



# Galápagos Islands

Nowhere else in the world gives the visitor such a sense of being just one element in the chain of evolution. Here, extraordinary and unique wildlife pay almost no attention to passing humans, secure in the knowledge that nature is the uncontested master of these islands. Like a trip to an alternative universe, no matter what you expect, you will never be prepared for the wonders that are revealed.

## At a glance

- 19 volcanic islands, 600 miles from the coast of Ecuador
- UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Fearless wildlife, including giant tortoises, marine iguanas, blue and red-footed boobies, lava lizards, sea-lions, snakes and frigate birds
- Hot with intermittent rain December-May, cooler and overcast June-November
- Boat cruises available for 4,5,7 and 10 nights
- Excellent hotels on Santa Cruz, San Cristobal and Isabela
- We recommend booking at least 9 months ahead to secure space

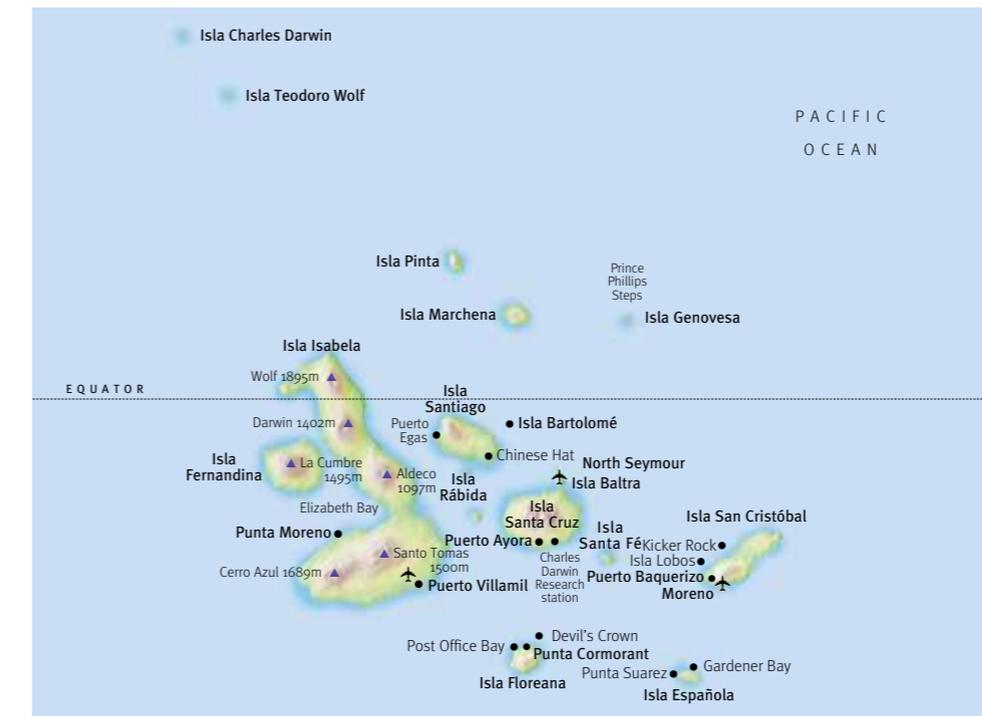
## Getting there

Fly from the UK to Quito or Guayaquil with KLM or Iberia (via Amsterdam or Madrid), stay overnight on the mainland and then take an onward flight to the islands (Baltra or San Cristobal). The majority of the flights to the Galápagos from Quito touchdown in Guayaquil en route (the return is the same route reversed). Please note, there is a 1 hour time difference between Ecuador mainland and Galápagos.

Prices from **£2,424 per person** (2 sharing) for 4 night Galápagos cruise.

## Combinations

We highly recommend you stay at least 2 nights in Quito or Guayaquil prior to flying to Galápagos. Ecuador mainland makes for an ideal combination with the Galápagos or alternatively, Peru is also worth considering.



# Galápagos Islands

In order to conserve and protect the wildlife and environment of the islands, the number of visitors is controlled by the Galápagos National Park Authority. Here is a selection of some of the main islands and what you might expect to see are shown below.



## Santa Cruz

The most populated island, the main town of Puerto Ayora is the busiest hub in the Galápagos. A charming and well-resourced port in its own right with a number of hotels and restaurants, it has lovely crescent beaches and excellent opportunities for snorkelling, kayaking and scuba-diving. It is the base for further cruises and walking tours. The Charles Darwin Research Station is committed to preserving the unique environment and is a centre for the breeding of Galápagos tortoises.



## San Cristobal

The sleepy town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno is home to the Interpretation Centre that provides an excellent history and explanation of the islands. At Punta Pitt you will find red, blue and masked-footed boobies, and at La Galapaguera both wild tortoises and others in a reserve - necessary to protect them from wild goats and rats (introduced unfortunately by earlier travellers). The second main airport is on this island, and is another starting point for cruises.



## Isabela

The largest island made up of 6 fused volcanoes, Isabela is shaped like a seahorse and is one of the youngest islands, which gives it a distinctive ecosystem. There are more wild tortoises here than anywhere else, because the Alceda tortoises like to wallow in the mud of the volcanic craters to protect them from mosquitoes and ticks. Around Elizabeth Bay, penguins, turtles, Darwin's finches and reef sharks abound, and between June and September Isabela is the best place to see passing pods of whales. It has a number of good hotels.



## Floreana

Devil's Crown is an almost completely submerged volcano that has become a haven for exotic birds and offers the most spectacular diving and snorkelling opportunities. Here you can swim among turtles, sea-lions, white-tipped sharks, amberjacks and king angelfish whilst seeing the most vibrantly-coloured coral.



## Espanola

The oldest of the islands (3.4 million years) Espanola has no fresh water source and is uninhabitable by humans - but it's a haven for sea birds. There is a large waved albatross community at Punta Suarez, and at Port Gardner you will encounter blue and masked-footed boobies and bright red marine iguanas. Sea lion colonies can be seen, along with finches, swallow-tailed gulls and the Galápagos hawk.



## Santa Fé

A tiny island 25 km from Santa Cruz, Santa Fé has one of the most beautiful bays in the Galápagos. The water is crystal clear and ideal for snorkelling, and is a wonderful place to swim with sea-lions. The Santa Fe iguana is unique to the island, and can be seen among the Prickly Pear cactus that sometimes grow to a height of 10m.



## Santiago

Long a favourite spot for pirates and whalers, and more recently given over to an attempt at salt-mining, Santiago is now uninhabited. Fascinating for its lava formations at Sullivan Bay, Santiago is a home for pink flamingos, fur seals and sea-lions, marine iguanas and Sally Lightfoot crabs.



## Bartholomé

Despite being desolate with few plants, Bartolomé is probably the most photographed of all the islands. The wondrous lava formations with shades of red, orange, green and glistening black are a stunning sight, as is the view from the look-out summit at Pinnacle Rock (114 m). If you snorkel, Galapagos penguins are regular companions.



The Galápagos Islands can be visited year round. There are 2 main seasons: the hot / wet season from December to May with warm air and sea temperatures and occasional heavy rainfall; and the misty (garua) season from June to November with cooler air and sea temperatures and more wind. The seasonal variations affect the wildlife cycles in different ways. With the land based animals tending to breed in the warm season, and those that get their food from the sea tending to breed in the garua season, there is always something interesting to see. Please note, timings may vary from year to year and island to island.

## A few wildlife facts

- There are five families of reptiles on the islands: iguanas, lava lizards, geckos, snakes and the giant tortoises. The Galápagos and the Seychelles are the only two island groups in the world which are inhabited by giant tortoises.
- Half of the resident population of birds is endemic to the Galápagos, but only 5 of the 19 species of sea birds found on the Galápagos are unique to the islands. These are: the Galápagos penguin, the flightless cormorant, the lava gull, the swallow tailed gull and the waved albatross.
- The number of native mammals is limited to two species of bats, a few species of rats and, of course, sea lions and seals. The Galápagos are washed by three currents which provide the islands with a rich and diverse underwater fauna. 16 species of whales and 7 species of dolphins are also in evidence around the islands.

## Galápagos Calendar - At a glance

### December - May (hot/wet season) and June - November (overcast/stiff breeze season).

**January** The hot / rainy season becomes established. Air and water temperatures rise. 'Spring' arrives with the rain and green shoots appear even in arid areas. Land birds nest, land (Isabela) and marine (Espanola) iguana mating season starts. Green turtles start arriving to lay eggs.

**February** Flamingos start nesting on Floreana, marine iguanas nest on Santa Cruz and Bahama pintail ducks start breeding. Sperm whales and occasionally blue whales may be seen off the west coasts of Isabela and Fernandina.

**March** Hot and humid. Marine iguanas nest on Fernandina. Frigate bird mating season starts. Late in the month Waved Albatross arrive on Espanola.

**April** Large numbers of Waved Albatross arrive on Espanola and start their noisy courtship ritual. Green turtle and land iguana eggs start to hatch. The last giant tortoises hatch.

**May** Waved Albatross on Espanola start laying their eggs. Sea turtles

hatching on Espanola, Floreana and Santiago, and marine iguanas hatching on Santa Cruz. Galápagos penguins active around Bartholome. The sea lion and fur seals mating season starts, running from May to December. As there is a 12 month gestation newborn pups also arrive during this period.

**June** The garua season starts. The air and sea temperatures start to cool, south-east trade winds return and currents become a bit stronger. The nesting season of the giant tortoises starts. Humpback whales may be seen, as may migrant birds flying north.

**July** Breeding season for blue footed boobies on Espanola as albatross fledglings start to be born. Flightless cormorants start courtship rituals on Fernandina. Whales and dolphins may be observed off the west coast of Isabela.

**August** Oceans can be choppy. Migrant shore birds start to arrive. Mating season for Galápagos Hawks on Espanola and Santiago.

**September** Air and sea temperatures at their lowest. Galápagos Penguins breeding especially around Bartholome although can occur all year. Manta Rays seen off east coast of Isabela. Height of the sea lion mating season, with rival males fighting for control of harems.

**October** Weather can be mixed. Giant tortoises continue to lay eggs. Blue footed boobie chicks can be seen on Espanola and Isabela.

**November** Water and air temperature begins to rise and the winds decrease. There can be some jellyfish. Good visibility for snorkelling - can be especially fun with sea lion pups.

**December** Hot / rainy season begins. Air and sea temperatures continue to rise. The mist clears. Islands begin to green over as the rain falls. Green sea turtles start to mate. Giant tortoise eggs begin to hatch.



## Cruises and hotels

The ideal way to experience the diverse beauty of the islands is on a cruise. Different types of vessel, duration and itineraries are available. Additional information is on request. We also offer a number of good hotels that provide flexibility. They are mainly situated on the islands of Santa Cruz, San Cristobal and Isabela. If time permits we recommend combining a cruise with a land-based stay in order to maximise your enjoyment. If you are interested in an island hopping itinerary flights and boat transfers are available.

### IMPORTANT NOTE

Please note, when booking a Galápagos Islands cruise a deposit for the cruise will be required in addition to our standard deposit. In addition, upon entry to the Galápagos Islands there is a National Park Fee of \$100 per person and a Transit Fee of \$20 per person. In most cases this can be prepaid in sterling at the time of booking.



**Galaven Expedition Yacht** **FB**  
20 passengers. 4,7,10 and 11 night itineraries

The Galaven Expedition Yacht is a 27 metre expedition vessel that carries 20 passengers accommodated in 11 double/twin cabins, all with private bathrooms and air-conditioning. The amenities include spacious outdoor seating areas where guests can enjoy alfresco dining or relax on sun chairs. There is a large interior dining room and a lounge/library equipped with a TV for daily briefings and presentations. The boat has a captain, eight crew members and two bilingual naturalist guides who will help to show you the wonders of the Galápagos Islands. This vessel represents good value for money.



**Yacht Anahi** **FB**  
16 passengers. 4,7,10 and 11 night itineraries

The Yacht Anahi is a 90 ft catamaran with 6 standard cabins on the main deck and 2 suites on the upper deck. The cabins offer private facilities, air conditioning and windows in all but one standard cabin which has a porthole. On the main deck, there is a comfortable indoor dining area and an open plan lounge/library. On the upper deck there is a bar, sundeck and jacuzzi. The open plan layout of Anahi is a great choice for those who would like a smaller vessel with a friendly and sociable atmosphere.



**MY Eric & Letty** **FB** 20 passengers. 7 and 14 night itineraries

The Eric and Letty are two identical 83 ft motor yachts. Each yacht has ten cabins located on three decks: Lower (Iguana) deck, twin/triple cabins with a porthole; Middle (Booby) deck, twin/double cabins on the top deck with a window (Dolphin). All have private facilities and air conditioning. Middle deck houses the dining room, bar, lounge with TV and library and Top deck, an observation area and sun deck. For excursions, there is one naturalist guide for every ten guests. Complimentary snorkelling equipment and wetsuits are included. This vessel represents good value for money.



**SS Mary Anne** **FB** 16 passengers. 7 night itineraries

The Mary Anne is a romantic sailing ship which accommodates 16 guests in 12 tastefully decorated cabins, each with private facilities and air conditioning. There are 3 decks including Cabin deck; Main deck, where public areas include a comfortable, wood panelled lounge with cosy bar area, dining room and library and the Sun deck with an open air lounge/dining area.

### Suggestions for choosing a cruise

When planning your cruise, there is a choice of durations between 4 and 14 nights. A 7 night cruise is the average, however, shorter cruises are still worth considering especially if combined with a land based stay on one of the islands. We recommend a 4 night cruise as a minimum duration. When choosing the boat we recommend that you consider the maximum number of guests and type of vessel. We offer a choice of either a catamaran or motor yacht. All naturalist guides on board are trained by the Galápagos National Park Authority. Group guided tours are limited to a maximum of one guide to sixteen guests.



For additional boats, lodges and general information on the Galápagos please visit [www.sunvil.co.uk](http://www.sunvil.co.uk)



**Ocean Spray** **FB** 16 passengers. 4,5 and 7 night itineraries

This self-billed Mega-Catamaran can carry 16 passengers in nine elegant cabins. It is 113 feet in length - with an ample sundeck, social areas, jacuzzi and kayaks. The comfortable cabins have double or twin beds, en-suite bathrooms, air conditioning, an iPod docking station, TV with DVD player, picture window and small private balconies. The crew includes a bilingual naturalist guide, as well as the captain, the cruise manager and 8 other crew. A smart and stylish vessel with comprehensive itineraries.

**Yacht La Pinta** **FB** 48 passengers. 4 and 6 night itineraries

Yacht La Pinta offers 24 spacious staterooms accommodating 48 guests. All of the luxury cabins are located mid-ship on the Cabin Deck, each with 2 double beds or 1 Queen bed, private facilities and individually controlled air conditioning. For families, there are 4 interconnecting Luxury Cabins and 4 larger Luxury Plus Cabins that are suitable for triple occupancy. The Boat Deck offers a large observation lounge and bar, library, small gym and Jacuzzi. On the Main Deck there is the dining room, reception area and boutique shop. This yacht successfully combines a luxury cruise with a relaxed atmosphere.

**MV Origin** **FB** 20 passengers. 7 and 14 night itineraries

The MV Origin is a purpose built 20 passenger yacht. There are ten deluxe staterooms, all located on the Main (Beagle) Deck featuring large panoramic windows, twin beds (can be converted into a king size bed), smart contemporary furnishings, air-conditioning, Apple TV with preloaded movies, a universal docking station, safe deposit box and private bathroom. Triple and interconnecting cabins are available for families. On board facilities include the Sun Deck with an al fresco dining area, loungers and hammocks and the Darwin Deck with the main dining room, an indoor lounge and bar. Additional facilities include a jacuzzi, small gym, library, kayaks, snorkelling gear and wetsuits. There are two expert naturalists on board to guide the 20 guests. This luxury yacht comes highly recommended.

**Santa Cruz II** **FB** 90 passengers. 4 and 6 night itineraries

The vessel has 50 air-conditioned cabins and suites over 3 decks. All cabins feature large picture windows, hairdryer, safe deposit box and an iPod docking station. There are spacious public areas including the Beagle Restaurant, an al-fresco dining area, two lounges, a library, gift shop, sun deck, fitness area and hot tub. The boat also carries a glass-bottom boat, kayaks and pangas. Cruises carry up to 6 expert Naturalist guides with the average group size of 11 guests per guide. With triple and interconnecting cabins this boat is also ideal for families.



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**Galapagos Suites** **BB** Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz

This modest guest house is conveniently located a few blocks back from the main street (Charles Darwin Avenue) in Puerto Ayora. There are 6 comfortable air-conditioned rooms featuring private bathrooms (shower) with biodegradable hair and body products and a safe deposit box. Some of the larger rooms have a balcony with a hammock. Wifi is available in the entire property. Breakfast is taken on the terrace overlooking the small private garden (no restaurant service). Central location and good value.

**Finch Bay Hotel** **BB** **FB** Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz

The Finch Bay Hotel is located a 5 minute water taxi ride from Puerto Ayora. It is situated in a quiet location, surrounded by mangroves and just a few metres from a white sandy beach. The hotel features 21 Finch Bay Rooms and 6 Finch Bay Suites. Each with private facilities, air-conditioning, safe deposit box, hairdryer, balcony and hammock. Four of the suites are interconnecting, making them a great choice for families or friends travelling together. There is a stylish restaurant, bar/lounge area and outdoor pool with Jacuzzi. The hotel offers a variety of packages that include all meals and local tours. Alternatively, it is possible to book and pay for activities locally.

**Scalesia Galapagos Lodge** **HB** Highlands, Isabela

Situated in the highlands on the slopes of a volcano, this deluxe safari-style tented camp is nestled on a 40 acre forest with spectacular views of the coast and other islands dotted on the horizon. The main lodge has 3 separate social areas for relaxation and a restaurant where guests enjoy their breakfast and evening meals. The main building is linked to 16 tents by a series of pathways that wind their way through the forest. Each of the raised tents has a terrace, bathroom (hot water shower) hardwood flooring, and a king sized or two full sized beds. The lodge offers fixed 3 night (Thu-Sun) and 4 night (Sun-Thu) packages that include half board (breakfast & dinner), daily guided excursions and return transfers from Puerto Villamil Airport or port (in Isabela).

**Guideline Prices**

All cruises include full board, return flights (from mainland), daily group guided excursions and return group transfers from the airport in the Galapagos. The hotel prices exclude flights from the mainland and airport transfers. Meals as shown below. Guide price per person based on 2 sharing. Fly from Quito or Guayaquil on the mainland. They are guideline prices only, please contact us for an exact quote as there may be special offers available.

Boat/Hotel	Duration	Guide price per person
Galaven Expedition Yacht	4 nights	£2,424
	7 nights	£3,348
Eric & Letty	7 nights	£3,605
M/V Santa Cruz II	4 nights	£2,994
	6 nights	£4,256
Ocean Spray	4 nights	£3,388
	7 nights	£5,058
Yacht La Pinta	4 nights	£3,368
	6 nights	£4,816
MV Origin	7 nights	£6,054
Finch Bay hotel (BB)	3 nights	£602
Scalesia lodge (HB)	3 nights	£1,172

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