



South Coast

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Why Go?

Stretching all the way from Puerto López in the north to the Peruvian border in the south, this region features a long, sandy coastline. A motley crew of international travelers heads to seriously mellow hangouts to surf and chill while *guayaquileños* (people from Guayaquil) and people sport-fishing and yachting fill the hotels and condominiums of resort towns. Trails through the coastal mountain cloud forests lead past small villages, rushing brooks and all manner of birdlife.

Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city and commercial and business capital, includes the Disneyfied *malecón* (waterfront), museums and nightlife rivaling any in the country. All flights to the Galápagos Islands leave from here.

South of Guayaquil is mostly banana country, featuring miles and miles of the unripe green fruit, also known as *oro verde* (green gold). The regional capital of Machala makes a good base for exploring nearby mountain towns, and it's a convenient stopover for those heading to Peru.

Best Places to Eat

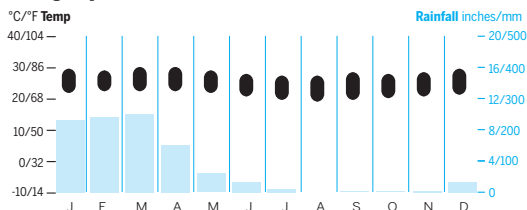
- » Lo Nuestro (p285)
- » Marea (p268)
- » Beachfront Shacks (p263)
- » Hostería Farallón Dillon (p268)
- » Cevichelandia (p270)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hostería Mandala (p262)
- » Balsa Surf Camp (p267)
- » Samai Lodge (p265)
- » Mansion del Rio (p282)
- » Camping in Parque Nacional Machalilla (p261)

When to Go

Guayaquil



Jan–May The rainy season when the coast is hot, humid and sunny, with occasional heavy rains.

Jun–Dec The dry season is cooler and more overcast. Humpback whales visit June to September.

End Dec–Apr This is generally when Ecuadorians visit coastal resorts.

South Coast Highlights

1 Get up close and personal with nesting boobies and other birdlife on **Isla de la Plata** (p263)

2 Slow down and do some serious chilling at surf mecca **Montañita** (p265)

3 Hike one of the trails snaking their way through the coastal mountain **cloud forests** (p266)

4 Take a Sunday stroll along the **Malecón 2000** (El Malecón; p273), Guayaquil's amusement-park-like riverfront promenade

5 Breathe in the cool air and spectacular views around **Zaruma** (p294)

6 Spot massive **humpback whales** breaching only meters away from your boat on their annual mating sojourn (p261)

7 Chow down on piles of shellfish and freshly caught seafood at a beachfront restaurant in **Playas** (p268)

