

ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS ISLAND HOPPING 8 DAY



INTRODUCTION

The Galapagos archipelago is unlike any other place on Earth - rugged, strikingly beautiful, fragile and sometimes bizarre and home to a fascinating array of wildlife. From land and marine iguanas to giant tortoises, red and blue-footed boobies, frigatebirds, turtles, Galapagos penguins, mockingbirds, dolphins, whales, albatrosses, lava lizards and Darwin's finches - the wildlife is mesmerizing.

If you are looking for more than a cruise to the islands then a week of touring the less-explored parts of the Galapagos Islands is the answer. Explore Santa Cruz and Isabela Islands, returning to the comfort of a hotel each evening. Snorkel with rays, sea lions and iguanas and experience the breath-taking beauty of the Galapagos archipelago as you discover the islands. Island Hopping Tours are an excellent option for those looking for a more active Galapagos Islands tour without spending days at sea. These land-based tours offer you a unique perspective of the Galapagos Islands, the way the locals see them. Each night you will stay in a small boutique island hotel, perfect for those that prefer to sleep on firm dry land!

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Baltra, Puerto Ayora

Flight from Quito or Guayaquil to Baltra's airport where a naturalist guide will meet you and transfer you to Puerto Ayora. On the way, we will stop to visit the highlands. Then you will have lunch at the harbour, and eventually, we continue with the transfer to the hotel. After a short break, we will visit the Charles Darwin Station. At the station, we will be able to see a variety of species of Giant Tortoises in captivity. We will see their different sizes and ages, and learn the Islands they originally come from. We will hear about the on going conservation efforts directed at preserving the Giant Tortoises, as well as the environment of the archipelago as a whole. Then return to the hotel for dinner and accommodation.



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DAY 2: North Seymour, Bartolome, Plazas, Santa Fe

After breakfast, the guide will meet you in the hotel lobby to take you to the dock, and start of the tour. Lunch will be included on board the small yacht. In the afternoon, you will return to the port. Today you will have the option to choose one of the following tours (you will visit only one of these islands): North Seymour Island is a spectacular place to hike, swim, and snorkel. The main attractions are the frigates, boobies, gulls, hawks, green sea turtles and the famous Galapagos Sharks. Bartolome Island has the most attractive landscape of the archipelago. This island is undoubtedly the most photographed in all the Galapagos Islands. You can appreciate the spectacular view of two beautiful bays and observe the fascinating formations of lava and volcanic cones. Two islands form Plazas. The turquoise waters of the channel contrast brilliantly with the white sand and black lava coast. It is a wonderful spot to observe marine life, including manta rays. The coast is the perfect spot for snorkelling. Santa Fe Island (Spanish: Isla Santa Fe), also called Barrington Island after admiral Samuel Barrington, is a small island of 24 square kilometres (9.3 sq mi) which lies in the centre of the Galapagos archipelago, to the south east of Santa Cruz Island. Geologically it is one of the oldest, since volcanic rocks of about 4 million years old have been found. The vegetation of the island is characterized by brush, palo santo trees and stands of a large variety of the prickly pear cactus *Opuntia echios*. Then, the passengers would return to the hotel for Dinner and accommodation. Island will be chosen according to available spaces.



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DAY 3: Santa Cruz Cerro Mesa, Garrapatero Beach

The guide will pick you up in order to go to Cerro Mesa. This place provides an impressive view of the archipelago. It has the most prestigious location and the best view to observe a variety of endemic plants, as well as up to 7 subspecies of finch and the vermillion flycatcher. The area is known by the characteristics of persistent drizzle ('la garúa') that falls horizontally throughout 8 months of the year. On the west side of the island you will see the largest crater on Santa Cruz. Here you will have time for lunch. Afterwards, we go to El Garrapatero, which is a wide bay with multiple sandy beaches. It is a nice area for swimming and relaxation, while you enjoy the wonderful view. Then you will return to the hotel for dinner and accommodation.



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DAY 4: Explore the Galapagos Islands

Today you take a sailing tour to another island that you have not yet visited (Bartolome, North Seymour, Plazas or Santa Fe). After breakfast, the guide will meet you in the hotel lobby to take you to the dock for the start of the tour. Lunch will be included on board the small yacht. In the afternoon, you will return to the port. Then you will return to the hotel for dinner and accommodation. Island will be chosen according to available spaces.



DAY 5: Santa Cruz - Isabela

After breakfast the guide will take you to Tortuga Bay. Here, you walk for 45 minutes approximately, through a cactus trail on to the first beach, which is called Playa Brava due to its strong currents. On this beach you will see a lot of marine iguanas, marine birds and pelicans. After visiting Playa Brava, we continue with an additional 15min walk to reach Playa Mansa. This second beach is a natural lagoon visited by blue-footed boobies and pelicans. It is also a beautiful place for swimming and catching the sun. Afterwards we will have lunch at the port. After lunch, you will go to the port to embark on a public speedboat that will take you to Isabela Island (approximately 2-2.5 hour navigation). On arrival, you will be taken to the hotel for check in. Afterwards, we visit the Lake of the Flamingos. Dinner is provided at the port. Later you return to the hotel to overnight.



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DAY 6: Full Day Isabela

The trip to Sierra Negra Volcano starts at approximately 7.30am. You will be transported by bus or other transportation for about 45 minutes to the Galapagos National Park control site in order to record the visit. Then you begin a trek to the Sierra Negra and Chico Volcano. During the trek a box lunch is provided. In the afternoon, we return to the hotel. After a short break, you will be transferred to the Concha Perla to snorkel. Later you return to the hotel for dinner and accommodation.



DAY 7: Isabela - Santa Cruz

After breakfast we have the Tintoreras Islet Tour. The guide will transfer you to the dock of Puerto Villamil where you embark on small boats. After a short ride (approx. 15 min.), we arrive at Tintoreras. After the hike through the islet, there is the opportunity to snorkel. We can see starfish, multicolour fish, sea urchins, and with luck manta rays, sharks, and sea lions that may swim with us close up. Return to the town for lunch. In the afternoon, visit the Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre of Isabela, where we will be able to see a variety of species of giant tortoises in captivity. Visit the Wall of Tears. The wall has a length of 100m and a height of 7m. The name is derived from the difficult and painful nature of the conditions in which the prisoners were forced to work. Visit a Lava Tunnel near the Wall, as well as visits to Mirador Orchilla, Estero de Isabela, and Playa del Amor. Then, you would return to the hotel for Dinner and Accommodation.



DAY 8: Departure Day

At 05:30 am, you will be transferred to the Port for embarkation. At your arrival at Santa Cruz around 08:30, a guide will be waiting for the transfer to the airport in Baltra, so you can take your flight back to Quito or Guayaquil. On the way, we will make a brief stop in order to visit two sunken "holes", similar to craters, known as "Los Gemelos".



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

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Accommodation	Hotels
Inclusions	<p>Accommodation in double rooms All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner). First day: lunch and dinner. Last day: breakfast Transportation and Maritime timed views Bilingual naturalist guide Scheduled Visits All Transfers from Puerto Ayora – Isabela Island – Puerto Ayora</p> <p>Not Included: Air Ticket Snorkeling Equipment Galapagos National Park entrance fee USD 100.00 INGALA Migration Control Card USD 20.00 Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages Tips</p>
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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