

Ecuador & the Galapagos Islands

The best of Ecuador and the islands of the Galapagos!
from Quito, Ecuador

11-night Adventure
AdventureMeter: ★★★★★☆ Very Active

In this multi-activity adventure, every day features something new and different—

- walking/hiking
- exploring
- archaeological sites
- mountain biking

and Galapagos island-hopping –

- snorkeling/scuba
- sea kayaking
- animal exploration
- award-winning photo ops

and more!



DAY 1 – Tuesday

Arrive Quito, Ecuador

Arrive in the bustling city of Quito, transfer to Hotel.

Rest from flight.

Afternoon to yourself.

Happy Hour as a group, followed by dinner of your choice.

DAY 2 – Wednesday

Quito - Cuicocha Lake Trek & Otavalo Market

Early morning we depart Quito and head north to the Lake province of Imbabura. After a two-hour drive we reach Cuicocha, a crater lake and a nature reserve located on the slopes of the Cotacachi Volcano. Cuicocha Lake is surrounded by rim walls and its name translates to Lake of the Guinea Pigs due to the shape of its two center islets.

This combines paramo and Andean forest covered by species such as Pumamaqui, Quishuar, chilca, bromarea, fushia, lupins, calcelaria, and colorful flowers of the Andes. This hike known as the Orchid Trail runs around the crater rim with stunning views to the lake and the Cotacachi, Mojanda and Imbabura volcanoes. We watch for rodents, mammals, marsupials and birdlife such as



guans, hummingbirds, tanagers, wild turkeys, ducks, buzzard eagle and the great Andean Condor.

A healthy, refreshing picnic lunch awaits us along the trail. In the afternoon we visit the town of Cotacachi, famous for its leather market.

We also visit the Otavalo Indian Market, one of Ecuador's most important indigenous bazaars brimming with handmade arts, clothes, tapestries, jewelry, ceramics and wood carvings. This colorful market now runs every day of the week and is considered one of the most important ethnic markets in South America.

(L, D)

DAY 3 - Thursday

Papallacta Hot Springs Trek - Rain Forest

We drive early morning through the Inter-Andean valleys for a great 2 hour hike in the Cayambe Coca Ecological Reserve, located across the Atlantic - Pacific continental divide. The reserve is composed of endemic highland paramo with cloud forest patches. The large amount of water retained in this sponge-like environment is the source of the largest water system in the world.



Then return to a rewarding hot spring soak at Termas de Papallacta, where we can relax in any of the 9 different thermal pools, ranging in temperature from 97°F to 104°F (36°C to 40°C). Cloud Forest Mountains and an occasional snowcapped volcano surround these pools, with their mineral rich waters

from underground geothermal springs.

After lunch we travel to the Amazonian town of Tena where we find our accommodations and enjoy a wonderful dinner and a peaceful evening listening to the sounds of the rainforest.

(B, L, D)

DAY 4 - Friday

Jungle Hike & Quichua Indian Communities

This day involves soft walks and more time to enjoy. After breakfast in our river front jungle lodge, we walk in the nearby reserve at the 500 meter level in search for species particular to the tropical lowland rainforest. We explore under a 40 meter canopy of many unique trees such as balsa, cedar, rubber and cinnamon. We can expect to see many orchids, vines, ferns, insects, and reptiles.



This area has a long history of indigenous cultures, and we will learn about the traditional use of plants for daily living and medicinal purposes. We will also visit a local Kichwa community to learn about their way of life, culture, traditions and customs.

After lunch, we head south and climb up back the Andes through the Pastaza River Gorge, one of the principal waterways that feed into the Amazon Basin and reach the town of Banos for accommodations and overnight.

(B,L,D)

DAY 5 - Saturday

Waterfall Exploration & Baños

In the morning we drive to the edge of Llanganates National Park, gaining altitude until we reach one of the

best views of Tungurahua, Ecuador's most active volcano. This is an especially scenic route, where high rock

walls give way to deep cloud forest canyons known for its hot springs and rugged landscape where we have lunch.

Afterwards, we take a cable car across amazing gorges to explore the trail of waterfalls, as this is the only way to reach them.

We'll see the most scenic ones: Pailon del Diablo (Devil's Cauldron) and Manto de la Novia (Bride's Veil). In the afternoon we explore the colorful town of Baños.

(B, L, D).



Day 6 - Sunday

Mountain Bike & Hike At Cotopaxi Volcano



After breakfast, we drive to the base of the Cotopaxi Volcano, where we start our adventure journey. We hike to pre-Incan ruins while crossing highland plateaus populated with typical highland wildlife and vegetation - all with stunning volcanic scenery as a backdrop.

We grab our mountain bikes and go downhill on a side trail of the majestic Cotopaxi. We pass by Limpiopungo Glacier Lake, a crystal-clear lake that often paints mirror-like reflections of the snowcapped Cotopaxi in its azure waters only to be interrupted by ripples from Andean waterfowl.

We make a quick stop at the park's Interpretation Center to learn about Cotopaxi's wildlife and natural history.

We head back to Quito where you may explore the landmarks and night life of this incredible colonial city.

(B, L).

Day 7 - Monday

Fly to Galapagos - Hike & Snorkel San Cristobal Island

After breakfast we fly to Galapagos. Once in San Cristobal Island, we brief you over lunch at a sea side restaurant.

Our journey begins at the Interpretation Center learning about Galapagos' unique wildlife, geology, history, and social dynamics. We hike to Frigate Hill along lava rock trails. On the way, your naturalist guide explains all about the Galapagos cotton, palo santo, acacia, and cacti. You also spot blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, pelicans, herons, gulls, warblers, mockingbirds, and finches among the vegetation and sea cliffs. In addition to unique species, the hike provides marvelous views of the rugged coastline and the coastal town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno.



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We stop for a refreshing snorkel or swim at beautiful Carola Beach. Here, you find sea turtles, sea lions, and marine iguanas, as well as surfers riding some world-class waves.

After dinner with a gorgeous sunset as our background, we recommend you take a stroll down the boardwalk to view the immense colony of endemic Galapagos sea lions.

(L)

Day 8 - Tuesday

Sea Kayak & Snorkel the Coast, Isla Lobos, and Kicker Rock



We go to sea in our kayaks and explore coastal bays and coves full of wildlife. We find blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, sea lions, and sea turtles everywhere.

We reach Playa Ochoa and head away from the coast to nearby Isla Lobos where we snorkel with marine iguanas, sea lions, and countless reef fish. Paddling out towards the open sea we reach Kicker Rock, two breathtaking rock massifs that jut out from the ocean. Above the waters, thousands of sea birds cling to its walls and below millions of fish call the rock home.

Between the rock walls, you find some of the best snorkeling in the islands with spotted eagle rays, golden rays, Galapagos sharks, starfish, clams, and fish of every shape, size, and color.

(B, L)

Day 9 - Wednesday

Mountain Bike The Coastline & Explore Tintoreras In Isabela Island

After breakfast, we take a short plane ride to Isabela Island.

This is the largest island in Galapagos formed by 6 shield volcanoes in real time. Without a doubt, Isabela is one of the most volcanically active spots on the planet. We take our bikes and visit El



Muro de las Lagrimas (Wall of Tears). Isabela was once a penal colony and prisoners constructed a massive wall of lava rocks for no other purpose than to keep busy.

We continue biking along white sand beaches, mangroves, brackish lagoons, and a lava tube. The area is filled with giant tortoises and birdlife. We also have a chance to spot flamingos!

After lunch, we explore Tintoreras, a set of small islets filled with hidden coves and beaches where we find the endemic Galapagos penguin as well as reef sharks, sea turtles, and sea

lions.

In the late afternoon feel free to take a leisure stroll down the seemingly endless beach or join the bustle on the sand streets of this idyllic beach town.

(B, L, D)

Day 10 - Thursday

Volcano Hiking In Isabela´s Highlands

We drive up to the highlands to the end of the road, grab our daypacks and hike into a world of recent geological history, enjoying the incredible views of the surrounding volcanoes and sea.

When we arrive at the rim of Volcan Sierra Negra, you´ll be awestruck! This is the second largest active caldera on the planet. We walk along the rim of this enormous 30 square mile crater, and if feeling energetic, continue our hike into the caldera of Volcan Chico, an otherworldly landscape with endless hues of oranges, reds, blacks, and yellows. Here, we explore puffing fumaroles and spectacular lava formations.

After a day on what seems like another planet, we return to paradise on earth. Enjoy the evening as you please, relaxing in the hotel or cruising the town.

(B, L, D)



Day 11 - Friday

Flight To Baltra & Return To Quito

In early morning flight takes us from Isabela Island to Baltra Island, where we board our flight back to the continent.

Transfer to Sierra Madre (B)

Day for yourself in Quito



Day 12 - Saturday



Breakfast, then transfer back to airport for your flight home.

Pricing

◆ We offer Trip Layaway - break your trip down into several easy payments!

\$2,750 Land Package per person - based on double occupancy

Plus Inter-Country Flight Quito -> Islands RT \$478.00 pp

Plus Galapagos Park Permit \$110.00 pp

Single Supplement - please inquire

TOTAL Price \$3,334.00 pp dble-occupancy

plus RT air to Quito, Ecuador

Additional:

Roundtrip airfare to Quito, Ecuador from your city

Meals not indicated in itinerary

Travel Insurance. Travel insurance is mandatory (see next page), or proof of international medical coverage.

Deposit

\$200 per person deposit required upon sign up

Easy-Payment plan for balance available!

Cancellation Policy

Please note: there is a **\$100 non-refundable penalty upon cancellation**. Other cancellation fees apply.

If cancellation is received between 60 and 45 days prior to the date our services are due to begin, 25% of the full price per person will be forfeited.

If cancellation is received between 44 and 30 days before our services are due to begin, 50% of the full price per person will be forfeited.

If cancellation is received between 29 days and 0 days, full payment will be forfeited.

Should a group member cancel after final confirmation, he should be replaced by another member in order to avoid the cancellation fee.

Please see our page on **Policy-Terms & Conditions** for full policy information

