

ECUADOR - XAVIER III



INTRODUCTION

Begin your tour of the beautiful Galapagos archipelago with one night in a hotel on San Cristóbal Island, followed by 3 nights cruising through the Galapagos National Park aboard the Xavier III. Discover the incredible wildlife of the islands accompanied by an expert naturalist guide. Encounter giant tortoises, observe three species of booby and two species of frigate bird nesting together at Punta Pitt, snorkel with rays and sea turtles in the shadow of Kicker Rock and witness the towering volcanic cliffs and the dark sand beaches of Santiago Island.

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.



TRIP CODE

SEVL07MB

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19/10/2019, 02/11/2019,
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14/12/2019, 28/12/2019

DURATION

7 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Galapagos
Islands



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DAY 2: San Cristobal Island

This morning you will have an early transfer to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. On arrival in San Cristóbal, you will be met by your naturalist guide and transferred to the hotel. San Cristóbal is the easternmost island of Galapagos and one of the oldest. The principal town is Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galapagos. 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. Covering nearly 5000 square kilometres (3100 sq. miles), the Galapagos Islands are now a National Park. We will visit the Jacinto Gordillo Breeding Centre in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. At this giant tortoise Breeding Centre you can see all of the different species of tortoises close up. The tortoises are bred in captivity in a protected wild area, safeguarded from predators. There are newly hatched tortoises as well as full-grown adults that can live well over 100 years. You may also see finches, warblers and mockingbirds in the vegetation surrounding the Breeding Centre.



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DAY 3: Punta Pitt / Kicker Rock

We make a landing this morning at Punta Pitt on the eastern tip of San Cristobal, where we will see a group of eroded volcanic cones. Here you can see fascinating geological formations and enjoy amazing wildlife opportunities. 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. Next we visit Cerro Brujo on San Cristobal to explore its coastline, look for wildlife and learn about the human and natural history of the area. There is time to take a refreshing dip in the turquoise water and head out on a short walk to a freshwater lagoon to see flamingos. Later in the afternoon we sail to the dramatic León Dormido, or Kicker Rock, which is a magnificent rock with steep vertical walls that rise from the ocean, set in a shape resembling a sleeping lion. The rock rises 150 metres above the surface of the water and is divided into two parts by a narrow channel navigable by small vessels. Kicker Rock is one of the most stunning landmarks in the Galapagos Islands, home to an incredibly diverse range of marine life that inhabits the nutrient-rich water. Sharks and fish are drawn to the rock and provide an exhilarating and unique snorkelling experience.



DAY 4: Santiago Island

This morning we make an excursion to Playa Espumilla, one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galapagos Islands, with thick mangroves along with flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites. After exploring Playa Espumilla, we head to Buccaneer Cove with its towering cliff wall rock formations. Here we cruise by panga and explore the cove that was once a hideout for pirates as they restocked their boats with food and water. We may spot seabirds nesting in the cove and sea lions resting on the beach. Our third stop for the day is at Puerto Egas with its spectacular shoreline, salt crater, dark-sand beach and tidal pools. Also known as James Bay, there are many reptiles and shore birds to be seen here. 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 flourished and provides outstanding viewing opportunities. The island boasts marine iguanas, sea lions, fur seals, land and sea turtles, offering great wildlife viewing both on land and in the water.



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DAY 5: Puerto Ayora

Disembark in Puerto Ayora and visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to see the giant Galápagos tortoises. In the afternoon, explore Academy Bay on a boat tour. Snorkel with sea lions and walk over a volcanic path to a crystal clear saltwater lagoon. Visit Fausto Llerena Breeding Center a great place to observe many species of tortoises and land iguanas in captivity. Brought back from the brink of extinction, see the famous Galápagos tortoise up close - a corral houses adult tortoises, and a nursery cares for the young until around age three when their shells have hardened. This area also houses the Charles Darwin Research Station, a scientific organization initiated in 1964, which works to preserve the Galápagos' ecosystem through the conservation efforts of scientists, researchers, and volunteers. While the offices themselves are not open to visitors, the research station provides a study location for international scientists and environmental education for the local community. Enjoy a boat tour around Academy Bay, head across the bay to La Loberia to snorkel with playful sea lions and colourful fish. After, continue on to Punta Estrada to spot a variety of birds, on the way to Playa de los Alemanes lookout for marine iguanas sunning themselves on the rocks, Cross a cactus forest looking for Darwin finches and lava lizards on the way to Las Grietas, a local swimming hole. The cool, bright turquoise water separates two volcanic cliffs. Fed by the ocean from one end and a river from the other, this unique brackish pool is perfect for swimming.



DAY 6: Puerto Ayora - Quito

This morning Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz and see the Galápagos giant tortoise in its natural surroundings. Explore the area and its incredible underground lava tunnels. Wander along the volcanic tubes and keep an eye out for the (mainly) nocturnal barn owls that sometimes roost here. 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.



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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	Standard
Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel (3 nts), aboard the Xavier in twin-share cabins (3 nts). • 6 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners - Allow USD 105-140 for meals not included. Drinks and tips on board not included. <p>Certified Galápagos National Park Service Guide Overnight on San Cristóbal Island Visit to a wildlife interpretation centre (San Cristóbal Island) Snorkelling at Isla Lobos and Kicker Rock Charles Darwin Research Station visit (Santa Cruz) All transport between destinations and to/from included activities Internal flights Snorkelling equipment and wetsuits while aboard Xavie</p>
Difficulty Rating	1 (easy)
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 opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.

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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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