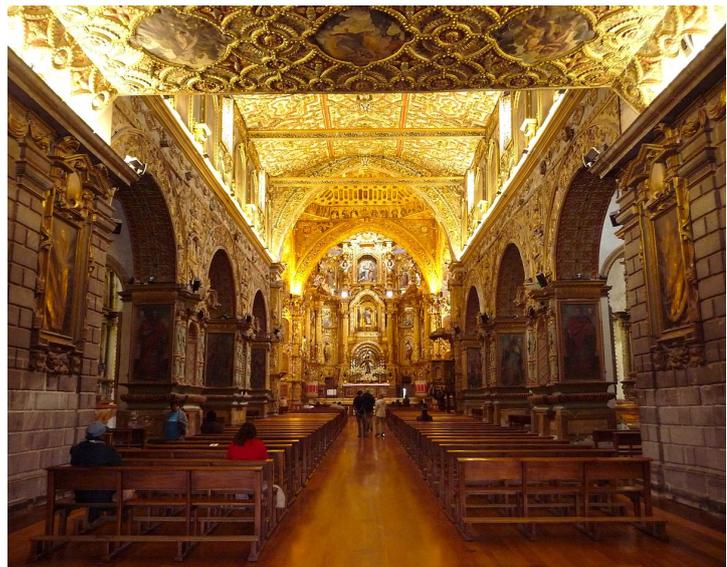


Church and Convent of St. Francis

Church and Monastery of St. Francis <i>Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco</i> (Spanish)	
	
Basic information	
Location	Quito, Ecuador
Geographic coordinates	0°13′13″S 78°30′56″W^[1] Coordinates: 0°13′13″S 78°30′56″W^[1]
Affiliation	Roman Catholic
Architectural description	
Architect(s)	Francisco Cantuña Wikipedia:Please clarify
Architectural type	Church
Direction of façade	Southeast
Groundbreaking	1534
Completed	1604
Specifications	

The **Church and Monastery of St. Francis** (Spanish: *Iglesia y Monasterio de San Francisco*), commonly known as *el San Francisco*, is a 16th-century Roman Catholic complex in Quito, Ecuador. It fronts onto its namesake Plaza de San Francisco. The imposing structure has the distinction of being the largest architectural ensemble among the historical structures of colonial Latin America and for this reason is sometimes known as "El Escorial of the New World"Wikipedia:Manual of Style/Words to watch#Unsupported attributions. The style evolved over almost 150 years of construction (1534-1680) through earthquakes and changes in artistic fashion. The Church houses the city's beloved *Virgin of Quito* (1734).



Interior of the Church of San Francisco, Quito.

Description

Layout

The San Francisco de Quito convent defined itself in its relations with the outside world according to three spaces:

- **The Public Square** (*Plaza de San Francisco*) was a purely urban space, demarcated and connected to various public activities (teaching, market, water supply).
- **The Courtyard** (*El Atrio*), where urban and some sacred functions met. Here, at least in the 16th and 17th centuries, ordinary people were sometimes buried. This space is entered through the convex staircase, designed by the Vatican architect, Gian Lorenzo Bernini.
- **The Church and its chapels** (*La Iglesia de San Francisco*), which were considered sacred places.

Together, Church and Convent encompass three hectares including 13 cloisters (six of them major), three churches, and a large courtyard. In total, about 40,000 square meters of construction. San Francisco follows the classical typology of medieval monasteries. The main Church is the guiding axis and from there the cloister galleries extend: the refectory, the chapterhouse, and winery. These define a quadrangular courtyard, with the four respective pandas, or galleries: that of the chapter room, the refectory, the converts, and the mandatum. In addition to the basic dependencies of a convent, there were areas devoted to health care, education, crafts, a garden, and even a jail (to maintain strict discipline). The kitchen and dispensary operated in the cloister of services.

Style

The facade of the main Church reflects, for the first time in South America, Mannerist elements, which later became a reference point for that style in the rest of the continent. The severity of the building's Renaissance and Mannerist exterior contrasts with the inner decoration of the Church, in which Mudejar and Baroque elements bathe the nave, chapels, and high altar in an exotic golden splendour. In its nave and aisles, the Church of San Francisco reveals its Mudejar (Moorish) coffered ceilings, lavishly decorated altarpieces, and columns fashioned in different styles. In the choir — original from the end of the 16th century — Mudejar details are fully preserved, although the central nave was brought down by an earthquake and then replaced by a Baroque coffered ceiling in 1770.

Holdings

San Francisco houses over 3,500 works of colonial art, of varied artistic styles and techniques, most notably those of the famous Quito School of art, which had its genesis precisely here. Undoubtedly the most celebrated of these is the 18th century sculpture known as the *Virgin of Quito*, which has long been a kind of icon of the city. Here also is a magnificent Franciscan library, described in the 17th century as the best of the Viceroyalty of Peru.

History

Construction of the building began a few weeks after the founding of the city in 1534 and ended in 1604. The founder of the church was Franciscan missionary Jodoco Ricke.^[2]



Courtyard of the Monastery.

The building's construction began around 1550, sixteen years after Quito was founded by Spanish conquistadors, and was finished in approximately 1680. The building was officially inaugurated in 1605. Wikipedia:Please clarify The main cloister was added in 1605.

With the support of European Franciscans, the Flemish Friar Joost de Rijcke, known in Spanish as Jodoco Ricke and Friar Pedro Gosseal – who came to the city two years after its founding – acquired land to the west side of the city's main plaza. This plot was where the palace of the Incan ruler Atahualpa (1497-1533) had once stood. In addition to being a market center for indigenous Ecuadorians, it was also the location of

the military seats of the chiefs of the indigenous armies. All told, the place had enormous strategic and historical significance for the indigenous people the Franciscans wanted to evangelize.

It is not known who designed the original plans for the complex, though the most-accepted theory is that they were sent from Spain, based on the topographical study of Ricke and Gosseal. It is also possible that architects came from Spain for the construction of the monastery, or that Ricke and Gosseal managed the entire construction. Wikipedia:Please clarify

The Church underwent a major (US\$2M) interior renovation between 2000 and 2010.

References

- [1] http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Church_and_Convent_of_St._Francis¶ms=0_13_13_S_78_30_56_W_type:landmark
- [2] Palmerlee, Danny; Grosberg, Michael; McCarthy, Carolyn (2006). *Ecuador & the Galápagos Islands*. Lonely Planet (Footscray, Victoria, Australia; Oakland, California, United States). ISBN 978-1-74104-295-5.



Plaza San Francisco (Church and Convent of St. Francis) in the Historic Center of Quito.

Article Sources and Contributors

Church and Convent of St. Francis *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=577061677> *Contributors:* *TikiTac*, Bearcat, CAN, Calliopejen1, Cptnemo, Digirami, Dr. Blofeld, E Wing, JASpencer, Khazar2, Malcolm, Neddysagoon, Valerius Tygart, Woohookitty, 12 anonymous edits

Image Sources, Licenses and Contributors

File:SanFranciscoQuito.jpg *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:SanFranciscoQuito.jpg> *License:* Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported *Contributors:* Marc Figueras

File:Kostel sv. Františka, Quito.jpg *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Kostel_sv._Františka._Quito.jpg *License:* Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported *Contributors:* Ondřej Žváček

File:Stfrancisquito.JPG *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Stfrancisquito.JPG> *License:* Public Domain *Contributors:* Francesco Bailo

File:Plaza de San Francisco en Centro histórico de Quito, Ecuador.JPG *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Plaza_de_San_Francisco_en_Centro_histórico_de_Quito,_Ecuador.JPG *License:* Creative Commons Attribution-Sharealike 3.0 *Contributors:* User:Alvarosevilladesign

License

Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0
[//creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)