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# BEXPERT

EXPERTS IN CUENCA

A CITY THAT SHINES

Santa Ana de los Ríos de Cuenca, before known as Tumipampa and Guapondelig, is a space where every corner is the expression of its ancient history. It is distinguished by the courtesy and hospitality that permeates everywhere. Cuenca is tradition and charms. A city crossed by four rivers enclosing culture, art and heritage. Founded several times, since pre-Hispanic history it has been of great importance to this side of the planet. Cuenca is a city that invites you to discover its many twists and turns.

Cuenca is the center of the country, between the Andes, 456 km (283 miles) to the South of Quito and 198 km (123 miles) to the East of Guayaquil.

**Cuenca is a whole world!**







## CUENCA

CAÑARI, INCA,  
AUTONOMOUS, A  
CITY THAT INVITES  
ONE TO STAY  
THERE

**S**anta Ana de los Ríos de Cuenca is the city that flashes charm everywhere you look at; it is definitely a city made for exploring on foot, where every corner offers something to discover. The streets emanate art, bohemian, religion, history and tradition, but it also combines modernity and conveniences to visit; besides, it is a great place to live.

It is the third largest city in Ecuador, after Quito, the capital, and Guayaquil, the main port. Due to its architecture and other virtues, it has been

called the cultural capital of the country. Here, events like the Orchid International Film Festival and the Art Biennial take place, in addition to the cultural expressions and traditions present in the everyday life of its people.

The city of the four rivers is crossed by the Tomebamba, Yanunca, Machángara and Tarqui. The city sits on an inter Andean valley at 2,535m (8,316 feet) above sea level and its population is around 500,000 inhabitants, making Cuenca a multi-diverse city.



BE AN  
EXPERT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### CURRENCY

Since the year 2000, the official currency in Ecuador is the US Dollar..



### CLIMATE

Cuenca typically enjoys a mild climate, with an average temperature of 17°C (62°F).



### SECURITY

Streets, parks and nature walks invite one to visit them anytime.







## HUMAN HERITAGE

In December, 1999 Cuenca was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) for the architectural richness of its Historical center, defined by the presence of traditional paving and for housing churches and, mostly,

colonial and republican era buildings. Since the declaration to the present time, everything about Cuenca has been positive changes, from infrastructure, restoration and construction of spaces for living, and recognitions, including: first place to visit and stay in Latin America by the #49 Stern Magazine, in 2008; historical destinations by National Geographic, in 2008; best place in the world for retirees by International Living, in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Lonely Planet included Cuenca in the top 10 cities to visit in the world, in 2010.

Trip Advisor placed it as #21 destinations in South America, in the year 2012. Cuenca is the successful fusion of different Latin American cultures and its colonial architecture of Spanish roots, showing the implementation of urban planning principles from the Renaissance of the Americas.

CNN Money said it was the best overseas place for retired Americans, in 2012. In 2013 Cuenca won the "Jena Paul - L'allier" award given the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC).



### TRANSPORTATION

The bus fare is USD \$0.25 cents. The minimum taxi drive is USD \$1.36 during the day, and \$1.67 at night. It is mandatory the use of taximeters.



### CLOTHING

Short or long sleeves are recommended; use shorts in the morning and pants in the afternoon and evening. Carrying a raincoat is always a good idea.



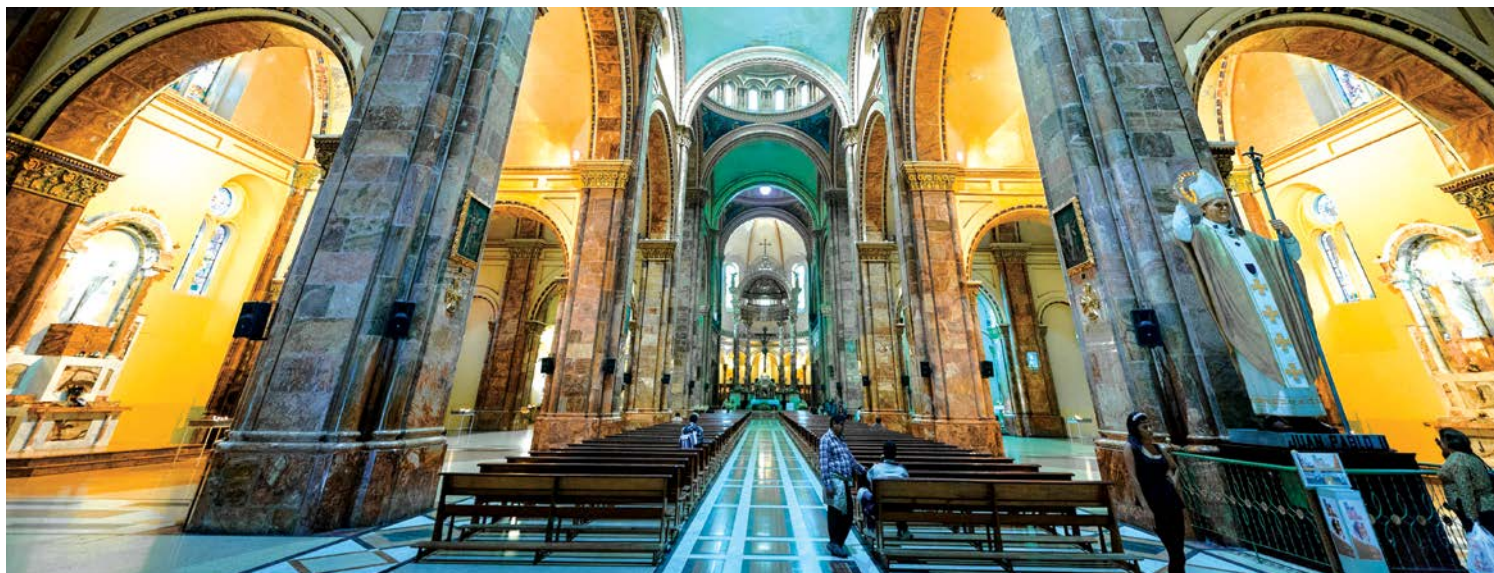
### TECHNOLOGY

Hotels, hostels, restaurants and public spaces offer free WIFI service.



# TRADITIONAL

## CUENCA



To reach to the heart of the city and discover it, it is necessary to walk it by its cobbled streets, by houses with balconies that transport the stillness of centuries past with colorful geraniums. When crossing it, one discovers invisible doors to galleries, bars, ateliers, taverns and shops that invite one to enter their world and feel the aromas and elements that make them up. Stone is everywhere, as decorative resource, as well as pink marble columns, windows and walls with very distinctive designs; even its sidewalks are particularly attractive. Churches are found at almost every corner, some for everyday use by

worshippers, and others opened to visitors, or transformed into museums. They are the perfect opportunity to learn in depth their religious tradition.

In Cuenca, the ability of working with creativity using their hands captivates people who visit it: pottery craft, jewelry, textiles and the development of the finest straw hat, declared in 2012 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, are part a set of expressions of syncretism and inheritance that at present signal objects and ornaments suitable for the most discerning tastes.

### Places of interest:

- Loja Street
- Contemporary Art Centre
- El Vado Plaza
- Barranco
- Trail by the Tomebamba River
- Calle Larga

The brand that identifies Cuenca are the old houses with red tiles and bricks; red is the color that paints the city and the traditional spaces now turned into shops, bars and restaurants. The old city is enclosed by cobbled streets and four crosses in each of the cardinal points. It is almost impossible not to talk about the essentials of Cuenca: when walking through its streets one must visit the San Sebastian Park, its church and the Contemporary Art Centre, the Las Posadas House, the picturesque district of El Vado, the Calle Larga and its surroundings starting with the 10 de Agosto Market, the hat shop and the CEMUART Artisan Municipal Center.



## THE OLD CATHEDRAL

It was the main church in the colonial era. It was built after the foundation of the city, later than 1557 and its original name was the Tabernacle Church. It stopped opening in the late twentieth century and in 2005 it reopened as a museum of religious art; it is also a designated space for musical performances. The original building is on top of Inca stones and the structure was on wood. In 1779 it was expanded and redecorated because Cuenca was declared a Bishopric.



## THE NEW CATHEDRAL

The most important Catholic monument for the people of Cuenca. Designed by the Redemptorist Juan Bautista Stiehle, its construction took about 100 years. Its architecture is a mixture of Roman, Gothic and Renaissance style. The stained glass windows are a highlight; made by the artist Guillermo Larrazabal. The same can be said about the Salomonic columns, the sculpture of the crucified Christ that is a mestizo version, similar to the people, which identify with him and increases their faith.



## TODOS SANTOS HERITAGE COMPOUND

Historically, in this place there was a native chapel called "Usno", a place of worship for the natives. At the arrival of the Spanish, they built on the same space the "Saint Marcus" Chapel that was given to the religious order of the Oblate, who later expanded the church. Until today, they run the Sacred Heart of Mary School. It is at the edge of the Tomebamba River, at the end of the Calle Larga and down the Todos los Santos Street. It includes the church, a gazebo, a convent garden and a restaurant.





## WHAT YOU CANNOT MISS WHILE VISITING CUENCA



There are not a number of days or perfect itinerary to get to know Cuenca in depth. That and the ideal conditions it offers to enjoy a desired quality of life may be the reasons why, increasingly, foreign retirees decide to settle here and make it their new home.

The truth is that one will never have enough time to discover Cuenca and its routes; its surroundings are places that invite one to visit the places in the city of four rivers one cannot miss. Among the most important we have:

- CIDAP Inter-American Center for Popular Arts and Crafts, the best choice for watching and buying handicrafts from Ecuador and Latin American countries. It has an extensive library on the subject.

- The Hat Museum, located in the Calle Larga, is a must for understanding the elaboration of fine straw hats.
- Barranco, a traditional neighborhood next to the Tomebamba River. Here, there are traditional houses along the linear river park; bohemian life takes place here and it connects to the picturesque stairways that lead to important points of the city, such as the University, the Park dedicated to the Mother, the broken bridge, and more sites.
- The Turi Gazebo located south east of the city. There, one can see the flashing red of the roofs of the city; it is perfect for admiring the topography and it is geographically located in the places one has visited.
- The hot springs of Baños, featuring several resorts and spas where travelers can relax. This parish is within minutes of the city.



■ Tourism Foundation  
for Cuenca

[www.cuenca.com.ec](http://www.cuenca.com.ec)



## THE CALDERÓN PARK AND PLAZA DE LAS FLORES

It is the Mayor Plaza of Cuenca and is at the heart of the city itself. The park is a natural garden with native plants and trees that invites one to explore and identify all kinds of characters in their daily lives. One block south of the park is the Plaza the Las Flowers (The Flowers' Plaza) where roses, sunflowers, chrysanthemums, astromelias and many more types of flowers are sold. The square is next to the El Carmen Monastery where cloistered nuns still live in. Tourists, photographers, locals, office workers, merchants and retired people come to this plaza to see, buy and admire the beautiful flowers sold. In here one can find sunflowers, roses, and chrysanthemums.

### Directions:

■ It is in the historic center of the city; almost every tour begins in these spaces and one can visit them during every day of the week, even on holidays.

**Details:** [www.cuenca.com.ec](http://www.cuenca.com.ec)



## HOMERO ORTEGA MUSEUM

The straw hat is a 100% Ecuadorian but it has been mistakenly known around the world as "Panama hat" because it was used by workers during the construction of the Panama Canal. The museum shows the process: from the fibers of the stem of the palm when they are hand woven, the washing and dyeing process, how hats are molded and finished. In this space, one can see and buy different types of hats. The price ranges from \$30 up to 2,000 or so, depending on its fineness.

### Directions:

■ Gil Ramírez Davalos 3-86 Avenue. Cuenca, Ecuador.

Schedule: Mondays to Fridays 8:00 – 12:30 and 2:30pm – 5:30pm. Saturdays: 8:30-12:30  
Sundays: 9:00 – 11:00 by appointment only.

**Details:** [www.homeroortega.com](http://www.homeroortega.com)



# THE CAPITAL IN TAHUANTINSUYO

## PUMAPUNGO AND THE SAINTS



**C**uenca has three major stages in its history of occupation; on the Cañaris Guapondelig the majestic Inca city of Tomebamba or Tumipampa was built. This is the place where the last Inca emperor, Huayna Capac, was born. Santa Ana and Santa Ana de los Ríos was founded on the Inca city in 1557, over a wide stony area that used the remains of walls to build some of the buildings and churches that can be visited today. Cuenca is one of the few cities in the world built on archaeological remains. Pumapungo is one of the most complete museums in the

country. It consists of three sections: the archaeological part where one finds walls which were part of the magnificent city of Tomebamba; the Inca garden that recreates the natural environment where this civilization lived and that has a bird rescue center. There is also a very complete ethnographic museum that talks about the ancient peoples who inhabited the present territory of Ecuador. Directions: Calle Larga and Huayna Capac: open Tuesdays through Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free

### Places of Interest:

- Museum of Aboriginal Cultures
- Manuel Agustín Landívar Museum
- CIDAP Museum
- Museum of the Cañari Identity
- Cojitambo Archaeological Complex

The archaeological remains of Todos los Santos (All Saints) were studied in the 70s by Augustin Landívar. It is a place where the three predominant cultures in Cuenca converge: the Canari reflected in the scarcely worked rocks placed perpendicularly. The Inca, with its fine work in pillow shaped stone and trapezoidal niches. And the Spanish presence, characterized by the use of the arches. **Directions:** It is located at the east end of the Tomebamba River Walk and below the Museum of Todos Santos; it opens from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free



# THE PALATE

## ROUTE



To enjoy delicious cuisine is part of a unique experience within Ecuador in each of its four worlds. Without any doubt, the feature on this side of the Andes, present in each table, is the mote (cooked and popped maize). Fine and not so fine palates, soup kitchens and exquisite restaurants offer wide range of options to enjoy the mote pillo or mote pata, tamale, potato soup, lima beans and cheese, caldo de patas, guinea pig, pork a la Barbosa

(grilled pork) and drinks such as chicha, rosero and morocho (another type of maize) For Chef Juan Carlos Solano, the traditional character of a product is given because behind it there is a story. The mote pata, for example, is a legacy that brings the cooking elements of pork that the Spanish did not use and gave to the Indians. In turn, the Indians prepared it according to their custom and ended as a typical dish.



The 10 de Agosto Market is a must to sample popular food [78cce]



Traditional food one can taste in the Cristo Del Consuelo, El Maiz, Los Tiestos, and others [88cce]



In Cuenca there are many options to enjoy international cuisine [76cce]

The cuisine includes desserts like fritters, and salty tamales. The Fanesca (soup with beans and three types of pumpkins) and dried cod is eaten at Carnival and Easter. In June the Corpus sweets appear in the Calderon Park; a delight to eye due to their shapes, textures and flavors. There are other flavors such as flour tortillas or corn wheat stew (soup with cassava, maize and maqueño plantain), fried pork, llapingachos (potato pancakes cooked and fried), sausage (artisanal sausage), and banana skins (busted pig skin).



## EL CAJAS

### NATIONAL PARK

It is one of the areas of beautiful scenery in the country. It is a lakeside compound with more than 230 lakes that are the main source of water for Cuenca. The park is located between 3,200 m (10,498 ft.) and 4,450 m (14,600 ft.) high; the average temperature is 10°C (50°F). It is a wetland of perfect height for walking, hiking, building camps, bird watching, fishing, wilderness and high Andean vegetation studies.

#### Directions:

■ It is located 30 km (18 miles) from Cuenca, at approximately 50 minutes on the way to the Coast.

The park is opened from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. throughout the year. It takes a morning to 3 days to visit the place.



## AMARU BIOPARK

### THE CUENCA ZOO

It is a haven for conservation of flora and fauna; it is a center of scientific research and it seeks to promote awareness and respect for biodiversity. It consists of eight hectares (19 acres) and is home to over 800 animals from 70 different species. It is part of a natural native forest located in the northeast of the city and maintains more than 300 varieties of native plants. This is part of a native forest located to the northeast of the city and retains more than 300 varieties of native plants. In the place you can learn about environmental education and rescue of animals in captivity.

#### Directions:

■ By the Cuenca - Azogues Highway, 10½ Km, about 15 minutes. The visit takes 2 to three hours, it is recommended to bring water and sunscreen.



## ADVENTURE

## THE BEST WAY




 Courtesy Daniel Carrión



 Courtesy Ramiro Garrido



 Courtesy Juan Carlos Astudillo



 Courtesy Ramiro Garrido

**C**uenca is also as a starting point for extreme and outdoor sports. It offers several options to enjoy adrenaline, speed and verticality.

With ideal conditions and from the edge of the historic center one can go kayaking on the waters of the Tomebamba River. Its banks are an ideal training site; many people jog in this place in the mornings or they do it in many of its linear parks.

The practice of rock climbing has grown among Cuencanos and the city offers several options for visitors who enjoy this demanding activity. The Cojitambo Hill, one of the sacred mountains of the Canaris is the ideal place to learn and practice climbing. It has around 200 routes of varying

difficulty, from fourth grade in the French scale to seventh grade for experts. The site is 25 km (15 miles) from Cuenca. One can also climb in the Paute Valley.

Biking not only facilitates the mobilization but it is a way to see the city. Tour operators offer routes between the villages of Ricaurte - Déleg - Cojitambo - Honorato Vasquez - Ingapirca - Guagualshumi and Jadan.

In Tarqui, 15 km (9 miles) south of Cuenca, one can go horseback riding on several farms in the area.

There is also canopy in Bibin, with six "ziplines" that provide adequate security conditions. Paragliding can be practiced in places like Paute, Gualaceo, Barabon and Susudel.



## NIGHTLIFE

### PARTY IN CUENCA



**N**ightlife in Cuenca starts in the Calle Larga (Long Street). This landmark neighborhood in the city welcomes local and foreign people to turn on their “engines” from late afternoon to liven up the night in the many bars in town. Bohemia, live music, bars and nightclubs are nearby or across the Tomebamba River. The Cuencana night lights-up with the fervor of the pyrotechnics castles, the canelazo and the local costumes. The festivities outside the daily life fall in a calendar scheduled throughout the year. Cuenca always celebrated; the cobbled, convent city

is ready for stomping. The Holy Innocents is a religious celebration held every January 6. People use disguises and participate in colorful parades. Cuenca celebrates Carnival every February; the Godfather and Godmothers’ Thursdays with characters chosen publicly. Easter is the greatest Christian commemoration of the year; the best-known event is the procession of the Lord of the Passion which takes place on Good Friday. The Passing of the Child, on December 24, is a huge parade that attracts hundreds of children in costumes and representations of ethnicity.



Bohemian lives on the Calle Larga: live music, bars and terraces



The clubs (or “discos”) are across the Tomebamba River, where one can enjoy karaoke and dancing



The party turns on Remigio Crespo Toral Avenue, a place where the younger ones go to.

# WHERE TO BUY

## Cuenca

When walking around Cuenca and all its corners, there is undoubtedly a representation of that magical reality one feels there: the memories of smells and textures are intended to be carried in the pocket of every traveler and one will always fall short of space (but not of money) to pack a special object that will be a gift or ornament of this beautiful city.

Metalwork, ceramics, shawls (macanas), embroidery, sweets and, of course, the best straw hat in the world, of unknown origin and popularized as panama hats but 100% Ecuadorian, made by the hands of an army of knitters around Cuenca. Definitely, the best place for fine hats is the Homero Ortega store - museum, where there are varieties ranging from USD \$30 to USD \$2,000, depending on the fineness of the finishing details.



Lituma - Peláez arte en joyería, Chordeleg - Azuay

## In the City

The Corner of the arts is the ideal place to find a mixture of objects and activities related to art and crafts. To take a souvenir one cannot miss the CEMUART Municipal Craft Center, the hat Museum, the Rotary Square, El Tucan, the Ordóñez Jewelry, the Vega Gallery, Pablo Cordero, among others.



Ceramic arts  
Cuenca

## Around the city

The most precious goldsmith work in gold and silver is definitely found in Chordeleg. There, one will find artisans who design with indigenous, classic and avant-garde styles. Nor can we ignore the fine work of the "macanas" or Ikat shawls, the ceramics and the footwear made in Gualaceo.



La casa de la Makana,  
Chordeleg - Azuay

**ERRATA.** We apologize to our readers for inaccurate data due to reasons beyond our control. The credit of the cover of the number 03 magazine corresponds to the Municipality of Guayaquil. On page 45 it is mentioned that Supermaxi is located in Salinas; the correct site of this supermarket is La Libertad.





# CATHEDRAL

LA INMACULADA  
CONCEPCION

This new cathedral is located in the heart of Cuenca, it is one of the biggest churches of Latin America and its main characteristic is the presence of pink marble. In the interior of this majestic temple, the side naves, with religious stained glass predominates. The baldachin baroque and the wreathed columns are similar to those of St. Peter's Basilica, in The Vatican.

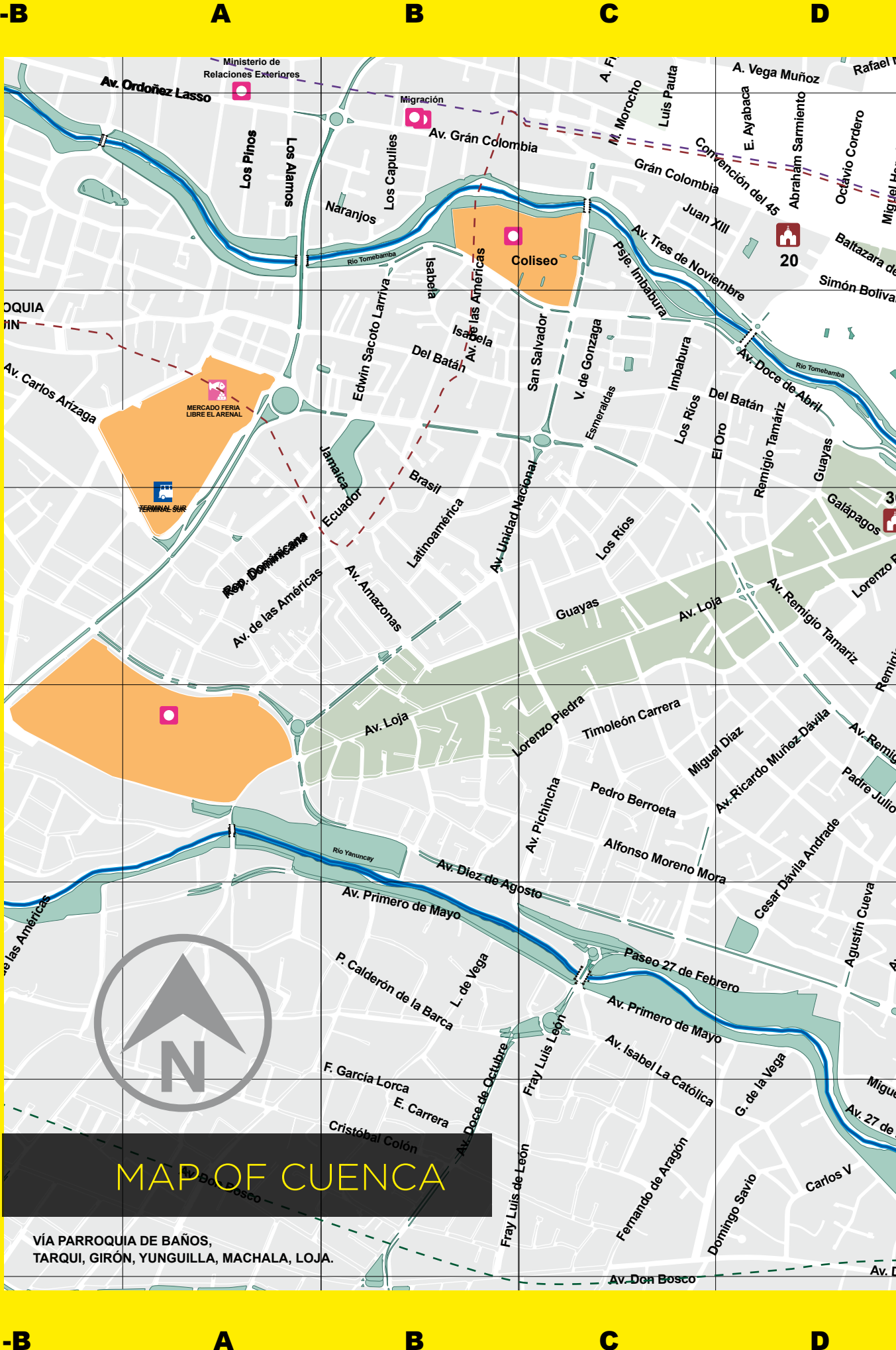
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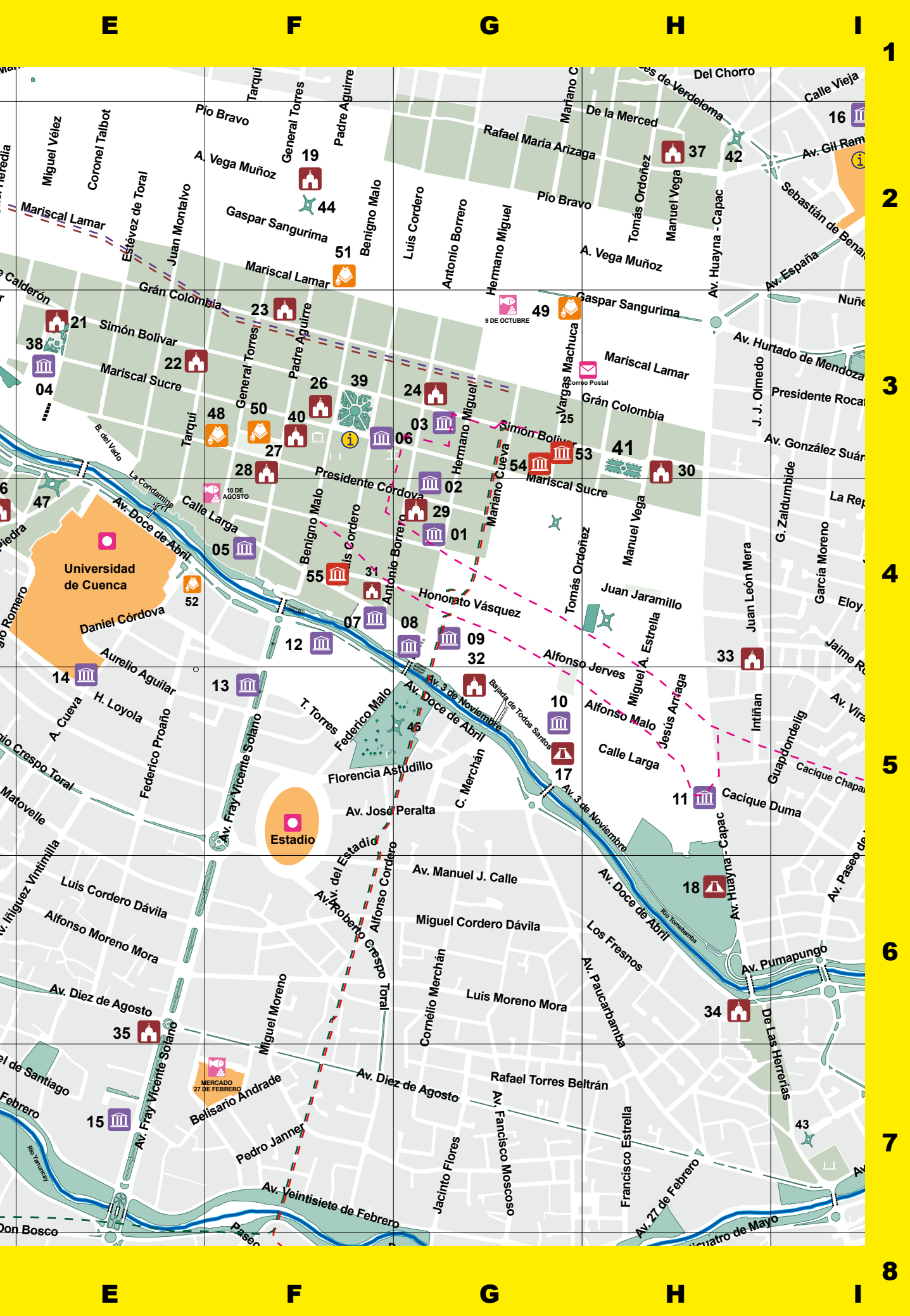
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# MAP OF CUENCA

VÍA PARROQUIA DE BAÑOS,  
TARQUI, GIRÓN, YUNGUILLA, MACHALA, LOJA.





# ICONS/

## Iconography



### Museos | Museums

- G-4 **1** Conceptas
- G-4 **2** Cañari Identity
- G-3 **3** Esqueleología
- E-3 **4** Arte Moderno
- F-4 **5** El Sombrero Workshop
- F-4 **6** Catedral Vieja Museum
- F-4 **7** Remigio Crespo Toral
- G-4 **8** Interamerican Art and Popular Handcrafts (CIDAP)
- G-4 **9** Culturas Aborígenes
- G-5 **10** Manuel Agustín Landívar
- H-5 **11** Pumapungo (Central Bank)
- F-4 **12** History of the Medicine
- F-5 **13** Benigno Malo School
- E-5 **14** Archaeological University
- E-7 **15** Metales
- I-2 **16** "Homero Ortega" Hats



### Ruinas Arqueológicas | Archaeological sites

- G-5 **17** Todos Santos
- H-6 **18** Pumapungo



### Iglesias | Churches

- F-2 **19** María Auxiliadora
- D-2 **20** Corazón de Jesús
- E-3 **21** San Sebastián
- E-3 **22** Santo Cenáculo
- F-3 **23** Santo Domingo
- G-3 **24** San Alfonso
- F-3 **25** Catedral Vieja (Religious museum)
- F-3 **26** Catedral Nueva
- F-3 **27** Carmen de la Asunción
- F-3 **28** San Francisco
- G-4 **29** Las Conceptas
- H-3 **30** San Blas
- F-4 **31** La Merced
- G-5 **32** Todos Santos
- H-4 **33** Corazón de María
- H-6 **34** El Vergel
- E-6 **35** Virgen de Bronce
- D-4 **36** San Roque
- H-2 **37** San José del Vecino



### Parques y Plazoletas | Parks and Squares

- E-3 **38** San Sebastián Park
- F-3 **39** Abdón Calderón Park
- F-3 **40** Plazoleta Carmen de la Asunción (Flower Square)
- H-3 **41** San Blas park
- H-2 **42** El Rollo Square
- I-7 **43** Herrero Square
- F-2 **44** María Auxiliadora Park
- F-5 **45** La Madre Park
- J-6 **46** El Paraíso park
- E-4 **47** Farol Square



### Artesanías | Artisanal Centers

- F-3 **48** CEMUART (Casa de la Mujer)
- G-3 **49** Sangurima Square (P. Rotary)
- F-3 **50** San Francisco Square
- F-2 **51** Santa Ana Square
- E-4 **52** Esquina de las Artes



### Teatros | Theaters

- G-3 **53** Sucre
- F-3 **54** Casa de la Cultura
- E-4 **55** Carlos Cueva Tamariz



### Zoológico

- J-8 **56** Vía to the Amaru Zoo



■ Cuenca Tourism Foundation

[www.cuenca.com.ec](http://www.cuenca.com.ec)



## All about the HOWs



Minimum price for a taxi ride

USD **1,36**

Price for a bus ride or public transportation

**0,25 ¢**



### TOURISTIC BUS

Various turns from 9h00 - 19h00

Reservation:  
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### CAR RENTAL

There are several operators to choose from.



### MUSEUMS

Ecuador has an enormous archeological and cultural richness in all its regions. Various schedules: 9h00 - 19h00

www.museos.gob.ec



### HOTELS

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www.allyouneedisecuador.travel/trade



### RESTAURANTS

39 LUXURY RESTAURANTS  
699 FIRST CATEGORY

www.allyouneedisecuador.travel/trade



UNITED STATES DOLLAR is the official currency in all Ecuador



Ecuador has public and private hospitals all around the country. There is medical assistance calling 911 from any telephone.

### ELECTRICITY/ VOLTAGES

In Ecuador, electricity is provided at 110 V and 60 Hz, with single-phase dual-wire outlets.

### INTERNET/TELEPHONE

There are three phone and internet operators in Ecuador: Claro, Movistar and CNT

