

## **CITY AND WEATHER INFO**

Cuenca and Quito are both old, formerly Spanish cities (and before that, cities from the Inca civilization). Despite being a third-world country, Ecuador is a modernized country, and both Cuenca and Quito are technologically-developed very large cities (don't think grass shack-village-type place for Cuenca and Quito). Cuenca has a population of about 400,000; Quito has about two million. Both cities are located high in the Andes Mountains; Cuenca has an elevation of about 8,200 feet and Quito an elevation of about 9,200 feet.

Many automatically think that since Ecuador is on the equator that it's going to be really hot and humid, however, because both Cuenca and Quito are so high up in the mountains, that's not the case at all. On the coast, it's hot and humid, and also in the jungle, but in Cuenca and Quito, it's relatively "dry" so to speak (when it's not raining!). The temperature is fairly constant year round, ranging from 55°-80° F. The weather varies from quite cool in the mornings and evenings to sometimes hot in the middle of the day. There is no heat in the homes, orphanages, etc., therefore bring clothing that can be layered.

Many volunteers think that Ecuador's summer and winter seasons are generally opposite of those in the States, however, because of being on the equator there aren't huge differences in them. We've found the coldest months to be June through October (this is when volunteers have usually expressed dismay at not really believing us about how cold it can get and wishing they really had taken warm clothes) and the warmest months to be December and January. Rain is a common factor during all seasons, though more at certain times than others. There can be times when it's a nice and sunny, even hot day and then it downpours in the afternoon with the sun returning afterward, and there can be periods when there's a constant drizzle or steady rain for a few days at a time, and sometimes there are periods when a lot of heavy rain is received.

*Almost everyone underestimates how chilly, even cold, it gets down there at any time of the year. Fifty degrees when there's no indoor heating is really pretty cold—warm clothing that you can layer over clothing for the warmer times is a must!*