

# NATURAL TREASURES OF ECUADOR: GALÁPAGOS, YASUNÍ, AND COTOPAXI



Ecuador is a small but incredibly diverse country. Despite its size, it is home to many natural heritage sites that are recognized nationally and internationally. Among the most important are the Galápagos National Park, Yasuní National Park, and Cotopaxi National Park.

The Galápagos Islands, located about 1,000 kilometers off the coast, were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. They are famous for their unique biodiversity and for inspiring Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (UNESCO, 2024).

In the Amazon region, Yasuní National Park has one of the highest levels of biodiversity on Earth. It is also home to Indigenous groups living in voluntary isolation, such as the Tagaeri and Taromenane (Ministry of Environment, 2023).

Cotopaxi National Park, located in the Andes mountains, is home to one of the world's highest active volcanoes. Its scenic beauty and ecological importance make it a popular destination for tourism and conservation (Ministry of Tourism, 2024).

These natural sites represent Ecuador's environmental richness and highlight the need to protect these unique ecosystems for future generations.