



ADVENTURES IN GALAPAGOS

The Galapagos Islands are a perfect destination for a family adventure. We know this to be true: children and animals have a natural affinity for each other! We invite you to nature's greatest animal viewing sites with your family – the Galapagos Islands. When Charles Darwin arrived here so many years ago, he too found the animal life intriguing as it showed no fear of humans. Now, you and your family can experience this spectacular wildlife haven for yourself, frolicking amongst the same rare and friendly creatures that captivated him as he formulated his theories on evolution. Swim with playful sea lions, walk amongst rookeries of dancing blue-footed boobies, and relax within an arm's length of the famed Galapagos tortoise as these ancient creatures feed on the lush vegetation.

On our world-class Galapagos cruise you'll see it all in style from aboard the Galapagos Legend, which was completely refurbished in 2002. You will also visit the Ecuador highlands and witness its artisan practices and visit the Otavalo Market, and visit and help a local orphanage.

ITINERARY

☞ This trip begins with a rendezvous at the airport in Quito, Ecuador, on Day 1.

DAY 1 ~ Arrive in Quito

Arrive in Quito. An Eco Family Adventures representative will meet you outside the customs and immigration area at the airport. He or she will answer questions, brief you on the immediate arrangements, and escort you to the Swissotel, the best hotel in Quito.

Swissotel

DAY 2 ~ Quito city tour and visit to the Equatorial Line

Today we visit the Ethnographic Museum in Quito that has interesting exhibits about the many different ethnic groups that make up the indigenous population of Ecuador. We will then drive about an hour to visit the "middle of the earth" where Charles-Marie de la Condamine's expedition made measurements that showed this was, indeed, the equator. The measurements also gave rise to the metric system and proved that instead of being perfectly round, the earth bulges at the equator. Here it is possible to visit the small village called middle of the world and visit artisan shops that sell typical crafts and products from Ecuador.

B,L,D...Swissotel

DAY 3 ~ Galapagos: San Cristobal Island

Fly to Galapagos. Board the M/V Galapagos Legend vessel, which will be your home base for the next 4 days. The Legend was completely refurbished in 2002 and is one of the most luxurious boats in the Galapagos. It carries 100 passengers and because of its larger size, you will find it hard to get sea sick compared to the smaller vessels. In the afternoon we disembark the ship and do a wet landing (get your feet wet) to Chinese Hat, a small island near Baltra. You will encounter a small colony of sea lions and do an hour long hike. At this site it is possible to observe flamingos. A walk will take you to the other side of the island, on the way back there are some possibilities for snorkeling with sea lions on turquoise water.

B,L,D...M/V Galápagos Legend

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DAY 4 ~ Galapagos: Santa Cruz & Floreana Islands

Early in the morning you will do a wet landing onto Santa Cruz Island, where you will walk to a hyper-saline lagoon behind the beach. Observers report that sometimes a high number of Pink Flamingos can be observed. This trail leads up to Dragon Hill, which offers a beautiful view of the bay. This area is a nesting site for a big number of reintroduced Land Iguanas, thanks to the Charles Darwin Research Station. There is also a bizarre Scalesia tree forest. Passengers will have the option to make a dinghy ride in Venice islet and observe the vegetation and marine animals such as: spotted eagle rays and golden rays, mullets, sharks and sea turtles which rest in calm waters of the coves and channels. Land iguanas are also often observed from the dinghy.

After returning to the boat for lunch we arrive at Floreana Island and do a wet landing at Cormorant Point. Floreana has a colorful history of pirates, whalers, convicts and assorted characters. The evocative wooden postal barrel at Post Office Bay was created by whalers in 1793 who would be out to sea for years at a time. Outbound mariners would deposit letters and ships returning home would pick them up. Mariners and travelers continue to use the postal drop today. Punta Cormorant features two contrasting beaches: a green-tinged olivine beach and a powdery white sand beach, separated by a salt lagoon habitat of flamingos, pintails, stilts, and other wading birds. The white sand beach is a nesting site for green sea turtles. Devils Crown, an eroded volcanic cone, is a favorite site for boobies, pelicans, frigatebirds and red-billed tropicbirds. Snorkel and cavort in the crater with playful sea lions and colorful tropical fish.

B,L,D...M/V Galápagos Legend

DAY 5 ~ Galapagos: Espanola & San Cristobal Islands

We arrive at Isla Espanola early in the morning and disembark as the sun begins to rise. Immediately we are taken off guard as the black volcanic rocks seem to move. In fact, they are covered almost entirely by Marine Iguanas catching the early morning rays. As we look closer, we see small Lava Lizards perched on top of some of the iguanas and Sally Lightfoot Crabs scurrying about over the entire mass of bodies.

This is the largest colony of these iguanas in Galapagos, and the Marine Iguana is endemic, or found only in the Galapagos. Once they have warmed up in the morning sun we see them swim, using their laterally compressed tails for locomotion, out into the surf and then down to the bottom to feed on sea lettuce. They are able to stay submerged for up to an hour and are excellent swimmers. Once they have fed, they are out of the water, up on the warm rocks, and warming themselves in the hot equatorial sun. Once they are warm enough, they turn themselves away from the sun and into the cool breeze. They continue repositioning themselves to maintain a temperature of about 98.6F. These Marine Iguanas are able to control their body temperature better than any other lizard.

In the afternoon we arrive in Isla San Cristobal and visit the Giant Tortoises, which can live to well over 100 years of age. We visit the saddleback tortoises, which are named for their shell shape, in their natural environment. We hike a nature trail for about 2 hours, taking our time to learn about these incredible animals. We then return to the ship for an evening farewell dinner.

B,L,D...M/V Galápagos Legend

DAY 6 ~ Galapagos: North Seymour Island

North Seymour Island hosts a large concentration of friendly and playful sea lions. Here we can observe exuberant sea lion pups frolic and chase one another in the small tide pools among the rocks, while their mothers keep a watchful eye from above. Land iguanas meander among cactus clumps, nibbling the vegetation, while frigate birds and Blue Footed Boobies fly above and try to attract a mate and we will hike around the nesting sites. We then go to Baltra Island and fly to Quito and transfer to the highlands of Ecuador and overnight at a 200 year old Hacienda. Constructed in 1790, Hacienda Pinsaquí was originally a colonial textile enterprise, employing over one thousand weavers and spinners. Many of Pinsaquí's fabrics were exported to the United States in the late 1800s where they first received international recognition. To this day, the Hacienda retains the character and authenticity of its earlier incarnation, making for a unique travel experience.

B,L,D... *Hacienda Pinsaqui*

DAY 7 ~ Hiking & Hacienda

We will visit a local orphanage in the afternoon and we invite you to bring school supplies, including pens and pencils, paper, and Spanish learning books. In the morning we hike at the Cotacachi-Cayapas ecological reserve. We trek around sapphire-blue Cuicocha Lake (Guinea Pig Lake), a volcanic crater on the flanks of Volcán Cotacachi (10,000'). We enjoy views of several volcanoes, including Imbabura, Cayambe (18,996') and Cotacachi. After lunch we will visit the small villages of Pinsaqui, Agato, Peguche where the artisans work on their products for the Otavalo Market.

B,L,D...Hacienda Pinsaqui

DAY 8 ~ Otavalo Market

Today we will visit one of the most famous and largest handicraft fair in South America, the market at Otavalo. Otavaleños are most famous for their weavings such as tapestries, sweaters, blankets, ponchos and other woolen goods. You will also find paintings, ceramics and jewelry.

Then we will continue to visit Parque Condor a thirty-acre park is managed by a foundation dedicated to the care and rescue of predatory birds such as hawks and eagles, vultures and owls. Return to Quito.

B,L,D...Swissotel

DAY 9 ~ Fly home

Transfer to the airport for homeward-bound flight.

LAND COST

\$2990 per person (4 members minimum)

Internal air: \$410 (Quito/Galapagos roundtrip)

Child discount: \$300 (12 and under)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double or triple accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$1100 for “requested” singles; \$550 for “forced” singles.

If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you’re traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we’ll try our best to find you a roommate. If that’s not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

What’s Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ airport transfers
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation
- ◆ additional guides where necessary

What’s Not

International airfare to Quito, Ecuador and return; internal flights (\$410), Galapagos Park Fees (\$100), meals as noted; insurance (we strongly recommend you purchase trip insurance offered by Eco Family Adventures, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; cost of medical immunizations; items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. But please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We will provide you with the internal flights within Ecuador upon your arrival in Quito.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Expert Leaders

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Eco Family Adventures attracts gifted leaders for whom leading trips is their passion. They show you many natural wonders that you'd never find on your own and make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. Eco Family Adventures guides positively elevate your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends. On all trips with 8 or more people there will be an extra guide (on land portion only) for the kids who is the "activities director" in charge of environmental education, language classes, games, and overall flow of the kid energy.

Lodging & Ship

Lodging in Quito are in 5 star (south american standard) hotels with private baths. All rooms have private bath. The M/V Galapagos Legend was completely remodeled in 2002, with extended decks in order to accommodate for upgraded and more spacious cabins as well as larger deck areas. The 100 passengers are in double, triple or single cabins. Some rooms are adjoining and open up to one another and so are perfect for families. Fully carpeted and air conditioned, it is the right size cruise ship for a comfortable and relaxed vacation in the Galapagos Islands. There are five zodiacs for shore landings, 5 naturalists (1 chief naturalist), and a total of 52 crew on board, or a more than 2:1 guest/staff ratio.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control.

Note on Services

We often use local suppliers who provide services that may include transportation, equipment, logistic support, and other services (hotels, restaurants, etc.). We do not own or operate these independent suppliers. We work with service providers who share our commitment to safety and quality, and work closely with them to develop itineraries unique to Eco Family Adventures.