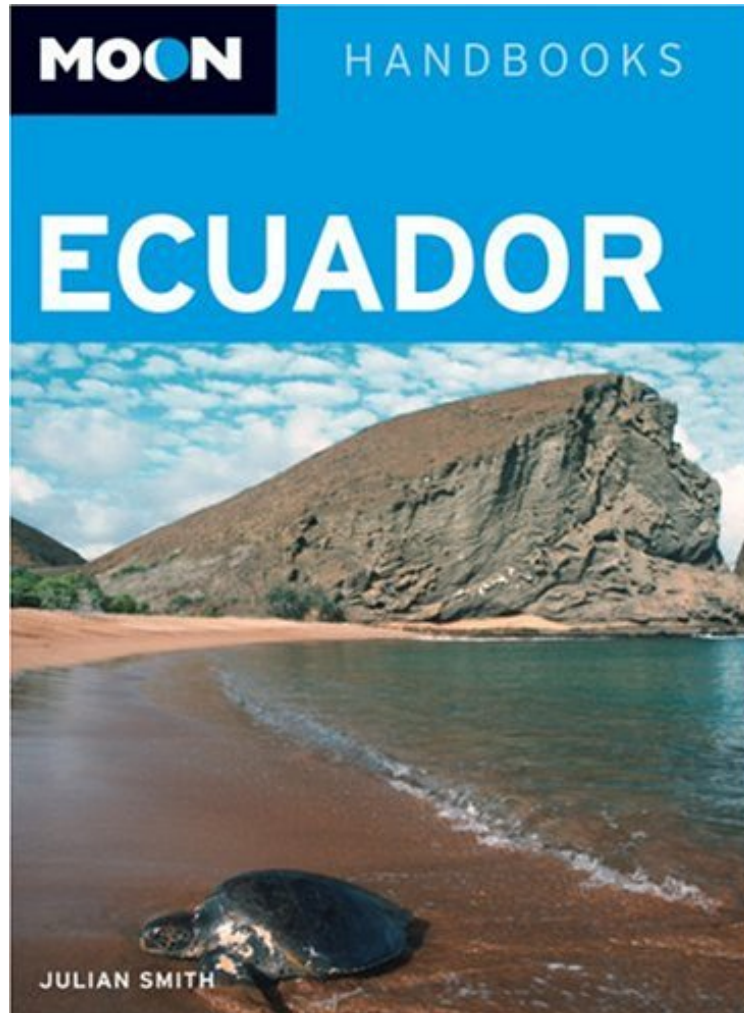


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## Moon Handbooks Ecuador: Including the Galpagos Islands

*Julian Smith*

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**Julian Smith : Moon Handbooks Ecuador: Including the Galpagos Islands** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moon Handbooks Ecuador: Including the Galpagos Islands:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Good overview but get something else to planBy Anne-LiseI first bought this book a couple of months ago and was really pleased at first. It seemed to give good information on a variety of areas and gave recommendations of things to do that were probably off of the beaten path. Based on the book I drew up a list of the places in Ecuador that I would like to visit and laid the book down for a little bit until I had firmed up my plans some more.On picking up the book again I started to see some of the glaring errors I had missed in my first reading. There are very few maps of the cities that are spoken of in the book so it doesn't really do you any good to know an address if you have no idea where in the city it is. When there is a map it will label all of the things mentioned in that section on that map. When you're talking about Quito or Cuenca or even significantly smaller cities

you have to search the entire map to find the name of a hotel or museum. It would have been so much easier if there was a key to the map where all the locations were given numbers and you could say that Hostal Maria is #5 which is located in square B-3. This guidebook also wasn't very helpful in planning because it wouldn't give very much information on the transportation section. You could be in a section on the southern coast and it will say that the bus takes 11 hours to Quito. Well, what about Guayaquil or other closer cities of importance? Also, how frequent are the buses? Is it once a day or do they leave every couple of hours? Very few travelers are going to keep going to the capital in between cities. Rather they will probably be making a circuit and it's really necessary to know how long it is between cities in a region. In addition it will mention towns that are major transportation hubs (like Jipijappa) but doesn't give any additional information like travel times to various places, accommodations if you need stay the night, etc. One last pet peeve was that frequently they would mention a hotel or a restaurant and just give the name of the place with no address or phone number. Having said all of this the Moon guide was informative about various places and it was nice that it included pictures in the text, though as usual, more would have been nice. I had bought the Lonely Planet Peru and found it far more helpful in planning for that country. Unfortunately, however, the LP for Ecuador hasn't been updated since Ecuador switched its currency. Oh well.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Moneyline-1 Great info.. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Moon Over Ecuador  
By Robert L. Simpson Very informative and as I have used Moon publications before I knew exactly where to go for the things I needed to look at. The index helps finds things faster if you are not quite sure, or even if you know the exact subject matter. It goes in the suitcase first!

From horseback riding between ancient haciendas in the Andes and cruising around the Galapagos Islands to relaxing in a mellow coastal beach town, Moon Handbooks Ecuador is the guide to the best the country has to offer, both on and off the beaten path. Practical information includes suggested travel strategies and lists of must-see sights, plus essentials on dining, transportation, and accommodations for a range of budgets. Complete with details for exploring the colonial architecture of Quito's Old Town, climbing volcanoes, and hiking, biking, and rafting information, Moon Handbooks Ecuador gives travelers the tools they need to create a more personal and memorable experience.

From the Back Cover  
PACIFIC, ANDES, AMAZON Hidden beaches, snowcapped peaks, lush rainforest: veteran South America adventurer Julian Smith guides you to the very best of Ecuador and its Galapagos Islands, with: Descriptions of outdoor adventures, including backpacking, kayaking, and mountain-climbing, and details on navigating the infamous Nariz del Diablo on the roof of a train Discerning reviews of hotels and restaurants for every budget, from luxury rainforest lodges to getting by on US\$10 a day Extensive coverage of the world-famous Galapagos Islands, including hints on finding the right tour and where to swim with sea lions 44 detailed maps  
About the Author Julian Smith has been writing since he could read and traveling since his first trip to Cape Cod with his parents as a child. A pre-college summer in Brazil sparked a love affair with (and in) Latin America, fueled by a stint studying the cloud forests of Costa Rica. Within days of receiving a B.A. in Biology from the University of Virginia, he found himself hopelessly entangled in a self-publishing venture that resulted nine months later in the one-pound, eight-ounce *On Your Own in El Salvador*, the first in-depth guide to the country. He's also the author of Moon's upcoming *Virginia Handbook*. In addition to backpacking through much of South America, Julian has ranged as far as Greece, Scotland, and the top of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, but tragic twin addictions to *Gobstoppers* and *The Simpsons* always drag him back home eventually. He currently resides in the sublime desert southwest, where Albuquerque is a perfect base for hiking, mountain biking, camping, snowboarding, and rock climbing. On off days you'll find him buried in a book, baking bread, or playing funk guitar.

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SAQUISIL'S THURSDAY MORNING MARKET Cotopaxi gleams in the early morning sun as vendors labor to set up one of the most economically important and authentic markets in the country. This one isn't oriented to tourists: the atmosphere here is strictly business, and almost everything for sale serves some utilitarian purpose, from crates of chickens to homemade shotguns, shoes to leeks. Buses from Latacunga drop shoppers in the Plaza Condordia, where racks of tools and mountains of neon-colored yarn line the square. Grab a 20-cent pan dulce (cornbread, Andean-style) and head in just about any direction. The entire city, in effect, becomes one big market on market day. Although most of the major buying and selling takes place in one of eight plazas, every street seems to have its own particular offering--some of which earn a double take. On one you'll find car radios dangling wires; head down a block and over for the fried pig heads. While chickens are confined to the food market, along with the roosters, rabbits, and guinea pigs, pullets are sold in a different street altogether. Tinny loudspeakers trumpet miracle herbal cures for everything from diarrhea to gonorrhea, as ragged old men shuffle by with crates of goods secured on their backs by rough lines tied around the shoulders. Past the food market, with its haggling crowds and pots stewing over smoking coal fires, you'll eventually reach the large metal roof shading the textile market. Otavalan weavers display sweaters and tapestries, and garish wooden festival masks from Cotopaxi province glare off racks in the form of dogs, monkeys, and clowns. To one side sits an elderly row of tailors, each pumping the treadle of an antique Singer sewing machine. More than a few tables are covered with the intricate, colorful paintings from the Tigua valley to the

southeast. The real treat, though, waits about a kilometer out of town. Follow the pig squeals down a dusty lane to the animal market, where creatures of every description are bought, sold, and bartered. This market is also divided into sections: placid, dreadlocked llamas cluster with cloud-fleeced alpacas near the entrance, while cows, sheep, and horses congregate toward the back. Some women resemble strange parodies of New York City dogwalkers, with dozens of piglets on strings milling around their ankles. Occasionally someone screams, but no one turns to look--it's just a huge hog being loaded into the back of a truck by a group of sweating, swearing farmers. Aside from the few tourists with cameras, this scene in the blowing dust and harsh equatorial sun seems plucked out of time.