

ECUADOR - MONSERRAT



INTRODUCTION

BOOK AND SAVE: Up to 15% off select voyages

Spend 4 nights cruising the Galapagos Islands aboard the comfortable Monserrat, searching for sea turtles in secluded bays, snorkelling with sea lions and hiking the Sierra Negra Volcano - the largest basaltic caldera in the Galapagos. The Galapagos archipelago is home to a vast array of fascinating wildlife set against stunning backdrops, and naturalist guides will ensure you get the most from your Galapagos adventure.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival transfer in Quito

On arrival, please make your way through to the Arrivals Hall where our representative will be waiting for you to transfer you to your hotel. He/she will be holding a sign with your name on it. Should you not be able to locate them, please refer to the front of your itinerary for emergency contact details of our representative office. Please note this service is with a driver only.



NO IMAGE
AVAILABLE

TRIP CODE

SEV07NA

DEPARTURE

Fortnightly Saturdays.

DURATION

7 Days

LOCATIONS

Galapagos Islands,
Ecuador



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DAY 1: Arrival to Quito


Today is free for you to explore Quito at your leisure.



DAY 1: Quito

Sitting at 2,850 metres above sea level high in the Andean foothills lies Quito, the capital of Ecuador. The city, a short distance from the Equator and with an amazing backdrop of snow-capped mountains, is known for its stunning colonial architecture and art-work. Founded in the 16th century on the ruins of an Inca city, Quito has one of the largest, least-altered and best-preserved historic centres in the Americas. It was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 1978.



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DAY 2: Baltra / Mosquera

This morning you will be transferred early to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. On arrival in Baltra you will be met by your naturalist guide and transferred to the ship. Please note that the Galapagos National Park charges a visitor fee of USD100, payable on arrival, which funds park maintenance and supervision in the Galapagos, as well as ecological study and conservation. The Galapagos Islands are located about 1000 kilometres (620 miles) off the Pacific coast of South America. The archipelago is comprised of 13 major islands and scores of islets that served as a living laboratory for Charles Darwin, the renowned evolution theorist. Long before Darwin arrived in the Galapagos, seafarers knew these isolated islands as home to some of the strangest and most wonderful wildlife imaginable, including birds that could swim but no longer fly, aquatic iguanas, dragon-like lizards left over from prehistoric times and the giant Galapagos tortoises for which the islands were named. This afternoon we sail to Mosquera Island, a small island located between Baltra and North Seymour. It is a reef of rocks and coral with a beautiful white sand beach. Here we walk along the beach looking out for wildlife, observing the vast sea lion colonies and searching for aquatic life in the tidal pools that dot the coastline. We return to our ship, the Monserrat, a spacious 20 person vessel, sailing overnight to ensure that you arrive refreshed and ready to explore the next destination. Enjoy the amenities while cruising - spend time on the top deck lounge and bar, indulge in a meal with new friends or relax in the indoor air-conditioned areas. The ship travels at night so you will wake up in a new destination, ready to explore.



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DAY 3: Isabela Island

This morning we make an early landing in the small town of Puerto Villamil on Isabela Island before hiking to the rim of the 10km (6 mi) wide crater of the Sierra Negra Volcano, which has the largest basaltic caldera in the Galapagos. We trek across the lava fields and fumaroles with their moon-like landscape, enjoying spectacular views north towards Fernandina and the rest of Isabela Island. The volcano’s last eruption was in October 2005, making it the most recent eruption of the Galapagos. In the afternoon we visit Las Tintoreras and the tortoise breeding centre in the Puerto Villamil area. Las Tintoreras Bay is home to a colony of whitetip reef sharks. Here we take a panga across the bay to "Tintoreras Shark Alley" to observe the sharks found swimming in the channels between the rocks. We may also see pelicans, frigatebirds and diving blue-footed boobies as well as manta rays and rare Galapagos penguins. We walk through the town’s wetlands to the Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre. We pass basking iguanas and flamingos, before heading into the forest to see the giant tortoises in their natural habitat at this reserve. These incredible animals were on their way to extinction in the late 1950’s and this program was established to protect these noble creatures.



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DAY 4: Chinese Hat / Rábida

Today sees us visiting Sombrero Chino (Chinese Hat) to observe the birdlife and sea lions and for snorkelling, followed by an excursion to Rábida to see a lagoon and sea lion colony. We arrive at the small island of Sombrero Chino, so called due to its unique shape, lying off the southern tip of Santiago. Here it is often possible to see Galapagos penguins and the abundant marine life makes snorkelling here a fantastic experience. There is a large sea lion colony as well as many marine iguanas that can be seen on a guided walk amongst the beautiful volcanic scenery and along the spectacular white-coral sand beach. There is the opportunity to snorkel from the beach or swim in the cove, maybe encountering sea lions, marine iguanas, penguins and large schools of tropical fish. This afternoon's excursion takes us to the red sand beaches of Isla Rábida. An abundance of birdlife frequents the island including pelicans, white-cheeked pintails, boobies and a number of species of finches. There are a number of trails here. A short trail leads to a saltwater lagoon and another trail goes past the lagoon to the interior, where the revered palo santo trees grow. When burned, the branches of this tree give off a pleasant aroma that wards off mosquitoes. Back at the beach you can observe the pelicans nesting among low-lying bushes and maybe watch parent pelicans returning with gullets full of fish for the noisy youngsters. There is also the opportunity to take a panga ride from the beach to a cliff wall that drops off into the water for one of the best deep-water snorkelling spots in the Galapagos.



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DAY 5: Santiago Island

Today we visit Puerto Egas, Playa Espumilla and Buccaneer Cove on Santiago Island. Santiago Island has seen its share of human activity from whalers and pirates over the years, and despite the introduction of goats to the island many years ago, the wildlife of Santiago has otherwise flourished and provides outstanding viewing opportunities. The island boasts marine iguanas, sea lions, fur seals and both land and sea turtles. Here you can enjoy great wildlife viewing, both on land and in the water. Playa Espumilla is one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galapagos Islands, with thick mangroves as well as flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites. At Puerto Egas (also known as James Bay) we see a salt crater as well as a dark sand beach made up of eroded lava and tidal pools. We explore the spectacular shoreline where there are marine iguanas and Sally-Lightfoot crabs with fur sea lions found further along the lava flow path. There are many shore birds to be seen here as well as reptiles and the beach is home to an abundance of wildlife. Snorkel off the beach to explore the fascinating underwater world of Puerto Egas. You may see rays, turtles and reef sharks whilst snorkelling. Please note that you need to be a good swimmer to snorkel here. The "crown" provides protection from the open sea, but the water can be rough and the currents strong. At Buccaneer Cove we explore by panga, cruising alongside the high cliffs and spectacular rock formations. Buccaneer Cove was once a favourite hideout for pirates as they restocked their boats with food and water. Here we may spot sea lions relaxing on the beach and sea birds nesting in the cove.



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DAY 6: North Seymour / Baltra / Quito

This morning we visit North Seymour Island, lying just north of Baltra, an island that teems with wildlife, offering an amazing wildlife experience. Trails pass alongside marine iguanas and sea lions and blue-footed booby nests where mating pairs perform their courtship dance and mating rituals. We head out to a rocky shore where pelicans can be seen dive bombing in a feeding frenzy. Inland there is a large nesting site of magnificent frigatebirds. These incredible birds have wingspans that extend to two metres and the males display puffed-up scarlet throat sacks as they sit perched precariously in low bushes watching over their large chicks. Enjoy one final snorkelling opportunity here at North Seymour Island in amongst the sea lions and rays. After disembarking the ship in Baltra, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Quito. On arrival there is a transfer to the group hotel with time to enjoy one last night in Ecuador’s capital.



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DAY 7: Transfer to the airport for onward destination

You will be collected from your hotel at the appropriate time and transferred to the airport for your onward flight.




INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin

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Inclusions	Cruise the Galápagos Islands aboard the Monserrat (4 nts) 2 Certified Galápagos National Park Service guide All meals aboard the Monserrat Sierra Negra Volcano Hike (Isabela Island) Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre Snorkelling at Chinese Hat, Isla Rábida and Puerto Egas All landings and excursions Snorkelling equipment and wetsuits Internal flights All transport between destinations and to/from included activities
	Accommodations Hotel (2 nts), aboard the Monserrat in twin-share or double cabins (4 nts).
	Meals 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners Allow USD80-105 for meals not included. Drinks and tips on board not included.
	Transportation Plane, motorized yacht, panga, private vehicle.
	Staff & experts 2 CEOs/Naturalist Guides while in the Galápagos Islands (certified by the Galápagos National Park Authority), local Rep in Quito
Difficulty Rating	1 - Easy
Single Surcharge	Available upon request.
Notes	Itinerary may vary depending on departure date. Inquiry for more information.
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.

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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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