

Mother and child in Saquisilí, Ecuador

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A woman carries a young child on her back in a cloth sling. Both woman and child are wearing felt or wool fedoras. The woman's eyes are obscured by the brim of her hat.

Saquisilí has one of the largest daily markets in Ecuador. Everything from agricultural products to livestock to handcrafted goods can be found in Saquisilí. The active market makes the town a lively place to visit and is a popular tourist destination.

Many anthropologists see the market of Saquisilí as a culturally significant because it represents a time in Ecuador's history that is increasingly hard to find. As the country becomes more industrialized and more land is becomes open to investors, traditional lifeways are beginning to disappear. By providing an arena for local craftsmen, markets like the one at Saquisilí help preserve a little bit of the country's traditions.

One of those tradition is the wearing of fedora or bowler hats. Throughout the Andes region, indigenous men and women don European-style hats that may look out of place to our eyes. They are so common, though, that it would be out of place for an indigenous adult to not wear a hat.



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