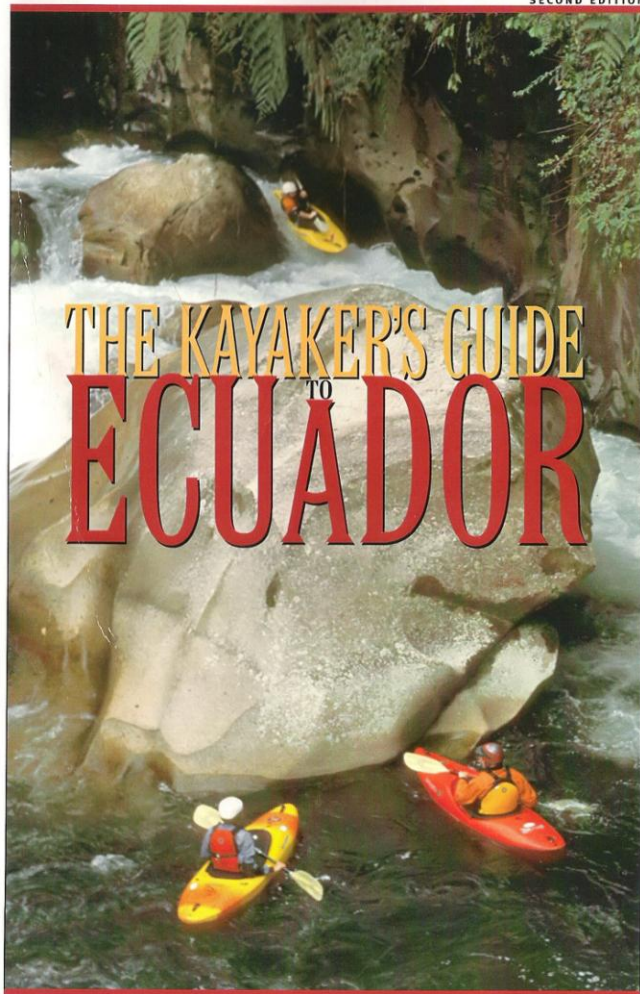




DON BEVERIDGE • DARCY GAECHTER • NANCY HIEMSTRA • LARRY VERMEEREN



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NOTE: For updates to this guidebook and current conditions in Ecuador, check out our blog spot at www.kayakersguidetoecuador.blogspot.com.





Cover photo: Tim Brown.

All other photos by Don Beveridge, Darcy Gaechter and Larry Vermeeren.



INTRODUCTION



Much has changed since 1993 when we first started paddling in Ecuador—not just the country's infrastructure and the popularity of kayaking—but quite literally the rapids. Every couple of years there is a massive flood in one of the drainages that changes every rapid on a section. Roads are also being pushed further up the valleys giving easier access on the upper sections of many runs. New hotels, restaurants and Internet cafes have opened and it became clear it was time to update this guidebook. Most importantly we found some additional great runs to include. We anticipate other changes and additions and plan on posting them on the web at www.kayakersguidetoecuador.blogspot.com.

When we first kayaked here, most of the rivers had been paddled only a handful of times, if at all, and little information was available on the runs. During the late 1990's the number of kayakers visiting Ecuador took off and although it was rare to see other paddlers on a run it became common to encounter them around Tena and Baeza in the evenings. That is still the case today; there are just so many runs available from these towns it is rare to end up sharing one with another group.

The popularity of Ecuador with visiting kayakers seems to have leveled off in the 2000's and during January, the most popular month, it would be very unusual to have more than 40 foreign kayakers in the country any given week. Spread them out in small groups over the one hundred plus runs and you see why it still is an adventure to paddle in Ecuador. There are numerous local Ecuadorian kayakers now and many of them are quite good since paddling is a year around activity here. Still, due to the expense of the sport and the time commitment involved to get good, there are probably less than seventy five Ecuadorian kayakers in the country spread between Tena, Quito, Santo Domingo and the Quijos valley. If you have some extra gear, think about selling or donating it to someone in Ecuador. It may be the best option local paddlers have to get gear.

This book, like its predecessor, still concentrates on the classic runs of Ecuador but by no means contains all the country's whitewater possibilities. It takes most people at least a month of solid boating just to get through most of runs included here. We want you to share the thrill of running new rivers in a foreign land so our descriptions don't dissect each run. You'll still have to figure out the rapids on your own, but we have aimed to lessen the amount of downtime between river trips. There are still many rivers to be discovered if you are willing to either walk to the put-in or explore some of the little paddled mountainous regions of the country.

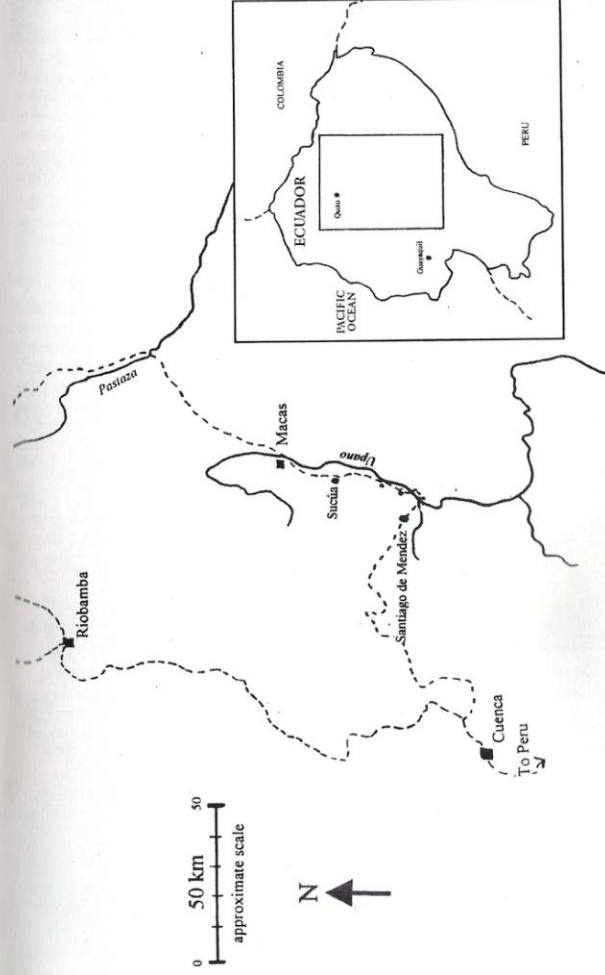
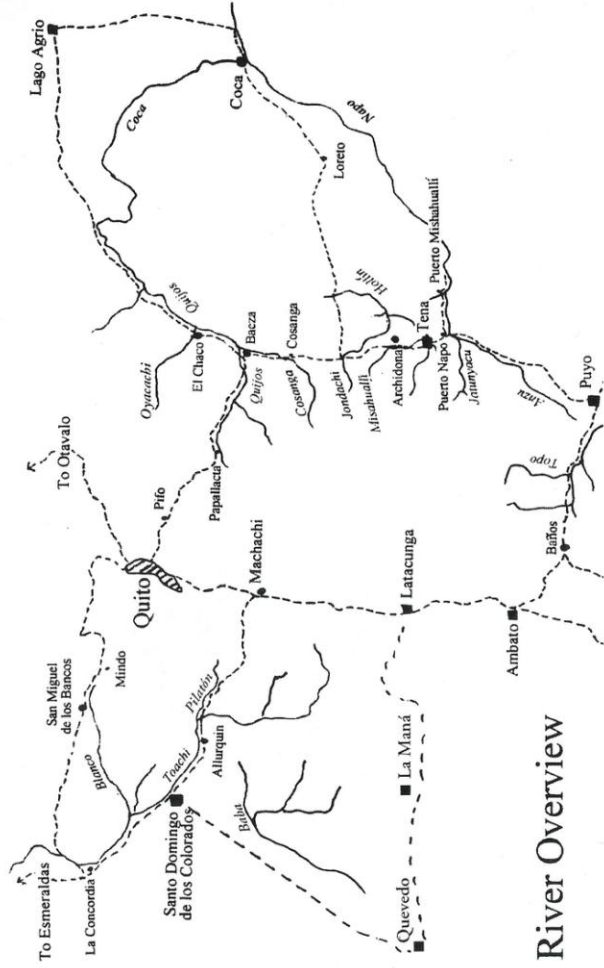
With this guide, basic Spanish skills and a willingness to accept, if not embrace, some of the oddities of traveling in Ecuador, such as sharing your bus seat with a bag of live chickens, you should be able to put together a quality paddling trip in Ecuador. We hope that this book helps you enjoy some of the best whitewater this incredible country has to offer.

See you on the river,

Larry, Nancy, Don and Darcy

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



The information included in the "About Ecuador" and "Logistics" sections is meant to help you before and after you actually get on the water. The rivers in this book are divided into four sections: the three major drainages and "everything else." Most of the rivers are listed in the Quijos, Napo Valley and Santo Domingo regions. These regions each have an overview map. Additional maps are included with the text where appropriate. The rivers of each drainage are listed from upriver to downriver. Once a river is begun, we continue downstream with it, coming back up the drainage to discuss tributaries later.

For each run we've included ten categories to give you key information at a glance. This is followed by a description of the run, and then the put-in and take-out information. Here's what these categories mean.

CLASS We used the standard I-VI scale, with I meaning moving flatwater and VI meaning almost unrunnable. *Low*, *Medium*, and *High* refer to reasonable kayaking (or rafting) water levels. In the rainforest, there is a huge difference between high for kayakers and high for the riverbed, but the presence or absence of huge trees and other debris floating down the river will clue you in to which is which. We don't often list rapids as Class VI, but when we do it means that the rapid is portaged much more than it is run. We tried to accurately gauge each run's difficulty, not inflate it for readers. Take all of these ratings with a grain of salt, as water levels can change the difficulty of a rapid and our perception of Class III may be different than yours.

TIME The amount of time a run can be expected to take moving at a decent pace on your first trip down that section.

GRADIENT Measured in feet per mile. We toyed with the idea of staying in metric, but how many of us really know what a gradient of 5 meters per kilometer means?
100 ft/mile ≈ 19 m/km

LENGTH The approximate river distance, in both miles and kilometers, as measured from topographic maps. There is of course some degree of error to these measurements, so they should be taken as estimates. All of our shuttle distances are in metric because Ecuador and its vehicles use kilometers. We included river miles because North Americans are used to them, and because we had to figure the mileage to do the gradient anyway.

RAFTS Although this book is geared primarily towards kayaking, we thought that there might be some interested rafters. This category is a quick guide to a river's suitability for rafting. Normally it will be a simple yes or no, but in some cases we elaborate with "experts only," and "small." A "yes" means oar boats or a regular paddle crew could make it down. "Experts only" means that the water is both too difficult for oars and for crews that are not used to paddling together. "Small" refers to boat size. A river may not be extremely difficult, but there's no room for oars or big rafts. Here we're recommending less than 11-ft self-bailing boats or Shredder type crafts. Again, these are just guidelines - read the descriptions and decide if your raft and skills are appropriate for the river.

CHARACTER A three to five word attempt at describing a river to give you a quick idea.

FIESTA FACTOR Just how much fun is this river, anyway? We used a scale from one to six to rate the amount of fun you'll have doing this river and talking about it in the bar afterwards. The more ☺, the better. We also meant this to be used as a "gotta do this one" list. If we rate a river five beers or more, you don't want to miss it.

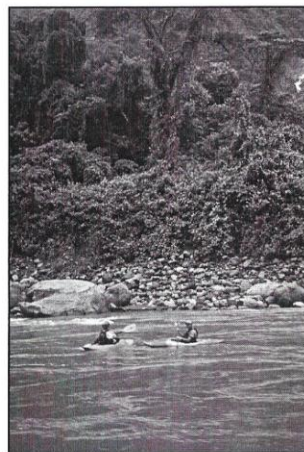


DEGREE OF SUFFERING Paddle long enough in Ecuador and this one will make sense. This also uses a one to six scale. A rating of one ☹ is pleasant, six is masochistic. This scale is not about the difficulty of the river, but the overall hassle involved with doing the run. How long of a walk to the put-in? How much flatwater to the take-out? Yeah, that was a great surf wave, but do you see that mud we have to walk through to get to the road? It also considers such mundane details as how long and grueling the shuttle is.

MEDIUM FLOW We hate this one. This is an attempt to give you an idea of what a "regular" water level is. While it is often a guess at cfs, we don't claim to be any better than anyone else at looking at a river and deciding it's 3941 cfs today. We thought we needed to give an idea of what medium water was to give our ratings and descriptions some scale.

100 cfs ≈ 2,83 cms

SHUTTLE Many runs in Ecuador can be done using only the public bus system. Other rivers require a taxi or truck to get to the put-in, and some a combination. Of course, if you hire a vehicle for your entire stay, this category isn't as important. If the run can be done by hitching or catching buses on both ends we write "Bus ok." If both put-in and take-out require a special shuttle "hire a truck" is written. For rivers that require a special ride just to the put-in or take-out, but a bus can be ridden for the other leg, we write "truck to put-in" or "truck to take-out," respectively. Of course "truck" is also used loosely. It can be a van, a taxi or a milk truck. If a more rugged vehicle is normally required, that will be in the text. *



NOTE: Rivers and rapids in Ecuador change not only with water level. Seasonal floods or local re-routing of waterways can cause permanent changes in river beds. Roads can be washed out or extended. This guidebook contains information current at the time of publishing. However, when using it, keep in mind that rivers, roads, access and many other factors make boating in Ecuador very dynamic.

Map Key

- (any solid line) river or creek
- - - - road
- - - - - very bad road or trail
- * river access
- - - -  - - - - bridge
-  oil pump station





ABOUT ECUADOR



GEOGRAPHY Situated right on the equator, Ecuador has everything from snow-capped volcanoes to warm sandy beaches. The Andes Mountains run from north to south, popularly dividing the small country into the *Sierra* mountain region, the *Costa* west of the Andes to the Pacific Ocean, and the *Oriente* on the east side of the Andes as it drops down into the Amazon basin. The *Costa* and the *Oriente* are lowlands. In Ecuador, the good whitewater rivers typically flow down either the west or east side of the Andes, close to or in the *Sierra* where there is plenty of gradient.

CLIMATE When gringos think of Ecuador, they usually think hot, tropical jungle. The *Oriente* and the *Costa* generally meet these expectations. However, at any time of the year you can find snow as you go up in elevation. Come prepared for anything.

As you drop down into the *Costa* or the *Oriente* you will see more and more rain, heat and humidity. However, the Quijos Valley is between 4000 and 7000 feet, and while days here can be warm, there are also periods of rain and cold. Nights usually cool down enough for a light jacket. The Quijos' rivers are snow-fed as well as rain-fed, with temperatures ranging from 50-65 degrees F. The lower you go, the warmer the water is.

The temperature and humidity noticeably increase as you leave the Quijos Valley and drop down from Guacamayo Pass into the Amazon basin and deeper into the *Oriente*. Tena is at an elevation of about 1300 feet. The rain-fed rivers here are much warmer. Every once in a while after days of rain it might be cool enough to wear jeans.

As you drop down the west side of the Andes into the *Costa*, temperatures are similar to those around Tena. It does seem to be hotter and more humid, especially near the coast.

SEASONS Every guidebook and often every local have a different idea of when the rainy season is. Ecuador's non-sierra climate can be better characterized as having rainy and really rainy seasons. As a result, rivers are rarely too low for good paddling.

The best boating season in the *Oriente* is October - February, with September and March also good but more likely to be threatened by excess rain. Usually at least once every month or two it will rain for days and river levels in at least one drainage area will skyrocket. The rainiest times of year when levels are more likely to be too high for kayaking are in our summer months, April through August.

The rainy season on the western side of the Andes is January through May, almost the opposite of that of the *Oriente*. This is probably the best time for the creek runs as well as the more popular rafting runs, although some can be done all year long. Periods of sudden rain occur here as well.

PEOPLE Ecuador is made up of many different peoples. You'll find everyone from cosmopolitan city dwellers to folks who live miles from any road. In the areas in which you will be boating, the indigenous people you encounter will mainly be Quichuas, with a language and culture all their own. Especially in the Tena area, the folks you see along the river might consider themselves more Quichua than Ecuadorian. In fact, some of the younger kids who haven't started school may not yet know any Spanish. *



BOATING IN ECUADOR



STUFF TO BRING Bring the five essentials in good condition as well as the standard spare paddle, throw rope, and rescue gear. It is possible to buy or rent used or new gear in Ecuador, but it might require a trip to Quito or to another drainage and the selection will be limited. Bring all the normal polypro, boating shorts, etc. In Tena and other lower elevation areas, a shorty or paddling jacket is sufficient. In the colder Quijos Valley a dry top is often appropriate. Here are some more Ecuador-specific suggestions.

- ★ Good shoes. *You might want to do some runs that require serious hiking in or out, sometimes through deep sticky mud or sketchy jungle.*
- ★ Emergency gear. *Good first aid kit, headlamp, rain poncho, water purification tablets, snacks.*
- ★ Sunscreen. *You're on the equator; burns happen fast and deep.*
- ★ Bug dope. *Nothing like prevention as a cure for malaria.*
- ★ Machete. *If you plan on doing any exploratory trips, pick one up in Quito or a jungle town.*
- ★ Extra money and dry clothes for riding in vehicles. *You never know when you might need a ride.*

WATER LEVELS Keep an eye out for flash floods. Jungle rivers are fed by many tributaries, so a sudden rainstorm can bring water levels up very quickly. Rain far upstream of where you are, hours ago, can reach you quite unexpectedly. On one trip, the sweep kayak turned around to see a wall of water coming toward the group, and barely got everyone's attention in time. Water levels can also drop quickly, so it might be worth it to wait it out if you're caught in high water.

While Ecuador's rivers are, on average, cleaner than most rivers in the U.S., high water can bring a lot of shit, literally, into the river. Little side creeks that haven't flooded in a while will purge their debris. Rivers and their tributaries sometimes pass by farms and villages at some point, and these areas often don't have the most sophisticated of sewer systems. You might want to consider waiting a few hours or days if a river that hasn't flooded in a while is going off.

Low water is almost never a problem. Some runs do get better with more water, but many runs are better at low water. We've heard stories of boaters renting a vehicle, driving two hours to a put-in, then coming back because they thought there wasn't enough water. Most of these runs don't need much water to be runnable. Don't waste your shuttle-scrapce down a few rapids until channels come together or a tributary comes in.

DAYLIGHT Being on the equator, Ecuador has twelve hours of daylight all year long. It starts to get dark around 5:30 or 6:00. When it gets dark in the jungle, it gets really dark. Plan ahead and start early. Bring a headlamp for long runs.

BOAT CAREFULLY - THERE'S NO FLIGHT FOR LIFE The last several years have seen a dramatic increase in the number of kayakers in Ecuador. Unfortunately, this has corresponded with a significant increase in the number of kayakers needing outside help or rescue. Keep in mind that you're in a remote jungle environment, and you need to be more prepared than you would be on a run at home. Often the difference between a successful run and disaster can be checking water levels thoroughly or bringing a "bivy" sandwich. While accidents do happen, try not to burden the country's limited search and rescue capabilities. The locals already think kayaking is a crazy and dangerous sport, and there has been talk of local and national regulation. If foreigners keep getting lost,



hurt, and stranded, government control could be the next step.

Be prepared for anything. Every year groups spend unplanned nights on the riverbanks. Many of these runs are difficult to reach between access points, so bring appropriate extra gear.

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS If you want to do some exploring or just get more info on runs, you can pick up topographic maps at the Instituto Geográfico Militar, located at Av. Gran Colombia and Solano in Quito. *

ECUADORIAN CULTURE

Ecuadorians are usually curious about kayakers, thinking of us as slightly off-the-wall gringos. Most Ecuadorians cannot imagine or understand having the desire, time, and money to get involved in the sport. While you may think of yourself as a dirt-poor kayak bum, to most Ecuadorians you are rich and privileged. Locals are usually kind, courteous, and welcoming to kayakers, especially if you are friendly and respectful in return. In most areas of the country virtually no English is spoken. If you know even a little Spanish, Ecuadorians will be thrilled and as helpful as can be. Ecuadorian Spanish is relatively clear and slow, so it is a great place to learn.

GRINGOS If you're reading this, and unless English is your second language, then you're a gringo. "Gringo" isn't a negative term, but a descriptive one. Technically, we've been told by South Americans, only U.S. citizens are gringos. A Canadian isn't a gringo, nor is a European. In Ecuador, however, "gringo" is often used more loosely to refer to all foreigners.

Gringos tend to lead lives much more scheduled than Ecuadorians. To Ecuadorians, this means that we are more uptight than they are, more stressed. In Ecuador, *mañana* doesn't necessarily mean tomorrow. Things will get done, but what's the rush? If we say two o'clock, a driver might come at three o'clock, wondering why we're miffed. It can be frustrating to deal with the *mañana* attitude if you're trying to squeeze as much boating as possible into a short time. Schedule in a few extra days if you can to account for this, or go with an outfitter.

ECUADORIAN CULTURAL DIFFERENCES Folks tend to be openly curious about kayaking. Staring is not considered rude. Ecuadorians have a different concept of personal space, and you might find yourself surrounded by fifteen kids when you want to change. Simply ask them to move with a smile (*Por favor, voy a cambiarme la ropa*). Kids will ask you for handouts or gifts. You shouldn't feel obligated to give them anything. If you're into it, consider having fruit or stickers on hand instead of teeth-rotting junk food. Just know that if you do, the next time any kayaker is there the pack will be even bigger.

You'll also encounter a different concept of noise. Ecuadorians generally think nothing of blasting music late at night or screaming across the street at 5:30 in the morning. They aren't intentionally rude; they're just accustomed to such noises and don't give them a second thought. Consider bringing earplugs.

TIPPING In nice restaurants, a standard tip is 10%. At local places, tipping is 0-10%. If a taxi driver helps or carries something for you, then a tip is appropriate.



BE A GOOD GRINGO As you travel around Ecuador, keep in mind that Ecuadorians are forming their opinions of North Americans as well as of kayakers from what they see of you. As gringos, we're given a good amount of leeway in terms of local customs. Ecuadorians tend to be very modest in comparison to gringos. For example, Ecuadorians rarely wear shorts except at a sporting event, but they are considered acceptable for gringos. You almost never see a shirtless local riding in the back of a truck. Keep this modesty in mind; be discreet when changing at the river. If you look around, city and country, Ecuadorians dress nicely unless they are going to milk the cows. If you want to be treated with respect, don't dress too casually.

Ecuadorians generally don't mind kayakers crossing their property getting to and from rivers. Ask permission to put in near a house or field - it's a nice courtesy. Close gates behind you, try not to spook livestock, and don't trudge through sown fields. Locals often help kayakers out, with rides, directions, and cheers at rapids. Repay the favors when you can. If you have room in your shuttle vehicle, pick up a few folks. *

SAFETY

The people of Ecuador are generally very honest and friendly. However, Ecuador is a third world country with the problems that poverty brings anywhere. Guayaquil is known to be especially dangerous. Although still safe compared to Guayaquil, crime is increasing in Quito. Beware of transvestite hookers on street corners near Amazonas—a 4" spiked heel can be a hell of a weapon.

Quito isn't dangerous if you simply use common sense. Look out for pickpockets. Go out with as little money as possible and don't flash it around. Money belts and hidden pouches are a good idea, but any thief worth their title knows where gringos carry their dough. Day packs and packages could get stolen while you sit at restaurants and bars. On crowded transportation keep stuff zipped up, close to you, and in sight. Don't walk down alleys by yourself, especially in Old Town. The bus station is a notorious site for petty theft and scams. Be careful at night. You're pretty safe in New Quito, but keep an eye out as it gets late and the streets are empty. Don't be paranoid, just careful.

Once you get out of the city you can relax a bit, but still be watchful. We've heard of several incidents of armed bus robbery on Papallacta pass, and we recommend trying to go over that pass during daylight hours. Don't leave anything unattended in vehicles.

If you leave your stuff hanging all over your hotel porch, it might be in danger of disappearing. As has been explained to us by locals, your stuff won't exactly get stolen, but just taken, because people figure you don't care enough about it to watch it well. Especially prized items include shoes, hats, shirts, watches, and sunglasses. This is probably an overcautious warning - in all our years down there, only one or two things have disappeared. *





ARRIVING



IMMIGRATION North Americans don't need a visa to travel in Ecuador, but your passport must be valid for at least six months after your planned departure date. When it's your turn to hand your passport and customs form (which you will be given on the plane) to the customs official in Quito, keep in mind that you can get a tourist card (T-3) for up to three months. If you're not sure how long you want to stay, try to get the full time so that you can avoid having to get a T-3 extension in Quito later. If you do want to extend your stay past three months, you need to check at the Immigration office. There are offices in Quito, Tena, and Santo Domingo.

The customs official will stamp the time you are allowed in the country on your passport and on a carbon copy of the customs form. Do not lose this little piece of paper because you will need it when you depart.

GETTING OUT OF THE AIRPORT Now you'll pick up checked stuff and head out of the airport. There is sometimes an airport official checking baggage claim tags so have them handy. The money-changing office (Cambios) is often closed so you should arrive with some U.S. dollars (this is the local currency now). The remodeled airport is a much friendlier feeling place than the old exit into a surging crowd. It is now pretty easy to get out the door where there are taxis just a few steps away. Most popular hotels are 10 to 15 minutes away by speeding taxi. A new airport is being built on the outskirts of Quito (due to be completed by 2009) which should make for less arrival cancellations due to weather, but will make for a much longer and more expensive trip to the popular tourist area.

- ☆ **Taxi** - The cheapest option, about \$5 to most hotels (per vehicle not person). They are pretty good about charging the approved rate, but it doesn't hurt to check before loading up.
- ☆ **Van (*fergoneta*)** - If arriving in a big group or with a kayak, this might be the best option. Have the price set before loading up—it should be around \$10 to \$15 per vehicle. You can rent them inside the airport just after sending your luggage through the x-ray machines or outside next to the taxis.
- ☆ **Bus** - Don't try to figure out the buses yet, especially at night and/or with boats and gear.

TIPPING If you get a luggage cart (\$1 rental), one of the porters will usually push it for you and then return it to the airport. If you are carrying lots of luggage or a boat, someone outside will usually try to give you a hand whether you want them to or not. Giving the porter a \$1 tip is pretty standard. Tipping the non-official helpers outside is more of a personal call. *



LEAVING



CONFIRM AIRLINE RESERVATIONS Confirm your flight three days in advance of departure or you can lose your seat. It doesn't hurt to confirm more than once.

EXIT TAX You are required to pay an exit tax at the airport. In 2006, it was \$32. Credit cards are not accepted.

KAYAKS It seems that airlines are more relaxed in Quito than in the States. You might be charged similar rates for kayaks, though you are more likely to be charged less or nothing. If you want to sell your kayak in Ecuador, spread the word early. Try rafting or adventure travel companies. The purchase price is usually lower in Ecuador than in the U.S. If you shipped your kayak down airfreight, you might be required by customs to bring a boat out of the country. *



MONEY



In 2000 Ecuador changed over to the U.S. dollar for its official currency. There are still a few money changing places that will deal in other foreign currency as will some banks. Traveler's checks can be cashed at banks in Quito but not in any of the other cities or towns you are likely to be in. Ecuador operates primarily on cash, although at nicer hotels credit cards are starting to be accepted. In the past a surcharge of up to 8% might be added for things like airline tickets or Galapagos trips but this is starting to disappear.

There are many ATM machines in Quito and Santo Domingo and a couple in Tena. Some of the ATM's only work with Ecuadorian credit cards. The Quijos valley has no ATM's or banking facilities for a foreigner. *



TELEPHONES



It is quite easy to make calls around the country and back to the U.S. from Quito and smaller towns. Quito, Tena and Santo Domingo have numerous telephone offices (Movistar and Porta) that have telephone cabins where you dial yourself and can see a running tally of your expenses. Calls to the U.S. are about \$.29 a minute. Some internet cafes have even less expensive phone rates. There are also pay phones in most towns, even the small ones, where you typically buy a prepaid card at the nearest store and you can call locally, long distance or internationally quite reasonably. A few paddlers that felt the need to stay in touch purchased a cell phone upon their arrival in Quito and have used it while they traveled. Get a Porta phone, not Movistar and you will get better coverage in the paddling areas. You will probably want to get one that uses prepaid phone cards. *



QUITO



Quito sprawls north to south in a long, skinny Andean valley at about 9000 feet. To the south of the city is *Quito Colonial*, filled with narrow cobble streets, colonial churches, and small markets. As Quito grows it pushes further and further north. The most popular tourist area is in *Quito Nuevo*, spread out along Amazonas and its side streets. Here you find a plethora of hotels, restaurants and stores. As most paddlers arrive and leave out of Quito, often using it as a base, we want to give you a brief guide to the city.

TRANSPORTATION Walking is generally the easiest way to get around. There are numerous buses running north south on Quito's main roads and are quite cheap, \$.25. To signal a bus to stop, wave an arm up and down. To tell a driver to let you off, stand up and yell "Gracias." A relatively modern electric trolley on 10 de Agosto as well as the eco bus on "6 de Diciembre" offer a fine way to get around during rush hour. There are over 10,000 taxis zipping around Quito, and they are also cheap. All taxis are required to have meters, but sometimes they are "broken" or "don't work at night." Try to insist on them. If you have to bargain a fare, do so before getting in.

HOTELS There are dozens of hotels in all price ranges in the "Mariscal" section of Quito alone. Almost all the hotels have storage rooms called "bodegas" where you can leave extra gear or luggage while traveling. The Mariscal is also known as Gringolandia and is full of souvenir stores, outfitters, internet cafes and phone offices. Here are a few hotels to get you started:

- ☆ **Hostal Calama #1** – Well located on Calama street near Reina Victoria. Private rooms with hot water in private baths and TVs. \$8 singles, \$10 doubles and \$15 for triples. ph 02 223 7510
- ☆ **Crossroads** – The owner of this convenient hotel is a kayaker and there are a variety of rooms available from 6 person dorms with shared baths \$5.60 to private rooms with bath, singles \$15.68, doubles \$24.64. Foch y Juan León Mera info@crossroads.com ph 02 223 4735
- ☆ **Alston Inn** – Private rooms with hot water and TVs, good location. Singles \$15, doubles \$22. Juan León Mera y Veintimilla www.alston@interactive.net.ec ph 02 222 2721

FOOD Quito can be food heaven if you have been traveling in rural Ecuador. For between \$3 to \$10 you can get a great meal and for \$20 you can dine like royalty. All kinds of fast food can be found at the CCI mall north on Calle Amazonas. For the cheapest food in or outside of Quito try local Ecuadorian restaurants and get the meal of the day, typically \$1.50 to \$2.50. There are lots of small cafes and restaurants catering to tourists all over the Mariscal area. Here are a few local favorites:

- ☆ **Magic Bean** – Large breakfasts, Foch and Juan León Mera
- ☆ **Red Hot Chile Peppers** – Good Mexican and margaritas. On Foch kitty corner from Crossroads.
- ☆ **Chandani Tandoori** – Good cheap Indian food Juan León Mera just south of Colón.



QUITO



You'll find Ecuadorian versions of convenience stores on every corner. If you want a real supermarket, try Supermaxi in El Jardin Mall on Amazonas.

INTERNET CAFES AND PHONE OFFICES There are literally dozens of internet cafes in Quito. Most internet cafes also offer net-to-phone service, some for as cheap as 8 cents per minute to call the U.S. There are also more official phone offices run by the phone companies. These are more expensive, but give you a much better connection.



RIVER CONSERVATION



The Ecuadorian Rivers Institute was formed as a U.S. non-profit in 2002 by Matt Terry. The ERI works to protect and conserve unique watershed resources in Ecuador. The ERI's vision is to encourage sustainable natural resource management by educating the people of Ecuador about the importance of protecting their waterways. Their programs include conservation, education, events, and paddle sports for Ecuadorians. For more information about the ERI, check out their website at www.kayakecuador.com. *



Equator Monument



GETTING AROUND



BUSES Ecuador has a surprisingly good long-distance bus system. Most Ecuadorians depend on this system, so it remains cheap (especially for gringos) and goes almost everywhere. As the country modernizes, more and more buses are without roof racks. In the good old days, you could count on always finding rack space for your kayak somewhere among the chickens and bananas. These days you have to make sure a bus has a suitable rack.

Have your own tie downs, and if the bus assistant insists on tying boats for you, check their work. They aren't accustomed to tying down smooth objects that like to squirrel out of ropes. We recommend tying boats cockpit down, as it often rains. Smaller boats can sometimes fit in the under-bus compartments of the newer buses. The fare for kayaks on buses is typically between zero and half of passenger fare. Keep in mind that most buses don't have bathrooms, and if they do they are often locked. Be prepared to hold it for as long as the driver can.

CATCHING THE BUS In cities like Quito, Tena, Santo Domingo and Baños, it's easiest to catch a bus at the terminal (called *terminal terrestre* or *terminal de buses*). There, you'll be able to buy the ticket ahead of time, make sure the bus has a suitable rack, and tie your boat on before take-off. On the road, buses are most likely to stop near a covered stop, though they will stop anywhere if they feel like it. The occasional driver doesn't like kayakers and will fly by, but most don't seem to mind. Once the bus stops, be fast. Get someone up on top to tie down the boats, paddles, and gear bags. Drivers don't necessarily wait for everyone to get off the roof, so have some good holds until the next stop and watch out for low cables. Be careful stepping around up there. You could squish anything from a crop of bananas to a litter of puppies.

TO GET OFF It's easiest if you know specifically where you want to get off and can tell the bus assistant beforehand - town name, road mileage, a good landmark. If you spot your destination as the bus flies by, yell "*Gracias!*" and the bus should stop. Again, be fast. Check to make sure you have everything - these buses have no lost-and-found office.

RENTING A VEHICLE Hertz and Avis both have offices at the Quito airport, several Quito locations, and in other major cities. There are also some cheaper Ecuadorian companies, such as Ecuacar. Beware that in Ecuador credit card insurance common in the U.S. usually isn't accepted. There is usually a very high deductible no matter what insurance you use.

If you want to rent a vehicle as well as a driver, you can do this in Quito. The cost is usually around \$100 per day, depending on type of vehicle. This price includes gas but does not include driver's expenses for food and lodging. In Tena you can also arrange for drivers and vehicles to leave the area, especially if you are willing to pay for their room and board. If you rent a vehicle, you might consider giving locals a ride when you can. Ecuadorians often pick gringos up, and it's not a bad idea to reinforce favorable opinions of kayakers.

TENA AREA SHUTTLES Shuttles are as easy as can be in Tena, as there is no shortage of willing drivers and taxi pick-up trucks. Many drivers know the put-ins and take-outs and even approximate paddling times. Most hotels know of drivers and can call one for you



GETTING AROUND



or just flag one down on the street. Depending on the run you can hire them for a drop off and pick up or just get dropped off and bus back. Bus shuttles to put-ins are possible as well. Typical price for an Upper Jondachi drop off and pick up is \$35, drop off to Upper Jatunyacu at Santa Rosa \$10 (as of 2006).

Although slightly more challenging than Tena, transportation in the Quijos valley has become much easier lately. The town of El Chaco has pick-up truck taxis that run from Santa Rosa, downstream of El Chaco, to Baeza on a non-scheduled but frequent basis. There are also buses heading up and down valley, both local and going to and from Quito. If you are doing one of the lower valley runs where you take out below El Chaco you can catch a ride to town with a passing truck or bus and either stay on it or get off and hire a truck taxi to take you where you want to go. They have a set price schedule so if you think something is too pricey ask to see their list. Costs at time of printing El Chaco to Baeza \$7, El Chaco to San Juan (Oyacachi put in) \$7, El Chaco to Borja \$4. If you flag down a Taxi on the fly it should be about \$.50 between each town in the valley. Good drivers in Borja: Wilo Acosta, ph 06 232 0010. Victor Montenegro ph 06 232 0418. Good drivers in Baeza: Rodrigo Morales, ph 09 958 7953; Vicente Cevallos, ph 09 766 0263.

WESTERN SLOPE Buses are less kayak-friendly on the Western Slope, but some will still stop to pick you up. You might be able to get shuttle help from Quito-based rafting companies for a small price. There are also trucks for hire in the cities and bigger towns, and you can hitch rides around here.

DRIVING IN ECUADOR A foreign driver's license is accepted for the first month that you are in the country. After that, you are supposed to get an Ecuadorian license. There are offices for this in Quito, Tena, and other big towns. Ecuadorians have some different driving techniques than we do. Use the horn a lot: to warn someone you are passing, to thank them for letting you pass, to warn a pedestrian, going around a blind curve, etc. The condition of most of the roads you will be on doesn't allow high speed, so you might be alarmed by how close an oncoming car is when someone passes. It is not uncommon for a two-lane road to suddenly become three or four lane when vehicles are passing.

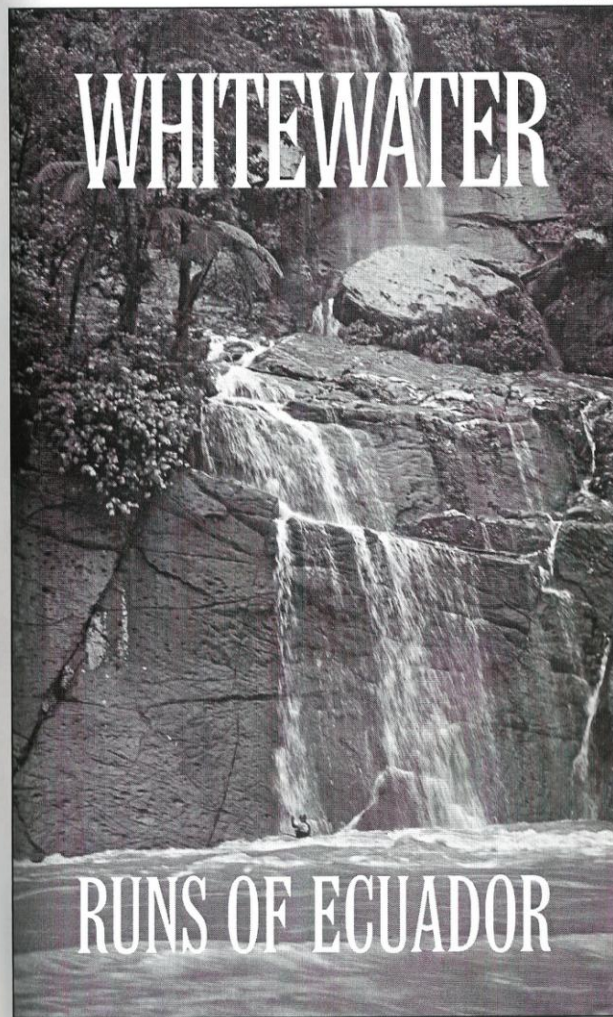
Few roads outside of Quito are paved, and they quickly become potholed or washedboarded. Mudslides and even big landslides occur when it has been raining a lot. There are no highway crews to put up neon signs when a road will be closed. We've sat an entire day in a line of traffic miles long when a road was closed to fix a one-lane bridge. If you leave a vehicle unattended, lock it and don't leave anything of value inside or out of it, especially in Quito and the Tena area. Hire a guard or park in a secure lot. Gas stations in the country are often few, far between, and out of gas. Fill up when you can.

HORSES If you hire horses or mules to help carry boats and gear on a grueling hike to the put-in or take-out, here are a few tips. Throw a sweater over the horse's head while loading boats (better yet, a buddy's sweater) because horses don't like to see long colorful plastic things attached to their body. Short boats work better than long. Gear and boats must be balanced side to side. Keep the front of the boats close to the horse





or they get stuck on trees. Bring a machete to cut down branches in the way; it's easier to do that than back the horse up. Don't pay the horse owners until you get there, and make sure you all know where "there" is. *





QUIJOS VALLEY



The Quijos and all the rivers and creeks draining into it provide many quality runs. The Quijos eventually becomes the Río Coca, and the Coca joins the Río Napo in the town of Coca. In this valley, you're at between 4000 and 7000 feet. The water temperature here is generally much colder than in other areas of Ecuador - dry top temperature. While it usually cools enough for a sweater at night, days can be hot and sunny (but not like Tena) when it isn't raining.

The majority of folks in the Quijos Valley are dairy farmers, but greenhouse farming and tourism are up-and-coming industries. The World Rafting Championships were held here in 2005 and the locals now have a good idea about river running. The two local cantons (counties) are excited about kayaking and rafting and do lots to help with access and other river issues.

GETTING THERE Go east out of Quito, toward Tumbaco and then Pifo. From there, follow signs to Lago Agrio and Tena. The road goes up over Papallacta Pass and then drops down into the Quijos Valley. Just before Baeza, the road forks at the "Y," the left fork to Lago Agrio and the other to Tena. It's about 1 1/2 hours from Quito to Papallacta Pass, then another hour to the "Y."

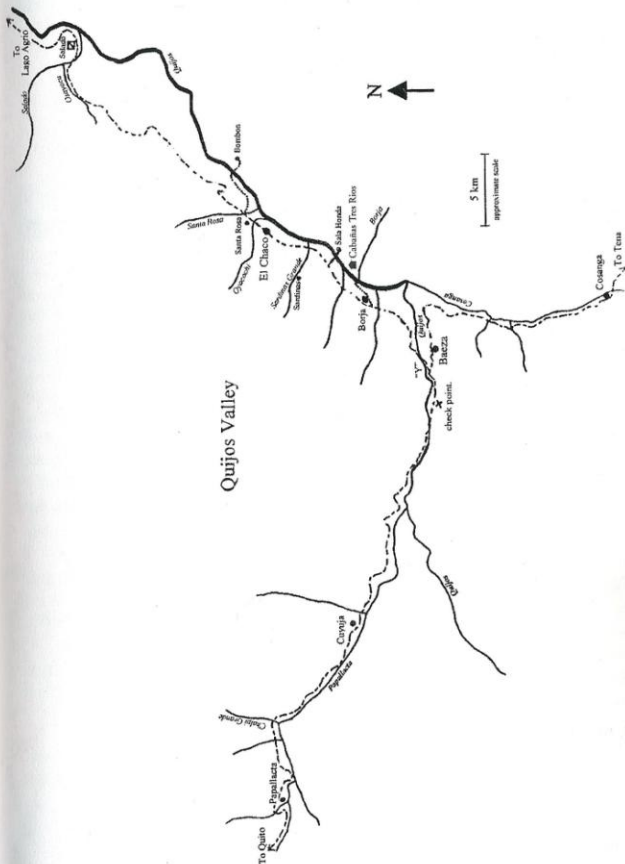
From the Quito bus terminal, catch buses to Baeza, Tena, or Lago Agrio. If you're willing to do some bus hopping then any of the three will do. If you don't want to shuffle boats between buses, check the map to see what lies on each route. Check the guidebook updates page at www.kayakersguidetoecuador.blogspot.com for bus departure times.

As you drop down into the valley from Quito, you pass the towns of Papallacta, Cuyuja, and then the police road stop. If you go right and up at the "Y," you hit Baeza, then Cosanga, and eventually Tena. If you go left, you hit Borja, Sardinas, El Chaco, and eventually Lago Agrio and then Coca.

At the police control just before the "Y" you may be stopped, asked where you are going and what you are carrying in the vehicle. This is also where they might want to see your driver's license and car registration (matricula). Occasionally they ask everyone



to get out and bring their passports to the office so they can write down the information. This stop is a drug checkpoint, complete with soldiers, guns, and dogs. If you are caught with drugs in Ecuador you go to jail first and they ask questions later. Anyone in the vehicle with you can also be arrested. *





QUIJOS VALLEY MAJOR TOWNS



BAEZA This small town has two parts. Coming from the "Y" you come to Baeza Colonial, the original Baeza. Thirty years ago a landslide came close to the town and it was abandoned for Baeza Nueva, which is another 1/8 mile towards Tena. Baeza Colonial has been rebuilt and repopulated but "Nuevo" is still larger and has more stores.

Restaurants: Gina's – Baeza Colonial. Good, safe food. The original kayaker hang-out in Baeza. El Viejo – Baeza Nuevo. Good, safe food. The menu here is very similar to Gina's since her sister runs it.

Hotels: Gina's. Nice rooms above the restaurant. \$6-\$8. ph 06 232 0471.

Casa de Rodrigo. Next to Ginas. Rodrigo has rafted much of the Quijos and is knowledgeable on river levels and access. \$8. ph 06 232 0467.

Bambus. Located in New Baeza. \$10. ph 06 232 0219.

BORJA Since most of Borja is off the main highway it is even sleepier than Baeza and, although close to many runs, has less services than Chaco and Baeza. On the main highway near the upstream end of town there is a good restaurant called "Doña Cleo's." There is a decent hotel on the main highway on the downstream edge of town called Hotel Quijos and a couple on the main road to the right into town. Cabañas Tres Ríos is located downstream on river right at Quijos puente #4 and is Small World Adventures' base. Rooms are available if they don't have river trips staying there. \$25 ph 09 792 0120 or 09 421 1709.

EL CHACO Biggest town in the valley and convenient for the runs on the Oyacachi and lower Quijos, but then again everything is close in this valley. Los Yumbos is a hotel about a kilometer downstream of town, okay food, quaint jungle style set up. ph 06 232 9101. Guarida del Coyote is above town on a hill, pool and okay rooms. ph 06 232 9222. There are two gas stations in town and internet at the "Centro de Comunicaciones" next to the police station at the upstream edge of town.

COCA Coca is a true undisguised jungle town, oily and hot as hell. If you have to stay here (most likely after taking out from the Coca run), stay at the Hotel Auca and eat in the hotel dining room.

COSANGA Last town in Quijos Valley before you go up Guacamayo Pass. No hotels. One restaurant on road. Gas station across from restaurant.

PAPALLACTA On the east side of pass. North off of main road is fancy "Termas de Papallacta" hot springs, with tourist hotel and restaurant. South off the road is the town and locals' hot springs. Several hotels in town, and touristy one at Termas. Restaurants at Termas and in town. No gas station. *

Upper		PAPALLACTA		Upper
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low NA Med IV High V	4 hrs	235 fpm	5.5 miles 9 km	No!
Character: Skinny, loggy creeking Fiesta Factor: ☹️☹️ Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️ Medium flow: 200 Shuttle: Bus ok				

DESCRIPTION

As you drive over the pass from Quito and descend into the Quijos valley, it's hard not to stare with longing at the river you're driving along. This is the Papallacta, which joins almost imperceptibly with the Quijos just above the Baeza Pump Station. The Papallacta from the town of Cuyuja to its confluence with the Quijos is one of the best and hardest road accessed runs in Ecuador. Above Cuyuja, the river is easier, rockier, and sillier. At medium flows, this run can be fun rock dodging, interspersed with some hard rapids and portages. Watch out for logs and pin spots. At low water it's just too rocky and hard on the butt. Be careful how high you run this. It's a tiny creek and in several spots from the road it looks like the more water the better, but at high flows/floods, this is non-stop and gnarly. Above the Río Chalpi Chico, there are a few runnable sections, but the river in general is so skinny to be worth it. Go below the "Pump Station Chalpi Grande" and start at the Río Chalpi Grande, where you'll actually be able to boat most of the way to Cuyuja.

PUT-IN: Río Chalpi Grande. The main road from Quito crosses this tributary 28.5 km upstream of the "Y" in Baeza. Put in on the Chalpi Grande and boat or carry down to the main river.

TAKE-OUT: The town of Cuyuja, 19 km above the "Y." There is a small footbridge that is the last chance to get out at Cuyuja before the lower Papallacta starts. Don't miss it! The best access is on river left above the rapid before the bridge. See put-in for Río Papallacta.

NOTE: If the water is high enough that you can do the Upper Papallacta, you probably don't want to do the lower! *



PAPALLACTA

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV+ Med V High V+	3-5 hours	175 (210)	7.5 miles 12 km	No
Character: Steep creeking Fiesta Factor: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Nasty rocks Medium flow: 500 Shuttle: Bus ok				

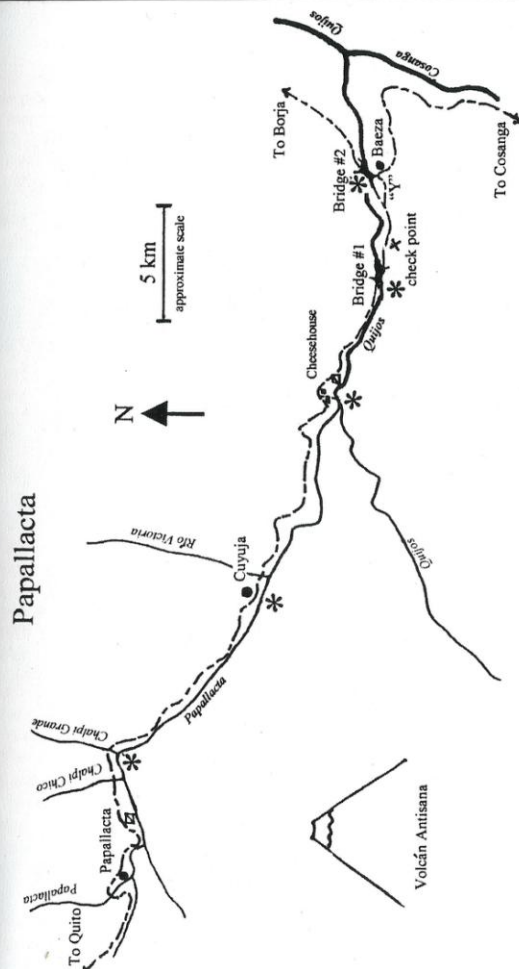
DESCRIPTION

Below the town of Cuyuja, the Papallacta immediately starts rocking. This is one of the harder runs of the Quijos Valley. Within 50 meters of the put-in the cliffs have grown tall and the rapids are almost continuous. At medium to high flows, catching eddies can be difficult. It's best to do this run first with someone who knows it or at lower flows. Although you will encounter difficult boating and lots of scouting throughout the entire run, the most difficult and continuous section is within a half hour of the put-in. In this first mini-gorge, plan to catch every eddy and scout often as there are definitely places you do not want to go. At higher flows, eddies are scarce in this first canyon.

This run can take as little as 3 hours, but start early your first time so you have plenty of time to scout. Although the road does follow the river, it's a long way up and only accessible in a few places where trails come down to the river. The action does let up for some calm stretches, but it's not over until you reach the Quijos. Even then, the "Cheesehouse" section will keep you entertained. About halfway through the Papallacta there is some recent construction on river left. Use caution in this area. There are several places where rapids have been changed from week to week and large broken rocks have been pushed into the main channel by bulldozers and blasting. The canyon narrows down one last time before the confluence. The confluence rapid is best scouted from the right just after a small footbridge. Finish this rapid and boof into the Quijos. From here down until the next road access is the "Cheesehouse" section of the Quijos.

PUT-IN: The town of Cuyuja, 19 km upstream of the "Y." Put-in on river left just upstream of a footbridge. To get to the bridge from the main road, look for a small soccer field on the downstream side of the town. Almost all of the small streets get you to the same place. Try to get to the lower corner of the field, nearest to the river. Drive until the road becomes a trail, then walk about 100 meters.

TAKE-OUT: The first time the road gets close to the river again is at a small footbridge below Pump Station #5. There's a small pullout here and a tiny covered bus stop if you are waiting for a ride. If it's dark or you need to take out earlier, there are a few trails and pipeline access points upstream, but they're a long way below the road. You could also continue down to Quijos Bridge #1 if you want to extend your day. *





FEAR & LOATHING ON THE TOP QUIJOS



To appreciate this story you have to understand the mental state that Larry and I were in. We were attempting to do the first descent of the "Top" Quijos above its confluence with the Papallacta. This was our third attempt. On our first two tries, we wandered around the highlands with kayaks on our shoulders, looking for a way to the river. This time, we figured the route out. We had spent a full day trudging through cow fields and cloud forest just to (finally!) reach the put-in. The further we hiked the less we trusted our topo map. We were carrying a GPS and it and the map were agreeing less and less. Trails that were on the map didn't exist, and when we finally got to the put-in at the confluence of the Quijos and Tablón rivers, we found the topo had it misplaced by 3 km. The map also showed a trail paralleling the river all the way down. We were counting on this trail as a safety net if the river got too hairy. Near the confluence, we met two locals who told us "no trail follows the river, it's full of huge rocks and waterfalls, and you're going to die." Normally news like this means it's a perfect river. But after a day of slogging through the mud, taking turns with a machete to make the established trail usable, we realized Flight for Life wasn't coming for us if things went wrong. If the map was wrong about the trail, maybe it was wrong about the gradient too.

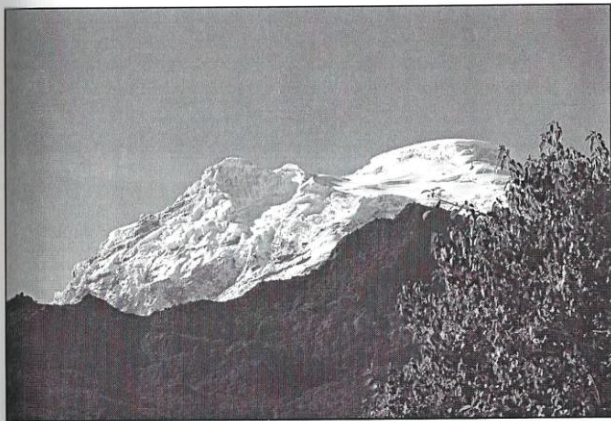
We spent a cold and rainy night in our tent at 8500 feet. The next morning, we woke to find that ants had chewed a four-foot long "L" in the floor of our tent. Time to get up. As we got ready to launch, a feeling of impending doom settled in. Upstream of our intended put-in, the entire river funneled through a five-foot wide canyon that took a 90 degree turn as it fell twenty feet. Sheer walls prevented scouting or portaging. The falls pounded into the far wall like a fire hose. Unrunnable. What if we had found a way to put-in above there? Was there more of that downstream? Without the map's phantom trail, we were going to have to walk out the way we came or boat down to the take-out. After much discussion, we decided we were too tired to hike back out the way we came. After three days of wandering around in the wilderness, we were going to go boating, damn it. We decided that we would try not to boat down any rapids that we couldn't hike back up, so that if things got unrunnable we could still make it back to the put-in and hike out.

It was a good idea, but after the first couple of Class IV+ rapids, we began to wonder if we could make it back up. The canyon continued to close in and the rapids continued to be difficult, but not impossible. The point of no return snuck up on us. We found ourselves halfway through a Class V series that just got ugly looking downstream. Perched on a cliff halfway through the rapids, we tried to come up with a new plan. We knew we couldn't make it back to the put-in with our boats. Larry was big enough to say it was okay with him to leave the boats here and try to hike ourselves out if that's what we decided to do (both boats happened to be his). We were in the midst of some gnarly looking stuff, but around the corner it looked like it might let up. It would be so much easier if we were able to paddle out, but once we entered this next rapid, the walls closed in and there was absolutely no getting back upstream. We decided that one of us should run this rapid (we couldn't quite see the end of it because our view was blocked by a boulder), scout the next one and hope we could see around the corner to what was coming up. The remaining paddler would watch from on shore, and if the next rapid wasn't runnable, throw a rope down the cliff and help the probe climb back up from a small eddy.



It seemed like the best plan. I drew the short straw and we decided I should paddle downstream. The only remaining question was what if I had problems? There's Larry, standing upstream with a rope waiting to help me climb the cliff, but what if I swam around the corner? Maybe you had to be there, but it seemed like the best plan was for me to go and if I had problems, Larry should try to hike out alone and...have a good life. We sat there for a while, knowing that we probably couldn't make it back upstream to the put-in, and that this seemed like our only option. I told Larry not to feel bad if anything went wrong. It was an odd feeling, basically saying goodbye before running a rapid. He said good luck and, trying to make light of the situation, I said, "I love you, man" and peeled out of the eddy.

The rest is a bit anti-climactic. The rapid I ran wasn't nearly as bad as it looked. The next one was unrunnable, but we were able to portage around. Just around the corner, the canyon opened up and we saw a footbridge! A trail going somewhere! We knew that if the river got bad again, now we just had to get back to this point. It was amazing how quickly it went from "this is it" to "this is fun." We had a blast as we paddled the remaining Class III-IV to the take-out. The beers at Gina's tasted very good that night. *



Antisana—Headwaters of the Quijos



Bridge to Bridge		QUIJOS	Bridge to Bridge	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV Med IV+ High V-	1 1/2 hours	120 fpm	3 miles 4.5 km	experts only / small
Character: Rocky and continuous Fiesta Factor: ☹️☹️☹️☹️ Degree of suffering: ☹️ Medium flow: 800 Shuttle: Bus ok				

DESCRIPTION

Although many of the runs on the Quijos go from bridge to bridge, this is currently the only one that is between bridges on the main road. All the other bridges are on side roads. The upper bridge, called Quijos #1, is upstream of the police control. The takeout is at Quijos Bridge #2, about 1 kilometer below the "Y" in the road. The rapids here are very similar in character to those of the Cheesehouse section - lots of fast action in a steep, shallow riverbed. The rapid of note on this section is called "Esquina" (corner) and is about 1 km above the takeout. At some levels there are good boof options in the center. Because of its length (or lack thereof) this run is usually added on to either the one above or below it.

PUT-IN: Quijos Bridge #1, 4 km upstream of the "Y," same as the take out for Cheesehouse.

TAKE-OUT: Quijos Bridge #2, 1 km downstream of the "Y." If you are planning on hitching a ride to Baeza after this run you might consider taking out below Esquina and walking straight to the "Y." To find the best path, run Esquina, then carry back upstream



Small World Adventures' Cabañas Tres Rios

on river right. From here, cross a field straight to the "Y." If you don't find a trail it isn't worth it unless you have a grant to do an in-depth study of high altitude rain forest. The 100 yards or so of jungle may make you want to catch the first bus back to Quito and a flight home. *

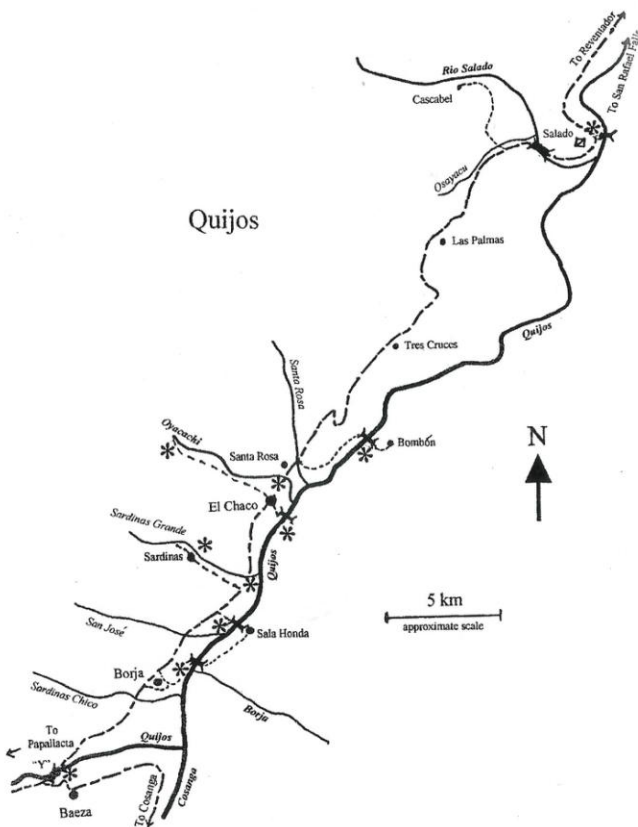
Baeza to Borja		QUIJOS	Baeza to Borja	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV- Med IV High IV+	2 1/2 hours	95 fpm	6 miles 9.5 km	small
Character: Continuous boogie water Fiesta Factor: ☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️ Fun to start small and end big Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️ (1 if you hire a vehicle) Medium flow: 1000 Shuttle: Bus ok (see text)				

DESCRIPTION

The river maintains its technical character through the first three-quarters of this run and then changes dramatically after its confluence with the Cosanga. The gradient and difficulty are less than upstream but there is still plenty of action. Numerous islands and gravel bars cause the river to split into separate channels and a bit of water reading skill is required to choose the "right" channel. Since there is less farming, the bird life is abundant. About ninety percent of the way down to the confluence with the Rio Cosanga, the Quijos #3 bridge (by-pass bridge) crosses the river, and two of the harder rapids are shortly below it. This bridge is a possible access point, though the bridge on this seldom-used bypass (Borja to Tena) road is quite far from the main road. After the confluence the river is drop-pool until the car bridge at Borja. If you are hitching your shuttle it is probably easier to keep going down to the next take-out since there is very little traffic over this bridge and it is a kilometer long walk uphill to the town of Borja.

PUT-IN: Quijos Bridge #2, see "Bridge to Bridge."

TAKE-OUT: Turn off the main road 8.4 km downstream of the "Y" and enter the small pueblo of Borja. Go straight until the end of the central park where you take a left. Take the second right, which is once again at the end of the park. After passing the large gymnasium, turn left and head downhill for about 1 km to the bridge (Quijos #4). Do not cross the bridge, but stay on river left past the bridge about 300 meters until you get to a big beach. You can also take out on river right just below the bridge on Small World Adventures' property. Their cabins and river base are a few hundred yards downstream and they do not mind kayakers putting in or taking out at the access beside the bridge. *



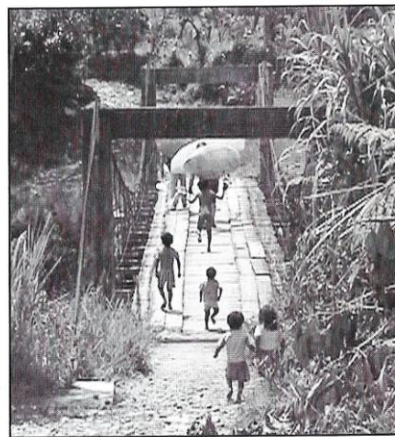
Borja Run		QUIJOS			Borja Run	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS		
Low III+ (IV) Med IV- High IV+	1 hour	75	3 miles 5 km	Yes		
Character: Wide open play Fiesta Factor: ☺☺☺☺ Degree of suffering: ☹☹☹☹ (1 if you hire a vehicle) Medium flow: 1500 Shuttle: Truck to put-in						

DESCRIPTION

Class III to III+ rapids are what to expect from this short section with one class IV rapid dominating the run about half way down. It's called "Pica Piedra" which has a double meaning: 1. Flintstones, 2. Rock bite. Depending how your run is you can choose to interpret it however you wish. The easiest run is down the left side of the main channel. Just below this rapid is a good play spot and another car bridge (Quijos #5) where the people from the local village like to watch the fun. The take-outs are about a kilometer and a half below the Quijos #5 bridge and are easy to miss. For the upper take out be watching for the low volume Rio Sardinias to enter on the left and take out just below this confluence. The lower take-out is a river level gravel quarry area on the left about half a kilometer below the Rio Sardinias.

PUT-IN: Quijos #4 in Borja, see text on "Baeza to Borja."

TAKE-OUT: Be watching for the small bridge over the Rio Sardinias Grande, which conveniently has a sign. This is 15 km downstream of the Y. Two often locked gates on either side of the Sardinias lead to a gravel pit 100 meters away at the river's edge. The workers at the gravel pit don't usually let you drive to the river through their workplace. You can park at the bridge and walk to the take-out. *



El Chaco		QUIJOS			El Chaco
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low III+/IV- Med IV High V-	3 hrs	70 fpm	6 miles 13.2 km	Yes	
Character: Steep canyon, big water feel Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷🍷 Good play, great scenery Degree of suffering: ☹☹☹ Medium flow: 2000 Shuttle: Bus ok					

DESCRIPTION

One of the most spectacular runs on the Quijos and in Ecuador, this section is often referred to as El Chaco Canyon or Linares Gorge. Powerful drop-pool rapids, great playspots and incredible basalt gorges make this a favorite. About 2 kilometers into the run is a rapid called "Toro." It has several possible entrance lines through numerous boulders and pourovers. At the bottom a large rock in the center of the channel requires boaters to drive hard right. "Playlandia," "Bamboozel," "Remo Perdido," and "Pleasure or Pain" are a few of the other named and noteworthy rapids in this canyon. About half way down the run there is a bridge (Puente Fucundo) crossing an impressive basalt gorge. This is an optional take-out or put-in for the slightly easier lower section. The take-out for the lower section is river left below the confluence with the Rio Oyacachi. Run the rapid below the easily missed confluence and take out just upstream of the river gage and cable across the river.

PUT-IN: Rio Sardinas Grande confluence with the Quijos, see previous section.

TAKE-OUT: A couple kilometers downstream of the town of El Chaco is the Rio Oyacachi bridge, 24 km downstream of the Y. Cross the bridge and take an immediate right onto a small dirt road and go until just before a gate on the road. There is room to turn around here. Sometimes the road gets washed out so you may have to hike a bit to find your driver, or hike out to the main road to catch the bus. ★

Bombón		QUIJOS			Bombón
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV- Med IV High IV+	1 1/2 hours	65 fpm	3 miles 5 km	Yes	
Character: Big water, great play Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷 Play! Degree of suffering: ☹☹☹ Medium flow: 3000 Shuttle: Truck to take-out					

DESCRIPTION

This run is much like the one before and is a playboater's dream. One two hundred meter long section has three play holes (pretty big!) and a mystery move spot all accessed by eddies. The best of these spots is just above a big, pillowed rock, which discourages many people but remember, there is a pillow. "Curvas Peligrosas" is an S turn rapid with big boils at the top and a huge double hole at the bottom. Drive right at the bottom to miss the holes. Beware of the basalt cliff on river left after the final hole, it has caused some problems for swimmers. One of the very last rapids is called "Chuchaqui" which means "hangover" and has the most fun wave train on the river. The take-out is after the bridge over the canyon at Bombón on river right at a small beach next to the river level gauge. It is worth noting that the gage goes up to over 70 but you are probably paddling in the teens or low twenties! Hitching a ride from here is unlikely because of the infrequent traffic.

PUT-IN: See previous text on the "El Chaco" section, and either put-in at the take-out for El Chaco or add this section for a longer day.

TAKE-OUT: To access the Bombón bridge from the main road, turn east on the road that is just on the north side of the Rio Santa Rosa, 26.5 km downstream of the "Y." It is about a 5 km drive in. ★

Lower		QUIJOS			Lower	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS		
Low III+ (IV) Med IV- (IV) High IV+	4 hours	32 fpm	12.5 miles 20 km	Yes		
Character: Big water play Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷 Degree of suffering: 😞😞😞 Long flat paddle out Medium flow: 4000 Shuttle: Truck to put-in						

DESCRIPTION

Beautiful rainforests views, waterfalls and lots of class III+ rapids highlight this run. The last 3 kilometers are basically flat but the views continue to be magnificent. Be aware that there are some huge holes on this run. Fortunately most have good, relatively easy lines to skirt them, but paddlers need to have good boat control in large volume water to be assured of missing them. About half way through the run is the hardest rapid, a Class IV, called "Gringos Revueltos." It is steeper than the rest of the rapids in this section and is the only one with a horizon line. Although it is relatively short it is very powerful. The best scout is on the right. A short distance downstream of the tall hanging bridge is a large gravel bar on river left—this is your take-out. About 1/2 km up stream of the take-out, the Río Salado joins the Quijos on river left and you will see the Salado oil pumping station. The gravel bar changes every few years and always seems to involve a few hundred yards of walking to get to a vehicle and a bit more to get to the road to catch a bus. It is possible to run a few more kilometers below this takeout (see Final Quijos, next page).

There are no towns or stores anywhere near the takeout, so come prepared.

PUT-IN: Bombón bridge, see previous text.

TAKE-OUT: About a half mile below the Salado Oil Pumping station look for a road access to a large gravel beach. *

San Rafael Falls

If you have time after taking out in Salado (or want a good day-off excursion), check out San Rafael Falls. The Quijos River plunges 500 feet in a spectacular drop. The turn-off for the falls is about 1/2 hour east of the Salado pump station, or about 1/2 hour southwest of the town of Reventador. Turn east off the main road at the "Cascadas" sign. Go about 1 km until you reach the guard station. There is usually a chain across the roadway that can be easily opened. There is a small entrance fee. The cluster of buildings where the road ends was part of an abandoned dam project. The path to the falls starts behind a row of small houses. The trail can be muddy, and takes about a 1/2 hour each way. If you are just driving by and don't have time to hike in, look for the falls from the main road. There are a couple of undeveloped viewpoints on the main road downstream of the turn-off. *

Final		QUIJOS		Final	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low III+/IV- (V) Med IV (V) High IV (V)	2-3 hours	30 fpm	8 miles 13 km	Yes	
Character: Big water Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️ Flatwater, un-kayakable waterfall Medium flow: 5,000 Shuttle: Bus OK					

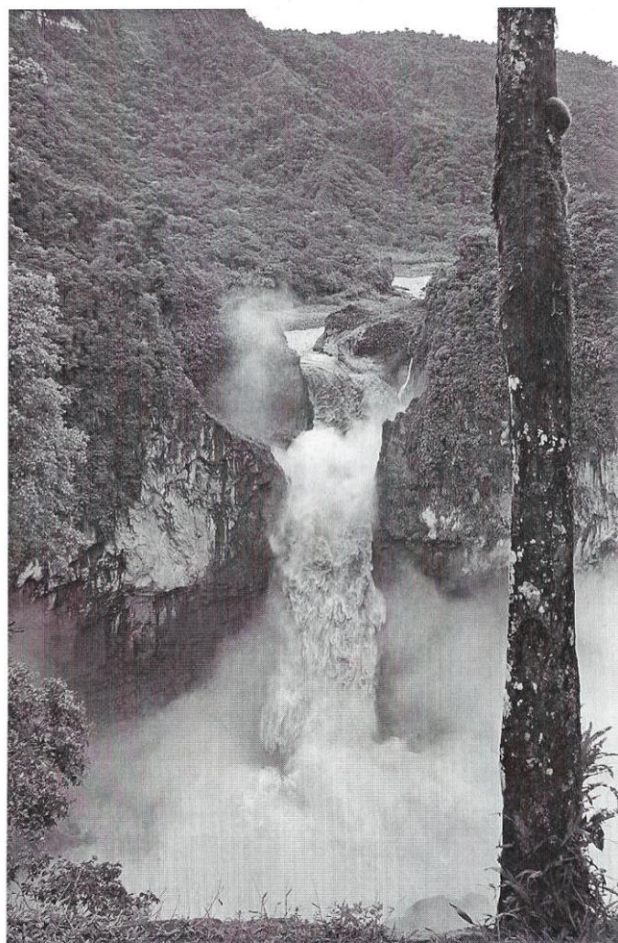
DESCRIPTION

This is the final section of the Quijos River before it plunges off of 500 foot San Rafael Falls—at which point it becomes the Coca River. It is similar in character to the Lower Quijos but is more wide-open, and oddly enough, slightly more difficult. After a long stretch of flatwater, you will reach a funky, multicolored foot bridge over the river and the beginning of the rapids. The first rapid is just above the bridge, and from this point to the take-out it is fairly action packed. About three quarters of the way down the rapids, you will reach the one class V rapid. Scout this one, at certain levels there are some very large holes! At most levels, there is great play on this run. The one tricky part is that you must get out before the big falls. Continuing a little ways past our recommended take-out would result in a very difficult hike out to the road. Continuing too far downstream and over the falls would result in certain death (see photo next page).

PUT-IN: The easiest put-in is on the Salado River. The main highway from Quito to Coca crosses the Salado River about 1 hour north of the town of El Chaco. Put in on river right of the Salado and boat about 2 minutes to the confluence with the Quijos River. If you wanted to skip the flatwater, an alternate put-in would be to put in right at the funky foot bridge and the first rapid. This access is a little hard to find from the road, but it is about a 15 minute drive further north from the Salado Bridge. Be looking for a multicolored footbridge over the Quijos. From the main road it is about a 5 minute walk to this bridge.

TAKE-OUT: This is the important part. Just about the time the rapids start up, the river leaves the road, and you will not be able to see it for quite some time. When it comes back into sight, you want to start thinking about the take-out—don't lose sight of the road again! There are a few spots where the road is very close to the river. You can get out at one of these points or continue for a few more rapids to the last easily accessible take-out before the falls. You will recognize this spot because the river makes a hard (almost 90°) bend to the right, and the road and oil pipeline climb steeply up a hill and away from the river. There is also a picturesque waterfall coming out of the basalt cliffs here (in a year of normal rainfall). From the beach on river left, it is a 15-20 minute walk up a tiny creek bed to the main road. To find the take-out by car, look for a small cluster of houses just before the road climbs a fairly steep hill to the San Rafael Falls overlook.

Note: Be sure not to pass our last suggested take-out. You do NOT want to go too far downstream as accidentally going over the falls would be a VERY BAD THING. *



San Rafael Falls

Bottom Quijos

COCA

Bottom Quijos

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV Med IV High IV+	2-3 days	20 fpm (52)	54 miles 87 km	Yes

Character: Big water play, jungle camping, great scenery**Fiesta Factor:** 🍻 🍻 🍻 🍻 Great play, but with boats full of gear**Degree of suffering:** ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ Grueling walk in, long flat paddle out**Medium flow:** 8000**Shuttle:** Bus ok**DESCRIPTION**

This 2 to 3 day run is easily accessible by bus or private vehicle. Paddlers wanting an early start can spend the night in the town of Reventador in very basic hotels or in the nicer hotel near Cascada San Rafael. You can also just stay in Baeza, Borja or Chaco and get up and catch an early bus.

The first half of the run is full of rapids and incredible scenery. We have seen deer, monkeys, otters, and lots of birds as well as scores of 200 foot waterfalls. There is excellent play, tempered by the fact that you're surfing in loaded boats. The camping is good on sandy beaches although the possibility of rising water is always a fear. After the canyon falls away, the river and terrain flatten, the excitement level drops and eventually most people start wishing for the takeout near Coca! The long paddle out, the arduous hike in, and the ever-present threat of being caught in a flood discourage most paddlers from visiting this section, but is well worth it if you are looking to get into some of the most remote whitewater in Ecuador. Hiking out early is not an option so be sure you are ready for the entire run. Many people bring tents to sleep in, but substitute a sheet for a sleeping bag because of the heat.

PUT-IN: About 10-15 km north of the town of Reventador look for a small village named Simón Bolívar. Stop in the first part of town and backtrack up the road about 200 meters to a little decrepit wooden house on the east side of the road. It is the first house out of town on that side. Take the diagonal downhill trail that runs in front of the house angling upstream. The trail is confusing but in general bear left when you can, and after an hour plus you should arrive at one of the most spectacular sights on any river in Ecuador. Walk out on the bridge and look straight down into a gorge about 30' wide and 250' deep! During my first visit, two Military Macaws flew under the bridge while I stood on it. To continue to the put-in backtrack about 200 meters from the bridge and head downstream through the field. When you get to the edge of the field look for a steep trail—more like a slightly less steep part of the cliff—and head on down. I have used my throw rope to descend every time I have been here. At the bottom of the really steep section follow the creek bed toward the river. This part is no fun but you can reward yourself with a swim when you get to the river. Farmers living near the start may be willing to guide you in or rent horses to carry your gear as far as the bridge.

TAKE-OUT: After a full day of flat water, take-out at the road bridge between Lago Agrio and Coca. Coca is about 10 minutes away to the east. There is one alternative take out that cuts off 2-4 hours of flatwater, but the logistics would be challenging and expensive. If you really hate flatwater, get a map and go for it! *

Upper SARDINAS GRANDE Upper				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low n/a Med IV+ High V	2 hours	240 fpm	1.8 miles 3 km	No
Character: Steep Creekling Fiesta Factor: ☹ ☹ ☹ Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ (If walking) Medium flow: 150 Shuttle: Truck/walk				

DESCRIPTION

Upstream of the town of Sardinas, the Río Sardinas Grande kicks into a higher gear. This is a big step up from the lower section, Class IV+, but with some nasty consequences and logs. Historically, the only way to get to this upper part was on foot, but each year the road seems to get pushed farther up. Unfortunately some of the rapids have been damaged by high water and log jams. You can see much of the run from the road as you drive up, but be prepared to scout often and watch out for wood.

PUT-IN: Cross the bridge that is the put-in for the lower Sardinas Grande and continue upstream on river left. When the road ends, put in, or walk upstream as far as you like.

TAKE-OUT: Same as the put-in for the lower run, the town of Sardinas, or if you want to combine both runs, all the way to the confluence with the Quijos. *



lower SARDINAS GRANDE lower				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low n/a Med IV High V-	1 hour	180 fpm	1.8 miles 3 km	No
Character: Extreme Class III creekling Fiesta Factor: ☹ ☹ ☹ Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ Medium flow: 150 Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

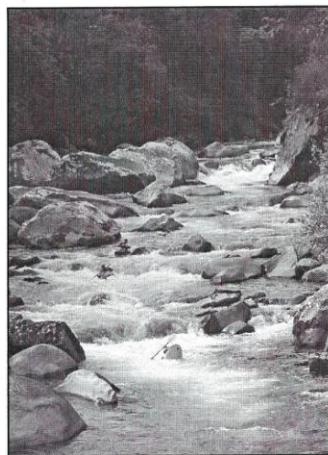
DESCRIPTION

After a bit of rain the Río Sardinas Grande can be runnable with a simple shuttle from the town of Sardinas to its confluence with the Quijos. You can check the water level as you drive over the marked "Sardinas Grande" bridge in the main road. This run is best done as a one to two hour addition after completing another run. If the river looks runnable to high, you can head on up to the put-in in the town of Sardinas. This run is probably best described as "extreme Class III+ creekling." It's fast, shallow and continuous, and makes for some frantic boat scouting. The best of the run is near the put-in, where the river is tight and sprinkled with small eddies. Pick your line before you hop in at the bridge. The canyon opens up and makes scouting easier as you boat past town, and you may want to stretch your legs to check out some of the blind corners downstream. A word of caution: due to its tiny bed and frequency of flooding, this run can change a lot and have wood in it.

PUT-IN: The road to Sardinas turns off the main highway about 1/2 km toward Baeza from the Sardinas Grande Bridge. There's a covered bus stop at the intersection. Take this road through the town of Sardinas to the bridge across the river just upstream of town. Put in here or continue upstream for the upper Sardinas Grande.

TAKE-OUT: Just below where the main road crosses the Sardinas, before the confluence with the Quijos.

NOTE: Don't confuse this run or the road bridge with the Río Sardinas Chico, which is upstream of Borja. *



Upper OYACACHI Upper				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low V Med V+ High V+/VI	2-3 days	240 fpm	18.5 miles 30 km (+ Lower run)	no
Character: Steep and continuous Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 Full days of great rapids Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ Self supported class V Medium flow: 500 at take-out Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

The first descent of the Upper Oyacachi was a 4-day lesson in not trusting average river gradients. Over the Oyacachi's 25-mile course to the confluence with the Quijos it "only" averages around 200 fpm. But the first few miles and the last 10 are relatively flat. The inner canyon has gradients in the 300-400 fpm mile range. We also made the mistake of running this when the water was high, so we'd have enough water for the skinny parts way upstream. At higher flows, when you get to the big rapids, they are full-on and continuous. It is best to do this run at low water. You may have to carry a lot the first day because it's just too skinny, but then you'll have a chance to run stuff or at least portage at river level when it gets big further down. Bring gear for cold weather (put-in is 10,000 ft) and enough food for 3 nights. This run's saving grace is that there is a good trail all the way from the town of Oyacachi to El Chaco, but the trail is not always near the river.

When we first did this run, the entire town of Oyacachi came out to see us off. The mayor made a little speech (last rites?) and we were off. The river starts out as a little creek cutting through fields and low hanging bushes. We were able to make good time and had no portages. At the low flows that would be ideal for the main river, this upper part may be too annoying. Another option is to follow the road downstream out of town to where the first major tributary comes in, saving you some boat abuse. From here down, the river is more channelized and the rapids cleaner. This run has not been done much, and big floods continue to rearrange things. Go into it with the mentality that you are on a first descent.

If you want to give this one a try, keep in mind you're in the middle of nowhere. Camping spots were numerous for the first day or two, then as the cliffs closed in and the vegetation grew we found ourselves hard pressed to find a place on shore to sit, much less lie down. As the day wears on, start looking early for a place to sleep. You will find a new appreciation for slash and burn agriculture. When we found clearings for cattle we rejoiced - room to stand up!

PUT-IN: The town of Oyacachi can be reached from the Quito side of the pass, or through the nature reserve in Papallacta. From Quito, hire a vehicle to take you north at Pifo and to this tiny village. From Baeza, you can hire a vehicle to take you past the Papallacta hot springs, a more direct route to Oyacachi. Both routes will require you pay a \$20 park entry fee. You may need to do some talking to convince the gatekeepers to let you drive the Papallacta route. Hopefully the creek looks very small. Put-in right in

town or drive downstream on the newly built road until you get to more water. You may want to spend some time in the town's hot springs. The weather is cold up here.

TAKE-OUT: Boat all the way to the confluence of the Oyacachi and Quijos (see Lower Oyacachi write up). You can bus or hitch back to wherever you need to go from here. Don't bother setting a take-out shuttle. Two days is a long time for a driver to wait. Another option is to take out at the put-in for the lower Oyacachi, at the village of San Juan, but there is not much traffic there, and the timing could be difficult. *

OYACACHI				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV Med IV+ High V	3-4 hours	130 fpm	6 miles 10 km	experts only
Character: Fast, technical and shallow Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 (4 high) Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ Medium flow: 800 cfs Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

The Oyacachi is a fun run at any level, but especially if the water's up. This valley can experience slightly different weather patterns than the Quijos, so it can be a good run when other things are too high. It starts off with a bang. Be ready for some fast, powerful, but surprisingly shallow water right after the put-in. It's an odd experience to be caught in a strong hole and be bumping your head when you turn over. There are no required portages, but you'll want to be comfortable boat scouting Class IV. Many of the rapids don't appear scout-worthy until you're in them, so planning on getting out to look at the hard ones isn't very feasible. The first hour or so down to the lower put-in is significantly harder than the second half of the run.

PUT-IN: From the town of El Chaco (19 km downstream of the "Y"), take the road heading west across from the walled-in soccer field. There is a sign on the corner, visible only from the north, that says "INEFAN, Reserva Ecológica Cayambe Coca." Fortunately the entrance fee to the reserve hasn't been collected for the past few years. The lower put-in is 8.2 km and a few stream crossings from the turn-off in El Chaco. Look for a 100 meter spur road to the right that takes you to a foot bridge. To get to the higher put-in just continue up the road until it ends at a swinging pedestrian bridge in the tiny village of San Juan.

TAKE-OUT: Río Oyacachi Bridge. The main road crosses the Oyacachi 3 km below the town of El Chaco. The best take-out is on river right, just before the bridge. *

OSAYACU

Upper		OSAYACU			Upper
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV Med IV+ High V	1-2 hours	180 fpm	1 mile 1.5 km	no	
Character: Tiny creek Fiesta Factor: ☹️☹️☹️ Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️☹️ Big portage Medium flow: 150 Shuttle: Bus ok					

DESCRIPTION

This short but scenic creek parallels the main road just before it meets the Salado River. The upper section is fun and worth doing if you're into a short trip. This creek is basically pool drop with four hard waterfall-like rapids and one grunt of a portage around a mudslide. The creek is very small but channelized so you don't want much water. At the put-in it should look clear and skinny, just barely runnable. If it looks like pushy Class III under the bridge, come back some other day. It'll be nasty when the rapids pick up. Once you leave the put-in bridge, the run feels surprisingly remote, even though the road is alongside it on top of the hill. This is creek boating, so think twice about running it in a tiny play boat.

PUT-IN: 2 km above the road to Cascabel. The trail to the put-in is on the main road three houses above the turn-off for Cascabel (about 5.8 km upstream of the Rio Salado bridge). There is a good trail going down about 1/2 km to an old cement bridge.

TAKE-OUT: Bridge to the tiny village of Cascabel. This road joins the main highway about 3.8 km upstream from the bridge over the Rio Salado.

NOTE: Don't miss the take out. Just below this bridge is a marginally runnable falls/rapid. See Lower Osayacu. ★

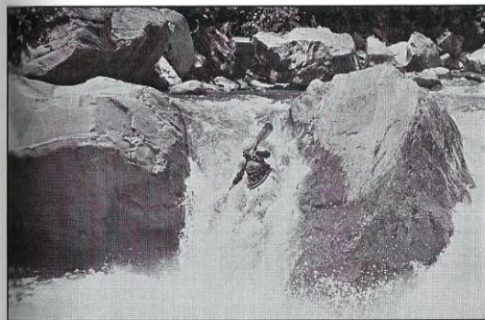
Lower		OSAYACU			Lower
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low V Med V+ High V-VI	3 hours?	400 fpm	1 mile 1.5 km	NO!	
Character: Very steep creek Fiesta Factor: ☹️☹️☹️☹️ Adventure boating Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️ Steep canyon walls, portaging Medium flow: 150 Shuttle: Bus ok					

DESCRIPTION

The Rio Osayacu probably isn't advisable. But it's so close to the road, you might as well at least look at the first rapid just below the bridge. It does get a little easier after this rapid. This run is much harder than the upper section and you want the river to be medium to low. You need a flow that allows portaging and scouting at river level. The green fields on both sides of the river are above steep cliffs, so you can find yourself committed to the river corridor. This run is full of steep boulder-choked drops. There are quite a few portages where the river almost disappears under rocks, but in between is some quality creaking. It's best to portage the first rapid through the fields on river right. After this, the walls close in and the rest of your portages are scrambles at river level. The only way around one unrunnable drop is to crawl through a cave that is below the high water mark. Don't do this run at high water! The confluence with the Salado isn't far, but when the water is filling the riverbed, it seems a very long way away.

PUT-IN: The Osayacu bridge on the road to Cascabel, 3.8 km upstream of the Salado River bridge. Or, do the upper section as a warm up, and put in 2 km further upstream (see above).

TAKE-OUT: On the Rio Salado, where the main road crosses. Easy bus shuttle! ★





SALADO

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV- Med IV High V-	2-1/2 hours	82 fpm	5.6 miles 9 km	Yes

Character: Continuous, technical river

Fiesta Factor: ☺ ☺ ☺ Very scenic

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ Long ride to put-in

Medium flow: 1500

Shuttle: Truck to put-in

DESCRIPTION

Since the Rio Salado flows out of a large undeveloped valley the water clarity is usually very good. The put-in is at the Rio Yaguana, a small class IV creek that hits the Salado after about ten minutes of very low volume, rocky paddling—beware of logs. Once you join the main river you are in for some powerful, but relatively shallow, technical rapids. Play holes abound, but few have eddy service. About a third of the way down the section you will encounter “El Presidente” a big rapid with a huge rock on river left. Shortly below this you enter an exquisite narrow sedimentary rock canyon with a tricky entrance. Below this canyon the rapids spread out and ease off, but the canyon wall on river right continues for a mile or so, offering more great scenery.

PUT-IN: From the main Quito-Coca road, take the turnoff to Cascabel, which is 3.8 km south of the Salado Bridge. Cross the Rio Osayacu, drive through the village of Cascabel, and on to the end of the road. In 2006 the road ended about 1 km from your put-in on the Rio Yaguana. Perhaps by the time you do this run the road will go all the way to the creek; if not, walk the remaining 15 minutes downhill to the Yaguana. Put in here and boat your way to the Salado. It would be possible, but tedious, to skip the creek and walk to the banks to the Rio Salado. No bus traffic to the put-in.

TAKE-OUT: River right at the main road bridge over the Salado. Plenty of buses.

Top COSANGA Top				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV- Med IV High IV+	3 hrs	130 fpm	7 miles 11 km	no
Character: Steep Creek, gravel bars Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Medium flow: 400 Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

This is one run that can't be accessed by local buses since the road is small and only occasional traffic runs up it. The rapids here are much like the lower runs in character and the scenery is very pretty. This section is in less of a gorge than the lower runs. One short Class IV canyon is encountered soon after the put-in, and after that the river is more spread out and easier. Because of its location this run has rarely been done up to this point.

PUT-IN: The road to the Top Cosanga leaves the Baeza-Tena road about 1 km north of the town of Cosanga. Follow this small road until it ends about 8 km upstream. The road gets increasingly bad as it nears the river. An alternate put-in spot would be where this road crosses the Rio Aliso.

TAKE-OUT: The town of Cosanga (17 km south of Baeza), underneath the main bridge. *

Upper COSANGA Upper				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low III+ (IV) Med IV- (IV) High IV+	3 hours	90 fpm	5 miles 8 km	At high water only
Character: Shallow and busy Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Shallow riverbed, one scout/portage Medium flow: 500 Shuttle: Bus ok				

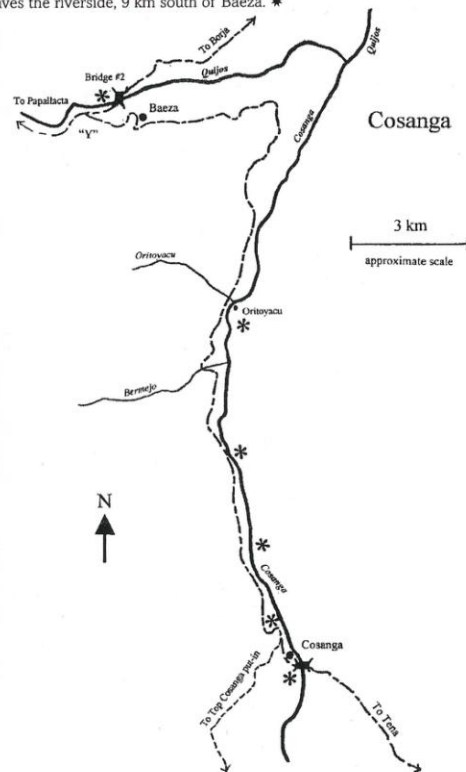
DESCRIPTION

Starting off at the town basketball courts never fails to draw a big audience. Be ready for some boney rapids for the first third of this run. Actually lots of the run is quite shallow and unless the water's high, you'll grow to hate the sight of islands that divert some of the flow. There are more access points along the way so if you want to skip the easier and shallower sections just put in downstream of town. About half way down the run the character changes to become more channelized and the rapids get tougher. One of the

hardest rapids on the entire river, "Chibolo" (lump on the head), lies in wait not far below a small hanging bridge that has good Class III boulder gardens above and below it. Scout and/or portage this one on the left. If you enjoy this run but want more action keep heading downstream to the next section.

PUT-IN: Town of Cosanga, 17 km south of Baeza. There are also alternate access points downstream of town.

TAKE-OUT: At the suspension bridge near Oritoyacu creek. This is the last access before the road leaves the riverside, 9 km south of Baeza. *



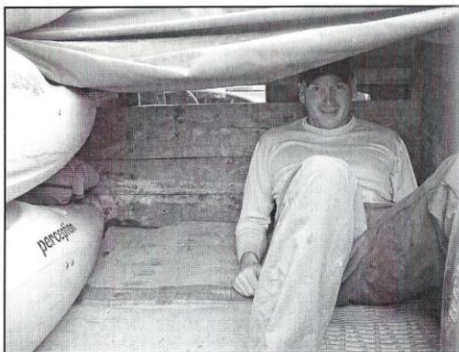
Lower COSANGA Lower				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV Med IV High IV+	4 hours	100 fpm	5-5 miles 9 km	experts only / small
Character: Scenic pool-drop creeking Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 Degree of suffering: 😓 😓 Medium flow: 700 Shuttle: Bus ok (see text)				

DESCRIPTION

This is one of the prettiest runs in the region with incredible bird life and stunning waterfalls. Torrent ducks lead the way through the rapids and the rare Cock of the Rock is often seen in this canyon. Shortly below the put-in you will be boofing your way through some of the most fun Class IV action in Ecuador. The most challenging rapids are in the first two kilometers, like "Starts with a Bang," "Triple Drop," and "Random Acts." Below this it eases off a bit, but there is still plenty of excitement. "Go Left or Portage," "Cock on the Rock," and "Ménage a Rodeo" are found in the last half of the run.

PUT-IN: About 9 km to the south of Baeza at a small swinging bridge known by the locals as Oritoyacu, or just downstream at the new pipeline access road. The main road to Tena comes close to the river here for the first time since leaving Baeza.

TAKE-OUT: If you have a shuttle arranged, you can take out at Borja. If you want to hitch a ride, it's best to continue down 5 km to where the road rejoins the river at the confluence with the Sardinas Grande. See text on Quijos: Baeza to Borja and Borja to Sardinas Grande. *



QUIJOS VALLEY EXTRA CREDIT



These runs are too small, silly, or short to get a full write-up. But if you're looking for something else to do in the valley, here's some info.

RÍO BERMEJO On the main road between Baeza and Cosanga, about 2 km upstream of "Oritoyacu," is the Bermejo. You can tell from the bridge if there's enough water to run it. The put-in road runs upstream on the river left side. The 4 km above the bridge is very technical, with many chances for friendly pins. Not great for a play boat. Class IV+.

RÍO CHALPI GRANDE On the road to Quito, 28.5 miles upstream of the "Y" is the Chalpi Grande. This river is often used as a put-in for the Upper Papallacta, but upstream of the bridge offers some boating also. A trail goes up the river left side of the Chalpi Grande. If you want to go exploring, shoulder your kayak and start walking. We went up 3-4 km, until the path started to leave the river and it seemed the amount of fun we were going to have coming down was overshadowed by the effort going up. The trail continues for many more kilometers up the drainage. What we got was wood-choked continuous rapids. Do some scouting on the way up to make things easier on your run down. Play boats not advised. Class V.

TOP PAPALLACTA The Papallacta above the Río Chalpi Grande doesn't offer much for continuous boating, but certain sections are worth exploring. Whether you boat and carry from top to bottom or do car assisted micro sections, there are some cool drops up there if the water's right.

RÍO SANTA ROSA On the Lower Quijos below El Chaco, a road that follows the Río Santa Rosa accesses the Bombón section. The Santa Rosa along this road is very runnable if the water's high enough. This section can either be done as a lead-in for the Lower Quijos or as a short run on its own. Play boats are OK. Class IV. Above the Santa Rosa Bridge, a road goes up the drainage on river right. If it's been raining lots, there's some Class III up here. *



NAPO VALLEY



All the rivers around Tena drain into the Río Napo. The Napo is one of the major tributaries to the Amazon. The final fast elevation drop from the Andes to the Amazon basin provides many excellent whitewater rivers and creeks. Whitewater runs in this valley are between 4000 and 1000 feet. As the rivers of this area join to make the Napo it becomes really flat, meaning no more whitewater to the east. The humidity is more noticeable here and the air and water temperatures are much warmer. There is also a noticeable difference in people and way of life. You will see thatched-roof huts and folks whose walk out to a road took a couple days. Small-scale animal farming and crop harvesting are primary professions. Petroleum companies employ many men, and tourism is a growing source of income. The indigenous folks around here are mainly Quichuas.

GETTING THERE From Baeza, head south to Cosanga and then up and over Guacamayo Pass. It is about two and a half hours from Baeza to Tena. You can also reach Tena from Coca, via a very poor road through Loreto that comes out on the main Baeza to Tena route, between Kilometro 28 and Cotundo. There is a longer route to Tena heading south out of Quito. Go south to Ambato, southeast to Baños, east to Puyo, then north to Tena. This way takes about 9-10 hours from Quito, so it's only convenient if you want to go through Baños. *



NAPO VALLEY MAJOR TOWNS



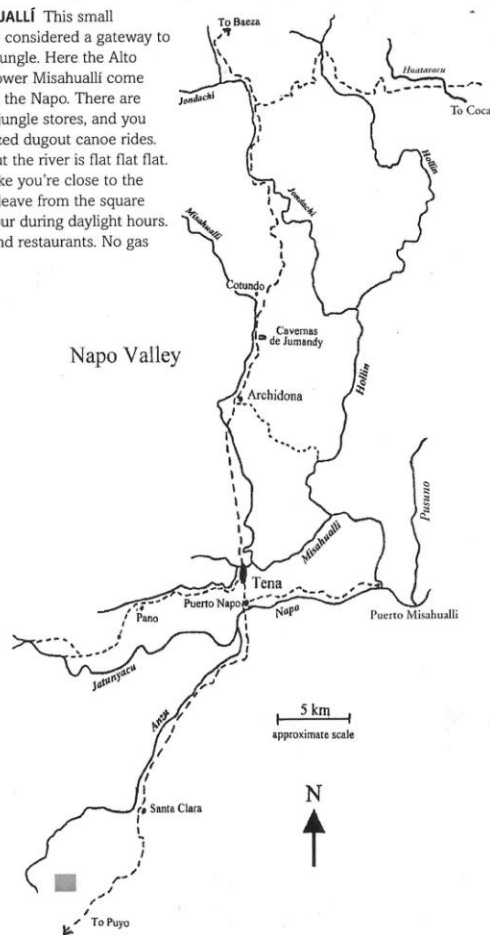
ARCHIDONA Archidona is about fifteen minutes north of Tena. You can find a few truck taxis here if necessary. Cavernas de Jumandy are nearby - caves and a pool with a water slide. It's a good base if you find Tena too crowded. **Hotel Regina**—okay, no hot water, nice owners, \$5 per person. Many small restaurants. Gas stations at both ends of town.

TENA Tena is the biggest, nicest jungle town in Ecuador, and the easiest anywhere out of which to boat. It's got it all (well, kind of) - post office, taxis galore, good restaurant choices and even a night life. The north entrance to Tena is marked by a large statue of Jumandy, a local indigenous hero.

There is no shortage of hotels in Tena, encompassing all kinds of prices and quality. Here are just a couple suggestions: **Hostal Villa Belen**. Nice clean rooms with fans, some with TV's and hot showers. Norma will cook incredible meals for you if you ask in advance-\$10. **Welcome Break**. This simple hotel has become the kayakers hang out in Tena mostly because of price and friendliness. The rooms are very basic with shared bathrooms and no fans-\$5. ph 06 288 6301. **Yutzos #2**. Guido and Maria run this nice riverside hotel. Guido speaks English and has wireless internet. The rooms are nice with fans, phones and private baths-\$10. ph 06 288 7897. **Hotel Araza**. The attraction here is air conditioning at a cheap price in basic rooms-\$10. ph 06 288 6573.

There are many restaurants in Tena, some catering to tourists more than locals. Veronica's Place is a great breakfast place next to the Welcome Break. Pizza Masilla downstairs at Yutzos #2 has great pizza and Mexican food. Chuquitos on river left near the walking bridge has good Ecuadorian style food. Tena has many internet cafes and gas stations.

PUERTO MISAHUALLÍ This small riverside town is considered a gateway to the Amazonian jungle. Here the Alto Napo and the Lower Misahuallí come together to form the Napo. There are several touristy jungle stores, and you can take motorized dugout canoe rides. From here on out the river is flat flat flat. You really feel like you're close to the Amazon. Buses leave from the square every half an hour during daylight hours. Several hotels and restaurants. No gas station. *



Upper		JONDACHI		Upper
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV-V Med IV-V High V	4-7 hours	140 fpm	6 miles 10 km	small/ experts only
Character: Pristine pool drop Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️ Muddy walk in Medium flow: 500 at take-out Shuttle: Bus ok				

DESCRIPTION

The Upper Jondachi is a world class run, full of pristine scenery and amazing rapids. While not a forgiving place to be in over your head, if you're up to the run it's one of the best anywhere. Situated between Baeza and Tena, the Jondachi can be run as a day trip by bus from either town. Starting out at an elevation of just under 4000 ft, it's not as warm as the rivers nearer to Tena but still shorty weather. The usually clear water complements the lush forest overgrowing each bank. Remember to look around as you navigate through what seems like hundreds of pool-drop rapids. Parrots are often seen, especially where ferns give way to clay cliffs. Depending on water level and where you put in (see below), the run can be done with 0-3 portages. If it's your first time on the Jondachi, start early and keep moving. You'll be boat scouting a plethora of Class IV rapids and will probably want to scout or portage the Class V rapids. In case of problems, there are several footbridges leading to grueling trails up to the road on the river left side. At any water level, it will feel like a Class V day because of all the rapids.

PUT-IN OPTION 1: The traditional put-in has been from the tiny village at kilometer 28. Locals, buses, and taxi drivers all know this location simply as "Kilometro 28." The usually muddy trail starts just downhill from the small *tienda* and volleyball court, actually going up at first. When the trail forks, take the fork that heads left and then down. It's about 2 km down to a large footbridge. The rapid just under the bridge is one of the harder rapids of the run.

PUT-IN OPTION 2: At about Kilometer 29, there is a new gate and road down to a bridge over the Río Urcusiqui. From here, you'll have 1-2 km of tiny creeking until the confluence with the Jondachi more than doubles the flow. Look for two hard rapids after the confluence, one just above and one just below the bridge reached by the Kilometer 28 put-in. This section adds at least an hour to your time on the river.

TAKE-OUT: The main road crosses the Jondachi at Kilometer 18. Take out here, on river right.

NOTE: There is a river gauge on river right just underneath the take-out bridge. In 2006, 1-4 on the gauge was a fine level, 7 was stomping. A word of caution, though: shifting gravel bars have made this reading erratic. Another indicator is the river's clarity and character. You don't need much water. If it looks big at the take-out, it will be huge upstream. Check our blog spot at www.kayakersguidetoecuador.blogspot.com for updates on this gauge. *

Lower		JONDACHI			Lower
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV Med IV High IV+	6-8 hours/ 2 days	70 fpm	19 miles 31 km	experts only / small	
Character: Playful pool-drop creeking Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Long day (or 2 days) Medium flow: 500 at put-in Shuttle: Truck to take-out					

DESCRIPTION

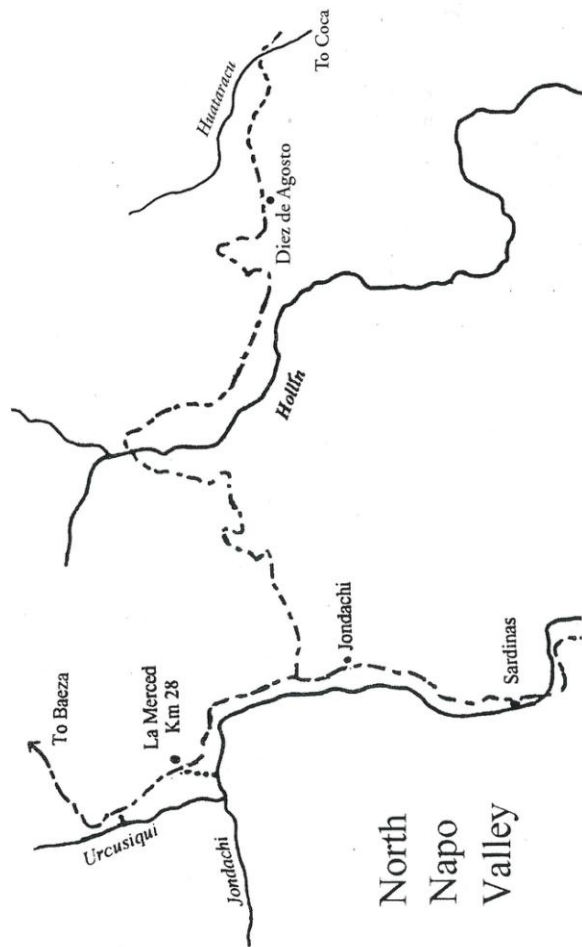
The Lower Jondachi is a big step down from the Upper section. If the water's high or you want an easier run, the Lower could be what you're looking for. It's not as scenic as the Upper, but the first few miles below the put-in offer similar rapids and character. If you have a shuttle arranged for the take-out on the Hollin (see below), this run can be done as a long one day. Start early if you don't want to camp out. For a simple shuttle, you can combine this run with the Lower Misahualli and take out at Puerto Misahualli, but you will need 2 days. The best part of the Lower starts right below the bridge. It's busy pool drop. Plan on scouting a few times. The run feels very remote, but there are some access points at footbridges. The action eases off after you pass the second foodbridge. Be prepared to scout efficiently and paddle the flats if you're doing this in one day. After the confluence with the Hollin, the bigger volume makes for some fun play spots. A big plus for doing this run in one long day is light boats for playing. The action on the Hollin lets up a ways before the high car bridge to the town of Santo Domingo de Hollin. After this bridge, the gravel bar on the right is the take-out unless you're going all the way to Puerto Misahualli. If you haven't arranged for a ride ahead of time, don't expect to find transportation from this town to Archidona. Buses run here in theory, but not often enough in practice.

PUT-IN: The main road from Tena to Baeza crosses the Jondachi at Kilometer 18. This bridge is the put-in.

TAKE-OUT OPTION 1: Arrange to have a truck or taxi meet you at the river near the small town of Santo Domingo de Hollin, the first road access downstream of the put-in. To find Santo Domingo, take the dirt road heading east out of Archidona's main square. It's at least a half-hour further down a good but slow dirt road to the river and town. The take-out is just downstream of the car bridge.

TAKE-OUT OPTION 2: Bring overnight gear, paddle the Hollin to the Lower Mis and take out in Puerto Misahualli. This makes for a great 2 day, from small creek to big jungle river. It also makes for a very easy bus shuttle on both ends. The best camping spots are near the confluence of the Hollin and Jondachi. *





HOLLIN

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV Med IV High IV-V	1-2 days	55 fpm	28.5 miles 46 km	Yes

Character: Jungle play

Fiesta Factor: ☼☼☼☼ Jungle overnighiter

Degree of suffering: ☼☼☼☼ Jungle overnighiter/long one day

Medium flow: 800 cfs at put-in

Shuttle: Truck to take-out (or continue down Lower Mis.)

DESCRIPTION

The Hollin is a nice medium flow jungle river with some good play and Class III-IV rapids. It was originally run as a two-day. It's possible to do the entire run in one day, and that's becoming more the trend. Several parties, planning on running it in two days, launched with good flows and were caught by high water on day two. They ended up camping in the rain waiting for the river to drop. The new theory is that if you get an early start, have good flows, and paddle light and fast, you can finish with the water level you started with. It's a very long day though. Whichever you decide to do, go prepared in case things change while you're out there. An unplanned evening in the jungle doesn't have to be epic if you're ready for it.

At the put-in, you may be confused about how to start the run without killing yourself. If you don't want to run the rapid under the bridge in a boat full of gear, the regular put-in is downstream on river right (see below). While you're here though, check out the scenery upstream. A word of warning: the big falls upstream are even harder than they look. About 10-15 minutes downstream is a rapid that basically runs through a cave. Scout for logs, but the left side is usually the best line. A little further downstream is a fun waterfall. Scout from the right, well above the falls.

After a hard start, the river mellows out to lots of Class II-III, so you can make good time if you're doing the one-day approach. For camp spots, the best places are about 5 hours downstream of the put-in. Down by the confluence with the Jondachi the rapids pick up again, so save some energy for playing. You can take out at the village of Santo Domingo or continue for one more day to Puerto Misahualli.

PUT-IN: From Tena drive past the Jondachi towards Coca. The road to Coca splits off the Baeza-Tena road about 7 km after the Jondachi Bridge. Drive towards Coca for about 11 km until you reach the Hollin Bridge. On river right about 10 meters from the bridge, there's a small trail leading downstream. This trail gets you below the bridge rapids.

TAKE-OUT OPTION 1: Santo Domingo de Hollin. Arrange transportation ahead of time because there's not much traffic out this way. The take-out is the gravel bar just downstream of the tall car-bridge (the only one you'll encounter on the Hollin). To find the take-out by car, take the small road heading east out of Archidona's main square. It's at least 1/2 hour further down this slow dirt road to the river and town.

TAKE-OUT OPTION 2: For an extra day of paddling, continue downstream to the Lower Mis. and take-out at Puerto Misahualli. (See section on Lower Mis.) *



MISAHUALLI



The Río Misahualli is another Ecuadorian classic. It starts as a small mountain stream and in a very short distance swells into a giant jungle river. The clear water and boulder gardens of the Upper "Mis" seem a world apart from the powerful rapids of the Lower Mis. The scenery on both runs is excellent, and on the Lower the feeling of "we're in the Amazon Basin" is unmistakable. In 1999 there was a huge flood that changed every rapid on the Upper. The river level rose to the bottom of the bridge between Tena and Archidona! All of the runs of the Upper can be combined for a longer day, but they've been divided here by ease of access and river character. *

Lodo MISAHUALLI Lodo				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV Med IV High IV-V	3 hours	155 fpm	3 miles 5 km	small
Character: Technical boulder gardens Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷🍷 Degree of suffering: ☠️☠️ Mud! Medium flow: 300 Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

The "Lodo" (mud) section of the Mis is basically from the end of the road above Cotundo down to the village of El Retén. An alternate put-in is the Puente San Francisco just outside of Cotundo. After a muddy 300 meter walk, paddlers are rewarded with a beautiful little river bed in which to wash off. The river is very channelized, and it takes surprisingly little water to make such a good run. It starts off fairly quickly with intricate boulder gardens and doesn't let up until you get near the bridge to the village of San Francisco (an alternate put-in). About 15 minutes into the run, look out for an island that ends in a chunky rapid. It's easiest to scout this one from the island.

Immediately below the San Francisco bridge is an annoyingly rocky rapid. The best line is usually down the middle channel. Downstream of this point is still plenty of fun, though there are a number of intricate rapids with slightly obscure routes. Of note are "Kinda Worthy" and then "Panel of Bozos," where a few paddlers usually bounce down the rapid a couple of strokes away from where they want to be. Don't be surprised if the kids from San Francisco follow you downstream on their inner tubes. It's very cute but irritating when they have better lines than you do. Friendly locals might surround you at access points.

You'll pass an alternate access point where a footbridge from Cotundo crosses the river. There's an old still downstream on river right. You're not to the main road yet, and there are more fun rapids and play below, so you might as well go down to the next major footbridge at El Retén (El Retendo to us kayakers).

PUT-IN: The turn-off for Cotundo is on the main road from Baeza to Tena, about 7 km north of Archidona. It is marked by a national park sign, "Sector Nueva Esperanza." Follow this road through Cotundo and upstream (north). Just outside of town the road has a "T" intersection. The left fork goes in a very straight line to the Puente San Francisco. The right fork winds uphill to the "Lodo" put-in. You'll pass a few more forks in the road. Stay left on the road to Nueva Esperanza. Here's the tricky part, the road doesn't make it to town, and the trail is hard to find. Quite a ways after you pass through the small village of Cinco de Octubre, you will drive over a decent bridge with tube guardrails. The wide trail to the river cuts off to the left about 200 meters up the hill from this bridge. If your vehicle struggles up a steep hill with loose rocks, you've gone too far. The trail is wide and easy to follow almost all the way to the river, where it forks and almost disappears into a muddy field. Both forks make it to the river. Some drivers know this part of the river as "Bamboo" as there used to be a bamboo bridge here. It washed out, but the mud is still here. You could continue to where the road ends and then start hiking, but the road is much further away from the river at this point. If you like carrying your boat in hot, humid weather through lots of mud, then consider hiking up the trail that continues where the road ends. You can carry up at least a mile or two, but it's definitely hard going only to be rewarded with about the same kind of rapids that you'll find down below.

TAKE-OUT: The foot bridge at the village of El Retén. There are several other access points upstream if you want to get out earlier, but this is the easiest access from the main road. About 2 km south of Cotundo there is a covered bus stop and sign pointing to El Retén. The Cavernas de Jumandy swimming pools are about 1-1/2 km further south. From the bus stop it's about 50 meters to the footbridge. Enjoy the kiddie fan club. *



El Retén		MISAHUALLÍ		El Retén	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low III+ Med IV- High IV+	2 hours	130 fpm	3 miles 5 km	Small only	
Character: Technical boulder gardens Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️ Medium flow: 400-600 Shuttle: Bus ok					

DESCRIPTION

Below the bridge at El Retén, the difficulty of the Upper Misahualli eases slightly, but the character continues to be that of technical creeking at lower flows and continuous, pushy water at high levels. Even at low flows, the run is well worth doing, though you will encounter a few spots with congested rocky routes (such as the first rapid). But if you get stuck you'll probably only be in a foot of water and someone can walk out to pull you off. As the river level rises these tight spots disappear. This section, more than any other, was so dramatically changed by the 1999 flood that even the gradient and river channels have shifted around. Because of the nature of the river bottom the rapids will undoubtedly continue to evolve at a rapid pace. As you reach Archidona the river channelizes and things pick up for the final few rapids.

PUT-IN: The Bridge at El Retén. See take-out for Lodo section.

TAKE-OUT: The town of Archidona. The main road bypasses downtown Archidona and comes right by this take out. From the river, look for a small footbridge and beach about 200 meters after a very tall vehicle bridge. Take out on this beach and meet your driver, or hike up onto the road and into town to find a vehicle. The beach is hard to see from the road, but a sawmill just upstream is a good landmark. *



Middle		MISAHUALLÍ			Middle	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS		
I-II	3 hours	22 fpm	7.5 miles 12 km	Yes		
Character: Wide open Class I-II Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ Flatwater! Medium flow: 800 Shuttle: Bus ok/ flag a taxi at take-out						

DESCRIPTION

The Misahualli from Archidona to Tena is a good place for beginners. It starts out with some class II boulder gardens, which soon give way to rifles. Beware of deceptively shallow water in places and overhanging branches on turns. Some locals might swim out to play with you as you pass small villages. The last hour is quite flat.

Though it seems that you might have missed the takeout, you can't - it's the only vehicle worthy bridge you see on this stretch after the Tena to Archidona bridge fifteen minutes into the run. This bridge is a possible put-in for the lower Mis. There is more Class I-II downstream, but the shuttle back gets interesting, and if you go to far you're doing the Class IV Lower Mis.

PUT-IN: The public beach in the town of Archidona. See Upper Mis.

TAKE-OUT: Vehicle bridge to Dos Rios in Tena. To reach this bridge, turn right (east) at the statue of Jumandy as you leave Tena. Follow this road about 1 km to the bridge. *



Lower		MISAHUALLI			Lower
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV Med IV+ High V	4-6 hours	30 fpm	15.5 miles 25 km	Yes 1 portage	
Character: Big water play Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷🍷 Bar at the take-out! Degree of suffering: 😞😞😞😞 Portage/Water fluctuations Medium flow: 5000 Shuttle: Bus ok					

DESCRIPTION

Below the town of Tena, the Misahualli becomes swollen with the flows of 4 more major rivers. Gone are the clear pools and technical boulder gardens of the Upper. It's big volume jungle river time. The Lower Mis cuts through some of the most rugged and remote jungle you're likely to see in Ecuador, but the shuttle is one of the simplest anywhere. Where else can you sit at a bar celebrating with a beer while waiting for the bus driver to tell you it's time to go? Abundant bird life, waterfalls cascading into the river and great play make this a run a classic. The rapids are big and powerful, with names like "Sapo Submarino," "Chicas al Revés," "Bivouacky," and the well named "Land of the Giants." Just after "BFR Sur" (Big "Friendly" Rock, South), there's a Class VI waterfall that is usually portaged on the right, though sometimes snuck. There is a large pool and obvious, foreboding horizon line. The portage has become the crux of this run. Due to rockslides, the portage is no longer a short scramble along the shore. At most water levels it is necessary to go up into the jungle above the cliffs on river right to get around the falls, dropping back down through a notch just above Land of the Giants. The best way to find this route is to portage along at river level until the cliffs stop you, then zigzag up to a path just above the cliffs (see photo). This portage often takes groups 1-2 hours. Immediately below the portage is a rapid called Land of the Giants. Scout while portaging, and know that there is a huge pool just around the corner. Have fun. At this point you've earned it. While the canyon is remote and the river powerful, the rapids aren't overly technical. It isn't the paddling as much as the portaging that raises the bar for this run. Check with local paddlers in Tena as well as with our guide book update site: www.kayakersguidetoecuador.blogspot.com for current portage conditions.

Here's another tricky part. The Lower Mis has a HUGE drainage. Virtually everything you can see from Tena drains into the Lower Mis. Water levels can fluctuate dramatically even if the weather is clear in Tena. Numerous groups have been stranded down here at flood stage (see story). If you're staying in Tena, it's a simple thing to put in right downtown on the Tena River. If it's been raining though, it's worth your time to drive at least to the outside of town and check the flow on the Misahualli. The play is best at lower water and it will never be too low. If it's your first time down, look for clear water and gravel bars on both rivers. If it looks high in Tena, it'll be huge in the canyon. If you want to be extra careful, you can drive through Archidona and on to the Lower Hollin put-in. While this is a long drive, it gives you the advantage of being able to check all the major tributaries.

Even with the worry of increasing water flows and the nasty portage, this run is well worth it. If the water is stable and you're staying in Tena, laps on the Lower Mis are as simple as walking your boat from your hotel to the river and taking the bus home in the afternoon. Be prepared for mishaps though. Bring a little extra food and enough gear and bug dope to be able to spend a night out. The water usually drops as fast as it rises.

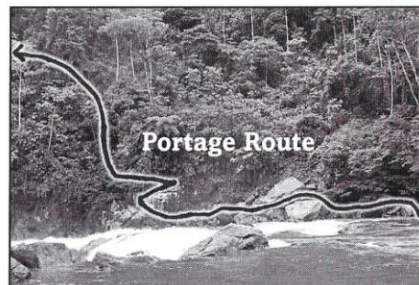
No matter which put-in you use, the flatwater paddle in is long but beautiful. There's also a paddle out to the town of Puerto Misahualli. When you get to the take-out you'll know you've arrived at one of the major tributaries of the Amazon. Motorized dugout canoes are the mode of transportation here. It is over 1200 miles of winding river to the Atlantic from here, and Puerto Mis is at about 1300 feet above sea level. That's right, an average of about 1-foot per mile for 1200 miles. Take out here.

PUT-IN OPTION 1: Downtown Tena. The park on river right at the confluence of the Tena and Pano Rivers is a convenient spot.

PUT-IN OPTION 2: Rio Misahualli, Dos Rios Bridge, just outside of Tena. Drive north toward Archidona. Just as you leave town, turn right (east) at the statue of Jumandy. Follow this road about 1/2 km until it reaches the bridge to Dos Rios. The best river access is on river right. Or, continue across the bridge and downstream to the community of Alto Angota. Unload on the far end of the soccer field and follow the path to the left of the basketball court. A 1 km walk gets you to a nice put-in beach. This put-in costs a bit more, but saves you some flatwater.

PUT-IN OPTION 3: Lower Hollin at Santo Domingo de Hollin. This put-in is convenient if you're staying in Archidona, or if you want to check all the river flows. From the central square in Archidona, head east on the small street that is just south of the church. Follow this slow dirt road for at least a half an hour. Just past the village of Santo Domingo, the road crosses the Hollin. Put-in on river right, downstream of the bridge.

TAKE-OUT: Puerto Misahualli. Although there are some other access points a little bit further upstream, for the bar and easy bus option paddle on down to the beach at the confluence of the Mis and Napo rivers. From here it's a short walk to town where there's a bus parked waiting to begin it's return route to Tena. Tie your boats on and have a beer in the bar across the street until it's time to go. To find the take out from Tena, head south on the main road 7 km to Puerto Napo. Turn left (east) before you cross the Napo River and follow this small road (17 km) until it ends in the town of Puerto Misahualli. Watch out for monkeys. *





UNA NOCHE EN LA SELVA



"We can't paddle any farther!" At last some words of wisdom got through to my tired brain on my first run down the Lower Misahualli. I yelled back to try to find an eddy on the left and stop. The left seemed as good as the right since I couldn't even see the end of my kayak. Of course that was back when boats were well over ten feet long. It's true that the other senses become more acute when you lose sight and my hearing was screaming to me that I didn't want to run the next rapid in the pitch dark. I found a one boat eddy, Enga caught one just upstream and Kent just downstream. Jonathan tried for mine but bounced back into the current and the last thing we heard from him was "This one sounds really big!" For the first time I could remember I wasn't willing to chase after a paddling buddy. I could crawl along the rocky shoreline though, and that is what we did since we couldn't see a thing that cloudy night in the Ecuadorian rainforest...

The day had been chaotic since the late put in. As soon as we got to the confluence with the Rio Hollin we were surprised by the very large volume of water coming in. Things went pretty well though, and we enjoyed big, booming rapids and beautiful jungle. Once we got to the portage we separated to scout the river level option as well as to see if there were any trails high up through the jungle. After the first quick look each group decided that the other way must be better, so we wasted more time with another round of clinging to wet rocks and sliding through muddy rainforest. My group opted for the river level route but there was barely an eddy to get back into the river. The poor guy who helped everyone get in their boats had a hard time getting his skirt on and swam the exit rapid from the portage and was barely roped in before Land of the Giants. By this time it was virtually dark, and even though the big portage was behind us, our troubles were just beginning.

After a seeming eternity of feeling our way downstream we hear Jonathan's whistle and know he survived. A few more minutes of crawling around and we all get together and even though we can't even see each other's faces, we hug and laugh. I didn't know about the others but, given the alternative, I realized it was a wonderful thing to be sitting in the middle of the rain forest with no camping gear. This story is embarrassing to me because of my stupid decisions that led up to our bivi, but at least we didn't lose any gear or even have a really hard time. It was a beautiful night to sleep out and most importantly, I learned some lessons and have a great bar story.

That was the beginning of my second year here and since then I haven't spent another unplanned night out. It will probably happen again but I'll be better prepared with some food, water purification tablets, and mosquito repellent and extra layers. Most of us that have had unexpected bivies in Ecuador started a bit late or encountered high water. Every year I hear stories about them; lost kayakers, friends getting separated and walking barefoot into native villages begging for food and help, nights out without even a paddle jacket. Later they make for some hilarious bar stories, but at the time they are all too real. Ecuador has a way of giving even the best kayakers a trial or two. It all seems easier being here than most places - convenient shuttles, friendly locals, warm rivers and soon you get swayed into thinking nothing bad can happen. *

Larry

PUSUNO

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low V+ Med V+ High VI	4-6 hours	250 fpm	6 miles 10 km	Oh No
Character: Bedrock and waterfalls Fiesta Factor: ☹️☹️☹️☹️ Epic canyon Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️☹️ Dangerous and difficult Medium flow: 150 Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

The Pusuno is one of the most difficult rivers included in this guide. Almost every rapid requires a scout or portage. The highlight of the run is a 40 foot waterfall that plunges into a natural amphitheater of rock. The bowl-shaped pool below is surrounded by 100 foot cliffs. It is difficult to scout the takeoff, and you can only guess at the landing. The falls have a ledge jutting out just below the brink, so it's best to drive to the right and then pencil into the pool. The only way to portage is to lower boats by throw ropes, and jump into the pool. Due to the shape of the cliffs, running the falls is about 40 feet, but jumping is from a higher point, about 60 feet. Either route will get your attention.

The run starts out in a unique canyon of sculpted bedrock. The drops are mini falls in their own right, some quite difficult. At the low levels that the river is runnable, it is quite easy to scout and carry this first part on ledges that are below the high water line. An unrunnable sieve of boulders and logs signals your arrival at Pusuno falls. Portage across this jumble and scout on river right. If you don't like what you see, or are having a bad day, this is your last chance to hike back to the put-in. After the falls you are (obviously) committed to paddling downstream. While the falls and upper canyon are most spectacular, the lower part of the river is arguably more dangerous. The rapids aren't very clean, and piles of rock make numerous sieves. Make sure to catch every eddy and scout often. Eventually the river flattens out and you have a calm 2 km paddle to the Napo and then 3 km more on down to the takeout.

Water levels can be tricky here, as you definitely don't want it to be high, but too low exposes more sieves, which doesn't help either. For some local information, check with Tarquino in Tena at tarquinonapo@hotmail.com, or ph 09 463 2651. E-mailing him is best. Besides being one of the area's finest paddlers, Tarquino leads canyoneering trips to the Pusuno falls, camping out right at the brink. In general, this run should be possible when rivers are on the low side around Tena.

PUT-IN: The Pusuno is reached by crossing the small vehicle bridge in Pununo, on the Lower Misahualli above Puerto Misahualli. Taxis can be hired in Tena (about \$25, 45 minutes) or you can bus to Puerto Misahualli and hire a truck there for about \$10. Cross the bridge and head to the village of Alto Pusuno. Look for a sign marking the turn and take a right at the "Y" to avoid going to Palmeras. Currently the road doesn't make it all the way to Alto Pusuno. Where the drivable road ends, about a kilometer before town, take the left fork and walk 15-30 minutes, depending on mud, to a footbridge over the river. The best put-in is to scramble down on river left. This bridge is about halfway between the villages of Alto Pusuno and San Miguel de las Palmeras.

TAKE-OUT: Paddle the Pusuno down to its confluence with the Napo below Puerto Misahualli. Continue downstream about 3 km to Punta Ahuano on river right. Buses run from here to Tena, but arrive by 5:30, when the last bus is scheduled to depart. If you miss the final bus, you can buy food and water here and camp out, or continue down to Ahuano proper, where there are hotels and jungle lodges to stay the night. *

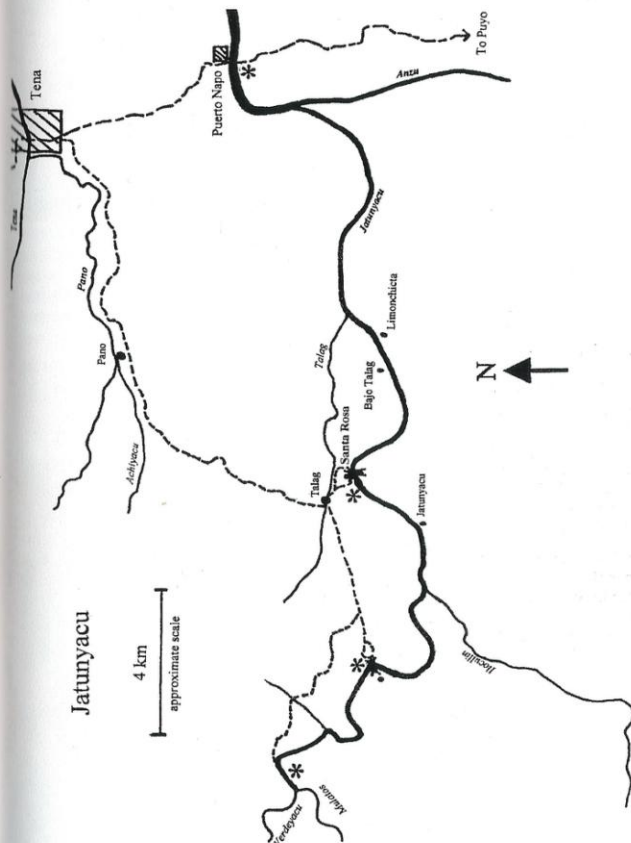
Alto Napo		JATUNYACU		Alto Napo	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low III Med III+ High IV	4 hours	25 fpm	18.5 miles 30 km	Yes	
Character: Wide open play Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷 Lots of local kids to play with Degree of suffering: 🦟🦟🦟 Steep put-in, bugs on the beaches Medium flow: 5000 Shuttle: Truck to put-in					

DESCRIPTION

In a country full of harder rivers, the Jatunyacu (aka Alto Napo) is one of the best Class III runs on the eastern slope. This river flows out of the unbelievably rugged Cordillera de Los Llanganates and is very clean since virtually no one lives in its upper drainage. Most of the rapids here are straightforward wave trains where one easy cut to the left or right usually assures a good run. This has become a popular run for Class III paddlers but expert and advanced paddlers look to it when everything else is in flood. When this river gets high the waves can be huge but the difficulty stays moderate. This run should not be neglected by anyone just because it is "low." The play is still fun and the clearer warm water makes a swim at lunch almost mandatory.

PUT-IN: Driving south out of Tena, turn right just before the hospital. Follow this road out of town towards the west. If you don't take any more turns this road will lead you to the lower of the two put-in options. After driving through the towns of Pano and Talag (17 km from Tena), you end up at a long footbridge that leads to the town of Serena. If you want to go to the upper put-in (taxi drivers should know this as Cando), turn around at the bridge and go back 1 km and make a left on a small road that heads steeply uphill. Follow this road for about 6 km until it reaches a pull-out and a steep but good trail down to the river. The road continues for a short distance past this put-in until it ends just before a side creek with a waterfall and swimming hole. The locals here have "improved" the access with a gate and will charge an entry fee. While the normal put-in is back downstream, a jump off the cliff and swim in the pool can be fun. It is also possible to carry your kayak up to this "park" and put in at the base of the falls.

TAKE-OUT: Although this run is usually done in its entirety, it is possible to take-out or put-in at the bridge at Santa Rosa about half way down. Otherwise the take-out is on river left, downstream of the bridge at Puerto Napo which is on the main road from Tena to Puyo (7 km south of Tena). You can catch a bus from here back to Tena. They run every 1/2 hour or so until around dark. *



Upper ANZU Upper				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV- Med IV High IV+	3 hours	95 fpm	11 miles 18 km	Yes
Character: Creeky and continuous Fiesta Factor: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Long way from anywhere Medium flow: 500-800 Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

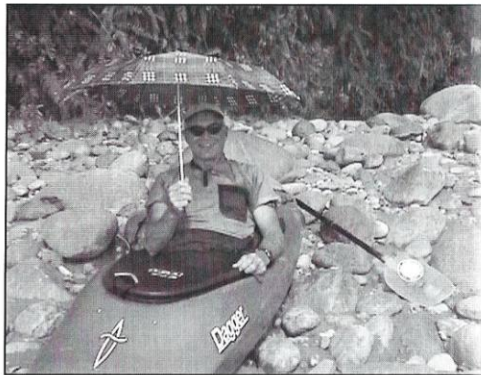
DESCRIPTION

Don't worry if this run looks too low at the put-in. Not far downstream is a confluence that will improve your water level. The hardest rapids here are in the middle of the run and most are boat scoutable, but you may find that you want to get out and look at a few of the bigger drops. In general the rapids are moderately technical with lots of boulders in the channels. This river is runnable at extremely low water, so if you're here, might as well go for it.

PUT-IN: Getting to this section takes a bit more travel than the other rivers in the area and it is often skipped for this reason. From Tena, drive south towards Puyo. About 60 km from Tena (19 km before Puyo) look for a road forking off to the right leading to the town of Buayacú. There is a covered bus stop near the intersection and the road initially goes uphill as it leaves the main highway. If you pass this turn off you will come to a pretty impressive school with covered basketball court. Find the turn off and drive this side road for about 45 minutes to the riverside village of Buayacú.

TAKE-OUT:

At the hanging bridge on the north side of Santa Clara, which has a sign saying Cabañas Río Piatua. This bridge is fifty meters off the main road and 30 km from the bus station in Tena. *



Lower ANZU Lower				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low II+ Med II+ High III	5 hours	15 fpm	15.5 miles 25 km	Yes
Character: Good beginner stretch (no eddies at high water) Fiesta Factor: ☹️ ☹️ Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Long drive to put-in Medium flow: 1000 Shuttle: Bus ok				

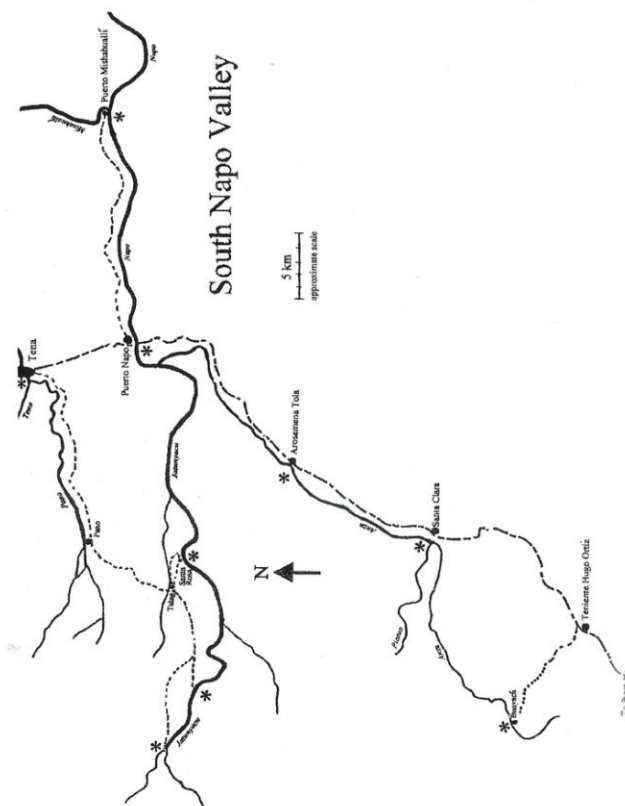
DESCRIPTION

This is one of the better Class II and easy III runs in the Oriente. While the rapids are long their nature is drop-pool. It starts out as class III- and in general gets progressively easier after the first 5 or 6 kilometers. Be careful of a tricky class III rapid about fifteen minutes into the run with a huge boulder in the middle of the channel. There are some alternate access points off the road from Puerto Napo if you want to shorten the day or just do the easier lower section.

PUT-IN: Bridge near Santa Clara, see Upper Anzu.

TAKE-OUT: Below the confluence with the Río Jatunyacu at Puerto Napo, same take-out as the Río Jatunyacu run. *





Shuttle on the Lower Mis

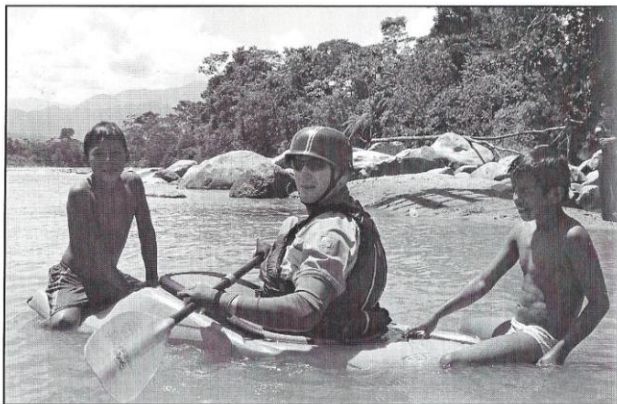
Upper TENA Upper				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low III Med III High IV	45 minutes	35 fpm	2 miles 3 km	No
Character: Continuous and technical Fiesta Factor: ☹️ ☹️ Degree of suffering: ☹️ ☹️ Medium flow: 150 at put-in Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

This short section is full of boulders and often short on water. Fortunately, about half way down the run a tributary comes in on the right which is a much needed help to the volume. A better paddler can get down it at the lowest flows but it would be boat abusive. If the water comes up a bit to medium flows it can be an enjoyable short town run if you don't want to travel farther to paddle. This surprisingly scenic, close to Tena run is mostly technical class II+ with three or four class III rapids. This isn't the best run for new paddlers wanting to step up to more challenging rapids, though, since it is so technical.

PUT-IN: Get a taxi to take you to the pueblo of Atacape, about a fifteen minute ride west past the airport from the center of Tena. Put in at a small beach.

TAKE-OUT: Bridge at Muyuna, look for the sign for "Establo de Tomas." If you want to save on a taxi, just paddle another hour to downtown Tena. The river between Muyuna and "The Soga" (see next section) is annoyingly shallow and only has a couple class I rapids. *



La Soga TENA La Soga				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low I+ Med I+ High II+	45 minutes	10 fpm	2 miles 3 km	Inner tubes are better
Character: Low volume, shallow, wide riverbed Fiesta Factor: ☹️ ☹️ ☹️ Bar at take out Degree of suffering: ☹️ Medium flow: 150 Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

This is a good first time run since it starts out at a swimming hole where you can practice basic skills. The rapids are relatively clear channels but a couple end in 90 degree bends with swirly currents. This is the run most of the local paddlers started on. Watch out for swimmers swinging on ropes over the swimming hole especially on weekends and holidays.

PUT-IN: La Soga. Any Taxi in town will know of it.

TAKE OUT: Walking bridge in Tena. *

**NAPO VALLEY EXTRA CREDIT**

Rio Inchillagui (aka Hakuna Matata) Just before crossing the bridge over the Rio Misahualli on the road from Tena to Archidona, turn left onto a gravel road and follow the signs to "Cabanas Hakuna Matata." Ask for permission to put in at their private beach, or better yet continue 1 km more until the end of the road. Walk the final 1 km to, and then through, the village La Libertad. Class III, creek, at low flows. Best if the water is up a little bit.

Rio Mondayacu tributary of Upper Misahualli. The road to Cotundo crosses this small creek. Needs rain.

Rio Calmitoyacu Joins the Upper Misahualli on river right, a bit upstream of the Orchids Paradise Hotel. Needs some rain.

Rio Pucuno an overnight trip near Huataracu.

Rio Pano above it's confluence with the Tena.

Rio Illocullin Joins the Jatunyacu just above the bridge at Serena. Hike to put-in.



LESSONS IN TRANSLATION



"It's okay, guys, this man here says that they canoe this section of the river."

We all cheered. I'd been in Ecuador for only a couple of weeks, and I was anxious to check out as many rivers as I could. It had been raining for three days straight in Tena, and all the rivers right around us were raging too much. We had several heated chess tournaments, but by the third day of rain, the four of us were going stir crazy. Allen, Don, Larry and I decided to check out the Upper Anzu. None of us had done it, but we'd heard rumors that it was runnable at high water. It also supposedly had a significant waterfall somewhere, though we weren't sure how high up it was.

So there we were, at the river's edge beside the tiny village of Buayacú. We'd driven three hours on the bumpy washboard road between Tena and Puyo, including repeated drive-bys of the five miles around where we knew the turn-off must be. We finally found it, and drove another twenty minutes on a badly pitted road barely wide enough for the van. Our driver made one heroic stream crossing, but then the road became a muddy trail.

We walked down to check out the river in the continued rain, slipping, sliding, and sinking into the trail for fifteen minutes until we reached the cluster of huts and a soccer field that made up Buayacú. Suddenly we were accompanied by a few adults (who didn't seem to sink in the mud like I did) and many pairs of eyes looking out from darkened windows.

We stood at the edge of the Upper Anzu, discussing whether or not it looked do-able. The water was muddy and the riverbed full. I was elected to try to get some information out of the locals. Turning to a wrinkled, solemn-looking man at my shoulder, I introduced myself and asked in my best Spanish if the river was flooding.

"It can be higher," he answered quietly.

"We want to go down this river in our canoes. Is it very difficult?"

"We go down it in our canoes."

Excited, I repeated, "In your canoes? When the water is lower you will go down it here in your canoes?"

Not looking at me, he paused and then nodded.

I gave my translation to the guys.

"Well, if they canoe it at lower flows, then maybe we'll get a few wave trains today. It'll be easy!"

"That waterfall must be further upstream then."

"Should we even bother to do it?"

"I'm sick of sitting around. We're here - we might as well."

We all agreed that it would be good to get on the water, even if it would only be a class II run. We hustled through the mud back to the van, changed and unloaded gear, and gave our driver directions to the takeout. He was nervous about what the continued rain could do to the already sketchy road, so he took off right away.

Our second slog through Buayacú, we were completely surrounded by villagers touching our kayaks and trying on helmets. Even the little school had been recessed to watch the crazy gringos. A few kids climbed into the metal basket on the cable crossing over the river and pulled themselves out over the water for front row seats.

As I made a few last adjustments in my boat, a woman grabbed my arm.



"You can't go down this river! It is very dangerous!"

Her desperation caught my attention.

"What? Don't the people from here go down it in canoes?"

Several people behind her giggled. She shook her head vigorously. "No! They do further downstream, way downstream. But here it is *muy fuerte, demasiado fuerte!* Por favor, no se entren! Se van a morir!"

My mouth dropped. I looked around for the old man I'd spoken with earlier but he was no where in sight.

"Uh, guys?" They turned to look at me. "I think I made a little translation mistake."

"What do you mean?" All three turned to look at me.

"Well, I thought that guy said they went down this section in canoes, but I guess he meant way downstream. This woman says that even at low water this section is too rough for canoes."

I added, "And she thinks we're going to die, and asks us not to go." We turned to look at the river.

Larry tugged at a strap on his life jacket. "When they say it's really dangerous, it usually means we're going to have a blast. But it does look huge. I don't know if I really want to do this run for the first time when it's flooding."

"The van is long gone by now," Don pointed out. "I don't think many vehicles make it down here. If we don't put in, it's a long muddy hike out."

There was a heavy silence.

"Hell," said Allen, "I'm here to boat. Let's just put in and take it slow if we have to."

"But, but," I stuttered, "What about the waterfall? What if it's on this section?"

"I guess we'll find that out!" hooted Allen.

"Boating down may just be the best option," Don pointed out. "Can you imagine carrying your kayak all the way up that road?"

Larry and I looked at each other, then back to the river. Allen and Don finished gearing up. Larry shrugged resignedly and put on his helmet. I groaned and did the same.

We slid in the river to the cheers and waves of the village. It started out silly Class III, but just around the corner it became a big water blast, with huge waves and holes and tiny eddies. I obsessed too much about whether each horizon line could be the waterfall. We finally got to what we thought must be it. We scouted, and a couple ran it and a couple portaged. It started to ease up, though we weren't totally sure that there wasn't a bigger fall. It took us all of about an hour and a half to reach our van at the takeout. And you know, it was a great run. Definitely better than another chess tournament.

I learned several things about boating in Ecuador. First, don't ask yes/no questions to someone when there might be a language barrier between you. Second, ask the same question several times of different people. Third, maybe the "you're going to die" warning isn't always bad. *

Nancy



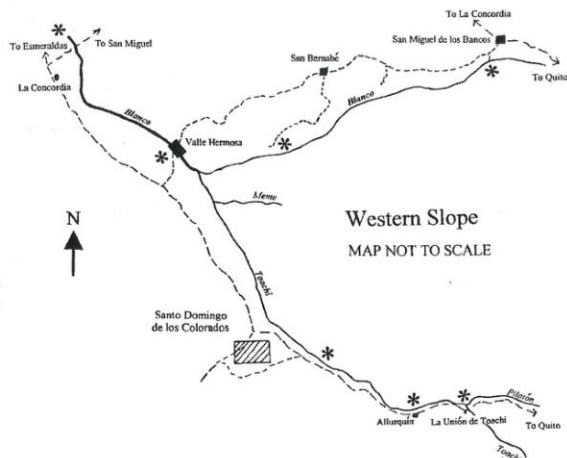
SANTO DOMINGO DE LOS COLORADOS



As Ecuador's westernmost part of the Andes make their final drop down to the coast, they create a great topographical setting for whitewater—lots of rain and lots of gradient. The coastal rivers drain a huge area, and their countless tributaries offer some outstanding paddling. While there are a good number of established runs near Santo Domingo, the surrounding areas are still relatively unexplored. If you are looking to get off the beaten path, this is the place to head. You are much less likely to run into other kayakers here than in Tena or Baeza. The climate and river temperatures are similar to Tena, but some of the higher elevation runs can be chilly.

Many folks here are farmers, and a large portion of Ecuador's produce exports come from this region. As you descend down the pass from Quito, you will notice growing numbers of fruit stands along the highway. If you see people with their hair colored red, you will know how Santo Domingo de los Colorados got its name.

GETTING THERE: There are two routes to Santo Domingo. The quickest and most direct route is to drive south out of Quito toward Machachi. Before Machachi, turn west towards Santo Domingo de los Colorados (this is one of Ecuador's major highways). This takes about three hours, and there are plenty of buses running day and night. This highway is notoriously curvy and dangerous, and it is a good idea not to drive it at night. The alternative route takes you north of Quito towards the equator, then west towards Mindo and San Miguel de los Bancos. This route is longer, but if you want to visit the equator and the orchid gardens of Mindo on your way, it is not a bad option. There are buses on this route as well, but they run less frequently. *



ABOUT SANTO DOMINGO



Unlike the Eastern Slope, rain is a good thing on the Western slope. Many of the rivers near Santo Domingo are just little trickles until the rains come and make them outstanding kayak runs. There are a number of runs in the area that you can boat during the "dry season," but most kayakers go between mid-December and mid-May which is usually the "rainy season." See the "directions" page for which rivers need lots of rain, and which do not.

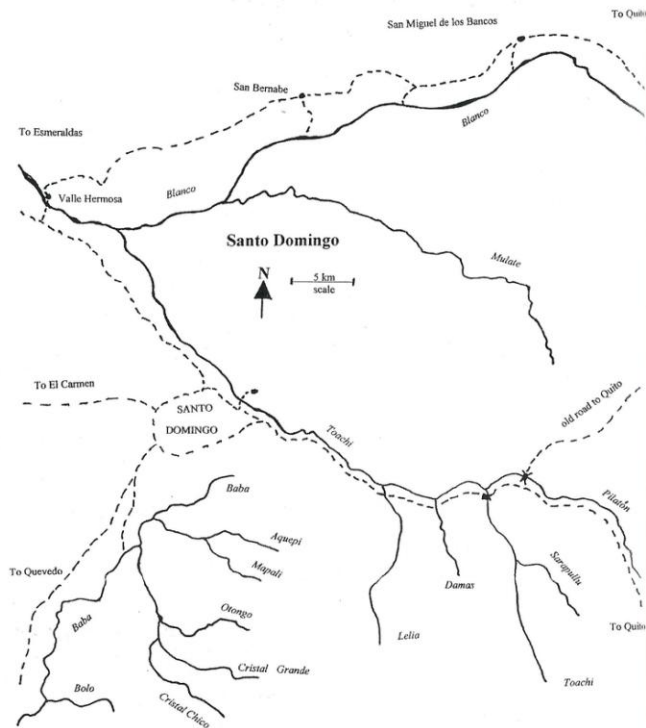
There are very few (if any) official truck taxis in this town, and finding shuttles can be difficult. If, however, you are up for a little adventure, head to the bus station and try to negotiate with one of the (usually unmarked) pick-up trucks there. If you are planning to stay for a while, it would be wise to get the driver's phone number and use the same one for your entire visit. Using the buses for shuttles is more difficult around Santo Domingo. Besides the fact that many runs are not along the bus lines, the buses in this region are much less kayak-friendly than in the Tena and Baeza areas. One will probably pick you up eventually, but you will most likely have to pay double the normal fare, and you will have watched dozens of others speed past you.

There are tons of restaurants and hotels to choose from in Santo Domingo, but here are a few suggestions to narrow the field.

Hotels: **Hotel Toachi** costs \$35 for a double room with air conditioning, and \$20 for a lower quality double without AC. It has very nice rooms (the newer \$35 rooms), and is on the main road into the city (but not downtown in the noisy city). ph (02) 275-4688. **The Tropical Inn** is on this same road (Avenida Quito), and offers rooms for \$25 for a double. The main advantages of this hotel are air conditioning, and the owner, Tex, is a kayaker, so if he happens to be there he can offer some beta. www.tropicalinn.cjb.net ph (02) 276-1771. There are also a handful of hotels across the street from the bus station. These hotels are all in the \$10-15 dollar range but are not of the best quality. The nicest (and oddly enough cheapest) is the **Hotel Metropolitana**. It costs \$10 per double has nice, simple rooms with cable TV and a private bath. The catch is you have to bring your own fan, which you will definitely want in Santo Domingo.

Restaurants: One of the safest places to eat is the Pizzeria El Hornero on Avenida Quito right next door to the Tropical Inn. Popular with kayakers are three top-quality dives (meaning cheap, but tasty food). These restaurants are all in a row on Avenida Quito near the Hotel Toachi. They offer Chinese food, ceviche, and menestra. All have great food for very reasonable prices, and your group can sit outside and order from all three restaurants at once. Look for the name Popeye's to spot these restaurants. Again, there are many more in Santo Domingo if you have time to go exploring.

Everything Else: It is difficult to walk more than a block in downtown Santo Domingo without finding a phone office. Internet cafes are a bit more sparse, but if you look around you will find some. There is one about 6-7 blocks towards Santo Domingo from Popeye's. This town also has a huge supermarket and every other kind of store you could want (within reason of course). It is one of the largest towns on the Western Slope, and should have just about everything you will need. *



SANTO DOMINGO DIRECTIONS

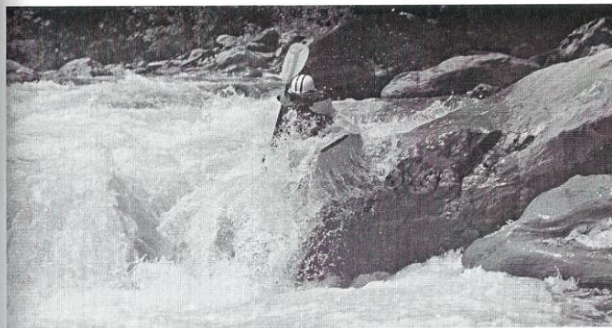


Because navigating around Santo Domingo can be tricky at times, we have added a "directions" page to this section. There are four main roads leaving Santo Domingo:

- 1.) Via Quito to the east, 2.) Via Quevedo to the south, 3.) Via El Carmen to the west, 4.) Via Esmeraldas to the north. The Via Quito and Via Quevedo are of the most importance to kayakers.

To paddle the Pilatón, Sarapullu, Mulate, Damas, Lelia, and the upper sections of the Toachi, follow the Via Quito out of town. Continue on this main road that links Quito and Santo Domingo until you reach the very obvious toll booth (you will have to stop and pay your toll). Because of the sprawling nature of Santo Domingo and the lack of a central place to start counting kilometers, we measured our distances for these runs from this toll booth (depending on your location in Santo Domingo, the toll booth is 5-15 kilometers east of town). Just in case they tear the toll booth down someday, we have also tried to give other landmarks, such as bridges or schools, for all these runs. Most of these runs are good when there is NOT much rain, and for some, low water is a must (see river write-ups for specifics). The Damas and Lelia are the exception. These two creeks need rain.

For runs on the Cristal, Otongo, Bolo, and Baba, you will want to take the Via Quevedo south of town. After about 10 km, you will reach a very small police control station and a "sky" pedestrian bridge that crosses over the road. 1 km past this, turn left at the sign for "Hotel California." 2-3 km up this road, take the first right that you come to. Drive 2 km on this road and go left at the Y (turning right will take you to the bridge over the Baba river where the Baba surf wave is, and is a potential take-out for the Otongo and Cristal). 3 km past the Y, you will reach an upper bridge over the Baba and Bañeario Los Angeles. All put-in and take-out directions for the above runs will begin from this bridge at Bañeario Los Angeles. You need lots of rain for all of these runs. If most of the rivers on the Via Quito are too high, head to the Via Quevedo and you should find good levels on these creeks. ★



Upper		PILATÓN			Upper
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV/IV+ Med IV+ High V	2-3 hours	210 fpm	3 miles 5 km	No	
Character: Tight, intimidating canyon to start, wide-open to finish Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷 Tanker truck in river Degree of suffering: 🤯🤯🤯 Water level discrepancy (see text) Medium flow: 400 Shuttle: Bus OK					

DESCRIPTION

This run starts out stout! From the put-in, you have about three minutes to warm up before you drop into the deepest part of the canyon. Although you are just a few hundred feet below the main road to Quito, it feels quite remote. There are 5 or 6 challenging rapids in this canyon. At low water they are all scoutable, and portageable if necessary. It would be nice to see this run at low water first as stopping between rapids may be difficult at higher flows. Use caution in the second significant rapid because there is a gas tanker truck in the river. It constricts most of the channel, but you can pass it on river left. We portaged one rapid in the canyon because it looked like some good potential for a nasty pin, but this one is most likely runnable with a little more water. This rapid is just around the corner from the rather long "Tanker Truck rapid." This run is a catch 22, because you want low flows for the canyon, but high flows for the rest of the run. After the canyon, the river widens a great deal. It becomes shallow and rocky, and in many places it is extremely difficult not to hit rocks. Unfortunately, there is no great access until the town of Tandapi. Despite the second half, this run is recommended because the canyon is excellent.

PUT-IN: Drive about 17 km past "La Hesperia" (or 49 km east of the toll booth) until you cross a creek called Río Chisinche. Just after the creek, there is a house on the left and a small hill with a set of white dumbbells perched on top. Turn in here and either walk .5 km down the road to the river, or ask the family for permission to drive down. They will more than likely let you, and accompany you down to see you off. You are actually putting in on the Río Corazon, but it becomes the Pilatón in about 50 meters.

TAKE-OUT: 43 km east of the toll booth you will reach the town of Tandapi (aka Manuel Cornejo Astroga). On the far side of town (closer to Quito), there is a small access road with a bridge crossing the Pilatón. If you can find access just after the canyon you will be a bit happier, although in 2006, nothing looked too promising. Also, the river at the take-out should look low. We almost didn't put on because we thought there was not enough water, but it turned out to be a great level for the canyon. You could continue down from here to La Hesperia, but you will encounter more of the boat abusing, characterless Pilatón that you had from the end of the canyon to Tandapi. It will take you about another hour to go to La Hesperia, and what you see from the road is pretty much what you get. It is probably not worth your while unless the water is high.

Middle		PILATON			Middle
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV- (3-8 on the gauge) Med IV/IV+ (8-11 on the gauge) High V (11 and up on the gauge)	1-2 hours	150 fpm	7 miles 11.5 km	Yes, experts only	
Character: Extremely continuous boating! Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷 Fun and continuous Degree of suffering: 🤯🤯🤯 Continuous—a swim would be unpleasant here Medium flow: 800 Shuttle: Bus OK					
DESCRIPTION					

DESCRIPTION

If you haven't already gathered, this run is NOT pool drop. It starts out as fairly wide-open III/III+ with one rapid running right into the next. There are only a few distinct rapids, and the rest of the run is just non-stop downriver fun (there are plenty of small eddies to catch if you choose to). There is a tighter canyon in the middle of the run, which creates a few tougher rapids with some big holes. After this canyon, it opens up again, but remains action-packed until the take-out. "Normal" levels for this run are between 5-9 on the gauge. If you are comfortable in class IV water it's a hoot! The only problem is you can paddle 7 miles pretty fast when there aren't any pools.

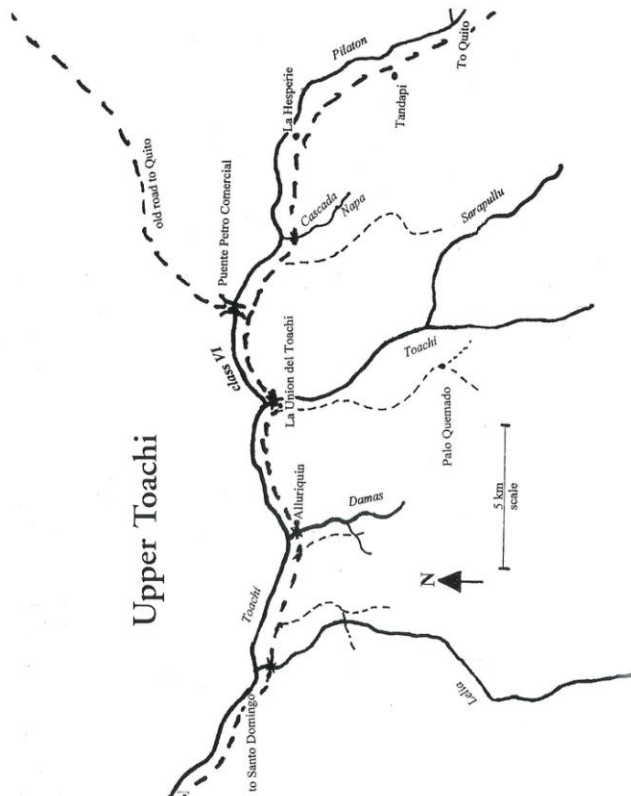
PUT-IN: From the toll booth it is 25 km to La Cascada where the Río Napa plunges off a cliff practically onto the road. From here, continue another 7 km up the road until you see a sign for "La Hesperia." Here, there is a school right on the Pilatón River. Follow a small path next to the fence just upstream of the school to reach the put-in. The gauge is just across the river.

TAKE-OUT: There are two possible take-outs for this run. The first is La Cascada on the Río Napa. If you want to add 3 more kilometers to the run, you can continue down to the Petro-Commercial Bridge (using this take-out makes it 11.5 km). This is on the old road to Quito, and the locals may know it as the Camino Chiriboba.

WARNING! *The Petro-Commercial Bridge is the last take-out on the Pilatón before the river drops into a virtually unrunnable Class VI canyon. About 2-3 km downstream of the bridge, the river constricts to 5-10 feet wide and plunges over a series of seemingly unrunnable drops. There is no river access in the canyon and scouting would be difficult to impossible.*



Tanker Truck Rapid



Palo Quemado		ALTO TOACHI		Palo Quemado	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV Med IV+ High V	3 hours	80 fpm	7.5 miles 12 km	Experts only/small	

Character: Slot canyons

Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Degree of suffering: 🤖🤖🤖🤖 Long drive

Medium flow: 700

Shuttle: Truck to put-in

DESCRIPTION

This section of the Toachi is one of the good low water options around Santo Domingo. In fact, high water would make this stretch scary. From the put-in to the confluence with the Sarapullu, the river is pretty much class II. After the union, things start to build. Many of the rapids in this section come in intimidating, hard to scout, tight walled mini gorges. Luckily, the nastiest box canyon can be scouted and portaged on the right.

These mini canyons are scattered throughout the first half of the run, but most of the difficult rapids are towards the end. When you can see the road on river left making it's big switchback to reach the top of the ridge, the rapids are about to get difficult. If the water is high, or you're looking for an early way out after boating the Sarapullu, this is the first time since the confluence that the road has been relatively close. Steep walled pool drop rapids remain, but at low to medium water you can still scout and portage.

The final rapid is just above the bridge at La Unión del Toachi. At high water, this hole is monstrous. Check the gage just upstream before doing the long drive to Palo Quemado. 8-10 is a low level here. Because of dusty hills upstream, the river almost always runs dirty, so water color is not a good indication. There is also a gauge upstream at the confluence with the Sarapullu. 3-5 is low on the Sarapullu/Toachi gauge.

Keep an eye out for wood, as there always seems to be logs on this run.

PUT-IN: 17 km east of the toll booth on the Via Quito, the main road crosses the Toachi in the town of La Unión del Toachi. Leave the Via Quito and drive south from La Unión del Toachi for about 45 minutes to the village of Palo Quemado. On the far side of town, the main road bends to the right. Turn left instead (almost straight) and head down the hill to the "playa" and riverside community. This road ends just short of the put-in footbridge. Twice daily buses service Palo Quemado, but it would be a LONG walk down to the river.

TAKE-OUT: Above or below the final rapid at La Unión del Toachi, just above the highway bridge. ★

La Unión to Alluriquin		ALTO TOACHI		La Unión to Alluriquin	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low IV Med IV+ High V	1.5 hours	55 fpm	2.5 miles 4 km	Experts only	
Character: Swirly canyon Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️ Medium flow: 2,000 Shuttle: Bus OK					

DESCRIPTION

Another great option for low water paddling in the Santo Domingo area, this powerful canyon becomes full-on at higher flows. Regardless of water level, there's always a big water feel with powerful currents. The river squeezes between cliffs and makes amazing eddy lines. One longer rapid that bends away out of sight is harder than the rest. It can be scouted on the left.

The suggested run is pretty short due to the fact that the water gets dirty as it passes through the town of Alluriquin. It's always a good idea on the Toachi to get out just BEFORE riverside towns. Downstream of Alluriquin to the confluence with the Río Lelia the character is mostly flatter, with one long nasty rapid that is only runnable at very low flows.

PUT-IN: Just above the highway bridge in La Unión del Toachi. Drive 17 km past the toll booth on the Via Quito until the main road crosses the Río Toachi. Or drive a short way upstream towards Palo Quemado to get the tail end of that section.

TAKE-OUT: In Alluriquin. Just below the first road bridge over the river. A trail downstream on river right next to the gauge leads back up to the bridge. ★

Middle		TOACHI		Middle	
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low III (IV+) Med III (IV+) High IV (IV+)	3 hours	60 fpm	9 miles 15 km	Yes	
Character: Wide open play Fiesta Factor: 🍷🍷🍷 Degree of suffering: ☹️☹️☹️ Dirty water Medium flow: 1,500 Shuttle: Bus OK, depending on your take-out					

DESCRIPTION

This run can really be broken down into two sections. Because they are both relatively short, we think it is best to combine them. The first section is from the Río Lelia down to Tinalandia. This run only takes about 30 minutes, but flows through a tightly constricted canyon. At med-high flows, it is big water class IV with one IV+ about 5 minutes into the run. You can scout this rapid on river right. There is excellent playing potential at these higher flows if you don't mind a little dirty water. You can either get out at the bridge at Tinalandia, or continue another 1.5-2 hours down to a road bridge at Las Vegas Del Toachi (aka Brasilia Del Toachi). This section is much more wide-open and the difficulty eases significantly. The shuttle is slightly more complicated if you take-out here as it is not on the main bus route. It is, however, less than a mile from here to Santo Domingo and hitching a ride may be possible. The only problem with this great run is the dirty water. It is typically muddy and is downstream of a couple sizeable towns. Don't forget your nose plugs!

PUT-IN: Put in on Lelia Creek. The Via Quito crosses the Lelia a few kilometers west of the town of Alluriquin. Just upstream of the highway bridge that crosses this creek is an old bridge. From this bridge, there is a trail down to the river on river right. Scrape down about 100 meters of the Lelia into the Toachi.

TAKE-OUT: Either at the bridge at Tinalandia (the first bridge you will come to after entering the Toachi). Or, continue down to the serious road bridge at Las Vegas Del Toachi. Take-out on river left and walk up to the road. Conveniently, there is a little tienda at this second take-out where you can buy some aguardiente to kill those river bugs! ★

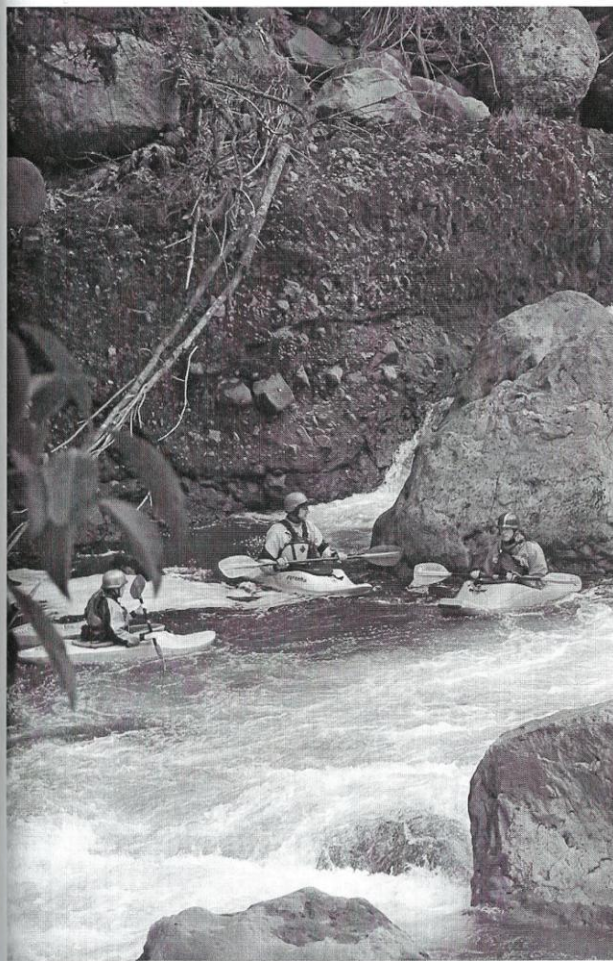
Lower		TOACHI			Lower
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS	
Low III Med IV- High IV+	2 hours	55 fpm	6 miles 10 km	yes not at high flows	
Character: Small, technical canyon Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 (4 in rafts) Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ Medium flow: 3000 above confluence with Blanco Shuttle: Bus ok					

DESCRIPTION

This run is surprisingly beautiful given that it is situated so close to Santo Domingo. You are padding in a small canyon much of the way. The rapids are moderately technical and pretty close together. The river enters a small gorge for the final third of the run and bumps up from II-III to some fun pool-drop Class III-IV. The Río Meme joins the run about a kilometer above the confluence with the Blanco and this makes for a nice lunch spot. The hardest rapid is called Sapo (frog), and is often run from the middle moving right. Watch out for rocks and holes at the bottom.

PUT-IN: Take the Via Esmeraldas northeast out of Santo Domingo until you reach km 13. Turn right here and go about 2 km to the bridge. Put in here. This is a popular rafting run, and if you get lost, someone will be able to point you in the right direction.

TAKE-OUT: Valle Hermosa, same as the Upper Blanco (see page 102) since you will join it for the last 2 or 3 miles. There are also several access points before you enter the last gorge. *



SARAPULLU

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV+/V Med V+/V+ High V+/VI	5-8 hours depending on take-out	195 fpm	3.7 miles 6 km (+ Upper Toachi)	No

Character: Tight, sheer-walled basalt canyon

Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 Great boating, beautiful canyon

Degree of suffering: 🐻 🐻 🐻 Remote, committing canyon

Medium flow: 500

Shuttle: Hire a truck

DESCRIPTION

This is an amazing run, but it is difficult and committing. Once you get into the tough rapids, there are no access points until it's over. The run starts out class III/IV and the kilometers fly by for the first hour or so. The last few kilometers will take the majority of your time. For a while, the harder rapids are interspersed with easier class IV, but eventually, every rapid will require scouting. This run gets its rating both for its remoteness and for the difficult rapids in the last canyon. These last couple kilometers are in a very tight and closed-off basalt canyon. In this gorge high water would be problematic. The sheer basalt walls offer few eddies, and even fewer places to climb out of your kayak, and high flows could make scouting/portaging impossible. There is a gauge at the put-in just below the bridge on river right. We did this run at 5 on the gauge, which seemed about perfect. You could certainly go lower, probably down to 3 would be ok. Above 6 on the gauge would make some of the scouting we did unfeasible. Also, there were a couple river-wide holes that were unportagable due to the canyon walls. They were runnable at 5, but may not be at higher water. There was also a log in one rapid that forced us to do a somewhat epic, rope-supported jungle portage. Go prepared for adventure. Having said all of this, the Sarapullu is an outstanding run, one of the best in Santo Domingo.

PUT-IN: It is a bit of a drive from Santo Domingo to the put-in, so be sure to get an early start. From the toll booth, continue about 24 km towards Quito. You are looking for a small dirt road with a sign that reads, "Estacion Ecologica Sarapuyo." The road will be on your right hand side, and is between the Puente Petro Commercial (see notes for Middle Pilatón) and La Cascada on the Rio Napa. If you get to La Cascada, turn around and back track as the road is easier to see from this direction. Once on the dirt road, drive past Pampas Argentinas, then go right at the Y continuing on the main road. When in doubt go right, and just try to follow the main road, as there are lots of little spur roads leading to farms. When we were there, this road dead-ended in a landslide. From here, hike past the landslide and continue about 15 minutes on the road that will lead you to the put-in bridge, where you can check the gauge.

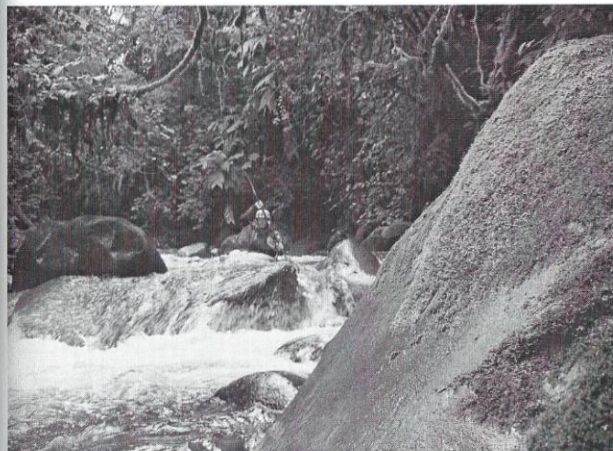
TAKE-OUT: If you are short on time and have arranged a shuttle driver, you can take-out near the confluence of the Sarapullu and Toachi. After you hit the Toachi River, continue downstream for about 100 meters. You will pass a river gauge on the left, and just past this there is a break in the cliffs on river left. Get out here and start hiking upstream.



There is a trail (although it is sometimes hard to find), that leads away from the river, up onto a little bench, and then back up river left of the Toachi. **IMPORTANT**—make sure you hike up the Toachi. No matter how good a trail you find, do NOT hike straight up the hill, you want to hike upriver—in about 20-30 minutes, you will end up at a house and a dirt road that leads up to the village of Palo Quemado. Have a driver meet you at the bottom of this hill (for directions, see put-in for Alto Toachi—Palo Quemado).

The preferred take-out option is to continue down the Toachi to the main highway at La Union Del Toachi. The key to this is to start early on the Sarapullu and get to the confluence with plenty of daylight left. From the confluence to the highway is about 12 km and is class IV at reasonable levels. If you were happy on the Sarapullu, it will probably take you two to three hours. Again, low water is better for this run (see description for Alto Toachi—Palo Quemado).

If you decide to paddle out but run out of time or get caught by high water, you could paddle downstream for about 8 km and hike out where the road drops closer to the river (the road follows the Upper Toachi on top of the ridge on river left, but it's a LONG way up). The rapids on the Toachi get more difficult just about where the road makes a big switchback down towards the river. If you can't make it all the way to the bridge, bushwhack to the road and figure out the shuttle from there. *





TRAILS OF DECEPTION



It is amazing that there are still countless unexplored rivers in Ecuador. The country is only the size of Colorado and kayakers have been coming here for more than a decade, and yet, there are still many unknown rivers with roads to the put-in! I have spent the past four winters in Ecuador, and the quality and quantity of rivers continues to impress me. In 2005, Don Beveridge and I went to Santo Domingo on the western slope of Ecuador to try to do two new runs that our local boater friend, Ricardo, had been researching. We had relatively low water which was perfect for both of the creek-like runs we had in mind. The first, the Río Mulate, has two sections. The lower class II section is run regularly. The upper section, however, had never been done. Surprisingly enough, there is a road to the put-in and take-out. Perhaps other boaters had shied away from this section because of the LONG shuttle and obscurity of the area.

You often hear stories of grueling first descents that read more like memoirs of pain and misery than enjoyable river exploration. While there is plenty of opportunity for this sort of suffering in Ecuador, it is also not too late to discover rivers in comfort and style. Don and I had just finished guiding kayaking trips for four straight weeks on the eastern slope, and treated ourselves to a decadent night out on the town in Quito (complete with Internet cafes, Mexican food, and margaritas). The next morning we caught an early bus towards Santo Domingo and met Ricardo and María Clara at a roadside truck stop. Two bumpy hours later, we reached the put-in at the tiny town of Mar de Tranquilidad where the locals assured us they had never seen any kayakers before. We put-in on a very small creek that was class III for the first couple of kilometers. Shortly, we entered a more canyonized section that created some beautiful class IV drops. This class IV canyon persisted for about 7-8 kilometers offering up some clean and unique rapids, and then became class II-III again. The easing of the river was more than compensated for by the great scenery and bird-life in the lower portion—we saw three toucans in the last 5 kilometers. Eighteen kilometers and about five hours later we reached the take-out, hopped in our shuttle vehicle and were back in Santo Domingo enjoying the food at Popeye's restaurant by dinner time. We are lucky to have been invited along on this fantastic run that Ricardo had so meticulously researched. It almost felt unfair; it was by far the easiest first descent I have ever done. I can't help but wonder how many more rivers like the Mulate are out there.

The second river on Ricardo's hit list was not quite the logistical joy that the Mulate was, and we would soon get a taste of the other kind of first descent. The Río Sarapullu was both a more difficult river and a more difficult take-out. (It turns out the take-out did not have to be so challenging, but our lack of knowledge and fear of impending darkness led us astray). Knowing from the topo maps that this run was 6 km long and averaged 195 feet per mile, we got a typical early Ecuadorian start and were on the river by noon. The boating was difficult and the basalt canyon spectacular. Our run down the river went smoothly with countless runnable class IV and V rapids, and only one long, sweaty, jungle portage around a log. It was at the take-out that our troubles began. We arrived at the confluence with the Toachi at 5:00 pm and it gets dark around 6:00-6:30 pm. The Toachi from here down to the highway was, at this time, unknown to us, and we were not confident we could finish the 12 km run before dark. From our maps, we knew there was

a trail from our take-out to the town of Palo Quemado. We now know that there is a somewhat overgrown trail leading upstream on the Toachi River to a dirt road that leads to Palo Quemado. This pleasant walk takes about 20 minutes. Our route, however, was a different story. In our concern about the hour, we hastily found a great, well-worn trail and followed it straight up the mountainside for 1 kilometer and 1,000 meters of nearly vertical, mud-laden walking. After about 20 minutes, the trail changed from a well-worn path to a few discernable gum boot prints left in the mud. It was too late to turn back so we decided to press on. Just after the darkness and fog settled in, I began to wonder how we were going to camp out on this mountain of mud. A porta-ledge would have been an appropriate piece of equipment, but we were unprepared. Memories of the simple life of river running from the day before, combined with the hope of getting back to Santo Domingo in time for another dinner at Popeye's, pushed us on (or up rather). Donning headlamps, we slipped, grumbled, and cursed our way up the mountainside. At about 7:30 pm, we made it to the town of Palo Quemado covered from head to toe in mud, tired, hungry, thirsty, and wishing we had looked over the maps a bit more closely. By this time, our shuttle driver had given up on us and headed back to Santo Domingo (a one hour drive). Using our pitiful condition to elicit pity, we convinced the local shop owner to let us use his phone and give us some food and water on an I.O.U. We called our shuttle driver who returned for us around 9 pm. I never thought that lying in the back of a marginally clean cow truck could feel so good, but I slept great on our drive back to town. We didn't make it in time for dinner, but we did make it off that mountain. I can't wait to get back to the beautiful Sarapullu, and more so, I can't wait to use the proper take-out this time around. *



DAMAS

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV Med IV/IV+ High IV+/V	1-2 hours	260 fpm	1.25 miles 2 km	No

Character: Low volume, steep, rocky creeking

Fiesta Factor: ☺ ☺ ☺ Waterfall and beers at the take-out

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ Short run, sharp rocks

Medium flow: 150

Shuttle: Truck to put-in

DESCRIPTION

The Damas (aka Rio Alluriquin) is a small tributary of the Toachi River. Although it is a short run, it tumbles quickly out of the hills, and offers some fun creeking. It is more consistently steep than its neighbor the Rio Lelia. Overall the run has a class IV feel, but there are a couple of rapids that are scout-worthy, and at certain levels may need to be portaged. Most of the bigger rapids have clean lines, but watch out for sharp rocks in the easier stuff between rapids. This run ends with a fun and clean (on the right) 10 foot waterfall that will leave you with fond memories of the Damas. From the take-out, you can look at the river to determine if water levels are right. It should look boney here (kayakable, but still rocky) as the river upstream is much more constricted. If it is bank full, you may want to consider a run on the middle or lower Toachi instead. The Damas drains a small area and needs recent rain, as it is quick to come up and quick to go down.

PUT-IN: Take the Via Quito to the town of Alluriquin (about 10 km past the toll booth), where the road crosses the Damas River. Turn right just before the bridge, and take a look at the water level. From here, take your first right and go up a small hill to where the road hits a T. At the T, go right, then immediately left, and climb up a steep dirt road. Follow this road for 2.8 km. Just before the road crosses a side creek, park and walk down to the river through a field. There is a small choza (gazebo) on the bank. The river has a couple of channels here and looks marginally boatable, but it gets much tighter downstream.

TAKE-OUT: Get out on the edge of town at a swimming complex called Complejo Alluriquin. This is just about 150 meters upstream of the road bridge that crosses the Damas. In a car, you can get there by taking the same right off the main Via Quito as the put-in, but then just drive straight to the end of the road. From the river, you will be able to see the local swimmers while you are scouting the waterfall. Cold beers at the local tienda! ★



Falls on the Damas

LELIA

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV (VI) Med IV (VI) High V (VI)	2 hours	210 fpm	1.8 miles 3 km	No

Character: Skinny creeking

Fiesta Factor: ☺ ☺ ☺ Good access, clean water

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ Short run with a long portage

Medium flow: 150

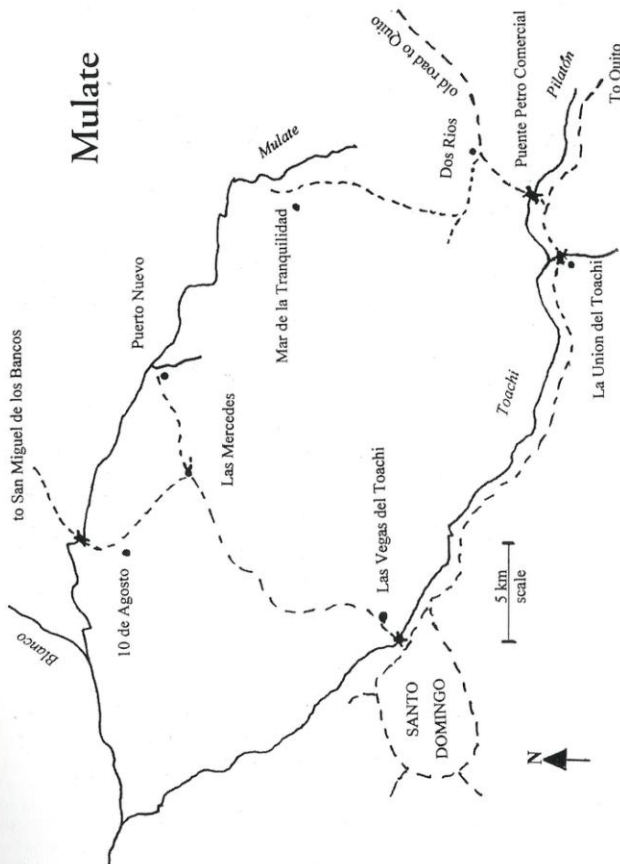
Shuttle: Truck to put-in

DESCRIPTION

This run flows into the Toachi River just downstream of Alluriquin. You will probably drive over it many times on your way to other runs, and if you have a few free hours one afternoon, it is definitely worth doing. It may look unworthy from the road as there is a diversion dam about .5 km upstream that reduces the flow by about fifty percent. But, if the Damas is medium or even low, the Lelia will likely be good. It is a very skinny creek, but does have some fun and challenging rapids. There is one tight section in the middle of the run with numerous class IV drops and very few eddies, making it sketchy at high water. Towards the bottom of the run, there is an obvious canyon where the river squeezes down to about 2-3 feet wide and then opens up again to tumble over a series of convoluted class V-VI falls. There is a portage trail on river right that goes up into the jungle and then out into a field. Drop back down to river level at the low-head dam. Watch for wood on this run as the creek courses through a heavily forested area.

PUT-IN: From the toll booth, drive 9.3 km towards Quito and you will reach El Paraiso. Both El Paraiso (a town/bus stop) and the road up to the Lelia are easy to miss, so pay attention as you drive. The road is on the right, just before a three-story house that was (in 2006) painted yellow with a blue-trimmed roof. You will know you are on the right road because there should be a chain across it, and you may have to pay a small toll. Drive up this road for 5.5 km. There are two Y's on this road, and you should go right at both. The bridge over the Lelia (your put-in) is just after you turn right at the second Y. If you reach the town of San Miguel de Lelia, you have gone too far.

TAKE-OUT: After the portage, either take out at the dam or paddle or hike the remaining 15 minutes to the main road to Quito. A small dirt road accesses the dam where the Via Quito crosses the Lelia. If you want, you can drive up to the dam and have a look at the last couple waterfalls in the portage. ★



Upper

MULATE

Upper

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV- Med IV High IV/IV+	2 hours	125 fpm	8 miles 13 km	Yes

Character: Jungle creeking**Fiesta Factor:** ☺☺☺☺☺ Clean water, beautiful scenery**Degree of suffering:** ☹☹☹☹☹ A long way from anywhere**Medium flow:** 150 put-in, 800 take-out**Shuttle:** Hire a truck**DESCRIPTION**

This run has spectacular scenery and abundant bird life. Last time we were there we saw three toucans. It starts out annoyingly bony, but the riverbed quickly squeezes together and makes for some nice boating. You will pass many small tributaries along the way adding significantly to your flow, so that by Puerto Nuevo (possible take-out) it is likely you will have 4-5 times the flow you started with. Once you enter the deeper water, the rapids stay fairly constant, but pool drop, all the way to the take out. Medium water is ideal for this run; it does get a little scrappy at lower water. It seems, however, that this run flows most of the time. Even after an extremely dry period in Santo Domingo, the Mulate still had water. The combination of the clear water, scenery, and quality rapids make this a first rate run. The only problem is that it is a long way from anywhere.

PUT-IN: The put-in is in a small village called Mar De Tranquilidad, about two hours from Santo Domingo. From the toll booth, continue towards Quito for about 22 km until you get to the Petro-Commercial Bridge on the old road to Quito. If you pass La Cascada on the Rio Napa, you have gone too far by about 3 km. Get on this old road to Quito (some may call it Camino Chiriboba), and drive 7 km to Dos Rios. Here, the main road continues straight over a small bridge, but you should take a sharp (almost 180 degrees) left at this town. Then, at the first Y, take a right. The put-in is just over 23 km from the Petro-Commercial Bridge. You will be able to see the Mulate River for about 10 minutes before you actually get to the put-in, but be patient because the road eventually gets within 10 feet of the river.

TAKE-OUT: If you want to get out just after the whitewater, get out at Puerto Nuevo (the mileage and time mentioned above are for this take-out). The town is visible from the river, has a large foot-bridge, and is located where a large tributary, Rio El Dorado, joins the Mulate from river left. Driving directions: From Santo Domingo, head down the hill to Las Vegas del Toachi (this is not one of the 4 main outlets from Santo Domingo but most people will know where it is). Cross the Toachi River and continue up the road past many balnearios on your way to the town of Mercedes. About 24 km past the Toachi River, you will reach a police station next to a Y in the road. Turn right here and go into the town of Mercedes. In Mercedes, you will see a very large pink/orange church. Turn left here. In 9.7 km, you will arrive in Puerto Nuevo, look for the footbridge over the Rio Mulate.

A second take-out option is Puente De La Paz (see take-out directions for the Lower Mulate). This adds 13 km of Class II/III to your day, but the scenery is outstanding and helps your boating to driving ratio. ★

Lower MULATE Lower				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low II/III- Med III High III/III+	2 hours	55 fpm	8 miles 13 km	Yes
Character: Wide open cruising Fiesta Factor: 🍹 🍹 🍹 Outstanding scenery Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ Flat water Medium flow: 800 Shuttle: Hire a truck				

The Lower Mulate is a huge step down from the Upper in terms of difficulty, but there is perhaps even better scenery and birdlife on this lower portion. If you have time, and enjoy jungle surroundings, it is definitely worth your while. Adding to your river time with this lower section is also a good way to justify all the truck-time you put in to get here. This lower run is great for intermediate boaters as there are numerous class II/III rapids and you can scout and portage everything. The higher the water the better for this section.

PUT-IN: Puerto Nuevo (see take-out for Upper Mulate).

TAKE-OUT: Puente De La Paz. Follow directions to the take-out for the Upper Mulate until you get to the Y at the police station. Here, go left (instead of right) and follow this road (this is the road to San Miguel De Los Bancos) until you cross the Mulate River on a two-lane cement bridge called Puente De La Paz.

Note: You can also paddle from Puente De La Paz to the confluence with the Blanco. It is a Class I-II run, great for beginner kayakers*

Upper BLANCO Upper				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low III- Med III High IV	4-7 hours	65 fpm	26 miles 42 km	Yes!
Character: Continuous Cruising Fiesta Factor: 🍹 🍹 (4 in rafts) Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ Long day Medium flow: 3000 (15-17 on put-in gauge is stomping) Shuttle: Truck to put-in				

DESCRIPTION

The drive from Quito to Los Bancos is spectacular, dropping from the sierra towards the coast through dramatic rainforest. From the put-in near the town of Los Bancos it is a long day to reach the take-out at Valle Hermosa. There is a possible middle take-out but you need a vehicle with good clearance. The rapids here are pretty straightforward with

big waves and continuous fast sections at good flows. At low water the run probably isn't worth doing if it's whitewater you're after. At high water the river is truly huge after the confluence with the Toachi and has some serious holes.

PUT-IN: About 2 1/2 hours from Quito is the town of San Miguel de los Bancos. Take the largest road (6 de Diciembre) heading south of town and take a left turn at the fork. The put-in is just downstream of the bridge on river left about 10 to 15 minutes from town.

TAKE-OUT OPTION 1: Vehicle bridge in Valle Hermosa, just upstream or downstream of the bridge. Beware the towns name (pretty valley) is a bit deceptive at this point.

TAKE-OUT OPTION 2: Rock quarry near San Bernabé about 10 km upstream of Valle Hermosa. This quarry is on river right, opposite some growth-filled cliffs, about 3-4 hours below the put-in. It's easy to miss if you're not looking for it. To drive to the take-out, go back up to the Y and take a left. This puts you on the road to San Bernabé. From San Bernabé, take a left on to a bad dirt road leading to the rock quarry at the take-out. This road may be impassable in rainy weather. *

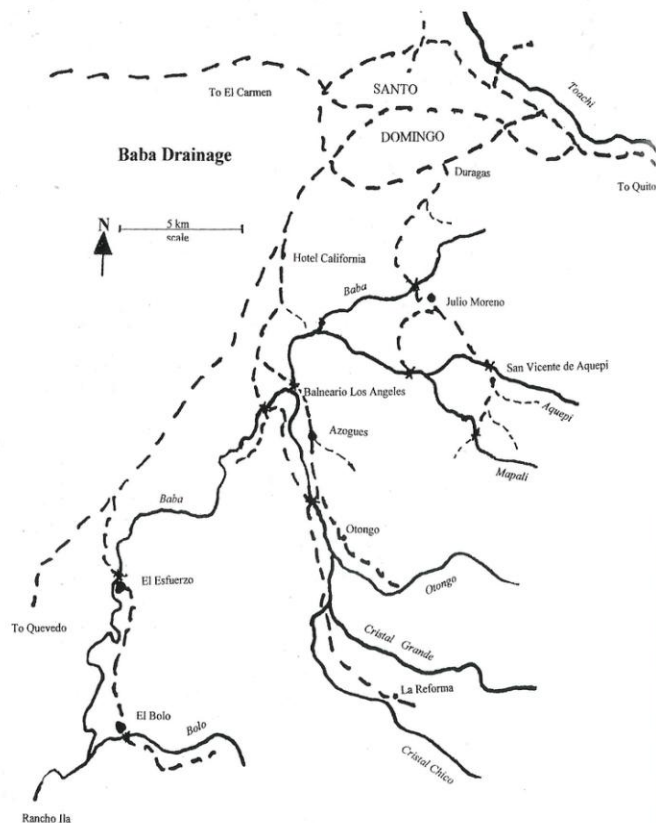
Lower BLANCO Lower				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low III Med IV- High IV+	3 hours	35 fpm	12.5 miles 20/km	Yes!
Character: Good play, bad water quality Fiesta Factor: 🍹 🍹 (3 for rafts) Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ Too many bugs Medium flow: 5000 Shuttle: Bus ok				

DESCRIPTION

The drop-pool rapids at medium levels here tend to run together at high flows. This section is less remote than the upper offering more access points but also less in the way of rainforest. The rapids are very nice at good levels and offer some good playing. Be ready for hot weather, possibly poor water quality and bugs.

PUT-IN: Follow the Via Esmeraldas northwest out of Santo Domingo for about 20 km. Look for a turn-off heading northeast to the town of Valle Hermosa. Put in right in Valle Hermosa at the vehicle bridge over the Blanco.

TAKE-OUT: There are several options, but the easiest take-out to use is probably at the large bridge just outside of La Independencia on the Via Esmeraldas. *



MAPALI AND AQUEPI

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low N/A Med III High III/IV-	Under 1 hour	160 fpm	3.7 miles 6 km	No

Character: Tiny creek

Fiesta Factor: ☹ ☹ Good when other things are too high

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ Long drive, short runs

Medium flow: 200

Shuttle: Hire a truck

DESCRIPTION

Because the Río Mapali is right next to the Río Aquepi, and they are so similar in length and character, we combine them in this description. When other runs in the Santo Domingo area are too high, you can usually count on the Mapali and Aquepi to be boatable. The put-ins are about an hour from Santo Domingo, and the runs quite short, so it is worth your while to hire a truck for the whole day and do both runs (they are right next to each other). They are class III creeks, but will be fast and furious with few eddies because it is best to do them at high water. Watch for wood as the riverbeds are narrow. Here are some stats for the Aquepi: Length-2.5 miles, 4 km. Gradient-130 fpm.

PUT-IN: From Santo Domingo, take the Via Quevedo. After about 3 km, look for the Bypass de Via Quito, there is a large pharmacy (Farmacia Loja) at the turn. Go left here, and continue for 1.7 km where you will take a right at Planta de Duragas. After 3.3 km, go straight (right) at the Y towards Bañeario Río Mapali. You will pass through the town of Julio Moreno, then cross a bridge, and at the next Y turn left off of the pavement onto a dirt road (there is a bañeario at this Y and a sign that says, "entrada Aquepi"). 4 km from the Y, you will cross the Río Aquepi (just after the pueblo of Aquepi), put in here. For the Mapali, continue on and turn right at the next Y. The road worsens, and soon you reach another Y, go right and in another couple of kilometers, you will reach a bridge over the Mapali.

TAKE-OUT: The take-out for both runs is the same, at Bañeario Piramide. From the put-in, back track to the Y where you leave the pavement at the sign for "entrada Aquepi." Go left at this Y, and stay on this road until you reach a bridge over the Río Mapali just below the confluence with the Aquepi. *

-Upper OTONGO Upper				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV- Med IV High IV/IV+	1.5 hours	±8 fpm	4 miles 6.5 km	Yes, small
Character: Boulder-choked creekling Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 Degree of suffering: 🤯 🤯 🤯 Long drive, bumpy roads Medium flow: 300 Shuttle: Hire a truck				

DESCRIPTION

There is no gauge for this run, but if it has been raining a lot in Santo Domingo, you are likely to have enough water. The Upper Otongo is a technical run of the boulder garden nature. This upper section is slightly steeper, more continuous, and more difficult than the main Otongo after the Cristal comes in. Below this confluence, you will have nearly double the flow you started with, the gradient eases somewhat, and the river becomes slightly more pool drop with more distinct rapids. From the confluence, it is about 30 minutes to the road bridge. This run is commonly done in conjunction with the lower Otongo and the Baba all the way to the play wave.

PUT-IN: From the bridge at the Balneario Los Angeles (see Santo Domingo Directions, p. 85), turn left and head up a steep, rocky road (go right here to enter the Balneario and to access a possible take-out for your run). Go 1 km to another Y; go right, and in 1 km more you will reach the town of Azogues (aka Otongo de Baba). Continue straight (right) and you will soon get to a bridge across the Otongo where you can check the level. If the level looks good—the river should look kayakable but not huge—backtrack a short distance until you reach a road on your right (it will have been on your left as you were driving towards the bridge). Drive about 7 km up this road to the put-in.

TAKE-OUT: There are three take-out options for this run. 1. The bridge over the Otongo where you checked the level—this makes for a very short run. 2. The Balneario Los Angeles. 3. The bridge over the Baba at the play wave.

While you are in the area, you may want to check out the Baba play wave. At medium flows, surfing at the play wave is a great way to end a run on the Otongo or Cristal. From the Balneario Los Angeles, continue downstream for about 20-40 minutes (depending on how much you stop to play along the way) of class III to the next bridge. Just downstream of the bridge there are a series of eddy serviced waves, and the bottom wave is typically the best feature. This is also a popular 'park and play' spot (meaning you might see one or two other boaters there).

NOTE: If you are using topographic maps, the one for this area is inaccurate. It does not show the above-mentioned bridge over the Otongo, but we swear it exists (unless there was a big flood since the time of this writing)! Also, the road does indeed continue up to access both the Cristal Grande and the Cristal Chico. See our maps. ★

Lower OTONGO Lower				
CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low III Med III/III+ High IV-	1 hour	105 fpm	2.5 miles 4 km	Yes, small
Character: Wide open creekling Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 Degree of suffering: 🤯 🤯 🤯 Long drive, bumpy roads Medium flow: 500 Shuttle: Hire a truck				

DESCRIPTION

What we are calling the "Lower Otongo" begins at the bridge where you can check levels for the Upper Otongo. This section of the Otongo is a full step down in difficulty from the Upper, but still offers great scenery. It is much more wide open and less continuous. This is an excellent put-in option for people just getting familiar with the art of creekling. For more advanced boaters, adding this section to the Upper will make the drive worthwhile. Plus, if you go all the way to the Baba, take-out (option #3), you will be rewarded with a surf wave at the end of your day.

PUT-IN: Bridge over Otongo where you checked the level for the Upper (see Upper Otongo put-in directions).

TAKE-OUT: Balneario Los Angeles or the bridge over the Baba surf wave (see Upper Otongo). ★

CRISTAL GRANDE

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low III+ Med IV High IV/IV+	1.5 hours	156 fpm	6.5 miles 10.6 km	Yes, small

Character: Boulder garden creeking

Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ Long drive, bumpy roads

Medium flow: 200

Shuttle: Hire a truck

DESCRIPTION

This run needs water! If it has been raining a lot in Santo Domingo, the Cristal should be going. There is no gauge, but you can check out the flow on the way to the put-in as you drive across the Otongo River below its confluence with the Cristal Grande (If the Otongo is running, it is likely that the Cristal will be as well). The Cristal Grande is a boulder-filled, technical run, with many fun but indistinct rapids. It takes about an hour to get down to the confluence with the Upper Otongo, which will nearly double your flow. From here, see the description for the Otongo.

PUT-IN: The bridge over the Otongo is a midway point or take-out option (see Upper Otongo). If the level looks good from here (boatable but not huge), cross the bridge and take a left at the next Y. Drive 4 km more and you will reach a bridge over the Cristal Chico. If the water is on the lower end, park here and walk down a trail on river right until you find a low point in the hill dividing the Cristal Chico from the Cristal Grande (200 meters) and put in here. If it is medium to high water, the upper portion of this run fills in. Continue up the road to the next Y, go left and drive until you get to a bridge at La Reforma. This is the upper put-in on the Cristal Grande.

TAKE-OUT: Bridge over Rio Otongo, Balneario Los Angeles, or Baba bridge play wave. See Upper Otongo.

NOTE: If the water is high, consider paddling the Cristal Chico. Take a right at the Y before La Reforma and continue to the Cristal Chico. It has to be pretty high to make it boatable.

Also, if you are using topographic maps, the one for this area is inaccurate and many existing roads do not make it onto the map. ★

BOLO

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low N/A Med IV High IV+	2 hours	165 fpm	4 miles 6.5 km	Yes, small

Character: Continuous, creek feel

Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 Fun, continuous when water is up

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ Short run, long drive

Medium flow: 300

Shuttle: Hire a truck

DESCRIPTION

This run consists mostly of continuous III and IV rapids. There is some IV+/V at extremely high flows. It has a similar character as the Upper Otongo and Cristal Grande, but when the water is up, it is more difficult with fewer eddies. The hardest rapid is at a long, thin island; you can scout from the island.

PUT-IN: Take the Via Quevedo out of Santo Domingo, but stay on it past Hotel California (see Santo Domingo Directions, p. 85). Continue towards Quevedo until you get to km 17. Take a left turn towards El Esfuerzo, there are signs here for balnearios. Continue past a toll booth, and go left at the Y. Cross the bridge over the Baba—a different bridge than where the surf wave is. Go through El Esfuerzo and stay on the main road (the main road makes an obvious 90 degree turn here). Cross the bridge over the Bolito, and then you will come to a concrete bridge over the Bolo (this is the take-out). Continue past this bridge and turn left at the next Y. This will take you up into the hills and to another concrete bridge. Put in here. It is 6 km from the take-out bridge.

TAKE-OUT: See put-in directions. ★

**RÍO CAONI ALTO (UPPER)**

Class III-IV, 7-8 hours, low volume technical. One 3 meter waterfall near the start.

Put-in: 1½ km south of Pedro Vicente Maldonado, about 2½ hours west of Quito on the road past Los Bancos.

Take-out: About 9 km upstream of Puerto Quito where a side road leads to the river. On the map look for Esc. Caoni.

RÍO CAONI BAJO (LOWER)

Class II-III, 3 hours, low volume technical.

Put-in: See Upper take-out.

Take-out: About 1 km upstream of Puerto Quito near Hostel Salamandria that has rustic tree house cabins over the river. *

Other Western Slope Rivers to Check Out

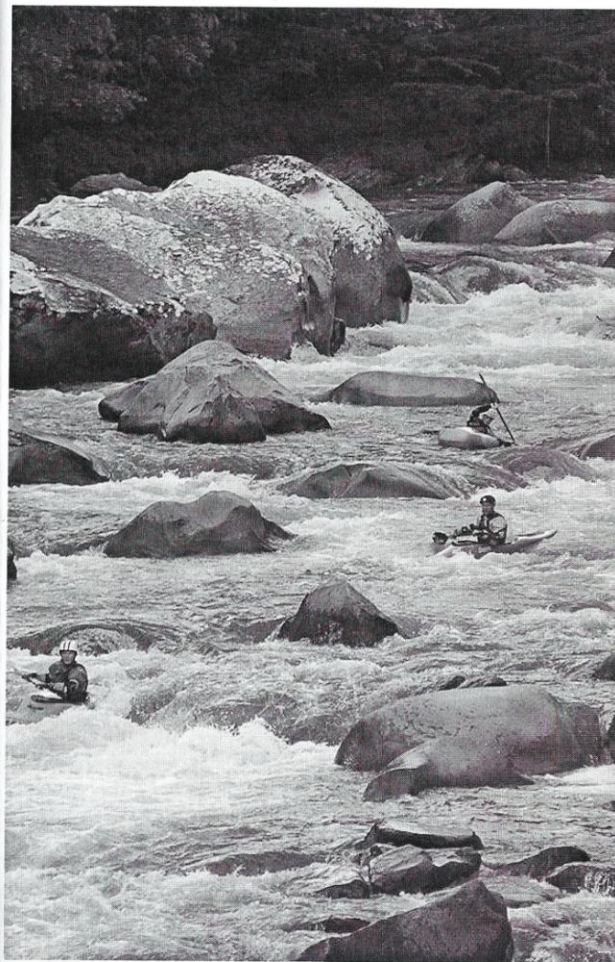
Río Corazón - Class V tributary to the Pilatón

Río Memé - Between the Toachi and Blanco

Río Mindo - Flows into the Blanco just above San Miguel de los Bancos

Río Pachijal - Near San Miguel de los Bancos

Río Saloya - Flows into Río Blanco, access from old road to Quito



A special thanks to all of our friends in Santo Domingo who facilitated our explorations and made our trips to the western slope wonderfully memorable.





EVERYTHING ELSE



The best and most concentrated whitewater areas in Ecuador are the Quijos, Napo, and Santo Domingo valleys. Because kayakers spend more time here than anywhere else, this guide has focused on these areas. While the runs already described should keep you entertained for quite a while, the following pages contain several other rivers to check out. *

TOPO

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV-V Med V High V-V+	6-8 hours	140 fpm	9 miles 14.5 km	No

Character: Steep boulder filled pool-drop

Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ Out of the valley

Medium flow: 1000

Shuttle: Truck to put-in

DESCRIPTION

The Río Topo is an excellent run. Below Baños, it's a tributary of the Pastaza River. Check the level from the take-out bridge. This rapid is not as steep or pool drop as the upper ones and it should look bony. If it looks high and difficult here, think twice before you head up to do the run. The top is full of boulder-choked rapids, great slots, and boofs. While mainly Class IV+, it's spiced up with some V's and turns into more continuous

Class V at high water. This run is not to be taken lightly, so get an early start. You'll want to scout several times, and there is one boulder sieve/waterfall to portage just before the take-out.

PUT-IN: Just east of the take-out bridge, a small dirt road heads up the river left side of the Topo. Hire a good vehicle. If it's been rainy this steep road can be hard to climb. Follow this road until it ends at a small footbridge (about 9 km). Put in here. In about 1 km, the road leaves the side of the river and you're on your own.

TAKE-OUT: Bridge near the confluence of the Topo and Pastaza Rivers, just downstream of the village of Río Negro, 35 km from Baños on the road to Puyo. *

While most boaters congregate around the Baeza and Tena valleys where there are more runs closer together, this part of Ecuador is worth a visit. Basing out of Baños for a few days on your way to Quito or Tena would be a good way to get to these rivers.

Other rivers to check out in this area:

Río Chico Verde
Río Verde
Río Pastaza
Río Zunac
Río Encanto

Warning: The Pastaza is notoriously dirty.

UPANO

CLASS	TIME	GRADIENT	LENGTH	RAFTS
Low IV- Med IV-V High V-	2-5 days	40 fpm	38.5 miles 62 km	Yes

Character: Big volume pool-drop

Fiesta Factor: 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

Degree of suffering: ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ Macas is in the middle of nowhere

Medium flow: 10,000

Shuttle: Hire a truck

DESCRIPTION

The Upano, made famous by R.O.W., is located in the southern oriente. R.O.W. calls it the "River of the Sacred Waterfalls." It's a big volume jungle river with drop-pool rapids and spectacular scenery. Water levels fluctuate widely from day to day on the Upano. The Upano is usually run as a multi-day trip, but it's also possible to break it up into several day trips out of Macas. From Macas to Patuca, the Upano has a large meandering riverbed with various access points and many cobbled beaches and islands great for camping. After Patuca the river enters a steep-walled gorge, called Canyon of the Sacred Waterfalls, that has few camps, bigger rapids and no access. This canyon has 1-2 scouts and a lot of big holes to avoid, with an almost river-wide ledge hole of special note. Below the Canyon of the Sacred Waterfalls, the Upano really flattens out as you near the take-out.

The easiest way to get there is to fly to Macas from Quito. If you fly, make sure you arrange gear shipment first. It's a long day's drive from Quito. From Baños, Macas is still a 7-8 hours drive over bad roads. There are many hotels and local restaurants to choose from in Macas. You can also purchase simple food items and arrange your shuttle. This area is hot and humid. You will definitely encounter some bugs while camping on this trip.

PUT-INS/TAKE-OUTS:

Macas - Large bridge over Upano just outside of Macas. There's a dirt road going to some gravel bars just before crossing the bridge.

Sucúa - Coming from Macas, as you enter Sucúa take the left fork as the road turns to bricks. Turn left just before blue police building (across from central park). Turn right (downstream) just before the bridge over the Upano for river access. Road time from Macas is 50 minutes.

Huambi - Turn left from main road at central park. The bridge over the Upano is very high, and it's best to lower gear from bridge. There is a steep but short trail on river right, downstream of the bridge. Road time from Macas is one hour five minutes.

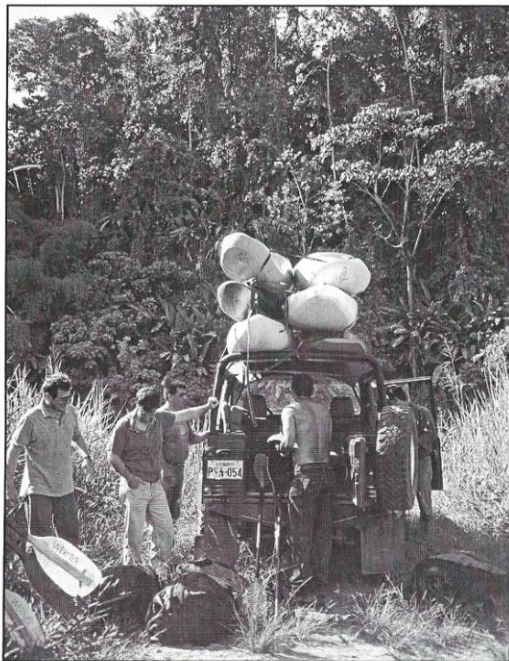
Logroño - There is a gravel quarry upstream of town with road access, and also a bridge near town. Road time from Macas is on hour thirty-five minutes.

Below Tayuza - Between Tayuza and Patuca, there is an unmarked road that goes down to the river. After the river is visible continue toward the end of the road where there's a

military target practice area. This is the last good place to put in or take-out before the lower canyon. Road time from Macas is two hours ten minutes.

Patuca - At the bridge, the rock walls are too steep for easy access. Upstream on river right there is a trail from the little upper beach that could be used for emergency access. Road time from Macas is three hours. This is your last opportunity to take-out before the most challenging part of the run, the Canyon of the Sacred Waterfalls.

At the end of the whitewater - After the last canyon, there is a side creek coming in on the left. If you look up the creek, you can see the road bridge. There is a nice beach about 150 feet below this creek, above a walking bridge. Road time from Macas is 4:45. *



ECUADOR EXTRA CREDIT



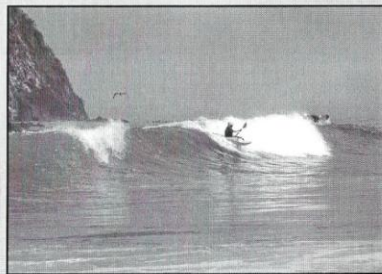
There are more runs to be done in the Macas area, including the Upper Upano and the Rio Chiguaza. If you are looking for more rivers to explore, try around Zamora near the border with Peru and La Mana to the south of Santo Domingo. Near Ibarra in the north are the rivers Mira, Intag and Carchi. The Rio Chingual, on the Colombian border, is excellent, but perhaps not the most politically stable area to be boating. With some research, topo maps and a willingness to hike, there are still a plethora of rivers to be explored in Ecuador. *

Surfing in Ecuador

Though a long way from the rivers, there are some good surfing beaches in Ecuador. The most famous surf beach is in the town of Montanita. It has a good point break and a very established surfer culture. There are many cheap places to stay and several good bars and restaurants. Surf and boogie boards are available for rent, and the slope of the beach is very forgiving for surf kayaking. The only problem with Montanita is its popularity. Since it's a point break, the good waves can be crowded. For a more secluded surfing experience head north. From just south of Montanita, all the way north to Canoa, the coast is dotted with surfing possibilities. Some beaches require paddling to get to the waves, so you won't find them crowded with conventional surfers.

To get to the beach from Quito, look into the all night buses to Guayaquil or Portoviejo. The night ride is a great way to avoid the heat of the lowlands. If you have a short boat, you may be able to fit it underneath one of the newer, rack-less express buses. Otherwise, you're forced to ride one of the local produce movers, with your kayak sharing rack space with chickens and bananas. From either Guayaquil or Portoviejo, catch a local bus that services the beach towns.

If you're looking for a cool place to hang out on the beach (but not to surf) check out Alandaluz, about 15 km north of Montanita. *





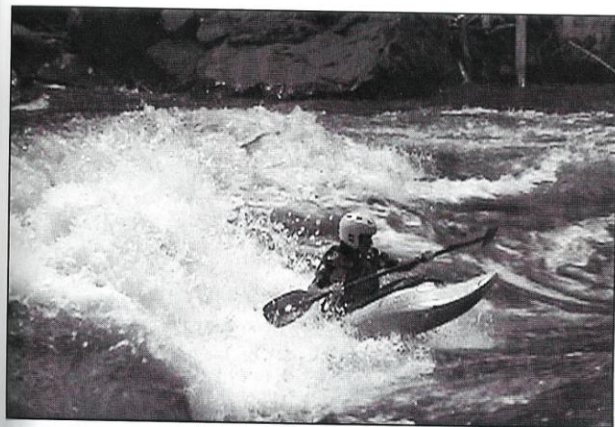
SPANISH DICTIONARY FOR PADDLERS



paddle	remo
helmet	casco
life jacket	chaleco or salvavida
skirt	falda (falda de kayak)
paddle jacket	chaqueta de agua (water jacket)
dry top	chaqueta impermeable
kayak	kayak
canoe	canoa (can be used if the word kayak illicit a blank look)
rapids	rápidos
river	rio
stream/creek	arroyo
very high river	rio muy crecido
waterfall	cascada or salto
rain	lluvia
take-out	salida
put-in	entrada
bridge	punte
to the left	a la izquierda
to the right	a la derecha
straight	recto or derecho
here	aquí
there	allá
stop	pare or alto
to wait	esperar
help!	auxilio or ayúdame
dangerous	peligroso
fun	divertido
broken	dañado or roto
to repair	reparar
to drive	conducir or manejar
driver	chofer or conductor
beer	cerveza



Can you take us to Tena?	¿Puedes llevarnos a Tena?
How much does it cost?	¿Cuánto cuesta?
Be there at 10.	Esté allá a las 10.
Can I put in on the river here?	¿Puedo entrar en el río aquí?
Did you see my kayak?	¿Viste mi kayak?
I lost my paddle.	Perdí mi remo.
Are there waterfalls?	¿Hay cascadas?
Is there a trail?	¿Hay un sendero?
May I share this seat with your bag of chickens?	¿Puedo compartir este asiento con su bolsa de gallinas?
I don't want to ride on the roof anymore.	Ya no quiero viajar arriba.
Turn down your radio, please. It's 4 am.	Baje el volumen de su radio, por favor. Ya son las cuatro de la mañana
I would like to sleep in tomorrow.	Me gustaría dormir hasta tarde mañana.
May we have that rooster for dinner?	¿Podemos comer ese gallo para la cena?





Larry Don Nancy

Nancy Hiemstra, Don Beveridge, and Larry Vermeeren wrote the first edition of this guidebook in 1998, and a revised first edition in 2000. In the last 6 years, however, many of the rivers and river accesses have changed and kayakers have pioneered many new runs. As a result, Darcy Gaechter, Don Beveridge, and Larry Vermeeren decided it was time for a new edition. The three of them are pictured above after a sweeping victory (1st in men's long boat—hence the Piroutte, 1st in men's short boat, and 1st in women's) in the first annual Quijos River race.



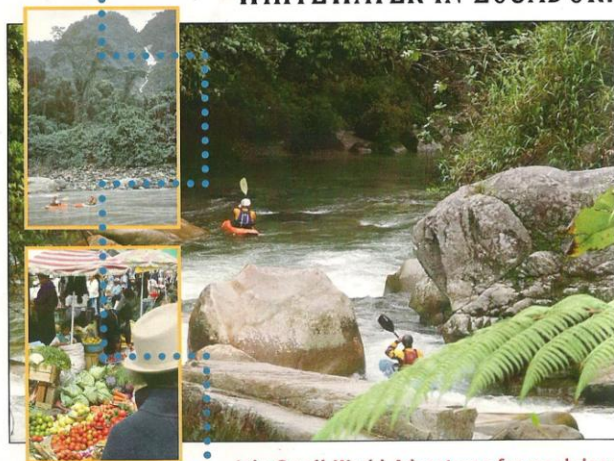
Nancy

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