

# EXPLORE!



## Classic Galapagos - Xavier III

ECUADOR, GALAPAGOS - TRIP CODE GX7A

WILDLIFE

### Why book this trip?

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Remote, spectacular and utterly unique, the Galapagos Islands are a 'once in a lifetime' destination for anyone interested in the natural world. Join us on our best value Galapagos seven-night cruise as we sail to the southern and central islands. Visit a saltwater lagoon and view a colony of sea lions on Rabida Island, encounter large colonies of marine birds and relax on the sandy beaches of Espanola. Please note that this tour is operated in conjunction with a local specialist company and is not exclusive to Explore customers. Your fellow passengers may come from a number of different countries although all guiding is done in English, and may include families.

- **Cruise for seven nights around the Galapagos Islands** - aboard the Xavier III
- **Visit the southern and central Islands** - home to spectacular scenery and incredible wildlife
- **Discover land and marine wildlife** - including blue footed boobies and sea lions



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
 Breakfast: 9  
 Lunch: 7  
 Dinner: 7



**TRIP STAFF**  
 Boat Crew  
 Driver(s)  
 Naturalist(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
 Bus  
 Boat  
 Flight  
 Zodiac



**ACCOMMODATION**  
 7 nights boat  
 2 nights standard hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
 Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
 10 - 16

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join tour Quito

Quito is Ecuador's mountain capital and the second highest capital city in Latin America (2850m). One of South America's most beautiful cities, Quito lies in a narrow valley at the foot of the Pichincha Volcano, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and extinct volcanoes. Quito is separated into the old and the new cities. The old city is a UNESCO Heritage site due to its rich blend of colonial architecture, imposing churches and bustling local markets. Some of the main sites include the Plaza de la Independencia, the cultural heart of the colonial city which is home to the Catedral de Quito, and La Compania church which is considered one of the most beautiful churches in the Americas with its magnificent gilded altars, walls and ceilings. The church of San Francisco, Quito's largest and oldest colonial church built in 1553, is also worth a visit. A climb to the top of Cerro Panecillo affords one of the best views across the city and the surrounding mountains, presenting you with an unparalleled vista of the encircling Andes from the viewing platform offered by the statue of the Virgen de Quito. There will be plenty of time to explore the city on your own, before returning to your hotel for the welcome briefing in the early evening.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
 Hilton Colon (or similar)

**Grade: Standard Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Fly to San Cristobal Island, transfer to the Xavier III**

Today we transfer to the airport early for our flight to the Galapagos Islands via Guayaquil (refueling stop only, you will not disembark the plane).

Lying on the Equator, 970km west of the Ecuadorean coast, the Galapagos National Park is a unique collection of islands, formed by volcanoes over hundreds of thousands of years and consists of six main islands, 12 smaller islands as well as over 40 small islets, supporting a distinct and unique flora and fauna, including prehistoric creatures found nowhere else on earth. This desolate and fantastic habitat was discovered in 1535 by Fray Tomas de Berlanga. One of the original designations by him was Las Islas Encantadas, the Enchanted Isles. Charles Darwin visited the islands on the Beagle exactly three hundred years later, in 1835. He observed the total isolation of the giant reptiles and other creatures, and this played a substantial part in his formulation of the theory of evolution.

The Galapagos have never been connected with the continent. Gradually, over many hundreds of thousands of years, animals and plants from over the sea somehow migrated there and as time went by they adapted themselves to Galapagos conditions and came to differ more and more from their continental ancestors. Thus many of them are unique: a quarter of the species of shore fish, half of the plants and almost all the reptiles are found nowhere else. In many cases different forms have evolved on the different islands.

Of the extraordinary animals to be found in the Galapagos many are reptiles, such as the great tortoise, large land iguanas, numerous lizards and three species of non-poisonous snakes. There are also several species of turtle, which come ashore to mate. Up to three quarters of a million seabirds flock to the islands, including a third of the world's blue-footed boobies, frigatebirds, pelicans, cormorants, albatross and petrels. Only 35cm tall, the Galapagos penguin can be seen swimming among tropical mangroves, whilst offshore it is common to see dolphins, sea lions and fur seals playing in the water. Fearless though not tame, the extraordinary wildlife can be easily approached and the opportunities for photography are superb.

The Galapagos National Park charges a visitor fee of \$110 USD, payable on arrival, which funds park maintenance and supervision in the Galapagos, as well as ecological study, conservation and infrastructure development in Ecuador's other national parks. Entry fees and the funds they generate for the national park system are among measures taken by the Ecuadorian government to protect its natural heritage.

On arrival in San Cristobal, we will meet our naturalist guide and transfer to our home for the next seven nights, the Xavier III. San Cristobal is the easternmost island of the Galapagos archipelago and one of the oldest geologically. The principal town is Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galapagos.

After lunch we will visit Isla Lobos (Sea Lion Island). This island is located in a small channel off the San Cristobal coastline and is home to a noisy population of frolicking and barking sea lions and is also a great place to watch nesting frigatebirds and blue footed boobies. While snorkelling in the calm clear waters watch as the curious pups blow bubbles, swim in circles and frolic in the waves.



ACCOMMODATION:

Xavier (or similar)

Grade: Boat



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 3 - Explore North Seymour and Mosquera Islands

Today we set sail for North Seymour Island, just north of Baltra Island, which is home to sea lions, marine iguanas, swallow-tailed gulls, Magnificent frigatebirds and blue-footed boobies. North Seymour Island is probably the most exciting island photographically. Birdlife abounds, and close to the trail you will find many nesting pairs and young chicks, depending on the season. North Seymour is also home to the Galapagos' largest colony of magnificent frigatebirds. Their mating ritual is an ostentatious display; males expand the red sack at the base of their throat and perch atop a bush with wings fully extended, flapping furiously. Interested females circle overhead, and if so inclined, may join the male on terra firma. Further along the trail we can observe a colony of sea lions. Take your time exploring the underwater world along North Seymour's beach, where you will be able to snorkel from. Be greeted by large schools of tropical fish and sea lions, and keep an eye out for sea turtles and reef sharks.

In the afternoon, we will visit Mosquera Island, situated between North Seymour and Baltra Islands. A stroll down the beach will enable glimpses of brown pelicans, blue footed boobies and sea lions.



ACCOMMODATION:

Xavier (or similar)

Grade: Boat



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 4 - Travel to Santiago and Bartolome Islands

In the morning, we will travel to Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island to witness the striking and fascinating giant lava formations. Very few plants have managed to survive on this island due to its harsh

environment and relatively new lava flow. Enjoy a walk along the lava formations before coming to a white coral sand beach, where plentiful Sally lightfoot crabs and sea lions can be seen. Enjoy a cool dip after exploring Sullivan Bay on foot. Grab a snorkel and discover many species of fish and other marine life in the shallow waters. Keep an eye out for turtles, rays, and large schools of colourful fish.

Later, we visit Bartolome Island. A hike to the summit of the island (Pinnacle Rock) provides a clearer perspective of the islands' not-too-distant volcanic origins, and the panoramic view is one of the best among the islands. From here the double-sided beach of Bartolome directly below, the volcanic tower rising out of the water next to it, and Santiago Island in the distance are all visible. After the summit hike, we stop at the beach to relax in semi-tropical tranquility. There is great snorkelling among the submerged volcanic rock and around the base of the tower. A short hike to the beach on the opposite side is worth the effort. It is not unusual to see sharks in these shallow waters, and marine turtles nest here from January through till March.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Xavier (or similar)



**Grade: Boat**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## **DAY 5 - Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, view giant tortoises in the Highlands**

In the morning we arrive in Puerto Ayora, on Santa Cruz Island. Santa Cruz is the second largest island in the Galapagos and has the largest population, with Puerto Ayora as its main town. It also boasts the most varied of the islands' vegetation zones: coastal, transition, scalesia, miconia and pampa. The Charles Darwin Research Station is a ten minute walk from the centre of the town and has been responsible for conservation projects within the islands since 1959 (the centenary of the publication of Darwin's book the Origin of the Species). Here, an exhibition centre displays photos of recent volcanic eruptions, charts outlining geological formations and drawings of the evolutionary development of endemic species. A corral houses adult Galapagos tortoises, and a nursery cares for young tortoises until they are about three years old, when their shells have hardened enough to resist attack from feral dogs. The Research Station is also the training centre for naturalist guides who accompany all visitors and members of the international scientific community often come to study at the station.

In the afternoon we may have the opportunity to visit the highlands and see giant land tortoises in the wild.



ACCOMMODATION:

Xavier (or similar)

Grade: Boat



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 6 - Journey to Rabida Island, visit a saltwater lagoon and sea lion colony**

In the morning we will take an excursion to Rabida Island, where we will land on a red sand beach. From here a short trail leads to a salt water lagoon, often home to wading flamingos. Another trail goes past the lagoon to the interior, where the revered Palo Santo trees grow. When burned, the branches of this tree give off a pleasing aroma and ward off mosquitoes. Back on the beach among low-lying bushes nest the prehistoric-looking pelicans. This is the best area for close viewing of these nesting birds, and it's a rare treat to watch parent pelicans return with gullets full of fish for the squawking youngsters.

We visit Bachas Beach in the afternoon, located on the northeastern tip of Santa Cruz Island. This is a great beach to stroll on with crystalline waters perfect for swimming. The sand is made of decomposed coral, making it soft and white, and a favourite site for nesting sea turtles. Spot abundant Sally Lightfoot crabs on the lava rocks along the water's edge -- these crabs will eat anything they can get their claws on. Trek to see a wide range of wildlife, including flamingos, hermit crabs, black necked stilts, and marine iguanas.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Xavier (or similar)

Grade: Boat



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 7 - Observe the wildlife of Floreana Island, visit Post Office Bay**

The history of Floreana Island has gradually evolved to reach near mythic proportions. The story begins when a baroness and her two lovers, a German doctor and his mistress, and a German couple and their

young son all came to settle on this land. Their dalliances and disasters, shrouded in mystery, were chronicled in John Treherne's book 'The Galapagos Affair'. Descendants of the German family, the Wittmers, still live on the island in the small community of Puerto Velasco Ibarra. Mrs. Margaret Wittmer has also written a book entitled 'Floreana' and this can be purchased at the airport in Baltra or at a local bookstore.

This morning we make our way to Punta Cormorant on the northern part of Floreana Island. Discover two amazingly different beaches: one with green sand, coloured by olivine crystals, and another with white sand particles known as 'Flour Beach'. This is a perfect spot to go snorkelling, as the waters are home to a multitude of colourful fish and sea lions. Please be sure you are a comfortable swimmer, the water here can be rough and the currents are strong. Spend the afternoon observing flamingos and other shore birds feeding in the lagoon. Spot penguins and marine iguanas at the water's edge.

Later in the afternoon we stop at Post Office Bay, which has a lot of history. A barrel was placed here in the late 18th century by English whaling vessels to be used as a post office. Passing ships would stop to leave mail for loved ones, collecting at the same time any mail destined for ports on their itineraries. Today the box is used mainly by tourists, who may drop off and pick up unstamped letters to be carried to far destinations. The remains of a Norwegian canning factory are the only evidence of the island's history prior to its designation as a protected area. A short hike up past the post barrel takes you to an interesting lava cave. With the aid of a torch, you can descend about 80 metres to the point where the sea enters the cave. We should also have time to visit Champion Islet, where there will be an opportunity to snorkel. Jump in and get up close with the playful sea lion colony that reside in the waters off this tiny island. Keep an eye out for sea lions, sea turtles, rays and colourful reef fish swimming by.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Xavier (or similar)



Grade: **Boat**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## **DAY 8 - Discover Espanola Island, on guided walks or free time to snorkel**

Today we head to Punta Suarez on Espanola Island. The southernmost island in the Galapagos archipelago is home to several wildlife species, including masked and blue footed boobies. A hike to the top of the cliff makes for spectacular photo opportunities. Punta Suarez on the western side of Espanola Island is spectacular: gargantuan waves break on jagged cliffs and large bird colonies thickly populate the interior of the island; there is a distinct feel of desolate wilderness here. The waved albatross is seen here from April to December during its mating/nesting season. This bird leaves land between January and March each year to make its annual odyssey far out to sea. Amazingly, Espanola is the nesting site of virtually the entire world population of this species, with more than 12,000 pairs residing here. Large numbers of masked and blue footed boobies are also found here, red-billed tropicbirds dash madly

through the air, and both marine iguanas and sea lions are common. A huge blowhole, where the surf is forced through a natural rock formation spouting seawater 15 to 20m into the air, adds to the island's impression of untamed beauty. We follow the trail through a rookery and learn the geological history of the island from our naturalist guide, including its dramatic volcanic features, climate, flora and fauna.

Then in the afternoon, we sail to Garner Bay, an excellent swimming and snorkelling site.



ACCOMMODATION:

Xavier (or similar)



Grade: Boat



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

### **DAY 9 - Visit the interpretation centre on San Cristobal Island then fly back to Quito**

We arrive at San Cristobal in the morning. San Cristobal is the easternmost island of the Galapagos archipelago and one of the oldest. Its principal town is Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galapagos. We disembark the boat after breakfast and visit the interpretation centre where we can learn more about the Galapagos' history, geology, turbulent past and challenging future.

Depending on flight times, we will transfer to the airport in the late morning or early afternoon for our flight to Quito via Guayaquil (refueling stop only, you will not disembark the plane). On arrival back on the mainland, we transfer to the hotel for our final night in Ecuador.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hilton Colon (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST



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## DAY 10 - Tour ends Quito

The tour ends in Quito this morning after breakfast.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

#### Ecuador

##### Climate

Temperature ranges are similar all year round. In the highlands: the dry season lasts from June to mid-September. November and December are partially dry. The rainy months are October and from January to May, but showers are short and mostly in the afternoons. Temperatures range from 12°C to 24°C. Nights are cold at altitude (4°C - 10°C). The Coastal Region: from December to May it is hot and wet. From June to November it is generally cool and misty with sudden light showers.

Temperatures range from 16°C to 32°C. The Amazon Area: it is humid all year round. Temperatures range from 16°C to 32°C. From April to August the rainfall is heavier. The Galapagos: On the Galapagos, the hot season is January to April with largely sunny days and the possibility of heavy showers; the cool season runs from May to December and is generally more cloudy with much cooler seas. Please note that although it is windier from July to November the sea can be rough at any time of the year. On the mainland the dry season lasts from June to October, though September can be wet.

| Time difference to GMT | Plugs      | Religion       | Language |
|------------------------|------------|----------------|----------|
| -5                     | 2 Pin Flat | Roman Catholic | Spanish  |

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#### Galapagos

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### Budgeting and packing

#### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities

are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

The below optional activities are bookable locally in Quito in the reception area of the Hotel Hilton Colon.

Please note, the following prices are a guideline only and may be subject to change. Due to International flights timings and the times of flights to and from the Galapagos, excursions will require extra days in Quito which we can arrange for you before travel, please speak to one of our travel consultants to secure additional nights and extra transfers :-

Quito city tour (Half Day) - US\$50 (1 pers) / US\$40 (2+ pers), Plus entrance fees approx. US\$ 9pp

Quito city tour + Equator Line (Half day) - US\$60 (1 pers) / US\$45 (2+ pers) Plus entrance fees approx. US\$ 9pp Equator line museum US\$9

Equator Line (Half day)- US\$50 (1 pers) / US\$40 (2+ pers) Museum ents. US\$9

Mindo Cloudforest (Full day) - US\$100 (1 pers) US\$70 (2+ pers) plus entrance fees US\$20

Otavallo Market (Full day) inc visit to Calderon - US\$100 (1 pers) US\$70 (2+pers)

Cotopaxi Volcano (Full day) US\$100 (1 pers) US\$70 (2+pers) plus Park Entrance fee \$35 USD per group (this can be split between group)

Papallacta Hot Springs (Full day) - US\$100 (1 Pers) US\$50 (2+ pers) plus US\$7 Entrance fee per person.

This is transport only Spa treatments are extra.

Cable Car - US\$3 taxi ; Entrance US\$8 You can get from 2.800 m to 4.200 m in 10 minutes and view Quito at your feet.

Please note that optional activities will need to be paid in cash and do not include lunch - please allow US\$10 accordingly.

## **Clothing**

We recommend that you do not bring too much clothing as space is limited in the cabins. We would recommend you bring a fleece top, waterproof jacket, 4 shirts / T shirts, 1 pair of shorts, 2 pairs of trousers and 1 pair of hiking trousers. You will also need a swimsuit for the additional water-based activities offered. Full snorkelling equipment is provided on board.

## **Footwear**

Bring comfortable walking boots or shoes and trainers or sandals with a good grip. Plastic sandals (not flip flops) are useful for wet landings.

## **Luggage**

20kg

## **Luggage: On tour**

We recommend the use of a duffel bag or backpack (whichever you find easiest to carry). A good size daypack is also essential. If you don't wish to take your entire luggage with you to Galapagos, please ensure you have an extra bag you can leave behind at hotel storage and pick up on your return.

Please note that the amount of luggage you can bring on the boat is LIMITED due to small cabin size. We recommend travellers use soft sided duffel bags of 40-50 litres in capacity. We will accept luggage types

onboard, however if you are a single traveller sharing with another traveller, it's especially important to keep in mind that cabins are small in size and it's best to pack light.

## Equipment

Pack a torch, water bottle, sunglasses, insect repellent, high factor sunscreen, a beach towel, waterproof bag for camera and motion sickness tablets/patches for the boat. You may also wish to take binoculars. Full snorkelling equipment is provided on board.

## Tipping

### Local crew

Onboard the Galapagos yacht, tipping the naturalist guide and boat crew is customary. There will be two envelopes presented at the end of the voyage, one for the guide and one for crew members. The recommended amount is \$15-18 USD per day from each traveller (\$5-7 USD for the guide and \$10-11 USD for the crew members). This is only a suggestion as we understand that tipping is a personal choice.

### Local fees

The Ecuadorian government currently levies a Galapagos Islands Park entry fee of \$120 USD per person. This is payable at the airport upon arrival in the park. It is not included in the cost of the tour, and must be paid in CASH. This fee funds park maintenance and supervision in Galapagos, as well as ecological study, conservation and infrastructure development in Ecuador's other national parks. Entry fees and the funds they generate for the national park system are among measures taken by the Ecuadorian government to protect its natural heritage.

The Galapagos National Park authorities have implemented a system of Transit Control Cards at a fee of \$20 USD per person. This card is to be purchased in CASH at a counter in the Quito airport before boarding the flight to the Galapagos. Please retain this card along with your passport as you will be required to present this upon arrival to the Galapagos Islands. Please note that this applies to all tourists entering the Galapagos Islands and is a supplement to the existing entry fee to the national park and is not controlled by tour operators or travel agencies. It is the first of a number of initiatives to track, control and maintain the sustainable tourism targets set out by the Galapagos National Park and the Ecuadorian government in an attempt to preserve the fragile environment of the archipelago.

## Ecuador

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

| Lunch price | Dinner price | Beer price | Water price |
|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| £10         | £13          | £1.7       | £1.3        |

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

US Dollar.

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

US Dollars are used in Ecuador. You can choose to either change your money in advance or on arrival at the airport. Here you will find both ATMs and Bureau de Change. The exchange rate with the USD is approximately USD 1.28 to the British Pound. We recommend you take small denominations as 100US\$ bills are very difficult to use. Please check on line for up to date information

**Where To Exchange**

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

**ATM Availability**

ATMs can be found in the major towns and cities for cash withdrawals in USD. Always have some cash back up as they are not always reliable

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Credit card are widely accepted in many shops and restaurants but some may be subject to a service charge

**Travellers Cheques**

We do not recommend Travellers Cheques

**Galapagos****Food and drink**

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

**Foreign Exchange**

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**Transport, Accommodation & Meals****Transport Information**

Bus, Boat, Flight, Zodiac

**Ship description**

The Xavier III offers a clean and casual setting with all the necessary comforts. It is staffed by experienced crew members, including a certified naturalist guide. Additional vessel features include a sundeck, dining room and bar. All cabins have side by side berths, private bathrooms and air conditioning. All meals are

provided and are served aboard the vessel. There is an interior lounge on the main deck with a TV and DVD player for briefings and presentations. Snorkelling equipment and beach towels are included at no extra charge and wetsuits are available to rent. At times, when the Xavier III is being serviced, we will use another boat of equivalent standard and size.

The daily schedule consists of a shore excursion immediately following breakfast then lunch aboard and perhaps a siesta before the afternoon shore excursion. In the evening after dinner, your naturalist guide will brief you on the islands to be visited the following day. You are ferried from the yacht to shore via small boats called pangas. Landings are either 'dry' or 'wet', where you may have to wade ashore in shallow water. Your naturalist guide will accompany you during all excursions. Snorkelling and swimming are a large part of this trip and water-based activities will be offered on most days while travelling in the Galapagos. Please note, if you are not keen on water sports, there will often be no alternative to the extra water-based activity offered, other than staying and relaxing aboard the vessel. In some landing spots, there might be an option to walk on shore but this would be without a guide.

## **Cabins**

Please note that the rooming on our Galapagos yachts is done on a first-come, first-serve basis, and we are not able to guarantee the specific cabin you will receive on board. The cabins are comfortable and clean, all with private bathrooms. Due to the specific location of the cabins on board, the window sizes vary as well as the noise at times when the boat is navigating, given the proximity of the cabins to the engine room. Our friendly and competent crew will ensure a smooth and comfortable journey for the duration of your tour.

On this tour, the price is based on a lower deck cabin. You can upgrade to an upper deck cabin if you wish, prices vary depending on dates and start from £120 per person.

## **Ship dining**

On our Galapagos yachts, food is included, plentiful and made of fresh local ingredients. Dining is casual, tables are unassigned and the dining room is capable of seating the entire passenger compliment at one time. There is always a selection of different meals available, and vegetarians will find plenty of options. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice, please advise us at time of confirmation. Coffee, tea and water are all provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic are not included and can be purchased at the bar.

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## **Essential Information**

### **FCO Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under

18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information.Booking Conditions

## Visa and Passport Information

Ecuador: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. In order for your visa to be granted on arrival, you will be required to show proof of travel insurance valid for the duration of your trip. Please also ensure your passport is stamped with the T3 permit (for 30 or 90 days) on arrival in Ecuador. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

Galapagos Islands: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information.(Not necessary if in transit)

For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's

recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will

exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Ability to swim**

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim. Snorkelling and swimming form a large part of this trip and are included in addition to the standard daily itinerary. Please note, if you are not keen on water sports, there will often be no alternative to the extra water-based activity offered, other than staying and relaxing aboard the vessel. In some landing spots, there might be an option to walk on shore but this would be without a guide.

## **Ecuador**

### **Vaccinations**

We recommend protection against malaria, Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Yellow fever is only recommended for those travelling east of the Andes (Amazon Extension). Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.



# Galapagos



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**