

Tourism Industry – Four Worlds of Ecuador

Ecuador is promoting itself as a country with four worlds: the Amazon, the Andes, the lowlands and the Galapagos Islands. It is said that travellers can experience four very different environments in one country, and this has helped attract tourists from around the globe. The four, very different, worlds have each benefited from different publicity campaigns and promotions. Even during a short trip, travellers can visit all four regions, experiencing everything from snowy peaks and humid rainforests to white sandy beaches. Visitors interested in culture also find Ecuador a perfect destination as there are some 27 different ethnic groups that co-exist in the country, many of which have little contact with modern civilisation. Ecuadorians are also willing to share their traditions and cultures with tourists.

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Sustainable tourism

In a press conference in December 2008 at the Explorers Club in New York, Ecuador announced that all of its future tourism projects will adopt a sustainable tourism approach. Being aware of the environment and its different communities is very important for Ecuador and also very important to travellers. Because of Ecuador's diversity, nature-based activities and accommodation have proven to be the country's best tourism product and because of this success, of all the Latin American nations, it has been Ecuador which has taken the initiative to lead eco-tourism and community-tourism developments. Some US\$75.7 million will be invested to introduce sustainable tourism practices, develop tourist facilities and improve infrastructure.

Spondylus Route

The Spondylus Route will be one of the key factors in the development and promotion of tourism in the region. The route will not only connect two countries (Ecuador and Peru), uniting customs, regions and cultures, but will also help connect the current communities of several provinces in Ecuador (Esmeraldas, Manabí, Santa Elena, Guayas, El Oro and Loja) as well as several in Peru (Lambayeque, Tumbes, Piura, Cajamarca and others).

The two main purposes of the Spondylus Route are to clearly indicate the main tourist attractions, joining them to become a homogeneous tourism product, and to enable easier access to the sites. The route is being presented as an alternative to the development of sustainable tourism.

(Extract from Euromonitor International's report "Travel and Tourism in Ecuador")

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