



Globility **Global Traveler**

globaltravelerusa.com | \$4.99 April 2020

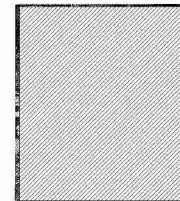
THE GREEN ISSUE

Singapore balances priorities as it forges a sustainable future. p. 48

- BORNEO p. 70
- CAPE TOWN p.56
- COPENHAGEN p.60
- FIJI p.72
- HALIFAX p. 62
- MADEIRA p.64
- MONTEVIDEO p.68
- QUITO p.58
- SAN FRANCISCO p.54



This issue is printed on recycled paper.



9-5 | QUITO



Urban Agenda

Enjoy Quito’s new subway, sustainable architecture and year-round equatorial sunshine. BY RON BERNTHAL

FOUNDED IN 1534, QUITO sits at almost 10,000 feet, making it the second-highest capital city in the world. Located just 14 miles south of the equator, the city enjoys a spring-like climate year-round, from the cool 50s at night to the low 80s during the day. With a consistent 12 hours of daylight, Quito is, literally, one of the greenest cities in the world.

Quito’s unique geography provides visitors with a spectacular wall of snow-capped Andes Mountains and volcanoes just beyond the skyline as well as flower gardens and palm trees. In 1978 Quito’s cobblestoned, 16th-century Old Town, one of the best-preserved colonial-era districts in South America, became UNESCO’s first World Heritage site.

Business travelers can start the day with an early-morning swim or workout at Zumay Health Club at the 5-star JW Marriott Hotel, followed by breakfast at the hotel’s Bistro Latino, featuring a buffet along with healthy fruit and juices. A popular downtown meetings venue for Ecuadorian and multinational businesses since opening in 1999, the strikingly modern hotel offers more than 30 event venues.

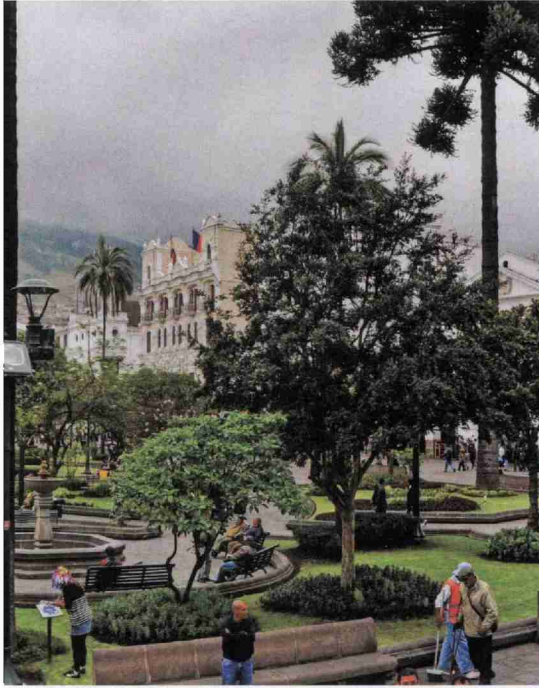
Numerous off-site venues provide a different ambience. English is widely spoken at business hotels, but at venues like museums and art galleries in Old Town or at wineries

and flower farms in the countryside, non-Spanish speakers may find it difficult to arrange meeting spaces. Contact a local tour operator like Link-Experiences, with connections throughout the city, prior to your visit.

Getting around Quito by taxi is easy, but account for traffic congestion between destinations. The new Quito Metro, opening this year, will ease that burden considerably and help make the air cleaner. Local environmentalists are thrilled the new Metro will stretch 14 miles through the business center and suburbs, offering 15 new stations, including one in Old Town. Operating 5:30 a.m.–11:30 p.m., the Metro will allow visitors and Quiteños to travel around the city faster and more efficiently.

“This is a pivotal moment for the city,” said Felipe Correa, editor, *A Line in the Andes*, a book about Quito’s urban transformation. “Quito is a linear city, north-south, along a narrow and elongated valley with mountains on either side, so there are very few cities that can actually build a subway from scratch in such a consolidated urban area.”

In 2013, to make room for the Metro and other projects, the city moved its airport from city center to a location 11 miles from downtown. The new, green Mariscal Sucre International Airport boasts one of the longest runways in Latin America and earned South America’s Leading Airport at the World Travel Awards. It strives to maintain its high scores in the global Airport Carbon Accreditation program and also instituted a rainwater management program and



works to maintain the biodiversity of the area. The city repurposed the 300 acres around the former airport into a city playground called Bicentennial Park, offering bicycling on the old runway.

The Eugenio Espejo Convention Center provides another example of repurposing, as the building once served as an important hospital center. After a remarkable architectural restoration in 2008, the center opened with enough meeting and exhibition space to host Ecuador's largest conventions.

Quito took advantage of the more affordable e-buses coming into the market by electrifying two major bus corridors, purchasing about 120 e-buses and installing dozens of charging stations. Ecuador is only the second South American country to adopt sustainable electric mass transit. Such projects increased since Quito hosted Habitat III, a United Nations conference, in 2016. Some 30,000 delegates attended discussions among world environmental leaders about making cities sustainable, resulting in the Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements.

For a small group lunch with business associates, reserve a table at Café Plaza Grande in the Hotel Plaza Grande, a boutique property adjacent to Old Town's main square, home to the historic Carondelet Palace, Cathedral of Quito, the Archbishop's Palace and the Municipal Palace. The café serves fresh fish, pork, steak, seafood salads and Ecuadorian specialties, including *loco de papas* (potato soup).

Around 5 p.m., an hour before sunset, get a table at Rooftop

Bar & Terrace at Casa Gangotena, a restored Neoclassical mansion converted into a 33-room boutique hotel on Plaza San Francisco. While enjoying the Old Town view, order a locally produced gin like the quadruple-distilled Amaranito. Or try the non-alcoholic *agua de frescos*, also called *horchata*, a vivid pink infusion of plants and herbs traditionally served to refresh visitors arriving in Quito.

Quito's environmentally ambitious city plans also include green architecture. Quito-based Uribe & Schwarzkopf will open the IQON residential tower in 2021, designed by the Danish firm BIG. The 33-story structure of concrete apartment "boxes" features terraces planted with native trees, with a hollow wall underneath to hold the roots. The entire façade becomes a vertical display of Quito's biodiversity, and the building will act as an urban tree farm, as the trees will be replanted in city parks once they outgrow the terraces, in about five years.

EPIQ, a 24-story curved tower also by BIG, will open in 2022 with sustainable features such as a gray water treatment plant for reusing rainwater and a materials bank to reuse and recycle construction materials. It will sit next to a large park close to a new Metro station.

Global architects Moshe Safdie, Jean Nouvel, Philippe Starck, Leppanen Anker, Marcel Wanders and Carlos Zapata also launched projects that will greatly enhance Quito's green and innovative urban environment.

NATURAL APPROACH:
 (Left to right) Plaza Grande in Old Town, IQON terraces, and the JW Marriott Quito lobby

PHOTOS: © QUITO TOURISMO, © BIG BJARKE INGEL'S GROUP, © JW MARRIOTT

Stroll down La Ronda, a pedestrian street where flowers and flags decorate the balconies.