

EXPLORA GALÁPAGOS:

Aventura Compartida

7 días descubriendo las

Adventure

9d/8n

Quito - Sta. Cruz - Floreana - Isabela



condortravel

PRE TOUR TMLA 2024

9-17 SEPTEMBER

GALAPAGOS ISLAND HOPPING ADVENTURE

9D/8N

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Quito

Transfer in Quito with English speaking assistance
Check in at your hotel

Accommodation: Hotel Patio Andaluz (or similar)

Includes: Transportation, English speaking guide.

Meal: None

Day 2 – Quito

Full day Quito hands on experience

Ecuador is history, fascinating indigenous cultures, slow winding rivers and lush tropical forests, spectacular snowcapped volcanoes and some of the most exciting wildlife on earth, and also amazing experiences!

The place to start is the city's impressive colonial centre, the reason Quito was the first city to be named a world heritage site.

First on the agenda is a walk through the main plaza, the 'Plaza de la Independencia', where you will see the Government Palace, the Cathedral, and some of the most important churches built around the XVI and XVII centuries, including the San Francisco Monastery, a building begun only 5 days after the founding of the city.

Then go off the beaten path and discover the sights, sounds, and smells of Ecuador's capital on a tour that takes you to visit to a traditional food market.

This fabulous market is known for its fresh medicinal herbs, traditional cleansings, fresh juices, and local produce.

Visit a fruit juice stall to make your own juice – from the usual orange and mango to the unusual such as babaco and tree tomato.

Take part on a traditional herbal cleansing with a local “curandero” and leave with a greater understanding and appreciation for Ecuadorian food and Quito market life - essential to feeling like a local.

To end our visit in the old town, it is time for our chocolate experience! Ecuador’s unique equatorial climate provides the perfect environment for growing the world’s finest cocoa - Cacao Arriba. Cocoa has been revered in Latin America for over 5,000 years. Spanish explorers loved it so much they called it the ‘Food of the Gods’.

Our chocolate experience starts with the history of cocoa in Ecuador, followed by a chocolate tasting. Later we will make the 45 minute journey northwest to the equatorial line, where we will walk the rim of the extinct Pululahua volcanic crater. After lunch, we will visit the “Intiñan Museum” located right on the Equator. Here you will have the chance to plant your feet in two hemispheres at the same time!

To close our amazing day, we will visit Casa Agave, listed as one of the best experiences in the middle of the world, in approximately 1:30min. You can see the true spirit of Ecuador

It is a project that has been researching, innovating and enhancing the culture of agave andino for more than 15 years. An encounter with the depths of the Ecuadorian identity. First agave experience museum in South America, where you will have the chance to visit the:

- Museum
- Botanical garden of agaves
- Distillery
- Tasting

Back to your hotel in the afternoon.

Accommodation: Hotel Patio Andaluz (or similar)

Includes: Transportation, English speaking guide, excursion, entrance fees.

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3 – Quito – Galapagos

Transfer to Quito Airport in order to take our flight to Galapagos

Local flight to Baltra (no included)

Arrival in the Galapagos Islands – Kayak – Giant Tortoises

Today we arrive in Baltra Island, the gateway to the Galapagos. This tiny island was a military base during the Second World War and hosts the Islands’ principal airport. The airport was built using the most advanced environmental techniques to reduce emissions and energy use, some of which you’ll notice as you walk through the facility. This was the first ecological airport in the world.

We dive into our adventure as soon as we arrive! We enter the airport through a special VIP lounge where you will have a chance to change clothes, put on some sunscreen and get a cool drink before we transfer to the Itabaca Channel to explore its spectacular turquoise waters. We will have a chance to kayak, snorkel and stand up paddleboard (SUP), as well as encountering some of the most famous Galapagos wildlife such as blue-footed boobies, sea lions, brown pelicans, a variety of herons and white-tipped reef sharks.

There’s no better introduction to the Galapagos than to get on the water as soon as possible! We will glide through beautiful red mangrove forests and along lava rock cliffs on water so clear we can see the marine life in the shallows. Our ocean (sit on top) kayaks come in doubles or singles, and life jackets are provided.

A support boat will escort us throughout our water activities to ensure safety and to provide water, snacks and towels between activities. From the Itabaca Channel we head up to the Santa Cruz highlands to a private reserve that borders the National Park, where we can see the famous Giant Tortoises roaming in the wild.

After lunch we drive to Puerto Ayora town.

Accommodation: Hotel Ikala (or similar)

Includes: Transportation, English speaking guide, Arrival transfer with Local English speaking guide, excursion

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 4 – Galapagos

Navigation with a Galapagueño Fisherman

Set out to sea on the motor boat with an ex-fisherman, his welcoming crew and a knowledgeable naturalist guide for a full day excursion to experience the waters near one of the Galapagos' more remote islands. Recent history has transformed the Galapagos Islands, reshaping the local economy from one of subsistence fishing and small-scale agriculture to one where tourism employs some 40% of locals. We have worked with local fishermen to transform their careers from harvesting sea life to introducing the Galapagos' rich marine ecosystem to visitors while also helping to preserve them. Their livings are now made from sustainable tourism rather than fishing.

You will have the chance to admire and experience the biodiversity unique to this area of the island to visit. We'll enjoy a variety of marine activities including swimming with sharks as well as snorkeling where we can observe colorful fish and sea cucumbers (among other species). The journey takes place among extraordinary landscapes that combine sparkling turquoise waters and sand. All the while, we can enjoy watching wildlife in its natural state.

This full day excursion includes snorkeling and swimming opportunities.

**** Excursions are subject to availability and may change without prior notification**

Accommodation: Hotel Ikala (or similar)

Includes: Transportation, Local English speaking guide, excursion

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 5 – Santa Cruz - Floreana

After a breakfast we depart for Floreana Island. We will leave early for our two hour speedboat crossing. This peaceful island is home to the Galapagos' smallest human population. Because only 150 people call Floreana home, it is the least developed and most natural of the four inhabited islands. It was the first inhabited islands in the Galapagos, and descendants of the original population still live here. Once a pirates' lair, the island's history is full of mystery and legends about its first inhabitants.

During our stay, we will be hiking, learning about the fascinating local history and also seeing some of the Galapagos' special wildlife. We may see giant tortoises, frigate birds, sea lions, Darwin's finches, petrels and marine iguanas, among other species. Upon arrival on Floreana, we will take an open-air 'chiva bus' to Floreana Lava Lodge, which overlooks one of the Galapagos' most beautiful and secluded bays. The lodge is operated by Claudio Cruz, a descendant of one of the Island's original inhabitants. We are lucky to be hosted

by Claudio, as he is able to share his deep knowledge of the Island and its history with us, as well as to meet several of his family members during our stay, giving us special insight into life on Floreana.

Once we are settled in, we can walk or kayak to nearby Black Beach for some snorkeling. After time in the water to whet our appetites, we will walk to a restaurant in the nearby village for lunch. The restaurant is part of a community tourism initiative that Tropic helped to develop and has been working with since 2012. In the afternoon, we set out once again to walk to La Loberia, a sea lion breeding ground. Once there, we can enjoy more snorkeling and swimming in the calm, bright water with sea turtles, sea lions, stunning rays and an abundance of tropical fish. Later we will return to the lodge (30 minute walk) for a warm shower. We will watch the spectacular sunset and then head to the village for dinner where we will celebrate another incredible day in the Galapagos.

Accommodation: Lava Lodge

Includes: Transportation, Local English speaking guide, excursion

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6: Exploring the Highland of Floreana

After breakfast, we leave to explore the Floreana highlands on our open-air bus (chiva) – an unbeatable, historic, and comfortable way to see the island. On the way, our naturalist guide will share the colorful history of some of Floreana's first inhabitants, such as the Wittmers (whose descendants still live on the Island), the 'Baroness,' and the pirates that once visited here. They will also tell us about the "Enigma of Floreana," involving the mysterious deaths of several of the Island's inhabitants. The enigma is a riddle from the 1930's that has never been solved and was featured in the film "The Galapagos Affair."

After driving into the highlands, we reach Asilo de la Paz (Peace Haven) where our hike begins. We walk up to this historic site, explore the pirate caves, and visit the freshwater spring that provides water for the entire Island, with our guide sharing stories and history along the way.

As we traverse the hillside, we can expect to see giant tortoises lumbering around in the vegetation or even on the trail. We depart Asilo de Paz walking down through a rural area where the local people grow produce for their own consumption. This is a fascinating example of how the island people survived in this remote place and over the years were able to develop an understanding of the local environment and now work to preserve their unique agricultural knowledge. On our way back to the coast, we will make a stop at Claudio's farm, La Primavera, where we will watch the extraordinary behavior of the frigate birds who 'dance' as they wash their salty wings in the fresh water lake on the farm. With a little bit of luck, we may be able to see males puffing up the red pouches on their chests in an attempt to attract females. We'll also see where some of the delicious fruit and vegetables that we've been eating at the lodge come from.

We will prepare a very special barbecue lunch, featuring delicious Cruz family recipes!
In the afternoon return to the hotel.

Accommodation: Lava Lodge

Includes: Transportation, Local English speaking guide, excursion

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7: Floreana – Isabela

Biking to the Wall of Tears – Tintoreras Islet

Today we take an early morning speed boat and transfer to Isabela Island where we will check into our hotel. Our Isabela adventure begins with a tour to the local giant tortoise-breeding center and on the way we may catch a glimpse of pink flamingos feeding in a lake. Once at the Center our guides will explain the process of breeding and then releasing into the wild these giant slow moving creatures whose Spanish name (meaning saddle) gave the Islands their present title. The breeding center is an important conservation tool and it is here that the islands' giant tortoise population is presently recovering.

In the afternoon we will continue with our tour to the Tintoreras, a group of small islands near the village of Puerto Villamil, that are named after the white tipped 'Tintoreras' reef sharks that swim in these calm waters. A Galapagos in miniature on the Tintoreras you will see almost all of the archipelago's iconic wildlife: white tipped sharks, sea lions, turtles, rays, penguins, and of course pelicans and blue footed boobies. You will have a chance to snorkel in the bay – and don't be surprised if some of the penguins or sea lions jump in to play alongside you in the water.

Accommodation: Isamar Hotel (or similar)

Includes: Transportation, Local English speaking guide, excursion

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 8: Isabela

Hiking Sierra Negra Volcano

Volcanic eruptions created all the Galapagos Islands, and you will have a chance to see this geologic process first-hand as we explore Isabela, one of the archipelago's youngest and most volcanically active islands. We have the whole day to explore the Isabela highlands, and we start by hiking up to the crater of the massive Sierra Negra volcano, and then onward to the rim of the Volcan Chico. This fascinating walk usually begins with some morning fog and drizzle, which sometimes persists in the shadow of the volcano, adding to its mysterious character. Despite the drizzle, we may see Galapagos Hawks, finches, flycatchers and Short Eared Owls en route.

When we reach the rim of the Sierra Negra crater, the second largest in the world after the Ngorongoro in Tanzania, we will see the reward for our efforts. The crater is so large, and the views so expansive, photos can't do it justice, but bring your binoculars and camera anyway!

Later, as we head towards Volcan Chico, we may get the feeling we are walking on Mars due to the alien landscape. And while the land appears to be utterly desolate, a closer look will reveal small lizards scurrying about among the rocks. From the crater's rim, we will enjoy more amazing views along with lava tubes and fumaroles.

After Volcan Chico and its extreme landscape, we will be able to relax in the shade of a lovely "jaboncillo" tree, and enjoy our box lunch while taking in the spectacular and expansive views over the central and northern parts of the Island. In the distance, we will be able to see Fernandina, Pinzon and Santa Cruz Islands. We then head back down to complete our day of hiking (16 kilometers / 9.94 miles in total) and relax on the beaches of Puerto Villamil.

Accommodation: Isamar Hotel (or similar)

Includes: Transportation, Local English speaking guide, excursion

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 9: Isabela – Santa Cruz – Baltra

Today we take an early morning speed boat back to Santa Cruz and then transfer by land to Baltra for our onward journey or flight back to Quito to start engines for the TMLA show.

Includes: Transportation, Local English speaking guide

Meal: Box Breakfast

*****END OF SERVICES *****

HOTELES:

City	Hotel
Quito	Patio Andaluz or similar
Galapagos - Santa Cruz	Ikala Galapagos or similar
Galapagos - Floreana	Lava Lodge
Galapagos - Isabela	Isamar or similar

Included:

Accommodation, meals as per the itinerary, Airport VIP services on arrival, Transfers& ground transportation, Boat excursions with snorkeling on a sharing basis, Speed boat transfer on a sharing basis, Kayak, SUP and snorkeling equipment, English-speaking naturalist guide, Activities and visits detailed in the itinerary

Not Included:

Flights (all flights from mainland Ecuador to the Galapagos Islands can be arranged upon request), Galapagos National Park entrance fee (US \$200 per adult/\$50 per child under 12), tourist transit card (US \$20 per person), Beverages, Laundry service, Insurance (prior to your journey please ensure your travel insurance is valid in your country of origin), Gratuities

Special reduced price apply for buyers, for more information please contact:

- Diego Escobar
- Commercial Manager – Condor Travel Ecuador
- diego-escobar@condortravel.com

Gracias!



condortravel

www.condortravel.com

ECUADOR

Quito: Pasaje Sanchez Melo OE1-37 girar a la izquierda en la 1a. calle y seguir.

Galápagos: Av. Charles Darwin girar a la izquierda en la 1a. calle y seguir.

Belicón: Pelican Bay.

Phone: (+593) 022-22400-21831 / (+593) 022-22400-68350