



GALÁPAGOS LANDSCAPE BY JILL RICHMOND

ECUADOR | Gardens, Cloud Forests, Dry Forests, History, Culture, Otavalo Market, & the Galápagos Islands

13 DAYS from \$6,995 | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **NOV–AUG**

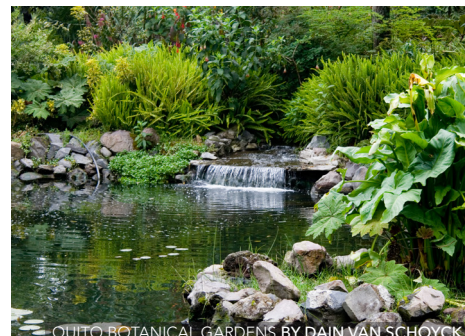
FROM *the Andes to the Galápagos, Ecuador boasts a dazzling biodiversity and a fascinating blend of Hispanic and indigenous cultures. This tour celebrates it all while shining a spotlight on the rich flora you will admire in the botanical gardens of Quito and Guayaquil, and in the cloud forests of the Choco Bio-Zone. A highlight will be your four-night cruise in Darwin's "living laboratory of evolution," the iconic Galápagos Islands, which you'll explore aboard a first-class expedition yacht.*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- View the impressive collections at Quito Botanical Gardens and Guayaquil Botanical Gardens.
- Explore the rich flora and diverse ecosystems within the Mashpi Reserve and the Cerro Blanco Reserve.
- Discover the unique plants and hardy vegetation endemic to the Galápagos and its volcanic terrain, like the Incense Tree and red Vesuvius.
- Come face-to-face with the iconic wildlife of the Galápagos, including Blue-footed Boobies and giant tortoises.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Specialist guide
- Private transportation
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Bottled water on the bus
- Carbon offsetting



QUITO BOTANICAL GARDENS BY DAIN VAN SCHOYCK



ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

Day 1 (Thursday) | **Quito**

Upon arrival, after clearing customs and collecting your luggage, you will be met and transferred to the beautiful Casa Ganglena in the historic district of Quito, located on Plaza de San Francisco. *Overnight at Casa Ganglena*

Day 2 | **Quito**

This morning you will meet your guide and be transferred to Jardín Botánico de Quito, where you will be given a special tour of the Garden, which is located within the 67-hectare Parque La Carolina. The gardens feature different environments, such as Amazonian, desert, and wetland ecosystems. Highlights include carnivorous plants, roses, and orchids. You will then travel back to Old Town, and have lunch at a local café. After lunch, enjoy a walking tour of the historic district of Quito. During your tour, you will visit the church of the Compañía de Jesús, with its impressive interior inlaid in gold. You will also see Plaza Grande, which is surrounded by the Cathedral, the Presidential Palace, the Municipal Building, and the Archbishop's Palace. End your tour in the Plaza de San Francisco, with a walk around the Plaza, making sure to visit San Francisco Church, one of the principal religious monuments in the world. The remainder of the late afternoon and evening is yours to explore on your own, and enjoy the amenities of your hotel. *Overnight at Casa Ganglena (BL)*

Day 3 | **Otavalo**

Following breakfast and check-out, you will travel to the famous town of Otavalo to experience the Otavalo Market. En route, stop at Hacienda Cusin for check-in and a quick lunch, then proceed to the market, which is open all day on Saturdays. This is the most famous of all Andean markets, where hundreds of native persons from several different cultures travel to Otavalo to set up their creations for you to enjoy. There is a plethora of items to be discovered. Besides the crafts, you will also see food being sold such as fruits and vegetables, all colorfully displayed. You will be free to wander through the market, with a meeting time and place to regroup for your transfer back to the Hacienda. This lovely

property boasts beautiful gardens and a rich history. Enjoy the remainder of the late afternoon and evening exploring your new surroundings. *Overnight at Hacienda Cusin (BLD)*

Day 4 | **Mashpi Reserve**

This morning you will visit Cotacachi to stroll through the town squares of the local craft towns and their shops. The various towns feature fine products such as leather and weaving products that are of artisan quality. After your time in this area you will travel to Mashpi Lodge, located in the Choco Bio-Zone. Lunch will be en route. Perched at 900 meters (3,116 feet) above sea level, the Lodge is surrounded by a profusion of plant species, from ferns and bromeliads to large numbers of orchid species, many newly-discovered. A staggering 500 species of birds – including some 36 endemics – are estimated to inhabit the forest, fluttering through the canopy. Monkeys, peccaries, and even puma make their homes inside the Reserve, crisscrossed by waterfalls; all between dramatic, verdant hills. Included in your stay are guided activities and excursions within the reserve: walks, bird watching, nocturnal adventures, and nature encounters are offered. Your beautiful accommodations feature a view of the gorgeous mountains through your floor to ceiling window. Once you arrive, you will have time to explore your new surroundings and decide what you'd like to experience the next day from a wide array of offerings. *Overnight at Mashpi Lodge (BLD)*

Day 5 | **Mashpi Reserve**

You will have a full day to enjoy the activities that you will have selected the night before, choosing from trail hikes, waterfall trails, hummingbird garden, Sky Bike, and a favorite of visitors, the "Dragonfly," which is an innovative cable system that carries you under, through, and above the forest canopy. The Dragonfly consists of two stations, six towers (with an intermediate station half-way, which can be used to embark and disembark), and four 'gondolas' in which you travel. Each gondola can carry four guests plus their guide. The Dragonfly travels gently and slowly along a 2-kilometre (1.2-mile) cable between the two stations, sometimes below the canopy, sometimes through it, and also far above it – it's a bird's eye view of this magical ecosystem. It takes about 40 minutes to ride from one station to the other. They have designed various experiences which integrate the Dragonfly ride with the

Reserve's trails, rivers and waterfalls. It takes 10 minutes to walk from the lodge to the departure station. *Overnight at Mashpi Lodge (BLD)*

Day 6 | Quito

This morning you will be transferred back to Old Town in Quito via representatives of Mashpi Lodge, and have the remainder of the day to explore Old Town. Dinner is on own this evening (reservations suggested if dining at your hotel). *Overnight at Casa Ganglana (BL)*

Day 7 | Galápagos Islands

Early this morning you will be transferred to the Quito airport for your flight to the Galápagos Islands, specifically, San Cristobal Island. Upon arrival, you will be met by the naturalist guide of M/Y Coral II, and transferred to the pier to board the Yacht. This afternoon you will visit the Interpretation Center & Tijeretas Hill on San Cristobal Island. San Cristobal is home of the capital town of the Galápagos Province, Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. Passengers visit the interpretation center, which is an excellent place to learn about the nature and history of the islands, displaying information of Galápagos volcanic origins, their remoteness from the continent, ocean currents, climate, arrival of the original species, among other points of interest. The human interaction is also showcased, chronologically narrating the most significant events about the colonization of the islands. Later on, a high-intensity hike can be done to visit Tijeretas Hill, a beautiful landscape ending with a magnificent view of a nearby large frigate bird colony. If there is enough time, a town visit can be planned. *(Please note cabin assignments are made on a first come/ first served basis – this is a full vessel, 20 passenger charter) Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II (BLD)*



the oldest in Galápagos. It has a high percentage of endemism due to its isolation from the rest of the islands. Due to the great variety of wildlife, this is one of the most attractive spots in the Galápagos. Here, it is possible to explore volcanic formations and see large colonies of sea lions. The trail cuts through Salt Bush (*Cryptocarpus pyriformis HBK*) where you will see seabirds including the Española mockingbird, Nazca boobies, and the spectacular red-billed tropicbirds. The singular marine iguanas have a turquoise color with reddish parts during the breeding season, lava lizards, and the colorful Sally light-foot crabs. A somewhat lengthy hike brings visitors to nesting grounds that sometimes overlap the trail. Other birdwatchers' favorites include the Galápagos dove, the Galápagos hawk, swallow-tailed gulls, and the world's largest colony of waved albatross, an unequivocal highlight during mating season (Apr–Dec). Admire the island's dramatic backdrop, featuring the famous "Soplador," a seaward blowhole that shoots water up to 75 ft. into the air. You will return to the vessel for lunch, and travel to Gardner Bay, also off of Española Island, for a wet landing. Gardner Bay is a beautiful white coral sandy beach guarded by a colony of sea Lions. Here, there are no trails, so visitors stay along the shore, spotting the

Galápagos hawk, the American oystercatcher, the Galápagos dove, hood mockingbirds, yellow warblers, lava lizards, marine iguanas, three species of Darwin finches; the cacti finch, the small ground finch, and the warbler finch. Swimming and snorkeling offer a great variety of Galápagos marine wildlife: king angelfish, creole fish, damsel fish and parrot fish. Green Sea Turtles may be found gliding through the water or hauling themselves onto the beach for a rest or nesting (Jan–Mar). *Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II (BLD)*

Day 10 | Galápagos Islands

Today begins with a wet landing at Cormorant Point on Floreana Island, on an olivine green, sanded beach. Hike from the black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*) beds to a brackish lagoon, which usually holds one of the largest flamingo populations in the Galápagos. This island features some endemic plants such as the threatened longhaired scalesia (*Scalesia villosa*), white (*Laguncularia racemosa*) and black (*Avicennia germinans*) mangrove, and the Incense Tree or Palo Santo (*Bursera graveolens*). The trail continues to a beautiful white sandy beach, one of the most important nesting sites of Green Pacific Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*). From the beach, one can spot sea turtles, blue-footed boobies plunging into the water, and small reef sharks floating along the shoreline in the search for food. A small colony of penguins resides on Floreana and can sometimes be observed as well. During lunch, you will travel to Post Office Bay for another wet landing. Located on the north side of Floreana, the bay was named because in 1793 Captain James Colnett installed a wooden barrel which served as an informal post office for sailors passing through, who would take letters with them back to their destinations. Today, visitors continue the tradition by placing unstamped postcards inside the barrel, hoping that some other traveler, going to the letter destination, will take it back for free. The chances are that the letter posted can take a long time to arrive at its destination. However, there have been cases where it has arrived before the sender. You may

Day 8 | Galápagos Islands

Today begins with a wet landing at Cerro Brujo on San Cristobal Island. Cerro Brujo is an eroding tuff cone that is composed of AA lava formations; it is close to a beautiful white sandy beach which is great for snorkeling and sunbathing. Nearby is a lagoon ideal for migratory bird species; often sighted are black-necked stilts, ruddy turnstones, whimbrels, sandpipers, and white-checked Pintails. Cerro Brujo offers beautiful views of Kicker Rock, an islet in the adjacent southern coast of San Cristobal. During lunch you will travel to Punta Pitt, also on San Cristobal Island, for a wet landing, followed by a high-intensity hike on rocky terrain. The trail is 90 meters long, from an olivine beach then up a path that climbs to the top of a volcanic tuff, through several magnificent viewpoints. The trail offers a closer look at the hardy vegetation such as the Incense Tree or Palo Santo (*Bursera graveolens*), tiny, colorful cacti and, in the dry season, carpets of red Vesuvius. This is probably the only site where the three booby species of the Galápagos can be seen together, as well as two species of frigate birds and a sea lion colony. It is also excellent for dinghy rides and snorkeling, where a good range of sea birds can be observed. *Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II (BLD)*

Day 9 | Galápagos Islands

Following breakfast you will have a dry landing at Suarez Point on Española Island, which is of geological interest, being one of

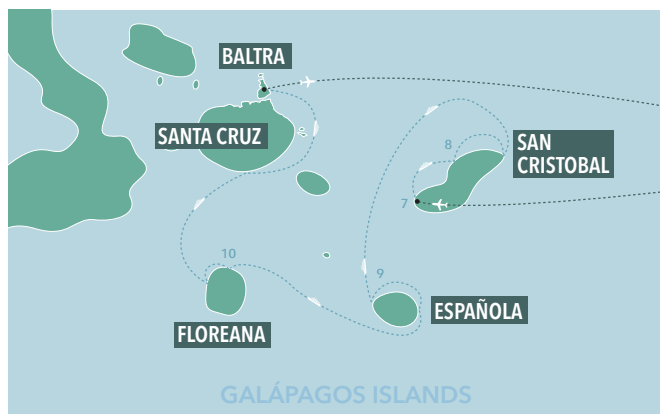
also encounter Darwin's finches, Yellow Warbler, and Lava Lizards. Great snorkeling opportunities are available, with possible sightings of the Green Sea Turtles and most assuredly playful sea lions. As well, the island is best known for its endemic vegetation: Longhaired Scalesia (*Scalesia villosa*), Cutleaf Daisy (*Lecocarpus Pinnatifidus*), and the Galápagos Milkwort (*Polygala sancti-georgii*). *Overnight aboard M/Y Coral II (BLD)*

Day 11 | Guayaquil

During the night you will have traveled to Santa Cruz Island. This morning you will have a dry landing to visit the Highlands and the Tortoise Reserve. Travel by bus to the highlands, passing through all seven vegetation zones found in Galápagos, which are – in order of elevation - the Littoral (or Coastal) Zone, the Arid Zone, the Transition Zone, (The Moist Zones): the Scalesia Zone, the Zanthoxylum (or Brown) Zone, the Miconia Zone, and the Pampa or Fern-Sedge Zone. Visit Rancho El Manzanillo, a privately-owned hacienda where giant tortoises roam in their natural habitat. There are many species of birds to be seen this morning, such as tree and ground finches, vermilion flycatchers, paint-billed crakes, yellow warblers, and cattle egrets (usually standing on the tortoises' shell). As you travel to the reserve, often Galápagos Giant Tortoises are seen on the way, wandering through pastures in the paddocks. This spot is a birdwatchers' haven, since almost every land bird present on the island lives or migrates here. After your visit to the highlands, you will return to sea level and transfer to Baltra Island for your flight to Guayaquil. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel for check-in. You will then be given a guided tour of the city's public gardens and stroll along the Malecon. Return to the hotel to freshen up for a wonderful farewell dinner at a lovely restaurant in the city. *Overnight at Oro Verde Guayaquil (BD)*

Day 12 | Guayaquil

Your last day in Ecuador will be spent exploring gardens and natural areas around Guayaquil. On the way out of the city, stop for a quick visit to Lineal Park, a small but charming park with ornamental and endemic species that are found in this region. Continue on to the Cerro Blanco protected forest, a reserve of six hectares within the tropical dry forest ecosystem of the Ecuadorian coast, located in the extreme southwest area of the Chongon - Colonche mountain range. The ecosystem of lush native flora is home to 54 mammal species, 221 bird species, 8 amphibian species, and 12 reptile species. In addition, there are more than 700 species of vascular plants, 20% of them endemic species of the southwest of Ecuador. After your time in the reserve, you will have lunch at a typical restaurant, and then visit Jardin Botanico de Guayaquil. The garden is situated on a hill overlooking the Guayas and Daule rivers. Development of the garden began in 1979 and was opened to the public in 1989. There are



MAPS NOT TO SCALE

approximately 324 plant species that can be observed in their natural habitat, as well as timber and fruit trees, ornamentals, and exotics. Orchids are the main attraction. After your visit, you will be transferred to your hotel. Dinner is on own. Should you have a late night flight this evening, you will be transferred to the Guayaquil International Airport for your flights back to your home city. *Overnight at Oro Verde Guayaquil (BL)*

Day 13 (Tuesday) | Depart

Early this morning you will be transferred to the Guayaquil International Airport for your flights back to your home city.

LAND PRICING

\$6,995 per person, double occupancy, based on 19 participants (plus 1 complimentary from Miami, double occupancy). *Single supplement: \$2700 (mainland only).*

Cost includes: Accommodations, meals as indicated, specialist guides, transportation, internal airfare, activities per itinerary, carbon offset, bottled water on bus, Galápagos National Park Fee, Galápagos Transit Card.

Cost does not include: International airfare, items of personal nature, optional activities, gratuities to guides, drivers, crew and naturalist guide.

Valid for travel in 2020.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$350 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Non-refundable final payment is due at 95 days prior to departure.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/ Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/ Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

