

“FOLLOW THE FOOTPRINTS OF DARWIN AND FALL IN LOVE WITH AMAZING ECUADOR”

June 13-25, 2022

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1, MON, JUNE 13th WELCOME TO ECUADOR!

Arrive in Quito. Meet and greet with your bilingual guide; then transfer to hotel Mama Cuchara. Two nights, luxury rooms (double occupancy), including breakfast, hotel tax and service charge.



DAY 2, TUE, JUNE 14th QUITO AND COOKING CLASS

Your tour starts with a visit to the « Mercado Central » where you stop at various affiliated stations, your Guide explains about the products and culinary traditions. You buy together the ingredients for the cooking class. You can take pictures, taste some endemic fruits and make your own purchases if desired. You return to Altamira (walking or by transport).

The cooking class begins: we offer you a chef's hat and an apron for preparing the 3 dishes you will cook; which they are traditional Ecuadorian recipes: a « Locro Quiteño », a « Encocado » and a Chocolate Soup. These foods have been chosen specifically because the ingredients used can be found worldwide, so you will have the chance to cook these recipes in your own country.

You are invited to participate and to become a Chef; you have the possibility to manipulate food, peel, cut, season, mix, beat... During the class, the Chef is accompanying and guiding you, he gives explanations and details about the history of each dish and its origin.

After elaborating the 3 courses, you have the pleasure to taste what you prepared yourself with the Chef in a unique place: in the “patio” of a Colonial House. The class ends with a round of applause for all participants.

After your nice lunch made by you, the tour continues exploring the city. Visit the old colonial Quito which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its whitewashed adobe buildings, historic churches and preserved plazas for strolling. You will see how the colonial houses were built and how the “Quiteños” lived hundreds of years ago. Your walk takes you to San Francisco to find the oldest church in Quito and the museum full of history and legends. Later on, visit the main Plaza de la Independencia where the Presidential Palace, the main cathedral and some other important buildings can be appreciated. La Compañía de Jesus church is one of the most beautiful churches in South America or perhaps the world.

Your tour ends and your Guide will take you back to the hotel in the late afternoon.

DAY 3, WED, JUNE 15th
FLY TO GALAPAGOS & BOARD THE M/Y GRAND DAPHNE

One of our Guides will take you to the Quito airport in time for your flight to Galapagos which is typically in the morning and arrives to Galapagos before noon. Transfer to the luxury yacht M/Y Grand Daphne.



Begin your 7-night cruise through Darwin’s “Enchanted Islands”. Accommodations will be in eight cabins (double occupation). All cabins are spacious and feature a private bath/shower and air-conditioning. All meals, lectures and shore excursions are included.



The excursions and cultural programs are led by category “3” Naturalist Guide with years of experience in guiding in the Galapagos Islands.

PM: Highlands of Santa Cruz island

Today you will visit Santa Cruz, the second largest island in the Galapagos. Afterward you'll head up into the highlands for a total change of scenery. Beginning at the coast you will travel across Santa Cruz through the agricultural region and into the misty forests.



This is a lush humid zone containing miconia bushes, scalesia and inactive volcanic cones. Santa Cruz has more endemic plants than any of the other islands and you are likely to see Galapagos giant tortoises in their natural habitat and perhaps even the bright red feathers of a vermillion flycatcher!

(L, D)

DAY 4, THU, JUNE 16th

CRUISING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

AM: Post Office Bay – Floreana Island

In the north side of Floreana, there is the Post Office Bay. Its name gets in 1793, by the Captain James Colnett, who installed a wooden barrel that will serve sailors' as a post office. Seamen will drop-off letters there, in other for another sailor, who would be headed back home, to take the letter with him and deliver it to the recipient. Nowadays, the tradition is still alive and tourist will leave behind letters and postcards, with the hope that other tourists will take them, for free, back to their country. The delivery time can take days, weeks or even up to years! However, there has been cases where the letter arrives back home before the sender does!

Here, it is possible to see Darwin finches, yellow warblers and lava lizards. There are great snorkeling opportunities to see green pacific sea turtles and playful sea lions on main beaches. Moreover, this island is best known for its endemic vegetation: Scalesiavillosa, Leococarpuspinnatus and the Galapagos millwork.

PM: Cormorant Point – Floreana Island.

Cormorant Point on the archipelago's southern Floreana Island, features a golden-greenish beach rich in olivine. It's a collection of volcanic crystals originating in the Earth's mantle and composed of aluminum, silica, magnesium and iron, as well as eroded tuff remains, all of which are responsible for the sand's unique color.

Not far inland, a brackish lake home to a variety of migratory and coastal birds, is also ideal for flamingo-watching. Here, there's quite a large percentage of flamingos living in one single pond considering that the entire population of Galapagos Flamingos amounts to only about 1,200 to 1,500 individuals scattered across the archipelago.

Flamingos tend to migrate from island to island searching for food but never attempting to fly toward mainland Ecuador. Their ancestors come from the Caribbean.
(B, L, D)



DAY 5, FRI, JUNE 17th
CRUISING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

AM: Suarez Point – Espanola Island

At the southeastern tip of Galapagos lies, Española, the Archipelago's oldest island, which is without a doubt a prime sanctuary of birds where you can observe blue-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, red-billed tropic birds, swallow-tailed gulls, the Española mockingbird, and from April to December around 12,000 pairs of waved albatrosses come to nest.

Passengers will observe sea lion colonies, the most colored marine iguanas, lava lizards, and the beautiful scenery of the blowhole where water shoots 75 ft (23 m) up into the air.

The dramatic setting among the black cliffs, the never-ending rolling and crashing of the waves below; the elaborate courtship rituals of the albatross (birds that mate for life) make Española a highlight of your trip.



PM: Gardner Bay – Espanola Island

Located on Española Island, Gardner Bay consists of an extensive beach of whitish coralline sand with several colonies of Galapagos sea lions. Here, we can also observe the endemic mockingbird of Española, usually in small groups defending their territories.

Snorkeling is recommended, especially around the small semi submerged tuff cone located in front of the beach. Where we could see reef white-tipped sharks, rays, sea lions and a variety of colorful reef fish.

(B, L, D)

DAY 6, SAT, JUNE 18th

CRUISING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

AM: Witch Hill – San Cristobal Island

It's located on the northern coast of San Cristobal. Cerro Brujo is an eroding tuff cone that at several locations is composed of AA lava formations. It is a beautiful white sand beach, with an impressive volcanic landscape. Great for snorkeling and sunbathing.

We visit a lagoon where migratory bird species can be seen: black-necked stilts, Ruddy turnstones, whimbrels, other sandpiper species and white- cheeked pintails. Cerro Brujo offers beautiful views of Kicker Rock, the southern part of San Cristobal and the adjacent coast.!

PM: Interpretation Center – San Cristobal Island

A small island, Plaza Sur is nonetheless a place of great beauty, where you will get close to sea lions and onto trails past one of the Galapagos' largest land iguana populations, resting amid cacti and volcanic landscapes colored bright red and green by sesuvium. The island's rugged southern cliffs are an excellent place to spot tropicbirds and swallow-tailed gulls, as well as 'the gentlemen's club', a gathering of male sea lions either too young or too old to be beach masters!

(B, L, D)

DAY 7, SUN, JUNE 19th

CRUISING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

AM: Santa Fe Island.

The visitor site Santa Fe is located on the northeast end of the island bearing the same name. We continue walking through an endemic cactus forest as we search for the endemic Santa Fe land iguana, which is the largest in the islands and distinctively paler, and sea lions.

This island is home to a number of endemic species including Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snake, a variety of finches and one of the four species of Galapagos mockingbirds.



PM: South Plazas Island.

A small island, Plaza Sur is nonetheless a place of great beauty, where you will get close to sea lions and onto trails past one of the Galapagos' largest land iguana populations, resting amid cacti and volcanic landscapes colored bright red and green by sesuvium. The island's rugged southern cliffs are an excellent place to spot tropicbirds and swallow-tailed gulls, as well as 'the gentlemen's club', a gathering of male sea lions either too young or too old to be beach masters!

(B, L, D)

DAY 8, MON, JUNE 20th
CRUISING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

AM: Darwin Bay – Genovesa island

Sandy coral beach with a great viewpoint of the bay. From within the flooded caldera of Tower Island, we set foot onto a sandy beach to be greeted by swallow-tailed gulls often said to be the most beautiful gull in the world. Our short, flat, trail leads us past stands of mangroves and saltbush on which we have our best possible look at nesting red-footed boobies and great frigatebirds. At the tidal lagoon, we may also see the rarest gulls in the world, our very own, endemic lava gulls.



PM: Prince Phillip’s steps – Genovesa Island.

A paradise for bird lovers, about 200,00 Red-footed boobies in their nesting site. Prince Philip’s Steps are named after a visit by the British Monarch in 1964. The 81-foot stairway leads to a narrow stretch of land that opens out onto the plateau surrounding Darwin Bay, that extends forming the north side of the island.

Riding our dinghy to the far side of the caldera, red-billed tropicbirds display vociferously overhead while Galapagos fur seals can be seen on the shoreline. Once at the top of the rocky stairway we are immediately met by Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, mockingbirds, and finches that line our way through a palo santo forest until we arrive at an expansive open lava field. Wedge-rumped storm petrels swarm above the lava where we keep our eyes peeled for short-eared owls.

(B, L, D)

DAY 9, TUE, JUNE 21st
CRUISING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

AM: Sullivan Bay – Santiago island

This visitor site is located at the southeastern portion of Santiago Island and represents a great important geologic interest; it features extensive lava flows which are believed to have been formed during the last quarter of the 19th century. The area is covered by Pahoehoe lava flows (Pahoehoe wick means in Polynesian language “easy to walk”); this type of lava is rare to the rest of the world but is common to the volcanoes of the Galapagos Islands and Hawaii, as they share the same volcanic origin.

You can see the path of lava flow as well as the various igneous rock structures formed from varying rates of flow, temperature of formation and pressure. Visitors can also find pioneer plants and “hornitos”, little ovens formed when bubbles escape from hot lava to form mini-volcanoes.

PM: Buccaneer's Cove – Santiago Island.

This is an amazing location featuring the remains of an eroded shoreline that is home to seabirds, fur seals, and playful sea lions. Its different shapes have been made throughout and erosion process of the salty waves and wind. Espumilla beach is a white-sandy front located in James Bay very popular among visitors.

Espumilla is a typical Ecuadorian dessert made of fruit and eggs which consistency is very similar to a foamy dessert which can also describe the foamy waves of this site. There are mangroves and a small palo santo forest that lead to salty lagoons that are home to wading birds such as flamingoes.

(B, L, D)



DAY 10, WED, JUNE 22nd

GALAPAGOS – QUITO – HACIENDA PINSAQUI “OTAVALO”

AM: Black Turtle Cove

On the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, accessible only by sea, we'll find four species of mangrove crowd from the shore out into the lagoon. We will also see turtles swimming and poking their heads above the surface of the calm waters while fish, rays and small sharks circle below.

White-tipped reef sharks and rays can be seen beneath the boat, as well as sea birds, pelicans, herons and egrets feeding in the cove. This cove has been declared as a “Turtle Sanctuary”.

Transfer to the Baltra airport for your flight back to Quito.

Upon arrival to Quito, transfer to the luxury hacienda Pinsaqui in Cotacachi about 1:30 hours north of Quito. Three nights, (double accommodation) buffet breakfast and local taxes included.

(B, D)

DAY 11, THU, JUNE 23rd
OTAVALO FULL DAY

and towering volcanoes with verdant slopes. Otavalo market, which dates back thousands of years and is famous throughout the Andes for its handicrafts, textiles and tapestries, you will visit the local market and the Poncho market to learn more of this interesting culture that populates the area and dates back to pre-Incan times.

After lunch in one of the traditional restaurants of the area and an old Colonial Hacienda, you will visit some of the Indian villages near by just to learn the local's traditions and lifestyle, an enriching experience. Late return to your hotel.

This land is rich in friendly and colorfully attired indigenous people, historic working haciendas,
(B, L)



DAY 12, FRI, JUNE 24th
CUICOCHA FULL DAY

Early in the morning you will start with a drive to the Cotacachi – Cayapas reserve, place where you will see the beautiful Cotacachi volcano and the blue water lagoon of Cuicocha that is a caldera of this active volcano. Your Guide will take you to admire this beautiful setting located at 11,000 feet of altitude, where you can admire the beauty of the Andes. In the afternoon choose between some activities the guide will offer there.

(B, L)

DAY 13, SAT, JUNE 25th
FLY BACK HOME

Late breakfast, you will have time to discover the Hacienda, and all the Ecuadorian history that took place there. Transfer to the airport for your flight back home.

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End of our services.

The Galapagos schedule and the all touring arrangements herein are subject to change without notice and can be altered by the Galapagos National Park who is the maximum authority in the Galapagos Islands, if so your cruise / tour will be operated in a different sequence, depending on operational considerations. All hotels are subject to availability and can be substituted for similar hotels.

All payments for custom-designed itineraries are non-refundable in the event of cancelation by passengers. Travel insurance is highly recommended.



Notes

- Please remember that the exact route and programme may vary according to weather and ocean conditions and the wildlife we encounter. It's also subject to change without previous notice due mainly to readjustment of the National Park policies and regulations.
- Dry landing: guests step from the dinghy onto rocks or a dock.
- Wet landing: as the dinghy edges onto a sandy beach, guests step into around 20 cm (8 inches) of water and wade ashore.

PACKING CHECK LIST:

- At Night: cruise-casual attire for dining; no shorts, swimwear or tank tops.
- On Shore: shorts or fast-drying slacks, T-shirts, or long sleeved cotton shirts.
- Walking shoes
- Thongs or sandals
- Wind-breaker
- Hat with a brim
- Bathing suits
- Bandana to cover the back of your neck from the sun's rays
- Sunglasses (with holding strap)
- Extra set of glasses or contact lenses + lens solution
- Sun block (SPF30 or higher)
- Insect repellent (Mosquitoes are NOT malaria carrying)
- Grooming kit
- Personal medication
- Multi-purpose Zip-lock bags.
- Camera gear, extra memory and charger (or extra batteries)
- Lip balm (SPF30 or higher)

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