



ORGANIZACION DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS  
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17th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20006  
AUDIO VISUAL PROGRAM

85 ECUADOR: Handicrafts, Ambato views

Modern Ecuador has a rich and varied cultural heritage derived from prehistoric Indian civilizations, the art and architecture of Spain's Golden Age transplanted to the colony in the seventeenth century, and the literary and artistic achievements of the colonial and republican periods. Today, the nation's cultural tradition is carried on by a new generation of creative artists and writers, educators and scientists.

#### Pre-Columbian Culture

From Indian burial mounds and ruins in the Andean highlands and along the coast, archeologists have uncovered pottery, jewelry, and stone objects which resemble the culture of pre-Incaic civilizations. The Spanish conquest destroyed all but a few of the Inca fortresses and temples. The most impressive Ecuadorean example of stone masonry, for which the Incas were famous, is the ruin of the citadel of Ingapirca on the cold Andean plateau of Cañar Province. In the villages of Chrodeleg and Sigsig, not far from Cuenca, archaeologists have uncovered golden crowns and breastplates, and goldbanded weapons. Near La Tola in the north, golden artifacts, molded figurines, bowls, stone axes, and other relics have been uncovered in burial mounds, or tolas, left by a prehistoric Indian civilization which attained a high degree of culture.

#### The Ecuadorean People

Ecuador's present-day population represents a rich mosaic of different racial and cultural elements, composed principally of descendents of the once mighty Incas and their Spanish conquerors. In addition to the white population and a substantial mestizo class, Ecuador has some of the most interesting Indian tribes and communities of South America: the resourceful Otavalos of the Andean highlands who excel in arts and crafts; the docile Colorados of the western jungle who are diminishing in number; the primitive Jivaros of the isolated Oriente; and the Aucas, who are as much a mystery to other Ecuadoreans as to the outside world.

The large Negro population of the city of Esmeraldas is descended from Negro slaves who, in the sixteenth century, successfully fought for their freedom against both Indians and whites and created a small independent Negro empire under the leadership of two men who escaped from a slave ship in 1533.

Geography and climate have been as influential as race in molding the temperament and personality of the people and there is no such thing as a typical Ecuadorean. The osteños (people of the coast) are quite different in make-up from the serranos of the highlands. The country's Andean capital Quito and its citizens, the Quiteños, seem to belong to a different world from tropical Guayaquil and the gay and bustling Guayaquileños. Friendliness and hospitality are typical of Ecuadoreans of all sections of the country. Ecuador's modern progress has not eliminated the traditional mode of gracious, leisurely living nor the religious and regional fiestas which still play an important role in the Ecuadorean culture.

museum of modern art of latin america



85 ECUADOR Handicrafts. Ambato views

- 85A Aerial view of Ambato
- 85B Downtown, Ambato
- 85C Farming north of Ambato
- 85D Pushing a passenger boat away from port (Esmeraldas Bay)
- 85E Pottery making
- 85F Embroidery work
- 85G Young girls learn embroidery work
- 85H Girl making a poncho
- 85I Painting doll house-type furniture
- 85J Ecuadorian girl displaying gold jewelry

Photographs by William H. Behr

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