

Ultimate Galapagos

to the West of Turtle Cove on the Santa Cruz Island. Behind one of the beaches there is a small brackish water lagoon, where occasionally it is possible to observe flamingos and other coastal birds, such as black-necked stilts and whimbrels. The other beach is longer and has two old barges that were abandoned during the Second World War, when the USA used Baltra Island as a strategic point to protect the Panama Channel. This area is a great introduction to the Galapagos landscape, fauna and flora.

Overnight - Galapagos Islands - M/C Anahi (B, L, D)

Day 3 : Genovesa Island



This morning we visit Darwin Bay on Genovesa Island which has a shield volcano with a 600m wide crater. Following a trail which is part coral sand and part slabs of lava, we'll spot nesting colonies of the common frigate, the Nasca booby and the swallow-tailed gulls. We'll also see nests of red-footed booby, which is the largest nesting colony of pelagic birds in the Galapagos. The Great Frigate bird is also abundant here and one of the main attractions of the island.

This afternoon's port of call is El Barranco, in the southern part of Darwin Bay on Genovesa Island. The 1.5km trail is on volcanic rock and the cliffs located in the south are composed of very fragile lava. The natural erosion that has occurred in these lava flows has become the ideal place for nesting Storm Petrels. You can see two species of petrels that nest in cavities and holes in the lava. During the panga (dingy) rides along the cliffs fur seals can also be seen. **Overnight - Galapagos Islands - M/C Anahi** (B, L, D)

Day 4 : South Plazas & Santa Fe

This morning's excursion takes us to South Plaza Island which is home to around 1000 sea lions and several hybrid iguanas, a result of crossing a male marine iguana and a female land iguana. These iguanas are unique, recognizable at first glance by their black or gray colour, with a land iguana's crest, but face and tail of the marine iguana.

We'll meet more unique species of iguanas when we explore Santa Fe Island this afternoon. The Galapagos is also home to six endemic species of rats, one of which can be found on Santa Fe and another attraction is the presence of giant tunas. **Overnight - Galapagos Islands - M/C Anahi** (B, L, D)

Day 5 : San Cristobal Island



This morning we explore Punta Pitt at the east end of San Cristobal Island. The trail that we follow takes us to past an olivine beach before ascending to the top of a volcanic tuff hill passing several wonderful viewpoints en route. This is the only site in the Galapagos Islands, where you can see the three species of boobies and two species of frigates nesting in the same area. Another added attraction is the presence of sea lion.

After lunch we stop to see the Leon Dormido Rocks, which are the remains of a lava cone eroded by the sea. The two vertical rocks rising 500 feet from the ocean form a small channel that is navigable by small boats. This natural monument has become a favourite sight for cruises due to the many tropic birds, frigates and boobies that fill the surrounding air. Beneath the sea the nearly crystal-clear waters offer a brilliant show of colourful tropical fish and invertebrates. We continue

on to explore Lobos Island which is home to a small population of blue-footed boobies, as well as two species of sea lions. In the pangs brown pelicans and several species of shorebirds can also be observed and if you opt to snorkel it's common to see juvenile sea lions, manta rays and sea turtles.

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Day 6 : Galapagos Tortoise Breeding Centre



Today's highlight is a visit to the Galapagos Tortoise Breeding Centre, in the southeast of San Cristobal Island. The natural population of tortoises from San Cristobal is seriously threatened by introduced animals (mainly wild goats, rats and cats), which to date has been impossible to eradicate despite continuing efforts. The San Cristobal tortoises are one of the 11 populations of Galapagos tortoises. At the visitors centre, we learn all about the natural history of the giant tortoises of this island.

After lunch we visit San Cristobal's Interpretation Centre which takes us through the history of the island in the context of nature, humankind and conservation. We finish today's touring with a scenic walk up Tijeretas Hill with its spectacular views of the island and an inlet where we can go snorkelling. It is also one of the only places where you can watch the two species of frigate birds nesting in the same colony.

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Day 7 : Espanola Island

Espanola is one of the most beautiful Galapagos Islands and is also one of the oldest, dating back an estimated 3.3 million years. Espanola has a high percentage

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of endemism because it is isolated from other islands. Endemic species include the Waved albatross, Darwin's finches and the mockingbird of Espanola, which is the largest species in the islands and has developed carnivorous behaviour. We explore Punta Suarez on the west of the island in the morning and Gardner Bay on the north coast in the afternoon. The main attraction here is the huge colony of sea lions, which inhabit the beach during the breeding season.

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(B, L, D)

Day 8 : Floreana Island



Floreana Island is our port of call today. We enjoy a morning excursion to Punta Cormorant on the north Coast of Floreana Island, which has a beautiful lagoon that is home to a large population of flamingos and a fine sand beach which is a nesting area for sea turtles. Later this morning we cruise out in the panga to the "Devil's Crown" which is a great place to snorkel. Here we can find a variety of underwater characters: sea turtles, Galapagos Sharks, Moray Eels, and sea lions. Outside of the crown is a good place to see Hammerhead Sharks.

This afternoon we visit historic Post Office Bay. When whalers came for supplies of Galapagos tortoises in the 18th Century, it is said that the captains kept a barrel for those who passed through the bay to leave mail in and deliver any that they could. Today, this tradition is alive with tourists visiting the Galapagos, It's possible to send a letter or postcard from Post Office Bay a without stamp, all you have to do in return is pick up a letter that is directed to where you live.

Overnight - Galapagos Islands - M/C Anahi
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Day 9 : Santa Cruz



We finish our Galapagos adventure in Santa Cruz this morning with a morning tour of Charles Darwin Station, which takes in the famous tortoise breeding centre. The Galapagos breeding program is conducted by the park staff with the collaboration of scientists from the Darwin Station. The eggs are brought from the Galapagos Islands of Pinzon, Santiago and Santa Cruz to the station where they are incubated artificially; the galapaguitos are born and reared until the age of 5 years, when they can survive the effects of introduced predators (rats, pigs and dogs), then they are returned to their native areas. There is also a breeding program for iguanas.

After this visit, you'll be transferred to the airport on Baltra Island for your flight back to Quito. Upon arrival you'll be met and transferred to your hotel in Quito for your final night.

Overnight - Quito (B)

Day 10 : Quito

Saturday. Arrangements end after breakfast and hotel check out today. (B)

M/C Anahi

The M/C Anahi is a First Class category, Power Catamaran Yacht, built in Guayaquil, Ecuador and launched at the end of 2006 with high comfort standards. As the Anahi is a catamaran, it offers unparalleled stability, which helps to avoid sea sickness, ensuring that your cruise will be a restful and relaxed one. The Anahi is also one of the fastest boats of its size.

The Anahi can accommodate 16 passengers. It has six 14m² twin cabins on the main deck (including two which can transform

into double bed cabins), and two specious 25m² suite cabins on the upper deck which have a sofa bed in addition to a king size bed and are therefore suitable for those travelling with children. Every cabin has large windows - portrait type - for wonderful ocean views, a beautiful wooden floor and cozy private facilities with hot/cold water shower, in addition to a locker, closet and air conditioning.

On the main deck, the yacht has plenty of resting areas, including a library, TV-DVD room, comfortable dining room and lounge. The upper deck of the Anahi features a charming bar and an excellent area for relaxation, together with a jacuzzi for six people. In addition to this, above the bar area is a spacious sundeck with resting chairs for eight people to soak up the sunshine and admire the spectacular views.

Specifications

- Type: Motor Catamaran
- Category: First Class
- Year: 2006
- Length: 90.50 ft / 27.60 m
- Beam: 36.08 ft / 11 m
- Capacity: 18 passengers (Authorization navigation : 16 passengers)
- Main Engines: 2 x John Deere IMO 300 HP each
- Electric System: 2 x 50 kw generators (IMO) (110v and 220v. AC)
- Speed: 10 knots
- Water Capacity: 3000 gal. plus water maker with capacity of 1000 gl/ day
- Diesel Capacity: 200 gallons
- Material Construction: Glass fiber
- Interiors: wooden flooring
- Exterior: Teakwood flooring
- Crew: 9 + 1 naturalist bilingual guide
- Accommodation: 16 passengers in 6 twin bed cabins on main deck and and 2 suits on upper deck

Navigation & Safety Equipment:

One 48 miles Radar; Echosounder; GPS; One VHF radio; Epirb; Magnetic compass; 2 Rigid life rafts for 15 passengers each; 30 SOLAS life jackets; fire & smoke detectors; complete fire system; 2 Zodiac rafts for 10 persons each. Safety equipment complies with international Coast Guard regulations

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Entrance Fees

A Galapagos park entrance fee of US \$100 and a Transit Card of US \$10 are not included in the cost of the tour.

The Galapagos park entrance fee is to be paid IN CASH at the Galapagos Island Entrance Control on day 2. The Transit Card fee is to be paid in CASH at the desk in the New Mariscal Sucre Airport in Quito, before boarding the plane to Galapagos. Our representative will assist you with this.

What to Pack

Clothing

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals with thongs or Tevas
- Light cotton socks
- Long-sleeved cotton shirts and T-shirts
- Light cotton scarf to protect your neck
- Shorts
- Lightweight long trousers or skirt / dress
- Light rain jacket or wind breaker
- Sweatshirt, Sweater, light jacket: the early morning/late evenings can get cool, often with a breeze
- Wide-brim hat
- Bathing suits

Equipment

- Sun block lotion
- Sunscreen (at least factor 15)
- Lip salve
- Sunglasses with a strap
- Insect repellent
- Personal medication
- Self-sealing bags for electronic equipment
- Camera, memory cards and extra batteries
- Underwater cameras to take photos of the animal life while snorkeling
- Binoculars in case you want to get a more detailed look at unique animals in Galapagos.

Money and Security

- Passport
- Copy of passport
- US Cash mostly low denomination bills (\$5 to \$20)
- Travel Insurance

Motion Sickness

- Salted Crackers
- Candied Ginger or ginger tablets
- Patch

First Aid

- Immodium or Lomotil for diarrhea
- Band - Aids
- Anti-biotic cream
- Aloe Vera cream or gel for sunburn
- Pain relief tablets

Wetsuit Hire

Wetsuits can be hired onboard the Anahi. The cost of wetsuit hire is:

US\$ 10 per day or US\$ 40 for the entire 8 day cruise.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Ecuador Country Guide

Ecuador - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Ecuador
- Capital: Quito (population 1.4 million)
- Government: Multiparty Republic
- Population: 13.4 million
- Total Area: 283,560 kilometres squared, including the Galapagos Islands (slightly smaller than Nevada, USA)
- Official Languages: Spanish. Others: Amerindian languages (especially Quechua)
- Religions: Roman Catholic 95%
- Voltage: 110 volts. Sockets are a mixture of the European, two-pronged round variety and US flat-pin.
- Time Difference: For time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- International airport departure tax: US \$25. This is sometimes included in your airfare - please check with your airline before departure.

Ecuador - Visas

Most nationals, including citizens of the EU, North American and Australasia do not need a visa to enter Ecuador. Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. You'll be issued with a T-3 tourist card on arrival, which you should keep safely with your passport as it will be collected when you leave the country. The tourist card can allow up to 90 days stay, although it's up to the immigration official to decide whether you're allocated 30, 60 or 90 days on arrival.

Visa requirements do change periodically so you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Ecuadorian embassy or consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Ecuador - Climate

Ecuador is divided into the coastal plain (costa), inter-Andean central highlands (sierra), and flat to rolling eastern jungle (oriente). There's no real summer and winter in Ecuador, with weather patterns varying according to geography, and temperatures determined more by altitude than by season or latitude. As a general rule, the warmest and driest months in the sierra are June to September, though this is complicated by various microclimates found in some areas. Outside these months, typical sierra weather is characterised by sunny, clear mornings and cloudy, often wet, afternoons. In the oriente, you can expect it to be warm, humid and rainy throughout the year, though there are often breaks in the rain between August and September and December to February.

In the lowland areas it can get particularly hot on clear days, with temperatures easily topping 30°C. The coast has the most clearly defined wet and dry seasons, with the best time to visit being from December to April, when you'll get frequent showers but also clear blue skies and warm weather. From May to November, the southern coast, in particular, is often overcast and relatively cool, with less chance of rainfall.

Check the weather chart on our website or visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your trip.

Ecuador - Money

Important

In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the

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signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local Currency

In April 2000, the government in Ecuador decided to 'dollarise' the economy due to the instability of their own currency, the sucre. The country now uses the US dollar as its own currency, which means that you do not need to change money on arrival (if you bring sufficient US dollars with you). If you do need to change money into dollars, you can do it at the bank after exiting the luggage hall or use one of the ATMs outside the terminal. Remember that if you are travelling through to other countries in South America, Ecuador is the best place to load up on US dollars cash without paying high charges. Having said that we do recommend that you bring as much US dollars cash as you feel comfortable carrying as it is not always easy to get money out on credit and debit cards. You should carry your US dollars in small denominations (US\$1, US \$5, US\$10 and US\$20 are best) as there is always a shortage of change.

Although bank cards are often the easiest way to go, there are times where they will not work for you even if your bank at home tells you it will! Do not rely on your card as your only source of money. Always have a few back-ups with you.

Ecuador - Local Transport

Most of Quito is easy to visit on foot, although there is a cheap trolley bus system which travels from north to south of the city. There are also normal buses which are cheap but can get very crowded. We recommend that you use taxis at night as they are fairly cheap but also have meters so you do not need to worry about bartering to get a good price – just make sure the driver puts the meter on when you get in.

In other Ecuadorian towns and cities walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights.

Ecuador - Food & Drink

As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$2, a light meal will cost around US\$4-5, and even a meal in one of the

best restaurants in Quito or Cuenca costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home (usually around US\$30-40). Obviously this depends on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below;

- 1 litre of water - US\$1
- 30cl bottle of soft drink - US\$0.70
- 30cl bottle of beer - US\$1.20
- 50cl bottle of beer - US\$1.70

Food

In Ecuador the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. Ceviche is fish marinated in lemon juice, onion and hot peppers traditionally served with corn on the cob and tostado (roasted maize). Other popular dishes include fritada (roast pork), lomo ala pimienta (pepper steak), humitas (ground corn steamed in a maize leaf) and quimbolitas (similar to humitas but with corn-flour and cooked in banana leaves). For a simple fish, you should ask for pescado which can be grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs (apanado) or served with a sauce. An interesting local speciality is cuy (pronounced: cooe). This is roasted guinea pig which some people say tastes like chicken, others, like cooked cardboard!

Maize and potatoes feature in many dishes, particularly soups. Locro de papas is cheese and potato soup, sancocho de yucca is vegetable soup with cassava or manioc root and sopa de bola verde is vegetable banana dumpling soup. Typical snacks are empanadas (little fried pasties usually filled with meat, chicken, cheese or even prawns) and patacones (fried vegetable banana chips, served as a side dish).

Much of Ecuador's food is not too hot and spicy but you will find a bowl of aji (which is a chilli or hot pepper sauce) on most tables which can be added to spice things up.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. You might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other egg dishes. Our tour leaders will do their best to organise interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drinks

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Please note however that fruit juices are sometimes made with unboiled tap water and could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order juice 'con leche' (with milk) instead. The choice of different juices is incredible e.g. mora (blackberry), piña (pineapple), naranjilla (mixture between mandarin and orange), maracuya (passion fruit), tomato de argol (like a tomato but with a harder texture), guanabana (custard apple) and curia (which has a great taste – just try it!).

In Ecuador some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be a bar within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums, aguardiente (a kind of ouzo) and imported Chilean and Argentine wine can sometimes be found cheaply. There are various brands of beers including Pilsener, Club and Biela.

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