

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS - MONSERRAT



TRIP CODE

SEVL07NB

DEPARTURE

Fortnightly on Tuesdays

DURATION

7 Days

LOCATIONS

Galapagos Islands,
Ecuador



INTRODUCTION

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

Discover the fascinating wildlife and stunning scenery of the Galapagos Islands aboard the Monserrat, a comfort-class vessel ideally suited to navigating the waters of the Galapagos archipelago. Begin your exploration of the Galapagos with a day on land, staying at a beautiful island hotel. Snorkel with sea lions and other aquatic wildlife, trek over volcanic rock and encounter giant tortoises - this trip will leave you with indelible memories.

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

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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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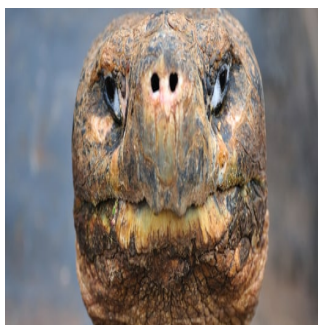
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DAY 2: Baltra Island & Puerto Ayora

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 guide and transferred to the hotel in Puerto Ayora where you will spend your first night in 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. We check into the hotel before having lunch followed by a short afternoon hike to the beautiful white sand beach of Tortuga Bay and kayaking amongst the mangroves. Tortuga Bay (Turtle Bay) is a great place to see sea turtles, sea lions, marine iguanas, pelicans, flamingos and lava gulls which are endemic to the islands and commonly found along the shores. The two beaches at Tortuga Bay are separated by red mangroves. You may see tintoreras sharks, turtles and manta rays in the shallow waters. There is also the opportunity to explore the mangroves by kayak. As you paddle through the waters, look out for the wide variety of marine life, including colourful reef fish, rays and sea turtles. Afterwards, relax on the beautiful fine white sand beach where you may see iguanas basking in the sun.



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DAY 3: Baltra & Santa Cruz Island

This morning we visit the Charles Darwin Research Centre on Santa Cruz Island. This is the second largest island in the Galapagos, with the largest population and with Puerto Ayora as its main town. It also boasts the most varied of the islands' vegetation zones including coastal, transition, scalesia, miconia and pampa. The Charles Darwin Research Station is located a short walk from the centre of the town. It is a science organization that was initiated in 1964, working to preserve the ecosystem of the Galapagos through the conservation efforts of scientists, researchers and volunteers. It also provides a study location for international scientists and training for Naturalist Guides. We tour the exhibition centre to see photo displays of recent volcanic eruptions, charts outlining geological formations and drawings of the evolutionary development of endemic species. The station is also a great place to observe many species of tortoises and land iguanas in captivity, brought back from the brink of extinction. Here you can see the famous Galapagos tortoise up close. A corral houses adult Galapagos tortoises and there is a nursery in which the young are cared for until around age three when their shells have hardened. **Please note: The Charles Darwin Research Station has partially closed until December 2016. Groups affected will visit the highlands to see the giant tortoises in the wild.** We head to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island and visit El Chato Reserve, to see giant land tortoises in the wild in their natural environment. We explore the Reserve's lagoon and see some of the amazing volcanic formations including lava tunnels, keeping an eye out for owls that often roost in the entrances to the tunnels. This afternoon we transfer to our ship, for our first night on board the Monserrat. This spacious 20 person vessel sails overnight to ensure that you arrive refreshed and ready to explore the next destination. Enjoy the amenities while cruising - spend time in 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 4: Sullivan Bay & Bartolomé Island

The day begins with a visit 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. There is time to enjoy a refreshing dip in the water, snorkelling in amongst the varied fish species and other marine life found in the shallow waters. You may also see turtles and rays. We continue on to 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.



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DAY 5: Las Bachas & Cerro Dragón

Today sees us visiting the beach on Las Bachas to relax or swim in the crystal waters before we continue to Cerro Dragón on the west coast of Santa Cruz to see land iguanas and a saltwater lagoon frequented by flamingos and other species of birds. This morning 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, blue-footed boobies, black-necked stilts and sea lions. There will be time to take a dip in the crystalline waters, snorkelling or swimming off the beach. Next we visit Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) on the west coast of Isla Santa Cruz to observe land iguanas and a saltwater lagoon frequented by flamingos and other bird species. We take a short walk from the beach to a hypersalinic lagoon frequented by pink flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks and other species of birds. We pass through a Scalesia tree forest. This tree is endemic to the area with only 400 specimens of Scalesia trees left in the world.



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DAY 6: Black Turtle Cove & Baltra Island

This morning we explore Black Turtle Cove on the northern end of the island and take an excursion by panga. Here we explore the mangroves to observe the rich and varied marine life between the fresh and salt waters, including manta rays, sea turtles, pelicans and an abundance of other birdlife. Whitetip reef sharks can sometimes be seen gliding by. This afternoon 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.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard
Inclusions	<p>Cruise the Galápagos Islands aboard the Monserrat (2 nts) 2 Certified Galápagos National Park Service guide All meals aboard the Monserrat Overnight on Santa Cruz Tortuga Bay hike and kayak Charles Darwin Research Station Highlands giant tortoises excursion Snorkelling at Sullivan Bay, Bartolomé Island and Bachas Beach Black Turtle Cove Excursion All landings and excursions Snorkelling equipment and wetsuits Internal flights All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.</p> <p>Accommodations Hotel (3 nts), aboard the Monserrat in twin-share or double cabins (3 nts).</p> <p>Meals 6 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners Allow USD105-140 for meals not included. Drinks and tips on board not included.</p> <p>Transportation Plane, motorized yacht, panga, private vehicle.</p> <p>Staff & experts 2 CEOs/Naturalist Guides while in the Galápagos Islands (certified by the Galápagos National Park Authority), local Rep in Quito.</p>

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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.
- 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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