

Galapagos Active

8 days

Experience the natural wonder of the Galapagos Islands, a living paradise – wildlife sanctuary made famous by Charles Darwin and home to unique flora and fauna found nowhere else on Earth.

Swimming

Biking

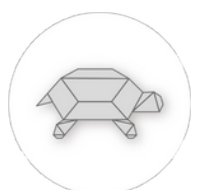
Hiking

Snorkeling

Wildlife

Culture

Beer tasting



Galapagos Active

This 8-day, moderate-level adventure invites you to immerse yourself in the stunning landscapes and vibrant ecosystems of the Galapagos Archipelago, island-hopping through volcanic terrains teeming with wildlife.

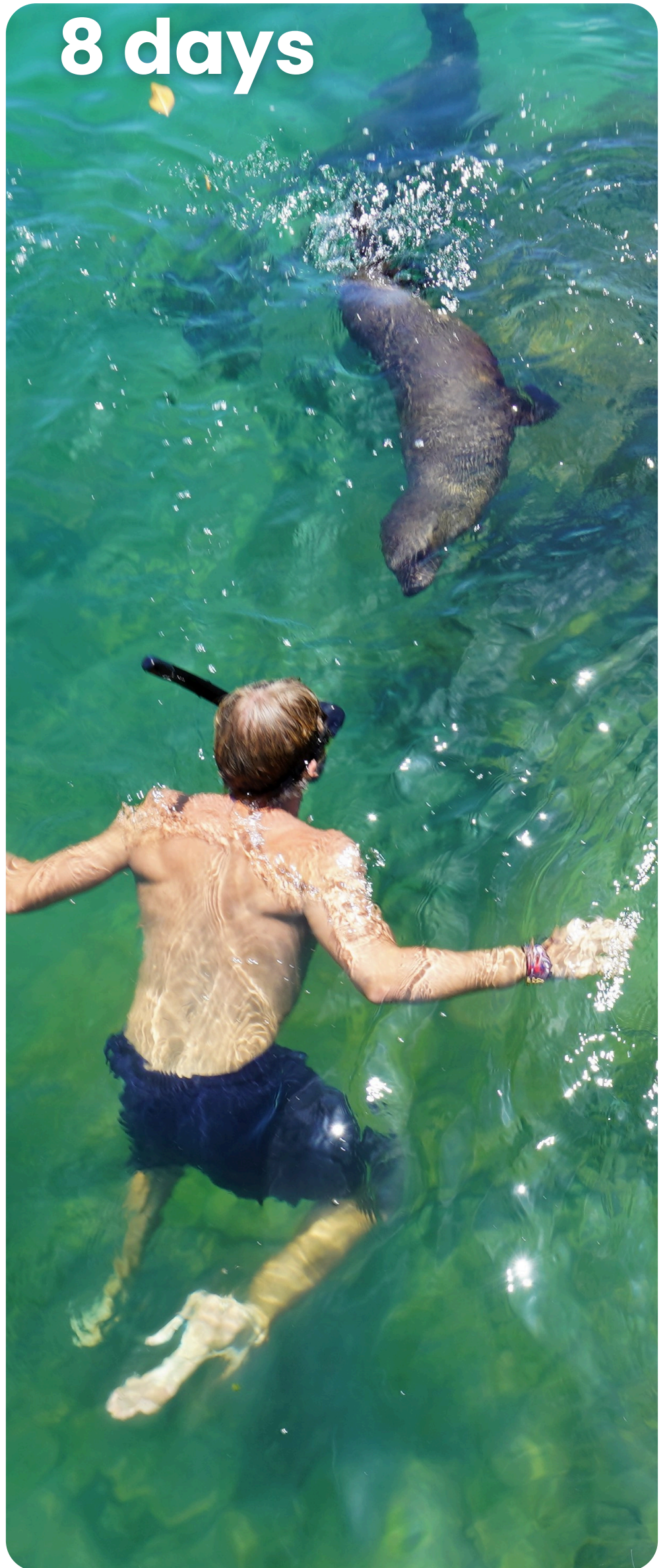
The Galapagos Islands are a global model for conservation, with their fragile ecosystems carefully protected through sustainable practices and efforts to minimize human impact. As you explore, you'll witness conservation in action—whether observing the work to protect giant tortoises in the highlands or the preservation of marine habitats crucial for species like hammerhead sharks and Galapagos penguins.

Activity level : Easy to Moderated

Season: Year Around

Minumum age: 8 years old

8 days



Galapagos Active

This journey includes hiking to volcanic craters, snorkeling in crystal-clear waters among sea turtles, rays, and reef sharks, paddling kayaks alongside playful sea lions and iconic blue-footed boobies, and cycling through lush highlands where giant Galapagos tortoises roam freely. These activities are designed to provide close encounters with the islands' diverse ecosystems while fostering respect for their delicate balance.

On Isabela Island, join a social hour featuring Ecuadorian wine and local flavors, and on Santa Cruz Island, explore the highlands while sampling locally brewed craft beers.

Accommodations include charming eco-friendly hotels that offer comfort while supporting local families and sustainable tourism initiatives. Every aspect of your journey is curated to harmonize with the islands' conservation goals.

Join us in the Galapagos for an unforgettable experience that blends adventure, conservation, and authentic cultural immersion.

8 days



Highlights

Soft to moderate Adventure activities:

- Cycling Adventure on Isabela Island: Explore Isabela Island by bike, pedaling through beautiful trails in search of the island's unique wildlife and stunning volcanic landscapes.
- Swimming with Galapagos penguins: Galapagos penguin, one of the rarest penguin species in the world and found only in this archipelago.
- Trekking Sierra Negra: This active island volcano features one of the largest calderas in the world. Be among the fortunate few to walk across its lava fields, surrounded by a surreal, otherworldly landscape.
- Snorkeling at the Lava Tunnels: Snorkel in the stunning lava tunnels of Isabela Island, where you can observe vibrant marine life including sea turtles, rays, reef sharks, and colorful fish in this unique underwater ecosystem.
- Highlands Hike to See Giant Tortoises: Trek through the lush highlands of Santa Cruz to observe the Galapagos' famous giant tortoises in their natural habitat.

Cultural unique experiences:

- Cultural immersion with locals: Connect with the welcoming local folks throughout the islands, gaining insight into their traditions, stories, and way of life.
- Wine Tasting Social on Isabela Island: After a day of adventure, relax with a social wine-tasting session featuring Ecuadorian wines, perfect for unwinding and reflecting on your experiences.
- Local Brewery Visit on Santa Cruz Island: Enjoy a refreshing craft beer tasting experience at a brewery in the highlands of Santa Cruz, where you can savor unique flavors inspired by the Galapagos.

Accommodation, guides and sustainability:

- Stay in charming hotels, each chosen for its character and connection to the unique surroundings of each island.
- Be accompanied by experienced and knowledgeable naturalist guides from the park who will ensure a safe, informative, and immersive adventure at every step.
- Your journey directly benefits local families and contributes to preserving the culture, nature, and biodiversity of the Galapagos Islands for generations to come.

Arrival Day

Day 1

Today, we will warmly welcome you upon your arrival at Quito Airport and assist you with your transfer to the hotel. This day is dedicated to your acclimatization and personal exploration of the city. Feel free to wander at your own pace, soaking in the rich culture, stunning architecture, and local cuisine that Quito has to offer.

In the evening, at 6 PM, we invite you to join us for an important briefing session. This will be an opportunity to meet your guide and fellow adventurers, as well as to gather essential information and tips for the exciting days ahead.

Overnight: Swissotel or similar

Meals: None



Galapagos Welcome by the Giants of Santa Cruz and refreshing at local brewery

Day 2

After breakfast a representative will meet you in the hotel lobby to assist with your transfer to the airport, ensuring a seamless check-in for your flight to Baltra Island, one of the gateways to the magical Galapagos Archipelago.

Upon landing, you'll pass through the Galapagos migration counters, where a Naturalist Guide from the Galapagos National Park will greet us, assist with luggage and guide you through the process to your next mode of transport—a combination of road and water transfer to Santa Cruz Island.

Our first stop will be the highlands of Santa Cruz, a lush and cooler contrast to the arid coastal regions. Our destination is El Chato Reserve, a haven for giant tortoises in their natural habitat. After a tasteful lunch, you'll have the unique opportunity to observe these gentle giants as they roam freely, graze, or wallow in mud pools, which help protect them from parasites and keep them cool.

During our exploration, your guide will share insights about the tortoises' behavior, diet, and incredible adaptations that allow them to thrive in such a unique environment.

In addition to the tortoises, the highlands are teeming with other wildlife, including vibrant bird species like Galapagos flycatchers, Darwin's finches, and vermilion flycatchers. A highlight of the highlands is a walk through one of the island's lava tunnels, formed by ancient volcanic activity. These subterranean passages are a geological wonder, providing an up-close look at the volcanic origins of the Galapagos. Your guide will explain how these tunnels were created and the role they play in the island's history and ecosystem. Later-on we'll visit a local craft brewery nestled in the highlands. Here, you'll taste a selection of beers brewed with local ingredients, capturing the unique flavors of the Galapagos. You'll learn about the brewing process and how the brewery integrates sustainable practices to operate within the delicate ecosystem of the islands. This family-owned place caters to everyone, featuring a thoughtful selection of alcohol-free beverages.

Once in Puerto Ayora, you'll have time to unwind and explore the town at your leisure. We recommend taking a stroll along the vibrant streets, where you'll find charming cafes, artisan shops, and inviting waterfront restaurants.

For a magical experience, head down to the boat docks after dark to spot blacktip sharks, rays, and other marine creatures attracted by the lights of the harbor. It's the perfect way to end your day in Santa Cruz, blending the town's lively charm with the island's captivating natural wonders.

Overnight: Hotel La Isla or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



A Scenic Bay Tour in Santa Cruz and journey to Isabela Island

Day 3

After breakfast, embark on a scenic boat tour of the bay, observing unique flora and fauna. Take a short navigation and walk along captivating lava trails. Later, enjoy a refreshing swim at Las Grietas water channels, followed by an exhilarating snorkeling session in the bay, searching for colorful fish, rays, sharks, and turtles.

Back to Puerto Ayora, you'll have some free time to enjoy lunch. We will suggest several excellent dining options, many offering fresh seafood and stunning oceanfront views, giving you a great taste of the Galapagos' culinary delights.

In the afternoon, we'll board a water taxi to Isabela Island, the largest and one of the most pristine islands in the archipelago. Isabela's rugged charm and unspoiled landscapes make it a haven for wildlife, including marine iguanas, flamingos, giant tortoises, and even the unique Galapagos penguins, the only penguin species found north of the equator.

Upon arrival on Isabela, our representative will assist you with transfer to your hotel. He'll advise of great places for dinner. You'll check in at your hotel and have the rest of the evening to relax and absorb the tranquil island atmosphere.

Consider taking a leisurely stroll along the beach, or simply unwind as you watch the sunset paint the sky in vivid colors over the Pacific Ocean, a perfect ending to your first day in the Galapagos.

Overnight: Hotel Cormorant or similar

Meals included: Breakfast





Biking through biodiversity: Tortoise trails, wetlands, and a journey of conservation and snorkel the Tintoreras Islet “white tip shark” heaven

Today, we'll dive into the lush cloud forest ecosystem surrounding Baños. A 45-minute drive takes us to Llanganates National Park, where our biking adventure begins at 10,000 feet. After a short uphill warm-up, we'll enjoy a mostly downhill ride to 5,000 feet.

As we cycle, you'll be immersed in the incredible biodiversity of the cloud forest, admiring diverse flora and fauna, and passing by local farms growing exotic fruits like tree tomatoes and passion fruit. The ride is primarily on a paved road with light traffic.

Once we complete our ride, we'll enjoy a refreshing picnic lunch. Our afternoon includes a visit to the famous "Swing at the End of the World," a National Geographic award-winning photo spot, and a ride on the thrilling Tarabita cable car across a gorge (with an optional zip-lining experience available). In the evening, we'll return to our hotel and then head out to experience Baños' vibrant nightlife, perhaps with a local beer tasting at a brewery.

Continuing our ride, we'll stop at Playa del Amor, or Love Beach, known for its striking black lava formations and the largest population of marine iguanas on the island. These unique creatures, found only in the Galapagos, can often be seen basking on the rocks or swimming in the ocean, foraging for algae underwater—a fascinating display of their adaptability.

A key highlight of the day is the visit to the Tortoise Breeding Center, a cornerstone of the Galapagos conservation efforts. Here, we'll learn about the impressive initiatives undertaken to protect and repopulate the islands with giant tortoises, whose numbers were once critically low due to human activity. We'll see tortoises at various stages of their life cycle, from tiny hatchlings to majestic adults, and gain a deeper appreciation for the dedication of those working to ensure their survival.

After a morning of exploration through these rich environments, we'll return to Puerto Villamil for enjoying a well-deserved lunch.

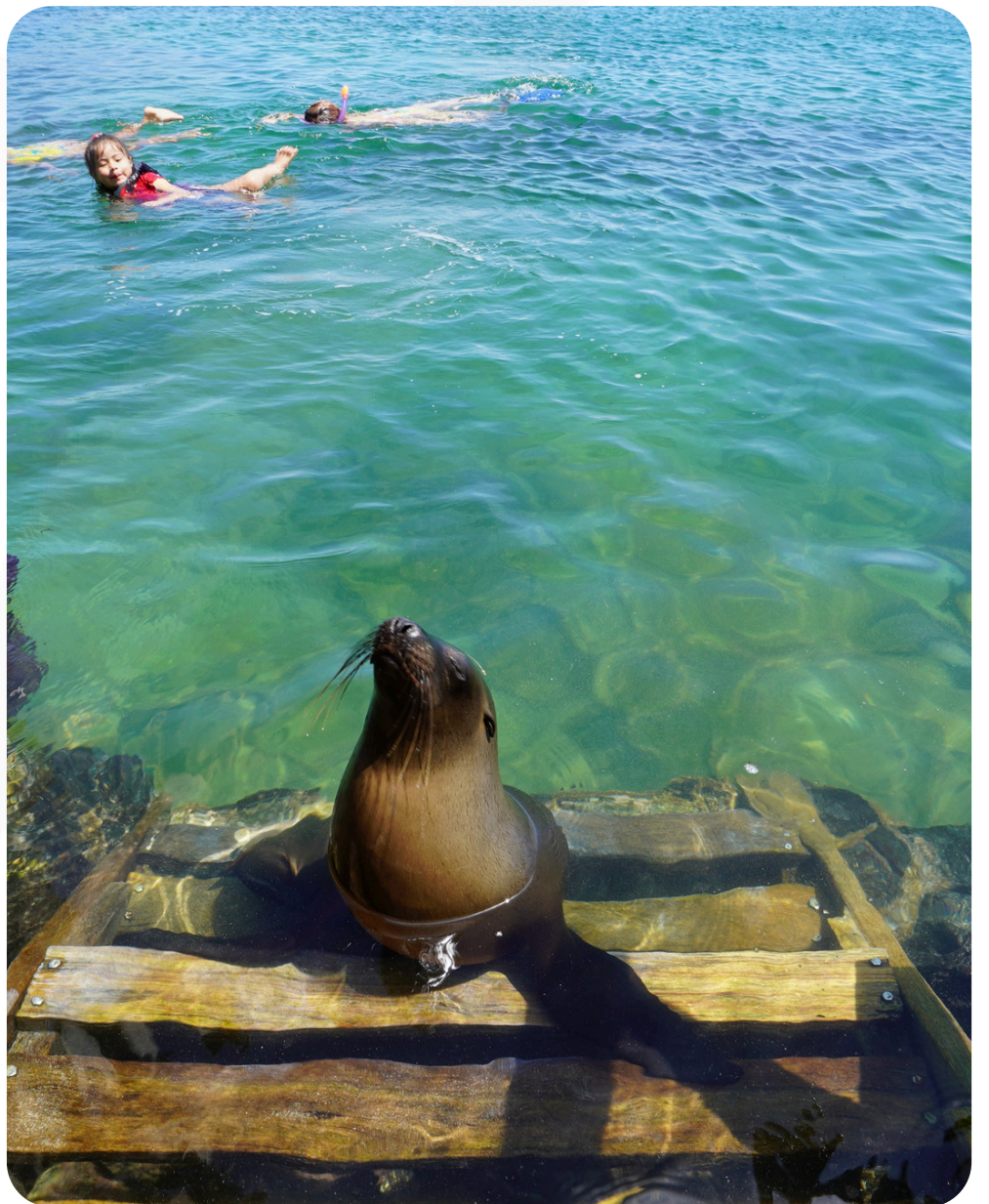
During the afternoon we'll head to Tintoreras Islet, a dramatic formation of jagged volcanic rock set amidst crystal-clear waters. The islet's name derives from the Spanish word "tintorera," referring to the white-tip reef sharks often seen resting in the shallow channels. We'll embark on an unforgettable snorkeling adventure, which are thriving with marine life. Swim alongside playful Galapagos penguins, one of the rarest species of penguins found only in this archipelago, and marvel at the elegant dives of blue-footed boobies hunting for fish. In the waters below, you might encounter vibrant schools of fish, graceful sea turtles, curious sea lions, and even marine iguanas foraging underwater—a behavior unique to this region.

For those who prefer to stay dry, the views from above the water are equally captivating. The stark contrast between the black volcanic rocks, turquoise waters, and vibrant wildlife creates a photographer's dream.

Overnight: Hotel Cormorant or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch





A breathtaking trek to the Sierra Negra Volcano

Day 5

We'll venture to the highlands of Isabela Island for a trek to the stunning Sierra Negra Volcano, home to one of the largest volcanic calderas in the world, measuring nearly 6 miles in diameter. This trek is approximately 10 miles round trip, offering breathtaking views of the surrounding landscapes and the opportunity to witness the unique geological features of this volcanic region.

As we hike along the rim of the caldera, we'll observe the fresh volcanic material left behind from the most recent eruption in 2018, a powerful event that reshaped parts of the caldera's interior. On clear days, you can enjoy panoramic views of the island, including the distant Elizabeth Bay, a pristine area known for its unique mangroves and marine life. Along the trail, keep an eye out for native bird species such as the Galapagos hawk, finches, and the vermilion flycatcher flitting through the sparse vegetation.

After exploring Isabela's highlands, you'll have free time to unwind and soak in the golden hues of the sunset, accompanied by the gentle sound of waves lapping the shore. If you're feeling energetic and wish to further explore, you can hike to nearby beaches like Concha Perla—a magical spot perfect for a refreshing swim or simply relaxing by the water. It's the ideal way to end a day filled with discovery and connection to this extraordinary island.

Overnight: Hotel Cormorant or similar

Meals included: Breakfast and boxlunch





A Day of snorkeling

Day 6

spectacle: Discovering the wonders of Los Tuneles and El Finado

Today, we'll embark on an unforgettable journey to Los Tuneles, one of the most iconic and visually stunning snorkeling sites in the Galapagos. This unique landscape was formed by ancient lava flows that cooled and cracked, creating a network of natural arches, tunnels, and lagoons both above and below the water. The result is a maze-like environment that is a haven for marine life and a paradise for nature enthusiasts. As we navigate the area by boat, your guide will share insights into the formation of these volcanic structures and the delicate ecosystem they support. On foot, we'll explore the rocky arches and observe blue-footed boobies nesting on the formations. Witnessing these iconic birds perform their courtship dance is always a highlight.

The underwater experience at Los Tuneles is just as magical. With crystal-clear waters, you'll have the chance to snorkel among a vibrant array of marine creatures, including:

- White-tip reef sharks resting in the shade of the tunnels.
- Sea turtles gracefully gliding through the calm waters.
- Golden and spotted eagle rays cruising over the sandy seabed.
- Colorful reef fish, from parrotfish to damselfish, darting in and out of the tunnels.
- Playful sea lions, always curious and interactive with snorkelers.

Los Tuneles offers a rare opportunity to swim in a sheltered and serene environment, making it a favorite for travelers and marine wildlife alike. After enjoying a delicious lunch served on board, we'll head to El Finado, another spectacular snorkeling site nearby. This secluded spot was once used by local fishermen as a resting place and is now a thriving underwater sanctuary. It is ideal for spotting:

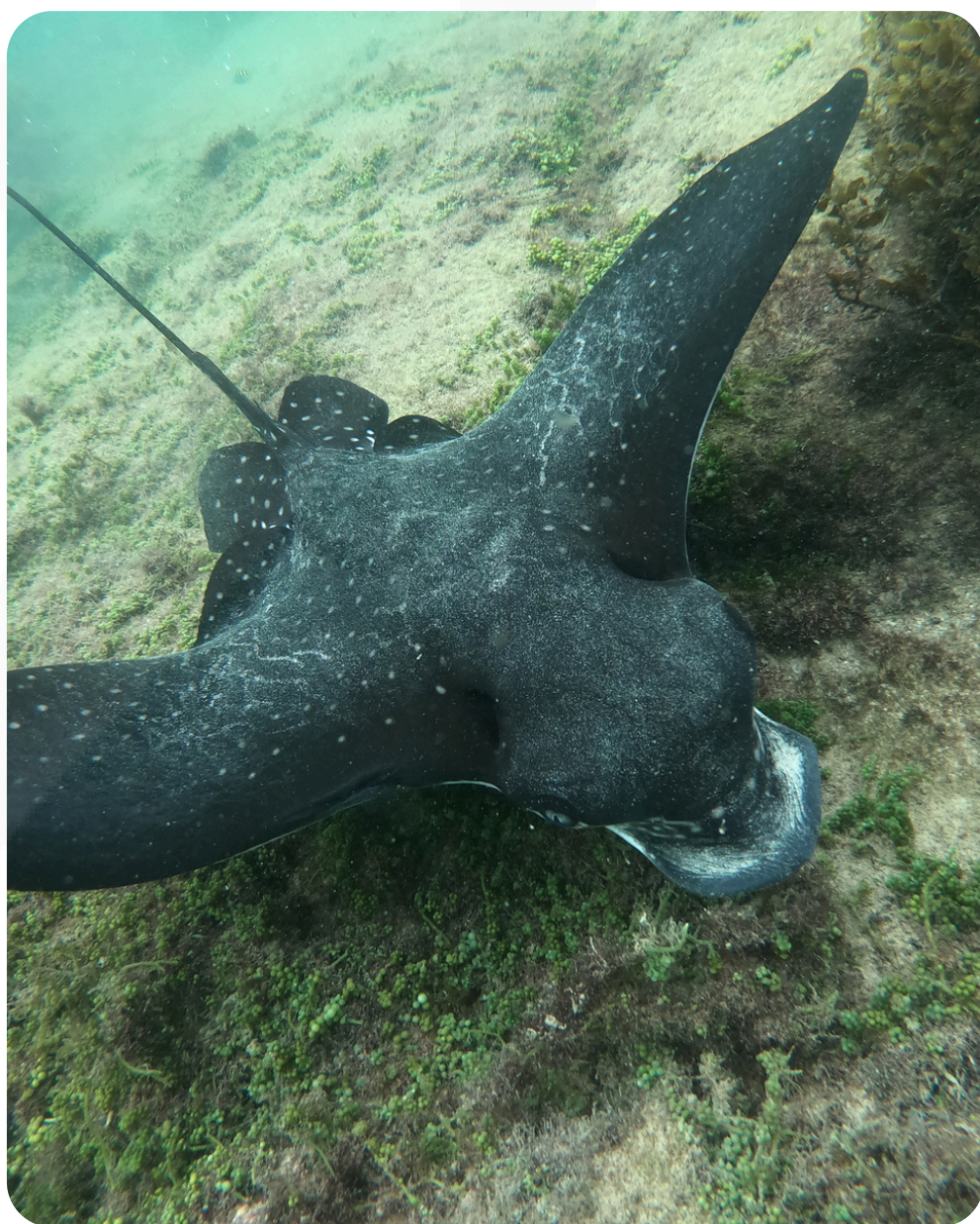
- Manta rays and stingrays gliding gracefully through the sea.
- Octopuses camouflaged among the rocky seabed.
- Starfish in vibrant colors adorning the ocean floor.
- Schools of fish shimmering in the sunlight, creating an underwater kaleidoscope.

For those who prefer to stay on the boat, the views of the islet's rugged volcanic landscape and its surrounding turquoise waters are equally mesmerizing.

As the sun sets, we'll unwind with a relaxing Ecuadorian wine-tasting social hour—a perfect time to reflect on the day's adventures. You'll have the chance to connect with fellow travelers, share stories, and soak in the tranquil ambiance of Isabela Island. Afterward, we'll get ready and hit the town's streets, ending the evening with a delicious farewell dinner at a charming local eatery.

Overnight: Hotel Cormorant or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Return to mainland

Day 7

After a relaxing last breakfast in Galapagos, you'll be picked up from your hotel with ample time for your transfer to Isabela Island Airport. Your journey continues with a scenic inter-island flight to Baltra Island—a beautiful farewell to the Enchanted Islands. Upon arrival at Baltra Airport, you'll easily connect with your flight back to mainland Ecuador (a journey of approximately 2–3 hours, sometimes including a brief stop in Guayaquil). Once you land in Quito, our team will warmly welcome you and assist with your transfer to your hotel in the city.

Overnight: Swissotel or similar

Meals included: Breakfast





Departure Day

Day 8

As our incredible journey comes to an end, we will prepare for your departure. Transfers to the airport will be arranged based on your individual flight schedule. To ensure a smooth departure process, we recommend scheduling your pick-up at least three hours prior to your flight.

Meals included: Breakfast



Included

- Airport transfers
- Interisland flight Isabela – Baltra Island
- Top Experienced Certified English-Speaking Guide
- Land and water transport
- Accommodation for seven nights.
- Meals according to the Itinerary
- Water and snacks at all time
- Biking gear: Hybrid bikes, certified helmets and gloves
- Snorkeling gear: Mask and fins



Exclusions

- International flights
- Domestic flights Quito – Baltra
GPS – Quito
- Galapagos transit control card
INGALA
- Galapagos National Park fee
- Isabela Island fee
- Meals not mentioned in the
itinerary
- Tips for guides and drivers
- Travel insurance (mandatory)
- Optional activities

Packing list

Galapagos & Quito Packing List

This packing list is designed for your 8-day trip, considering the unique climate of both Quito (Andean highlands) and the Galapagos Islands (tropical).

Remember that the weather can change, and versatility is key.

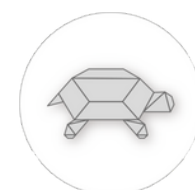
Important Note on Inter-Island Flight:

Please be aware that for your inter-island flight from Isabela to Baltra, the maximum luggage allowance is 25 pounds (approx. 11.5 kg) per person.

Luggage exceeding this limit may be subject to an extra charge at the airport. It is highly recommended to pack a small duffel or backpack for the flight and leave any non-essential items in your main luggage at the hotel in Quito, which will be available to you on Day 7.

Clothing (Layering is Essential)

- Tops (5-7): Lightweight, quick-drying T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts (for sun protection and evening).
- Bottoms (3-4):
 - 2-3 pairs of shorts (lightweight, quick-drying).
 - 1 pair of lightweight, breathable pants (ideal for evenings and protecting against insects/sun).
- Swimwear (2 suits): Having an extra one allows for a dry suit each day.
- Light Jacket/Fleece: For cooler evenings in Quito and on the inter-island boats.
- Waterproof Rain Jacket or Poncho: A must-have for unexpected showers.
- Undergarments: A sufficient supply for the trip (quick-drying materials are a bonus).
- Socks (5-7 pairs): Lightweight, moisture-wicking socks for hiking. Avoid cotton.



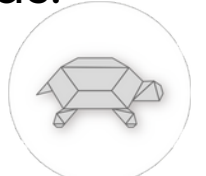
Packing list

Footwear

- Comfortable Walking Shoes/Sneakers: For exploring Quito and general walking.
- Sturdy Hiking Shoes: Essential for the Sierra Negra Volcano trek and other trails on Isabela. Ensure they are broken-in.
- Sturdy Sandals (e.g., Tevas or Keens): Perfect for water activities, walking around town, and wearing on boats.
- Flip-Flops: For relaxing at the hotel.

Gear & Accessories

- Daypack (small): For carrying water, camera, snacks, etc., during daily excursions.
- Reusable Water Bottle: To stay hydrated and reduce plastic waste. Water and snacks are provided on the tour, but this is a great addition.
- Dry Bag: Highly recommended for protecting your camera, phone, and other electronics during boat tours and water activities.
- Sun Hat: With a wide brim for sun protection.
- Sunglasses: With a strap to prevent them from falling off during boat tours.
- Headlamp or Flashlight: Useful for walking in towns at night, as some areas may be dimly lit.
- Binoculars: Highly recommended for spotting birds, marine life, and other animals from a distance.
- Sunscreen (high SPF, reef-safe): Essential for protecting your skin from the intense equatorial sun. Look for “reef-safe” formulas to help protect the delicate marine ecosystem.
- Insect Repellent (DEET recommended): Crucial for preventing insect bites.
- Personal Medications: Any prescription medications, plus a small first-aid kit with pain relievers, antihistamines, antiseptic wipes, and band-aids.



Packing list

- Toiletries: Pack in travel-size containers.
- Motion Sickness Medication: If you are prone to seasickness, it's wise to bring medication for boat transfers.
- Hand Sanitizer:
- Aloe Vera/After-Sun Lotion: For soothing sunburns.

Documents & Money

- Passport: Must be valid for at least six months beyond your departure date.
- Flights Itinerary: All flight information and confirmation numbers.
- Travel Insurance Information: This is mandatory.
- Credit/Debit Cards: Inform your bank of your travel plans.
- Cash: A mix of small US dollar denominations for tips, souvenirs, and small purchases.
- Copies of Important Documents: Keep digital copies on your phone or in the cloud.

Optional Items

- Camera with Extra Batteries/Memory Cards: A waterproof or underwater camera is ideal for snorkeling.
- Small Notebook and Pen: For journaling your experiences.
- Book/E-reader: For downtime.
- Small, lightweight packable towel: For quick-drying needs.
- Portable Power Bank: To keep your devices charged on the go.
- Small Backpack or Duffel Bag: For the inter-island flight to manage the weight limit.

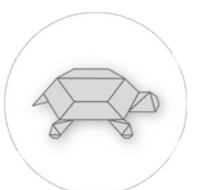
By packing smart and light, you'll be well-prepared to fully enjoy this incredible adventure without the hassle of extra baggage fees.

NOTE: Laundry is available almost at every location, this helps traveling light too.



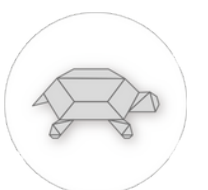
Important Information

- **Itinerary Disclaimer:** Even though we have a detailed itinerary, changes can be made by your guides, due to weather or safety reasons. Please also note that none of the wildlife sightings mentioned on the itinerary are guaranteed.
- **Visas and Passports:** Make sure you check your visa and passport validity and requirements per country. It is important your passport is valid for at least 6 months before your travel.
- **Accommodation:** We strive to use charming places that are unique and provide stellar service. Available at all properties single, double twin or matrimonial rooms.
- **Single Supplement Costs:** Generally, apply to solo travelers who do not have a roommate to share accommodations with.
- **Transportation:** Driving time can take more than expected in Ecuador, as it is a small country with roads meandering through the Andes Mountains. We assure your comfort during transit no matter the size of the group, while in the Galapagos the speed boat from Santa Cruz to Isabela can be a bit challenging if you are not use to travel by boat, so we highly recommend to carry some seasickness medicine with you.
- **Level of Activity:** This trip is considered as 2 out of 5. No prior experience is required and your guides will always brief you about safety and proper use of gear on every leg of the trip. The hiking is quite easy on mostly flat terrain along the rim of Sierra Negra Volcano, the kayaking is on a calm area, the biking is also easy on sand and some gravel mostly flat terrain, and there will be a transport support for the majority of the activities in the case that someone wants to take a break or just wants to relax.



Important Information

- **Weather and Elevation:** Although the islands are located on the equator, the Humboldt Current brings cold water to them, causing frequent drizzles during most of the year. The weather is periodically influenced by the El Niño events, which occur about every 3 to 7 years and are characterized by warm sea surface temperatures, a rise in sea level, greater wave action, and a depletion of nutrients in the water. During the season known as the garúa (June to November), the temperature by the sea is 22 °C (72 °F), a steady and cold wind blows from south and southeast, frequent drizzles (garúas) last most of the day, and dense fog conceals the islands. During the warm season (December to May), the average sea and air temperature rises to 25 °C (77 °F), there is no wind at all, there are sporadic, though strong, rains and the sun shines. Weather changes as altitude increases in the large islands. Temperature decreases gradually with altitude, while precipitation increases due to the condensation of moisture in clouds on the slopes. There is a large range in precipitation from one place to another, not only with altitude, but also depending on the location of the islands, and also with the seasons. The Galapagos Islands exhibit significant local variations in rainfall due to their topography and prevailing winds. A clear example of this can be seen by comparing the southern and northern sides of Santa Cruz Island. On the larger islands, the pattern of generally wet highlands and drier lowlands impacts the flora. The vegetation in the highlands tends to be green and lush, with tropical woodland in places. The lowland areas tend to have arid and semi-arid vegetation, with many thorny shrubs and cacti, and almost bare volcanic rock elsewhere.



Important Information

- **Sustainability:** We do our best to not produce any trash; we believe that recycling is not enough so we try to avoid using any plastic or materials that pollute our environment. Every day we work towards being a zero-waste tour operator and our staff is well trained to leave the least impact possible in our service areas. We also work with local indigenous communities in the different regions. By doing so we are able to teach our guests about the rich culture Ecuador, all the while helping the people preserve their traditions and lands. By working directly with local peoples, we are able to create a sustainable touristic income for the community.
- **Guides:** All our guides have a professional background from the Tourism University; this means they have a degree in guiding, so their knowledge and skills when leading a group are top-notch. Each guide has many years of experience and they all have taken additional courses for other outdoor activities as well as have International First-Aid certifications. On top of all of this, they are all extremely personable and strive to deliver travel experiences of a lifetime.
- **Heath advices:** No vaccinations needed for this trip

