

# My Travel-Report:

ECLUADOR vom 06.07.2003 bis 07.08.03

I travelled again as a backpacker 4 weeks accompanied by my son Lennart through the Andeans of the highlands of Ecuador, into the jungle of the Amazon and after that to the white-sand beaches at the Pacific Coast.

When we arrived in the capital city Quito, we visited the old town with its colonial charm and went there twice to see the colourful illumination at night of the Palacio de Gobierno and the Cathedral. The market for Saquisilí in the South and of Otavalo in the North of Quito determined our timetable. By bus we went to Latacunga, and from there we went on an excursion to the second highest Ecuadorian peak (5897 m), snow-capped the whole year through – Cotopaxi.

Fortunately we didn't climb up to the summit, because I really felt the altitude of climbing up the hut 4.500 m high.

From there the snow and ice begins. After that we had the possibility to sprawl over the Thursday-morning market of Saquisilí with the small people wearing the dark hat and the red and sometimes green ponchos typical for the Otavalo Indians.

We preferred the Saturday market in Otavalo perhaps because it looks more prosperous. These markets are not only at one place they are spread all over town and in different streets. Therefore you can spend quite some time walking around.

Now it was time to go via Quito to Coca at the Oriente, an 11-hour bus-drive. The bus driver seemed to be unwilling to take us all the way and kicked us as the last two passengers out in the stop before Coca. Fortunately we went to the bus-company where we got the money back for the last three-hour drive to Coca.

The journey over the highland to the jungle changed from green hills to rough mountains with a lot of waterfalls. The water is a challenge for the people damaging the roads. It's fascinating how people changed the nature to make their life more comfortable and progressive.

The boat-trip down the Rio Napo and the 2 days in the jungle will be unforgettable for us.

The guides we had at the Yarina Loge were very friendly and gave us a lot of information about the plants and their medical effects and took us out every night to see caimans, sparkling mushrooms and fireflies.

Got up at 5.30 am to see the sunrise, but instead we saw the Tucan-bird with the long, yellow beak and the clouds between the trees of the jungle as well as on the way back to the Lodge a monkey family. Back in the highlands of the Andean at Baños, Lennart got diarrhea and one day later the same happened to me. Therefore I couldn't enjoy the famous railroad from Riobamba to Simbaba constructed 1840 under big effort. The rails go zig-zag and the train for- and backwards. You can sit on top of the train seeing `The Devils Nose` and at the bottom the river with the real black water.

Across the highlands with unsealed roads we arrived at Montañita, a small town famous for the good waves, with colourful houses built with bamboo, paintings and hammocks - overall a good place to chill-out, although we missed the sun, the blue sky and the warm air. After a night where we had prepared dinner for 12 persons and afterwards chilling-out at the beach with a fire, bamboo-hut, Salsa, Meringue, rum and vodka, we went by bus to Puerto López.

We watched the buckle whales the next day, jumping out of the water or showing us the big back-fin.

Walked afterwards with a guide over the small Island `de la Plata`, getting a taste of the Galapagos Islands, saw the frigate birds, the blue footed boobies and pelicans.

To visit all this we had to pay a 20 US \$ entrance fee, valid for 5 days. Back in Montañita, Lennart was surfing although the sky was grey and the water too cold without a wetsuit.

Went up the coast to the north, stayed 3 days in a small town called Canoa, direct at the beach also with good waves.

Unfortunately Lennart again had diarea so that he couldn't surf the waves as he would have liked to. On the way back to Quito we saw a lot of "Haciendas" with the banana plantations and spectacular scenery in the mountains. At Quito we did our last

shopping and thought of the 30 days we had in Ecuador.

The Ecuadorian people we met were very friendly. We didn't like the food, especially why we had problems with our stomachs, other tourist had the same problem. There is a lot of trash and waste to be seen and the hygiene is not at its best. The Ecuadorian people told us that there are a lot of poor people in the country and quite often children have to die because of no food. The politicians are corrupt and I never saw so many security guards in the streets, in the entrance of shops, hotels, banks, and restaurants. We were disappointed about the weather, especially at the Pacific Ocean. For that it may be better to visit the country around January. I enjoyed travelling together with my son, made it a lot easier and with a lot more fun. Ecuador is a country where you've nearly everything: The Ocean, the Andean. The Oriente – Amazons. And because it's a small country you can see all this in a really short time.