



## **Ecuador Fact**

- 2002 Total Population of Ecuador: 13,183,978
- 45-55% Mestizo (*Mix of White European and Indian*)
- 30-40% Indigenous
- 10-15% White/European
- 5-10% Black
- *Population of Otavalo 50,000*

## **Religion**

- 90% Roman Catholic
- 1% Protestant
- 9% Native Religions

## **Economy**

- Agriculture and Industry
- Petroleum Export: began in 1970's with the Trans-Andes pipeline.
- 1994 GDP of Ecuador: \$41.1 billion

## **Foreign Trade**

- The United States is Ecuador's leading trade partner.
- LAFTA (Latin American Free Trade Agreement) was founded by Ecuador and is composed of several Latin American countries.
- The agreement works to improve economic and social conditions of the trade groups member countries.
- Free Trade in Ecuador

## **Labor**

- 1/3 of Ecuador's labor force is in agriculture.
- 1/5 of Ecuador's labor force is in manufacturing and construction.
- A small percent of the labor force is skilled workers.

## **Who we are?**

The Otavalos are one of the main Indigenous groups living in Imbabura province, about two hours north of Quito (capital of Ecuador). Their tradition of weaving and other crafts has its roots many hundreds of years ago, before the Spanish came to the Americas. About forty thousand Otavalo Indians live in seventy-five communities spread throughout a valley surrounded by volcanos. Since there are so many people, and so little land, people were forced to work on crafts instead of on farms. The Otavalos have become one of the most well-known and prosperous Indigenous groups in the Americas and their textiles are now sold all over the world. For the most part, because of pride in their culture, the Otavalos have retained their traditional costume and Kichwa language.

During the Spanish colonial period, Otavalos were forced to work in textile workshops called *obrajes* in order to pay taxes to the Spanish king. In the 1950s, a tourist trade began to flourish and the selling of textiles in a Saturday market became a significant part of Otavalo culture. Although the Otavalos retained their Indigenous customs, languages, dress, and beliefs, they are now found around the world selling textiles and playing their traditional music.

## Music

Mistakenly called "Inca Music", present day Andean folk music is the product of centuries of cultural and ethnic intermixing. The wind and percussion instruments existed in Pre-Colombian America hundreds of years prior to the advent of the Incas (1200-1500 A.D.) Archaeological excavations have proven that certain musical instruments in the Andean highlands were being played well before the birth of Christ. The arrival of the Spaniards in the beginning of the sixteenth century marked the beginning of the end for the Incas and many facets of their illustrious culture. Musically, it was the start of many transformations and the introduction of new instruments never before seen in the Americas. Here we have the appearance of the first stringed instruments, such as the guitar, mandolin, lute, harp and violin.

Although confronted with a repressive colonial system the Andean highlander continued to search for new ways of expression. European instruments underwent transmutations by way of new musical styles or new forms of tuning. Perhaps the best example was the creation of the **Charango**, a small ten-stringed instrument descended from the lute and traditionally made in parts of Bolivia from the *shell of an armadillo*.

Andean music today enjoys considerable popularity. The highland music of Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, northeastern Chile and northwestern Argentina forms its backbone. There is no mainstream as each region and village is unique in terms of instruments, dance, tuning and rhythm. The richness and variety are seemingly without end. The legacy of colonial oppression, however, is still to be found. Nevertheless the music has persevered and today one can find groups of Andean musicians in many parts of the world.

The music we offer is but a small sampling of the music found in Andean countries. It is an emblem of the development and evolutionary process that Andean music continues to experience.

## Dress

- The woman's dress is the closest to Inca costume worn anywhere in the Andes. It consists of white blouses, blue skirts and shawls. Jewelry is also an important addition to the woman's outfit. Layers of necklaces of predominantly gold beads, and red coral bracelets are the most common form of jewelry worn by the Otavalo women. Their dress is connected to their Indigenous identity and is a way to outwardly express their ethnicity.

- Men wear a blue poncho, white calf-length trousers, and a "**trensa**", a long braid that hangs down nearly to the waist. This tradition dates back to pre-Inca times, and is established and deeply rooted. In fact, this tradition is so important as a symbol of Indigenous ethnic identity that when Indigenous men serve in the Ecuadorian army, they are not required to cut it off. In addition, a fedora or felt hat is almost always worn by indigenous Otavalo men for special occasions.

## Language

In Ecuador, Kichwa is the official language for the indigenous people, another strong piece of evidence of their ability to hold on to traditional cultural values and practices despite years of oppression from colonization and outside influence. This, tied in with the traditional clothing styles, textile design and music making are powerful ethnic markers that define the Indigenous Ecuadorian culture.

## Instruments

**Siku** - Pan Pipe or **Zampona** from Peru and Bolivia and Ecuador, with 2 rows of tubes giving the alternate notes of the scale, made from highland bamboo, a cane found in the outskirts of many south American highland forests. In ancient times, sikus were also made of clay, stone and condor feathers.

**Kena** - Shepherd's pipe; shepherd's flute (pre-Colombian times) without mouthpiece, carved in a bamboo cane; originally carved from animal bone or made of wood or bamboo. Its ancestors were also made of clay, stone and bone, especially the wing bones of the condor. The kena is a vertical flute, open at both ends with six finger-holes in front and one in the back

**Antara** - Similar to the SIKU, the ANTARA is a single row of reeds rather than two. It is tuned pentatonically (5 note scale). The ANTARA is considered to be one of the oldest instruments of Andean culture.

**Charango** – Ten-stringed instrument, made from the shell of an armadillo; an Amerindian version of the imported European mandolin; found in Andean region

**Bombo** - Large sheepskin drum made from a hollowed tree, and played with a stick and a mallet. It's largely used in the Andean regions of South America.

**Palo de lluvia or Rain Stick** - is a musical and ceremonial instrument used in many communities from ancestral times to the present. Its name is descriptive of the sound of falling rain the instrument produces. Rain sticks are made only from dead cacti, found predominantly in the desert zones of Northern Chile. Filled with desert pebbles, the rain stick produces its characteristic sound when it is tilted to allow the pebbles to run through its interior.

**Maracas** - South and Central American shaker made from the fruit of the totuma (Venezuela), and filled with dried seeds or other small objects.

## **Mandolin**

A small Italian lute that has 8 strings and sometimes 12, now popular throughout the western world, often made with a flat back like a cittern.