

Activities





Miles of meandering roads through lush pasture land, pine trees and a eucalyptus forest make the valley of Zuleta a paradise for outdoor activities. We have twenty Zuleteño bred horses, mountain bikes and you are welcome to relax and explore the area with our horse drawn carriage.

At Hacienda Zuleta guests may find more information about the trails in our **Activity Room**. There are trails for every interest and fitness level. It will be our pleasure to help you plan your stay!

Horseback Riding

One of the best ways to “feel” Zuleta is on top of our beautiful horses. The horses are a cross between Andalusian, Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse, called “Zuleteños.” We have horses for absolute beginners as well as for experts. All our horses are easy to handle, gentle, calm and sure footed. You are welcome to choose your favorite horse in our horse catalogue! We offer short loops, day tours with picnics and riding lessons for every level and age.



Horse Drawn Carriage

If you would like to travel back in time, we recommend a loop with our carriage. Rodrigo Aguilar and a gentle Andalusian mare will take you on an unforgettable trip where you can comfortably explore the Hacienda.

Hiking

As there are numerous options of trails for every interest and fitness level, we ask you to please tell us your preferences and let us help you plan your hikes. You can hike with a local guide who can give you some information on the way, or if you prefer to go alone, you can easily follow the signs along the roads.



Mountain biking

We offer six mountain bikes size 18.5" to 15" as well as helmets. We have many trails perfect for biking, and we are happy to drive you to the top of a nearby hill so you can enjoy the descent back to Zuleta! For your own safety we always recommend to use a helmet.

The expansive Hacienda Zuleta ground is full of beautiful and interesting points to visit. Guests are invited to explore the grounds and to explore the farm operations, archeological sites and the community. We are happy to discuss your interests and plan an exciting and personal itinerary.

Bird watching

Zuleta offers a unique experience for bird watching in Ecuador. Located in an Andean valley, Hacienda Zuleta is surrounded by walls of biodiversity, making it an exceptionally good place to watch nature unfold. For decades, birding in Ecuador has been widely known due to our ideal position in the planet, the Equator.

Zuleta takes the Ecuador birding experience to another level by making sure that many species' natural habitats are conserved through our Condor Huasi project. The Andean condor of Ecuador is an endangered species, so here at Zuleta we have made it our mission to ensure the survival of the Andean condor in our region. Efforts to maintain our surrounding fauna and flora intact have been a focus of the Plaza family and Galo Plaza Foundation for decades. This history of Ecuadorian conservation has made Zuleta a preferred sanctuary for wild condors, spectacled bears, various owls, pumas and many other species.

Begin your day with a breakfast surrounded by humming birds, followed by an excursion to the Andean condor rehabilitation area, "Condor Huasi Project". Zuleta is the perfect location for a bird watching holiday. Our knowledgeable guides will accompany you through unique bird watching tours by foot, bike, horse or truck, while our staff makes sure that your stay is completed with first class Andean hospitality.



Things to see

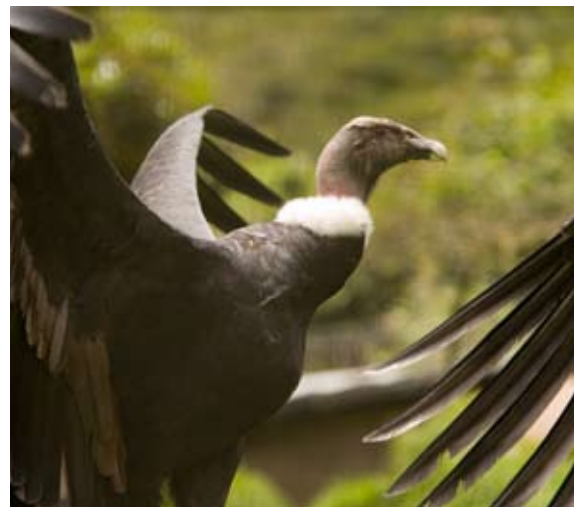




Hacienda Zuleta's grounds are full of beautiful and interesting sites to visit. As a world respected South America ecolodge, Zuleta is proud of its biodiversity that surrounds the farm. Guests are invited to explore the grounds and to visit our museum on Ecuadorian cheese, farm operations, archaeological sites, among others.

Andean Condor Huasi

Zuleta has been internationally and nationally recognized for its work with the Andean condor of Ecuador. Many of our guests ride or hike to Condor Huasi, our Andean condor rehabilitation project. Located about 3 km from the house in a valley surrounded by native forest. At Condor Huasi, the only reproduction and liberation site licensed by the governmental Ecuador Andes condor protection agency in Ecuador, you will be able to observe the seven condors we have in captivity and with some luck you might see wild Andean condors of Ecuador flying above you or even landing on the aviary.



Read more about our efforts to save the Andean Condor of Ecuador at our "Condor Huasi Project" folder.

Cheese Factory

If you are interested in Ecuadorian cheese, you can visit the cheese museum and learn how Zuleta's semi-aged, hand-made cheeses are produced. Our cheese making process begins from the farm's fresh milk and carefully processed in the small factory near the guest house. Find out about the steps from milk to cheese and how the process has changed throughout history.



Organic Garden

We invite you to visit our organic garden, to learn about permaculture and to discover the origin of your lunch ingredients. Within three hectares, we grow seventeen different kinds of vegetables, five different kinds of fruit, several herbs, spices and medical plants. Everything is produced without chemicals and the humus used as fertilizer comes from our own worm farm.

Dairy

Hacienda Zuleta has over 300 cows that support Zuleta's milk production. Milking takes place at 3pm in the afternoon (or at 5am in the morning!) and we invite you to come to the milking sheds to experience the process, feed a little calf and talk to the vaqueros (local cowboys). If you are interested in a private milking lesson, women of the community will be happy to teach you to milk by hand. Our milk is then used to make our Ecuadorian cheese and other products served fresh at the table for you to enjoy.

The Embroidery Shop

At "El Taller," you will find a workshop of Zuleta's famous and beautiful embroidery work. "El Taller" is managed by the Galo Plaza Lasso Foundation, a non-profit organization involved in helping the surrounding communities. Our embroideries are made by hundreds of Zuleta's women who use their spare time to contribute to their agrarian family income.

The Pyramids

Within the Hacienda grounds, you will find the largest and best preserved archeological sites of the ancient Caranqui culture. There are 132 small earth mounds dating as far back as 700 A.D. and five large square truncated pyramids from 1200 A.D. Please visit our History folder for more information about the mounds.

Galo Plaza Library

We are happy to show you the family area of the main building, including a private library with over 2.000 titles and some master pieces of Ecuadorian Art. You will learn about the history of Zuleta and see antique oil paintings as well as family pictures. Every piece of furniture and every little box has a story and we



welcome you to enjoy the trip through our history!

La Biblioteca de Zuleta

Next to Zuleta's main entrance, you will find the Zuleta's library. Run by the Galo Plaza Lasso Foundation, the library offers free cultural and educational activities for the community. In the morning hours it is used as a Child Care Center, and in the afternoon, many children from the community arrive for help with homework. We also offer extracurricular activities and workshops. You are more than welcome to visit the library and meet Zuleta's children.

Gardens

Rosario Pallares de Plaza, the family's grandmother, loved gardens, roads shaded by trees, rose bushes, and agapanthus. When Rosario and her husband Galo became owners of Hacienda Zuleta, she made it her goal to surround the house with thoughtfully designed gardens. Following her tradition, every day we look after her gardens, making sure that they are healthy and often add our own design, complementing her roses, with bromelias, orchids and many other varieties, often brought from our native forest. Following our no chemicals tradition, our gardens are nurtured only through organic ways. Also, our garden's are the ideal place to see birds; especially the sword billed humming bird that feeds from the red datura (*brugmansia suaveolens*) trumpet flower.

Paramo garden

Right next to the horse barn, we designed a little garden with native plants from the areas above the tree line, the so called "paramo." The garden has four interconnected lagoons, 37 different species with interpretation signs and a path for you to walk through. Explore the wonders of these high altitude plants and their very special little flowers, leaves and structures.

The Festival of San Juan

This is a very ancient tradition. Every year on June 23rd we celebrate the service for Saint John the Baptist with a grand party called the festival of San Juan. At night fall people go from house to house, dancing, singing and playing instruments like the guitar. Those families that have a picture or painting of San Juan decorate a "castillo" (a wooden frame that hangs on the wall) where they tie food, like bread, bananas, pineapples, oranges and also liquor and money. They also prepare the traditional "kaspashca" which is made of corn and beans that the region has in abundance during this time of the year.





On June 24th Hacienda Zuleta hosts “La Rama de Gallos”. Lots of people come to this spectacle; not only from our community, but also from other villages and even from the capital Quito and from abroad. The “Rama de Gallos” consists of the following – first, two horses which are decorated in a special way enter the courtyard of the hacienda. The first horse carries in a child that will give a special speech called the “Loa”. The second horse brings in twelve live cocks which are tied to the horse. Eight women lead the horse with belts that are also a kind of decoration for the horse – they wear embroidered blouses and the typical skirt that we call “anaco”. They are accompanied by other women who throw oranges and candies into the crowd. These women are chosen by the head of the “Rama”, the “Prioste”. Also every “Rama de Gallo” has its own fireworks. When sun sets after this special day some groups keep going from house to house dancing and singing. This ends with the traditional festivities of San Juan in Zuleta come to an end.

