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CUENCA

At the South of Ecuador, in the Andean region, is the "*Athens of Ecuador*", "*Santa Ana of the Four Rivers of Cuenca*", place of the eternal spring by its rivers and gardens. City full of colonial churches, small squares, balconies and beautiful landscapes of traditional urban architecture like the **Broken Bridge**, and the Precipice that borders the **Tomebamba River**, the Old and New Cathedrals, its museums of native cultures, and many churches throughout all the city, accompanied by the national folklore and the infinity of contrasts typical of the Ecuadorian highlands.

In the past, it was the second capital of the Incas' Empire and at the present time has been denominated "*Cultural Patrimony of the Humanity*". It is the center for the country's handicrafts production, because it is considered birthplace of poets, painters and excellent craftsmen of the most representative arts of the country.

Cuenca also characterizes by its friendly people and their hospitality, which support the tourism in each one of the city areas and around.

EL CAJAS NATIONAL PARK

The name of El Cajas is taken by the form of the mountains of the zone, within which are the lakes and lagoons. Approximately at 30 km of Cuenca, the El Cajas National Park is an area of 29000 hectares located in the Andean desert at the northwest of the city, in the division of the waters that go to the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. This Park is at the West of the Andes, at an altitude between the 3000 until the 4700 meters on the sea level.

In the way-by it's possible to see some small villages and also the changes of the vegetation due to the changes of altitude and climate. The formation of their brooks feed the lagoons formed by enormous glaciers formed thousands of years ago.

INGAPIRCA

Located in the province of Cañar, at 83 km to the North of the city of Cuenca, we find Ingapirca, an archaeological complex formed by different ceremonial elements, constructed by the **Inca Huayna-Capac** at about 500 years ago.

The word of "Ingapirca" means "**Wall of the Inca**"; this temple is at 3230 meters on the sea level, that's why it has a humid and cold climate, and an average temperature of 10 Celsius degrees.

The Castle of Ingapirca has an oval form called the "**Temple of the Sun**". Its structure is solid, the stones are carved and perfectly united with what the antique Indians used to call "*Quillucaca*"; the Temple's orientation this based on the Sun, God of their Empire. To the south are the launching slips and front doors, with



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their trapezoidal forms; all the other parts of the Complex are around this ellipse: the main rooms, the frontal plaza, the houses of the sector of the "Condamine", the *Intiguana* or *Ingachungana*, the *Intihuayco*, the *Vaguada*, the *Pilaloma*, the warehouses and the footpaths.

In the trip, we visit the **Sanctuary of the Virgin of the Dew**, a cathedral constructed by the end of the XIX century, right in the middle of one of the surrounding mountains to the city of **Biblian**; the main altar of this church was made mostly in **solid stone**.

GUALACEO

It is a town that has conserved the typical characteristics of the Andean population by preserving very Spanish architectonic elements, of the colonial times.

This is one of the most important zones in folkloric tradition and artisan works of the country; here, the local people elaborate clothes, vests, as well as furniture, etc. Another tradition of this area is their typical dishes, like: the *guinea pig*, the tamale, the roasted pig, etc.

CHORDELEG

The museum of the community of Chordeleg presents samples of a shining culture, which distinguishes in works with gold and pottery.

These people have a special characteristic: The great development in **precious metals works**. In general, the crafts are extremely varied: heavy tweeds, toquilla straw hats, shoes elaboration, and so much more.