

## ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS VENTURE



### INTRODUCTION

This island hopping tour introduces you to some of the fascinating islands of the Galapagos Islands and the unique flora and fauna found in this remote archipelago. Staying in island hotels and travelling by boat between the islands, explore San Cristobal, Santa Cruz and Isabela. Wander through the highlands alongside the famous giant tortoises, watch the antics of the blue-footed boobies and frigatebirds and marvel at the prehistoric-looking land and marine iguanas. Hike to the crater of Sierra Negra volcano and discover the incredible underwater world of the Galapagos as you swim and snorkel with sea lions, turtles and a myriad of fish. Why not spend a few extra days in Quito at the start or end of your Galapagos adventure to explore this beautiful UNESCO World Heritage listed city?

### ITINERARY

#### TRIP CODE

ECTSGV

#### DEPARTURE

Thursdays

#### DURATION

9 Days

#### LOCATIONS

Ecuador



## ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS VENTURE

### DAY 1: Quito

Bienvenidos! Welcome to Quito, Ecuador. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask the hotel reception where it will take place. 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). We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please ensure you have all these details to provide to your leader. At the meeting you will be offered a duffle bag to use for the duration of your time in the Galapagos, please see the packing section in the trip notes for more information. Quito is one of the most attractive cities in South America, sitting at an altitude of 2,850 metres under the gaze of Volcan Pichincha. With Colonial style buildings, a cosy Old Town and plenty of nooks and crannies to explore, you may like to take a stroll this evening and see some sights. We will however be back in Quito at the end of the trip, giving you a chance to further experience the city, depending on when you are flying out of course! Notes: Due to the high altitude of many of the places we visit, the air is thinner and some people can suffer altitude sickness, regardless of age, gender or fitness. Please see the 'Is This Trip Right For You?' and 'Health' sections in the trip notes for detailed information.



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### DAY 2: Isla San Cristobal

Early this morning transfer to Quito airport for your flight to San Cristobal. This afternoon take an included visit to the Interpretation Centre and learn about the human and natural history of the Galapagos islands. Afterwards perhaps hike up to Frigatebird Hill or head to Mann beach and chill.



### DAY 3: Isla San Cristobal

Enjoy a free day on Isla San Cristobal. You may also like to take an optional boat ride to Kicker Rock or Isla Lobos. This is one of your leader's favourite optional activities. You'll be able to observe the famous Galapagos marine life along the way, and have the opportunity to go snorkelling with sea turtles, eagle rays and the harmless Galapagos shark, just to name a few.



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### DAY 4: Isla San Cristobal

Early in the morning, take a two-and-a-half hour public speed boat ride to Isla Santa Cruz. Once in Santa Cruz have breakfast and Settle into the hotel. Mid-morning visit the Charles Darwin Research Station. The station's visitor centre and museums contain information about the islands and the conservation efforts being made to preserve the unique ecosystem here. It's also a great place to have close encounters with giant tortoises. In the afternoon, head to the higher part of the islands to observe these giants roaming in their natural habitat.



### DAY 5: Isla Isabela

Travel to Isabela Island. Check-in to the hotel and enjoy breakfast. The island is the largest in the Galapagos and one of the most volcanically active places on earth. A worthwhile optional activity today is an excursion to Tintorerias Island, home to the rare Galapagos penguin. The excursion will then take you to "shark alley", where white-tipped sharks rest during the day. This is also a popular nesting site for the endemic marine iguanas.



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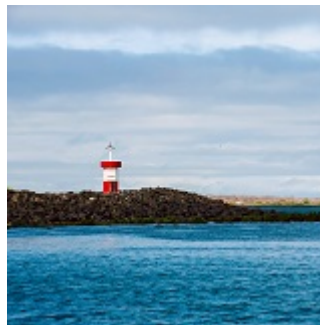
### DAY 6: Isla Isabela

Start the day with a visit to the Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre for a close encounter with these placid giants. Here you can see tortoises in different stages of development as well learn about the preservation program of this unique species. Take a bus to the highest part of Isabela Island where Sierra Negra Volcano is located. Weather permitting, go for a hike up to the crater to enjoy spectacular views and the possibility of sighting the rare vermilion flycatcher. The challenging 17-kilometre hike takes between five and six hours both ways, but at the top you'll be able to enjoy spectacular views. Please ensure you wear comfortable walking shoes that offer good support for the rocky climb. During the rainy season it can get quite muddy. There is an option to hire gumboots locally, should you wish to do so. During the hike it can get quite hot, there isn't much shade along the way so be sure to come prepared with your hat and sunscreen etc. After the hike, make your way back to town in the late afternoon for some free time to curl up with a book or venture down to the water for a relaxing swim before dinner. Unfortunately, recycling isn't available on Isabela, so please take your plastic rubbish with you.



### DAY 7: Isla Isabela

Travel back to Santa Cruz in the morning. We'll enjoy breakfast back in Santa Cruz. Consider taking part in some of the optional activities available, such as an excursion to Tortuga Bay, an immaculate natural paradise where you can go kayaking, observe marine iguanas and birds or swim with harmless sharks in an alcove. You may also like to rent some snorkelling gear while you're here.



### DAY 8: Quito

Say goodbye to these enchanting islands. The flight back to Quito leaves at midday, we get back to Quito in the late afternoon. A representative from Intrepid will take you from the airport to your hotel, then you'll be free to explore more of Quito. You may like to get out and enjoy the nightlife of this vibrant Latin city.



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### DAY 9: Quito

There are no activities planned for the final day and you're able to depart our accommodation at any time. Please check the 'Finishing Point Hotel' section for checkout times and luggage storage possibilities. As there's little time spent in Quito, we recommend staying a few extra days to make the most of your time in here. Ecuador has some of the most beautiful churches in the Americas, including the lavish La Compania de Jesus which is decorated with seven tonnes of gold and the pale art filled La Merced. Not far from the capital, there are volcanoes, hot springs and Incan ruins to explore. Consider doing our one-day sightseeing tours of Quito, including tours of the town, markets and culinary delights.



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## INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

#### Accommodation

Standard

#### Inclusions

##### Meals

8 breakfasts

##### Transport

Plane, Speed boat, Private Vehicle, Public bus

##### Accommodation

Hotel (6 nights)

##### Included activities

Isla Isabela - Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre (1 Hour)

Isla Isabela- Sierra Negra Volcano Hike (5-6 Hours)

Isla Santa Cruz - Charles Darwin Research Centre (45 Minutes)

Isla Santa Cruz - Highlands Visit (3 hours) - Dry Landing

#### Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

#### Single Surcharge

Available upon request

#### Notes

Contact us for more details

#### Price Dependent upon

Season and availability

## 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

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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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