


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 M/Y 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.

ITINERARY

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


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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). A US\$20 per person transit card is payable on departure at Quito Airport and a US\$100 per person national park entry fee is payable on arrival on the islands. Please have cash on hand for these transactions as credit cards can be time consuming. 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.



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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.



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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.




INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Standard

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Inclusions	<p>Meals 5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners</p> <p>Transport Boat, Plane, Bus, Zodiac (Panga)</p> <p>Accommodation Hotel (2 nights) Overnight boat (3 nights)</p> <p>Included activities Isla Santa Cruz - Highlands Visit (3 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Floreana - Post Office Bay - Walk (1.5 hours) - Wet Landing Isla Floreana - Post Office Bay snorkelling (45 mins) Isla Floreana - Punta Cormorant walk (1.5 hours) - Wet Landing Isla Floreana - Devil's Crown snorkelling (1 hour) Isla Espanola - Bahia Gardener - Snorkel (1 hour) Isla Espanola - Bahia Gardener - Walk (1.5 hours) - Wet Landing Isla Espanola - Punta Suarez - Walk (3 hours) - Dry Landing Isla San Cristobal - Kicker Rock - Snorkelling (2 hours)</p> <p>EXCLUSIONS International flights Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable) Travel insurance Beverages Personal expenses Gratuities for tour guides and drivers Any items not mentioned as included</p>
	<p>Difficulty Rating 2 (light adventure)</p> <p>Single Surcharge Available upon request</p> <p>Notes Contact us for more details</p> <p>Price Dependent upon Season and availability</p>

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SUSTAINABILITY

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

- 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

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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 structures 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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