

ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS ENCOUNTER CENTRAL ISLANDS | GRAND QUEEN BEATRIZ



INTRODUCTION

Admire the rugged landscapes of the remote Galapagos Islands and their incredible array of wildlife as you sail around the central islands. Visit the Galapaguero of Cerro Colorado to learn about the Galapagos giant tortoises and explore the spectacular volcanic island of Bartolom  with its spatter cones, lava flows, penguins and lava lizards. See iconic Pinnacle Rock and Sugarloaf Volcano and visit idyllic Espumilla Beach, a nesting site for marine turtles. Galapagos penguins, marine iguanas, sea lions, Sally Lightfoot crabs, blue-footed boobies, Darwin's finches, Galapagos hawks, pelicans and a host of other species are waiting to be discovered on this amazing Galapagos adventure.

* Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ECTSGEC
DEPARTURE
Selected Saturdays
DURATION
6 Days
LOCATIONS
Ecuador, Galapagos Islands




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DAY 1: Quito

On arrival at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day will be at your leisure. 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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DAY 2: Quito to San Cristobal Island

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. Please note the pick-up time will usually be as early as 4:30 am (a boxed breakfast will be provided), as the airport is a one-hour drive away and you must allow for delays and check-in times. (Your tour leader will confirm this time with you at the Welcome Meeting on Day 1). The flight to the Galapagos will make one stop in Guayaquil to pick up other passengers. (Total flight time is about 3.5 hours). You will be met in the arrival hall of the airport by the National Park Guide, and transferred to your catamaran 'M/Y Queen Beatriz'. This afternoon you will travel into the interior of the island to visit the highlands site of 'Galapaguera of Cerro Colorado' (Red Hill) where the national park has established a breeding program and information centre for tortoises. Here, we will be able to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat and learn all about their origin, evolution and their threatened future.



DAY 3: Bartolome island and Sullivan bay

Bartolome is one of the most spectacular volcanic landscapes in the Galapagos, full of parasitic spatter cones, lava flows, Galapagos penguins and lava lizards. It is a relatively new island in the archipelago and traces of its volcanic past can be seen everywhere, as evidenced by the amazing lunar-like landscape. The Pinnacle Rock is one of the most photographed sites in the Galapagos - an abrupt jag of rock protruding from the earth like a tooth, while nearby two golden bays back onto each other. You can hike to the top of a once-active volcano here (360 wooden steps), and enjoy superb views across to Sullivan Bay, on nearby Isla Santiago. If you are in luck you might catch a glance of the Galapagos Hawk here. You also have the opportunity to go snorkelling with plenty of tropical fish, starfish, white-tipped reef sharks, rays and hopefully penguins. On Santiago's eastern coast sits Bahia Sullivan. Here you walk on Pahoe-Hoe lava, from an eruption that occurred in 1897, and witness the colonisation of plant species since the last eruption. Hopefully see some marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, sea lions, finches, turtles, sharks and penguins. On a walk, your guide will explain the geological history of the islands.



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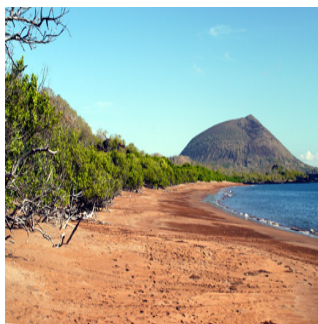
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DAY 4: Espumilla beach and Buccaneer's cove

Today you will visit some wonderful places. Espumilla Beach, on the northern coast of Santiago Island in James Bay, is one of the most idyllic locations in the Galapagos Islands and is an important nesting site for marine turtles. With large waves, it is also often a favourite amongst beach lovers. Potentially we will see Galapagos hawks up close, ghost crabs, blue-footed boobies (often plunging for fish) and brown pelicans. It is also well known for its palo santo forest and some extraordinary lava formations. You will also visit Caleta Bucanero (Buccaneer Cove), a natural monument of rocks caused by sea erosion. This cove was used by pirates to careen their ships. It is a place of local legends and stories! It is also where Darwin camped for nine days while making his study of the islands and their wildlife. If conditions are favourable, you can enjoy some further snorkelling. Puerto Egas is a black sand beach located on the west side of James Bay and northwest of Santiago Island. South of the beach is Sugarloaf Volcano, which has deposits of volcanic tuff. This site is named Puerto Egas, after Hector Egas who last attempted to mine salt here. The walk along the beach offers hundreds of marine iguanas and Galapagos sea lions. You will also see amazing tidal pools formed from ancient lava flow and home to sponges, snails, hermit crabs, barnacles and fish. Snorkelling with the seals always offers the possibility of thrilling encounters.



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DAY 5: Santa Cruz Island - Quito

Flights to mainland Ecuador from the Galapagos Islands depart mid-morning, so an early start is necessary to make the most of today's visit to the small town of Puerto Ayora is the economic centre of the archipelago, and home to the Charles Darwin Research Station. As well as undertaking vital conservation work, the station also makes for interesting exploration and offers the best opportunities for close encounters with giant tortoises. You may also see baby tortoises and land iguanas. This will be your final excursion before you head to the airport. Upon arrival at Mariscal Sucre International Airport, enjoy an included transfer to your hotel. Choose whether to join your fellow travellers for an optional dinner this evening. Upon arrival in Quito Airport you will be transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay.



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DAY 6: Quito

Your Galapagos adventure will come to an end today after breakfast. There are no activities planned for the final day so you are able to depart the accommodation at any time. There are many fascinating things to do in and around Quito, so please speak to our 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

- 2 nights group hotel in Quito
- Arrival Transfer in Quito (must have flight arrival plans confirmed 30 days prior)
- Transfers in Galapagos
- Accommodation on board Grand Queen Beatriz in double 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
- Round trip flight to/from Galapagos
- 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 (Wi-Fi is not available on the boat at all whilst in the Galapagos Islands)
- Wetsuit Hire
- Personal expenses and tips
- Items not specified

Inclusions

Difficulty Rating 2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.

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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. The proceeds of these funds go directly to ongoing preservation, conservation and management of the islands. These additional costs **must be paid in cash.**
- When booking, please make sure that your name is spelt correctly, and that you book using the name in your passport (particularly if you are recently married). If you are issued a new passport with a different number between the time that you book and the time you travel, please take both the old and new passports with you.
- All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice.
- Please note kayak activities are subject to weather conditions.

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Price Dependent upon

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

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SUSTAINABILITY