ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS ADVENTURE: NORTHERN ISLANDS | GRAND DAPHNE

TRIP CODE

ECTSGAN

DEPARTURE

Select Fridays

DURATION

7 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Galapagos Islands, South America

INTRODUCTION

This sailing trip aboard the Grand Daphne takes you through the remote northern islands of the **Galapagos archipelago**, barely changed since the time of Darwin's visit. Encounter an incredible array of wildlife and stunning scenery as you sail between the islands of **San Cristobal, Santa Fe,** the north-eastern outpost of **Genovesa, Santiago, Rabida and Santa Cruz.** Walk through Opuntia forests, climb Prince Philip's Steps to encounter large seabird rookeries, discover flamingo lagoons and pelican nesting sites, and explore the red sand beach of Rabida and the mangrove wetlands of Black Turtle Cove. This is an action-packed itinerary that introduces you to the fascinating and varied wildlife of the Galapagos on land and in the water.

Check out some of the other itinearies on the Grand Daphne: 10 Day Ultimate Galapagos, 17 Day Absolute Galapagos, 10 Day Complete Galapagos, 6 Day Galapagos at a Glance,

ITINERARY

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DAY 1: Quito

Bienvenidos! Welcome to Ecuador. A welcome meeting will be held in the evening at either 5pm or 6 pm when you meet others travelling with you on your cruise to the Galapagos Islands. Please check with hotel reception or check the reception notice boards for the time and place of the meeting for your trip. As today is an arrival day, you can arrive at any time as there are no activities planned until this important meeting. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early so you're able to attend. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). Quito sits at high altitude under the towering Pichincha volcano. It is a beautiful city, arguably one of the most beautiful in South America. The city stretches along the valley and is surrounded by the Andes. The Old Town of Quito is awash with history, with more than 30 churches to explore, and a number of fascinating museums. La Compania de Jesus is considered to be the most beautiful and ornate churches in the Americas. The city's oldest street, Calle La Ronda, is well worth exploring. As this trip spends very little time in Quito, we recommend you spend a few extra days before or after your trip to experience all the city has to offer. You may even wish to explore further beyond the city and visit Otavalo, Cotopaxi, the Cloud Forest or the Equatorial Monument.



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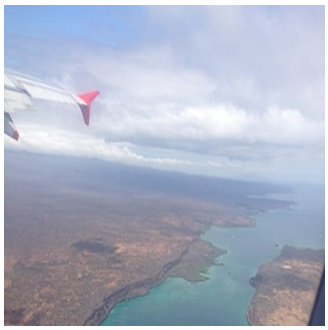
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DAY 2: Quito - Isla San Cristobal

Today is mostly a long travel day, and your Galapagos activities will begin after lunch. Rise early and transfer to the airport (approximately 1 hour) for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. Pick-up may be as early as 4:30 am (your leader will confirm this at the welcome meeting) and a boxed breakfast will be provided. On arrival in the Galapagos we are met in the arrivals hall and then transferred to our boat, the Daphne. Once on board we'll be assigned our cabins, meet the crew members and get to know our naturalist guide and fellow travellers over a delicious lunch. We visit the San Cristobal Interpretation Center. The centre brings the history and geography of the archipelago to life, from its volcanic origins to the present day. The human history exhibit offers an insight into the discovery and colonisation of the Galapagos and the issue of problems the islands face today is also explored. This is a great place to get a complete overview of the Galapagos. This afternoon, you will have the option to head to Galapaguera (Highlands) of San Cristobal to view the Giant Tortoises in a protected area. This will be your only opportunity on this trip to see these magnificent creatures. Your guide will organise this excursion for you and it will take about 2 hours. Depending on the number of passengers wanting to take part in this, the shared cost is approximately US$120 and paid locally to the guide. Please note the Transit Card & National Park Fees are not included in the cost of the trip as they need to be paid locally: There is a US$20 Galapagos Islands transit card fee that needs to be paid at the airport in Quito prior to departure to the islands. All visitors must pay the Galapagos National Park fee of US $200 upon arrival at the airport in the Galapagos. If your trip visits Isla Isabela, there is also port fee of US$10 which is to be paid locally. These fees are to be paid in cash.



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DAY 3: Isla Santa Fe - Isla Plaza Sur

Isla Santa Fe is home to more sea lions, and these ones are very eager for swimming partners! It’s a lovely place to take a dip, offers a dense concentration of wildlife, and is a fantastic place to see many of the stars of the Galapagos in one relatively small area. Expect to see Galapagos hawks, land iguanas, a variety of finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, sea lions, marine turtles, frigatebirds, Galapagos doves and lava lizards. This stunning island boasts one of the most attractive coves in the whole archipelago. The jade-green waters are ideal for snorkelling. Take a hike along the coast into the Opuntia forest (approximately 1.5 hours). From here you can see Santa Fe's trees – the largest in the Galapagos – along with a forest of giant cacti and palo santo trees. The trail can be a little rocky, so mind your step. Once back at the beach, you’ll have time for a snorkel. Playful sea lion pups and fluorescent fish make for nice company. Afterwards, continue to Plaza Sur (South Plaza), a small, picturesque island. Take a walk (approximately 1.5 hours), getting close to sea lions and passing one of the Galapagos’ largest land iguana populations which rest among cacti, volcanic landscapes dotted with brightly coloured sea-purslanes. The southern cliffs are great for spotting tropicbirds and swallow-tailed gulls, as well as ‘the Gentlemen’s Club’ – a gathering of male sea lions. Today there may be an extra stop along the way to Plaza Sur to restock the provisions for the boat. Later tonight, set sail for Isla Genovesa.



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DAY 4: Isla Genovesa

After an overnight sail, reach Isla Genovesa, the archipelago's north-eastern outpost. It’s undeniably worth the voyage. Dolphins are often spotted in the waters around beautiful Genovesa. These varied landscapes are a twitcher's paradise, with all three kinds of boobies, including the rare red-footed booby, and numerous other species such as tropicbirds and frigate birds. Next, Bahia Darwin (Darwin Beach) is another superb site with large breeding colonies of seabirds and frigates and other birds such as lava herons, swallow-tailed gulls, mockingbirds and, hopefully, vampire finches. Enjoy a moderate walk (approximately 2.5 hours) that passes tide pools, sea lions and diamond stingrays. This walk involves sand and some rocky sections. The steep Prince Philip's Steps lead you to the heart of the seabird rookeries, with birds overhead and nesting among the cliffs. Look out for storm petrels on the island’s rocky plains; Genovesa is the only place in the world where these birds can be seen flying during the day. Afterwards, perhaps cool off with a snorkel. The island's magnificent marine life makes for spectacular snorkelling – you might encounter manta rays, sharks, turtles and moray eels, plus many species of fish. Later tonight, depart Isla Genovesa for Isla Santiago.



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DAY 5: Isla Santiago - Isla Santa Cruz

On Santiago Island's eastern coast sits Bahia Sullivan, also known as James Island. Here you'll take a walk along pahoehoe lava (approximately 1 hour), which was created by an eruption that occurred in 1897, and witness the plants that have grown on the site since that last eruption. With some luck you might see some marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, sea lions, finches, turtles, sharks and penguins. During your walk, your guide will recount the geological history of the islands. Then travel to Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill): one of the best places to see land iguanas in the islands. From our dry landing, walk to a brackish, lagoon spotting lagoon birds such as stilts, pintail ducks, sandpipers, sanderlings and flamingos. Further inland, the trail offers a beautiful view of the bay and the western area of the archipelago. This area is a nesting site for land iguanas, which is constantly monitored and assisted by the Charles Darwin Research Station. The arid-zone vegetation makes for an ideal place to see Darwin's finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, the endemic Galapagos flycatcher and yellow warblers. The path can be challenging but it will be worth it for a spectacular view of the bay.



DAY 6: Isla Santa Cruz - Quito

As flights to the mainland from Galapagos depart mid-morning, it's an early start for your last morning on the islands. Depending on the time of your flight, your time spent on this final excursion may be limited. Explore Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) on a panga. This red mangrove wetland is located on the north shore of Isla Santa Cruz. You will paddle along this peaceful cove to experience its many underwater riches. It's a breeding area for green turtles, so you might catch sight of them mating. There is also abundant bird life, such as the yellow warbler and lava heron. It is also a nursery for golden cow-nose rays, eagle rays and Galapagos sharks. This is your final excursion before you return to the airport in Baltra for your flight back to Quito. The flight will stop over in Guayaquil to drop off and/or pick up passengers. Arrive at Quito Airport (approximately 4 pm) where you will be transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay. Your local representative may stop by at your hotel this evening to get your feedback on your Galapagos experience.



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DAY 7: Quito

Your Galapagos adventure comes to an end after breakfast this morning. There are no activities planned for the final day, and you are free to depart the accommodation at any time. There are many fascinating things to do in and around Quito, so please speak to your customer service representative about any optional activities that might be of interest. They can also assist you in booking a departure transfer to the airport.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board ship & hotel

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Inclusions	**INCLUSIONS** - 2 nights group hotel in Quito with breakfast - Arrival Transfer in Quito (must have flight arrival plans confirmed 30 days prior) - Transfers in Galapagos to/from the ship - Round trip flight to/from Galapagos - Accommodation on board Grand Daphne in selected cabin - All meals during the cruise - Guiding by Galapagos National Park Certified Guide - All visits and excursions/landings according to the itinerary* - Snorkel Gear (mask, tube and fins) - Kayaks - Unlimited purified water, coffee and tea **EXCLUSIONS** - Local Taxes - Any other airfares unless otherwise specified in the itinerary - Galapagos National Park Entrance fee (US$200 per person from Aug 2024 - Subject to change) - Galapagos Ingala card (USD 20,00 per person - Subject to change) - Passport & Visa Expenses - Travel Insurance - Alcoholic & soft drinks - Additional visits - Additional meals - Excess baggage charges - Telecommunications charges - Wetsuit Hire - Personal expenses and tips - Items not specified
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.
Notes	- Before checking in on a flight from Quito to the Galapagos there is a US$20 transit fee that must be paid. On arrival in the Galapagos you must pay a US$200 national park entrance fee per person from August 2024. - All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice. - Please note kayaking and water based activities are subject to weather conditions. * Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.

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Price Dependent upon	Seasonality, fuel surcharges, currency fluctuations and availability at time of booking.

SUSTAINABILITY

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