

Ecuador: Enjoy the best of Galapagos

Jungle, Andean highlands, Galapagos dream trip in the land of contrasts

Ecuador is one of the most diverse countries in South America. Costa, Sierra and Oriente form the natural landscape groups.

The journey begins with an easy trekking in the highlands of Ecuador, in the little-visited area of the Paramo del Angel. Connected with native markets and stylish overnight stays in haciendas.

The exclusive jungle tour on the Río Napo, the upper reaches of the Amazon, is probably unique. The tour begins in the headwaters of the Amazon and we follow the flow of rich vegetation with exotic fruits, a variety of orchids, colorful parrots and butterflies in the tropical rainforest.

In our exclusive jungle camp, the 300 m long suspension bridge over the jungle is another highlight for observing life in the treetops.

The Galapagos Archipelago, a thousand kilometers off the west coast of South America, is one of the last natural paradises on earth. Six days now we live in this legendary world; in our safari tents we sleep in the midst of nature. We explore Galapagos on foot and discover a unique animal and bird world. When bathing in the crystal clear water, even sea lions and penguins are our companions.

- 19 Days/ 18 Nights
- January to December
- Moderate

Travel Program

Day 1: Zurich - Quito

Scheduled flight Zurich - Madrid - Quito, arrival in the evening.

Day 2: Visit Quito

Today we visit the colonial old town of Quito with the monastery of San Francisco, the cathedral and the associated Iglesia de Sagrario and the many small streets with the magnificent facades that have been beautifully renovated in recent years.

Overnight at hotel.

Day 3: Quito - Otavalo, easy trekking

On the Panamericana we drive over the highlands, past the cattle breeding area of Cayambe with the 5790 m high snow giant Cayambe. Our easy hike leads through the picture book landscape of the Andean highlands. The views of the Cayambe and Imbabura volcanoes are fantastic when the weather is nice. Down in the valley we see Lake San Pablo. If we're lucky we might even spot the majestic condor, the largest bird in the Andes. We'll have lunch on the way today. Then continue by bus to the Hacienda. Overnight stay in a stylish hacienda.

Day 4: Trekking Abra and San Clemente

After an early breakfast we drive from Hacienda Piman to La Esperanza in about an hour. From there we take the bus up to Abra at 2800 meters, where we start our hike. At a leisurely pace it goes through cultivated farmland in the highlands. After the trek we will visit the village of San Clemente where we will be served a traditional lunch with Andean ingredients. In the afternoon there is the opportunity to explore the village with its medicinal gardens.

Then drive back to Hacienda Piman.

Day 5: Market in Otavalo and Laguna Cuicocha, easy trekking

This morning we visit the famous Otavalo market. The Otavalenos are the most traditional population in Ecuador and differ greatly from the other Indian tribes in their typical clothing. We then drive to Cuicocha Lagoon for a 3-hour hike in the Cuicocha Crater Lake area near the Cotacachi-Cayapas Conservation Area. There we see the impressive landscape forms of the inner Andean high basin with the typical highland vegetation. In the afternoon we visit Cotacachi, the leather goods town, and then drive back to the hacienda.

Overnight stay in a stylish hacienda.

Day 6: Otavalo - Papallacta

We drive through the Andean highlands up to the 4064 m high Papallacta Pass. Here is the watershed between the Atlantic and the Pacific. On the pass, the weather is often foggy, wet and cold. Warm clothes are therefore recommended today. From the pass we hike in about 3 - 4 hours directly to the thermal baths in Pappallacta. As a reward we can enjoy what is probably the most beautiful thermal bath in Ecuador at 3300 m with a view of the 5704 m high Antisana.

Overnight at Hosteria Termas de Papallacta.

Day 7: Papallacta - Río Napo

Now we leave the Andean highlands and get to know the huge catchment area of the Amazon. We drive down the eastern slopes of the Andes by bus and experience first-hand how a gigantic river emerges from a small trickle. Through an enchanted cloud forest we reach the Río Napo at noon. We enjoy the beautifully situated Lodge Casa del Suizo above the Río Napo.

Day 8: Jungle Excursion

In the morning we are already expected by an Indian guide who accompanies us on our jungle excursions. From him we get to know the way of life of the Quechua Indians and he explains the different types of plants to us. We then go by canoe to the Amazonico, a rescue station. We experience a great variety of animals and are informed about the problems of the station and the protection of the rainforest. Lunch on the Río Napo, in the middle of the rainforest. In the afternoon we have the opportunity to build a raft and float down the river, or simply enjoy the jungle scenery.

Accommodation at the Casa del Suizo.

Day 9: Ahuano - Coca - Sacha Camp

Departure by canoe with outboard motor towards Sacha Camp. The approximately 150 km long route is very interesting. We impressively observe how the stones on the river get smaller and smaller until there are only sandbanks. Dense rain forest dominates the picture and every now and then you can see gold panners or a native hut. After Coca we penetrate deep into the rainforest and in the afternoon we reach what is probably the most exclusive and special camp in Ecuador, the Sacha Camp. In the late afternoon we marvel at the colorful fluttering of butterflies in the butterfly house, which is right next to the camp.

Accommodation in Sacha Camp.

Day 10: Jungle Excursion

The exclusive Sacha Camp, which is located directly on a jungle lake, is probably unique in Ecuador. Over 550 bird species, including absolute rarities, butterflies, armadillos, howler monkeys and various amphibians offer a unique insight into the jungle. With an Indian guide and a biologist, we go on half-day to full-day game drives in small groups (depending on interest). Night tours are also provided to spot crocodiles (caimans).

Accommodation in Sacha camp.

Day 11: Jungle Excursion

The whole morning is available for excursions in the rainforest. We spend the afternoon in the camp with a fine lunch before another highlight awaits in the afternoon. We climb a 60 meter high lookout tower and cross the jungle on a 300 meter long suspension bridge. Gigantic view over the rainforest canopy.

Accommodation in Sacha camp.

Day 12: Sacha Camp - Coca - Quito

We leave Sacha Camp early in the morning. In canoes with outboard motors we travel up the Río Napo to Coca. Return flight to Quito. In the afternoon we have time to visit Quito individually. Free dinner.

Overnight at hotel.

Day 13: Quito - Galapagos

Flight from Quito to the Galapagos Islands, landing at Baltra Island. From one natural paradise to the next, but to a completely different one! After crossing the Canal de Itabaca we drive to Puerto Ayora and visit the Wild Ranch with the giant tortoises on the way. We board the speedboat and the rapid journey takes us first along the rugged coast of Santa Cruz, then across the open sea. During the crossing we observe the blue-footed boobies fishing and the legendary frigate birds. In the late afternoon we arrive at Isabela, the largest and most interesting island of the archipelago. Only a few tourists come here, so the island has been able to preserve its original character.

Overnight at Scalesia Lodge.

Day 14: Galapagos, easy trekking

Trekking highlight! Very early in the morning we leave for the Sierra Negra, the second largest volcanic crater on earth, with an extension of 10 km. Our faithful companions are the lively Darwin finches. In the Galapagos Highlands we are home to the Galapagos giant tortoises. The Sierra Negra volcano last erupted in 2005 and 2017. The path takes us to the edge of the caldera, where there are several parasitic cones, including the Chico volcano, from which hot vapors constantly emanate. Lunch at the lodge. In the late afternoon we relax at the lodge or we are driven to the snow-white sandy beach of Puerto Villamil to have fun in the waves.

Overnight at Scalesia Lodge.

Day 15: Galapagos, Los Tuneles

Today is another highlight on the program, we visit Los Tuneles. Depart for the port and take a small speedboat ride to a unique marine reserve. Here the lava flow has been influenced and shaped by the waves of the oceans for many years. This has formed the unique arches and bridges of Los Tuneles. This site is a marine paradise for white tip reef sharks, green sea turtles, sea lions, manta rays and countless

fish. Definitely one of the best spots for snorkeling. The water is very calm, clear and shallow. After lunch we visit the Turtle Breeding Center. Turtle eggs are collected and brought to the center where the baby turtles hatch and are raised for about five years, before they enter their natural environment. Isabela Island Wetlands are just outside of Puerto Villamil. They are home to a variety of unique bird species such as stilts, rainbows, white-cheeked pintails and galinules. The wetlands can be visited on foot via a trail that winds through the swamps.

Instead of visiting the breeding center, there is also the option of spending a leisurely afternoon on the beach. Return to the lodge.

Overnight at Scalesia Lodge.

Day 16: Galapagos, Isabela - Santa Cruz

Today we get up early and are picked up at the lodge. At six o'clock our speedboat leaves for Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz. With a bit of luck we can see dolphins or manta rays on the approximately two-hour crossing. We drive to the hotel, but cannot move into our rooms that early, so we take a trip to the Las Grietas lava tunnels. There we can snorkel and hike. We will have lunch at a local restaurant in Puerto Ayora. Later we visit the bustling fish market and then have the opportunity to visit Charles Darwin Station. There is also the option of taking a taxi boat back to the hotel and spending a leisurely afternoon. Everyone according to their preferences.

Overnight at hotel.

Day 17: Galapagos

Breakfast and departure to the port. A very special excursion is on the agenda for today. With the comfortable Galapagos Sea Finch Yacht we drive comfortably in about two and a half hours to Bartolomé. The smallest island directly opposite Santiago offers a fascinating panorama. A large spectrum of different volcanic structures and pioneer plants. The view from the 114 m high peak of Pinnacle Rock is magical and is certainly one of the most photographed subjects in the Galapagos. We spend the afternoon in the beautiful bays. With a bit of luck we will snorkel with Galapagos penguins and Galapagos sea lions. Return and overnight at the hotel in Santa Cruz.

Day 18: Galapagos - Guayaquil - Zurich

Today it is time to say goodbye to Galapagos. Breakfast and transfer to Baltra airport. The tour guide says goodbye to you and you fly back to Guayaquil independently. For longer stays in Guayaquil, there is an option to take a taxi at your own expense and head downtown. In the evening return flight via Amsterdam to Zurich.

Day 19: Arrival in Zurich

Arrive in Zurich later in the day.

Included meals: **B**=breakfast; **L**=lunch; **D**=dinner

What's Included

Services included in the prices:

- Accommodation in haciendas and hotels according to the program
- All transfers

- Full board throughout the trip, breakfast only in Quito and Guayaquil
- Six-day rainforest tour with flight Coca - Quito
- Six days Galapagos
- Natural history guide on Galapagos and in the jungle
- Flight Quito - Guayaquil - Galapagos return
- Airport tax in Galapagos

Not included:

- International flights to Ecuador round trip
- Transfer from the airport for bookings of individual flights with different times of arrival / departure
- Flight Zurich - Quito and Guayaquil - Zurich
- Exit tax at the airport in Lima
- Travel accident and health insurance
- Luggage insurance and trip cancellation
- Meals in restaurants in Ecuador
- Personal expenses
- Tips

What to Bring

What to Bring or take fo Day Hiking and Technical Equipment for Climbing Expedition

This equipment list is compiled to provide you with adequate help when choosing your equipment for a climb. Most items are required. Please consider each of them and make sure you understand the function and exclusive use for mountaineering, before substituting or removing items from this list. Please note that this list has been carefully annotated by the organizer. Remember that mountaineering, mountaineering or mountaineering is an extreme, risky sport, therefore everything related to it is of great attention.

These items should be on your hiking checklist:

Hiking backpack for hiking 30 to 40 liters

Light gloves for hiking or (Optional Mittens waterproof)

Medium weight socks

Sleeping bag (-10° to 15°C)

Small daypack for one day hiking 20 liters

Weather-appropriate clothing (think moisture-wicking and layers)

Hiking boots or shoes

Medium weight parka with fibber fill or down

Rain poncho (or rain gear)

Long-sleeved shirts

Fleece or Wool sweater and/or trousers
Lightweight pants
Cotton short-sleeved shirts or t-shirts
Water bottle for hiking or trekking
Strong waterproof duffel bag
Flashlight with spare batteries and bulb
Towel for personal hygiene each participant
First-aid kit
Regular and long underwear
Knife or multi-tool
Light cap and wool hat
Sunglasses with UV certification, Sun block, lips
The rest of the list Essentials as appropriate for your hike
Grooming and personal hygiene kit
One Hiking Buff per person

Technical Equipment for High Altitude Expedition Mountains

3 Locking carabiners, we recommended per person
We recommend 2 ice screws for each client
1 Daisy Chain (Life Line) per each person
2 Ice axes (per person) technical, we recommended GRIVEL company
1 ATC descender (Rappel), this is very necessary for technical mountains
2 Cords for prusik, very important (Size Cord 6 mm x 10 m. long)
Gloves(Good gloves) for expeditions over 6000meters
Harness, we recommended GRIVEL company
Sleeping pad / Mattress, we recommend with air or inflatable mattress
Crampons, we recommended GRIVEL company
Walking sticks (optional), a pair per person, we recommended GRIVEL company
Down Jacket for expedition
Very important to have personal clothing such as pants and jacket with GOROTEX certification

First aid kit, for high mountains, because we as guides cannot medicate clients

Backpack Capacity 60 liters, it is better to have a bigger backpack to go comfortably to the high camps, because here you have to carry all your personal things

Gaiters or Leggings, now modern boots already have built-in (Incorporated), but better to have an extra pair

Dressing appropriately for the mountains can make the difference between a pleasant trip and a really uncomfortable one. Clothing must provide the right degree of temperature, perspiration and be well ventilated. Preferably cotton clothing should be avoided, as in humid conditions they absorb body heat.

In general, the weather conditions in the Andes of South America can vary from day to day and even throughout the day. Therefore, clothing must be versatile.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have regarding the necessary equipment.

→ If you need to rent mountain equipment click here: