



## ECUADOR TOURS: ECUADOR SPECTACULAR

12 days / 11 nights

Features: Quito – Cuenca – Guayaquil – MV Galapagos Legend

Prices begin from \$7699.00 per person in double occupancy. Includes Land portion only. International flights are not included. Domestic flights included (prices subject to change)

**Includes Private Car with Driver/Guide for Airport Transfers and Sightseeing Excursions (where indicated).**

### **Day1 HOME CITY – QUITO**

Depart Home City to Quito. Meet and greet upon arrival and transfer to the hotel Casa Grande.or similar.

### **Day 2 QUITO – OTAVALO - QUITO**

Early morning depart hotel for private excursion to enjoy the dramatic Andean scenery close-up. This full-day excursion takes you north to the land of the Otavalos and South America's most famous Indian fair along the Panamerican Highway through dramatic mountain scenery to the textile market of Otavalo, where guests will enjoy visiting the many stalls full of ponchos, scarves, blankets, wall hangings, woven belts (fajas), hats, handbags and much more. Here Otavaleños barter in silence, in marked contrast to the raucous noise of other markets; take your time to negotiate the best bargains. Then, proceed to Peguche, an Indian village very near Otavalo, that is home to the artisans who do the weaving in their homes; guests can learn about their culture and everyday life. Lunch is at one of the charming country inns or haciendas of the area. Dress in layers (T-shirt, blouse, sweater, coat). Take a sweater even if the day is warm and sunny and rain protection from February to May. This tour includes walking at an altitude of 2560 meters (8434 feet). Suntan lotion, good walking shoes and camera are recommended. B L

### **Day 3 QUITO - COTOPAXI - QUITO**

Depart south from Quito to visit Cotopaxi National Park. Cotopaxi (5,897 m) is the highest active volcano in the world. Despite the altitude, the Park is home to numerous birds and varied plant life, which can be seen on a light hike. Northeast lies Rumiñahui (4,557 m) and between the two mountains the plain and lagoon of Limpiopungo (3800m approx.). If weather permits, from the north face we may have spectacular views of the mountain. The surrounding scenery also includes volcanoes like Pasochoa, Ruminahui and Sincholagua. Lunch included at a restaurant at the base of the mountain. Time permitting; a visit to an indigenous market nearby can be made. (Squisilí Market available only on Thursday). B L

### **Day 4 QUITO – CUENCA**

Morning, enjoy City Tour of Quito, declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 1978. Quito boasts the largest colonial sector of the Americas, a mix of modern and colonial, the city charms every visitor. Enjoy the eclectic architecture ranging from the modern quarters to varied colonial facades on churches and private residences decorated and balconies built along



the last five centuries. See the gothic Basilica of the Heart of Jesus, Independence Square developed during the past five centuries and flanked by the Presidential and the Archbishop's palaces dated back to XVII and XIX centuries. Catch the experience of the spirit of Quito, walk and see the Metropolitan Cathedral with excellent samples of the Spanish renaissance, so called street of the seven crosses and pass by the Jesuit convent, once head quarters of the first university in the country, El Sagrario church with a unique orthodox cross lay out dated back to the seventeenth century and the jewel of the crown. Visit the Jesuit temple of the baroque art in the Americas "LaCompañía de Jesús", and the jewel of the crown of the colonial architecture in Quito, continue to the Plaza of San Francisco, with temple and convent which displays a rich sample of artistic and cultural heritage. Transfer to the airport for flight to Cuenca. Meet and greet upon arrival and transfer to the hotel Mansion Alcazar or similar. B

#### **Day 5 CUENCA – GUAYAQUIL**

Cuenca is Ecuador's third largest city, yet it still retains its pleasant provincial air. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Cuenca's red tiled roofs, cobblestone streets, flowery plazas and museums make it very special indeed. Located in the Southern Andes, (441km south of Quito) at an altitude of 2,535m above sea level, its climate is typically mild with an average temperature of 63° F (17 ° C). The historic center is famous for its churches, colonial-style houses, and carved wooden doors. Visits to Cuenca's museums and churches are scheduled, where you will enjoy Colonial and Religious Art and buildings showcasing Neoclassical and Baroque architectural styles. Materials such as brick and marble can be seen on the façades of the New Cathedral and the Church of San Blas, as well as some Gothic-style inspired architecture with high towers and pointed structures. Some of the Spanish churches were built with stones taken from the Incan temples in Tomebamba. In the old town, we visit Main Square or Parque Calderón, the New and the Old Cathedral, El Carmen flower market, San Francisco and Santo Domingo churches, the Archaeological Museum of Central Bank, then a Panama hat factory and the view point of Turi. Transfer to the airport for flight to Guayaquil. Meet and greet upon arrival and transfer to the hotel Oro Verde or similar. B

#### **Day 6 GUAYAQUIL – GALAPAGOS ISLANDS**

Pick up and transfer from the hotel to the airport. Depart from Guayaquil to San Cristobal in the Galapagos archipelago. Passengers are picked up at the airport by our naturalist guides and taken on a ten-minute bus drive to the pier to board the beautiful M/V Galapagos Legend. Dry landing in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, capital of the Galapagos Islands. Passengers visit the Interpretation Center, an excellent place to learn about Natural History in the Galapagos\*. The Museum of Natural History displays information on the volcanic origins of the islands, their remoteness from the continent, ocean currents, climate, the arrival of the different species and their colonization, among other points of interest. The human history is also showcased, chronologically narrating the most significant events related to the discovery and colonization of the islands. Important: Tijeretas Hill involves a high intensity walk amidst beautiful landscapes and a magnificent view of a frigate bird nesting colony (Difficulty level: high Duration: 1 hour visit) B D

#### **Day 7 GALAPAGOS - ESPANOLA**

Morning: Gardner Bay, Gardner & Osborn islets Wet landing on a beautiful white coral sand beach guarded by a colony of sea lions. There are no trails, so we stay along the shore where



we can spot Galapagos hawks, American Oystercatchers, Galapagos Ground Doves, Hood mockingbirds\*, Yellow Warblers, lava lizards, marine iguanas, and three species of Darwin's finches: a subspecies (*Geospiza fuliginosa*) of the Large Cactus Finch, which is similar to the large ground finch, the Small Ground Finch (*Geospiza fuliginosa*) and the Warbler Finch (*Certhidea Olivacea*), another endemic subspecies. Swimming and snorkeling\* offer a great variety of Galapagos marine wildlife: king angelfish, Creole fish, damselfish, parrotfish, manta rays, and white-tipped reef sharks.

Difficulty level: easy

Type of terrain: sandy

Duration: 1 hour walk / 1hour snorkeling. B L D

Afternoon: Suarez Point (Española)

Dry landing. An island of geological interest, we explore volcanic formations and a riveting wildlife: large sea lion colonies and seabirds including Española mockingbird, Nazca Boobies and the spectacular Red-billed Tropicbird. You will also encounter marine iguanas, lava lizards, and the colorful Sally Lightfoot Crabs. A somewhat lengthy hike will bring you among Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies\*, right up to nesting grounds that sometimes overlap the trail. Other birding favorites include Galapagos Dove, Galapagos Hawk, Swallow-tailed Gulls and the world's largest colony of Waved Albatross\*, an unequivocal highlight during mating season (May-December). Admire the island's dramatic backdrop, featuring the famous Soplador, a seaward blowhole that shoots water some 23 m. (75 ft.) in the air.

Difficulty level: difficult

Type of terrain: rocky

Duration: 2h30 walk B L D

### **Day 8 GALAPAGOS - FLOREANA**

Morning: Post Office

Wet landing. Located on the north side of Floreana, the bay is so-named because in 1793 Captain James Colnett installed a wooden barrel which served as an informal post office for sailors passing through, who would take letters with them to their destinations. Today, our visitors continue the tradition by placing unstamped postcards inside the barrel that should reach their destinations for free. It can take weeks, months, even years, not arrive at all, or even arrive before you! We may also encounter Darwin's finches\*, Yellow Warbler and lava lizards. Great snorkeling opportunities with Green Pacific Sea Turtles\* as well, this island is best known for its endemic vegetation: *Scalesia villosa*, *Lecocarpus pinnatifidus*, and Galapagos milkwort. Snorkelers can practice on the main beach among playful sea lions.

Difficulty level: easy

Type of terrain: sandy

Duration: 30 minutes walk / 1 hour snorkeling

Afternoon: Cormorant Point / Devil's Crown / Champion

Wet landing, on an olivine green sand beach. We hike from the black mangrove beds to a brackish lagoon, which usually holds one of the largest flamingo populations in the Galapagos. This island features some endemic plants such as *Scalesia villosa*, white and black mangrove, and holy stick. The trail continues to a beautiful white-sand beach, one of the most important nesting sites of Green Pacific Sea Turtles. It is important to avoid walking in the water due to the Sting Rays that may be hiding in the sand, which can be dangerous if accidentally stepped





on. From the beach one can spot sea turtles, Blue-footed Boobies plunging into the water, and small reef sharks floating along the shoreline in search of food. This coral-sand beach marks the end of our trail, and we head back to the olivine beach we landed on to swim or snorkel amongst sea turtles, reef fish, sea lions and, on a good day, white-tipped reef sharks.

A small colony of penguins resides on Floreana and can sometimes be observed as well.

Difficulty level: easy

Type of terrain: sandy and walk on a flat terrain

Duration: 1 hour walk / 1 hour snorkeling B L D

### Day 9 GALAPAGOS - SANTA CRUZ

Morning: Highlands

Dry landing. A 45-minute bus ride will take us to the Santa Cruz highlands, located to the northwest of Puerto Ayora, where we will find a natural reserve with giant tortoises\*. These enormous and slow-moving reptiles are responsible for the island's name and therefore approaching them in their humid and forested abode is always an inspiring adventure. They can weigh between 250 and 300 kg and can live up to 150-200 years. Additionally, travelers can walk inside surprising lava tubes.

Difficulty level: easy

Type of terrain: flat & muddy sometimes (depending on season)

Duration: 45 minutes drive / 1h30 walk

Afternoon: Fausto Llerena Breeding Center - Charles Darwin Station

Dry landing. We visit the Station where the Galapagos giant tortoise-breeding program takes place as part of our efforts to preserve the fragile Galapagos environment and where the famous Lonesome George (the last surviving specimen of his specie) lived for decades. Admire a prickly-pear cactus forest and variety Darwin's finches and other land birds. The Darwin Station also works providing environmental education to communities and schools within the islands, and to tourists visiting the Galapagos Islands. You will also have some free time to visit the town and shop for souvenirs.

Difficulty level: intermediate

Type of terrain: flat

Duration: 1h30 visit B L D

### Day 10 GALAPAGOS - GUAYAQUIL

Morning: Daphne

We circumnavigate the islet of Daphne, an eroded tuff cone formation\* that was created by successive volcanic activity, for an opportunity to see Darwin's finches, Blue-footed Boobies, Nazca Boobies, Red-billed Tropicbirds, Swallow-tailed Gulls, Brown Noddies. Afterwards, you will go straight to the airport of Baltra for flight to Guayaquil. Meet and greet upon arrival and transfer to the hotel Oro Verde or similar. Balance of day free to relax, stroll, shop and explore on your own. B

### Day 11 GUAYAQUIL - HOME CITY

At scheduled time, transfer to the Airport for flight homeward or next destination. B

B Breakfast L Lunch D Dinner



**FEATURES INCLUDED:**

- Meet and greet upon arrival to Quito and transfer to hotel.
- 3 nights at the Hotel Casa Grande in Quito – Royal Back Suite w/breakfast
- Full Day private tour to Otavalo tour including lunch
- Full Day private tour to Cotopachi including lunch
- Half-Day private tour of Colonial Quito
- Private departure transfer to the airport
- Airline tickets Quito – Cuenca - Guayaquil
- Meet and greet upon arrival to Cuenca and private transfer to hotel
- 1 night at the Hotel Mansion Alcazar or similar in Cuenca – Deluxe Suite w/breakfast
- Private Colonial City Tour of Cuenca
- Departure transfer from hotel to airport
- Meet and greet upon arrival to Guayaquil and private transfer to hotel
- 1 night at the Hotel Oro Verde or similar in Guayaquil – Deluxe Room w/breakfast
- 5 day/4 night Galapagos Cruise on the M/V Galapagos Legend
- Junior Suite - air-conditioned cabins with private bathroom.
- Meals scheduled on board.
- =Daily visits to the islands with English/Spanish-speaking guide.
- Snorkeling opportunities.
- Snorkeling equipment
- Briefings and lectures on board.
- Transfers to/from the Islands from/to the ship.
- Galapagos National Park
- CGG Transit Control Card
- Fuel surcharge Cruise 4 nights
- Meet and greet upon arrival and Private transfer to hotel in Guayaquil
- 1 night at the Hotel Oro Verde or similar in Guayaquil - Deluxe Room
- Hotel taxes
- Departure transfer from hotel to airport in Guayaquil

**THE RATES DO NOT INCLUDE**

- Travel insurance, medical services and others not specified.
- Tips & personal expenses.
- Wet suits rental: 3 or 4 night cruises \$ 25 (subject to change)
- Kayak rental: each use per person \$ 30. Internet: 10 min \$ 32 (subject to change)
- Alcoholic / non-alcoholic beverages.

**DEPOSITS:** required upon confirmation

**CANCELLATIONS:** There is an administrative fee of \$150.00 per person if cancelled once confirmed. The hotels will require a written cancellation 30 days prior arrival for refunds. If cancelled less than 30 days before arrival we can request that the funds be used for future travel.

**CRUISE CANCELLATION:**

- 125 days prior to departure, space can be released without penalty.
- 125 to 65 days prior to departure, US\$ 350 per person shall be charged for any space released.
- 64 days prior to departure, reservations shall automatically be considered as firm; therefore, 100% of the total negotiated rate (cruise + fuel surcharge) will be charged and withheld if the booking is cancelled.