

HALF-DAY MIDDLE OF THE WORLD + RUMICUCHO INCA RUINS



Thousands of tourists come to Quito and make a stop at the world-famous Mitad del Mundo. But very few even know that a more ancient monument was built along the Equator and that they can stand atop this ceremonial site. Its name is Rumicucho. In the language of the Quichua, this place is named for:

Rumi = Stone

Cucho = Nook or Corner

The ancient ruins are well named. Stony walls wrap five different terraces on this site, which is located on the corner edge of a mountain.

If you are lucky enough to arrive on a day with sunshine (we recommend early in the morning or late in the afternoon to increase your chances), then you will see why this place is so very magical. The equatorial sunlight plays with shadows in deep canyons and dances along steep mountain slopes. The views from this nook are absolutely amazing on a clear day.

It isn't hard to imagine people living in this vicinity. In fact, it is difficult to believe that the ruins have survived the test of time. Somehow, colonizing Spaniards left this outpost alone and local peoples never scavenged the stones to improve their own farms and homesteads. Today, the town of San Antonio de Pichincha encroaches a little more each year.

The terraced walls of light pink stone radiate warmth even on an overcast day. Grasses blow gently in the wind and wildflowers bloom atop the foreshortened walls. A few steps lead to the heart of these ruins, a high plateau that once held different shaped buildings with unknown function. According to interpretive signs on the trails, Rumicucho was used by the Inca from 1500 to 1534. From Rumicucho, the Inca collected and redistributed taxes.

Rumicucho, San Antonio, Ecuador

The Inca also used the location as a strategic military site. In fact, locals still refer to this place using the word pucará, meaning fortress in the language of the Northern Quechua and Aymara, the original languages of the Inca.

Before the arrival of the Inca, the Caranquis, sometimes called the Cara, occupied the surrounding countryside from the current border with Columbia in the Carchi Province, through the Imbabura Province, and into the Pichincha province, where Rumicucho remains today.

Itinerary:

Pick up from your hotel or Quito Airport. Then, we are going to the North part of the City for approximately 40-minute drive.

- **Pululahua crater;**

The crater of extinct Volcán Pululahua can be entered on foot via a steep trail from the Mirador de Ventanillas viewpoint just inside the Reserva Geobotánica. It makes for an intriguing half-day trip from Quito. You'll need to sign in at the rangers' office at the entrance before starting the walk. From the viewpoint, a 1.7km trail leads to the crater; allow 90 minutes there and back.

The best time to visit is in the morning; by the afternoon the crater is often obscured by mist.

- **Intiñan;**

We visit the Intiñan museum, where you can witness the supernatural powers and magnetic forces of the equator. Later you will see the Middle of the World monument. We head to the outskirts of Quito to enjoy the mythbuster-type "Intiñan" museum, where you can witness the supernatural powers and magnetic forces that the equator offers. Here you will also see the equator line tracked by GPS with greater geographic precision. After that, you will also see the line mistakenly placed on the most recognized monument in the Middle of the World.

- **Rumicucho Inca Ruins;**

Then, we will visit Rumicucho Inca ruins. Thousands of tourists come to Quito and make a stop at the world-famous Mitad del Mundo. But very few even know that a more ancient monument lies a couple of miles away, Rumicucho. This fortress was first built by the Caranqui people and later occupied and improved by the invading Inca. While the ruins are in fair condition, the site makes a marvelous vantage point to view the surrounding mountains and canyons. Return to the hotel.

The tour includes:

Guide/driver (English-speaking)
Comfortable transportation
Activities according to the program

Tour does not Include:

Travel insurance
Entrance fees and personal expenses
Meals