

**ECUADOR - YOLITA: NORTH, WEST & CENTRAL ISLANDS**



**INTRODUCTION**

**BOOK AND SAVE: Up to 15%\* on select voyages.**


The Galapagos Islands offer beautiful and stunning landscapes and an incredible array of fascinating wildlife. Travelling aboard the Yolita for seven nights, this tour takes you to some of the lesser-visited islands such as Genovesa in the north and Isabela in the west. You will see an amazing concentration of birdlife and vast bird rookeries, including large nesting colonies of red-footed boobies and frigatebirds. Hike to the top of the Sierra Negra, the most recently active volcano in the Galapagos, stroll along white-sand beaches in amongst iguanas and sea lions and snorkel in the sunken caldera of Darwin Bay and around Pinnacle Rock.

**ITINERARY**

DAY 1: Quito

On arrival in Quito you will be met and transferred to your hotel.



<b>TRIP CODE</b>
SEV10YA
<b>DEPARTURE</b>
Select Saturdays.
<b>DURATION</b>
10 Days
<b>LOCATIONS</b>
Galapagos Islands, Ecuador


## ECUADOR - YOLITA: NORTH, WEST & CENTRAL ISLANDS

### 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.



### DAY 2: Sucre International Airport/Seymour Airport

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 Puerto Ayora to board 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. In the afternoon we visit Playa las Bachas (Bachas Beach), located on the north eastern tip of Santa Cruz. Here the sand is made of decomposed coral, making it soft and white and a favourite site for nesting sea turtles. As you stroll along the beach, you may see colourful Sally-Lightfoot crabs on the lave rocks along the shoreline. Trek with the guide to look for a range of wildlife including flamingos, hermit crabs, frigatebirds, black-necked stilts and sea lions. We return to the Yolita with its spacious cabins and large upper deck where you can soak up the sun's rays and enjoy the scenery. The ship sails overnight so you wake up refreshed and ready to explore the next destination.



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### DAY 3: Isla Genovesa

Today we make a landing at Genovesa, also known as Bird Island, an old imploded volcano. We walk along the white coral sands of Darwin Bay and follow the trail to see the massive colonies of frigatebirds, boobies, gulls and other seabirds as well as striking volcanic cliffs that rise from the ocean. There is an option to snorkel at Darwin Bay in the sunken caldera. Here you can see huge schools of tropical fish that swarm near the vertical walls and you may be lucky enough to see a hammerhead shark or manta ray. We also visit El Barranco, or Prince Philip's Steps, a steep pathway with excellent views and amazing birdlife. Located on the southern tip of the island, this is an amazing wildlife watching opportunity. We hike up the steps to see a seabird colony teeming with life including the breeding grounds for red-footed boobies and masked boobies.



### DAY 4: Isla Bartolomé/Sullivan Bay

We visit Bartolomé and have a guided tour of the dramatic volcanic features of the island, before hiking to a panoramic viewpoint. At the summit of the island you will gain an understanding of its volcanic origins and enjoy a spectacular view. The island is famous for Pinnacle Rock, one of the most iconic rock formations in the Galapagos and an excellent spot for swimming and snorkelling. Here you may encounter Galapagos penguins, sea turtles, sea lions, whitetip reef sharks and a huge variety of fish. The Galapagos penguin is the only species of penguin found north of the Equator. We continue to Sullivan Bay on Isla Santiago to witness the striking giant lava formations that contrast with the white coral sand beach. Plant life is sparse on the island due to its harsh environment and relatively new lava flow. We enjoy a walk along the lava formations before reaching a white coral sand beach, where abundant Sally Lightfoot crabs and sea lions gather on the shore.



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### DAY 5: Isla Isabela/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 the tortoise breeding centre in the Puerto Villamil area. 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.



### DAY 6: Elizabeth Bay/Urbina Bay

This morning sees us visiting Elizabeth Bay with its amazing marine life and bird viewing opportunities. We take a panga ride to explore the mangroves and shallows in search of wildlife such as sea turtles, rays and the flightless cormorant in the sheltered waters. We also keep a lookout for blue-footed boobies, Galapagos penguins and pelicans that feed on the abundant marine life. In the afternoon we make a visit to Urbina Bay, located at the base of Alcedo Volcano where we hike along a trail for views of the caldera, looking out for land iguanas along the way. This unique walk takes us along a vast marine reef that was raised out of the water during an uplift in 1950. Here we will see dried coral "sculptures" and other ocean formations. Urbina Bay is a great place to see flightless cormorants, brown pelicans, marine turtles, rays and vivid yellow land iguanas.



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### DAY 7: Tagus Cove/Punta Espinoza

Our first stop this morning is at Tagus Cove, an anchorage site on Isabela Island that was popular among whalers and pirates. We tour the area on foot, hiking to a lookout for spectacular views of Darwin Lake (a spherical saltwater crater) and Darwin Bay as well as Darwin and Wolf volcanoes. Once we land, we climb the wooden stairway to the trail entrance, following the trail through a dry vegetation zone. We will see old graffiti on the cliffs, made by whalers and pirates that visited the cove. We continue to ascend to a promontory made up of small volcanic cones or spatter cones. Later we continue to Punta Espinoza on Fernandina, the youngest of the Galapagos Islands, home to a large colony of marine iguanas and a variety of bird species. There are a number of trails that can be followed including a path along the beach and across lava flows that provides a unique opportunity to explore one of the least-visited areas of the Galapagos archipelago.



### DAY 8: Isla Rábida/Playa Espumilla

This morning's excursion takes us to the red sand beaches of Isla Rábida to see a lagoon and sea lion colony. 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. Our afternoon excursion is to Playa Espumilla, one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galapagos Islands, with thick mangroves as well as flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites.



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### DAY 9: Islas Daphne/Quito

Our final landing is at Daphne, a tiny conical island composed of a volcanic tuff that is home to nesting blue-footed boobies, frigatebirds, Darwin's finches and other incredible wildlife. Many of the finches are banded, as a result of Dr. Peter Grant's long-term study of Darwin's finches on the island. As we explore the Daphne on foot, there are great birdwatching opportunities and we will discover the island's interesting flora and geology. In the afternoon you will be transferred to the airport for the flight back 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: Quito

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



### 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

#### Accommodation

Cabin

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<b>Inclusions</b>	Arrival transfer Certified Galápagos National Park Service Guide Cruise the Galápagos Islands aboard the Yolita in twin-share cabins (7 nts), Hotels (2 nts) All meals aboard the Yolita Excursion to see red-footed boobies (Genovesa Island) Hike to the Bartolomé Island viewpoint overlooking the famous Pinnacle Rock Sierra Negra Hike (Isabela Island) Chance to see flightless cormorants and penguins (Isabela Island) Onboard snorkelling equipment and wetsuits Internal flights All transport between destinations and to/from included activities
<b>Difficulty Rating</b>	2 (light adventure)
<b>Single Surcharge</b>	Available upon request
<b>Notes</b>	Contact us for more details
<b>Price Dependent upon</b>	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

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bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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