

ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS AT A GLANCE: SOUTHERN ISLANDS | GRAND DAPHNE




INTRODUCTION

Discover the wonders of the **Galapagos Islands** as you cruise around the southern islands aboard the Grand Daphne. The archipelago abounds with incredible wildlife, many of the species endemic to these isolated islands. From pink flamingos in the lagoons of **Floreana Island**, to Darwin's finches and giant tortoises in the highlands of **Santa Cruz**, to the largest breeding site of waved albatrosses in the world on **Isla Espanola** - the wildlife is mesmerising. Explore the beautiful beach of **Gardner Bay** and snorkel in the centre of the eroded volcanic cone known as Devil's Crown - one of the best snorkel sites of the Galapagos.

Check out some of the other itineraries on the Grand Daphne: [10 Day Ultimate Galapagos](#), [17 Day Absolute Galapagos](#), [10 Day Complete Galapagos](#), [7 Day Galapagos Adventure: Northern Islands](#)

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ECTSGAG
DEPARTURE
Select Tuesdays
DURATION
6 Days
LOCATIONS
Ecuador, Galapagos Islands, South America


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DAY 1: Quito

Bienvenidos! Welcome to Ecuador. A welcome meeting will be held in the evening at either 5pm or 6 pm when you meet others travelling with you on your cruise to the Galapagos Islands. Please check with hotel reception or check the reception notice boards for the time and place of the meeting for your trip. As today is an arrival day, you can arrive at any time as there are no activities planned until this important meeting. 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). Quito sits at high altitude under the towering Pichincha volcano. It is a beautiful city, arguably one of the most beautiful in South America. The city stretches along the valley and is surrounded by the Andes. The Old Town of Quito is awash with history, with more than 30 churches to explore, and a number of fascinating museums. La Compania de Jesus is considered to be the most beautiful and ornate churches in the Americas. The city's oldest street, Calle La Ronda, is well worth exploring. As this trip spends very little time in Quito, we recommend you spend a few extra days before or after your trip to experience all the city has to offer. You may even wish to explore further beyond the city and visit Otavalo, Cotopaxi, the Cloud Forest or the Equatorial Monument.



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DAY 2: Baltra - Santa Cruz Highlands

This morning we transfer to Quito Airport for our early morning flight to the Galapagos Islands. Be prepared for an early start as this could mean leaving the hotel as early as 4:30 am (a boxed breakfast will be provided). On arrival in the Galapagos, we collect our luggage and meet our local guide in the arrivals hall. We then head to the Highlands of Santa Cruz for our first Galapagos adventure. Beginning at the coast we travel across Santa Cruz through the agricultural region and into the misty forests where we can see the unique scalesia cloud forest, dome-shaped giant tortoises in the wild, different species of Darwin finches and possibly the world famous woodpecker and warbler finches, as well as vermillion flycatchers. Today we will enjoy lunch in the highlands. This afternoon we travel to Puerto Ayora, where we are then transferred to our boat, the Daphne. Once on board, we'll be assigned our cabins and meet the crew members. Please note the Transit Card & National Park Fees are not included in the cost of the trip as they need to be paid locally: There is a US\$20 Galapagos Islands transit card fee that needs to be paid at the airport in Quito prior to departure to the islands. All visitors must pay the Galapagos National Park fee of US \$200 upon arrival at the airport in the Galapagos. If your trip visits Isla Isabela, there is also port fee of US\$10 which is to be paid locally. These fees are to be paid in cash.



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DAY 3: Isla Floreana

Discover the quirky maritime history of Post Office Bay, home of the oldest postal system in the Americas. Take the opportunity to post a letter in the historic post office barrel from 1793 which is still used today. Galapagos visitors can leave letters and postcards to be collected by the next passing boat. Snorkelling and a lovely panga ride are also included in this outing. Afterwards, head ashore at Punta Cormorant where the sand is made up of fine olivine crystal (a glassy volcanic mineral that gives the beach an olive-green colour). This is the best place to see Galapagos sea lions. Keep an eye out for pink flamingos and other waterbirds wading in the lagoons, including pintails and stilts. The moderate 2-kilometre walk continues to a white-flour sandy beach, which is an Eastern Pacific green turtle nesting site. Young diamond stingrays are commonly found in the shore line. Enjoy the view of the turquoise crystalline ocean. Just offshore, the famous Devil's Crown is an old eroded volcanic cone and a popular roosting site for seabirds such as boobies, pelicans and frigates. Red-billed tropicbirds can also be seen nesting in the rocky crevices. The centre of the cone is an outstanding spot and many people find this one of the best snorkelling experiences of their trip. You might see rays, sharks, sea lions and turtles.



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DAY 4: Isla Española

Sail overnight and wake up on the island of Española, the spectacular southernmost island of the Galapagos. Because of its remote location, this island has a large population of endemic fauna. It is the breeding site for nearly all of the world's 12,000 pairs of waved albatrosses and also home to colonies of blue-footed and masked boobies. Trails from the golden beaches, where sea lions bathe and marine iguanas make their way towards the water, lead you right through the middle of booby colonies, and Galapagos doves and mockingbirds are also often seen. Land at Punta Suarez, one of the most attractive locations in the Galapagos, home to a large and varied wildlife population. A walk along its rocky trails (approximately 3 km) takes you to a cliff-top viewpoint that affords magical panoramas. Boobies line the rocky shoreline below, while frigate birds can be seen overhead. Enormous male sea lions lounge nearby, and albatross use the cliffs as their 'runway', getting airborne on the southeast winds. If you're lucky you might spot the elaborate courtship rituals performed by albatrosses before the female chooses her lifelong mate. Next, head to Gardner Bay, one of the most beautiful beaches of the Galapagos Islands. It's full of sea lions and hooded mockingbirds. Enjoy a walk (approximately 1 km) along the beach, and do some snorkelling which could be great for playing with sea lion pups and many fish. The rocks off the coast provide particularly great snorkelling, with reef sharks, turtles and many species of tropical fish (such as surgeon and angelfish). Small white-tipped reef sharks are also often spotted resting under the rocks.



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DAY 5: Isla San Cristobal

As flights to the mainland from Galapagos depart mid-morning, it is an early start for our last morning on the islands. Depending on the time of our flight, our time spent on this final excursion could be limited. Kicker Rock (Leon Dormido) is the magnificent basalt remains of a crater in the middle of the sea, the shape resembling a sleeping lion. The rock rises 150 metres above the surface and is divided into two parts by a narrow channel. Cruise through the channel as nesting seabirds flank the boat, tropicbirds soar overhead, marine iguanas swim about and sea lions lounge on the water. Snorkelling from the panga gives you the chance to see Galapagos sharks, sea turtles and an incredible biodiversity of invertebrates on the wall. You might even spot a hammerhead shark. This is your final excursion before you return to the airport in San Cristobal for your flight back to Quito. The flight will stop over in Guayaquil to drop off and/or pick up passengers. Arrive at Quito Airport (approximately 4 pm) where you will be transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay. Your local representative may stop by at your hotel this evening to get your feedback on your Galapagos experience.



DAY 6: Quito

Your Galapagos adventure comes to an end after breakfast this morning. There are no activities planned for the final day, and you are free to depart the accommodation at any time. There are many fascinating things to do in and around Quito, so please speak to your customer service representative about any optional activities that might be of interest. They can also assist you in booking a departure transfer to the airport.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin on board ship & hotel

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INCLUSIONS

- 1 Night Pre and 1 Night Post cruise group hotel in Quito including breakfast
- Arrival Transfer in Quito (must have flight arrival plans confirmed 30 days prior)
- Transfers in Galapagos to/from vessel
- Round trip flight to/from Galapagos
- Accommodation on board Grand Daphne in selected cabin
- All meals during the cruise
- Guiding by Galapagos National Park Certified Guide
- All visits and excursions/landings according to the itinerary*
- Snorkel Gear (mask, tube and fins)
- Kayaks
- Unlimited purified water, coffee and tea

Inclusions

EXCLUSIONS

- Local Taxes
- Any other airfares unless otherwise specified in the itinerary
- Galapagos National Park Entrance fee (US\$200 per person from Aug 2024 - Subject to change)
- Galapagos Ingala card (USD 20,00 per person - Subject to change)
- Passport & Visa Expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Alcoholic & soft drinks
- Additional visits
- Additional meals
- Excess baggage charges
- Telecommunications charges (Wi-Fi is not available on the boat at all whilst in the Galapagos Islands)
- Wetsuit Hire
- Personal expenses and tips
- Items not specified

Difficulty Rating 2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.

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Notes

- Before checking in on a flight from Quito to the Galapagos there is a US\$20 transit fee that must be paid. On arrival in the Galapagos you must pay a US\$200 national park entrance fee per person from August 2024.
- All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice.
- Please note kayaking and water based activities are subject to weather conditions.
- * Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.

Price Dependent upon

Seasonality, fuel surcharges, currency fluctuations and availability at time of booking.

SUSTAINABILITY

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