


INTRODUCTION

Set sail aboard the Grand Queen Beatriz to discover the highlights of the Galapagos as you cruise around the southern islands of Santa Cruz, Isabela and Floreana. Encounter some of the species that inspired Darwin's Theory of Evolution including Darwin's finches, land and marine iguanas, pink flamingos and lava lizards. Walk across lava flows, snorkel at Devil's Crown, encounter reef sharks at Las Tintoreras and sea lions at Punta Cormorant. Explore the volcanically active Isabela Island, Arnolda Tupiza Tortoise Breeding Centre, historic Post Office Bay and visit the majestic giant tortoises in the highlands. This 6-day tour is an incredible introduction to the Galapagos archipelago, one of nature's most impressive wonders.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ECTSGES
DEPARTURE
Select Saturdays
DURATION
6 Days
LOCATIONS
Ecuador, Galapagos Islands


ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS ENCOUNTER SOUTHERN ISLANDS | GRAND QUEEN BEATRIZ

DAY 1: Quito

On arrival at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day will be at your leisure. 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 - Punta Carrion

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. Please note the pick-up time will usually be as early as 4:30 am (a boxed breakfast will be provided), as the airport is a one-hour drive away and you must allow for delays and check-in times. (Your tour leader will confirm this time with you at the Welcome Meeting on Day 1). 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 are not accepted. The flight to the Galapagos will make one stop in Guayaquil to pick up other passengers. (Total flight time is about 3.5 hours). On arrival in the Galapagos you will be met in the arrivals hall and then transferred to your motor yacht, MY Grand Queen Beatriz, anchored a short distance away in Baltra Island. Once on board you'll be assigned your cabins, meet the crew members and have a welcome briefing and safety drill before getting to know your naturalist guide and fellow travellers over a delicious lunch. Your first stop in the afternoon will be Punta Carrión, located on the eastern side of the Itabaca channel that separates the islands of Baltra and Santa Cruz. This is a shallow and protected cove, ideal for your first snorkel and swim in the Galapagos! From a boat ride, wildlife is plentiful - keep your eyes peeled for occasional sights of blue-footed boobies, Galapagos herons, great blue herons and underwater swim among rays and white-tipped reef sharks. Tonight, enjoy a welcome cocktail and crew presentation on board.



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DAY 3: Isabela - Las Tintoreras - Tortoise Breeding Cente

Today you will wake up on the south Coast of Isla Isabela (Isabela Island), the largest of the Galapagos Archipelago. Isabela was formed by five giant volcanic craters, all of which are still considered active. The island is located in one of the youngest geological areas in the world, having been formed less than 1 million years ago. Please note that there's a US\$5 fee to be paid upon landing on Isabela Island. This southern coast of turquoise blue waters has the largest area of beaches in the Galapagos. You will visit Las Tintoreras, where from the viewing walkway you can look down into this narrow channel to see a colony of white-tipped reef sharks swimming and sleeping, and the occasional playful sea lion among them! Blue-footed boobies and penguins, marine iguanas and crabs also make their home here. Enjoy a nice long walk on a gravel path through 'Ahh-ahh' lava flow and see plenty of marine iguanas. The natives of the islands call white sharks 'tintoreras', hence the name of this spectacular site. In the afternoon we visit the Arnoldo Tupiza Tortoise breeding center. We have a leisurely walk through a coastal lagoon, where you might see Flamingos. This mangrove-lined path leads to Isabela's Giant Tortoise Breeding Center (Arnoldo Tupiza) where you'll observe giant tortoises in all stages of development. Here you can see the five sub species of tortoises from Isabela Island, some of which are bred in captivity. You will then have the choice for optional swimming at the beach or out for some shopping in Puerto Villamil.



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DAY 4: Floreana - Post Office Bay - Devil's Crown

The island of Floreana is a highlight of any Galapagos cruise, rich in natural wonders and wildlife. Enjoy a panga ride around the loberia to observe marine iguanas, sea lions and crabs before taking a leisurely walk to Post Office Bay, where 18th century whalers used a barrel as an unofficial mail drop. This custom continues to this day with visitors to the Galapagos - post one of your own, or see if there are any you could deliver back home! You will also have the chance to go snorkelling with sea turtles. Today is also one of your finest opportunities to see pink flamingos and other water birds wading in the lagoons, including pintails and stilts. Just offshore, the 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 snorkelling spot, perhaps the most remarkable in the entire archipelago, full of sea lions and colourful fish. You will go ashore at Punta Cormorant where the sand is made up of fine olivine crystals, a glassy volcanic mineral, giving the beach an olive-green colour. It is the best place to see Galapagos sea lions.



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DAY 5: Isla Santa Cruz

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. Our final excursion will be a visit to the Santa Cruz Highlands. We travel through the agricultural region and into the misty forests where we can see the Unique Scalesia cloud forest, get up close to the dome shaped giant tortoises in the wild, different species of Darwin finches and possibly the world famous woodpecker and warbler finches as well as vermilion flycatchers. This is your final excursion before you return to the airport in Baltra for your flight back to Quito. As you will be leaving the boat this morning, please remember that if you have enjoyed the services provided by your guide and crew, a tip would be very much appreciated by them. As a guideline we recommend each passenger consider US\$15 per day for the crew and US\$10 per day for your guide. You can leave tips in envelopes that are placed in your cabin on the last day of your journey. Upon arrival in Quito Airport you will be transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay.



DAY 6: Quito

Your Galapagos adventure will come to an end today after breakfast. There are no activities planned for the final day so you are able to depart the accommodation at any time. There are many fascinating things to do in and around Quito, so please speak to our 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

Superior

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Inclusions	2 nights hotel accommodation in Quito 3 nights cabin accommodation in Galapagos Airfare Quito - Galapagos - Quito Transfers throughout itinerary All meals daily in Galapagos Breakfast only in Quito All shore excursions and activities as per itinerary Galapagos National Park Certified Guide
	EXCLUSIONS: Galapagos Transit Control Card US\$20 per person Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee US\$100 per person Isabela Island Port Fee (if applicable) US\$5 per person Gratuities Airfares to/from Quito Passport and visa fees Optional activities Items of personal nature
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

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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 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

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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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