Culture Box

Ecuador

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INTRODUCTION: is a representative democratic republic in northwestern South America, bordered by Colombia on the north, Peru on the east and south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

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GALAPAGOS ISLANDS AND THE AMAZON PLAYING CARDS

DESCRIPTION

These playing cards feature the diverse wildlife of the Galapagos Islands and the Amazon. For its size, Ecuador is the most biodiverse country on earth. It covers about the same area as the state of Arizona, yet it holds 8% of amphibian species, 5% of reptile species, 8% of mammal species, and 16% of bird species in the world!
CD of TRADITIONAL MUSIC

DESCRIPTION

This CD is an example of music from the Andean area which characterized by the use of the panpipe known locally as *siku* or *antara*. The national instrument of Ecuador is a style of panpipe called the *rondador*. It has the special ability of producing two tones at the same time.
**PAN PIPE**

**DESCRIPTION**

This is a traditional Andean wood pan pipe. It is the national instrument of Ecuador. In Spanish, the pan pipe is called *zampoña*. This specific style of panpipe is locally called a *rondador*. In the indigenous language Quechua, the pan pipe is called *antara*, and in the Aymara language it is called *siku* or *sicu*.
Heavy wooden masks are worn by dancers for festivals that take place in different communities. Many of the masks represent animals, including monkeys, wolves, tigers and fierce dogs. The large faces are carved from one piece of wood; the ears are often made separately from wood or other materials then attached later.
GOURD BOWLS

DESCRIPTION

Before metal, plastic, or porcelain were common, people in Ecuador made bowls made from gourds or *Jicara*. These are made from the dried and cut fruit of the Calabash Tree, or *cresentia cujete* in Spanish. They are still used for eating or drinking and carrying liquids in some communities today.
These postcards depict la iglesia de la compañía, or the Church of the Society of Jesus in English. This church is located in Quito, Ecuador and is one of the country’s most ornate churches. Construction on the church began in 1605 but was not completed until 160 years later.
WHISTLES

DESCRIPTION

These whistles, known as ocarinas, are part of ancient tradition of pre-Columbian music in the Americas. Historically, these musical instruments were used for both ritual and recreational purposes. Some can be very complex, with many holes and chambers capable of producing a wide range of sounds.
WOVEN FINGER PUPPETS

DESCRIPTION

These are finger puppets (8) of animals from the Andes and Amazon. Ecuador’s varied climate contribute to its biodiversity. It has four distinct climate zones: the Coastal Lowlands, the Andean Mountains, the Amazon, and the Galapagos Islands.
TRADITIONAL BUS

DESCRIPTION

This clay art represents the busses that helps transport residents and their goods to and from markets. Passengers can be seen inside of it and their goods on top include bananas, chiles, watermelons, chicken, and pork.
TRADITIONAL WOODEN SPOON

DESCRIPTION

This is a hand carved wooden spoon from Ecuador. Wooden spoons are used to make the famous *helado de paila*, a delicious sorbet. It is customary to whip up the dessert in a large copper bowl cooled with glacial ice blocks. The sorbet maker uses the wooden spoon to mix the ingredients of fruit, ice and sugar into the final product.
COINS

DESCRIPTION

The sucre was the currency of Ecuador between 1884 and 2000. The sucre lost 67% of its foreign exchange value during 1999. Within one week it nosedived 17%, ending at 25,000 sucre = US $1 on January 7, 2000. Two days later, President Jamil Mahuad announced that the US dollar would be adopted as Ecuador’s official currency. Today it still is the currency of the country.
VIRGEN DE PANECILLO

DESCRIPTION

This is a replica of the tourist attraction monument in Quito, Ecuador. The statue is the winged Virgen de Panecillo (Panecillo means “small bread roll”). At the actual monument in Quito, tourists can go inside and climb to the top of the monument and have stunning view of the capital city of Ecuador.
“CANASTOS”

DESCRIPTION

Baskets made of straw, agave fibers or reeds are common in Ecuador. The art of handmade, natural fiber baskets dates back over a thousand years. People use baskets to carry many everyday items.
HANDCRAFTED DOLL

DESCRIPTION

This style doll (muñeca de trapo) is a handmade toy. One of the oldest known toys, these "rag dolls" have been enjoyed by children for centuries. This doll depicts an Ecuadorian woman carrying her baby.
Here is an example of the more than three thousand species of butterflies (*mariposas*) that call Ecuador home. That is about 10% of all butterfly species in the world! Butterflies in Ecuador range from 2 millimeters up to 30 centimeters in diameter.
STATUE OF A LORD/GOD

DESCRIPTION

This clay statuette depicts what could have likely been a god figure or lord/lady and ruler figure in an ancient epoch of the Ecuadorian pre-Columbian society. Previous to the encounter with Europeans, the period of time known as the pre-Columbian era, Ecuador was inhabited for thousands of years by various people groups.
NATIONAL FLAG

DESCRIPTION

In the center of the flag is the national Coat of Arms. The flag has three colors: yellow signifies the crops and fertile soil; blue signifies the ocean and clear skies; and red represents the blood spilled by the heroes who died in the name of their country.
GOURD

DESCRIPTION

The item is a dried calabash fruit (jícara) that is carved and painted. The gourd is decorated with many people and animals along the sides, and the top depicts a variety of musical instruments.
ALPACA PONCHO, SCARF, AND HAT

DESCRIPTION

The poncho, scarf and hat are all made from alpaca fur. A poncho is a traditional piece of clothing worn to ward off wind and rain. Each community has distinguishing features of the size, shape and color(s) of the poncho.
HANDMADE WOOL TEXTILES

DESCRIPTION

Textiles like these are bought and sold in Ecuadorian markets all the time, by local people and tourists alike. The producers of textiles in Andean regions like Ecuador also may utilize the uniqueness of their natural surroundings and their local community to form a style of textile design that works as a form of identity.
The Venerable José Gregorio Hernández

DESCRIPTION

José Gregorio Hernández was born October 26, 1864 in the small town of Isnotú, Venezuela. After traveling the world to study medicine, teaching medicine at the Central University of Caracas, and pursuing a religious vocation in Italy, he was forced to return home due to poor health. In Venezuela, he was known for being an exemplary doctor and serving the poor.

After his death, José Gregorio became revered as a folk-saint, with his influence spreading in South America to Ecuador. His devotees, which include some people from the Catholic tradition and some from a syncretic religion known as the Cult of María Lionza, gather to make alters and offer him prayers for healing.