



10-day Galapagos Adventure Tour

****LAND TOUR****

Complete Itinerary

25 June to 4 July 2020

Introduction

Immerse yourself in the wildlife, culture and unique ecosystem the Galapagos has to offer as we hike, bike, kayak, and snorkel our way across the archipelago. We'll spend the week snorkeling with curious sea lions, grazing sea turtles, majestic rays, and an abundance of tropical fish while visiting each of the 4 inhabited islands. We'll start with a downhill bike ride through the San Cristobal Highlands learning about the vegetation before taking to the water for our first snorkel at the amazing Kicker Rock. We'll hike up an active volcano to one of the biggest calderas in the world on Isabela Island, take a coastal kayak in the Isabela's beautiful Bay and lounge on a black sand beach on the mysterious Floreana Island. Blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas and frigate birds populate each island. Up close encounters are common so have your camera ready!

Each island has historical and educational sites we'll visit along the way to learn about the human history and the many programs in place to maintain this delicate environment through research, education and sustainable tourism. We'll be staying in quaint hotels and dining in local restaurants that get you off the beaten path and into the amazing culture. No tour would be complete without an opportunity to observe giant tortoises in their natural habitat or taking a stroll through an ancient lava tunnel! Experience Galapagos amidst the animals, the locals and the landscapes in this unforgettable 10-day adventure.

Itinerary Snapshot

Day	Activities	Where	Meals
Day 1	Arrive in Quito. Welcome Dinner and Tour Briefing.	Quito	D
Day 2	Fly San Cristobal. Cycle San Cristobal Highlands and visit La Loberia.	San Cristobal	B L D
Day 3	Snorkel at Kicker Rock. Visit Interpretation Center.	San Cristobal	B L
Day 4	Boat to Floreana and snorkel. Visit Highlands and Pirate Caves.	Floreana	B L D
Day 5	Boat to Isabela Bay Kayak, Visit Giant Tortoises.	Isabela	B L D
Day 6	Hike Sierra Negra Volcano and visit lava fields of Volcan Chico.	Isabela	B L
Day 7	Visit Tintoreras. Free time.	Isabela	B L D
Day 8	Boat to Santa Cruz. Visit the highlands, Tortuga Bay.	Santa Cruz	B L D
Day 9	Depart for Quito. Farewell dinner.	Santa Cruz	B
Day 10	Depart Quito anytime.	Quito	B

Tour Summary

Start and End:	Quito, Ecuador
Tour Length:	10 days/9 nights on Land
Departures:	Every Other Friday
Tour Style:	Active
Comfort Level:	Standard
Difficulty Factor:	Moderate
Group Size:	Max 16, Average 10
Single Supplement:	US\$999
Tour Price:	US\$4999 per person
Extra Night EB Hotel:	US\$156 per room
Flight Lima to Quito:	US\$250 (if booked as an airpass with LATAM international flights)
Approximate NZD total:	NZ\$8878.00

Highlights

- Snorkel with sea turtles, playful sea lions and amazing underwater life
- Hike up an active volcano and one of the biggest calderas in the world
- Stay on all 4 inhabited islands and learn about the rich history and culture
- See the famous giant tortoises and marine iguanas in their natural habitat
- Go kayaking at Isabela Island
- Visit pirate caves on Floreana Island
- Sample some traditional Ecuadorian cuisine and meet the local Galapagueños

What is Included and Not Included?

Included in Tour Price – All prices shown in this itinerary are in USD

- 9 Nights Standard Accommodation: Private Bathroom
- *Flights to and from Galapagos
- All Land, Air, and Sea Transport in Galapagos
- Naturalist Guide Authorized by the GNP
- Mountain Bikes, Sea Kayaks, Wetsuits and Snorkeling Equipment
- Meals daily as specified in Itinerary
- Water stations to refill your reusable water bottles
- Tips for hotel staff, boat crew and drivers
- Arrival & Departure Airport Transfers to EB Hotel only

Not Included in Tour Price

- National Park Entrance Fee \$100, **cash only**
- Ingala Fee \$20, **cash only**
- Optional Diving (*Please inquire in advance*)
- Drinks other than water (*Soda, beer, etc.*)
- Meals not specified in Itinerary (*2 evening meals*)
- Tips for Tour Leader/Naturalist Guide

Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1 Friday	<i>Arrive in Quito</i> <i>Welcome Briefing and Dinner</i>	D Quito
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Arrive in Quito any time and check into your hotel. This evening you will be met by a representative for a briefing about your upcoming adventure and an opportunity to get know your new travel mates before your first dinner together. If you arrive early, you can use your free time to get acquainted with one of the highest capitals in the world sitting at just over 9,000 feet above sea level. The city is nestled in a long, narrow valley of the Andes and flanked by the Pichincha Volcano to the west. For a great view and a little exercise, Pichincha is easily accessible for a day trip. If you're in a cultural mood, head to the Old Town to stroll through the magnificent cathedrals and take in the colonial architecture of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. El Panecillo or 'the Little Bread Loaf,' is located high atop a hill in the Old Town and is a major Quito attraction boasting a panoramic view of the city. Museums are scattered throughout the New and Old Town as well as local artisan markets that are great for picking up souvenirs. The New Town is teeming with cafes and restaurants and is a vibrant mix of locals, expats, and fellow travelers. New Town and Old Town are easily accessible by trolley or taxi. If you'd prefer, we'd be happy to help arrange these pre-tour activities for you. We can also assist in booking any accommodation you may need if arriving earlier or staying later in Quito.

DAY 2 Saturday	<i>Fly to San Cristobal</i> <i>Downhill Bike Ride, Visit La Loberia</i>	B L D San Cristobal
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This morning we'll take a short flight to the one of the oldest islands in the Galapagos archipelago, San Cristobal. We'll land in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, a coastal town and the administrative capital of the islands. After sampling some of the local cuisine 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. There we'll be able to watch sea lions sun bathing, playing and vying for our attention. If you can't wait to get in the water, this is your first opportunity. As the sunsets, we'll bike back to town and get ready for a welcome dinner at a small local restaurant.

DAY 3 Sunday	<i>Snorkel at Kicker Rock</i> <i>Visit Interpretation Center</i>	B L San Cristobal
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Today we take to the water to get a glimpse of the underwater world of Galapagos. First we'll cruise along the coast in our boat identifying shore birds like the Great Frigate and famous Blue-Footed Booby. Then we'll find a calm spot near the coast to get our fins wet in search of damselfish, puffer fish, and, hopefully, curious sea lion pups. From there we continue to Kicker Rock or Leon Dormido as it's known by the locals to explore the final remains of a tuff cone rising over 143 meters out of the ocean. If Kicker Rock were a building, it would have almost 50 floors! Along the edge and through a channel of this drastic compact ash formation, we'll be on the hunt for sea turtles, spotted eagle rays, chocolate chip starfish, and, with any luck, a Galapagos Shark or two. Don't worry; they won't be as interested in you as you are in them.

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There are many beautiful beaches along the coastline of San Cristobal that are accessible only by boat. After our snorkel activities are done, we'll head to one of these sandy beaches for some fun and exploration. After lunch on board, feel free to spend your time swimming in the turquoise water or snapping photos of birds, crabs and other creatures we may find on the beach. We'll head back to town late afternoon to visit the Interpretation Center. We'll 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. To culminate the educational afternoon, pick a spot at nearby Playa Mann, or Mann Beach, with the playful sea lions or grab a front row seat at Casa Blanca to toast in the sunset. Dinner is on your own tonight but rest assured we can offer you plenty of suggestions.

DIVING: Occasionally, the option to dive is available. Please inquire in advance.

DAY 4 Monday	<i>Boat to Floreana and Snorkel Visit Highlands and Pirate Caves</i>	B L D Floreana
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After breakfast, we'll depart by boat for the least inhabited of the main islands, Floreana. In route, keep your eyes peeled for dolphins, whales and the waved albatross. We'll have a pre-lunch snorkel before going ashore to a black sand beach at the home of the Wittmer's, one of the islands first settlers. With a population of less than 150 people, Puerto Velasco Ibarra is a sleepy little town but not without its secrets. You can read up on how life came to be on Floreana and how some lives mysteriously ended. After lunch, take a siesta while listening to the waves or walk along the coast in search of sunbathing iguanas. This afternoon we'll bus up to the highlands of Floreana to visit the Pirate and Whaler Caves from long ago. We'll return to town and our beachside accommodation in time to enjoy the day's last light before heading to the Baronesa for dinner.

NOTE: Because of the small nature of the hotel and lack of availability, sometimes we are unable to stay and must continue on to Isabela.

DAY 5 Tuesday	<i>Boat to Isabela, Kayak in the bay Visit Giant Tortoise Breeding Center.</i>	B L D Isabela
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This morning you'll have a chance to go for one last walk along Floreana's coast before we embark for Isabela, the largest island in the archipelago. Once we arrive in Puerto Villamil, we'll check in, have lunch and then head off for a kayak around the sheltered bay area of Puerto Villamil. Galapagos penguins (the only penguin found north of the equator), sea turtles and rays frequent these shallow waters and blue-footed boobies, frigate birds and pelicans may be seen resting along the shore and in some nearby mangrove trees.

Afterwards, a visit to the Giant Tortoise Breeding Center is planned, where we'll see giant tortoises in all stages of development. The center has almost a thousand giant tortoises training for life on their own!

There is a nice mangrove-lined boardwalk path that brings us back to town from the center. Many birds, including flamingoes, call this area home. There are many bars and restaurants along the waterfront in Puerto Villamil where we can enjoy a drink or watch the sun set in the distance.

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DAY 6 Wednesday	<i>Hike Sierra Negra Volcano</i> <i>Visit Volcan Chico Lava Fields</i>	B L Isabela
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Lace up your hiking boots; we're heading up a volcano! Sierra Negra Volcano is one of the most active volcanoes in Galapagos; its last eruption was in October 2005. As we hike to the perimeter of the caldera, we'll be on the lookout for bird species found only in the highlands like the bright red Vermillion Flycatcher and the elusive short-eared owl. Once we reach the rim, we'll be met with a nine-kilometer view that stretches across one of the most active calderas in the world. We'll continue on to traverse the vast lava fields of Volcan Chico en route for a lookout that boasts breathtaking views reaching to the north of Isabela. After enjoying a hearty sense of accomplishment, we'll make our way back to town late afternoon for some free time to curl up with a book or venture down to the water for a relaxing swim before dinner.

Optional: Skip the Hike, and Snorkel at Los Tuneles (extra cost of \$150 per person)

If you think sleeping sharks, sea horses, sea turtles and strange lava tunnel formations sound intriguing then you're going to need your mask, snorkel and flippers, because you get all that and more at Los Tuneles.

Also called Cabo Rosa, this area about one hour from town was created when lava flows reached the ocean, forming tunnels, arches and sheltered bays perfect for snorkeling. They also happen to be perfect feeding grounds for sea turtles and resting places for other species like Galapagos sharks! Even the cute Galapagos penguins have been known to visit this area at times. It is one of the most diverse snorkel spots in the entire archipelago, and also home to some birds, such as nesting blue-footed boobies.

The ride to get here can be a bit rough, and because of the lava formations, safe access is only possible at certain tides. If you want to maximize the time you spend in the water in the Galapagos, Los Tuneles should be on your list! We haven't even mentioned that sea lions, eagle rays, octopus and plenty of tropical fish, sea stars and sea urchins are also spotted in these often crystal clear waters!

DAY 7 Thursday	<i>Hike & snorkel at Tintoreras</i> <i>Free afternoon</i>	B L D Isabela
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An easy walk around some aa lava fields and a fun snorkel with curious Galapagos creatures are in store this morning. We head over to Las Tintoreras, first enjoying a bit of a boat tour around the bay, searching for penguins!

Walking around Tintoreras, you're greeted by an abundance of marine iguanas. This is an important nesting site for them, so be sure to stick to the trail. Juvenile marine iguanas, as well as adults that are often brightly colored, are seen here. In some of the calm channels we walk by we may also see sleeping sharks.

Putting our fins and masks on, a dip in the water will have us snorkeling with a wide range of aquatic animals. Be on the look out for things like sea cucumbers, chocolate chip sea stars and even Galapagos penguins.

Isabela boasts a wide range of restaurants, and we'll enjoy a typical Ecuadorian lunch today, while everyone plans out their afternoon adventures.

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You can choose how you spend the rest of your day – you’ve earned some free time! More snorkel time is an option at Concha de Perla or perhaps you’d like to take a step back in time and visit the Wall of Tears. Built by convicts and still standing over 50 years later, this landmark is a remnant of Isabela’s penal colony past. A beachside road leads the way and it’s a lovely walk or bike ride. Stop offs along the way look into the brackish lagoons like Poza de las Diablas and tucked away beaches like Playa del Amor. Make sure you watch your step – this is also an area where juvenile giant tortoises have been reintroduced to the wild.

Tonight we’ll meet back up for a well deserved feast as it’s our last night in Isabela.

DAY 8 Friday	<i>Optional Visit Charles Darwin Research Station Visit Wild Tortoises in the Santa Cruz Highlands Optional Visit to Tortuga Bay</i>	B L D Santa Cruz
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We’ll wave goodbye to Isabela this morning as we depart for Santa Cruz. After arrival, the first highlight of the day will be heading into the highlands to a private reserve where giant tortoises roam free. Expect to get some great photos of tortoises wallowing in mud pools, munching on vegetation or even "running" across the fields in the highlands at full speed. The highland areas we like to visit often have lava tunnels as well, which you can walk through - some of them are quite large!

After a lunch in the highlands, we’ll head back into town for a visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station. We’ll learn about the station’s successes in repopulating the islands with the once endangered land iguana and several species of Giant Tortoise. From the collection of the eggs to the age of release, we’ll observe how the giant tortoises are raised and readied for life on their own.

What happens next is up to you. Puerto Ayora is the biggest town in the Galapagos, so you may want to explore the shops, restaurants and waterfront on your own. Alternatively, an optional visit to Tortuga Bay is highly recommended. Featuring a gorgeous beach accessible only by foot you can swim, sunbath, bodysurf, kayak or snorkel around this popular area. A leisurely 45-minute path leads to the beach area and along the way you may spot lava lizards and birds in the surrounding trees.

Upon arrival at the first soft, white sandy beach, you’ll be greeted by some rough surf that is perfect for surfing. Further along you can reach Tortuga Bay, a calm bay that is sheltered by mangroves and perfect for swimming. There’s a nice walk through a cactus forest for those that want one more chance at spotting nesting blue footed boobies or massive marine iguanas.

After fun in the sun, make your way back to town for our farewell dinner in the Enchanted Islands.

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DAY 9
Saturday

Return to Quito, Final Dinner

B D
Quito

Enjoy a bit of free time before your morning flight to the mainland. Baltra airport is on another island, which requires a cross-island taxi ride on Santa Cruz, followed by a ferry and a bus ride that can take up to two hours of travel time in total.

On the way to the airport, should you want coffee and, time permitting, we'll make a pit stop at a local distributor for a bag of fresh ground Galapagos Coffee, the only thing exported from the islands. Further along, we'll try to make a stop in the highlands at Los Gemelos. This interesting site features some unique craters unlike anything else you'll have seen in the Galapagos. Again, everything is dependent on how early your flights are today. As you head across the channel to Baltra, enjoy one last look at the turquoise waters before flying back to Quito for your final dinner this evening.

DAY 10
Sunday

Final Day, Depart For Home

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Quito

Today is the last day of the tour and we'll be sure to get you to the airport if you have a flight out before noon or arrange a day tour in and around Quito for some additional exploring. Check out our post-trips for some ideas on where to go and what to do.

Activity & Itinerary Disclaimer

All dossiers and itineraries are designed to be as informative as possible and are provided in good faith. Unless otherwise stated, all prices in this Dossier are in USD\$. Due to the temperament of Mother Nature and the Ecuadorian Government, itineraries may change and activities may be shifted, omitted or replaced without notice. Our goal is to give you the best possible tour with a safety-first mentality. We also must comply with all rules set forth by the national and local governments no matter how convenient or inconvenient they may be. The good news is that we rarely have to change the itinerary drastically and we are very adept at dealing with the challenges of operating in a third world country. You're in good hands!

Itinerary Notes

Highlands Cycle

This is a scenic, non-technical bike ride on mountain bikes. There will be a support car with us the entire way for anyone that prefers to ride in the truck or hop off early.

Kicker Rock Snorkel

If you've never snorkeled before, no worries. There will be a full briefing and a practice run in calm water. Wetsuits also make you buoyant and we have a couple different flotation devices to choose from. You do need to be able to climb a short ladder back into the boat after the snorkels, but again, don't worry, the skipper will be there to help you. You'll be on the boat for approximately 6 hours. Since you'll be staying close to the coast, seasickness isn't usually an issue this day.

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Diving in the Galapagos

Occasionally, the option to dive is available. Please inquire in advance. We can also arrange a diving extension for you to spend extra time in the Galapagos; this must be booked and paid for in advance. If you have never gone diving with a 5mm-7mm wetsuit, in the open water, or it's been 2 years or more since your last dive, we highly recommend a refresher course to be better prepared, as well as to ensure your safety and comfort during your dive experience. Diving in the Galapagos is not geared towards novice divers.

Note: *If you choose to book diving, we require you to complete a dive request form and send us a copy of your certification.*

Snorkel & Activity Gear

We take pride in having the best gear in the Galapagos Islands! Wetsuits or rash guards, fins, mask and snorkels are provided for you, as well as kayaks and bicycles during scheduled activities. If you prefer to bring your own snorkel gear, please do so. If you have a new mask it should be cleaned properly and used beforehand to make sure it isn't going to fog up when you are on the hunt for that perfect underwater fish photo. If you wear glasses – YOU CANNOT WEAR YOUR GLASSES WITH A MASK. You can wear contacts or visit a dive shop before coming to Galapagos to get a corrective lens mask if necessary.

Tijeretas Hike

The Tijeretas track is a loop trail at about 2km/1.5miles in length. The loop takes you up and down four flights of stairs to various lookouts, one with a statue of Charles Darwin. It's a paved/sealed track and there is an extension to a beautiful beach called Punta Carola. Facilities are located at the beginning, in the Interpretation Center.

Boat Crossings

Residents and tourist alike use this method of transport regularly between the main inhabited islands. However, for this tour you'll be on a private boat. Out on the open ocean, this is your best chance to see whales and dolphins. Each crossing takes about 2 hours. Less time if the sea is calm, more time if the sea is rough. Boats are usually 30-35 feet long and hold 20-30 passengers. You'll be leaving bright and early most days when the sea is usually calm, but if you're prone to seasickness or not sure, bring some seasickness pills just in case.

Floreana Island

Floreana is the least developed of all the inhabited islands. You'll be staying in beautiful beachside hotel, but bear in mind the limitations of the island and available facilities. There's limited electricity, water supply and food choices. **NOTE:** *There are also times when we are not able to stay in Floreana due to the extremely limited availability of accommodations and must continue on to Isabela.*

Volcano Hike

You'll be walking 4-6 hours with frequent rest stops and a lunch break. From the National Park checkpoint, there's about a 45-minute walk uphill to the rim of the volcano. The trail around the rim has only slight up and downs with a few short steep inclines. The lava fields of Volcan Chico are uneven and rocky in areas. The path in and out is dirt: if it's been raining, it could be muddy. There's one proper bathroom at the beginning of the trail. The majority of walking is on level terrain and as long as you're comfortable walking 4-6 hours, it's definitely doable. If you have weak ankles, use athletic braces and wear hiking boots. If you have knee trouble, bring a hiking pole or two. This is a non-technical hike.

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Kayaking Isabela

This is a beginner friendly kayak - no experience required. We use sit-on-top double kayaks and life vests. Be prepared for some splashes and wetness just in case. A dry bag is good piece of gear to bring along if you want to bring a non-waterproof camera.

Wall of Tears

There are no facilities. Taxis are sometimes not allowed. The path is part sand part gravel with a few slight inclines. It will take 2+ hours walking or 1+ hour biking one way. For the most part, it's an easy ride or walk that parallels the beach.

Tortuga Bay

The trail to the beach is an easy walk on a nice path for about 45 minutes. Once you pass the National Park checkpoint at the entrance, there will be no bathrooms or shops to buy refreshments, so bring plenty of water and sunscreen. If you want to rent a surfboard or boogie board, you must rent one in town and carry the board with you. If you want to walk through the cactus forest, you'll need shoes suitable for the rocky path.

Charles Darwin Research Station

Most itineraries included a visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS); however, you're actually visiting the Breeding Center Fausto Llerena, which is where Lonesome George was until his death in 2012. One animal you can see here that you may have not seen already is the Galapagos Land Iguana. The center is also home to Super Diego, a giant tortoise originally from Española Island. Diego got his name after being rescued from the San Diego Zoo in 1977. Since his return, he's been very busy and has an estimated 1,700 offspring!

NOTE: *If we have an early flight out of Galapagos (not usually the case), this activity may be omitted or you can choose to visit CDRS on your own instead of Tortuga Bay.*

Santa Cruz Highlands

If it's been raining, the farm can be muddy. The lava tunnel is damp, dark and rocky. There are lights in the tunnel, but if you have a headlamp, bring it. Closed toed shoes recommended and keep a rain jacket handy just in case.