

# GALAPAGOS & ECUADOR

DETAILED ITINERARY IN DARWIN'S FOOTSTEPS - ONBOARD THE LEGEND

Mar 03/24

Marine iguana.



Photo: © Klein Tours

Exchange a curious glance with a blue-footed boobie, admire stunning tri-colored marine iguanas and watch the ever-playful sea lions frolic in the surf. The non-predatorial environment of Darwin's Galapagos has created a non-threatening, relaxed and magical connection with wildlife unlike any other on Earth.

Our 11-day Galapagos adventure starts and finishes in the colonial capital of Quito, nestled in the Andes. Enjoy a scenic city tour, taking in the sites and sounds and admiring the colonial architecture. The short flight to Baltra delivers us to our comfortable yacht. Watch for dolphins riding the bow, like oceanic messengers taking us to our next equatorial volcanic island, each with its unique endemic species perfectly adapted to its environment. Pink flamingos, Galapagos penguins, giant tortoises and a myriad of birdlife, including the fish-stealing frigate and the enormous albatross, are just some of the wildlife we encounter during our naturalist guided adventure.

## FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 11 days • Small ship cruising • Start, finish in Quito, Ecuador • All meals on ship included • Land portion includes breakfast • Includes 2 internal flights • Search for unique wildlife including: blue-footed boobies, Galapagos penguins and giant tortoises, tri-colored marine iguanas • Swimming and snorkeling • Enjoy island excursions led by naturalists • Explore colonial Quito

## DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

Departs every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday year round on Legend.

Prices start from: **\$6505 USD**

See page 2 for complete pricing.

## Activity Level: 3

**Comfort Level:** 4 days over 9,000 ft. Sea can be rough when crossing to the western islands. Zodiac landings required.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

7 nights on either shared or single on ship in Galapagos (all cabins have private bathrooms.) On land, single accommodations with private bathrooms.

**ELDERTREKS**



SMALL GROUP  
**EXOTIC ADVENTURES**  
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

Cool off with a refreshing ocean dip, or snorkel with stingrays and view the fantastic underwater world of sea turtles, dolphins, florescent tropical fish and colorful coral gardens, before departing for your next evolutionary marvel.

Few Galapagos journeys include the seldom-visited western islands. ElderTreks' Galapagos adventure does include this hard-to-get-to region, making our trip unique and remote, and providing a Darwinian experience second-to-none.

**Combines with...** some Peru, Patagonia, Hidden Treasures of South America departures, Amazon Rainforest, Lodge to Lodge trekking and Machu Picchu extensions.

**Please note:** Departure dates are not exclusive to ElderTreks. You may be joined by other international passengers. Boat itinerary subject to change.

This is not an ElderTreks operated tour. As such, participants on this tour are not exclusive ElderTreks clients and it may not adhere to ElderTreks' maximum size restrictions of our tours.

## 2025 DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

Departs every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday year round on Legend.

### LOW SEASON: JAN 06 - DEC 17

#### Double / Single shared:

**Standard Plus Cabin: \$6505 USD**

**Junior Cabin: \$7220 USD**

#### Single / Non shared:

**Standard Plus: \$9590 USD**

**Junior: \$10,665 USD**

### HIGH SEASON: DEC 18 - JAN 05

#### Double / Single shared:

**Standard Plus Cabin: \$6765 USD**

**Junior Cabin: \$7515 USD**

#### Single / Non shared:

**Standard Plus: \$11,315 USD**

**Junior: \$12,625 USD**

Prices include Galapagos airfare, National Park Fee: \$100 USD, Transit Control Fee \$10 USD. Prices subject to change.

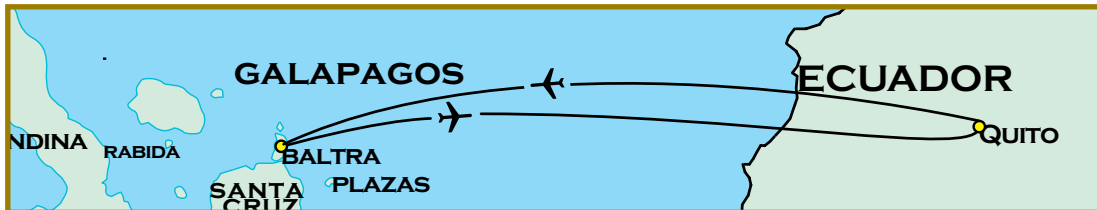


## ELDERTREKS 11 DAY ECUADOR AND GALAPAGOS TOUR

Our Ecuador and Galapagos tour is made up of two distinct parts. The first is the land portion in Ecuador, while the second part is the Galapagos Islands. The dates listed are Day 1 of the tour, starting in Ecuador:

**Departure Dates :** Jan 11, 25, Feb 08, 22, March 08, 22, April 05, 19, May 03, 17,31, June 14, 28, July 12, 26, Aug 09, 23, Sept 06, 20, Oct 04, 18, Nov 01, 15, 29, Dec 13, 27

### LAND AND AIR PORTION - DAYS 1-3 (AND RETURN FLIGHT)



### THE GALAPAGOS SEA PORTION - DAYS 3-10





## DAY 1 ARRIVE IN QUITO

You will be met on arrival at Quito Airport and transferred to our Quito hotel. Remainder of the day is at leisure.

Overnight in Quito.

## DAY 2 QUITO CITY TOUR

Explore the bustling streets and squares of the largest historical center in the Americas. On our tour we visit some of its most important churches such as the majestic La Compañía (Society of Jesus Church) and the iconic San Francisco, guardians of a stunning multi-ethnic artistic and cultural heritage. Drive through the traditional neighborhood of San Juan. Finish the tour at the “Panecillo” hillside with its breathtaking views of the old and modern city.

Overnight in Quito.

## DAY 3 FLY TO GALAPAGOS ISLANDS, HIGHLANDS TORTOISE RESERVE (SANTA CRUZ ISLAND)

**AM:** This morning you are transferred to the airport for your flight to Baltra Island where we are greeted by our Galapagos guides. Upon arrival we take a ten minute bus drive to the pier to board the M/Y Legend.

**PM:** Dry landing. In the mountains of Galapagos it is possible to admire different kinds of birds, such as tree and ground finches, vermilion flycatchers, paint-billed crakes, yellow warblers, and cattle egrets (usually standing on the tortoises’ shell). The journey to the reserve offers great opportunities to see the contrasts that the island offers in reference to the variety of ecosystems. The road goes from the coast through the agricultural zone and straight up to the dense humid forests. Often, Galapagos giant tortoises are also seen on the way, wandering

through pastures in the paddocks. This spot is a bird watchers’ haven since almost every land bird present on the island lives or migrates here.

## DAY 4 EL BARRANCO, PRINCE PHILIP’S STEPS, DARWIN BAY (GENOVESA ISLAND)

**AM:** El Barranco, Prince Philip’s Steps (Genovesa Island).

Marvel at the variety of sea life that uses the crevices of the lava cliffs for shelter. Red-billed tropic birds fly overhead, switching between their nests and the bay, and a small colony of fur seals may be found near the landing site. You will be dropped off at a steep stairway that begins on rocks at the foot of a path that leads through a seabird colony full of Nazca and red-footed boobies. At the plateau, the trail continues inland allowing you to see more nesting booby colonies in the thin Palo Santo forest. Near the end of the trail, over a rocky lava plain, wedge-rumped storm-petrels can be observed flying in all directions. If you are lucky, you may catch a glimpse of a short-eared owl.

**PM:** Darwin Bay (Genovesa Island).

Disembark onto a small sand and coral beach. A short trail heads west along a tidal lagoon and then up a rocky hill that leads to a point overlooking the cliffs and Darwin Bay. Along the trail near the tidal lagoon, visitors will see pairs of swallow-tailed gulls, lava gulls, yellow-crowned and lava herons. The trail continues through Palo Santo trees, Opuntia cacti, and Saltbushes inhabited by great frigate birds and red-footed boobies. This is one of the few places in the islands where visitors are guaranteed to see red-footed boobies. It is estimated that more than 200,000 red-footed boobies live in the trees and bushes of Genovesa.



## **DAY 5 DRAGON HILL (SANTA CRUZ), SANTA FE ISLAND**

**AM:** Dragon Hill.

Dry landing. Walk by a brackish lagoon to see flamingos. The trail leads across typical dry zone vegetation. Walking up to Dragon Hill, see an important nesting ground for endemic land iguanas, offering lovely views of the anchored boats and neighboring islands. The forest is home to mockingbirds, Darwin's finches, yellow warblers, and Galapagos doves.

**PM:** Santa Fe Island.

Wet landing. Santa Fe has white sand beaches surrounded by sea lion colonies. Through the island path, an endemic cactus forest is passed, home to the Santa Fe land iguanas (the largest in the islands). This island is the habitat for a number of species, including the Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snakes, rice rats (one of the few endemic Galapagos rodents), a variety of finches, and one of the four mockingbird species of the archipelago.

## **DAY 6 BACHAS BEACH (SANTA CRUZ ISLAND), MOSQUERA ISLET**

**AM:** Egas Port (Santiago Island).

Wet landing. Egas Port is a black volcanic sand beach, visited by Darwin in 1835. The first section of the trail is formed of volcanic ash (eroded tuff) and the other half is an uneven terrain of volcanic basaltic rock. The unique, truly striking layered terrain of the Santiago shore is home to a variety of animals including the bizarre yellow-crowned night heron, and marine wildlife including lobster, starfish and marine iguanas grazing on algae beds alongside Sally light-foot crabs. It is easy to see colonies of endemic fur seals swimming in cool water volcanic rock pools.

**PM:** Rabida Island.

Wet landing. Dark red sand covers the unique beaches of this island. Home of sea lions colonies, Rabida is considered the epicenter of the Galapagos Islands due to the diversity of its volcanic geology. Nesting brown pelicans are found from July through September, as well as nine species of the famous Darwin's finches. Here we enjoy a dinghy ride along the marine cliffs to observe nesting seabirds. We can also snorkel off the coast, where marine life is particularly active.

## **DAY 8 URBINA BAY, TAGUS COVE (ISABELA)**

**AM:** Urbina Bay (Isabela Island).

Wet landing (may be difficult due to the tide). This island has a volcanic black beach, and depending on the season, it is possible to find giant tortoises, land iguanas, and the unusual flightless cormorant. After a short walk inland it's snorkeling time! This is a chance to swim with sea turtles, sea lions, and countless tropical fish. Urbina Bay features a wide variety of plants, with the different range of colors of flowers attracting different insects, birds, and reptiles. One of the highlights of the island is the uplifted coral reef that resulted from the 1954 seismic activity. Here the views of Alcedo Volcano are remarkable. When navigating from Urbina to Tagus Cove whale watching is possible from May – December.

**PM:** Tagus Cove (Isabela Island).

Dry landing on Galapagos' largest island where we will learn about the eruption of the five volcanoes that form it. The trail leads to Darwin's salt-water crater lake and excellent views of lava fields and volcanic formations. We will return by the same path

for a dinghy ride along a shoreline full of marine wildlife, where we will admire a variety of seabirds, such as blue-footed booby, brown noddy, terns, flightless cormorant and depending on the season, a large number of Galapagos penguins which are only 35 cm tall - the only penguin species in the world to live in the tropics.

The population of penguins on the islands is about 2,000 individuals, most of which live on this western portion of Isabela, with others scattered further south. We will have an opportunity to snorkel in deep water. Graffiti believed to have been left by 19th century pirates is a curious reminder of an intriguing past.

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### **DAY 9 ESPINOSA POINT (FERNANDINA), VICENTE ROCA POINT (ISABELA)**

**AM:** Espinosa Point (Fernandina Island).

Dry landing. From Espinosa Point, it is possible to admire a wide view of Isabela Island across the Bolivar Channel, an area that boasts some of the highest diversity of endemic sea fauna in the Galapagos. Here the largest, most primitive-looking marine iguanas are found mingling with sea lions and Sally lightfoot crabs. Fernandina displays a wonderful opportunity to encounter flightless cormorants at their nesting sites, Galapagos penguins and the “King” of predators on the islands, the Galapagos hawk. Pa-hoe-hoe and AA lava formations cover the majority of the Fernandina terrain. Vegetation is scarce inland, with a few brachycereus cacti. Mangrove can be found along the shoreline.

**PM:** Vicente Roca Point (Isabela Island).

This afternoon we can enjoy great deep-water snorkeling at one of the richest marine havens on Earth, the Bolivar Channel. Accessible by water,

we take a dinghy ride along the coast to observe a wonderful diversity of sea and coastal birds such as Nazca and blue-footed boobies, noddies, brown pelicans, penguins, and flightless cormorants. The upwelling of cold water currents in this part of the Galapagos gives rise to an abundance of marine life, a perfect place for deep-water snorkeling.

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### **DAY 10 PIT CRATERS (SANTA CRUZ), FLY TO QUITO**

**AM:** Pit Craters (Santa Cruz Island).

Dry landing. A visit to the collapsed, twin sink holes (Gemelos) puts us in a stunning forest of the endemic tree-forming *Scalesia*. Apart from the dramatic scenery, this area is well known for its diversity of passerine bird species.

**PM:** After the events of your final itinerary day in the Galapagos we will depart the Galapagos and take our short flight to Quito where, depending on your route you will have free time to enjoy Quito.

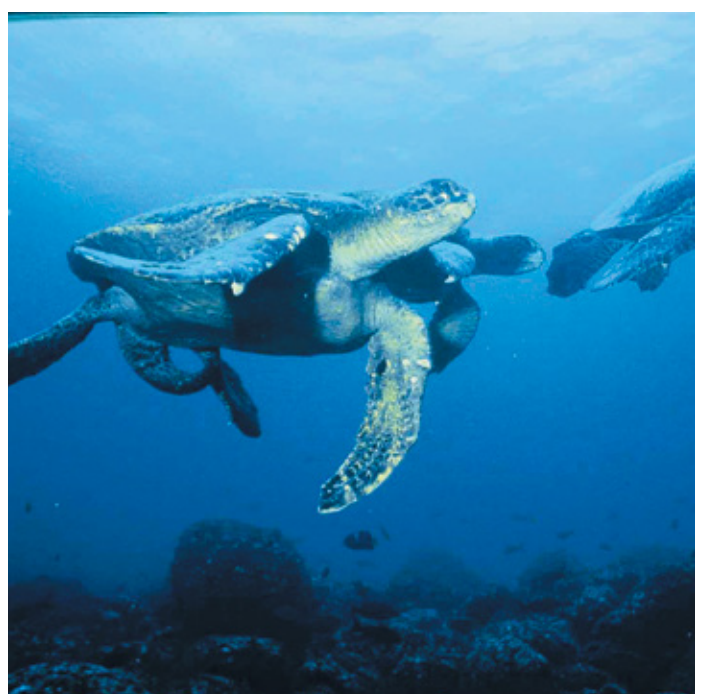
Overnight in Quito.

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### **DAY 11 DEPART QUITO**

Transfer to the airport for your return flight home.











 GALAPAGOS BALCONY

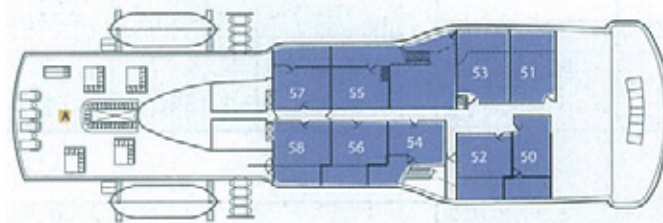
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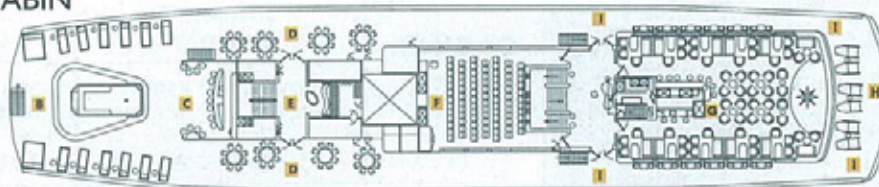
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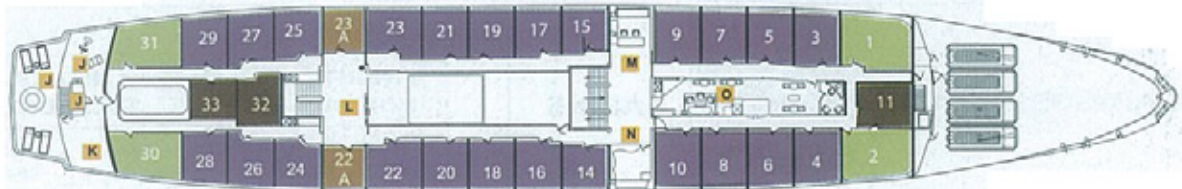
MOON DECK



SKY DECK



EARTH DECK



SEA DECK



**Legend**

Technical Specifications Category: High-end luxury cruise ship  
 Length: 300 ft (91 mts)  
 Decks: 5  
 Number of Passengers: 90

Crew: 55  
 Guides: 6 multilingual naturalists  
 Speed: 17-20 knots



Standard Plus Cabin



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

The maximum number of travelers on the Legend is 100. While ElderTreks does have published departure dates, please note that the group size is not limited to 16 travelers and you may be joined by other international passengers of various ages.

### 2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals on board the ship and breakfast on Ecuador land section; services of an English-speaking naturalist guide; and airport transfers in Baltra. Please note that the flights from Quito/Galapagos return are included in the tour price.

### 3. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, we go on daily naturalist-guided hikes on the islands, learning about and experiencing the unique life forms endemic of the Galapagos as well as experiencing the cultural delights of Quito and the stunning countryside around Otovalo.

### 4. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

Tours and transfers are in air conditioned vehicles. We travel on the comfortable 100-passenger Legend. We also travel by Zodiac water craft and have dry and wet landings depending on the shore. The Legend has recently been refurbished and upgraded to deluxe standards. Cabins have portholes, upgrade cabins located on the upper deck have windows. Although not large, all cabins contain superior amenities found only in upscale motor yachts. They are fully air-conditioned and have private bathrooms with showers. Quito tours and transfers are by car or minibus.

### 5. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

On board, all the cabins contain two lower berths, air conditioning and private bathrooms. Hotels rooms are comfortable with private bathrooms.

### 6. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

The temperature can reach a peak of 85°F in March – April, and can reach a low of 60°F in June – July. Overall, the Galapagos climate is warm, however, cold air currents in the dry season, July – December, can create cooler temperatures. Moderate rainfall occurs between January – March. Temperatures in Quito are cooler due to its altitude at 2850 meters/9350 feet.

### 7. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$1250 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full tour price is due 150 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure, however, please note that unlike our other programs, there are no transfers allowed.

### 8. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

### 9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note: all visitors to Ecuador must give proof of medical insurance to immigration officers at the point of entry to cover them throughout their stay in case of emergency treatment. Lack of documents or inability to give the proof of medical insurance can result in refusal of entry into Ecuador.

### 10. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals on the boat are included. We enjoy a wide variety of foods, buffet style. Breakfasts are included on land portion.

### 11. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

### 12. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.





