



Hannah's Diary

Over the Christmas and New Year period of 2015-2016, I visited Ecuador for the first time. Ecuador is the **country** of my other half and I was so thrilled to visit one of the most beautiful and natural countries in the **world**.

26th December 2015

From the United Kingdom, the trip is around 12 hours of flying. I was relatively close to London so could easily get a direct flight to Quito airport. During landing I looked out of the plane window and could already see how beautiful the city was. With a time difference of 6 hours, I was slightly jet-lagged so spent the rest of the day unpacking, meeting my partner's family and resting.

27th December 2015

Today was our first day of sightseeing and we visited the most famous part of Ecuador, la Mitad del Mundo.



We climbed up the monument in the centre of the world and managed to take some gorgeous pictures with all the **mountains** in the background and some small **villages** that were scattered around. Luckily, the **sun** was shining and the **sky** was blue (with just a few clouds) so we got some lovely pictures.

29th December 2015

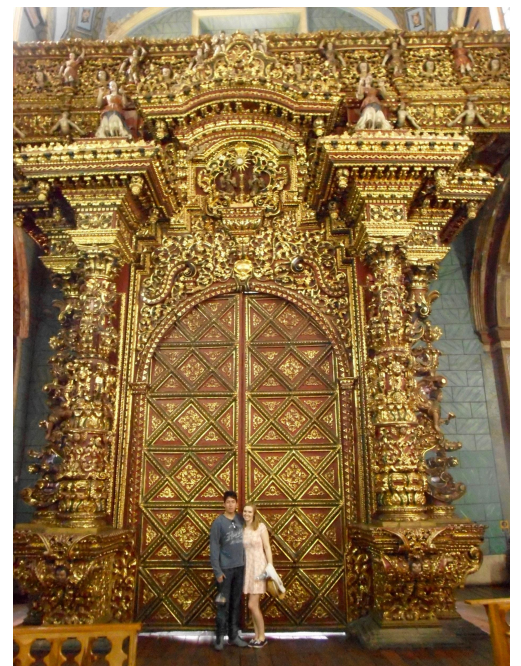
The 28th of December was a nice relaxing day around the house and our next outing was on 29th, where we took a cable car up the mountain to see the gorgeous **view** of all of Quito. It was pretty windy and relatively cold at the top of

the mountain and the altitude made it a bit more difficult to breathe but it was nice to get some good fresh **air**! Neither of us are really **explorers** or hikers, so we didn't wander around too much, instead ate at the restaurant at the top of the mountains.



30th December 2015

Today we went to the centre of Quito to see all the gorgeous tourist attractions - churches, cathedrals, museums, you name it. I was so surprised by the grandeur of all the places we visited with so much gold. We walked up and down the **streets** and **roads** of the city to take in all the culture and had some lovely traditional Ecuadorian meals in some local restaurants.



31st December 2015

For New Year's Eve, we travelled to Amabato, a city south of Quito to be with my partner's extended family. We had a wonderful evening with some delicious food and it was nice to meet some of my partner's extended family.

1st January 2016

We're into the new year now, ready for 2016! We started the day wandering around the city of Ambato to see some of the local attractions. We walked through some parks with **ponds** in the glorious sun, visited some churches then travelled on to Riobamba. We drove through many small villages and **towns** up and down the **hills** and mountains amongst the clouds.

2nd January 2016

Today was a wonderful experience travelling by train around the Nariz del Diablo. We took an old-fashioned train on a rather scary track around the mountains. We dropped some **stones** down the mountain to see just how steep it was! The track was so close to the edge, even little **rocks** were falling down! We looked out onto some gorgeous little **streams** trickling down the mountains.



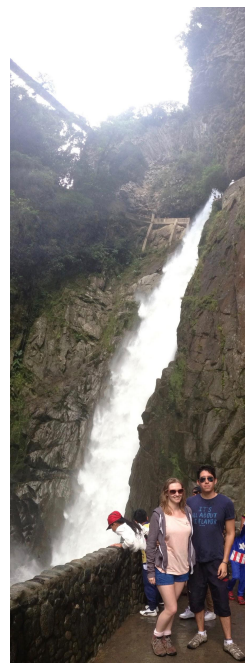
3rd January 2016

Today we went to El Columpio del fin del mundo. After a steep walk up the hill, we saw the infamous tree swing that swings you over the edge of the mountains and volcanoes. What a gorgeous view! After this, we went on a long walk down to El Pailon del Diablo, which is a beautiful **waterfall**.



We walked through the **rainforest** for ages and across a rather wobbly **bridge** until this beautiful waterfall emerged that went on to a **river**. We all got soaked standing so close to the waterfall! You could crawl through a little **cave** to get right underneath the waterfall, which was really fun although quite claustrophobic.

We ended the day zip-wiring across the jungle, which was a little scary but very fun! Finally, we headed on to our destination, Baños and settled in for the night. The car journey was beautiful through the **countryside** with green **grass** in the **fields** and the local **farms** with cattle grazing.



4th January 2016

Today was a city-break. We wandered around Baños and took in the sights, met some of the locals and got to know the area a little better but we were excited to head on to the Amazon jungle for a walking tour, so we got an early-night's sleep.

5th January 2016

We got up very early this morning and found our way to the **river** ready for a boat tour and then a walking tour through the **rainforest**. We needed to put on some sensible clothes and shoes for our day as rainforest **explorers**, which included wellies and a **raincoat**. We started with a small boat ride on the river and saw some amazing water animals and we finally arrived at a small **island** not far from where we left off. The driver had to be very careful to navigate around all the **rocks** and stones in the river. We all hopped off the boat ready to walk deep into the jungle with our tour guide. We met some people who lived there and told us about the food and drink they have and how they go about their everyday lives, we even tried some of their food!

The **trees** were enormous with big **leaves**. Luckily our tour guide told us which ones were dangerous to stay away from. The **ground** was covered with mud, leaves, **wood** and grass.



6th January 2016

We spent today at the local zoo in Baños. It's an outdoor zoo with a lot of natural animals just coming and going but it was nice to see lots more animals. We even had little monkeys jumping down onto our shoulders and met a talking parrot!

7th January 2016

Today was a long car journey back to Quito so we spent most of the time staring out of the car windows looking on to the gorgeous views of the mountains and fields around. We decided to spend the evening at the cinema after a lovely Japanese meal out. Over the next few days we met friends and family and talked all about our trip to the Amazon. It really was an amazing experience! We went ice-skating, went shopping, went clubbing and had some tasty traditional meals!

10th January 2016

After a nice long relaxing day, we went to El Panecillo, which is a monument standing on a hill in Quito. It was pitch black so we couldn't see much of the city,

but the sky was so clear and we could see all the **stars** and a gorgeous shining **moon**. It felt like we could see right into **space**.

12th January 2016

We made a beautiful 5-hour car trip today to the **beach**. Luckily the weather was lovely so when we arrived we didn't even unpack, we just headed straight down to the beach. We walked all the way along the beach with our feet in the **sand** listening to the **waves** crashing against the shore. As we were out of season the **sea** was rather cold!

We spent a couple of days at the beach, visiting the local beach restaurants, getting some sunbathing in and relaxing before I needed to travel back home.



16th January 2016

After spending another day travelling back to Quito on 15th, the 16th was the day I left. I needed to pack up my suitcase, get everything ready for another 12-hour flight and return back to the UK to finish my final semester of studying at university.

I had the most wonderful trip in Ecuador and feel so lucky to have family there that allows me to visit any time I want.