

A Guide to The Pacific Coast

GUAYAQUIL TO PUERTO LÓPEZ

You might have heard that the Ecuadorian Coast is a great place to explore, lined with beautiful beach towns serving delicious seafood, all well worth a visit... Read on to discover the Wanderbus team's tips to some of the best destinations to explore from Guayaquil to Puerto López. Don't forget your sunblock!





HOW TO GET THERE

Depending on which direction you plan to travel, you may be starting from Guayaquil (south) or Puerto López (north).

Public transportation:

If you're starting from **Quito and travelling to Puerto López** by public transport, you'll need to head to the bus terminal in the south called Quitumbe ("**Terminal terrestre Quitumbe**"). To get to Quitumbe, you can either take a taxi or the trolley line headed south.

You'll find regular buses departing Quito to the Manabí province, where Puerto López is located. Puerto López is around 490 km (304 miles) from Quito and the bus routes to Puerto López include:

- Quito to Latacunga to Quevedo to Portoviejo-Montecristi to Puerto López (8 hours)
- Quito to Santo Domingo to Portoviejo-Montecristi to Puerto López (8 hours)

- Latacunga to Riobamba to Guayaquil to Puerto López (9-10 hours)

The best part about traveling on public transport is always the price: \$9 to get to Puerto López, that's roughly a dollar an hour!

If you need to get from **Quito to Guayaquil** and then work your way up the coast, you'll need to take a bus leaving from Quitumbe or Carcelén, the two main bus terminals in Quito. Since Guayaquil is one of the larger cities, there are numerous buses that leave frequently from the terminals.

The trip from Quito to Guayaquil takes approximately 9 hours and costs between \$9 and \$14 dollars.





Wanderbus Ecuador:



The Wanderbus is the most comfortable way to visit some of the Coast highlights and still have the flexibility to hop on and off at the smaller stops along the way.

If you're open to visiting other towns along the Andes on your way to the Coast, we highly recommend getting the Wanderpass, for a complete loop around Ecuador.

If you're set on heading straight to the coast, you have a few options like Garza Pass.

The Wanderbus leaves regularly from Quito and other cities at pre-selected, convenient pick-up points, and is a much safer option for travel to the coast and around the country.

Please contact [Wanderbus](#) today to inquire about schedules and routes to get to [Guayaquil](#), [Puerto López](#) and other cities along the Ecuadorian coast.

Domestic flight: A more expensive, but convenient, option is to fly to Manta if you're planning to head south through Puerto López down to Guayaquil. Or, if planning to start in Guayaquil, you can catch a flight there from Quito. Check out websites like [LATAM](#) or [Despegar.com](#) for deals on flights.



AN OVERVIEW OF THE TOP DESTINATIONS BETWEEN GUAYAQUIL AND PUERTO LÓPEZ

Guayaquil



Guayaquil may not be your primary destination, but as a starting point it offers visitors the opportunity to learn about Ecuadorian culture and history. Guayaquil is the largest city in Ecuador and where the country's main port is located. It is also a jumping off point for travelers headed to the Galapagos Islands. Read more about [what to do in Guayaquil](#).



Salinas



In the past couple of decades, Salinas has developed significantly and is more of a beach city than a beach town. Many families in Guayaquil have apartments or houses in this area as a way to escape the big city. It's a comfortable destination with a lovely promenade (*malecón*) and a couple of popular beaches like Chipipe and San Lorenzo.



Montañita

If you've heard of any destination in Ecuador apart from the Galapagos Islands, it's likely Montañita. Montañita is known to be a beach party town and a wonderful place to chill, surf, learn Spanish and then continue on along the coast to Puerto López. [Read more about what to do in Montañita.](#)



Olón

Olón is Montañita's neighbor and is a great spot for travelers who don't want to stay in the center of Montañita. It offers a quieter environment and access to a lovely, long beach as well. You can find a number of cute hostels and airbnbs and it's still close enough to Montañita to enjoy its restaurants, bars and beach activities.



Ayampe

Moving farther from the larger beach towns you'll find Ayampe, a quaint surfer town with a much more laid back feel than Montañita. Ayampe is an ideal destination to relax and dabble in a bit of surfing or horseback riding.



Puerto López

Puerto López has grown significantly in the past 10 years and is known as the source of much of Ecuador's fresh seafood. For tourists, it's one of the best places to go whale watching and is also the entrance to Machalilla National Park (Ecuador's only coastal national park), with a handful of beautiful destinations. Read more about what to do in [Puerto López](#).

PLANNING YOUR TIME ON THE COAST

What you decide to do during your time on the coast depends greatly on your preferences. If you like to party, you might be spending more time in Montañita, whereas if you prefer experiences in nature, head to Puerto López and Machalilla park.



Head from Guayaquil to Montañita or Olón



Go surfing! (You can take a class anywhere along the beach)



Leave your things in Ayampe (or find a hostel in Puerto López and leave your things there) and head to Los Frailes beach in Machalilla National Park. Plan to take a packed lunch or grab a bus to Salango and eat at the Delfín Mágico since there aren't any food options at Los Frailes.



Head back to your hostel and organize a whale watching tour with a company in Puerto López (your hostel can help you get connected).



Get up early to surf practice what you learned yesterday



Have dinner at Restaurante el Tiburón



Wake up early, go to the port in Puerto López and watch the fishermen haul in the daily catch while waiting for your whale watching tour to begin.



Upon your return, organize a tour to Isla de La Plata for the next day.



Grab a bus to Ayampe



Have lunch at the Barn and go surfing. Stay in Ayampe to travel the next day to Machalilla National Park



Head out early to Isla de la Plata, the "Poor Man's Galapagos"



Head back to Quito on the Wanderbus or overnight public transport



WHERE TO STAY



Hostal Moai (Montañita) – Best known for its warm and friendly staff, Hostal Moai offers guests clean rooms in a quiet sector of town. They also provide guests with a tasty breakfast to start the day.

Balsa Surf Camp (Montañita) – A quirky, family-friendly place where you can enjoy a peaceful holiday while still experiencing the fun of Montañita. Highly recommended!

Casa del Sol (Montañita) – This is a basic hostel in town that offers visitors access to many activities, like Spanish lessons, yoga classes, surf lessons and bicycle rental. Hot showers and hammocks are included, and the hostel is a 20 minute walk from the beach.

La Mariposa Hostel (Olón) - Located close to Olón beach, this is a comfortable spot with excellent breakfast options run by an Italian couple.

Viejamar Hostel (just north of Ayampe) - A cozy hostel between Ayampe and Puerto López, Viejamar's location provides easy access to many of the nearby attractions.

Hostería Cabañas Itapoa (Puerto López) - A conservation-focused family enterprise, Itapoa also offers visitors lush grounds and direct access to the beach.

Hostería Mandala (Puerto López) - Hostería Mandala is a gem on the north end of the city of Puerto López. The hostel has been meticulously designed and each space is full of character. The food is also incredible.

WHERE TO EAT

There are endless food options to choose from, especially in Montañita, but some exceptional places along this route include:

Restaurante Tiburón



One of the best spots in Montañita with delicious seafood and Thai food.

The Barn



A delicious pastry shop / bakery in Ayampe and a great place to work for a couple of hours before heading to the beach.

Restaurante de Jimmy



Visit this small surf restaurant located north of Ayampe and before the town of Puerto Rico.

Delfín Mágico



Located in Salango, is a restaurant made popular for its delicious seafood. If you haven't yet tried scallops in a garlic sauce ("al ajillo"), now's your chance!



NIGHTLIFE

If you're intent on partying, you should definitely head to Montañita.

While there, make sure to check out Caña Grill (\$3-5 cover), Nativa Bambú (\$5-7 cover), Hola ola (\$5 cover), and the Lost Beach Club (\$5 cover).



In Puerto López there are also a few places to party along the boardwalk (*malecón*) where you'll find pop up beach bars to order fresh Piña Coladas. Feel like dancing? Check out Wett, a bar that offers salsa classes.

You'll need a valid ID to get into most places, so make sure you make a copy of your passport. Don't carry more than enough cash for covers and drinks, and definitely don't carry your credit card around. It's best to leave any valuable belongings at your hostel, just in case.



Weather

The temperature in this area doesn't vary too much and is significantly drier than the northern coast of Ecuador. It fluctuates around 23 – 28 C (74 – 82 F) with the hottest months of the year between February and April when temperatures rise to 30 C (86 F). In terms of the best times to go, with good sun and warm waters, aim for late November to April. The rest of the year (particularly June to October) it's pretty overcast.



**Plan your trip to
The Pacific Coast
with Wanderbus -
you won't regret it!**



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