

Galapagos Island Hopping

6 days | Starts/Ends: Baltra Island



Discover one of the planet's top wildlife destinations on a 6-day Galapagos island hopping adventure, staying in a choice of standard or upgraded accommodation. From Baltra Island, take in beautiful landscapes and encounter incredible wildlife on the islands of Santa Cruz, Floreana and Isabela, topped off with a hike up Sierra Negra Volcano.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Santa Cruz Island - observe Giant Tortoises in their natural habitat at Rancho El Manzanillo farm
- Santa Cruz Island – visit the famous Charles Darwin Research Station and see the body of the world-famous turtle Lonesome George
- Santa Cruz Island - follow the Tortuga Bay trail to reach one of the most beautiful beaches in the Galapagos, where you can swim and soak up the sun next to the marine Iguanas, boobies and marine birds
- Floreana Island – see a colony of sea lions and perhaps some blue footed boobies, marine iguanas and marine turtles at picturesque Playa Lobos

- Floreana Island - walk to historic Asilo de La Paz, where the legendary Witmer family first settled in 1932 and lived in caves
- Isabela Island – explore the largest island of the Archipelago, visiting the beautiful beaches of Los Humedales and the Tortoise Breeding Centre
- Isabela Island - hike up to the rim of Sierra Negra Volcano to see the 2nd largest caldera in the world

What's Included

- 4 nights 3 star accommodation and 1 night local community guest house on Floreana Island (homestay with private en suite room)
Upgraded (3-4 star) accommodation available for a supplement.
- 5 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners
- Guided excursions and walks on Santa Cruz Island, Floreana Island and Isabela Island
- Sierra Negra Volcano hike
- Professional English/Spanish speaking Galapagos Naturalist Guide
- Shared speed boat transfers on the tourist class Serenity boat
- Baltra airport arrival and departure transfer

What's Not Included

- Entrance Fees: USD\$120pp Galapagos park fee & transit card, paid in USD
- Domestic and International flights, airport taxes and visas
- Bus from Baltra – Itabaca Channel (budget approx USD\$5 per person)
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture
- Items of a personal nature, drinks and additional meals

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Baltra Island & Santa Cruz



Baltra Island - Santa Cruz Island. Upon arrival at the airport of Baltra Island, our guide welcomes you and arranges your transfer to the city of Puerto Ayora, the biggest on the Galapagos Archipelago, located on the island of Santa Cruz. On the way, we should cross the beautiful Itabaca Channel which separate Baltra and Santa Cruz Islands. Once on the other side of the channel our shared transport will take us up to the highlands of Santa Cruz

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island to visit el Manzanillo private farm where we will have our first Galapagos amazing experience observing the giant Galapagos Turtles in their natural habitat. Tortoises are very sensitive, and will typically withdraw into their carapaces as soon as they see you coming close. It is very important not to bother, touch or feed these beautiful animals. We enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and time permitting, perhaps we can also visit one of the lava tunnels of the area. Then we transfer to the hotel in the town of Puerto Ayora where the rest of the day is spent at leisure.

Accommodation:

Standard: Posada del Mar, Dejavu or Lobo de Mar

Upgraded: Ikala Galapagos Hotel

Overnight - Santa Cruz Island (L)

Day 2 : Santa Cruz & Floreana Island



Santa Cruz Island – Floreana Island. The day starts with breakfast in the hotel and then at around 8 a.m we leave the hotel on foot to visit the Fausto Llerena Interpretation Centre where you will learn about the Galapagos National Park work and observe different species of turtles. A little further on is the Charles Darwin Station with its Lonesome George exhibit and well-known captive breeding programme for Giant Tortoises. After enjoying this wonderful walk, we head back to town where you will have time for lunch (at your own expense) and prepare to transfer onwards to Floreana Island.

Early afternoon leave the hotel and walk to the pier where we board the shared speed boat taking us to Puerto Velasco Ibarra, a small town located in the legendary Floreana Island, the transfer takes approximately 2½ hours. Upon arrival on Floreana you will be taken

to your overnight accommodation in one of the houses of the local community. You will have time for a walk to Playa Lobos, a beautiful spot on this island where you may see a colony of sea lions, perhaps some blue footed bobbies, marine iguanas and with some luck maybe marine turtles. Upon returning to your accommodation there will be time to relax and enjoy a group dinner.

Note: Floreana is the most pristine inhabited Island on the Galapagos Archipelago and the less developed, so do not expect to find shops, big restaurants, etc. It is a very simple way of life that the local people live here and the accommodation is also very simple.

Accommodation:

Standard: Community Guest Houses

Upgraded: Lava Lodge

Overnight - Floreana Island (B, D)

Day 3 : Floreana & Isabela Island



Floreana Island - Isabela Island. The day starts at 6:30 a.m. with breakfast in a local restaurant before being taken to the highlands of Floreana by "Chiva" transport, where you can enjoy a stroll through "Asilo de La Paz" the Peace Haven. Here you will see lumbering giant tortoises, the natural spring that supported Floreana and the caves where the first settlers lived. Heading back to town you will have time for a spot of lunch before boarding your speedboat taking you onto Isabella Island, transfers take approximately 2½ to 3 hours

Isabela Island is the largest in the Archipelago. Following your arrival at Puerto Villamil, after checking into your hotel, you will then head out to the wetlands an area known as Los Humadales This awesome area is characterised by sandy beaches,

rocky shores, and mangroves. During the walk along the main trail, you can see all four species of mangroves found in Galapagos and observe pink flamingos and other migratory birds. You will also visit the Turtle breeding centre where the National park is breeding turtles in danger of extinction. Some of these turtles have been released by the park and can be found on the trails. You will then be transported back to your hotel to enjoy a little free time before your evening meal.

Accommodation:

Standard: Hostal Gran Tintorera

Upgraded: La Casa de Marita Hotel

Overnight - Isabela Island (B, D)

Day 4 : Hiking Sierra Negra Volcano



Isabela Island - Santa Cruz Island. Isabela is known for having the second largest volcanic crater in the world, the first being the Ngorongoro in Africa. After an early breakfast, we will be taken to Galapagos Park checkpoint, from where you can hike up to the rim of the crater where, weather permitting, you may be able to see the whole diameter of the crater (6 miles/11 km.). Afterwards we will be taken back to town to enjoy some free time for lunch before our speedboat transfer to Santa Cruz Island, which will take approximately 2½ to 3 hours. Upon arrival in the city of Puerto Avora you will then be taken to your hotel.

Accommodation:

Standard: Posada del Mar, Dejavu or Lobo de Mar

Upgraded: Ikala Galapagos Hotel

Overnight - Santa Cruz Island (B)

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Day 5 : Santa Cruz Island



After an early breakfast in the hotel, we start our day hiking towards the shores of the Pacific Ocean, to one of the most beautiful beaches of the Galapagos, to the place known as Tortuga Bay. After some 40 minutes to 1-hour walk, we arrive to the heavenly spot, where the soft coral sand and nice scenery make this a special location for anyone visiting. The first part of the beach has strong waves so it's not recommended for swimming but walking west we will reach a beautiful bay of calm water. Here we can observe colonies of Marine iguanas, boobies and marine birds, as well as mangroves, cacti forest and interesting flora of the coast.

There's time to enjoy the beach before we return to the town. After free time for lunch and a rest at the hotel we meet in the afternoon at 3 pm and enjoy a walking tour to Las Grietas. For this we follow a nice 1.5 km trail to this scenic point of a huge lava crevasse, which is in fact a long narrow cool-water swimming hole among a jumble of small cliffs and tumbled boulders. It is a great place for swimming and on the way to Las Grietas, you might spot some interesting birdlife among the landlocked shallow water bodies around here. In the evening we enjoy a farewell dinner at a nice local restaurant.

Optional Tour: In the afternoon, we offer an optional shared Bay Tour (3 hours) which includes a visit to Lobos island, snorkel activities (snorkel equipment include), and visit to Las Grietas de la Tintorerías where eventually you can observe sharks. During this tour, you can also observe blue footed boobies, Galapagos pelicans and other marine birds.

Optional Tour - approx. USD\$50 per person.

Accommodation:

Standard: Posada del Mar, Dejavu or Lobo de Mar

Upgraded: Ikala Galapagos Hotel

Overnight - Santa Cruz Island (B, D)

Day 6 : Baltra Island

Santa Cruz Island – Baltra Island. In the morning, we will transfer you to the airport on Baltra Island. The bus ride will take about 45 minutes until we reach the Itabaca Channel. From here using a local ferry we cross the channel to the side of Baltra from where the airport buses will take you to the airport. On the way, we will be stopping by the natural formation known as “The twins” (Los Gemelos) Craters, that lies on the route to the Itabaca Channel. Our guide will help you with check in for your onward flight to Quito or Guayaquil (not included).

Please note that we can book your domestic Galapagos flights, accommodation in Quito or Guayaquil and transfers upon request. In addition to this, if you'd like to see more of Ecuador we can tailor-make an itinerary for you. Please contact us for details. (B)

HOTELS

The hotels listed below are ones which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard when necessary.

Lobo De Mar Hotel

The Grand Hotel Lobo de Mar is in the heart of Galapagos on Santa Cruz Island After a full day of exploration, why not head to the either the indoor or outdoor swimming pools or to the fabulous roof terrace to admire the stunning sea views whilst relaxing with a drink from the poolside bar. Later why not enjoy an evening meal at the on-site restaurant. Make yourself at home in one of the comfortably decorated air-conditioned rooms featuring flat-screen cable television, private bathroom with bathtubs or showers. Situated in Puerto Ayora within a 5 minute stroll of where you can find a selection of restaurants, cafes and shops.



Community Guest Houses Floreana Island

Overnight accommodation is allocated in community run guest houses on the tiny island of Floreana. These community houses offer clean and comfortable, private en suite accommodation.



Gran Hostal Tintorera, Isabela Island

The Gran Hostal Tintorera guesthouse is located just two minutes' walk from the main road in Isabela and 350m from the beach. This friendly little property is family run and you will be sure to receive a warm welcome here. The clean spacious rooms are well equipped offering private bathrooms, hot water, air conditioning, TV, fridge and wi-fi.



Our Partners

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers who booked through different operators, not solely On The Go.

The group size can range from 4 – 16 travellers.

Style of Travel

This is a soft adventure tour, which involves a reasonable amount of physical activity, most of which will be walking and hiking around the islands so a decent level of

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fitness is required. Escorted by a Galapagos Naturalist Guide you will travel by speedboat and visit different islands each day, with guided excursions included, and spend your evenings at leisure. We offer a choice of 3 or 4 star accommodation, which means that some members of the group will be staying in a different accommodation to you. Please note that dependent upon the group demographic, the guiding sightseeing may be in Spanish as well as English.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Ecuador Country Guide

Ecuador - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Ecuador
- Capital: Quito (population 1.4 million)
- Government: Multiparty Republic
- Population: 13.4 million
- Total Area: 283,560 kilometres squared, including the Galapagos Islands (slightly smaller than Nevada, USA)
- Official Languages: Spanish. Others: Amerindian languages (especially Quechua)
- Religions: Roman Catholic 95%
- Voltage: 110 volts. Sockets are a mixture of the European, two-pronged round variety and US flat-pin.
- Time Difference: For time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- International airport departure tax: US\$25. This is sometimes included in your airfare - please check with your airline before departure.

Ecuador - Visas

Most nationals, including citizens of the EU, North American and Australasia do not need a visa to enter Ecuador. Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. You'll be issued with a T-3 tourist card on arrival, which you should keep safely with your passport as it will be collected when you leave the country. The tourist card can allow up to 90 days stay, although it's up to the immigration official to decide whether you're allocated 30, 60 or 90 days on arrival. Visa requirements do change periodically so

you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Ecuadorian embassy or consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Ecuador - Climate

Ecuador is divided into the coastal plain (costa), inter-Andean central highlands (sierra), and flat to rolling eastern jungle (oriente). There's no real summer and winter in Ecuador, with weather patterns varying according to geography, and temperatures determined more by altitude than by season or latitude. As a general rule, the warmest and driest months in the sierra are June to September, though this is complicated by various microclimates found in some areas. Outside these months, typical sierra weather is characterised by sunny, clear mornings and cloudy, often wet, afternoons. In the oriente, you can expect it to be warm, humid and rainy throughout the year, though there are often breaks in the rain between August and September and December to February.

In the lowland areas it can get particularly hot on clear days, with temperatures easily topping 30°C. The coast has the most clearly defined wet and dry seasons, with the best time to visit being from December to April, when you'll get frequent showers but also clear blue skies and warm weather. From May to November, the southern coast, in particular, is often overcast and relatively cool, with less chance of rainfall.

Check the weather chart on our website or visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your trip.

Ecuador - Money

Important

In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local Currency

In April 2000, the government in Ecuador decided to 'dollarise' the economy due to the instability of their own currency, the sucre. The country now uses the US dollar as its own currency, which means that you do not need to change money on arrival (if you bring sufficient US dollars with you). If you do need to change money into dollars, you can do it at the bank after exiting the luggage hall or use one of the ATMs outside the terminal. Remember that if you are travelling through to other countries in South America, Ecuador is the best place to load up on US dollars cash without paying high charges. Having said that we do recommend that you bring as much US dollars cash as you feel comfortable carrying as it is not always easy to get money out on credit and debit cards. You should carry your US dollars in small denominations (US\$1, US\$5, US\$10 and US\$20 are best) as there is always a shortage of change.

Although bank cards are often the easiest way to go, there are times where they will not work for you even if your bank at home tells you it will! Do not rely on your card as your only source of money. Always have a few back-ups with you.

Ecuador - Local Transport

Most of Quito is easy to visit on foot, although there is a cheap trolley bus system which travels from north to south of the city. There are also normal buses which are cheap but can get very crowded. We recommend that you use taxis at night as they are fairly cheap but also have meters so you do not need to worry about bartering to get a good price – just make sure the driver puts the meter on when you get in.

In other Ecuadorian towns and cities walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights.

Ecuador - Food & Drink

As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$2, a light meal will cost around US\$4-5, and even a meal in one of the best restaurants in Quito or Cuenca costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home (usually around US\$30-40). Obviously this depends on what you order

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and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below;

- 1 litre of water - US\$1
- 30cl bottle of soft drink - US\$0.70
- 30cl bottle of beer - US\$1.20
- 50cl bottle of beer - US\$1.70

Food

In Ecuador the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. Ceviche is fish marinated in lemon juice, onion and hot peppers traditionally served with corn on the cob and tostado (roasted maize). Other popular dishes include fritada (roast pork), lomo ala pimiento (pepper steak), humitas (ground corn steamed in a maize leaf) and quimbolitas (similar to humitas but with corn-flour and cooked in banana leaves). For a simple fish, you should ask for pescado which can be grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs (apanado) or served with a sauce. An interesting local speciality is cuy (pronounced: cooee). This is roasted guinea pig which some people say tastes like chicken, others, like cooked cardboard!

Maize and potatoes feature in many dishes, particularly soups. Locro de papas is cheese and potato soup, sancocho de yucca is vegetable soup with cassava or manioc root and sopa de bola verde is vegetable banana dumpling soup. Typical snacks are empanadas (little fried pasties usually filled with meat, chicken, cheese or even prawns) and patacones (fried vegetable banana chips, served as a side dish).

Much of Ecuador's food is not too hot and spicy but you will find a bowl of aji (which is a chilli or hot pepper sauce) on most tables which can be added to spice things up.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. You might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other egg dishes. Our tour leaders will do their best to organise interesting vegetarian

alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drinks

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Please note however that fruit juices are sometimes made with unboiled tap water and could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order juice 'con leche' (with milk) instead. The choice of different juices is incredible e.g. mora (blackberry), piña (pineapple), naranjilla (mixture between mandarin and orange), maracuya (passion fruit), tomato de argol (like a tomato but with a harder texture), guanabana (custard apple) and curia (which has a great taste – just try it!).

In Ecuador some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be a bar within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums, aguadiente (a kind of ouzo) and imported Chilean and Argentine wine can sometimes be found cheaply. There are various brands of beers including Pilsener, Club and Biela.

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