



## INTRODUCTION

Set sail aboard the luxury mega yacht, the M/V Origin to explore the Galapagos Islands where the scenery is as diverse and spectacular as the wildlife. Giant tortoises, red-footed and Nazca boobies, land and marine iguanas, flightless cormorants, frigatebirds, tropicbirds, whales and dolphins - the list of fascinating species is endless. Snorkel with Galapagos penguins on Isabela Island, kayak at Darwin Bay and Tagus Cove and explore the volcanic formations on Fernandina Island. Every day a different experience awaits as you explore this remarkable UNESCO World Heritage site.

## ITINERARY

### TRIP CODE

GATSWNR8

### DEPARTURE

Weekly

### DURATION

8 Days

### LOCATIONS

Ecuador



## DAY 1: San Cristobal - Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado

When you land at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on SAN CRISTOBAL Island, your guides will be there to greet you and escort you to your yacht by bus and Zodiac. Once you've boarded, you'll have a welcome briefing and a short safety drill. Begin your vacation with a delicious buffet lunch before traveling to Cerro Colorado to visit Centro de Crianza Jacinto Gordillo (La Galapaguera). Here, you'll learn about the breeding program for giant tortoises that the national park has established to ensure that these animals continue to thrive despite the endangered status of some species. At the visitor centre, you'll have a chance to learn about the evolution of tortoises and the threats they face, from invasive species to habitat loss. Along the trail, your first exposure to Galapagos wildlife may include the San Cristobal mockingbird and Calandrinia plant, both endemic to this island. Back on the yacht, after a briefing, the captain and crew will welcome you with a cocktail reception. An elegant multi-course dinner, prepared by our accomplished chefs and accompanied by wine, will be served, and you'll set sail for Genovesa Island. But for tonight, enjoy meeting your fellow passengers as your kitchen staff treats you to a multi-course dinner complete with complimentary wine.

## DAY 2: Prince Philip's Steps & Darwin Bay

Later in the afternoon, you'll land at Darwin Bay, a gorgeous coral sand beach. Here, you'll see both swallow-tailed gulls and lava gulls gathered near the tide pools. A forest of Optuntia cactus and mangroves provide shelter for Great frigate birds. Males looking to attract a mate inflate a red pouch on their chests. Round out the afternoon by relaxing on the beach, or choose to swim with friendly, playful sea lions in these warmer northern waters. When you return to the yacht, you'll have a short briefing followed by a delicious dinner. If the night is clear, take a stroll on the deck and enjoy the sky full of bright stars. Your guides can point out constellations and help you identify the species of birds flying alongside the yacht

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**DAY 3: Las Bachas, Black Turtle Cove & Dragon Hill**

This morning you'll visit Las Bachas, (Spanish for barges) on the northern side of Santa Cruz. Dozens of bright pink flamingos feed on the interior lagoons, and a long white sand beach is a beautiful site for a stroll. Your guides will point out endemic plant species and share some fascinating Galapagos history. Before returning to the yacht for lunch, you'll have time to snorkel from the beach. Bring your underwater camera to take photos of colourful tropical fish and sea stars, along with sea turtles and maybe even sharks along the ocean floor. Your guide will offer an enrichment lecture that is informative and entertaining, the topic is on marine currents, climate and geology of the Islands. In the afternoon, when you step ashore on Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill), you'll have a magnificent panoramic view of the bay and island landscape. You may see flamingos in the brackish lagoon, along with a variety of plants, including opuntia cactus, Palo Santo and Muyuyo trees (Cordia letea). As you walk the trail, look for Darwin's finches, Galapagos flycatchers, yellow warblers, and Audubon shearwaters. The guides will also pause to point out birds such as stilts, pintail ducks and sandpipers. Scan the path for yellow Land iguanas, strikingly different from their marine cousins, resting in the sun. These iguanas, which are endemic to the Galapagos, were once part of the Station's breeding program. After walking the trail, you'll return to the yacht for a briefing and dinner.

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**DAY 4: Fernandina - Punta Espinoza, Isabela - Urbina Bay**

Begin your morning with a Zodiac ride at Punta Vicente Roca. Your skilled driver will navigate you through the wave-sculpted caves and bring you up close to the tuff walls covered in colorful Sally light-foot crabs. Don't miss the opportunity to snorkel here, with penguins diving playfully in the water or grooming themselves on rock formations. Look for sea turtles poking their heads above water before swimming gracefully beneath the surface. After lunch, take a seat on the sun deck to enjoy the scenery as we sail through the Bolivar Chanel. In addition to the dramatic scenery, you might get to see whales riding the bow wave or dolphins jumping in graceful arcs. You may even spot the Mola-Mola, an odd-looking giant sun fish with triangular fins on the top and bottom and a short, stubby tail fin. In the afternoon, you'll disembark at Urbina Bay on Isabela Island and see some surprising evidence of volcanic activity. Four files of coastal seabed were exposed due to a dramatic uplift during an eruption in 1954, and some of the remaining coral skeletons still stand several feet high. A diverse collection of animal species await on the island as well, including Galapagos land iguanas, marine iguanas, Darwin's finches, brown pelicans, flightless cormorants, and the occasional giant Galapagos tortoise. When you're finished exploring, you'll return to the vessel for your nightly briefing and dinner.

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## DAY 5: Isabela - Elizabeth Bay, Tagus Cove

This morning you're in for another geological wonder. Stop at Punta Espinoza on Fernandina Island, the youngest and most pristine Island in Galapagos, formed by active volcanoes that stretch around the coast. With no introduced animals on this island, you can observe the ecosystem at its most pristine. Sea lion harems lie on the beach, with resident bulls carefully guarding their territory and keeping a lookout for sharks that threaten the colony's pups. Hundreds of marine iguanas, forming the largest colony in Galapagos, warm themselves along the rugged shoreline, blending in with the dark rocks. Out on the point, your guide will show you the nests of flightless cormorants, which stay close to shore since they lost their ability to fly. You'll have an opportunity to snorkel here, in the company of the large sea turtles that frequent the area. Return to the yacht for a BBQ lunch served on the sundeck where you'll have a prime view for whale watching. Your guide will offer an enrichment lecture about Charles Darwin and his Theory of evolution. After lunch, you'll get to see some of the human history of the Galapagos when you go ashore on Tagus Cove. This was a favored stopping point for pirates and whalers for centuries, and sections of the rocky cliffs are covered in graffiti from as far back as the 1800s. Hike at a faster pace to a saltwater lagoon and scenic overview, and take in the ocean, lava fields, and volcanic formations. You may choose to explore the shoreline of the secluded cove by kayak or paddleboard. There are many animals to see, including Galapagos penguins, boobies, pelicans and other seabirds.

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**DAY 6: Rabida Island - Puerto Egas, Black Turtle Cove**

This morning, you'll disembark on the dark red beach of RABIDA. This small island is considered the geographic centre of the Galapagos because its volcanic rocks are the most diversified in the archipelago. A short trail will lead you to a saltwater lagoon filled with greater flamingos. Along the way, look for marine iguanas, mockingbirds and yellow warblers. You may also see Darwin's finches. If you choose to snorkel this morning, you may be able to see a colony of sea lions or rays. Several species of rays live on the Galapagos, but golden rays and spotted eagle rays are the most common. Guests on the Origin have a Zodiac excursion at Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) through a series of peaceful coves and inlets surrounded by mangroves whose large roots rise out of the water. View pairs of mating sea turtles (Sept to Feb), white-tipped reef sharks and golden cow-nosed rays. We return to the vessel for the Captain's Farewell cocktail with the crew, and dinner as well as a special presentation by your guides.

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DAY 7: Santa Cruz - Highlands & Darwin Station

When you wake up this morning, your yacht will be one of dozens of boats anchored in the lively harbor of Academy Bay. You'll disembark at Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, the social heart of the Galapagos, with a population of 24,000 residents. This morning, we visit the breeding centre Centro de Crianza Fausto Llerena and Charles Darwin Research Station where we learn about ongoing conservation efforts from exhibits set up along the wooden trail. You'll see hatchlings and miniature tortoises that will be repatriated by the National Park when grown. The newest exhibit honours Lonesome George, the last surviving tortoise from Santa Cruz Island that tragically died of natural causes. A more hopeful story is Diego, a saddleback tortoise whose species was reduced to 14 individuals before he was transported from the San Diego Zoo and who has since fathered hundreds of descendants. Afterwards, you'll learn about the history of the settlers of this Island on a guided tour through the back streets of Puerto Ayora. Stroll through town to shop for handmade souvenirs, Ecuadorian chocolate ice cream or coffee grown in Galapagos. Return to the yacht for lunch and later board a bus for a short ride to a lava tunnel, a hollow formation created when lava on the earth's surface cools and hardens while molten lava continues to flow in the middle. Your next stop will be Los Gemelos (The Twins), a pair of large, deep craters with vibrant plant life at higher elevation. Next stop is at a privately-owned hacienda, where giant tortoises roam freely - some weighing over 500 pounds - in their natural habitat, feeding or resting in shallow pools.

DAY 8: San Cristobal - Cerro Tijeretas

Your last morning in the Galapagos we disembark after breakfast and travel by bus to Cerro Tijeretas (Frigatebird Hill), where you'll find nesting colonies of both species of frigate birds; Great and Magnificent, lava lizards, medium ground finches and San Cristobal mockingbird. Follow the trail to Punta Carola for a spectacular view. Guests on the Letty have an early morning visit Isla Lobos. Before your flight back to the mainland, you'll have time for any last-minute photos or shopping. A short bus ride will get you to the airport with plenty of time for check in.

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## INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

### Accommodation

Standard

### Inclusions

Cabin accommodation,  
all meals and snacks,  
All beverages including open bar,  
Captain's welcome and farewell party,  
Guided shore excursions,  
Cruise director,  
Use of wet suits, snorkeling equipment, stand up paddle boards and sea kayaks,  
Transfers in the Islands between the airport and dock.  
**Cruise rates do not include**  
International Airfare, Airfare to Galapagos,  
Galapagos entrance fee (park tax), transit control card,  
Premium alcoholic beverages,  
Gratuities to guides and crew, purchases on board laundry service, Wi-Fi (when available) and travel insurance.  
Galapagos Park Tax: The entrance fee to the National Park is \$100 for adults and \$50 for children 11 and younger and is not included in the cruise rate.  
Transit Control Card - A TCT card or tarjeta de control de transito is \$20 per person and is required by INGALA for all visitors to Galapagos to control migration to the Islands.

### 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 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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