

Ecuador & The Galápagos Islands

An exclusive 17 day fully escorted tour

Our 17-day Ecuador & the Galápagos Islands tour can only be described as the adventure of a lifetime. After discovering the delights of Ecuador and richness of the Spanish empire that once dominated this country, we head for the Galápagos Islands and our 7 night cruise aboard the luxurious Isabela II where you can swim with sea lions and dolphins, float eye to eye with penguins and stand beside a blue-footed booby as she feeds her young. Having chartered Isabela for our group, our captain can allow nature to dictate our course ensuring maximum sightings during our voyage of nature.

Day 1 Quito - 4 nights

We gather at London Heathrow for our Iberia flight via Madrid to Quito. On arrival and after customs clearance our waiting coach will take us to the JW Marriott, Quito's most luxurious hotel, where our accommodation is booked for the next four nights. This evening become better acquainted with your fellow passengers as we enjoy a welcome drink together. (Included Meals: Lunch).

Day 2 Quito

Founded in 1534, Quito has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, noted for its exquisite Spanish colonial architecture. We visit the old town this morning and see the Church and Plaza of San Francisco, the gold leafed La Compania Church and the Plaza de la Independencia. North of the city is the 'centre of the world'. Latitude 0° marks the Equator, where you can stand with one foot in the Southern Hemisphere and one foot in the Northern Hemisphere - an excellent photo opportunity! We visit the Equatorial Monument before lunch at a restaurant in one of Quito's most dramatic locations. Spend the remainder of the afternoon at leisure. Laze by the pool, or explore the old city with its parks, plazas and low adobe houses. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch).

Day 3 Quito

At first glance the Andean highlands blend into a palette of green, dotted with farmlands. Impressive Spanish haciendas and whitewashed colonial towns are interspersed with deeply rooted Indian tribes whose culture and traditions remain as they were centuries ago. We visit the Otavalo Indian Market featuring a fascinating array of colourful textiles and handicrafts, for products from the lowlands. The Otavalo Indians are Latin America's most prosperous indigenous group and for more than 400 years Otavalo was a predominant market town along the Inca's Royal Road, where goods from the highlands were traded. Following lunch at the delightful Hacienda Pinsaqui we return to Quito. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch).

Tour Highlights

- Magnificent Wildlife of the Galápagos Islands including the
 - Blue Footed Booby
 - Frigatebird
 - Galápagos Penguin
 - Sea Lions
 - Marine Iguana
 - Giant Tortoise
- Exclusive charter of Isabela II for a 7 night cruise
- City sightseeing tours of UNESCO World Heritage sites of Quito & Cuenca
- Equatorial Monument & Latitude 0°
- Culture & indigenous tribes of Ecuador
- Tour the Andean Highlands
- Tour the Avenue of Volcanoes

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Ecuador & The Galápagos Islands



Quito Angel



JW Marriott, Quito

Day 4 Quito

Today our drive takes us along the Avenue of Volcanoes for a view of some of the tallest volcanoes in the Southern Hemisphere. Keep your fingers crossed for clear weather! Snow-capped Cotopaxi, at 17,000 feet, is the world's highest active volcano. A special experience today is lunch at the Hacienda Hualilagua, after which we return to Quito for our fourth and final night. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch).

Day 5 Cuenca - 3 nights

The morning is at leisure until we depart to the airport in time for our flight to Cuenca. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, this is a city considered by many to be the country's hidden jewel. Visitors are always fascinated with Cuenca's unique colonial atmosphere; buildings with elaborate wrought iron balconies, plazas filled with flowers and a wealth of religious art. Our hotel for the next three nights is the Oro Verde Cuenca. (Included Meals: Breakfast).

Day 6 Cuenca

Located in the southern highlands, Cuenca is a delightful university city that has flourished in the arts. This morning we take a tour to further explore its beauty, including a visit to the 'original' Panama hat factory. Your afternoon is left at leisure to explore further. Dinner this evening will be taken at the fabulous Villa Rosa. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner).

Day 7 Cuenca

Today has been left free to spend as you please. Maybe consider a tour to the ancient Inca ruins at Ingapirca in the province of Cañar. (Included Meals: Breakfast).

Day 8 Guayaquil - Overnight

After breakfast we depart for the airport in time for our flight to Guayaquil. Upon arrival we drive to the nearby Hilton Hotel where we enjoy the rest of our day at leisure. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner).

Day 9 The Galápagos Islands - 7 nights cruising

This morning the adventure of a lifetime begins when we fly to the Galápagos Islands! Remotely located, 600 miles to the west of Ecuador in the Pacific Ocean, these incredible volcanic islands are the breeding ground for some of the most rare and unique wildlife in the world. Charles Darwin arrived as a naturalist aboard HMS Beagle in 1835; 24 years later he used his findings as the basis for 'The Origin of Species'. Anchored in the nearby harbour, our private yacht awaits. Our state of the art mini cruise ship, Isabela II has been chartered exclusively for our group and will take us on a never to be forgotten experience. Following our introductory briefing and lunch we disembark at North Seymour Island to observe colonies of blue footed boobies, frigatebirds and swallow tailed gulls. The island's male magnificent frigatebirds are always a memorable sight

when they inflate their enormous crimson pouch to attract a mate. We will also have our first sighting of sea lions as well as marine iguanas, found only in the Galápagos. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

Day 10 The Galápagos Islands

This morning we explore the island of Española, where on the white coral beach we will see sea lions, mockingbirds and finches. The informative naturalists aboard Isabela are always on hand to answer questions and share information about the Galápagos Islands' fascinating life and habitat. Join the marine biologist aboard the glass bottom boat - or go swimming and snorkelling among baby sea lions, fur seals, pelicans and a myriad of colourful fish found in these tropical waters. Waved Albatrosses can also be found in the months of May to December. This afternoon enjoy a panga ride along the coastline of Punta Suárez sighting blue-footed boobies, masked boobies and red-billed tropic birds. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

"The JW Marriott, Quito is by far the best hotel I have ever stayed in."

Amanda Sutcliffe,
Reservations Consultant







Hotel Oro Verde, Cuenca



Quito

Day 11 The Galápagos Islands

Today we visit Floreana, one of only five islands visited by Charles Darwin. At Punta Cormorant flamingos inhabit a brackish-water lagoon, but as they tend to migrate we need to keep those fingers crossed for a sighting! This evening, as we cruise to the island of Santa Cruz, we may enjoy the company of dolphins, or even whales. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

Day 12 The Galápagos Islands

After breakfast, we disembark to visit highlands of Santa Cruz Island, a Scalesia forest and the twin pit craters of Los Gemelos. Following lunch we visit the world renowned Darwin Research Station which will give us a clearer understanding of the government's dedicated conservation efforts. Witness the ongoing preservation of the giant tortoise - and observe hundreds of baby tortoises in nearby breeding pens. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

Day 13 The Galápagos Islands

Today we cruise over the equator to remote Genovesa, one of the northernmost islands of the Galápagos archipelago. Aptly named 'Bird Island', Genovesa is home to many unusual bird species including the red-footed and masked boobies, as well as Darwin's famous finches. Isabela drops anchor in Darwin Bay, a

collapsed caldera (crater), and shortly after we commence our morning viewing. This afternoon enjoy a panga ride along the island's cliffs, and after ascending the 'Prince Philip Steps' we walk to the other side of the island viewing colonies of masked boobies, frigatebirds and storm petrels. Here we would also hope to find the well camouflaged short eared owl. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

Day 14 The Galápagos Islands

While crossing the Equator line, early risers will enjoy cruising right in front of the famous Ecuador Volcano, which rises from the water line with one of its halves completely collapsed and now resting under water. Isabela II gently cruises on to the youngest island, Fernandina, featuring Le Combre Volcano, one of the world's most active. Since 1813 there have been ten recorded eruptions. On Fernandina we shall find the archipelago's highest density of marine iguanas, providing another wonderful photo opportunity! We will also see countless pelicans, flightless cormorants and penguins. Following lunch we shall keep our fingers crossed for sightings of dolphins and whales as we cruise to Isabela, the largest island in the archipelago. We arrive into Tagus Cove, and for those that so wish, we take an uphill hike to the back of Darwin Crater, filled with salt water. Darwin is one of

Isabela's six volcanoes, a remarkable contrast to the lower islands to the east of the archipelago. The view at the end of the trail is well worth the climb. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

Day 15 The Galápagos Islands

Today we cruise to San Salvador. On the black volcanic rock, marine iguanas can be seen basking in the sun amongst the brilliant red and blue Sally Lightfoot crabs. Next stop is the island of Bartolomé, occasionally frequented by Galápagos penguins. Snorkel next to Pinnacle Rock or take a walk up the trail for some magnificent views. This evening Isabela II sails for Baltra. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner).

"I stood whilst iguanas walked by my feet, stood feet away from blue footed boobies doing their courtship dance, watched seal pups suckling and kept clear of bull sea lions as they bossed everyone around on the beach!"

Elaine Mordaunt,
Reservations Consultant



Seal pup



Cuenca



Flower Seller

Day 16 Guayaquil - Overnight

During your last seven days and nights you will have been introduced to some of the world's most unique wildlife at a most intimate level. Your environmental Galápagos experience will be both memorable and personal. This morning we transfer back to the airport for our flight to the mainland. Leaving the Galápagos, you will have a deeper feeling and appreciation for the diversity of life and the fascinating ecosystem in which we live. Transfer back to the Hilton Guayaquil where your time is free to relax prior to our departure back to the airport later in the day. (Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner).



Sea Turtle

Day 17 Arrive UK

Late afternoon we arrive at London's Heathrow airport, bringing this experience of a lifetime to a close. (Included Meals: Breakfast).

Departure Dates & Prices

Departure	Return Date	Price
18 Jan 2010	03 Feb 2010	£5425
25 Jan 2010	10 Feb 2010	£5425
26 Apr 2010	12 May 2010	£5425
01 Nov 2010	17 Nov 2010	£5425

Prices are per person, based on Double/Twin Share.

Single Supplement: £1995

Supplements for Business Class are available upon request.

Journeys of Distinction

Call: 01704 88 3000

Email: sales@jod.uk.com

Visit: www.jod.uk.com

Call now on 01704 88 3000 or visit www.jod.uk.com

Isabela II



Isabela II



Sundeck, Isabela II



Cabin, Isabela II

chartered exclusively for our group

When cruising the Galápagos, nature takes priority over routings and schedules. As Journeys of Distinction have chartered Isabela, our captain will be able to change course for the benefit of our group, to ensure maximum sightings during our voyage.

Isabela II

Isabela II is one of the most luxurious motor yachts sailing the Galápagos archipelago. Accommodating just 40 passengers, Journeys of Distinction have chartered the yacht for the exclusive use of our group. Isabela's informal ambience lends itself to a spirit of camaraderie with your fellow travellers.

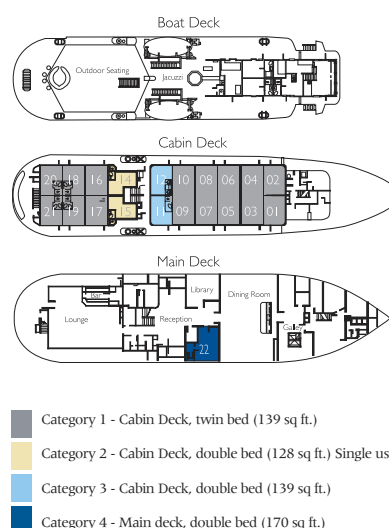
Specialising in cruising the Galápagos for over a decade, Isabela's well-trained 27 member team consists of Ecuadorian officers, naturalists and crew.

Sleek in style, Isabela's three decks feature a bar with deck chairs, a jacuzzi and an observation area for bird and seal watching at leisure.

Isabela anchors close to shore for swimming, snorkelling and hiking. Modern pangas (zodiac style rafts) can be launched at a moment's notice. The pangas will also transport guests ashore for informative hikes with naturalist guides. A glass bottom boat is also aboard for comfortable observation of marine life.

By evening, passengers gather for a briefing on the next day's activities with the on board naturalists. Viewing from the bridge is encouraged as Isabela operates an 'open bridge' policy.

On board dining is casual, even for dinner. There is an attractive dining room where all passengers are served in an unhurried single seating.



All Isabela's outside cabins feature private shower and toilet and individual air-conditioning.

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Land Iguana



Sea Lions



Sally Lightfoot Crabs

Wildlife & Islands of the Galápagos

Friendly and inquisitive, the animals of the Galápagos Islands are remarkably unaffected by mankind. Sea lions, dolphins, penguins, frigatebirds, blue-footed booby and marine iguana's are just some of the wildlife you can see. The Galápagos Islands are also home to 58 bird species, 26 of which are endemic. Whilst cruising the islands our exact routing could vary due to the Galápagos Parks Service, however our journey will include a selection of the following islands.

Bartolomé

Bartolomé is the most visited and most photographed island in the Galápagos. The island consists of an extinct volcano and a variety of red, orange, green, and glistening black volcanic formations. Frequent by the Galápagos penguins.

Española

Española, is the oldest island in the chain, helping to make it a unique jewel with a large number of endemic creatures. Secluded from the other islands, wildlife on Española adapted to the island's environment and natural resources. Visitors will find brightly coloured marine iguanas, Española lava lizards, Hood mockingbirds, swallow tailed gulls, blue-footed and masked boobies, Galápagos hawks,

and a selection of finch. The island is also home to the only Galápagos colony of waved albatross.

Fernandina

The youngest of the Galápagos Islands, Fernandina is one of the least visited islands and also the most volcanically active. The Island is home to thousands of marine iguanas as well as flightless cormorants, sea lions, and Galápagos penguins.

Floreana

Floreana (or Santa Maria Island) has long been a favourite site of visitors. One of the oldest islands, on Floreana unusual sights include an olivine beach, flamingos, pintail ducks and the 'Devil's Crown'.

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Wildlife & Islands of The Galápagos



Genovesa

Also known as Tower Island, Genovesa is a relatively small island and is an oasis for sea birds, hence the nickname 'Bird Island'. See red-footed boobies, masked boobies, Darwin's famous finches and the magnificent frigatebirds.

Isabela

Shaped like a sea horse, Isabela is the largest of the islands in the Galápagos. Wildlife includes flightless cormorants, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies and brown pelicans.

San Salvador

Also known as James or Santiago Island, San Salvador's central location makes Santiago a part of almost every Galápagos itinerary. Santiago has a long human history as well as some outstanding opportunities for wildlife viewing. Enjoy an opportunity to swim amongst pelicans, fur seals, sea lions and a myriad of colourful fish.

Santa Cruz

Located near the centre of the archipelago, Santa Cruz is the centre of tourism in the Galápagos. A visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station gives an insight into the government's dedicated conservation efforts. Witness the ongoing preservation of the giant tortoise, and observe baby tortoises in special breeding pens.

Blue-Footed Booby

Named for their blue legs and feet these are the most common and nondescript of the Galápagos Booby. Young blue-foots look quite similar to adults yet it takes 2 to 3 years to reach their adult plumage of a pale streaked head, dark mantle with white patches on the nape and rump, white bellies and a dark tail.

Frigatebird

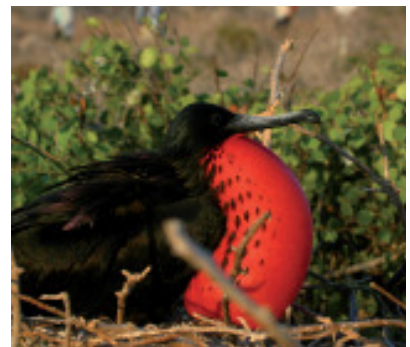
Stunt fliers with incredible eyesight. The adult male has the distinctive feature of a bright crimson pouch that swells majestically as it searches for the right female. Their name calls to mind the sails of ships and, indeed, frigatebirds sail gracefully in the Galápagos air currents. Frigatebirds are considered pirates who harass incoming birds until their victim is so upset that it disgorges its catch.

Galápagos Penguin

The only penguins found north of the equator, they are approximately 14 inches in height and are more duck-like than their southern cousins of the Antarctic. The penguins were brought to the Galápagos by the Humboldt Current, which brings cold waters and nutrients north from Antarctica. Swimming occupies much of the day as they reach speeds of up to 24mph !



Blue Footed Booby



Frigatebird

Marine Iguana

The Galápagos Islands are the only place on earth where you will find a lizard that swims and hunts for food in the ocean. Marine (and Land) Iguanas grow to about three feet in length and truly resemble creatures from the middle age. At night the iguanas mound by the hundred in order to provide heat for one another.

Sea Lion

The 'Unofficial Welcoming Committee' of the Galápagos Islands is the Sea Lion. Their playful inquisitive nature, speed, agility on land, and bark quickly make them an island favourite. These frolicsome mammals are often spied romping with their young pups. Swimming and snorkelling with the playful pups is often the highlight of a visit to the Galápagos.

Tortoise

The most recognised symbol of the Galápagos is the Tortoise and the Galápagos Tortoises are among the largest to be found on earth. These land-based vegetarian turtles are slow moving and are known for their long life span of approximately 150 years. The Giant Tortoise also played a crucial role in Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.