ECUADOR - GALAPAGOS ENCOUNTER SOUTHERN ISLANDS | GRAND QUEEN BEATRIZ



TRIP CODE

ECTSGES

DEPARTURE

Select Saturdays

DURATION

6 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Galapagos Islands, South America

INTRODUCTION

Set sail aboard the Grand Queen Beatriz to discover the highlights of the **Galapagos** as you cruise around the southern islands of **Santa Cruz, Isabela and Floreana**. Encounter some of the species that inspired Darwin's Theory of Evolution including Darwin's finches, land and marine iguanas, pink flamingos and lava lizards. Walk across lava flows, snorkel at Devil's Crown, encounter reef sharks at **Las Tintoreras** and sea lions at **Punta Cormorant**. Explore the volcanically active **Isabela Island, Arnolda Tupiza Tortoise Breeding Centre**, historic **Post Office Bay** and visit the majestic giant tortoises in the highlands. This 6-day tour is an incredible introduction to the Galapagos archipelago, one of nature's most impressive wonders.

Check out some of the other cruise itinearies on the Grand Queen Beatriz: 10 Day Central Southern Islands, 7 Day Southern Islands, 6 Day Central Islands, 10 Day Central Eastern Islands, 10 Day Southern Islands

ITINERARY

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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: Baltra - Punta Carrion

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). On arrival in the Galapagos you will be met in the arrivals hall and then transferred to your catamaran, M.C. Queen Beatriz, anchored a short distance away in Baltra Island. Once on board you'll be assigned your cabins, meet the crew members and have a welcome briefing and safety drill before getting to know your naturalist guide and fellow travellers over a delicious lunch. Your first stop in the afternoon will be Punta Carrión, located on the eastern side of the Itabaca channel that separates the islands of Baltra and Santa Cruz. This is a shallow and protected cove, ideal for your first snorkel and swim in the Galapagos! From a boat ride, wildlife is plentiful - keep your eyes peeled for occasional sights of blue-footed boobies, Galapagos herons, great blue herons and underwater swim among rays and white-tipped reef sharks. Tonight, enjoy a welcome cocktail and crew presentation on board. 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: Isabela - Las Tintoreras - Tortoise Breeding Cente

Today you will wake up on the south Coast of Isla Isabela (Isabela Island), the largest of the Galapagos Archipelago. Isabela was formed by five giant volcanic craters, all of which are still considered active. The island is located in one of the youngest geological areas in the world, having been formed less than 1 million years ago. Please note that there's a US$10 fee to be paid upon landing on Isabela Island. This southern coast of turquoise blue waters has the largest area of beaches in the Galapagos. You will visit Las Tintoreras, where from the viewing walkway you can look down into this narrow channel to see a colony of white-tipped reef sharks swimming and sleeping, and the occasional playful sea lion among them! Blue-footed boobies and penguins, marine iguanas and crabs also make their home here. Enjoy a nice long walk on a gravel path through ‘Ahh-ahh’ lava flow and see plenty of marine iguanas. The natives of the islands call white sharks 'tintoreras', hence the name of this spectacular site. In the afternoon we visit the Arnoldo Tupiza Tortoise breeding center. We have a leisurely walk through a coastal lagoon, where you might see Flamingos. This mangrove-lined path leads to Isabela’s Giant Tortoise Breeding Center (Arnoldo Tupiza) where you'll observe giant tortoises in all stages of development. Here you can see the five sub species of tortoises from Isabela Island, some of which are bred in captivity. You will then have the choice for optional swimming at the beach or out for some shopping in Puerto Villamil.



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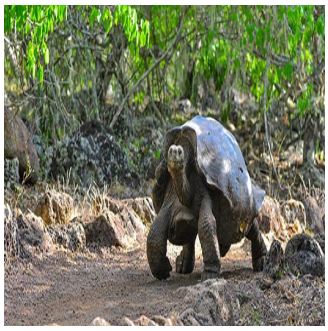
DAY 4: Floreana - Post Office Bay - Devil's Crown

The island of Floreana is a highlight of any Galapagos cruise, rich in natural wonders and wildlife. Enjoy a panga ride around the loberia to observe marine iguanas, sea lions and crabs before taking a leisurely walk to Post Office Bay, where 18th century whalers used a barrel as an unofficial mail drop. This custom continues to this day with visitors to the Galapagos – post one of your own, or see if there are any you could deliver back home! You will also have the chance to go snorkelling with sea turtles. Today is also one of your finest opportunities to see pink flamingos and other water birds wading in the lagoons, including pintails and stilts. Just offshore, the Devil's Crown is an old eroded volcanic cone and a popular roosting site for seabirds such as boobies, pelicans and frigates. Red-billed tropicbirds can also be seen nesting in the rocky crevices. The centre of the cone is an outstanding snorkelling spot, perhaps the most remarkable in the entire archipelago, full of sea lions and colourful fish. You will go ashore at Punta Cormorant where the sand is made up of fine olivine crystals, a glassy volcanic mineral, giving the beach an olive-green colour. It is the best place to see Galapagos sea lions.



DAY 5: Isla Santa Cruz

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	**INCLUSIONS** - 1 night pre and 1 night post cruise group hotel in Quito including breakfast - Arrival Transfer in Quito (must have flight arrival plans confirmed 30 days prior) - Round trip flight to/from Galapagos - Transfers in Galapagos - Accommodation on board Grand Queen Beatriz in chosen 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) - Galápagos 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
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. - 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.
Price Dependent upon	Seasonality, fuel surcharges, currency fluctuations and availability at time of booking.

SUSTAINABILITY

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