

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

Destination	Quito
Meals included	
Accommodation	N/A

Welcome to Quito! On arrival at Mariscal Sucre International Airport, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. As today is an arrival day, there are no activities planned until an important meeting in the early evening (5 or 6 pm) to meet your group leader and fellow travellers joining you for this adventure. Until then, why not discover more of Quito. The Old Town is awash with history, with more than 30 churches to explore – the La Compania de Jesus is considered to be the one of South America's most beautiful – and the city's oldest street, Calle La Ronda, is well worth exploring.

Quito is located at 2850 metres above sea level. At this altitude you may experience some of the milder effects of altitude sickness, such as dizziness, insomnia and a shortness of breath. If so, we recommend you avoid any strenuous activity. Please see the 'Medical and Health Information' section of the Essential Trip Information for more details.

DAY 2

Destination	Quito ➔ Isla Baltra 🚢 Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Very early this morning, take an included 1-hour transfer to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. Your flight will stop via Guayaquil to pick up other passengers (total flight time approximately 3.5 hours). On arrival in the Galapagos, you will be met in the airport arrivals hall by a transfer guide and will take a public airport bus (approximately 5 minutes), a public ferry across the Itabaca Channel (approximately 7 minutes) and a private bus (approximately 45 minutes) to Puerto Ayora, where your cruising vessel – the M/Y Grand Queen Beatriz – is anchored. Transfer to the boat via dinghy, and once on board, settle into your cabin and go through a safety briefing. You'll then get to know your Galapagos crew and naturalist guide over lunch. This afternoon, visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about their conservation efforts and have the chance to encounter the Galapagos giant tortoise. You will also see baby tortoises and land iguanas.

A USD 20 per person transit card is payable on departure at Quito Airport and a USD 100 per person national park entry fee is payable on arrival on the islands. Please have cash on hand for these transactions as credit cards are not accepted.

Today is a long travel day with an early morning start – usually around 4.30 am. All transport today is included. Your first activity on the islands will not commence until after lunch.

The airline provides a small snack but because it is such a long travel day, we recommend that you carry your own snacks too. There will be time after check-in and before flight departure to buy snacks. Keep in mind that the Galapagos has strict quarantine regulations in regard to bringing food onto the islands with many fruits and vegetables prohibited.

DAY 3

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

This morning, explore the natural wonder of Isla Santa Fe. This island is home to Galapagos hawks, land iguanas, a

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variety of finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, sea lions, marine turtles, frigatebirds, Galapagos doves and lava lizards. You may choose to take a walk through Santa Fe's opuntia forest – some of the largest trees in the Galapagos – or snorkel in the jade-green waters, perhaps with one of the island's many sea lions joining you for a swim. Otherwise, a hike towards the cliffs on Santa Fe will lead you to a forest of prickly pear cactus. Afterwards, sail on to Isla Plaza Sur – an island characterised by its volcanic and cacti landscapes, coloured bright red and green with sesuvium ground cover. Plaza Sur has a large land iguana population, as well as rugged southern cliffs ideal for spotting tropicbirds and swallow-tailed gulls. Sea lions also like to laze on the island's shores, so keep your camera handy.

DAY 4

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

After an overnight sail, wake up by Isla Espanola – the southernmost island of the Galapagos. Because of its remote location, this island has a large population of endemic wildlife. It is the breeding site for nearly all of the world's 12,000 pairs of waved albatrosses and also home to colonies of blue-footed and masked boobies, Galapagos doves and mockingbirds. Sea lions and marine iguanas are also spotted on its golden shores. Spend some time at Bahia Gardner for a swim and snorkel, discovering Galapagos' underwater world of reef sharks, turtles and many species of tropical fish. Also today, take a walk to a cliff-top viewpoint near Punta Suarez for panoramic views over the island – this is also a great spot to watch birds taking flight.

DAY 5

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

This morning you will visit Punta Pitt on the eastern end of Isla San Cristobal. Walk to the top of the volcanic hill for expansive views of the sparsely vegetated area. A variety of seabirds nest here, including blue-footed boobies and frigates. On a Zodiac ride you can observe the three varieties of boobies nesting in the Galapagos and enjoy a snorkel from the beach. Pass through Leon Dormido (Kicker Rock) – the basalt remains of a crater in the middle of the sea, the shape resembles a sleeping lion. The rock rises 150 metres above the surface and is divided into two parts by a narrow channel, with nesting seabirds on either side of the boat, and marine iguanas and sea lions in and out of the water. Snorkelling gives us the opportunity to see Galapagos sharks, and possibly a hammerhead shark among sea turtles and an incredible biodiversity of invertebrates on the rock wall. Today, you'll also visit Isla Lobos – a tiny island almost touching San Cristobal. Sea lions as they play in the calm shallow waters here, and blue-footed boobies, frigate birds and marine iguanas are also easily seen.

DAY 6

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Take it easy this morning, with some possibility to continue searching these islands for more unique wildlife and remote wilderness. In the afternoon, travel into the interior of Isla San Cristobal to visit the highlands site of 'Galapaguera of Cerro Colorado' (Red Hill) where the national park has established a breeding program and information centre for tortoises. Here, we will be able to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat and learn all about their origin, evolution and their threatened future.

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DAY 7

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Bartolome is one of the most spectacular volcanic landscapes in the Galapagos, full of parasitic spatter cones, lava flows, Galapagos penguins and lava lizards. It is a relatively new island in the archipelago and traces of its volcanic past can be seen everywhere, as evidenced by the amazing lunar-like landscape. Pinnacle Rock is one of the most photographed sites in the Galapagos – an abrupt jag of rock protruding from the earth like a tooth, while nearby two golden bays back onto each other. You can hike to the top of a once-active volcano here (360 wooden steps) and enjoy superb views across to Sullivan Bay on nearby Isla Santiago. If you are in luck, you might catch a glance of the Galapagos hawk here. Today, you also have the opportunity to go snorkelling with plenty of tropical fish, starfish, white-tipped reef sharks, rays and penguins. On Santiago's eastern coast sits Bahia Sullivan where you can walk on Pahoe-Hoe lava. Hopefully, catch sight of some marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, sea lions, finches, turtles, sharks and penguins.

DAY 8

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

On the northern coast of Isla Santiago in James Bay, Espumilla Beach is one of the most idyllic locations in the Galapagos Islands and is an important nesting site for marine turtles. With large waves, it's often a favourite among beach lovers. It is also well known for its palo santo forest and some extraordinary lava formations. Today, you will also visit Caleta Bucanero (Buccaneer Cove) – a natural monument of rocks caused by sea erosion. This cove was used by pirates to careen their ships and was also where Darwin camped for nine days while making his study of the islands and their wildlife. Continue on to Puerto Egas – a black sand beach located on the west side of James Bay and northwest of Isla Santiago. South of the beach is Sugarloaf Volcano, which has deposits of volcanic tuff. The walk along the beach offers hundreds of marine iguanas and Galapagos sea lions. You will also see amazing tidal pools formed from ancient lava flow and home to sponges, snails, hermit crabs, barnacles and fish.

DAY 9

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Sail overnight to Puerto Ayora on Isla Santa Cruz – the second largest island in the Galapagos. This small town is the economic centre of the archipelago, and home to the Charles Darwin Research Station. As well as undertaking vital conservation work, the station also makes for interesting exploration and offers the best opportunities for close encounters with giant tortoises. There may be time to revisit the tortoises today as you explore. Afterwards, head up to the highlands for a total change of scenery. Beginning at the coast you'll travel across Santa Cruz through the agricultural region and into the misty forests with the journey taking about 45 minutes. This is a lush humid zone containing miconia bushes, scalesia and inactive volcanic cones. On your walk, you are likely to see Galapagos giant tortoises in their natural habitat, and perhaps the bright red feathers of a vermilion flycatcher.

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DAY 10

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

This morning, take a land excursion on North Seymour, crossing inland and exploring the rocky coast. Along the way the trail passes colonies of blue footed boobies and frigatebirds. This large black bird with a long wingspan and hooked beak is extremely fast and has excellent vision. During mating season, males throw back their heads, inflate their neck pouch and shake, trying to capture the attention of female frigates. Sharing the same nesting area, blue-footed boobies make their ground nests from the twigs of the palo santos trees, while frigatebirds nest just above them in the saltbushes. Your walk is followed by some snorkelling, where you'll find a great variety of fish and possibly white-tipped reef sharks, rays and sea lions. After lunch, visit the small sandy island of Mosquera – a relaxing, picturesque stop situated between Baltra and North Seymour. Along the rocks and in the tide pool, Sally Lightfoot crabs scamper back and forth, skipping across small pools of water in search of food. The island also has a very large colony of sea lions as well as a sizeable resident brown pelican population. Depending on the tides and visibility, you may have a chance to go snorkelling here too.

DAY 11

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Today you will take a morning Zodiac excursion to Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) – a red mangrove wetland on the north shore of Isla Santa Cruz. Paddle among the cove's peaceful waters for your first taste of the underwater riches of this region – it's a wonderful place to see the green turtle and is a nursery for golden cow-nose rays, eagle rays and Galapagos sharks. There is abundant birdlife, such as the yellow warbler and lava heron, and it's also a breeding area for turtles. In the afternoon, cruise over for a walk on Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill) – one of the best places to see land iguanas in the islands. Walk to a brackish lagoon teeming with stilts, pintail ducks, sandpipers, sanderlings and occasionally flamingos. Further inland, the trail offers a beautiful view of the bay and the western area of the archipelago. This area is a nesting site for land iguanas, which is constantly monitored and assisted by the Charles Darwin Research Station. The arid-zone vegetation makes for a rewarding location for birdwatching with Darwin's finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, the endemic Galapagos flycatcher and yellow warblers all regulars here. The path may be challenging but you will be rewarded with a spectacular view of the bay!

DAY 12

Destination	Galapagos Cruise
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Spend the day exploring Isla Rabida and the geologically fascinating Sombrero Chino. Literally meaning 'Chinese hat', this islet is located near the south-east coast of Isla Santiago, with many lava tubes leading from the cone to the coast. Keep an eye out for sea lions, Sally Lightfoot crabs and possibly a Galapagos penguin! Follow a trail that circles the cove and passes through a sea lion colony and past a number of marine iguanas. There may be the opportunity for some snorkelling here, before heading off to Isla Rabida – an island eradicated of introduced species and reinstated to a state of splendid isolation. Admire the red sand beaches and cliffs, perhaps trekking on one of the trails to a lagoon filled with grazing flamingos. Rabida is also a wonderful place to spot nesting pelicans, pintail ducks, marine iguanas and sea lions. If you have time, enjoy an afternoon of snorkelling, spotting sea stars, damsels, gobies and surgeon fish.

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DAY 13

Destination	Galapagos Cruise → Quito
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Embrace an early start this morning to fit in a final excursion before a mid-morning flight back to Quito. Head to the sandy white beaches of Las Bachas on the north shore of Isla Santa Cruz, perhaps for a snorkel or a walk to its beachside saltwater lagoon full of flamingos and whimbrels. Return to the airport at Baltra and board your flight bound for Quito (via Guayaquil). On arrival at Quito Airport (approximately 4 pm), take an included transfer back to your hotel for the night.

As you will be leaving the boat this morning, please remember that if you have enjoyed the services provided by your guide and crew, a tip would be very much appreciated by them. As a guideline we recommend each passenger consider USD 15 per day for the crew and USD 10 per day for your guide. You can leave tips in envelopes that are placed in your cabin on the last day of your journey.

Today is predominately a long travel day with an early morning start. There will be a short morning activity before our mid-morning flight back to the mainland. The flight back to Quito is not due to arrive until late afternoon getting back to the hotel in time for an optional final group dinner.

DAY 14

Destination	Quito
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Your Galapagos adventure will come to an end today after breakfast. There are no activities planned for the final day, so you are able to depart the accommodation at any time.

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Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

13 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners
Expert tour leader
Minibus, Boat, Plane, Zodiac
Lower deck twin/double cabin
Hotel (2 nights), Overnight boat (12 nights)
In depth sightseeing

Fine Print

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accommodation
The accommodation listed is subject to change. Any changes will be of an equal or higher standard. Bedding configurations (double or twin) are requests only. All efforts will be made to meet your preferences, however, any changes are beyond our control.

Single Supplement

A single supplement is available on all nights of this trip from an extra AUD \$8925 subject to availability.

Triple Share

Not available.

Children

Children must be 5 years old or over and share a room with parents at all times. Children are charged the same price as adults.

Tour Documentation

Final documentation will be provided approximately 30 days prior to travel.

EXCLUSIONS

International Airfares
Personal Expenses
Travel Insurance
Optional activities
Anything not mentioned in the itinerary or optional
Tipping/Gratuities

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HOW TO BOOK & PAYMENTS

Deposit & Payments

Book now and secure your package with only a AUD \$400 deposit per person.

Pay a 2nd instalment of AUD \$2595 per person within 28 days.

You will then be invoiced for final payment 90 days prior to departure.

Booking Process

Select the purple 'Reserve Your Seat' tab to begin your booking (you must 'Sign Up' first by entering your email and creating a password)

Then select the purple 'Book now' tab of the tour you have selected

Select your Departure Date, Departure City, Number of Passengers, Room Configuration, any Upgrade Options, and enter any Special Requests

Click the purple 'Proceed to Secure Checkout' tab

Enter your credit card or PayPal details to secure your deposit/payment. You may also pay via BPAY (not available within 70 days of departure)

Once your order is complete, you will be prompted to complete a Booking Form so that we can fulfil your booking

Your booking is confirmed once your Booking Form is submitted and you can begin the countdown to your Inspiring Vacation!

OPTIONAL TOURS

None

HOTEL LIST

Quito - Hotel Le Parc or similar

Cruise - M/Y Grand Queen Beatriz

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