

History and Archeology of San Jorge Eco-Lodge and Botanical Reserve

Quito, Ecuador's capital, and the Andean highland have a strong presence throughout Ecuador's history. Hostería San Jorge Eco-Lodge and Botanical Reserve in Quito is located in this area that has seen political, economic, and social innovations and changes crucial to the development of Ecuador.

Here are explanations of some of the critical cultures and people of the Andes, Quito, and Ecuador, without which Hostería San Jorge would be just another hotel. From early tribes to the Spanish Conquistadors, these explanations help you understand a little more about Ecuadorian culture.

Early Tribes and Incan Empire of Ecuador

Cotocollao Tribe

The first known group to become sedentary was the *Cotocollao Tribe*, around 3500 years ago in 1500 B.C. This tribe developed a group of villages in the Western Andes Mountain area of Northern Ecuador. The main village was located at the North end of what is now Quito, in front of a lake, which has now since disappeared. It is important to note that while many llama and alpaca bones have been found around these dwellings, whether these animals were wild or domesticated during this period remains uncertain.

Hunting was a customary activity for this group and they would often hunt deer, weasels, skunks, wolves, pigeons, opossum, guinea pigs, mice, rabbits and various other wild

animals. The *Cotocollaos* were small people—the males averaging 1.59 m tall, while the females measured 1.48 m.

It is interesting to note that one can see their influence in the ceramics of *Machalilla* and the *La Chorrera* cultures of this period, namely in the legs and supporting structure of the ceramics. The *Cotocollaos* initially buried their dead alone, adopting the practices of group burials later on, most likely due to their increasing permanent nature of their settlements. The province of the Yumbos, Tulipe Village (Pichincha Province) which also included *Cachillacta*, *Gualea*, *Alambi*, *Mindo*, *Jitan*, *Embitusa*, and *Alosqui* was their main ceremonial location. The Tulipe Village has 3 different ancient cultural locations, which looks like a sample of the *Cotocollao* Culture of 1500 BC. This group also arrived to this area and some

ceremonial swimming pools that belonged to the Yumbos and Incan cultures have been discovered there.

This tribe is the structural base of the Quito nationality because it is the first testimony of a village in Ecuador. Thousands of years before the Spanish discovered this area, this was the first foundation of Quito. They traded some of their products with cultures from the lower sub-tropical areas. The Pululahua volcanic eruption, around 1500 BC, completely destroyed this early civilization.

Yumbos



The Yumbos were the pre-Incan natives that lived in northwestern Ecuador on the western slopes of the Andes Mountains. However, in the 1660s, following the eruption of Mount Pichincha, they moved to lower ground in the Amazon.

The Yumbo tribe hunted, fished, and lived in harmony with nature. They created many important commercial trails to the west coast and to the cloud forest, which can be seen through exploring San Jorge Botanical Reserves. The tribe would trade obsidian, quinoa, mellocos, chochos (lupin seeds) and other native products from the higher altitude of the Andes. The Yumbos were socialist in the sense that there was no head or leader of the tribe and there existed no one to whom they would pay tribute. With their

extensive knowledge they helped with the economic, political and cultural development of the Quitus. Moreover, evidence indicates that they may have found the middle of the Earth before the French Geodesic mission in the 18th century by exploring the Nono-Mindo valley.



Chaupicruz culture

From 550 BC - 500 AD another native culture called *Chaupicruz* habituated the eastern Pichincha foothills from the north to south. This culture also occupied the San Jorge areas and would use these trails to connect to the coastal interiors. The *Chaupicruz* people would use the trails in

same way for trading as the *Cotacollao* and Yumbo cultures did. Through looking at archeological evidence we see that this later culture had a different dietary plan than the other cultures, which is suggested by the elite consuming much more corn (most likely through drinking *chicha*). The museum at San Jorge contains ceramics and other artifacts belonging to the *Chaupicruz* culture.

Huayna Capac

Huayna Capac (1493-1525), meaning “splendid youth” in Quechua, was the 11th Sapa Incan Emperor of the Incan Empire (the land known as *Tahuantinsuyu*). Although he spent a lot of his time in Cuzco, Peru, the



Incan Empire extended the farthest under his rule, especially ruling south to Chile and Argentina. It was seen as the Inca's duty to keep conquering more land. Each conquest required a lot of preparation and the armies would usually gain more soldiers along the way to the battles. While travelling south for one conquest, Huayna Capac heard news of rebellions in Quito and returned to Cuzco to ready his armies. He now had the opportunity to have a northern stronghold in Quito. He was able to conquer the Yumbos along with many other areas using the old trade trails around Quito.

He became ill in Quito when he was preparing to go home to Peru. As one of his last acts before his death, Huayna Capac



divided his empire between his son Atahualpa (Quitenian Inca), who got the kingdom of Quito, and his son Huáscar, who got the rest of the empire. This division could have led to the downfall of the entire Inca Empire as it led to a brutal civil war between the two brothers.

Chasquis runners



The *chasquis* runners formed what was basically the communication system of the Incan Empire. These men would carry messages and deliver other objects for the government and emperor through running the Pre-Incan trails. These were long, narrow paths that required a lot of agility by

the *chasquis*. In addition to being runners of gifts and messages, the *chasqui* relays acted as an early warning system to inform the emperor of any impending enemy attacks. They would carry a *Qipi* (for objects), a *Quipu* (for letters), and a *Pututu*, which was a trumpet that would alert the next *chasqui* runner to get ready.

The relays could typically travel up to 280 km a day. The *chasquis* had to be able to run at full speed for 15 km or more, though there were small huts set up every 1.4 km with other runners waiting to go. With this amazing speed, the *chasquis* runners could travel from Cuzco to Quito, 1,250 miles, in five days. The Spaniards really admired the speed and usefulness of this system so they kept it in place into 1800s.

The *chasqui* runners themselves were very athletic and well-built. It was crucial that they had good lungs since most of the trails through the Andes are at very high altitudes of almost 17,000 feet, resulting in thin oxygen for the runners. The runners had strong legs and toes in order to grip surfaces more tightly. Because of the stress put on their bodies, the runners were the only ones who were able to chew coca leaves (although perhaps royalty could chew them too), viewed as a “divine plant.” The coca leaves helped with fatigue and breathing problems encountered at the higher altitudes of the Andes.



Pucaraes

Pucaraes were rock forts that the Incas built around the highland trails in order to prevent invasions and help with first defense.



Arrival of the Spanish Conquistador

Rumiñahui

Rumiñahui is Ecuador's national Incan hero from the 1530s. Meaning "stone face" in Quechua, Rumiñahui first entered the scene when Pizarro asked for treasure in exchange for the Incan Emperor Atahualpa, who was being held prisoner by the Spanish. When Rumiñahui showed up with the treasure, the Spaniards backed out of the deal and killed Atahualpa. Fortunately, Rumiñahui escaped with the treasure. After this death of Atahualpa in 1533, Rumiñahui was in charge of leading the Incan resistance against the Spanish in Ecuador.



Rumiñahui and his army would remain in the highlands guarding the way to Quito. While in Quito he received word

that the Spanish forces were coming to take over the city using their superior numbers and arms. Rumiñahui ordered the city of Quito to be burned and destroyed before the Spanish Conquistadors arrive. After burning the city he escaped with the Incan Emperor's sons and a group of virgins, crossing the San Jorge plateau. Knowing that the Spanish would keep pursuing him and the other Incas, he killed nearly 200 temple virgins in order to preserve their honor from any wrongdoings by the conquistadors.

Needing a competitive edge in battling the Spanish forces, Rumiñahui wanted to meet where the high altitude would be an advantage for his own warriors. The Incan forces were finally defeated at the Battle of Mount Chimborazo, but the legend of the Rumiñahui still lives on. The location of the treasure and the death of Rumiñahui are still disputed. There are four popular endings to the story that all have supportive evidence:



1. One story contends that Rumiñahui threw the treasure off a cliff and escaped the Spanish forces for good.
2. Another story points to evidence showing that Rumiñahui was running up to jump off a cliff during battle and got stuck trying to run through the bushes. The Spanish caught him, tortured him, and killed him, but he never revealed the location of the treasure.
3. A third story claims that Rumiñahui was found by the Spanish in a village, where he stood out by the way he looked, dressed and acted. The Spanish captured him

and tortured him, but again, Rumiñahui did not reveal the location of the treasure.

4. The last story indicates that Rumiñahui was actually killed by his own men, who did not want to continue tirelessly fighting the overpowering Spanish forces.

Juan Lobato de Sosa



In 1537, Francisco Pizarro gave Juan Lobato de Sosa the land of the *Cotocollaos* and Yumbos as a reward for his courage and success in the Inca Empire conquests. By acquiring this land he oversaw the area where Hostería San Jorge is today. Later in 1538 he was named *Regidor de Quito* (governor), a privilege that entitled him to exercise greater political and social control over the area. Incan women typically helped the Spanish soldiers in their conquests. Juan Lobato de Sosa received help from Ysabel Yarupalla, an Incan woman from a noble background, who aided him throughout many of his conquests. Juan Lobato de Sosa faithfully served the Spanish army until his death.

Pedro Vicente Maldonado

Pedro Vicente Maldonado was born in the Andes in 1704. Both of his parents studied in a Riobamba school that was directed by



Jesuits, passing on their love for learning to Pedro Vicente Maldonado. He graduated as a professor in exact sciences, but his knowledge far surpassed that lone subject. He was a physicist, mathematician, astronomer, topographer, and geographer. From very early on in his career he wanted to work in constructing commercial routes and transportation systems throughout Quito and Ecuador. For example, some projects were constructing a route to Esmeraldas and working on mapping the kingdom of Quito. Pedro Vicente Maldonado is probably most well-known as being the Ecuadorian scientist that helped measure the Middle of the World using Pre-Incan trails from the San Jorge area and the Nono-Mindo valley in 1730.

El Condado

El Condado was a Jesuit retreat used in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1868 the property was divided into two, where the lower part of the retreat was named *El Condado* and the upper part *hacienda Singuna* (San Jorge Botanical Reserve-Quito).

General Eloy Alfaro

General Eloy Alfaro was the Ecuadorian president of the early 1900s and considered the best Ecuadorian of all time. He was a republican and held very liberal ideas that were supported by the bourgeoisies and the villages of the Andes. For his continuous fight against conservatism for almost 30



years, people call him *Viejo Luchador*, meaning “Old Warrior”. He participated in many rebellions and military assaults against the government throughout his life.

After he finished studying he decided to go into business like his father. His goal was to modernize agricultural production and to help move money in a faster, more convenient way. Some of his most popular acts and changes as president were:

- Separation of church and state
- Changes to freedom of speech
- Legalization of civil marriage and divorce
- Public education initiatives
- Ferrocarril Transandino (Trans-Andean Railroad)

General Eloy Alfaro and his family bought Singuna Farm (now San Jorge Botanical Reserve-Quito) in 1905. In what was probably an attack commanded by the clergy, Eloy Alfaro was assassinated in 1912 while he was imprisoned for an attempted *coup*. Through his efforts to improve the quality of life for all people, he was known as revolutionary, ideological, spiritual, patriotic, communicative, militant and a teacher. He embodied all attributes that a president and person should possess.

Flavio Alfaro

Flavio Alfaro purchased Singuna Farm with his cousin General Eloy Alfaro. Flavio Alfaro had a Catholic base with some commercial tutoring. He helped financially back a couple of revolutions, including Manuel Albán in Manabí.



He was always involved with politics in some way. He supported the liberal candidates and regulations and attacked various local and regional governments by force. Flavio Alfaro was viewed as a symbol of democracy and a true patriot.