

## **Galapagos Islands & Quito – 8 Days 7 Nights**

Galapagos Trip 1: Nov 19-26

Galapagos Trip 2: Nov 26-Dec 3

Tour Leader: Edward Yount

### **Day 1 – Arrival to Quito**

Arrive in Quito, Ecuador today at any time. On arrival, you will be greeted and assisted by hotel staff and transferred to the hotel. (Rooms will be available starting at noon)

Quito is the capital of Ecuador, the closest capital city to the equator. The spectacular valley of Guayllabamba River where Quito lies is flanked by towering volcanoes, some of them snow-capped, and visible from the city on a clear day.

Accommodation: Wyndham Airport Hotel

### **Day 2 – Full Day Historic Quito Tour**

The historic center of Quito is one of the largest and best-preserved in the Americas. Quito was named as one the first World Cultural Heritage Sites declared by UNESCO, in 1978. Today we will enjoy a full day guided tour of Historic Quito including the following:

**Basilica del Voto Nacional** – this is the largest neo-Gothic church in South America. Rather than gargoyles, turtles and iguanas protrude from the church's side. Those brave enough (involves some steep stairs and ladders) can climb to the top of the Basilica Tower.

**San Diego Convent & Cemetery** – an often-overlooked highlight of the city is the Convent of San Diego. Packed with beautiful art as well as recently discovered frescoes that were long hidden beneath a layer of plaster.

**Panecillo Viewpoint:** There is no doubt that the best way to have your first visit to the city of Quito, is to go up to the Panecillo viewpoint. At the top of the viewpoint stands the Virgin of Quito monument, one of the great icons of the city.

**The Church and Convent of St. Francis:** a 16th-century Roman Catholic complex in Quito, Ecuador. The imposing structure has the distinction of being the largest architectural ensemble among the historical structures of colonial Latin America.

**Church of the Society of Jesus:** This Jesuit church is one of the great baroque masterpieces in South America. All the work took 160 years to complete (1605-1765). Almost every inch of the interior has intricate decorations. Known as one of the finest examples of Spanish Baroque architecture in South America.

**La Ronda Street:** Stroll along Calle La Ronda for a glimpse into the culture and history of Quito. This lively pedestrian street is the place to explore historic buildings, sample traditional food, watch artisans at work and enjoy live entertainment.

Accommodation: Wyndham Airport Hotel

Included B/L

### **Day 3 – Tortoise Ranch – Lava Tunnels**

Early morning transfer to Quito Airport for flight to Baltra Island - Galapagos National Park.

Arrival to Baltra Airport – Galapagos (GPS). You will meet our staff at airport exit area (outside baggage claim). Here you will begin transfer to our ecolodge located on Santa Cruz.

En route to the ecolodge stop for a visit to the **Twin Craters** these are geological formations, craters of volcanic origin. Take a short walk through the native Scaevola Forest to see the Craters. Several species of birds can potentially be found here, including the Witch Bird, Woodpecker Finch, Galapagos Mockingbird, etc.

Arrive for lunch and check in at Suyamar Ecolodge.

**Tortoise Reserve** - After taking some time to rest after lunch we can visit a private reserve of over 150 acres, adjacent to the territories of the Galapagos National Park. Here, giant tortoises migrate from the park to this property in certain seasons. On the property there is also a lava tunnel nearly 300 meters long which we can explore.

Accommodation: Suyamar Ecolodge.

Included: B/L/D

### **Day 4 - Santa Fe Island – Hidden Beach**

Morning transfer to Puerto Ayora for an appx. 1.5-hour navigation to Santa Fe Island. As we navigate near the island's huge precipices, we can observe a forest of giant endemic cactus and colonies of seabirds, including pelicans, boobies and gulls. On the north end of the island, we will arrive to a calm turquoise bay, inhabited by a large number of sea lions. This is an ideal place to snorkel, swim with sea lions, tropical fish, and occasionally observe and swim with sea turtles.

Lunch on board.

After lunch we will visit the Hidden Beach where we have the opportunity to enjoy the marine iguana population on the beach and explore this unique coastal ecosystem.

Accommodation: Suyamar Ecolodge.

Included: B/L/D

### **Day 5 - Bartolome Island – Sullivan Bay**

Early morning bus transfer to Itabaca Canal to board the yacht that will take us on the tour of this island with turquoise waters and beautiful white sand beaches. Breakfast onboard with an approximately 2-hour navigation to reach the volcanic shores of Bartolome. This is one of the youngest islands of the Galapagos Archipelago where we can see fascinating formations of lava flows, lava bombs and volcanic cones.

Upon arrival, climb a staircase and from the top, you will see a spectacular landscape of two beautiful bays. This is one of the most representative images of the Galapagos archipelago. Near Pinnacle Rock you can also see two beautiful beaches in the form of a crescent. After hiking, you will have the opportunity to snorkel in the bay, where we can hopefully observe sea turtles, sharks, white tip reef, tropical fish, sea lions and many other unique marine species. Also, this is the perfect area to observe **Galapagos Penguins**.

Accommodation: Suymar Ecolodge.

Included: B/L/D

### **Day 6 – South Plaza Island & Carrion Point**

Early morning bus transfer to Itabaca Canal for an appx. 2-hour navigation to South Plaza Island. Despite its small size South Plaza Island is home to a large number of species and is famous for its extraordinary flora. The coastline is home to many birds, such as nesting Red-billed Tropicbirds, and Swallow-tailed Gulls. South Plaza is also home to one of the largest sea lion colonies in the entire Galapagos Archipelago – with over 1000 individuals. Land iguanas & marine iguanas are also abundant, in fact, this is the only island where the mating season of the galapagos land iguana and marine iguana overlap, giving rise to a unique population of **hybrid iguanas** on the island.

We will return at appx. 5pm for transfer back to hotel.

Accommodation: Suymar Ecolodge.

Included: B/L/D

### **Day 7 - North Seymour**

Morning bus transfer to Itabaca for an appx. 1.5-hour navigation to North Seymour Island, which is a great place for hiking.

There is a circular path about 2 miles long that crosses through the interior of the island and takes us to explore its unique ecology. This trail will take you through some of the largest seabird colonies in the Galapagos Islands.

Here you will have the opportunity to observe the courtship behavior of Blue-footed Boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds inflating their balloon-like gular sacs. These are some of the more curious attractions of the Galapagos. After lunch, we have the chance to snorkel with green sea turtles and the famous Galapagos sharks; you'll also appreciate the mischievous sea lions playing and surfing in the sea.

We will return at appx. 5pm for transfer to your hotel.

Evening dinner in Puerto Ayora followed by free time to walk along the boardwalk and buy any last-minute souvenirs.

Accommodation: Suymar Ecolodge.

Included: B/L/D

### **Day 8 – Return to Baltra Airport**

Breakfast and departure from Suymar Ecolodge to Baltra Airport in time for your afternoon flight.

Included: Breakfast

END OF TOUR

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## **Trip Details & More Information**

### **Includes:**

- Accommodation Santa Cruz: Suymar Ecolodge
- All transfers in Galapagos
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner as listed on Itinerary
- Local Naturalist Guides (English speaking)

### **Not Included:**

- Air Ticket to Galapagos
- Entrance Fee to Galapagos National Park – USD \$100.00 per person (subject to change)
- Tourism (INGALA) Transit Control Card – USD \$20.00 per person
- Optional Expenses
  - Tips for Guides, Boat Crew, Hotel Staff
  - Extra Meals & Drinks – beer, sodas, wine.
  - Covid Testing
  - Laundry
  - Personal Expenses

### **Notes on Daily Boat Tours**

Boat tours are on a shared basis. Yachts to Bartolome Island, Plazas, North Seymour Island hold between 16-20 passengers. Santa Fe Island boats hold between 10-12 passengers.

### **Daily Boat Tours on Santa Cruz will include:**

- English Speaking Naturalist Guide
- Snorkeling Gear – Mask, Snorkel, Fins.
- Wetsuit (available for rent - optional)
- Snacks
- Drinks
- Towels
- Lunch

**Accommodation:** Suymar Ecolodge - This family run lodge is located in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island in the peaceful community of Bellavista. This community is one of the oldest of the original settlements on the Island of Santa Cruz. Located approximately only 6 km from the tourist center of Puerto Ayora.

**Note on Wi-Fi/Data Accessibility:** the Galapagos Islands are very remote, and connection possibilities are limited. Free Wi-Fi connection is provided via satellite at hotels, but the data speeds are slow.

**Note:** Itinerary subject to changes only if out of our control. Example: changes/delays to flights, changes in boat schedules, changes due to weather conditions or conservation policies of the Galapagos National Park for the protection of the islands.