

# The Ruta del Sol



## Further Links

- Beautiful coastal scenery
- Delicious seafood
- Machalilla National Park, Ecuador's only coastal park
- Whale watching
- Waved Albatross and boobies on Isla de la Plata

## Situation

On Ecuador's Pacific coast between Salinas and Manta.

## Activities

Whale and dolphin watching boat trips, snorkelling, hiking.

A good paved road runs along the coast from the resort town of Salinas winding through several fishing villages to Puerto Cayo before heading inland to Manta, the region capital and site of the regional airport. For much of the way, the road hugs the coasts before rising into the hills with splendid views of sweeping coves.

## The village of **Valdiva**

houses an interesting little archaeological museum with artifacts from the pre-Inca cultures that dominated the coast as well as a small aquarium. Nearby, the fishing villages of **Manglaralto** and **Montanita** offer several excellent seafood restaurants. Further on, the road climbs through dense cloudforest before arriving at **Puerto Lopez**

. The largest town on this stretch of the coast, Puerto Lopez offers banks (but no ATMs), shops and several good restaurants, and is the base for visits to Isla de Plata

## Beyond Puerto Lopez, the road continues into **Machalilla National Park**

with side roads leading inland to the village of **Agua Blanca**

, the old centre of the pre-Inca Manteno civilization with a small museum and trails through the cloudforest.

A few miles on, a road leads to the coast and the perfect sheltered bay of **Playa Los Frailes** with its sweeping sandy beach.

