

## GALAPAGOS ISLANDS - MONSERRAT



### INTRODUCTION

Set sail aboard the comfortable Monserrat to witness the wonders of the Galapagos first-hand, cruising through the archipelago's western, central and eastern islands. Snorkel with sea lions, explore volcanic lava tubes, discover the unusual endemic marine life in secluded bays and hike Sierra Negra Volcano, the largest basaltic caldera in the region. The scenery is stunning and the wildlife incredible.

### 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.



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#### TRIP CODE

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#### DEPARTURE

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#### DURATION

10 Days

#### LOCATIONS

Galapagos Islands,  
Ecuador



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### DAY 1: Free day in 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: Quito / Mosquera Island

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: Puerto Villamil

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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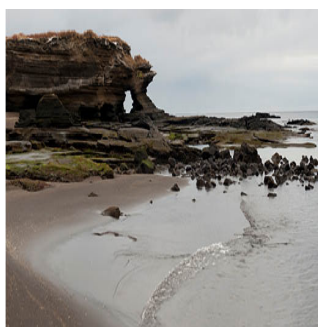




## GALAPAGOS ISLANDS - MONSERRAT

### 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 & Santa Cruz

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. There is another snorkelling opportunity here at North Seymour Island in amongst the sea lions and rays. Later we head to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island to see giant land tortoises in the wild in their natural environment. We explore the area and see some of the amazing volcanic formations including underground lava tunnels, some over 1 kilometre long. We wander along the volcanic tubes keeping an eye out for owls that roost in the entrances to the tunnels.



### DAY 7: South Plaza Island & Santa Fe

We make a morning landing at South Plaza (Plaza Sur), one of the smallest islands in the Galapagos. This island is home to one of the largest populations of land iguanas as well as a wide range of other fauna and incredible birdlife. We walk along a path through a cactus forest and view a combination of dry and coastal vegetation. We may see red-billed tropicbirds and indigenous swallow-tailed gulls resting on the cliffs, as well as sea lions playing in the water. This afternoon sees us landing at the tiny island of Santa Fé for a guided walk through the giant prickly pear forest (Opuntia) in search of land iguanas and other amazing wildlife. The iguanas feed on the Opuntia pads and fruit. The hike takes us towards the cliffs on the northern shore of the island. The island, also known as Barrington, is home to an endemic species of land iguana and rice rat. It is also one of the best locations to see sea turtles, swim with sea lions and maybe get a glimpse of a whitetip reef shark. There is generally plenty of free time to swim or snorkel in the lagoon off the beach. Swim with playful sea lions pups and see large schools of florescent tropical fish that make for fascinating company. You may also see sea turtles, rays and reef sharks.



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### DAY 8: Punta Pitt & La Galapaguera

We make a landing this morning at Punta Pitt on the eastern tip of San Cristóbal, where we will see a group of eroded volcanic cones. Here you can see fascinating geological formations and enjoy amazing wildlife opportunities including nesting birds and sun bathing sea lions. Punta Pitt is made up of volcanic tuff substrate and it is the only site in the Galapagos where three species of booby and two species of frigatebird can be seen. There is also the opportunity to snorkel around Punta Pitt amongst the schools of fish swimming below. Later we head to La Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado on San Cristóbal Island, an area of land reserved for the repopulation of giant tortoises. Here you can get close to these magnificent ancient creatures and learn about their life cycle at the small breeding centre and interpretation centre.



### DAY 9: San Cristóbal & Quito

San Cristóbal is the easternmost island of the Galapagos and also one of the oldest. Its principal town is Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galapagos. We visit the Interpretation Centre where you can learn about the Galapagos Islands from the natural history of the archipelago and their volcanic origins through to their ecosystems, flora, fauna and today's conservation efforts. The Human History exhibit provides information on the discovery of the Galapagos Islands and their colonisation. After the visit you are 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.



### DAY 10: 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.



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## INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

<b>Accommodation</b>	Cabin
<b>Inclusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 nts in the Galápagos Islands aboard the Monserrat</li> <li>• Arrival transfer on Day 1</li> <li>• Flights to and from the Galápagos Islands</li> <li>• 2 Certified Galápagos National Park Service guides</li> <li>• All landings, excursions, and transportation.</li> </ul> Snorkelling equipment • Visit to a wildlife interpretation centre • 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners. (Allow USD75-100 for meals not included. Drinks and tips while on the yacht are extra.) • Hotel (2 nts), aboard the Monserrat in twin-share or double cabins (7 nts) • Local flight, Monserrat motorized yacht, van, Zodiac • 2 Galápagos National Park Service guide while in the islands You must pay a USD20 Transit Control Card fee at the Quito airport and a USD100 (cash) Galápagos park entry fee immediately upon arrival to the Islands (subject to increase).
<b>Difficulty Rating</b>	1 (easy)
<b>Single Surcharge</b>	Available upon request
<b>Notes</b>	Contact us for more details
<b>Price Dependent upon</b>	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 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.

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- 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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