

Classic Galapagos Islands Adventure ★ 4.29 4 Reviews

Classic Galapagos Islands Adventure

7 Days

14 People Max



Discover the highlights and hidden gems of the Galapagos in just a week on our Classic Galapagos Islands Adventure.

There's no doubt you'll be mind blown by the contrasting landscapes, from the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu to the crystal clear water of Isabela Island, on our Classic Galapagos Islands Adventure. Starting in Quito, you'll wander the colonial city unchanged from the colonial days. From here, it's just a hop over to the Galapagos Islands. The next 6-days will be yours to snorkel next to Kicker Rock, cycle the San Cristobal highlands, hike Sierra Negra Volcano, sea kayak near Isabela Island and get up close to all manner of wild creatures and relax on isolated beaches. If you're only likely to visit this part of South America once in your life, we'll make sure our Classic Galapagos Islands Adventure is an adventure you'll never forget.

Trip Highlights

Hiking - Sierra Negra volcano and Santa Cruz

Kayaking - Isabela Island

Plus ... - Kicker Rock Snorkeling

Plus ... - Lava tunnels

Our Active Adventures Assurance

We value loyalty, and appreciate that it goes both ways. So when you book with us we'll make a few assurances to you so you can book with complete confidence, no matter what's happening in your life (or the world).





COVID-Ready Certified: Safe Travel for our Guests Travelling Overseas
Active Adventures has received the World Travel and Tourism Council's Safe Travels stamp, which guarantees you that we'll follow all ATTA and WTTC health and safety guidelines on all our trips. See how our small group, off-the-beaten-track adventures are perfect to start exploring again.

Classic Galapagos Islands Adventure ~ Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrive to Quito

Your trip begins in Ecuador's capital city, Quito. If you're flying in early today, you'll have a chance to journey to the city from the airport (or your hotel) to explore the beautiful town squares, quaint cafés and colonial architecture. Quito is a mesmerising city to visit, with its cobbled streets and towering cathedrals, nestled in a valley flanked by majestic mountains. On a clear day, several snow-capped volcanoes are visible from the capital. As well as being in a beautiful location, this colonial city is rich in history and much of the old town is well preserved, the buildings are unchanged and to walk down the narrow streets is to step into bygone eras. You'll meet your guides in the evening to chat about the Galapagos journey that lies ahead and to enjoy dinner together.

Hacienda San José de Puembo, Quito (Dinner)

DAY 2

Fly to the Galapagos Islands

We'll hop on a flight to Santa Cruz Island, in the heart of the Galapagos Archipelago. Once there, we'll take a short stroll to the highlands where we'll have a chance to see giant tortoises in their natural environment, along with intriguing birdlife like the vermilion flycatcher. Later, we'll take a look inside the lava tunnels scattered throughout the highlands. These tunnels were formed by molten lava flowing beneath the surface, which left behind large tube-like caves, some almost a mile long!

Hotel Solymar or similar, Santa Cruz Island (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

DAY 3

Visit Tortuga Bay, Charles Darwin Research Station

This morning we'll hike to Tortuga Bay, one of the most stunning beaches in the Galapagos. Tortuga Bay is accessible only by foot and is home to hundreds of prehistoric-looking marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies and pelicans. Later, we'll visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about the breeding programs that are saving vulnerable species of tortoises and land iguanas. Also, there will be a chance to see different types of carapace that help differentiate the tortoise species. This afternoon, we'll head to Isabela Island - the largest island in the Galapagos.

Hotel Albemarle or similar, Isabela Island (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Hiking: 6.5 kilometers (4 miles), 1-2 hours

DAY 4

Hike Sierra Negra Volcano and sea kayak Isabela Island

Our hike today will take us towards the summit of Sierra Negra volcano, rising nearly a mile above the ocean. See the lowland vegetation change before your eyes as we ascend through a lunar-like landscape on our way to the top. This is one of the largest volcanic calderas in the world, and one of the most active. As we hike, we might be lucky enough to see Galapagos hawks, short-eared owls, finches and flycatchers that inhabit this region. We'll head back down to sea level in time for lunch and then for a kayaking trip in the calm waters of Isabela Bay. Here we'll have the chance to see some of the island's most amazing wildlife up close. Marine iguanas bask in the sun, blue-footed boobies sit in pairs on the rock tops and Sally Lightfoot crabs scurry out of our way along the water's edge. In the clear waters below us, rays gracefully swim by and turtles pop up for a breath of air.

Hotel Albemarle or similar, Isabela Island (Breakfast, Lunch)

Hiking: 8 kilometers (5 miles), 2-3 hours, elevation +/- 65 meters (213 feet)

Kayaking: 1-2 hours

DAY 5

Walk and Snorkel Tintoreras, San Cristobal Island, Cycle San Cristobal Highlands and visit La Loberia

This morning, we'll hop out for a short walk at Tintoreras or Shark Alley, an isolated islet and popular iguana-nesting site that's home to hundreds of marine iguanas. Afterward, you can test the waters for a snorkel in a calm inlet that's home to a variety of colorful fish and green sea turtles who like to rest on the calm, sandy bottom. Later, we'll take a short flight to San Cristobal Island, the oldest and easternmost island of the Galapagos archipelago. On arrival in San Cristobal, we'll head up into the highlands for a scenic downhill bike ride. Starting at a panoramic viewpoint called La Soledad, we'll bike through the tiny town of El Progreso and five different vegetation zones until we reach a beach called La Loberia - a beach that is home to a large sea lion colony and nursery. You're not likely to see this many sea lions in one place anywhere else in the world! They play, they nap and sometimes, they pose for pictures! If you're keen on a swim, hop on in.

Casa Blanca or Blue Marlin Hotel, San Cristobal (Breakfast, Lunch)

Biking: 14.5 kilometers (9 miles), flat, 2-3 hours

DAY 6

Snorkel Kicker Rock

Today we'll cruise to Kicker Rock off the coast of San Cristobal, where we'll either snorkel or don wet suits, snorkels and masks (and tanks for the divers - diving option extra fee applies) and explore the around the remains of an underwater volcano with a rock face rising 150 meters (500 feet) above the surface of the water. Afterward, we can visit one of three beaches - Manglecito, Puerto Grande and Cerro Brujo and enjoy lunch here. This evening, we'll dine on local produce and fresh fish.

Casa Blanca or Blue Marlin Hotel, San Cristobal (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Diving/Snorkeling: Snorkel or dive Isla Labos & Kicker Rock: 2 snorkels, 30-45 mins each OR 2 dives, 30-45 minutes each (extra fees)

Notes: Optional Kicker Rock diving experience (additional cost applies): You can opt to swap the snorkel for a dive if you wish. This option must be selected at the time of booking.

DAY 7

Visit interpretation center, fly to Quito, depart

This morning, you're free to visit San Cristobal Interpretation Centre to learn about the history and mystery of the archipelago, from its discovery and what makes it so special, to Charles Darwin's visit and the present-day efforts to protect this amazing World Heritage Site. Afterward, we'll take a short flight back to Quito on the mainland, and depart for home. We'll make sure you return home relaxed and refreshed from all the great activities, fine food and friendly people you'll have met while traveling with us in the Galapagos Islands.

No Accommodation (Breakfast, Lunch)

Useful Info

Is tipping expected in the Galapagos & Ecuador?

Most people do choose to tip their Active Adventures trip leaders/guides and we recommend USD\$20 per day, per guest, per trip leader/guide. During your Active Adventures trip, your trip leader/guide will take care of all included restaurants and service tips for you. For other restaurants or services during your time in the Galapagos, 5-10% is a typical gratuity amount.

Where does the trip start?

On the first day of the trip we'll meet you at [Hacienda San José de Puembo](#) in Quito at 6pm. You are welcome to book your pre-trip stay at this hotel directly or any other hotel in Quito, though you must make your own way to Hacienda San José de Puembo at the pre-designated time.

Where does the trip end?

Your trip ends with a flight to Quito Airport (UIO) and transfer back to Hacienda San José de Puembo to pick up any other luggage. We can transport you back to Quito Airport in time for flights below.

What flights would you recommend?

Arrival: We recommend arriving in Quito by 12pm. Many guests like to arrive a day or two early to accommodate potential flight delays and/or explore the city prior to your trip start.

Departure: Flying out on the last day of the trip, we recommend departing from Quito after 8pm for domestic and 9pm for international. Earlier flight times will require a separate transfer booked at your own expense.

Tell me about the group leader?

Our Quito-based representative – they will meet you upon arrival into Quito and transfer you to our Quito hotel for the evening, where you'll dine and have a trip briefing. He'll then transfer you back to the Quito airport the following morning and see you on your way out to the Islands.

We work in partnership with a local operator in the Galapagos Islands. Depending on the size of your Active Adventures South America group, the local operator may have other clients joining the group for the island section of your trip.

Once you arrive in the Galapagos you'll be accompanied by your experienced Trip leader, who's there to keep you informed about the Galapagos and make sure that everything runs smoothly; a qualified naturalist guide, who will provide additional local knowledge of the flora and fauna; and your local boat Captain and crew!

How fit do I need to be for this trip?

As an [Activity Level 1-2](#) trip you'll need a reasonable level of fitness. While you don't have to be extremely fit, you should be in the habit of doing regular aerobic exercise. With a little preparation before your trip begins, you'll enjoy the active and outdoor nature of your trip all the more.

Please head to our [Fitness Guide](#) for great tips on how to prepare along with a workout plan!

What accommodations do we stay at on this trip?

The Galapagos Islands are located in a unique and remote part of the world, and to maintain an eco-friendly relationship with the environment, large modern hotels aren't built. We prefer to stay in locally owned accommodation, which can be fairly rustic, to give you a better opportunity to meet the locals and gain a real understanding of life in the islands. We're also lucky to be able to stay on land every night of the trip where as some operators aren't permitted to do this.

We recommend bringing enough clothing to not have to do laundry during your trip.

How much luggage can I bring on this trip?

You are allowed one piece of luggage on your trip, plus a daypack. Your main piece of luggage should not exceed 50 pounds (23 kilograms) and can be anything from a duffle bag to a sports bag with wheels or a suitcase. You'll also want a good quality backpack sized 25-30 liters (2000 cubic inches) to use throughout the days.

You'll be given a 70 litres (4,000 cubic inches) duffle bag with sizing's of around 80 x 30 x 30 centimetres (31 x 12 x 12 inches) on the first night of the trip. This is if you want to pack light for your time on the Galapagos Islands to make the transfers via boat easier. Any excess luggage and gear will then be stored securely for you at your Quito hotel until you return there on the last night of the trip.

Please note: due to the remote nature of the Galapagos Islands, many products are either unavailable or considerably more expensive than home. If there are some things you simply can't do without you might like to bring some from home (e.g. high-grade blister products and contact lens solution won't be available).

How flexible can this trip be?

Galapagos National Park is a fragile wildlife refuge and as such is sometimes subject to sudden rule changes that minimise potential damage through tourism. We may occasionally need to make itinerary changes in response to this. The Galapagos Islands are in a developing part of the world and we can't tell you that everything runs like clockwork there. What we can tell you is that we are experienced adventure travel leaders, and our Galapagos operator is a local specialist who knows how to keep things operating as smoothly as possible, even when conditions are challenging! Often, because of changing sea conditions, we may need to make small changes to our itinerary for your safety and comfort. If you bring flexibility, an open mind and a sense of humour, you'll find your trip is everything that adventure should be.

How do we travel between the Galapagos Islands?

You'll spend time journeying from island to island on board our boat, a 30 foot twin-decked launch with indoor and outdoor seating. We spend up to a few hours at a time on the boat, broken up by visits to smaller islands on a route chosen to make the most of each day's ocean and weather conditions.

You'll be able to enjoy the views and make unscheduled snorkeling stops to make the most of what's out and about that day.

How experienced do I need to be to dive?

We only recommend the diving if you've done at least 10-15 dives and are a mid-level to advanced scuba diver. The diving in the Galapagos can be quite challenging, depending on the currents, so it's only recommended if you're a confident diver - if in doubt, please chat to us before making your selection.

If you've not previously experienced diving in open water, or it's been two years or more since your last dive, then we highly recommend taking a refresher course prior to arriving too, to be better prepared.

Underwater visibility in the Galapagos is usually very good. You can often see from 15-25 metres (50-80 feet) ahead of you, sometimes up to 30 metres (100 feet) in most of the places. In some areas and in some seasons green waters are present, due to the richness of phytoplankton - this is normal.

You'll probably dive in the Galápagos in medium to strong currents of between 1-4 knots/1-4 miles/2-6 kilometres per hour. In the Garúa season (from July to December) the Humboldt current coming from the southeast is present. In the warm season (from January to June) the Panamá current from the northeast arrives in the Galápagos.

The wildlife here is in such abundance and variety! Things that you might see where we go are: Tropical fish, Galapagos Shark, Batfish, Hammerhead Shark, Tagle and Goleen Rays, Moray Eels, Green Sea Turtles, Stingrays, Barracuda, Triggerfish, Boxfish, Frogfish and plenty more!

Tell me about the optional activities on this trip?

While we do lots of snorkeling during this trip, during our day at Kicker Rock you have the choice of the following two options:

Snorkeling the Galapagos

As much snorkeling as you like! You'll be provided with 3mm short arm and leg wetsuits, mask, snorkel and fins.

Scuba Diving the Galapagos (extra fee applies)

Two dives including full dive briefings, a diver safety boat, 5mm full-length wetsuit, tank, BCD, regs, mask, snorkel and fins. Bring your diver certification card with you in order to dive!

Regardless of whether you snorkel or scuba dive, if you have your own mask, snorkel and fins we recommend bringing them with you - we do lots of snorkeling during this trip and it's always nicer to use your own!

We provide 3mm wetsuits with short arms and legs for snorkelers and 5mm wetsuits with long arms and legs for scuba divers. Our wetsuit sizes are small to extra large - you're welcome to bring your own if you would prefer.

The surface temperature of the sea ranges from 18- 30°C (65-85°F) with February to April being the warmest months, and September to November being the coolest. The average is usually around 20°C and you'll be diving to a depth of 20 metres (65 feet) You'll be provided with a wetsuit appropriate for your chosen activity and the conditions.

Please note that if you are 60 years or over and wish to participate in the Scuba diving option, you will need to provide a medical certificate in advance, and an additional fee will apply for an extra Dive Master to accompany you.

How do rooming arrangements work?

Trip prices are based on shared arrangements (typically two guests per room), unless otherwise stated. For solo travelers, we'll pair you with another person of the same gender to share rooms and if there's no one suitable to share with, there's no forced single supplement. However, if you specifically request your own rooms, you can opt to pay the single supplement. Solo travelers who book within 90 days of departure, where there are no other solo travelers willing to share, will be required to pay the single supplement.

For Family Vacation bookings, families consisting of four guests traveling with children aged 17 and under will be automatically assigned one shared room. However, the following alternative rooming allocations are available:

Families consisting of four guests with all children aged 13 and above are welcome to opt for additional rooms as per advertised double occupancy adult rates.

Families consisting of four guests with at least one child aged 12 and under are automatically assigned a shared room. However, families can opt to pay the adult rates for all guests in their family to have an additional room.

The same principles apply for families consisting of more than four guests.

Rooming preferences are subject to availability and must be communicated in writing at time of booking. Automatic assignments as per this policy will be applied in the absence of any specification provided by guests. Any request for additional rooms during trips will be at guests' own expense and subject to rates made available by the accommodation provider at the time. All minors (guests aged 17 and under) must be accompanied by at least one adult.

What park entrance fees are not included in the trip price?

The Ecuadorian government charges every person who enters the Galapagos Islands a US\$100 park entrance fee. You'll be asked to pay this when you arrive to the airport in Galapagos. INGALA, the coordinating body of Galapagos, also charges a US\$20 Transit Control Fee, which is paid through the airline as you check in at Quito airport.

What is not included?

Flights to and from trip start/end points

Pre/Post accommodation

Optional extra activities

Travel insurance

Gratuities for your guides

Rental gear

General Trip Information

You can find details on recommended flights and fitness, as well as trip start and end in the 'Useful Information' section above.

Accommodation

Our trips focus on getting you outside for the best adventure activities in the most stunning parts of Latin America. We choose our accommodation very carefully, but it's by no means a tour of the fanciest hotels on the continent. Some of the places we stay are quite luxurious and other places - like the mountain lodges in Southern Patagonia - are relatively basic, but in truly spectacular locations! Many of the inns and lodges we choose are quite small, so from time to time we might need to change one or two specified in the itinerary - though we'll make sure you love the places we stay!

Included

- Our own highly experienced trip leader, with you from start to finish
- Industry-leading Guest-to-Guide ratio (averaging 6:1)
- Your own 'Travel Wallet', an online space with everything required for your adventure
- Our knowledgeable Customer Service Team to answer your queries - just a phone call, email or chat away
- Customer Service pre-trip phone calls to ensure you're 'trip ready'
- All accommodations for the duration of your trip
- All meals except where indicated in the itinerary
- Unlimited snacks to keep you fueled
- Flights as outlined in the itinerary
- All activities outlined in the itinerary
- All necessary equipment (well-maintained and safe) for activities
- All gratuities for hotels, restaurants, and activities
- Transportation in our air-conditioned vans - safe, clean, modern, and comfortable!

Itinerary Updates

We update our itineraries regularly, so please check our website for the most up-to-date itineraries and pricing. We make every effort to ensure itineraries are updated as necessary, though changes may occur without prior notice due to unforeseen circumstances.

Outdoor Experience

You don't need lots of experience to take our trips. We allow you to make the most of Latin America's outdoor environments, culture and history regardless of your experience. Our trip leaders are highly trained and experienced outdoor guides and they'll look after you. Experience is not as important as being keen to give things a go. We manage the level of activity to suit you, and we have an impeccable safety record.

Excluded

- International/Domestic Flights before and after your trip
- Alcoholic beverages
- Optional additional activities
- Travel insurance (Mandatory for this destination)
- Rental equipment available as per your itinerary
- Gratuities for your guides at the end of your fabulous trip