



Immerse Ecuador and Galapagos - 16 Days (#20419)

Note: Price printed on this PDF is valid until **08-01-2025** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

Overview

Jump right into the action with this adrenaline filled tour around Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands! Discover Ecuador mainland diversity as you bike down the slopes of an active volcano, horseback ride across colourful Andean fields, climb up waterfalls in the Amazon rainforest, fight large waves by rafting on the Jatunyacu River, trek to the rim of Cuicocha Crater Lake and soak in Papallacta volcanic hot springs. Share time with two local indigenous communities, learning all about their life-style and culture in the Andes and Amazon regions. Hop on a plane to reach the fascinating Galapagos Islands, where you will hike, bike, kayak and snorkel among sea lions, iguanas, giant tortoises, birds and a myriad of tropical fish, surrounded by the volcanic landscapes of this world-class naturalist heaven. A perfect outdoor adventure for dynamic travellers searching for a life-changing experience!

Trip Highlights

Quito-Banos-Amazon-Volcanic Hot Springs-Otavalo-Quito-San Cristóbal-Isabela-Sierra Negra-Puerto Villamil-Santa Cruz-Quito



Detailed Itinerary

Day 01

Day 01: Arrive Quito

Welcome to Quito! The biggest, best-preserved colonial city of America was declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. The city is considered the Cultural Capital of South America and the second most important city of the old Inca Empire. Depending on arrival time, you can spend your day exploring the old town of Quito and the surrounding area. We can help you to organize a day trip. In the evening, one of our trip leaders will meet you at the hotel for a welcome briefing and there will be plenty of time to discuss details and answer any questions you may have regarding the adventure. Our first day is an informational and acclimation day.

Hotel: Sheraton Quito Hotel or similar.

Meal: No Meal

Day 02

Day 02: Trek to Cotopaxi National Park

After breakfast, we leave Quito driving southwards along the beautiful Avenue of Volcanoes, while getting the chance to see the colourful Andean fields. On our way we will reach 12,000 feet. After arriving at the Cotopaxi National Park, we will go hiking around Limpiopungo lagoon of the foothills of the Ruminñahui volcano, from here we will have the best views of the Cotopaxi Volcano, which is the highest active volcano in the world.

In the afternoon we will continue our drive towards the Llanganates National Park, which is 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.

Hotel: Casa de Luis or similar.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 03

Day 03: Biking in Llanganates National Park

This morning, we mountain biking from the Llanganates National Park down to the Pastaza River Canyon, enjoying the beautiful scenery of the cloud forest. The road brings us through some Andean farms and a beautiful canyon with many



waterfalls.

While descending into the jungle, we will have a breathtaking view of Baños. This town is very well known for its spectacular location right on the foothills of the Tungurahua volcano, active since 1999, which is the main attraction of this region. In the afternoon we will have some time to explore the town and then we will enjoy the best nightlife.

Hotel: Casa de Luis or similar.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 04

Day 04: Road of Waterfalls and Canyoning in the Amazon

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 the local native language and means "beautiful mountain". 600 years ago, the Incas hid here their golden treasure. Explorers spent many years looking for this treasure, but some of it has disappeared in this thick pristine jungle.

During a 3-hour hike through the tropical jungle, we will climb along several white-water waterfalls. This is a humid and warm area which will make our experience even more demanding, so get ready to wear your rubber boots and enjoy the magnificence of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Our local native guide will tell us about the incredible nature and wildlife we will see. We will spend the night at the Local Basic Jungle Lodge.

Hotel: Amazon Homestay.

Meal: Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

Day 05

Day 05: Jatunyacu River Rafting Volcanic Hot Springs

We will greet the day by preparing our gear to paddle the wild waves of the Jatunyacu River, located one hour away from the entrance of the Llanganates National Park. 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 clean water 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 will conclude our day with a drive back up to the Andes, stopping to visit the paradise of hummingbirds in Guango Reserve and finally continuing up to the volcanic hot springs resort, where we will spend the night.

Hotel: Termas Papallacta.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 06

Day 06: Hiking in Cloud Forest, Hummingbirds Paradise and Otavalo Market

After a 2-hour bird-watching tour through the cloud forest, we will travel across the Andes to visit Otavalo and its amazing indigenous handicraft market. Here, we will have a stop for shopping or exploring the market. Later in the afternoon, we will be transferred to the slopes of Imbabura volcano to enjoy a nice cultural encounter with the local people and learn the traditional way of living while sharing the daily activities with the families. In the evening, we will take part in an organic cooking lesson by using the local products. Our accommodation for the night will be a homestay for different local families of the San Clemente community.

Hands on cultural experience – AJ Sustainable Sacha WarmiKuna women project.

For lunch, we will head to Pijal, a small village located in the heart of the Andes to visit one of the AJ sustainable projects called Sacha WarmiKuna (women from the mountain). This is one fantastic effort developed by AJ and the local women with the main purpose to support their families and encourage the position of the women in the local society, providing them an alternative side work beside housekeeping, as a new option for an in-come. Once at the project you will experience an unforgettable cultural encounter, immersing yourself in the true spirit of the South American woman and their skills for textiles and a deep culinary knowledge coming from the past generations. You will be part of the preparation of “Aji”, a local spicy salsa which is part of their identity, you will also share precious time with them and a tasty traditional lunch in which local women have used the fresh products harvested the same day from the surrounding organic fields. Later we will learn more about the weaving process of their textiles. Don't miss the amazing opportunity to have the chance to give back, by buying handmade scarfs here. Later we will arrive at the beautiful, historical hacienda of Pinsaqui where we will stay overnight. Enjoy a typical Andean cocktail as welcome and learn about the history of this place.

Hotel: San Clemente Community

Meal: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 07

Day 07: Cuicocha-Quito



Today our challenge will be a 5-hour hike around the Cuicocha crater lake, with breathtaking views of the active volcano and of the amazing valleys located in Cotacachi-Cayapas ecological reserve. On this trek, we will reach an altitude of 11880 ft and hike 9 miles around the crater.

At the end of our hike, we will take a boat ride to the centre of the crater to observe the activity of this volcano, watching bubbles coming up from the centre of the caldera. In the afternoon we will drive back to Quito.

Hotel: Sheraton Quito Hotel or similar

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 08

Day 08: Travel Day to Galapagos Island (San Cristobal Island)

Today we will get ready to explore the most amazing archipelago in the Pacific coast and the place where Charles Darwin based his theory of the evolution of species. We will board a morning flight from Quito to the island of San Cristóbal. Once we arrive, we will have a transfer to the hotel in the town of Puerto Moreno and a short briefing about the next few days, before the adventure begins.

In the afternoon we will head to “La Loberia”, which is the home beach for large Galapagos sea lions. We can spot them launching over rocks or just lazy dozing in the sand. We will also get to see yellow warbler birds, frigate birds, and several species of Darwin finches along the beach. In between the rocks we can find marine iguanas, which you can only see in Galapagos. We will also have time to go for a refreshing swim, explore the waters with our snorkel equipment and enjoy the beach.

Hotel: Seaside Inn or Similar

Meal: Breakfast

Day 09

Day 09: Snorkel at Kicker Rock and Cerro Brujo

In the morning, we will take a speed boat to Kicker Rock, also known as the Sleeping Lion (Leon Dormido) because of its resemblance. This site is located off the coast of San Cristobal. The remains of a lava cone eroded by the sea, two vertical rocks rising 500 feet above the ocean, form a small channel that is navigable by small boats. This Galapagos Islands natural monument has become a favourite sight due to the many tropicbirds, frigate birds and boobies that fill the sky in this area. Beneath the sea, the crystal waters offer a brilliant show of colourful tropical fish, such as rainbow fish, and sharks, like hammerhead-, reef- and white tip sharks. After lunch, we visited Cerro Brujo beach. This appropriately named island is ripe



with noisy, frolicking, jolly sea lions who will welcome us to their home with open fins. This island also offers great snorkelling opportunities as well as the chance to see blue-footed and Nazca boobies.

Hotel: Seaside Inn or Similar

Meal: Breakfast

Day 10

Day 10: Exploring Isabela on two wheels

In the morning, we will take a short flight to Isabela Island, the largest island in the archipelago and the place where the most volcanic activity in the Galapagos is reported.

The island is formed by six shield volcanoes, Alcedo, Cerra Azul, Darwin, Ecuador, Sierra Negra and Wolf, five of them still active, and therefore the island is one of the most volcanically active places on earth.

In the afternoon, we will head out on our mountain bikes to explore the beautiful coastline on an exclusive trail, taking us through an incredible ecosystem with a wide variety of wildlife. We will start with a visit to the Wall of Tears, a massive wall built with lava rocks. This site dates back to the '50s, when Isabela was used as a penal colony and prisoners were forced to build the wall to keep them from going mad, because of the isolation they experienced.

As we continue our ride along the coast, we explore pristine, white sand beaches, mangrove forests and lagoons. This area is filled with birdlife, including American oystercatchers, herons, flamingos, finches and many shore birds, as well as the ubiquitous sea lions and marine iguanas.

After dinner we can enjoy a breathtaking sunset on the beach of Puerto Villamil.

Hotel: Albemarle or similar.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 11

Day 11: Hiking to Sierra Negra Volcano and Kayaking in Tintoreras

After driving up from Puerto Villamil to the trailhead, we will prepare our backpacks and 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 October 2005. Upon arrival, we take breathtaking views and explore the circumference of the massive, lava-filled crater, 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. These are great examples of the dramatic geological events that have forged the Galapagos Islands over millennia.



In the afternoon, we will return to Puerto Villamil and we will go kayaking in Tintorerías to watch sea lions, penguins, turtles and marine iguanas.

Hotel: Albemarle or similar.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 12

Day 12: Lava Tunnels Exploration

Today, we explore the amazing formations of lava created by the last eruptions of the Volcanic Island along the seashore. This magical place has been used by the staff of BBC /National Geographic for their documentaries. It is a labyrinth of lava arches inside the breakers with crystal clear water full of huge sea turtles, eagle rays, sea lions, fish, white tipped reef sharks and more. Turtles navigate their own highway from the mangroves to the open sea through “Los Tuneles”. Over here, we will have the best snorkelling opportunity with all these beautiful animals, including the curious Galapagos penguin playing around.

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

Hotel: Albemarle or similar.

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 13

Day 13: Santa Cruz, Charles Darwin Research Station and Highlands

In the morning, we will embark on a fast boat from Isabela to Santa Cruz Island. Once we arrive, we will check in at the hotel. We will have time to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn more about many of the endemic species we met during our adventure, as well as the ongoing conservation and management efforts on the Galapagos Islands.

In the afternoon, we will head to the ‘El Chato’ Reserve in the highlands of Santa Cruz, which is home to the famous Galapagos tortoise. Hiking through El Chato’s beautiful scenery with those lumbering giants is an unforgettable experience! We also see other highland wildlife such as pintail ducks, egrets, flycatchers and finches on our hike. We can also observe frigatebirds which gather to wash the salt off their feathers at a freshwater lake. We will return to Puerto Ayora to spend the evening in Galapagos’ most populous town.

Hotel: La Isla or Similar

Meal: Breakfast



Day 14

Day 14: Santa Cruz Free Day - Optional Diving

Today, you can experience the Galapagos at your pace! As an option, you can go on a self-guided exploration walk through a dry forest to Tortuga Bay (about 3 ½ miles long), a beautiful white sand beach and nesting side to thousands of marine turtles. This beautiful place invites swimming or snorkelling. Alternatively, you can join any of the optional activities (at an extra cost), such as a trip to Floreana Island, Bartolome Island or a scuba-diving day trip, just to mention a few.

Hotel: La Isla or Similar

Meal: Breakfast

Day 15

Day 15: Transfer to Baltra Airport - Flight back to Quito

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

Hotel: Sheraton Quito Hotel or Similar

Meal: Breakfast

Day 16

Day 16: Departure

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

Meal: Breakfast

Inclusions

Transportation: Private and comfortable land and sea transportation.

Accommodation based in double occupancy: 5* hotel in Quito, 3+ star hotel in Banos, home stay in the jungle, 5-star Spa Resort in Papallacta, home stay in San Clemente, 3+ star hotels in Galapagos.

Meals: 16 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 2 Dinners.

Activities: In Ecuador mainland: 2 hours horseback riding on the slopes of the central Andes, 3 hours biking in the



Llanganates national park, 4 hours white-water rafting on Jatunyacu River in the Amazon rainforest, 2 hours canyoning at Pimpilala waterfalls, bird watching and hiking exploration in the cloud forest, soaking in Papallacta hot springs, 5 hours trekking around the loop of Cuicocha active volcano, share time with local indigenous people, salsa lesson, organic cooking lessons with local people in the Andes. In Galapagos: Snorkelling at Kicker Rock and Isla de los Lobos, trekking to the top of Sierra Negra active volcano in Isabela Island, snorkelling in Lava Tunnels, kayaking in Tintoreras, biking to the Wall of Tears, visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, hiking in Santa Cruz highlands.

Gear: In Ecuador mainland: hiking sticks, high-quality MTB (disc brakes, front suspension), helmets, gloves, rubber boots, ropes, 7-people- rafts, life jackets, paddles. In Galapagos: Snorkelling mask and fins, life vest, mountain bikes, helmets, kayaks and paddles.

Trip Leader: Certified expert English-speaking adventure Trip Leader and naturalist local guides in Galapagos National Park.

Exclusions

International flights.

Domestic flights to Galapagos (rates available on request).

Airport transfer (international flights).

Travel insurance (suggested)

Meals not described in the itinerary – estimated budget USD \$360.

INGALA transit card: AUD 46 per person, cash only (subject to change).

Galapagos National Park fee: AUD 460 per person, cash only (subject to change).

AUD 23 pier-use fee at Puerto Villamil (subject to change).

Wetsuit for rent: AUD 23.

Tips.

Note

Hotels Used OR Similar

5* hotel in Quito, 3+ star hotel in Banos-home stay in the jungle, 5-star Spa Resort in Papallacta, home stay in San Clemente, 3+ star hotels in Galapagos.

Departure on Saturday.

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.



Unique Experiences:

- Organic cooking lesson with traditional fresh ingredients, side by side with local people in the heart of the Andes.
- Snorkel with sea turtles, sea lions and hummer head sharks at Kicker Rock, the best site in the Galapagos islands.

Program Touring / Guide

Escorted Experience

Periodic Departure

17 Dec, 2024 to 31 Dec, 2025

2-3 pax

AUD 13,067 P P twin share

AUD 14,516 P P single

ON REQUEST

4-5 pax

AUD 11,122 P P twin share

AUD 12,572 P P single

ON REQUEST

6 plus

AUD 10,002 P P twin share

AUD 11,452 P P single

ON REQUEST

