and communities go to Huaraz to celebrate the feast of the Lord of Solitude. The pilgrims are accompanied by a band of musicians playing quenenas (reed flutes) and drums as they lead the way. Competitions are also held in several adventure tourism categories, such as: mountain skiing, river rafting, hang gliding, and mountain biking. Cultural and social activities are also held.
May 23-27	Patronal Feast of Our Lady of las Mercedes	In Carhuaz, celebrations are held in honor of the Virgin with traditional processions, bands of musicians, bullfights, and fireworks.

May 5-15	Feast of Patron Saint Isidore, the Farmer	Moche, a Catholic and traditional town, gets in a festive mood each year to honor the Saint Patron of Agriculture. Through these celebrations, locals ask God for his grace and heavenly blessings for their fields. During the month of May, the Saint is taken around the countryside and welcomed by his followers with the harvested products. The day before this, an artistic cultural show and fireworks are held. On the main day, mass is held and then followed by a procession through the town's main streets which is accompanied by a band of musicians.
June 24	Inti Raymi	An Inca festival dedicated to the Sun god known as Inti Raymi. It is held at the beginning of the Winter Solstice. It is quite possibly one of the biggest and most important Andean indigenous events and, in the case of Cusco, it is held on the esplanade of the Sacsayhuaman fortress, where over 500 participants reenact the Sun worshipping ritual. The celebration begins with the arrival of the "Inca" actor at Sacsayhuaman who, after having been carried upon a throne from the Koricancha temple in Cusco, presides over the ceremony in his regal wardrobe until sunset.
Varies by year	The Corpus Christi	A Catholic Feast in honor of the Eucharist that dates all the way back to the colonial period. It is held in Cusco and follows the custom of parading the mummified remains of past Inca rulers. The pilgrimage is made 60 days after Easter Sunday, when the images of 15 saints and virgins from the various districts of Cusco arrive in procession at the Cathedral to "greet" the body of Christ, which is kept in a spectacular gold tabernacle weighing 57 pounds (26 kilograms) and measuring 4 feet (1.2 meters) tall.
June 21-27	Iquitos Tourism Week	Held in Iquitos, this week includes festivities that are celebrated along with the traditional (and regional) San Juan Festival. These festivities will often see typical music groups playing at the National Folkloric Handicrafts Fair, along with lively marches, contests, and other competitions.
Feast of Saint John the Baptist, the Patron Saint	June 24	This is a religious festival in honor of Saint John the Baptist, the Patron Saint, during which there are rural trips to the Community of San Juan that invite visitors to watch dances and various types of contests that are organized. During this festival, one can taste the juanes—a typical dish made of turmeric-spiced rice and pieces of chicken wrapped in bijao tree leaves.
Varies by year	Virgen del Carmen	Also known as the Mamacha Carmen Festival, it is an event that is held in Paucartambo and done in honor of the

		patron saint of the mestizos. The effigy of the Virgin is carried in a procession to bless those in attendance, these of which sing in Quechua to ward off demons. Attendees wear traditional Inca and colonial garb and perform gymnastics and daring maneuvers on the rooftops of houses. At the end of the procession, a “war” is waged against the demons, from which the faithful emerge triumphant.
July 12-30	Monsefu Typical Cultural Fair	This is a tourist-oriented festival that features a number of handcrafts that are put on display. They are made by the artists of Monsefu, who are experts in weaving macora straw and making fine cloths. Events held here also include local folklore as well as the presence of renowned artists.
July 26 - 30	Festival of the Sea	One of the main attractions of the seaside city of Huanchaco, which involves entertaining competitions in which fishermen demonstrate their skills and speed upon sailing aboard their caballitos de totora (small reed boats).
August 8-10	Santa Clara	Religious feast in honor of the patron of the hamlet of Santa Clara, located 9 miles (15 kilometers) from Iquitos. An effigy of the Virgin is taken out on procession to the riverbanks so that she can bless its waters. Agricultural products and handicrafts are on display and sold here during this time.
Fourth week of August	Cañete Week	The Semana de Cañete highlights the local cuisine, folk music, and dance that have been created in the town of San Vicente de Cañete—85 miles (135 kilometers) south of Lima—which is often regarded as the cradle of Afro-Peruvian culture. It is also a great time for adventure sports.
August 22 - 29	Chiclayo Tourism Week	Chiclayo holds civic, cultural, social, and recreational games and marinera festivals (a typical dance from the North of Peru) during this period. Handicrafts are sold as well as typical food.
August 30	Santa Rosa de Lima	Religious ceremonies are held in churches in downtown Lima and the highland town of Quives to remember the life and miracles of seventeenth-century saint Isabel Flores de Oliva, patron saint of the Americas and the Philippines. Santa Rosa dedicated her life to caring for the sick and reputedly worked miracles.
Typically, mid-August	Anniversary of Arequipa	A civil and religious festival, which is celebrated all week with different religious and artistic events to commemorate the founding of the city by the Spaniards, particularly on the day of the Virgin of Ascension.

September 29	Trujillo Paso Horse Contest	This contest is organized in Trujillo by the National Association of Peruvian Paso Horse Breeders and Owners. The show involves a breed of Spanish horse that has been crossed with a breed of Arab horse and then raised in the coastal deserts of Peru. Ultimately, this breeding technique has led to the creation of this rather special breed of Peruvian Paso Horse. For 300 years, the blood of this new Peruvian breed was tinkered with and refined until it finally developed the characteristics that have now made it the most beautiful of its kind in the world!
September 20-October 4	International Spring Festival	The coming of spring fills the people of Trujillo with joy and happiness. This is why they decorate their homes with flowers and hold a parade along with the participation of international beauty queens during this time.
October 4	Virgen del Rosario	In the districts of Urcos (in Quispichanchis Province), as well as Combate and Checaupe (province of Canchis), homage is paid to the patron saint of the town with processions, fairs, bullfights and wholesome pachamanca—meals prepared in shallow holes in the ground and cooked over hot stones.
December 1-8	Feast of the Virgin of the Door	During these days, the people Otuzco celebrate the “Day of the Day,” during which a famous image of the Virgin of the Door is lowered from her altar while the public prays and leaves offerings at her feet. Afterwards, thousands of followers hold a procession and celebrate in her honor.
December 5-8	La Purisima	Religious feast in honor of the Virgin of the Immaculada Concepción (Immaculate Conception), which is celebrated in the District of Puchana. During this brief period, the community participates in different cultural and folkloric activities
December 24	Santuranticuy (The Sale of Saints)	A festival dating back to the colonial period that is now ranked as one of the largest handicraft fairs in Peru. It is held every year in Cusco’s Main Square, where painters of religious images and artisans offer a wide range of Christmas figurines that are meant to be placed in nativity scenes found in homes and chapels throughout Cusco.