



The Best Of Ecuador and Galapagos - 12 Days (#20165)

Note: Price printed on this PDF is valid until **08-07-2025** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

Overview

A truly unique lifetime adventure blending the spectacular geography of Ecuador's mainland of active volcanoes, immense canyons, vast tropical rain forests and powerful waterfalls, with the enchanted Galapagos Islands, where the magic diversity of fearless animals flourishing in a volcanic ecosystem create an awe-inspiring atmosphere. This is a perfect combination that includes a wide variety of outdoor activities, while discovering the highlights of Ecuador in the same journey.

Departure on Sundays.

Trip Highlights

Quito-Isabela Island-Santa Cruz-Baños-Pimpilala-Papallacta

Detailed Itinerary



Day 01

Day 01: Arrive Quito

Welcome to Quito! The largest, best-preserved colonial city of America – declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. The city is considered the Cultural Capital of South America and is located on the equator in a valley at the foothills of the Pichincha volcano. Depending on arrival time, you can spend your day exploring the old town of Quito and the surrounding area. GGTS can help you to organize a day trip (please request in advance). In the evening, one of our trip leaders will meet you at the hotel's lobby for a welcome briefing at 18:00 hours. At this time, we will discuss the details and questions you may have regarding the adventure. Our first day is an acclimation and information day.

Meal: No Meal

Day 02

Day 02: Arrive in Galapagos-Isabela Island

Today we get ready to explore the most amazing archipelago in the Pacific coast and the place where Charles Darwin based his theory on the evolution of species. We will board a morning flight from Quito to the island of Baltra. Once we arrive, we head to the town of Puerto Ayora, the largest town in the Galapagos. From here we will take a quick boat to the largest island in the archipelago and where most of the volcanic activity in the Galapagos is reported. The island was formed by six shield volcanoes, Alcedo, Cerra Azul, Darwin, Ecuador, Sierra Negra and Wolf; five of them are still active which makes the island one of the most volcanically active places on earth.

Galapagos Islands are located 600 miles (965.6 km) from the coast of Ecuador, it is important to understand that you will have to take air, road and sea transportation to get there.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 03

Day 03: Snorkel at Lava Tunnels

Explore the amazing formations of lava created by the last eruptions of the volcanic island along the seashore. This magical place has historically been filmed by BBC and National Geographic for their documentaries. It is a labyrinth of lava arches made of crystal-clear water full of sea turtles, eagle rays, sea lions, sharks and more. The turtles navigate their own highway from the mangroves to the open sea through “Los Tuneles”. Here, we will have the best snorkelling opportunity with all these beautiful animals, including the curious Galapagos penguins playing around.



Before or after the trip, you can enjoy some optional activities such as snorkelling at “Concha de Perla”, biking or just relaxing on the exotic white-sand beaches of Isabela Island. We recommend you take some time to visit the giant tortoise breeding centre located walking distance from the hotel.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 04

Day 04: Hike in Sierra Negra and Kayak in Las Tintoreras

After driving up from Puerto Villamil to the trail head, we will prepare our backpacks for the hike into a young forest ecosystem, a world of recent geological history. Our destination is the rim of Sierra Negra Crater, an active volcano which last erupted in June 2018. Upon arrival, we take in breathtaking views and explore the circumference of the massive, lava-filled crater, a caldera that is over six miles across at its widest point. If we feel energetic enough, we can continue our hike to Volcan Chico, a secondary crater that has a wild landscape of puffing fumaroles and colourful lava formations; great examples of the dramatic geological events that have formed the Galapagos Islands over millennia. In the afternoon we will visit Tintoreras Islet, located at a short distance from Puerto Villamil and home to a great variety of wildlife. Its turquoise, crystalline waters are inhabited by white-tipped reef sharks, Galapagos Penguins, marine turtles and sea lions. One of its beaches, surrounded by mangroves, is one of the few sites where marine iguanas can reproduce successfully.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 05

Day 05: Charles Darwin Station - Highlands

In the morning, traverse from Isabela to Santa Cruz Island to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station. Once we arrive, we will check in at the hotel. We will then visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to Learn more about many of the endemic species seen in the wild, as well as the ongoing conservation and management efforts on the Galapagos Islands. In the afternoon, we will head to the ‘Primicias’ reserve in the highlands of Santa Cruz, home to the famous Galapagos tortoises. Hiking through Primicias’ beautiful landscape with these lumbering giants is an unforgettable experience! We will also see other highland wildlife such as pintail ducks, egrets, flycatchers, finches and frigatebirds, which gather to wash the salt off their feathers at a freshwater lake. Afterwards, return to Puerto Ayora to spend the evening in Galapagos’ most populous town.

Meal: Breakfast



Day 06

Day 06: Flight back to Quito

After our final breakfast on the Galapagos Island and the last photos taken of sea lions, we have a transfer to Baltra's airport in time to catch the flight back to the mainland.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 07

Day 07: Free Day in Quito

Today is a day on your own to explore the beautiful surroundings of Quito, GGTS can help you to organize a day trip.

COLONIAL CITY TOUR & THE EQUADOR LINE

MINDO CLOUD FOREST

OTAVALO MARKET FAIR

Meal: Breakfast

Day 08

Day 08: Hike in Cotopaxi

After breakfast, we leave Quito driving southwards along the gorgeous Avenue of Volcanoes, getting the chance to see the colourful Andean fields. On our way, we will reach 12,000 feet. (3657 meters). After arriving at the Cotopaxi National Park, we will go hiking around Limpiopungo lagoon of the foothills of the Rumiñahui volcano. From here, we have the best views of Cotopaxi, the highest active volcano in the world.

In the afternoon we continue our drive towards the Llanganates National Park, known as the sacred mountain, until we reach the town of Baños, located at the entrance of the Amazon. Here we can enjoy the best night life by drinking cocktails and dancing salsa.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 09

Day 09: Hiking in the Cloud Forest



This morning, we cross country mountain biking from the Llanganates National Park down to the Pastaza River Canyon, enjoying the beauty of the special cloud rainforest climate. The road brings us through some Andean farms and a great canyon with many waterfalls.

While descending into the jungle, we will have a breath-taking view of Baños, a town well known for its spectacular location right at the foothills of the Tungurahua volcano, which has been active since 1999. The volcano is the main attraction of this region. In the afternoon we will have some time to explore the town and go to The Swing of the End of the World, where the winner of the 2014 National Geographic photo contest took his photo.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 10

Day 10: Canyoning in the Amazon - Pimpilala

This morning, we will hit the road of the waterfalls. The first stop will be at the Bride's Veil waterfall, where we will take the Tarabita (cable car) to get across the Pastaza River. Then we will hike down to the Pailon del Diablo waterfall, the second highest in Ecuador.

Later, we will go deeper into the jungle inside the Llanganates National Park. The name "llanganates" comes from "beautiful mountain" in the local native language. Here, 600 years ago, the Incas hid their golden treasures. Many explorers have spent years looking for these treasures, some have even disappeared with no luck in this dense pristine jungle.

During a hike through the tropical rainforest, we will climb through several waterfall canyons. Our local native guide will teach about the incredible flora and fauna that thrive in this unequalled habitat.

We will spend the night at the Local Basic Jungle Lodge run by a kichwa indigenous family.

NOTE – This is a very basic accommodation; you will have your own room but will have to share the bathroom. The rooms are very clean, and all the beds have mosquito nets. There is no electricity in the room but there is a social area where you can have access to power to charge your batteries.

Meal: Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

Day 11

Day 11: Rafting in the Amazon

We greet the day by preparing our gear to paddle the wild waves of the Jatunyacu River, located just a 5-minute drive from the homestead. The beauty of this river will inspire you and reveal the magic of the Amazon rainforest. After a very important safety briefing from our rafting guides, we will start our class III rafting expedition down the Jatunyacu River,



well known for its clear waters and awesome rapids. We will have a lot of fun playing some games and exploring one of the canyons. The end of the journey offers us a stop for a picnic, prepared by our guides.

We conclude our day with a drive back up to the Andes to a spot called Papallacta, where we will stay the night and recharge in the volcanic hot springs high amid the cool Andes.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 12

Day 12: Departure

International departures, end of services. Take with you memories and photos and leave a piece of your heart, as you will want to return to Ecuador soon to experience more of this enchanted land. We wish you a “buen viaje”!

Meal: Breakfast

Inclusions

Transportation: Comfortable land and sea transportation.

Accommodation based in double occupancy: 5 star hotel in Quito, 3+ star hotels in Galapagos, 3 star hotel in Baños, home stay in the Amazon, 4 star spa resort in Papallacta.

Meals: 10 Breakfast, 5 Lunch, 1 Dinner.

Activities: Hiking to the top of Sierra Negra active volcano, snorkelling and kayaking in Tintoreras, snorkel at the lava tunnels, visit the Charles Darwin research station, hiking in Santa Cruz highlands, 3 hours hiking in Cotopaxi national park in the Andes, 3 hours biking in the Ilanganates national park, 4 hours white-water rafting on Jatunyacu river in the amazon rainforest, 3 hours canyoning at Pimpilala waterfalls, bird watching and hiking exploration in the cloud forest, soaking in Papallacta hot springs, share time with local indigenous people in the amazon, making chocolate, salsa lesson.

Gear: For snorkelling: fins and mask, trekking or hiking: black diamond trekking sticks, biking: trek x-caliber mtb (hydraulic disc brakes, front rock shock suspension), Bontrager helmets, biking gloves, canyoning: rubber boots, ropes, black diamond harnesses, rafting: Aire and nrs 7-people- rafts, nrs life jackets, nrs paddles, splash jackets.

Trip Leader: certified expert English-speaking adventure trip leader and local guides.

Exclusions

International flights.

Galapagos Ingala Card – AUD 46.



Galapagos National Park Fee – AUD 230.

Isabela Pier Fee – AUD 23.

Airport transfers.

Travel insurance (suggested).

Meals not described in the itinerary – estimated budget AUD 460.

Tips for guides, drivers and hotels. – estimated budget AUD 414.

Note

Hotels Used OR Similar

Quito - Sheraton Quito Hotel or similar.

Isabela Island - Albemarle or similar.

Santa Cruz - La Isla or similar.

Baños - Casa de Luis or similar.

Pimpilala - Amazon Homestay.

Papallacta - Papallacta Spa Resort.

Departure on Sundays.

Please note that the prices are starting from and that upon sending a new request with specific date we will send the applicable rate and availability.

Program Touring / Guide

Small group tour

Periodic Departure



28 Nov, 2024 to 31 Dec, 2025

2-3 pax

AUD 8,833 P P twin share

AUD 10,419 P P single

ON REQUEST

4-5 pax

AUD 7,036 P P twin share

AUD 8,622 P P single

ON REQUEST

6 plus

AUD 6,384 P P twin share

AUD 7,970 P P single

ON REQUEST

