

Ecuador History

Ecuador is a country in northwestern South America, bordered by Colombia on the north, Peru on the east and south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Ecuador also includes the Galápagos Islands in the Pacific, about 620 miles west of the mainland. The capital city is Quito, which is also its largest city.

The territories of modern-day Ecuador were once home to a variety of Amerindian groups that were gradually incorporated into the Inca Empire during the 15th century. The territory was colonized by Spain during the 16th century, achieving independence in 1820 as part of Gran Colombia, from which it emerged as its own sovereign state in 1830. The legacy of both empires is reflected in Ecuador's ethnically diverse population, with most of its 17.1 million people being mestizos, followed by large minorities of European, Amerindian, and African descendants. Spanish is the official language and is spoken by a majority of the population, though 13 Amerindian languages are also recognized.



The sovereign state of Ecuador is a middle-income representative democratic republic with a developing economy that is highly dependent on commodities, namely petroleum and agricultural products. It is governed as a democratic presidential republic. One of 18 megadiverse countries in the world, Ecuador hosts many endemic plants and animals, such as those of the Galápagos Islands. In recognition of its unique ecological heritage, the new constitution of 2008 is the first in the world to recognize legally enforceable Rights of Nature, or ecosystem rights.



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