

SOUTH AMERICA - GALAPAGOS EXPERIENCE



INTRODUCTION

Join us on this amazing Galapagos Experience and discover the incredible wildlife and unique beauty of this volcanic islands.

An ecological wonderland of largely endemic wildlife, the Galapagos inspired Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection long before the cruise ships arrived. Dotting the Pacific 960km off the Ecuador coast, this archipelago of 19 volcanic islands is noted for its fearless wildlife, a natural response to the lack of large predators.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Quito

Welcome to Quito and Ecuador!. At the airport you will be greeted by a member of our organization, we will escort you all the way to your hotel, giving you a short briefing about Quito and the country in general with valuable information you need to know. Enjoy scenic colonial and artistic Quito, visit museums, monasteries and the golden altars of its many churches. Stand with a foot on each hemisphere on the Middle of the World memorial. The capital of Ecuador has a setting that few cities in the world can match. During the 13th century it was the prosperous center of the Kingdom of Quitus. It later became the northern capital of the Inca Empire. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Colonial architects built formidable temples, monasteries and mansions, creating an urban jewel designated by UNESCO/UN as a World Cultural Heritage Site. Quito's artistic creativity awaits the visitor in cosmopolitan galleries and boutiques filled with contemporary paintings, sculptures and exquisite traditional crafts.



TRIP CODE

ECTSGAEX

DEPARTURE

Saturdays

DURATION

11 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador: Quito,
Galapagos, Guayaquil



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DAY 2: Scenic tour of Quito

Quito's colonial quarter, the largest and best preserved of South America, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will stroll at the Independence Plaza, flanked by the Cathedral, the Presidential Palace, the Municipal Building and the Archbishop's Palace. We will visit the temple of *La Compañía de Jesús and its awesome gilded interior. We will continue on to the Monastery of San Francisco, one the of great religious buildings of the New World; its impressive façade and atrium that lead to its Baroque interior influenced by Moorish style, with the winged Virgin of Quito at its main altar. The tour ends at a lookout point with a great view of Quito.



DAY 3: Quito / Galapagos islands


Shared Transfers from hotel to airport in Quito
Flight Quito - Galápagos islands



DAY 3: Baltra Island / North Seymour Island

Our adventure begins with a morning flight to Baltra Island and immediate transfer to the dock to board Yacht La Pinta. There's a welcome introductory briefing, boat drill, cabin assignment and then lunch. North Seymour Island Following an afternoon disembarkation, we enjoy a walk along the coast and the interior of the beautiful flat island, observing numerous bird colonies as well as sea lions and land iguanas. There are opportunities for coastal exploration by dinghy. Evening briefing, welcome cocktail and dinner.



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DAY 4: Punta Vicente Roca / Punta Espinoza

Since there is no landing site at this location, the coastal exploration is by dinghy, while the naturalist guide explains the dramatic geology of the area, with remains of lava flows and tuff stone layers. There is abundant wildlife and, depending on the conditions of the ocean, we'll be able to snorkel along the cliffs, hopefully in the company of green sea turtles. Punta Espinoza (Fernandina Island) In the afternoon, we visit the youngest and most pristine island of the archipelago, Fernandina, one of many people's all-time favourites. Punta Espinoza has an amazing combination of barrenness and abundant wildlife. Highlights include hawks, penguins, the flightless cormorant and astounding views of the surrounding volcanic landscapes.



DAY 5: Urbina Bay / Tagus Cove

After breakfast, we disembark at Urbina Bay, on the western side of Isabela Island, the result of an uplifting of the ocean floor. Here you can find corals, shells, and large and very colourful Galápagos land iguanas, giant tortoises (occasionally). Navigating the Bolívar Channel, there are good chances of spotting species of whales. Tagus Cove (Isabela Island) On the northwest of Isabela, secluded Tagus Cove provided a favourite anchorage for pirates and whalers over the centuries, and today makes a great visitor site. An uphill hike takes us to the back of Darwin Crater, filled with salt water. We can snorkel or ride kayaks amid the dramatic landscape before our hike.



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DAY 6: Rabida Island / Dragon Hill

In the morning, we disembark at Rábida Island's red-coloured beach. A stroll along the beach allows us to observe marine iguanas, mockingbirds, yellow warblers and several species of Darwin's finches. This is a great place to snorkel from the beach. For those non-snorkelers, we can ride our glass-bottom boat for a submarine exploration. Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) (Santa Cruz Island) The north shore of Santa Cruz hosts the fascinating landscapes of Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill). Our walk includes circling a brackish water lagoon frequented by lagoon birds, while further inland, the trail offers a beautiful view of the bay and the western islands of the archipelago, as well as the chance of observing land iguanas.



DAY 7: Puerto Ayora & Charles Darwin Research Station

The morning visit heads to the Charles Darwin Research Station and the giant tortoise pens within an impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest. These are the headquarters of scientific investigation, conservation and the National Park administration. A delicious lunch is served at the poolside of the Finch Bay Eco Hotel. Highlands of Santa Cruz Island After lunch, we wind up to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island by vehicle. This is a great place to look for the brilliant Vermilion Flycatcher and the endemic Scalesia trees. From December to mid-April and July to December a visit to observe giant tortoises in the wild may be included, if weather conditions are good.



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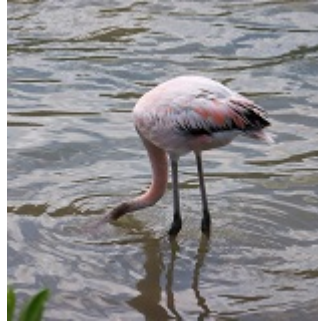
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DAY 8: Post Office Bay / Punta Cormorant

After breakfast, we land at Post Office Bay to visit the historic barrel that has served as a post office in the archipelago for over two centuries. Panga rides along the maze of channels on Floreana's north shore can also be enjoyed. There's great snorkelling from the beach as well. Champion Islet & Punta Cormorant (Floreana Island) Before disembarking at Punta Cormorant we can snorkel or ride our glass-bottom boat along the coast of an extinct cone called "Champion Islet". Our visit to Punta Cormorant takes in an olivine-crystal beach for an easy walk by a brackish water lagoon where bird species like greater flamingos may be observed. On the other side of the island, we come to a white-sand beach where sea turtles come out at night to nest.



DAY 9: Santa Fe Island / South Plaza Island

We take the dinghy over to this idyllic sandy-white beach populated by colonies of sea lions. Galápagos hawks are often easily observed, perched atop salt bushes. The endemic land iguana, unique to this island, may be spotted during the walk. Following the walk, we can snorkel and swim along a natural wave barrier. South Plaza Island The turquoise waters of the channel here contrast brilliantly with the white sand and black lava of the shoreline, while a carpet of scarlet sesuvium succulents serves as groundcover for a grove of luminescent green prickly-pear cactus beyond, populated by yellow-gray land iguanas. Along the coastline one finds sea lion colonies, while sea birds play with the thermals that form along the cliffs of this small but amazing island.



DAY 10: Puerto Baquerizo Moreno / Guayaquil

After breakfast, we depart for the port and airport for our flight back to the mainland. Flight Galapagos - Guayaquil Shared transfer from airport to hotel in Guayaquil.



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DAY 11: Departure day

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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Luxury

Inclusions

Private airport transfers
Internal flights as mentioned in itinerary
Accommodation with all meals on board
Sightseeing with local English-speaking naturalist guide
Accommodation with breakfast on mainland

Exclusions

International flights
Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable)
Galapagos Transit Control Card (USD\$20 per person subject to change)
Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee (USD\$100 per person subject to change)
Travel insurance
Beverages
Gratuities for tour guides/crew
Any items not mentioned as included

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge

Available upon request, contact us for more details.

Notes

Please remember that the exact route and programme may vary according to weather and ocean conditions and the wildlife we encounter. It's also subject to change without previous notice due mainly to readjustment of the National Park policies and regulation.

Price Dependent upon

Season and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

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- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.
- 5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structured to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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