

One of my favorite places in Ecuador is Quilotoa lake.

Quilotoa is (or was) a volcano which, in its last eruption, about 800 years ago, collapsed.

All that was left was a giant crater, and a lake formed there.

It's beautiful.

You have to be lucky though. Most of the time it's cloudy and rainy, but when it's clear, the view is amazing.

If you want to go there, you can go by bus, a friend's car, or on a tour, with more people.

I've been there a couple of times, and once something interesting happened:

To get to the lake, you have to walk downhill for about 45 minutes.

Then you can rest, eat something, and enjoy the view.

Ah! You can also rent a boat and sail across the lake.

Some people even jump into the water and swim for a while.

Considering that it's very cold and the water is full of sulfur, I don't think it's a good idea, but I'm not their father, so they can do whatever they want.

Something else you can find there is local people and horses.

If a visitor doesn't want to walk back to the top, they pay for a horse ride, and the horse does all the work.

I've never done that, but many people do it.

A few years ago I went to that lake with my cousins, and when we were getting to the lake, a man asked if any of us spoke English.

I asked him how I could help, and he told me he was trying to pay for a horse ride, and the child in charge seemed to not understand what he wanted.

"Ok. I'll ask him." I said. And I did.

But the child told me something that made me laugh.

He understood the man wanted to pay for a horse ride, but the boy didn't want to give him a horse because "the man was too fat and it would be too much work for the horse to get to the top."

"What did the boy say?" Asked the man.

And I was like... "should I tell him he won't get a horse ride because 'he is too fat'?"

I had to soften the message and I told him "the boy says you're too tall and the horse will probably have trouble carrying you to the top."

"Ahhh, I see. He said. "You Ecuadorians are shorter than Americans."

And I was like “mmmm yes, why not.”

Then he suggested something: He would pay for two horses to go with him. He would ride the first horse for the first half of the way, and the second horse for the rest of it.

The child agreed, the man paid, and me and my cousins kept walking to the lake.

They asked me why I was laughing, and when I told them what just happened, they laughed too.

“That’s why you should learn English.” I told them. And they did. A little bit.

Eventually they realized they preferred learning Chinese. They had Chinese friends, and they travel there from time to time, so it just made more sense.

Now they agree that speaking a second language can open many doors for you. And they still remember what happened that day by the lake.

Anyway, if you also want to learn Chinese, I guess I can ask them for their teacher phone number.

And If you want to learn Spanish:

[Online Spanish lessons with an Ecuadorian teacher.](#)

P.S. I haven’t been to that lake in four or five years. I should probably go again.

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