

Guagua Pichincha

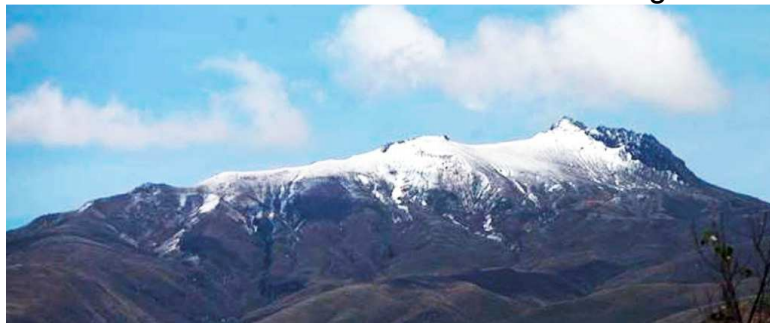
Pichincha in Ecuador is an active stratovolcano whose capital Quito wraps around its eastern slopes. Fortunately, the crater opens to the west and the ocean. The two highest peaks of the mountain are Wawa Pichincha (little or Guagua Pichincha) and Ruku Pichincha (old or Rucu Pichincha). The active caldera is Guagua Pichincha on the western side of the mountain.



Both peaks are visible from the city of Quito and both are popular acclimatization climbs. In October 1999, the volcano erupted and covered the city with several inches of ash. Before that, the last major eruptions were in 1553 and in 1660 when about 30 cm of ash fell on the city.



Rucu Pichincha - Safe hiking on an extinct volcano!



1660 - A huge historical explosion was recorded by recently arrived Spaniards. In their chronicles, they recorded ashes in the city and pyroclastic flows to the west.

June 1742 - French Geodesic Mission members, La Condamine and Bouguer, made an ascent of Guagua Pichincha and looked down into the crater of the volcano. La Condamine compared what he saw to the underworld.

May 1822 - General Sucre's southern campaign in the Spanish–American War of independence came to a climax when his forces defeated the Spanish colonial army on the southeast slopes of this volcano. The engagement, known as the Battle of Pichincha, secured the independence of the territories of present-day Ecuador.

Not much is known since then but in August 1981 the volcano came alive again after years of dormancy but not much happened in the following years until the late summer of 1999, when the giant displayed its power again and after smaller magmatic gas eruptions, there was a major eruption, which covered the city with a gray film of ash on October 5th. Two days later there were beautiful fumaroles mushrooms.



Guagua Pinchincha remains an active volcano



1999 Photos with Quito in the foreground