

15 SIGNS YOU'VE BEEN IN ECUADOR TOO LONG

1. You add “*canguil*” to the ceviche.

What you considered a sacrilege when arriving to Ecuador is now an ideal combination: the crunchiness of the popcorn with the soaked texture of the ceviche get along perfectly well.

2. You know the difference between *guineo*, *maduro* and *verde*.

In a banana republic, saying “banana” is as generic as the word “metal” for copper or silver. Simplified language is no longer useful. What you called “*plátano*” is “*guineo*”, the “*verde*” (“green”) is the one used for *patacones* and the “*maduro*” is a ripe version of *verde*!

3. You refer to everyone as man... even females.

If it breathes and seems human, then you call it “man”, using that English word. ¿How do you difference genders? Easy, “el man” and “la man”. You can even use the diminutive version: “el mancito” or “la mancita”.

4. You understand that “right now” does not mean “right now”.

– When will you send me the form?

– *Ya mismo.*

When people tell you “*ya mismo*” (right now), it doesn’t mean now and it doesn’t mean “later”. It is that illusory space in time between now and later... something like “some time soon”.

5. You eat everything with rice.

In Ecuador I finally discovered the importance of a good rice pot. The menu goes from rice with meat, rice with beans, rice with chicken, rice with shrimps, rice with sausages, rice with cheese, rice with maduro... Even rice with pasta! You might be lacking a bunch of foods at home, but it’s never going to be rice.

6. You curse and honk while driving... to what moves and what doesn’t move.

There are many reasons, like cars switching lanes without using their lights or suicidal pedestrians. It’s impossible to stay away from joining the collective orchestra.

7. You don’t ask for favors, you say “*No seas malito*”.

“*No seas malito*” (Don’t be mean), I was told just after arriving to Ecuador. I took it personally. Then I understood it’s just a formula for politeness around here. For instance, I would say “*no sea malito*, and share this article on Facebook”.

8. You are (almost) not afraid of iguanas anymore.

You see them on public parks, house roofs, and crossing the streets. So you have no choice but to get over your fear of lizards.

9. You have chosen your colors.

There are [Emelec](#) y [Liga](#)'s fans, which are some of the bigger teams in the cities of Guayaquil and Quito. But in my experience, few things unify the coast and the *sierra* like [Barcelona](#) does. Between that and the imposing Monumental stadium full of people, I sympathize with the *ídolo*.

10. If it is your *Santo*, you fear the cake and the belt.

Your *Santo* is your birthday. When your friends cheer *¡Qué viva el santo!*, what follows is them forcing you to “bite the cake”, which means smashing your face into it. And if you are in the *Sierra*, be careful: some people keep the tradition of hitting your butt with a belt for each year you've been alive.

11. You have experienced the *chiva* at the fullest.

Those colorful vehicles might be used for rural transportation and touristic rides, but you know the real purpose of their existence. They easily turn into four wheels discotheques, with lights, music, and dancing floors. Who doesn't want to get on board and enjoy the *farrón*!

12. You prefer one region over the other, but you don't admit it out loud.

Within the politically correct discourse, “regionalism is bad: we need to encourage unity and celebrate diversity”. But... the truth is, deep down, you identify yourself either with the coast or the *sierra*. Sometimes you even consider them to be two different countries and not two regions of the same nation.

13. You ran away to Montañita.

When you feel like you need to clear your head, you escape to Montañita for the weekend. The weather, the beach, and the variety of food (hmmm... corns and empanadas right from the street vendor), the vibe and, on top of everything, the *farra* make this town a unique place. A must for tourists, locals, and expats.

14. You know too well what it is like to be with *chuchaqui*.

If you drink a six pack of Pilsener and you finish off with some cheap national spirits, not even your mother or a Finalin will save you from the damned hangover (*chuchaqui maldito*).

15. You are familiar with the “Mashi” and national politics.

It's impossible not to take a side regarding his leadership style and some of the last controversial issues, from the *Yasuní* to the *salvaguardias*