

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Island Hopping 4d/3n

2026 Itinerary





Discovering the Natural Wonders of the Archipelago

The Galapagos Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage site located 600 miles off the Ecuadorian coast, are among the most extraordinary natural sanctuaries on Earth. These "Enchanted Isles" served as the foundational inspiration for Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution and continue to thrive as a living laboratory of biodiversity and endemism.

Our Galapagos expedition is meticulously crafted to offer an intimate look at the islands' unique ecosystems. By opting for an island-based stay rather than a traditional cruise, you will experience a more immersive journey, fostering a genuine connection with the local community and the rhythm of life in the archipelago. Each day includes expert-led excursions and navigations to premier visitor sites to encounter the islands' most iconic wildlife—from Giant Tortoises and Marine Iguanas to Blue-footed Boobies, the Galapagos Hawk, and the Galapagos Penguin.

Beyond the marine explorations, you will traverse pristine volcanic landscapes, secluded white-sand beaches, and verdant highland forests, gaining a holistic perspective of each island's ecological wealth.

Led by certified naturalist guides, this tour seamlessly blends comfort, flexibility, and world-class wildlife observation. It is the definitive choice for travelers seeking a meaningful, sustainable, and deeply enriching encounter with the Galapagos. Whether you are a nature lover, a birder, or a wildlife photographer, this is your opportunity to explore one of the world's last great natural sanctuaries in a sustainable and personalized way.



DAY 1 **Santa Cruz Highlands**

Upon your arrival in the archipelago at Baltra Airport, you will be met by your certified Galapagos naturalist guide to begin your expedition. You will be transferred to the Itabaca Channel, a stretch of crystal turquoise water that separates Baltra from Santa Cruz Island. After a short ferry crossing, your private tour continues into the Highlands of Santa Cruz.

You will visit a Giant Tortoise Reserve, located along the natural migratory paths these majestic reptiles take each year. Depending on the season, they may be found moving toward higher, moist locations during the garua season from June to September, or descending to the warmer lowlands during the wet season. The Galapagos giant tortoise is the largest living tortoise species, with some individuals weighing up to 250 kg.

The exploration also includes a visit to a lava tunnel, a significant geological formation that provides a window into the volcanic forces that originally formed the islands. You will also visit Los Gemelos, or The Twins, which are two impressive volcanic sinkholes surrounded by a lush *Scalesia* forest, a habitat for Darwin's finches and the elusive Short-eared Owl. After enjoying lunch at the reserve, you will be transferred to your hotel in Puerto Ayora for check-in and a relaxed afternoon.

INCLUDES: Private certified naturalist guide, private ground transportation, entrance fee to the tortoise reserve, accommodation in Hotel Fiesta or similar, meals (-/L/-).



DAYS 2 AND 3

Navigable Tours from Santa Cruz

After breakfast, you will embark on a shared full-day yacht exploration to one of the surrounding islands. These excursions include the services of a certified naturalist guide, lunch, and snorkeling gear. Depending on the booking date and availability, you will visit one of the following destinations, returning to Puerto Ayora in the late afternoon.

NAVIGABLE TOUR OPTIONS:

North Seymour Island was lifted from the ocean floor by a seismic event, resulting in a low, flat profile. The shoreline is characterized by small cliffs where Swallow-tailed Gulls nest among the ledges. Just above the landing, a forest of silver-grey Palo Santo trees stands waiting for the seasonal rains. This island is known for its high concentration of wildlife, particularly nesting colonies of Blue-footed Boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds, which can be observed at close range throughout the year.

Bartolome Island is home to Pinnacle Rock, a towering volcanic obelisk that serves as the most iconic landmark in the archipelago. Along the base of its dark volcanic ledges, you can find Galapagos Penguins, the only penguin species found north of the equator. The island offers a stark, lunar-like landscape of craters and cinder cones. Nearby rocky platforms are often occupied by resting sea lions, while the surrounding waters provide an excellent habitat for observing colorful reef fish and sea turtles.

South Plaza Island is a small but biologically diverse site featuring dramatic wind-swept cliffs. The island is characterized by a forest of giant Opuntia cacti and a carpet of Sesuvium vegetation that changes color from intense green to bright red depending on the season. Visitors can observe a large colony of Galapagos Land Iguanas and numerous sea lions along the shore. The cliffs serve as an important nesting area for various seabirds, including Red-billed Tropicbirds and Audubon's Shearwaters.



BARTOLOME ISLAND

Pinzon Island is located off the western coast of Santa Cruz and is renowned for the exceptional clarity of its turquoise waters. The shoreline is characterized by rugged cliffs that provide ideal nesting sites for Blue-footed Boobies, Frigatebirds, and Pelicans. The primary visitor site, Penguin Bay, features a sheltered, shallow cove that serves as a natural nursery for a high diversity of marine species. This destination is known for its remarkable underwater visibility, offering close-range encounters with Pacific Green Sea Turtles, sea lions, and white-tip reef sharks

Santa Fe Island features one of the most sheltered and picturesque coves in the archipelago. Its turquoise lagoon is protected by a peninsula of islets, creating a calm anchorage. The island is an uplifted fault, showcasing interesting underwater lava formations. Here, the prickly pear cacti grow to an impressive size, resembling large trees with thick trunks. This island is the only place to find the endemic Santa Fe Land Iguana and offers frequent encounters with sea lion colonies on its white-sand beaches.

INCLUDES: Shared navigable expedition, snorkeling gear, accommodation in Hotel Fiesta or similar, meals (B/L/-)

DAY 4 Departure from the Galapagos Islands

After breakfast, you will be transferred across the island to the Itabaca Channel, a drive of approximately 50 minutes.

At the Itabaca Channel, you will take a ten-minute ferry ride to Baltra Island, followed by a short bus transfer to the airport for your flight back to Quito.

INCLUDES: Overland transfer to Itabaca Channel, meals (B/-/-)



GENERAL INFORMATION

TRIP OVERVIEW

Length: 4 days

Start / End point: Seymour Galapagos Ecological Airport in Baltra

Physical difficulty: Moderate

INCLUDES

- Ground and maritime transfers.
- Shared navigable tours as described in the itinerary.
- Galapagos Certified Naturalist Guide.
- All meals, and excursions mentioned in the itinerary.
- Accommodation as described in the itinerary (double occupancy)
- Entrance fees and activities as specified in the program.

NOT INCLUDED

- Transit Control Card (USD \$20 – payable directly at the Quito airport).
- Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee: payable in cash at the airport upon arrival in the islands (international tourists over 12 years old: USD \$200).
- Round-trip airfare: Quito - Baltra - Quito.
- Dinners.
- Alcoholic or additional beverages.
- Gratuities and tips.
- Wetsuit (available for rent).
- Other expenses not specified in the itinerary.

CLIMATE

The Galapagos Islands, located on the equator about 600 miles off the coast of mainland Ecuador, enjoy a subtropical climate with two main seasons, both of which offer excellent wildlife viewing opportunities. The weather is generally warm and pleasant year-round, but conditions vary depending on the time of year and the islands visited.

December to May (Warm and Wet Season): Daily highs typically range between 27°C and 31°C (80°F to 88°F) with higher humidity and occasional short tropical showers, mostly in the afternoons. Seas are generally calmer and clearer, which is ideal for snorkeling. This is also the breeding season for many species, including marine iguanas, land birds, and green sea turtles.

June to November (Cool and Dry Season): This season is influenced by the Humboldt Current, bringing cooler air and ocean temperatures ranging from 21°C to 25°C (70°F to 77°F). You can expect overcast skies and occasional mist, known locally as garua. While the water is cooler, marine life is highly active, particularly sea lions, penguins, and seabirds such as Blue-footed Boobies and Waved Albatrosses.

TIME ZONE

UTC/GMT -5 hours (Mainland Ecuador) Note: The Galapagos Islands are in UTC/GMT -6 hours.

VISA INFORMATION

United States, Canada, and Mexico: Citizens from the United States, Canada, and Mexico do not require a visa for tourism purposes. Visitors may stay in Ecuador for up to 90 days per calendar year with a valid passport.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VISA-EXEMPT TRAVELERS

- Passport: Must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry.
- Proof of Departure: A return ticket or an onward ticket to another destination.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Vaccinations:

- No mandatory vaccinations are required to enter Ecuador from most countries.
- Yellow Fever: Recommended if you plan to visit low-lying tropical areas, particularly in the Amazon region.

Medical and Travel Insurance:

Medical and travel insurance is highly recommended for the entire duration of the trip. This is particularly important as you will be visiting remote areas and engaging in outdoor activities such as hiking, wildlife observation, and photography.

Additional Recommendations:

- Carry insect repellent, sunscreen, and any personal medications.
- Staying hydrated is essential due to the equatorial sun.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND PACKING LIST

To ensure a comfortable journey across multiple islands, please review the following recommendations and gear checklist.

Money and Practical Tips:

Most expenses are covered, but it is advisable to bring cash in small U.S. dollar denominations for souvenirs, snacks, or tips. While credit cards are accepted in major towns, many small shops and local services operate on a cash-only basis. We recommend carrying at least 300 USD per person for incidental expenses. Tipping guides, boat crews, and drivers is customary and can be done in U.S. dollars.

Gear and Clothing Checklist:

- Lightweight long-sleeve shirts and pants for sun protection.
- Swimsuit for snorkeling and beach visits.
- Waterproof sandals or water shoes for wet landings and rocky shorelines.
- Sturdy walking shoes or light hiking boots for exploring lava trails.
- Brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- Reef-safe sunscreen as the equatorial sun is intense even on cloudy days.
- Dry bag or sealed bags to protect electronics during boat rides.
- Reusable water bottle for hydration.
- Light rain jacket or windbreaker, especially useful for speedboat crossings.
- Motion sickness medication for inter-island navigations.



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