

# EXPLORE!



## Galapagos Highlights - Monserrat

ECUADOR, GALAPAGOS - TRIP CODE GMOA

WILDLIFE

### Why book this trip?

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The Galapagos Islands are an ecological paradise with wildlife you won't find anywhere else. Spend seven nights on the Monserrat embarking on a Galapagos cruising adventure through the archipelago's western, central and eastern islands. Join us as we snorkel with playful sea lions, discover the unusual endemic marine life in secluded bays, visit the tortoise breeding centre on Isabela Island and hike the Sierra Negra Volcano. 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.

- **Galapagos Cruise** - Seven nights exploring the Galapagos Islands aboard the comfortable Monserrat boat
- **Sierra Negra** - Hike the Sierra Negra Volcano, the largest basaltic caldera in the Galapagos
- **Iguanas** - Discover land iguanas feeding in the cactus forests on South Plaza Island and view plentiful marine iguanas on Santa Fe Island



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



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



**TRANSPORT**  
 Bus  
 Flight  
 Monserrat  
 Zodiac



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



**TRIP PACE:**  
 Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
 14 - 20

## 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 Baltra Island, transfer to the Monserrat**

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 Baltra, we will meet our naturalist guide and transfer to our home for the next seven nights, the Monserrat. After lunch, we will sail to Mosquera Island and walk along the beach to observe the vast sea lion colonies. Wander along the beach and keep a look out for wildlife on land, in the air, and at sea. Relax on the sand or search for aquatic life in the tidal pools that dot the coastline.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Monserrat (or similar)



Grade: Standard Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 3 - Hike the Sierra Negra Volcano and visit the tortoise breeding centre at Puerto Villamil**

Arrive at Puerto Villamil, home to the small community that lives on Isabela Island. In the morning, we will hike the Sierra Negra Volcano, considered to be the oldest volcano in the Galapagos. The volcano boasts the largest basaltic caldera in the Galapagos at an impressive 12km and dominates the southern half of the island, presenting us with some spectacular views from the top across the island and towards Santiago to the northeast. The volcano last erupted in October 2005, making it the most recent eruption of the Galapagos.

In the afternoon, we will visit the Tintoreras Islands. These islands were formed from the lava flows from volcanoes and are fantastic for viewing wildlife. The bay in front of the islands is home to a colony of white tip sharks, take a panga across the bay to "Tintoreras" Shark Alley to observe the whitetip reef sharks found swimming in the channels between the rocks. Get a close-up view of pelicans, frigatebirds, and diving blue-footed boobies. Watch for manta rays and rare Galápagos penguins.

You will also have the opportunity to see the 'Wall of Tears' which pays homage to prisoners forced to build the wall of huge blocks of lava between 1946 and 1959 when a penal colony was on the island. Many prisoners died during its construction. Finally, we will visit the tortoise breeding centre at Puerto Villamil (Isabela Island) to see some of the famous giant tortoises of the Galapagos.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Montserrat (or similar)



Grade: Standard Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 4 - Snorkel at Chinese Hat, afternoon trip to Rabida to see a sea lion colony**

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. There is also 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 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. More snorkelling opportunities await - take a panga ride from the beach to a cliff wall that drops off into the water to find one of the best deep-water snorkelling spots in the islands.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Montserrat (or similar)



Grade: Standard Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 5 - Explore Puerto Egas, continue to Playa Espumilla and Buccaneer Cove**

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 Puerto Egas to see the salt crater as well as a dark sand beach and tidal pools and the ever friendly fur seals. Grab a snorkel and jump into the water right off the beach to explore Puerto Egas' interesting underwater world. Keep your eyes peeled for rays, turtles, and reefsharks while snorkelling. After, visit the large tidal pool area - marine iguanas and Sally Lightfoot crabs are everywhere.

Next, we will travel to Playa Espumilla, one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galapagos Islands, boasting thick mangroves along with flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites. Then we continue to Buccaneer Cove to witness its towering cliff wall rock formations. Spot sea lions relaxing on the beach and sea birds nesting in the cove - there's lots to see at this site.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Montserrat (or similar)



Grade: Standard Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 6 - Visit North Seymour for guided walks, afternoon visit the Santa Cruz highlands

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. 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.

In the afternoon 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. Explore the area and its incredible underground lava tunnels. Wander along the volcanic tubes and keep an eye out for the (mainly) nocturnal barn owls that sometimes roost here. In the afternoon we visit the highlands to look for giant land tortoises in the wild.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Montserrat (or similar)



Grade: Standard Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 7 - Guided walk on Santa Fe to observe iguanas

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 Monserrat 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. Along the island's northern shore, enjoy trekking through the forest of giant prickly pear cactus (Opuntia). A member of the cactus family their name comes from the pear shaped fruit the plant produces. Santa Fe is also home to a number of endemic species which have bounced back from various threats to their survival. You may get a chance to see the Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snake, a variety of finches and the Galapagos mockingbird. Once back at the beach there is normally plenty of free time to take a panga ride in the lagoon to see playful sea lions and search for sea turtles, rays, and reef

sharks while catching a glimpse of large schools of brightly coloured tropical fish.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Montserrat (or similar)



Grade: Standard Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 8 - Explore Punta Pitt on San Cristobal then visit La Galapaguera**

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. Snorkel around Punta Pitt Island and spot schools of fish swimming below. On the shore admire the nesting birds and sun bathing sea lions.

After lunch we will head to La Galapaguera, where we will have the opportunity to see giant tortoises and to enjoy a snorkelling excursion off the south-eastern coast of San Cristobal.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Montserrat (or similar)



Grade: Standard Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 9 - Visit the interpretation centre on San Cristobal 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.

Then 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 (between 2:30pm and 5:30pm), we transfer to the hotel for our final night in Ecuador.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hilton Colon (or similar)

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**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

## 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.

<b>Lunch price</b>	<b>Dinner price</b>	<b>Beer price</b>	<b>Water price</b>
£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.

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### Transport, Accommodation & Meals

#### Transport Information

Bus, Flight, Monserrat, Zodiac

#### Ship description

Featuring a spacious top deck with a bar, a large sundeck and a comfortable dining room and lounge area for briefings and relaxing, the Monserrat's common spaces are as roomy as her cabins. All cabins have side by side berths, private bathrooms and air conditioning. All meals are provided and are served aboard the vessel. The Monserrat boasts our highest passenger to expert ratio including a cruise director and a naturalist guide for every ten passengers. Snorkelling equipment and beach towels are included at no extra charge and wetsuits are available to rent. At times, when the Monserrat 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 £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 complement 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.

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## **Galapagos**