

ECUADOR - BEST OF GALAPAGOS



INTRODUCTION

This active land-based tour of the Galapagos takes you from the historic colonial city of Quito to the 'Enchanted Islands'. Outstanding natural beauty and some of the most extraordinary wildlife in the world awaits, as you explore the islands of San Cristobal, Floreana, Isabela and Santa Cruz by boat, bike and on foot. From discovering the intriguing history of Floreana to climbing Frigatebird Hill and Sierra Negra volcano for spectacular views, to swimming with sea lions and turtles and roaming the highlands with the giant tortoises, this is an experience that is completely out of this world.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE

ECITAG

DEPARTURE

Thursdays & Saturdays

DURATION

10 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Galapagos
Islands



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DAY 1: Quito

Bienvenidos! Welcome to Quito, Ecuador. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 2 pm. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask reception where it will take place. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early so you're able to attend. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). If you're going to be late, please inform the hotel reception. We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please ensure you have all these details to provide to your leader. Quito is one of the most attractive cities in South America, sitting at an altitude of 2,850 metres with a view of Volcan Pichincha on the horizon. On day 1 there is a city tour to show the beautiful Colonial style buildings and help you explore the nooks and crannies of cosy Old Town. We'll be back in Quito at the end of the trip, giving you a chance to further experience the city. Notes: Due to the high altitude of many of places we visit, the air is thinner and some people can suffer altitude sickness, regardless of age, gender or fitness. Please see the 'Is This Trip Right For You?' and 'Health' sections in the trip notes for more information.



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DAY 2: Isla San Cristobal, Galapagos

Early morning transfer to Quito airport (approximately 45 minutes - 1 hour) for our flight to San Cristobal Island, Galapagos. The flight will take approximately 3.5 hrs including a stop in Guayaquil to pick up additional passengers (you will not need to disembark the plane) Departure time will be between 8.20am and 10.30am depending on flight schedule time. Welcome to San Cristobal, Galapagos Islands. The Galapagos National Institute has introduced a Transit Control Card. This card has a cost of US\$20 and it must be purchased by every person travelling to the Galapagos Islands. You will need to purchase this card upon arrival to the domestic airport on day 2, prior to checking in to your Galapagos flight. Our flight will stop once in Guayaquil to pick up more passenger's (approx 3.5 hours total). Upon arrival we will need to go through immigration and pay the Galapagos National Park entrance fee of US\$100 in cash (small bills please). We transfer from the airport to the hotel (approximately 15 minutes) Soon after, travel to La Loberia where you'll put on snorkelling gear for the first time and go for a swim with sea lions, and maybe even some sea turtles. Continue back to town. Tonight you may wish to head out with the group and enjoy some of the fresh seafood available.



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DAY 3: Isla San Cristobal, Galapagos

Today begins with a short boat ride to Leon Dormido (approx 45 mins) or Isla Lobos, observing along the way the abundant marine life that Galapagos is renowned for. On the way we might be able to spot nesting frigates and blue-footed boobies and/or might swim/snorkel with playful young sea lions. Here we can snorkel keeping an eye out below for sea turtles, manta rays and maybe the odd harmless Galapagos shark, to name a few. This snorkeling is in open sea, on occasion the currents can be quite strong so it's particularly important you are a confident swimmer for this activity. If you have any concerns, please ensure you speak with your leader. Included lunch today is a packed box lunch on board the boat! Unfortunately it is against National Park rules to eat on the beach. Later head we will head to the interpretation Center. Learn about the history of the 'Enchanted Islands' and the conservation projects which seek to preserve the unique Galapagos wildlife. Next, make our way to Frigatebird Hill (Cerro Tijeretas), which is located two kilometres from the Interpretation Center, southwest of Isla San Cristobal. It's quite a climb to the top, but well worth the amazing views of the bay. From here you can also see Kicker Rock, an eroded volcanic formation protruding from the sea which has become an emblem of the island. We'll return to town in the late afternoon/early evening.



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DAY 4: Isla Floreana / Isla Isabela, Galapagos

Take an early morning boat ride today towards Floreana Island, which should take about 2.5 hours. Along the way keep your eyes peeled for wildlife such as dolphins and whales. On arrival to the island, snorkel in the clear blue waters and then break for lunch. Afterwards venture to a black sand beach which belongs to the Witmers, decedents of some of the first settlers on the Galapagos. The town here, Puerto Velasco Ibarra, has about 150 residents and an intriguing history involving deaths, disappearances and murders. Later in the afternoon, wave goodbye to Floreana and continue to Isabela Island (approximately 2 hours) From Isabela Port it's a short transfer to the hotel where we will spend the night (approximately 15 minutes)



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DAY 5: Isla Isabela, Galapagos

Start your second day on Isla Isabela with a short bus ride (approximately 15 minutes) to the Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre where you'll observe giant tortoises in all stages of development. The centre has almost a thousand giant tortoises training for life on their own. After your visit make your way to a brackish lagoon where we will be able to observe flamingos. Then board small pangas for Tintoreras or Shark Alley. On our way we will go along the coast line in the hope to spot blue-footed boobies and the famous Galapagos penguin who is home on the western part of the archipelago. On arrival, hop off for a short walk on this isolated islet and popular iguana nesting site that's home to hundreds of marine iguanas. Snorkel in a calm inlet with colourful fish and winding underground lava tubes. This area is frequented by green sea turtles that like to rest on the calm, sandy bottom. Late afternoon, return to town in search of your own sandy resting spot and enjoy your first Isabela sunset, arguably the most beautiful of all the islands.



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DAY 6: Isla Isabela, Galapagos

Start your last day on Isla Isabela by heading towards the Sierra Negra Volcano (approximately 45 minutes by bus), one of the most active volcanoes in the Galapagos and the second largest crater in the world. Weather permitting, take a challenging hike of around 17 kilometres up the rocky mountain, which takes between five and six hours. After the hike, make your way back to town in the late afternoon for some free time to curl up with a book or venture down to the water for a relaxing swim before dinner. Unfortunately, recycling isn't available on Isabela, so please take your plastic rubbish with you.



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DAY 7: Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos

Today you will start the day with a kayak around Isabela before transferring by private speedboat to Isla Santa Cruz. Once you arrive on Santa Cruz you will head to a restaurant that offers a typical Ecuadorian lunch package, simply referred to as "Menu". Usually this consists of a fresh juice, basic entrée (usually a soup) as well as a main meal. These lunch deals are very popular throughout Ecuador so it's a great way to eat like a local. In the afternoon you will have free time to further explore the town or go on an optional excursion to the Charles Darwin Research Centre.



DAY 8: Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos

This morning we will walk to Tortuga Bay (3.5 kms) one way and enjoy some time on the beach. In the afternoon visit the higher part of the islands to observe the giant tortoise roaming in its natural habitat. Afterwards visit a locally owned Sugar cane farm. Here the farmers will show us the process in which sugar cane is processed and turned into alcohol. Take the opportunity to try some! Tonight, enjoy an included group dinner.



DAY 9: Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos / Quito

We say goodbye to the Galapagos today and take a flight back to Quito (Please note the flight will make a stop in Guayaquil) You'll arrive back to Quito later afternoon. Perhaps head out for a final group dinner.



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DAY 10: Quito

This morning your adventure comes to an end in Quito. As there are no activities planned for the final day, you can depart the accommodation at any time. Because there is little time spent in Quito on this trip, we recommend staying a few extra days to see more of Ecuador. If you choose to stay on, we'd be happy to assist you with booking accommodation. Ecuador has some of the most beautiful churches in the Americas, including the lavish La Compania de Jesus, which is decorated with seven tonnes of gold. Not far from the capital, there are volcanoes, hot springs and Incan ruins to explore. Consider doing one of our one-day sightseeing tours of Quito, which can include the Old Town, markets and the city's culinary delights.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard
Inclusions	Private airport transfers Accommodation with breakfast daily Sightseeing with local English-speaking guide as detailed in itinerary Other meals where stated Snorkelling activities Floreana Island Kayaking activities Isla Isabela Exclusions International flights Visa & reciprocity fees (if applicable) Travel insurance Beverages Personal expenses Gratuities for tour guides/drivers Galapagos transit control card (USD\$20 per person subject to change) Galapagos Park Entrance Fee (USD\$100 per person subject to change)
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request, contact us for more details.
Notes	Please note park entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice.

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Price Dependent upon Season and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Being environmentally accountable is a crucial part of our organisation. Chimu is currently striving towards using less paper, taking several initiatives to do so and tracking our progress along the way. Our goal: A paperless organisation. For this reason, all information given to you will be sent electronically. We encourage those who choose to travel with us to support our aspirations and actions and ask that you reconsider printing out documentation. To view these documents, you can download them to your iPad or portable computer before and during your trip.

Chimu is passionate and dedicated to sustainability measures and understands the crucial part sustainability plays within the tourism industry.

We use local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprint. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting. Our guides are all highly qualified (most with university degrees) or equip with many years of experience and are paid above the standard wage. Whether it be our knowledgeable local guides, locally produced meals or the transport on tour, we do not use imported goods when local products are available. We aim to minimise our impact on the environment and give as much back as possible to the communities we work in.

While visiting the many national parks, heritage sites, museums and landmarks our travellers are encouraged to explore whilst remaining culturally aware and sensitive. We further encourage you to buy appropriate souvenirs and discourage the buying of anything wrongfully made or taken from the environment i.e. shells and endangered species products. Information on how you can be environmentally conscious, and travel responsibly will be made available in our Travellers Guides and provided during your travels by guides and staff.

For more information on our sustainability policies, including how we are striving towards being a paperless organisation, click [HERE](#)

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