



## **UNIQUE SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES- KIWI SPIRIT**

### **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS MULTI ACTIVITY TOUR**

**TRIP DURATION:** 10 Days, 9 nights Quito to Quito

**NEAREST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FOR JOINING TOUR:** Quito, Ecuador

#### **TOUR HIGHLIGHTS**

- Snorkelling with sea lions and amazing underwater sea life
- Seeing all the amazing wildlife like Blue Footed Boobies and Giant Land Tortoises
- Hiking around the world's second largest volcanic crater
- Hiking, kayaking and mountain biking in this unique part of the planet (**Kayaking is temporarily suspended due to park policies**)

#### **IS THIS TRIP FOR ME?**

From the heights of the second largest volcanic crater in the world, to the depths of the enriched and unexplored waters of Galapagos, our carefully planned Multi activity tour is a must for all lovers of outdoor adventure. You do not need experience for any of the included activities, as the level is easy to moderate. However, we ask that if you wish to dive, you hold a current Open Water or higher, certification. For those who suffer from sea sickness, it is the perfect way to see these unique islands as we stay on shore every night in small comfortable hotels with private facilities. So if you have a passion for wildlife and the outdoors, this is the trip for you. The joy in being able to sit amongst wild animals in their natural environment is indescribable.

#### ***WELCOME TO THE SOUTHERN EXPOSURE TOURS EXPERIENCE***

Galapagos, or "The Enchanted Islands", discovered in 1535 and made famous by British scientist Charles Darwin over 150 years ago, have evolved into one of the top tourist destinations in the world and voted as one of the "seven wonders of the underwater world".

97% of the land in the archipelago and 40 miles of surrounding waters are protected and form The Galapagos Marine Reserve. Because of strict regulations enforced by The Galapagos National Park this delicate ecosystem has continued to thrive and has led to the islands nomination as a "Natural Heritage of Humanity" (2002).

Located on the equator, 970km west of the Ecuadorian coast in South America, The Galapagos archipelago consists of 6 main islands; San Cristobal (capital), Santa Cruz, Isabela, Floreana, Santiago and Fernandina (the last two are uninhabited). There are also 12 smaller islands and over 40 small islets that have official names. The total land area of the islands is about 8000-km<sup>2</sup> spread over about 45,000 km<sup>2</sup> of sea.

**DAY 1 ARRIVAL DAY QUITO.** Welcome to one of the highest capital cities in the world, Quito. You are free arrive anytime you wish and take in some of the many sites. There will be a welcome letter waiting for you at the hotel plus an information pack with a list of things to do and see, in and around Quito. That evening there will be a full briefing on the week ahead and the logistics of your tour in Galapagos. Evening welcome dinner (D)

**Quito**, officially **San Francisco de Quito**, is the capital and most important city of Ecuador in northwestern South America. It is located in north central Ecuador in the Guayllabamba river basin, on the eastern slopes of the Pichincha, an active stratovolcano in the Andes mountains. With an estimated population of about 2.1 million people as of 2007, Quito is the second most populous city in Ecuador, after Guayaquil. It is also the seat of the Quito Metropolitan District, home to 2 million residents, and the capital of the Pichincha province. As the headquarters of the newly-formed Union of South American Nations, Quito is also the *de facto* capital of South American integration.

The city's elevation is, on average, 2,850 m (about 9,350 ft), making Quito the second highest capital city in the world. There is some confusion about this claim because La Paz, Bolivia, which is higher, is the governmental capital of Bolivia (where the Bolivian government functions). However, Sucre, which is lower, is the legal capital of Bolivia. Quito is located about 25 km (15 miles) south of the equator. A monument and museum marking the general location of the equator is known locally as *la mitad del mundo* (the middle of the world).

Due to its high altitude and position on the equator, Quito has a constant, mild to cool climate. The typical temperature at noon is 25°C (77°F) with a normal night-time low of 6°C (43°F). The average temperature is 15°C (64°F). The city experiences only two seasons: dry and wet. The dry season, June through September (4 months), is referred to as summer; the wet season, October through May (8 months), is referred to as winter.

Because of its location at the equator, Quito does not experience variations in daylight hours during the course of a year. Except for a few minutes resulting from a slight wobble in the earth as it rotates, sunrise and sunset are always at 06:00 and 18:00, respectively.

**DAY 2 SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND.** The trip begins with an early morning transfer to the airport and a flight to San Cristobal Island, Galapagos. Here you will be meet by our friendly staff and transferred to your hotel. After lunch will we make our way to the top of San Cristobal through the settlement of El Progreso, to La Soledad from where we will have panoramic views out over the Pacific towards Santa Cruz, Floreana and Santa Fe. After we jump on the bikes for an exhilarating down hill through the lush highlands of the island, through El Progreso down to the township of Puerto Barequizo. We will pay a visit to the Interpretation Center and learn the mysterious history of Galapagos, "The Enchanted Islands". Later we hit Mann Beach for a swim where we can observe playful Sea lions and Frigates birds, gliding on the thermals. That evening we will have a welcome dinner of some of the islands fresh fish and produce. (B, L, D)

The **Galápagos Islands** (Official name: Archipiélago de Colón; other Spanish names: *Islas de Colón* or *Islas Galápagos*, from *galápagos*, "saddle"—after the shells of saddlebacked Galápagos tortoises) are an archipelago of volcanic islands distributed around the equator, 525 nautical miles (972 km/604 mi) west of continental Ecuador.

The Galápagos archipelago, with a population of around 30,000, is a province of Ecuador, a country in northwestern South America, and the islands are all part of Ecuador's national park system. The principal language on the islands is Spanish. The islands are famed for their vast number of endemic species and the studies by Charles Darwin during the voyage of the *Beagle* that contributed to the inception of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection.

**DAY 3 SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND.** The day begins with a short boat ride in the Christine to Kicker Rock, observing the abundant marine life that Galapagos is renowned for. On the way we stop off at Isla de Lobos to swim/snorkel with playful young Sea lions. A real highlight of the trip!

We then continue onto Kicker Rock, the remains of an underwater volcano rising vertically 150m out of the sea. A truly impressive sight! Here we can dive and snorkel keeping an eye out below for Sea Turtles, Manta Rays and maybe the odd harmless Galapagos shark, just to name a few. After we head to Puerto Grande, one of the most beautiful beaches in the islands and return to port late in the afternoon. **(B, L OPTIONAL DIVING, PLEASE ENQUIRE)**

**DAY 4 FLOREANA AND ISABELA ISLANDS.** This morning we depart San Cristobal Island to Floreana Island. Keep an eye out for dolphins and the magnificent albatross along the way. Here will be experience some of the best snorkelling in the islands at Champions bay or Devils Crown. We depart Floreana to Isabela Island after a full days boating and snorkelling. (B, L, D )

**DAY 5 ISABELA.** A full day tour takes us up Sierra Negra Volcano, one of the most active volcanoes in Galapagos, and the second largest crater in the world. A full days hiking, you will be able to experience a birds eye view of this magical landscape. After taking in the incredible views from the volcano we visit the Breeding Centre of the Giant Tortoise, the largest in Galapagos. This evening we kick back at the bar on the beach to enjoy a nice cold beer or cocktail (B, L)

**DAY 6 ISABELA.** By pick up truck and on foot we make our way the wall of tears, built by convicts many years ago. Along the way we'll pop in and visit Pink flamingos, also stopping at the lookout and one of the many natural pools, short walking trails, beaches and mangrove swamps along the way. After lunch we'll snorkel at the Concha Perla and observe resting marine turtles. Later, a zodiac tour of the bay where you can observe up close, the only penguins found close to the equator. (B, L, D)

**DAY 7 SANTA CRUZ.** Today is an early morning departure to the Island of Santa Cruz. We will visit the highlands of Santa Cruz, observing The Galapagos Giant tortoise in natural surroundings, and the amazing lava tunnels, some over 1km long while taking in panoramic views of the islands. Later in the day we head to Tortuga Bay, a stunning beach with fine white sand to see marine iguanas or try you hand at some body boarding or surfing. (B, L, D )

**DAY 8 SANTA CRUZ, SANTA FE, SAN CRISTOBAL.** Today we pay a visit to Lonesome George at the Charles Darwin Research Station. Here we can observe many species of tortoises and Land Iguanas in captivity, brought back form the brink of extinction. After some last minute shopping we depart Santa Cruz for Santa Fe Island for a relaxing dive/snorkel in a beautiful bay where we can observe marine iguanas feeding off rocks and schools of surgeon fish just below the surface. Return to San Cristobal. Evening group dinner to celebrate the conclusion of a fantastic trip. (B, L, D)

**DAY 9 SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND.** We bid farewell to the Enchanted Islands with some last minute souvenir shopping and free time! Depart San Cristobal Island and return to Quito with transfer to the hotel. Our representative will be able to advise you and help with some of the many day tours available in and around Quito (B, L, D)

**DAY 10 QUITO, DEPARTURE DAY** (B).

**SPECIAL NOTE. S.E.T. RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE ITINERAY DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS AND OR GALAPAGOS NATIONAL PARK REGULATION CHANGES**

**WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE**

- 9 nights full accommodation in single, double or triple accommodations
- Private bathroom, clean and comfortable.
- Meals daily as specified in tour (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)
- Airport transfers to and from accommodation in Galapagos and Quito

- International transfers in and out
- Full pre departure briefings and logistical support in Quito
- All land and sea transport
- Sea kayaks (**Kayaking is temporarily suspended due to park policies**)
- Mountain bikes
- Snorkelling equipment
- Naturalist guides authorized by national park of Galapagos.
- Wetsuit hire
- Airfare Quito-GPS-Quito

#### **Not Included**

- **National Park entrance fee \$100USD, only payable in cash, upon arrival**
- **Alcoholic / Soft drinks /Gratuities**
- **2 evening meals**
- **Anything not specified in the package**
- **Optional diving (please enquire for diving package)**

#### **JOINING INSTRUCTIONS**

**Hotel Reina Isabel**

**Av. Amazonas N23-44 y Veintimilla**

**Quito, Ecuador**

**Tel: Int. Dialling Code + 593 2 2544454**

**Aeropuerto Mariscal Sucre**, the international airport in Quito, is a 30-minute drive from the **New Town**, where our joining hotel is located. The easiest way to get there is via taxi. You can get an official taxi inside the airport, and pay set rate (approximately \$5 USD during the day, approximately \$6 USD at night). American dollars are now freely used in Ecuador, so you don't need to worry about changing money into a local currency.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day during which no activities are planned.

Your SET representative, will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other traveling companions and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning to fly to San Cristobal

**NOTE ON THE ITINERARY: This is the planned itinerary, but should any weather conditions or technical problems arise, we may be obligated to change this itinerary and will appreciate your understanding.**

#### **WHAT TO TAKE**

You will be on the go a great deal, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible. **We will supply you with a bag to take to Galapagos that is easily carried and keeps weight and space down on the boat and for the flight.** A good size daypack is also required. It is usually very hot on the islands during the day, but can be a bit cooler with wind chill and in the evenings. Life is pretty relaxed in Galapagos, so no real formal dress is required. There is a 5kg limit on hand luggage and a 15kg limit on your checkmin luggage.

#### **ITEMS AND CLOTHING:**

- Insect Repellent
- Small towel and swim wear
- 1 pair hiking pants or track pants
- 6 shirts/t-shirts
- Sport sandals
- 45 + sun block
- Windproof or waterproof jacket
- Flashlight
- Hiking boots or good walking shoes
- First-aid kit
- Fleece/ warm top
- Sunglasses
- Watch or alarm clock

- 1 pair of shorts
- Water bottle
- Sun hat
- Camera
- Binoculars -optional

#### **Documents:**

ALL TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION SHOULD BE TAKEN, SUCH AS PASSPORTS, **PLEASE REMEMBER IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THE CORRECT TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION.**

- \*Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- \*Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- \*Passport (with photocopies)
- \*USD cash and some travelers cheques (see personal spending money)
- \*Credit card (see spending money)
- \*Debit card (see spending money)
- \*Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required

**REMEMBER** that although near the Equator, the higher altitude on some parts of the trip make for cool evenings and you will need a warm sweater or pullover. It's best to layer clothes rather than bring a heavy parka so that you can take layers off.

#### **TRIP PREPARATION**

Please contact your physician or travel clinic for the most up-to-date health requirements. Contact your embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent.

#### **OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES LIST**

All prices are per person in US dollar amounts. Prices are subject to change, and can fluctuate in relation to the high/low season and the number of people on a specific excursion. Not all excursions listed here may be available due to season or weather conditions. As generally not a lot of time is spent in start/end cities, you may want to arrange to arrive early/stay longer in order to allow sufficient time to participate in optional activities there.

#### **Quito:**

- City tour \$15 - \$50pp
- Mountain biking \$45-\$70pp
- Climbing Cotapaxi Volcano (overnight) \$190 - \$320pp
- Otavalo Markets \$40-\$80pp

#### **SPENDING MONEY**

We include most meals and drinking water while on tour and the odd beer. There are 2 evening meals not included in the tour price and you will need **\$110USD** for the park entry fee once you arrive in at the airport in Galapagos. Evening meals vary from \$3 to \$10 depending on your tastes and where you dine. Coke, Sprite etc \$1. Souvenirs such as t-shirts are around \$10. **It is best to take all the money you need from the mainland, as getting cash out in Galapagos, can be difficult and we recommend taking around \$250usd.**

It is necessary to bring your spending money in US\$ only. This should be in the form of **some** travelers' cheques and mainly cash (small denominations are advisable for every day use). In recent years the currencies throughout South America have been more stable and there is no longer a black market. Credit cards are widely accepted on the mainland. The best credit cards to take are Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Diners and can be used in most places for cash advances in Ecuador and are often the best way to carry your money although we do not recommend that you rely on this in the Galapagos.

Cash can usually be drawn on these in the bigger cities although often there is a high commission charge (up to 8 %) when using them for other transactions. It should be remembered that all US\$ cash bills should be in good condition and that torn and dirty notes are not always accepted.

Cash is easier to exchange but you should only carry amounts you feel comfortable with. Make sure you record your travelers cheques numbers and to cross them off when used. Please note all cash and travelers' cheques should be in small denominations of US\$ only - no other currency is widely accepted for exchange, although the Euro is now also becoming more readily used.

## **TIPPING**

Many restaurants expect a tip (10%) for service. Also, there are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers. You may do this individually, or your Tour Leader may offer to collect the money and tip as a group. **Also at the end of each trip, if you felt your Tour Leader and crew did an outstanding job, a tip is always appreciated but never expected. \$80 to \$100usd per person a recommended tip. This is given to the tour leader at the end of the trip who in turn passes it along to the many local guides and people who make your trip possible**

## **DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY/FITNESS**

A reasonable level of fitness is required for this type of tour. There will be a lot of getting on/off boats, snorkeling, walking of up to 5 hours. Please consult us about any queries you may have in regards to fitness. You should be able to fully participate in all the tours activities with out the assistance of the tour leader. Any tour participants over the age of 60 needs to produce a doctors certificate, stating they are of good health, and able to participate unaided during the tour

## **FOOD**

While on one of the Land Galapagos Tours like this one, you will have most meals included and some options for you to choose your own dining choices in the evenings.

## **WEATHER**

This tour covers 2 climatic zones: the Equatorial Galapagos and the mountain region (Los Andes). In the Andes (Quito, Baños, Cuenca) November to April is the wet season with temperatures being on average 18°C. Don't be put off by the term rainy season, as this generally only means sporadic downpours a couple of times a day, mostly at night. Of course, there are times, when this is not the case but it is fairly rare for continual rain to persist. The rest of the year is the dry season with temperatures at around 20°-25°C during the day. In the altitude the nights can become very cool, sometimes below zero. In Galapagos, the temperature rarely falls below 20° and is hot and humid all year round. Some of the evenings can be cooler with wind chill.

## **SECURITY**

Like anywhere in the world, you can be in the wrong place at the wrong time. However, traveling with a Latin American expert increases passenger safety greatly because our guides know the good and bad places in each city and can warn our clients about the local tricks. In recent years Ecuador has become a much safer country but care should be exercised while walking around the cities of Quito and Cuenca in particular as there are still some groups of very good thieves operating. However, these people hardly ever use violence but rely on diversionary tactics. We suggest clients always use the hotel safes wherever possible and obtain a good money belt before leaving home. Security of our passengers is our tour leaders' number one concern. They provide all necessary information during the pre-departure meeting.

## **INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS AT BEGINNING OR END OF A TOUR**

**We recommend you arrive a day before the arrival day of your tour.**

Please note that your joining/departure city will have interesting sights to see so if you have the time it is nice to allow a day or two extra in these cities and this will also allow you time to relax before your tour begins.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

**Please contact 0800 874 748 or 03 528 9039, South America 00593 9 165 1543**

Should you need to contact S.E.T during an emergency situation, emails are checked daily and a list of contact numbers and itinerary will be left with the joining hotel and given to all tour participants on day1. [info@southernexposuretours.co.nz](mailto:info@southernexposuretours.co.nz)

The information supplied in this dossier is subject to change. It is an indication only and cannot be viewed as a contractual obligation on the part of the company. For the most up to date and current dossier, visit [www.southernexposuretours.co.nz](http://www.southernexposuretours.co.nz)

## **Important Notes for Booking This Tour**

S.E.T requires your passport number and date of birth before we can confirm your booking. We also need to know well in advance if you wish to dive. Please make sure you give this information to your travel agent or when filling in the booking form.