PASSPORT

Quito's Churches

ruta espiritual

Last Name

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Quito's Churches

1. The Cathedral (XVI)
2. San Francisco Church and Convent
3. San Agustin Convent and Church
4. Church of the Society of Jesus (XVII - XVIII)
5. Convent and Church of Santo Domingo
6. San Diego Convent and Church
7. Carmen Alto Monastery
8. Basilica of the National Vow
9. Santa Catalina de Siena (XVII)
10. Guapulo (XVII)

Religious Orders

1.535 - Franciscanos

1.541 - Dominicos

1.553 - Agustinos

1.586 - Jesuitas

1.887 - Oblatos

Visiting Rules And Recommendations

1. Passport will be sealed in the reception area of the visited religious museums after the visit. The Passport stamp is free of any charge and do not have any commercial value.

2. Please do not take tours or pictures during times of liturgical celebration.

3. Remember taking into account the restriction access rules of spaces and behaviours. Each of the religious orders raises these rules.

4. The works of art are fragile and susceptible to damage, so it is requested not to touch them.

5. It is prohibited to enter foods or drinks of any kind to churches and museums.

6. Please try to avoid generating any unwanted noise, loud talking on the phone, listening to music or running in the halls.

7. The photographic records and films should be done with prior authorization. Please explain the use of the material.

8. It is not allowed the entry of animals. Guide dogs accompanying blind people are the exception.

The Cathedral (XVI)

One of the oldest churches in Quito and South America. Its construction was finished in the XVI Century, and consists of three naves decorated with cedar. Several styles were used in the construction, including Roman with semi -ogival arches, Islamic in the ceilings, Baroque in the altar, and Neoclassic in the choirs and Episcopal stone chair. An very distinctive figure of an iron rooster is located in the church's dome. The church has a rich painting and sculpture collection representative of Quito School artists including Manuel Samaniego, Bernardo Rodríguez, Antonio Salas, Bernardo Legarda and Caspicara.

Location: Venezuela and Eugenio Espejo streets
Hours: Monday- Saturday: 9:00- 17:00; Sunday: Religious services
Cost: Adults: $1.50; children and seniors: $1.00

The Rooster in the Cathedral

Don Ramon went to the Plaza Grande every day, stood in front of the Cathedral's rooster and made fun of it by yelling " Nonsense rooster!". In the afternoon he drank wine with Mrs. Monica until it got dark and on his way back home in front of the Cathedral he used to yell "Roosters are worth nothing to me! Not even the Cathedral one!"

One night, he insulted the rooster and felt how a huge spur was tearing his legs and he fell to the ground wounded. The rooster was holding him down and wouldn't let him move. A voice said: "promise me you will never drink wine again!", "not even wine" he said. "Promise me you will never insult me again", " I won't even name you"- "Stand up and you better keep your promise"- "Thank you for your forgiveness rooster", Mr. Ramon said, and left limping as the rooster returned to its place.

People who lived during these time say Mr. Ramon never drank again and became a serious and responsible man.

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San Francisco Church and Convent

San Francisco is the largest religious architectural ensemble from the XVI century found in a historical downtown in Latin America. It's formed by the main church, the San Buenaventura and Cantuña chapels and the convent consisting of seven patios. It has a front plaza, a superior atrium and its façade pointing towards the horizon, similar to Spain's Escorial. The interior has a Baroque design. The decoration includes paintings from Miguel de Santiago and images of suns related to Inca culture. The main altar has the original sculpture of the "Virgin of Quito" by Bernardo Legarda, the only image of a Virgin Mary with wings, which served as inspiration for the Panecillo Virgin.

Location: 477 Cuenca Street and Sucre
Hours: Monday - Saturday: 9:00- 13:00. Open on holidays
Cost: Adults and college students: $2.00; students, handicapped and seniors: $1.00

The Cantuña Legend - San Francisco Church

Once upon a time, there was a stonecutter native from Quito, whose last name was Cantuña. He had made a commitment with the San Franciscan order to make the church's parapet and bleachers on a determined timeframe. The construction as moving forward but not at the required pace. Realizing he could lose the contract for not meeting the deadline, on the due date he decided to sell his soul to the devil in exchange for his help finishing the project at midnight. The agreement was signed with blood. According to the contract, if the devil finished the construction, he would own Cantuñas' soul, but if he didn't meet the deadline, Cantuña would be free of the pact. The devil forgot to put a stone and Cantuña was saved. The gap is still visible today.

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San Agustin Convent and Church

Built on the XVI and XVII Centuries by the Spanish Augustinians priests, the construction of the church and the convent was finished in 1650. Its tower, on one side, has five bodies and is the widest in Quito. The church's interior has three naves of Gothic floorplans and the arches of the central nave are semicircular, which reflect an Arab influence in the Latin American architecture. There are paintings of San Miguel de Santiago portraying San Agustin's life on the chapter house located on the eastern corridor, where the Declaration of Independence was signed on August 16, 1809.

Location: Guayaquil and Chile streets.
Hours: Monday - Friday: 9:00 to 12:30 and 14:00 to 17:00; Saturdays: 9:00 - 12:30
Cost: Adults: $2.00 Children 6 years and older: $0.50; College students and seniors: $1.00

Saint Agustin's Cucurucho (masked man) - San Augustin Church

Mrs. Magdalena and Mr. Pedro fell in love and her parents forbid them to see each other. Pedro, anxious of gaining a name and fortune, departed to unknown lands. After a short period of time, there were rumors about his death. Mateo de León proposed to Mrs. Magdalena, and her parents accepted.

On the wedding day, it was traditional for the bride to hand out alms to the poor people who visited her house. That afternoon a masked man (called cucuruchos) showed up at her house and Mrs. Magdalena took out a coin, when she approached the homeless man he stabbed her on the chest and killed her. The homeless man dressed as a cucurucho was Mr. Pedro; they recognized him and were imprisoned.

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Church of the Society of Jesus (XVII - XVIII)

As one the richest churches in architecture and art in the Americas, its construction started during the XVII century and ended on the XVIII. Its extraordinary facade, carved in stone, has six solomonic columns, which are a replica of the ones made by Bernini in the Vatican. The splendor presented in its interiors is dazzling as its walls and ceilings are decorated with beautiful altarpieces, stands, and a pulpit covered with gold leaf. Its magnificent carves exhibit foliage, grapes, birds, and faces. At the altarpiece stands lithography of Our Lady of Sorrows as a reminder of the 1906 prodigy.

Location: García Moreno and Sucre Streets.
Hours: Monday -Friday: 9:30 to 18:30; Fridays: 9:30 - 17:30; Saturdays and holidays: 9:30 - 16:15, Sundays: 12:30 - 16:15
Cost: Foreign adult and senior citizens: $4.00; foreign students: $2.00; National adults: $2.00; national students: $0.50; national college students: $1.00; Children under 11, national senior citizens and handicapped: free entrance.

Our Lady of Sorrows

On the night of April 20, 1906 at the old San Gabriel School building-located at Quito's Historic Center-an event took place that changed the life of the students. It was Easter vacations and students were having dinner at 8 o'clock. On the right wall next to the table, there was lithography of Our Lady of Sorrows. Hermann, who was a student, was shocked when he saw the virgin's eyelids moving. At the beginning, he thought he was imagining it. However, Chavez, another student, saw the virgin and yelled "look at the virgin!." Both were amazed that the image was opening and closing her eyes like a live person. The phenomenon lasted for about 15 minutes.

Since then, students from the San Gabriel and Jesuit schools in Ecuador profess a special devotion to the Our Lady of Sorrows. Her presence and protection manifest among these young students with an intensity that transcends their school years and extends through their entire lives.

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Convent and Church of Santo Domingo

Built during the XVI century, it's considered one of the most important religious buildings in Quito. The temple is made of a single nave with deep chapels on the sides, standing out the chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary, which was a gift from King Carlos V to the city. It has a Mudejar style satin ceiling that decorates the paintings. This building has a museum full of extraordinary works, in which the ones allusive to the martyrs of the Santo Domingo order stand out. Additionally, pictorial works from Diego de Robles and Fray Pedro Bedón can be admired. The latter one is considered a pioneer of Quito's School of Art.

Location: Montufar Street between Rocafuerte and Pereira.
Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 to 13:30 and 14:30 to 17:00; Saturdays 9:00 to 14:00
Cost: Foreigners: $3.00; Adults: $2.00; College and high school students (Foreigners): $1.50; College and high school students (Nationals): $1:00

Our Lady of the Staircase

An illustrious work from priest Bedón, its structure is based on the genealogical tree of the Dominican Order with Our Lady of the Rosary as the main pillar. Santo Domingo de Guzmán is the roots from where it is born, and the branches as the saints that have given prestige to the Order. It is not only the first and real Marian dedication born in Quito, but when painted directly on the wall, it takes the name from where it was originally located, the stairs of the Convent of the Dominicos.

The town's love, faith, and tradition did not allow it to vanish through history. It was the right combination to defend it by removing it from its original place and relocating it in another chapel since the liberal governments from the XX century demolished the convent's corner for the Great Exposition of 1900. Throughout the years a chapel was enabled next to the Santo Domingo church, where it is admired by devotees and tourists.

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San Diego Convent and Church

San Diego conserves the solidity of its walls and stone columns that date back to the end of the XVI and beginning of the XVII centuries. The convent was former house of the Franciscans. Among the pieces of great interests there is a pulpit, the image of Our Lady of Chiquinquirá, and the crucifix that the bohemian priest Almeida used during his night serenades. Its walls contain precious paintings with allegories of the Passion of Christ, the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and the life of chastity and poverty of saints such as Francis of Asis and San Diego of Acalá, the convent's patron.

Location: 117 Calicuchima Street and Francisco Farfán (next to the San Diego cemetery)
Hours: Monday - Saturday and holidays: 10:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 17:00; Sundays: 10:00 to 14:00 (Saturdays and Sundays there's no access to the church)
Cost: Nationals and Foreign adults: $2.00; college and high school students (with ID) , handicapped and senior citizens: $1.00

The legend of Father Almeida- Church, Recollect of San Diego

Manuel de Almeida entered the Franciscan order at the age of 17. He gave all his belongings to his mother and sister. The confinement and the prayers did little to overcome his young impulses. Temptation soon called his room when some ladies offered to share their attributes. He used to leave the San Diego convent jumping through a window and he would climb up on an image of the crucified Christ. One night, he heard the voice of Christ saying "Until when, Father Almeida?" and he replied "until I return Lord!" This scene was repeated several times until one time; Father Almeida decided to return to his life of confinement. The legend says he ended his days as a pious and holly priest.

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Carmen Alto Monastery

Expressionist realism, Quito's baroque, and Manierism styles stand out at the Carmen Alto of Quito marterpieces. Some of the permanent collection includes pieces from Bernardo Rodriguez (XVIII century), Victor Mideros and from Luis Ruiz from the XX century. The first Carmelite sisters arrived in from Lima to Quito on the XVIII century after a difficult four month trip. February 4, 1653, was commemorated as the day Carmen Alto of Quito was founded, where the old house of Santa Mariana de Jesus is located.

Location: García Moreno and Vicente Rocafuerte streets by the Queens Arch
Hours: Wednesday - Sunday: 9:30 to 17:30
Cost: Adults: $3.00; tudents with ID: $2.00; children and seniors: $1.00; tours in English: $4,00; Handicapped and infants: Free

Mariana de Jesús

The Monastery of Carmen Alto was the home of Mariana de Jesús Paredes, who was born in Quito in October 31, 1618. Without getting into any religious Order, she consecrated to pray and to penance by her own reaching unexpected limits. She is called the "Lily of Quito." As a result of her sickness, she had a bleeding and the maid threw the blood in a pot and a lily was born. When she was 26 years old, earthquakes and pests threatened Quito. A Jesuit priest said in a sermon: "God, I offer you my life in exchange to end the earthquakes." Mariana exclaimed: "No, Lord, the life of this priest is necessary to save many souls. Instead I offer you my life to cease earthquakes." God took her word and Mariana died on May 26, 1645.

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Basilica of the National Vow

It is one of the most important architectural works in the country, its construction started at the beginning of the XIX century by French architect Emilio Tayller. Inspired by Neo-gothic style it composed by a main nave and two laterals adorned with big stained glasses. The structure is ornamented with warheads, naves, buttresses, and crests, a traditional architecture from the French gothic era. The mystical animals, or gargoyles, were replaced by fauna found in the country. Pieces that represent the Ecuadorian flora were incorporated to anchor the stained glasses and the saints' images were substituted for ecclesiastical Latin-American personalities. The entire architectonic structure was finished in 1924. However, it still has unfinished spaces.

Location: Between the García Moreno, Carchi and Venezuela streets
Hours: Monday – Friday: 7:00 to 19:00; Saturday and Sunday: 7:00 to 19:00
Cost: Foreigners: $2.00; Nationals: $2.00; Access to the towers: $2.00 (foreigners), $1. 00 (nationals)

Basilica of the National Vow

The Tower of the Condors is one of the most distinctive traits of the church, and it's located at 115 meters from the ground. Instead of gargoyles, this tower has condors, Ecuador's bird symbol. What makes it different is that the temple's gargoyles do not represent mythological animals representative to the gothic style; instead they're endemic animals from the Ecuadorian fauna, such as alligators, the Galápagos turtles, blue leg boobies, armadillos, howler monkeys and pumas.

The Basílica, for both Ecuadorians and foreigners, has always been related to myths, legends, and stories including the idea that:

If the BWhen the Basilica is finally finished, the world will end

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Santa Catalina de Siena (XVII)

The church's construction started at the beginning of the XVI century, on a longitudinal direction, north-south. The main entrance is through the Espejo Street. It has an Eclectic-Neoclassic style, with added elements as a result of multiple restorations and interventions. The facade has Tuscan columns that serve as frames the sides of the wood door with trimmings in high relief and, at the same time, erected on a mid-point arch.

What used to the be Allac□Huasi or the Virgins of the Sun Temple during the Incas, in the Hispanic era became the house of Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, brother of Santa Teresa de Avila and since the XVII the home of the Contemplative Nuns of Santo Domingo.

Location: 779 Espejo Street and Flores (Historical Center)
Hours: Monday - Friday: 9:00 to 17:00; Saturdays: 9:00 to 12:00
Cost: Nationals and adult foreigners: $2.50; Students: $1.00; Handicapped and senior citizens: $0.60

The Miraculous Bench- Santa Catalina de Siena Monastery

Sor Catalina de Jesús Herrera's bench is considered a miraculous object by her devotees. She showed so much dedication to God and fervor through her life that she became famous among her colleagues at the monastery.

After her death, a bench was left in her room as part of the furniture and without anyone knowing it gained popularity because of its miracles. Today, this popularity has attracted devotees from different provinces, especially women and couples who suffer infertility. Every day, people go sit and pray on the famous bench, including women who want to get pregnant and people who suffer diseases with no cure. This bench has become part of the Quito faith and many foreigners visit it searching for miracles.

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Guapulo (XVII)

Its construction dates back to the XVII century. It was the first Marian sanctuary. The great nave shows almost no ornamentation or decoration. It only holds a geometric highlight and frieze that runs along the walls. The facade has a simple neoclassic style, with an original bulrush of two overlapping bodies. Inside of the church you will find paintings from Miguel de Santiago and the sculpture of Our Lady of Guadalupe by Diego Robles. The pulpit is an a masterpiece from the native sculptor Menacho and its considered as one of the most beautiful in the Americas.

Location: El Calvario N-27-138 and Leonidas Plaza (down the De los Conquistadores Avenue)
Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:00 to 12:00 and from 14:00 to 17:30.
Cost: Adults: $1.50; seniors: $1.00 and children $0.50.

Our Lady of Guapulo's Miracle

Through his third collection on studio "The Mirales of Our Lady of Guapulo", artist Manuel de Santiago portrays through votive paintings the death and miracle that happened in Quito. On the other hand, the episcopate used Our Lady of the Guapulo as an ambitious plan to consolidate a space of pilgrimage around the Virgin. At the Guapulo's series, the painter portrayed the miracles experienced by the indigenous population. In one of the twelve paintings, he portrays the miracle of the "devilish indian," who died in 1646 at mass in front of Bishop Agustín Duarte and President Martín de Arriola. After the religious service ended, the Indian woman woke up safe and sound.

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• These churches are outside the historic center

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