

EXPLORE!



Galapagos - Central & Eastern Islands aboard the Xavier III

ECUADOR, GALAPAGOS - TRIP CODE GXAB

WILDLIFE

Why book this trip?

A boat journey around the Galapagos is considered one of the most rewarding boat journeys in the world. Join us on our best value Galapagos seven-night cruise as we visit the central and eastern islands, come face to face with giant tortoises, snorkel around Kicker Rock and relax on Playa Espurmillla. 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.

- **Spend seven nights** - cruising around the Galapagos Islands aboard the Xavier III
- **Explore the central and eastern Galapagos Islands** - and its abundance of wildlife
- **Enjoy a variety of seabirds and reptiles** - including frigatebirds and giant tortoises

**INCLUDED MEALS**Breakfast: 9
Lunch: 7
Dinner: 7**TRIP STAFF**Boat Crew
Driver(s)
Naturalist(s)**TRANSPORT**Bus
Flight
Xavier
Zodiac**ACCOMMODATION**7 nights
comfortable boat
2 nights
comfortable 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 trip in Quito

Arrive in Quito, Ecuador's mountain capital and the second highest capital city in Latin America. 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. On arrival at Mariscal Sucre International Airport (UIO), a representative will be waiting to meet you directly in front of the arrivals section, holding a sign with your name on it. They will show you where to go to catch your transfer to your hotel.

For those arriving on time, a group representative will meet you in the hotel reception at approximately 5pm for the welcome meeting. You will have the opportunity to meet other tour participants and receive information about the trip, as well as departure times for the following day. A welcome note will be left for you in the hotel so you have all the necessary information regarding the exact meeting time, though we do recommend that you arrive at the hotel by 4pm. If you arrive late, the representative will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the following morning. There are no other activities planned today.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to explore the new and old parts of the city. The old city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its rich blend of colonial architecture, imposing churches and bustling local markets. 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.

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

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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 (refuelling 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, frigate birds, 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.

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.

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.

In the afternoon we will visit the Jacinto Gordillo Tortoise Breeding Centre, see all of the different species of tortoises up close. See newborns as well as full-grown adult tortoises that can live well over 100 years.



ACCOMMODATION:
Xavier III (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 3 - Visit Punta Pitt and snorkel at Kicker Rock

We land this morning at Punta Pitt, on the eastern tip of San Cristobal Island. Here we will find unique volcanic formations as well as nesting sites for all three species of the Galapagos boobies: blue footed, red footed and Nazca. Punta Pitt is also home to the endemic lava lizard. We will be able to observe a mixture of different types of lava flows as well as colourful vegetation. It is possible to see the three species of boobies as well as frigatebirds, all nesting in the same area - unique to this spot in the entire archipelago. After, we visit Cerro Brujo on San Cristóbal Island to observe sea lions, marine iguanas, and seabirds along the beach.

A short distance away and visible from shore is an island called Leon Dormido, or 'Kicker Rock', which rises hundreds of feet above the ocean and resembles a sleeping lion. It is quite striking and if conditions are right we may be able to sail through a narrow channel which splits Kicker Rock in half. An incredible snorkelling spot, Kicker Rock is home to an incredibly diverse set of marine life in the nutrient-rich water and is also inhabited by large numbers of seabirds.



ACCOMMODATION:
Xavier III (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 4 - Explore Santiago Island including Playa Espumilla

Today is spent on Santiago Island. This island has seen its share of human activity from whalers and pirates over the years, and despite the introduction of goats to the island many years ago, the wildlife of Santiago has flourished and provides outstanding viewing opportunities. The island boasts marine iguanas, sea lions, fur seals, land and sea turtles among others, which provide great wildlife viewing both on land and in the water. In the morning we will visit Playa Espumilla, one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galapagos Islands, boasting thick mangroves along with flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites. We continue on to Buccaneer Cove, to witness its towering cliff wall rock formations. Jump into the panga

and cruise alongside high cliffs and rock formations. This area was a favourite hideout for pirates looking to stock up their boats with food and water. Spot sea lions relaxing on the beach and sea birds nesting in the cove - there's a lot to see at this site.

Later in the afternoon, we head to the dark-sand beach at Puerto Egas and tidal pools. Explore the spectacular shoreline of Puerto Egas, also known as James Bay and spot a great number of shore birds and reptiles - the beach here is home to a plethora of wildlife.



ACCOMMODATION:
Xavier III (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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 head to Santa Cruz's verdant highlands and the El Chato Reserve. There are many reserves in this area, such as El Manzanillo, Primicias, and El Chato II, making this is a perfect place to see giant tortoises in their natural environment.



ACCOMMODATION:
Xavier III (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 6 - Snorkel at Chinese Hat and visit Black Turtle Cove

In the morning the boat arrives to a small little island off the southern tip of Santiago Island called Sombrero Chino or 'Chinese Hat', named for its unique shape. Chinese Hat comprises of a tilted cone and lava flows that run down to the coast. Here it is often possible to see Galapagos penguins and the abundant marine life, including rays, turtles and sea lions, make for great snorkelling possibilities. Snorkel right from the white-coral sand beach and come face to face with playful sea lions and large schools of tropical fish. Keep an eye out for marine iguanas and penguins. There is a large sea lion colony here as well as many marine iguanas that can be seen on our guided walk among the volcanic scenery which offers good views to the cone of the island's volcano.

In the afternoon we take an excursion by panga to Black Turtle Cove, to witness the extensive mangrove system and interesting waterway canals. Sea turtles and different species of rays can often be seen in this cove, offering a peaceful and fascinating glimpse into the diversity of the area.



ACCOMMODATION:

Xavier III (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 7 - Explore Cerro Dragon on Santa Cruz Island and witness Daphne Island's wildlife

In the morning we will visit Cerro Dragon, on the western coast of Santa Cruz Island. Take a short walk from the beach to a hypersalinic (saltier than the ocean) lagoon frequented by pink flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks, and other species of birds. Pass through a Palo Santo tree forest; endemic to the area, there are only 400 specimens of Scalesia trees left in the world.

In the afternoon, we will travel to Daphne Island, located between the islands of Santa Cruz and Baltra. Here we will see much birdlife including a number of finch species, masked boobies, Galapagos martins and frigatebirds. Observe from the boat, as this island is dedicated to scientific research. This island was where Dr. Peter Grant conducted a long-term study of Darwin's finches.



ACCOMMODATION:

Xavier III (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Boat



DAY 8 - Discover South Plaza and Santa Fe Islands

After breakfast this morning we visit South Plaza Island. One of the smallest islands in the Galapagos, South Plaza has one of the largest populations of land iguanas. A large colony of noisy sea lions, numbering about 1000 bulls, cows and pups, has its prime habitat on the smooth rocks. We will walk along a path through a cactus forest and view a combination of dry and coastal vegetation. The small cactus forest is populated by land iguanas, which can be seen sunning themselves or feeding on opuntia pads and fruits. Swallow-tailed gulls, which nest on the rugged southern cliffs, are usually seen, along with tropicbirds and Audubon's shearwaters. During the rainy season you can see the red sesuvium turn bright green and the leafless evening-blooming portulaca burst into large yellow flowers, which are loved by the iguanas.

After lunch back on board the Xavier III we will continue to Santa Fe Island. Santa Fe was formed from an uplift (rather than a volcano) giving the island a relatively flat surface rather than the typical conical shape of the other islands. Hike towards the cliffs along the island's northern shore to view the forest of giant prickly pear cactus (Opuntia), which is home to endemic land iguanas. It is also one of the best locations to see sea turtles, sea lions, and maybe even get a glimpse of a whitetip reef shark from the panga.

You may get a chance to see the Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snake, a variety of finches and the Galapagos mockingbird. There may also be the opportunity to swim and snorkel with sea lions.



ACCOMMODATION:
Xavier III (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Boat



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.

We transfer to the airport 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: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Trip ends in Quito

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Quito.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart at any time. We recommend spending extra time in Quito, particularly if you wish to go on some of the optional day trips that are bookable locally, or if you are looking to book on our Amazon extension package (trip code: AE). Pick-up times for your airport transfer to Mariscal Sucre International Airport (UIO) will be re-confirmed locally in your welcome pack. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at the hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

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

Galapagos

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

Otavalo 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. Please note : Payment for tips will need to be made in cash (USD) at the end of your trip. Cards are not

accepted on board

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 cards 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

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Flight, Xavier, 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.

Our Galapagos trips are often part of longer or shorter itineraries, so it is not unusual that some of the group may change mid-way through your trip.

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 £180 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.

Approximate prices :

Beer - \$4 - 6 USD

Bottle of wine - \$30 USD

Spirits / cocktails - \$6-8 USD

Please note : Payment for drinks will need to be made in cash (USD) at the end of your trip. Cards are not accepted on board.

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 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 be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See 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

Additional Information



Reviews
