



# ECUADOR & GALÁPAGOS

## Ultimate Ecuador: Biodiversity in the Amazon and Galápagos

12 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: OCT - AUG

*Ecuador is one of the most biodiverse countries on earth, encompassing varied ecosystems ranging from rainforest and cloud forest to highlands and coast. This ultimate Ecuador exploration introduces you to two biodiversity hotspots for an in-depth appreciation of the many wonders of this equatorial nation. Begin in the Ecuadorian Amazon to observe rainforest flora and fauna, then head to the volcanic landscapes of the Galápagos Islands and explore the wonders that inspired Darwin's theory of evolution, an idea that not only influenced his own life, but also changed the history of the world. Enjoy time in the bustling cities of Quito and Guayaquil to round out the experience.*

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Look for primates, tropical birds, and other wildlife as you travel by boat down the Napo River into the heart of the Ecuadorian Amazon.
- Learn about the Amazon's indigenous peoples and their relationship with the forest during guided hikes.
- Follow in Charles Darwin's footsteps while cruising the Galápagos Islands and come face-to-face with Blue-footed Boobies, giant tortoises, and sea lions.
- Discover fascinating geological history while trekking volcanoes and lava fields.
- Explore historical Quito, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the best-preserved colonial city center in Latin America.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting





PARROT CLAY LICK BY PELIN KARACA

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

### DAY 1 - QUITO

Upon arrival in Quito, after clearing customs and immigration, you will be met and escorted to your hotel. Dinner is on your own this evening. *Overnight at Hilton Colón.*

### DAY 2 - QUITO

This morning, explore Quito, Ecuador's capital. Surrounded by volcanoes, Quito is a unique city that boasts one of the largest and best-preserved colonial centers in the Americas, earning it recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visit La Compañía Church, the Alabado Museum (known for its pre-Columbian art), and San Francisco Church, with lunch at a local restaurant. Return to your hotel in the late afternoon, with the rest of the day at leisure to get ready for your departure to the Amazon tomorrow. (Instead of the Quito city tour, alternative day trip options include Otavalo market, Cotopaxi National Park, Antisana Reserve, or Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve.) *Overnight at Hilton Colón. (BLD)*

### DAY 3 - COCA

Depart early for the flight to Coca. From there, transfer to the Francisco de Orellana port, where you'll board a canoe and ride two hours down the Napo River. After a short rainforest hike, cross Lake Pilchicocha to arrive at Sacha Lodge. Enjoy some time to look for birds at the lodge's mini tower and the butterfly house before dinner. Of the 1,600 bird species recorded in Ecuador, an astonishing 600 have been seen at Sacha Lodge. Tonight, accompany your naturalist guide on a walk through the rainforest to seek out some of the area's many nocturnal mammals. *Overnight at Sacha Lodge. (D)*

### DAY 4 - COCA

Begin the day at the Yasuní National Park parrot clay lick and learn about the life and habits of the local parrot population. One of Ecuador's most accessible parrot licks just happens to be a short distance from Sacha Lodge. The exposed clay bank draws several different species of brightly colored parrots in the morning hours. When weather conditions are ideal (sunny and dry), the parrots can often be seen perching on and eating the exposed clay. Afterward, hike along the Liana Chica Trail to the canopy walk for spectacular views of the rainforest and the many different bird species. Designed to be a self-standing, rigid suspension, Sacha's canopy walk is one of only a few such structures in the world and provides the opportunity to get a closer view of the rainforest canopy and its inhabitants. *Overnight at Sacha Lodge. (BLD)*

### DAY 5 - COCA

After breakfast, set out on a hike on the Lagartococha Trail for a chance to learn more about the indigenous people that reside in the area and their relationship with the forest.



CANOPY WALKWAY AT SACHA LODGE

Learn about the trees where ancestral spirits are believed to live, and the mysterious “dwende” or devil man of the forest. After arriving at Lake Lagartococha, take a tranquil canoe ride through a natural swamp, home to anacondas, caimans, and capybaras. Next, a walk on the other side of Lagartococha may give you the opportunity to spot capuchin or squirrel monkeys playfully jumping through the trees. Return from the walk and head back to the lodge, where you can take a refreshing dip in the lake or nap in the hammock on your private balcony. After lunch, your local guide will teach you how to fish for the infamous razor-toothed piranha. Next, take a canoe ride through the flooded Amazonian forest, where you may spot wildlife like the shy and elusive river otter and the well-camouflaged three-toed sloth. Arrive at Sacha’s 135-foot wooden tower, built around an ancient kapok tree. View vibrantly colored birds through powerful scopes, and watch the sunset with amazing views of Mount Sumaco. If visibility is good, you might even be able to see the snow-covered peaks of the Andes. A canoe ride back through the flooded forest at night offers a different sensory experience; listen to the symphony of frogs, insects, and nocturnal birds, observe the glowing eyes of caimans, and watch for the several species of bats flying overhead. Arrive back at Lake Pilchicocha to the welcoming lights of Sacha Lodge. *Overnight at Sacha Lodge. (BLD)*

#### DAY 6 - PUEMBO

After an early breakfast, return upriver to Coca and fly back to Quito. Before dinner, hear a lecture on the geology of the Galápagos. *Overnight at Rincón de Puembo. (BLD)*

#### DAY 7 - ISABELA ISLAND

This morning, head to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos Islands. (Please note: There is a weight limit of 50 pounds of luggage per person for flights to the Galápagos Islands; please pack accordingly. Excess luggage can be safely stored in Quito until your return.) Upon arrival at Baltra airport, cross the Itabaca Channel by ferry to Santa Cruz Island. Drive to Puerto Ayora on the south side of the island, stopping en route to visit Los Gemelos, a pair of volcanic sinkholes. In Puerto Ayora, board a speedboat to Puerto Villamil on Isabela Island. Transfer to Scalesia Lodge, with the rest of the afternoon on your own to enjoy the lodge. *Overnight at Scalesia Lodge. (BLD)*

#### DAY 8 - ISABELA ISLAND

This morning, visit a small group of islets just offshore from Puerto Villamil known as Las Tintoreras. The islets create a sheltered bay with calm, turquoise water

that provides habitat for sea lions, sea turtles, marine iguanas, rays, and the endangered Galápagos Penguin. Check out the shallow crevices for sharks that rest there during the day. A short loop trail stretches across rough (a’á) lava rock, where you can see marine iguanas and lava lizards. This is a perfect place to practice snorkeling. Return to the hotel for lunch. In the afternoon, visit Los Humedales (“the wetlands”), a complex with various trails where you can find all four of the Galápagos’ mangrove species. This area is characterized by solitary beaches, lava tunnels, natural pools, and estuaries where you can see flamingos and other birds. Also visit the Arnaldo Tupiza Tortoise Breeding Center, where you can see five different subspecies of Galápagos giant tortoise and learn about their natural history and the conservation issues affecting them. Some of the giant tortoises have been released by the park and can be found on the trails. *Overnight at Scalesia Lodge. (BLD)*



GIGANT TORTOISE BY REINIER MUNGUIA

#### DAY 9 - ISABELA ISLAND

Enjoy a full day of hiking at Sierra Negra and Chico Volcano. Measuring nearly six miles across from north to south and more than five miles from east to west, Sierra Negra is one of the most impressive examples of a volcano in the archipelago. The trail to the top passes through fantastic lunar-like landscapes and habitat rich in plants and animals. Hike to the edge of the caldera and have a boxed lunch. Enjoy the incredible vista of the caldera and other volcanoes on Isabela

as well as the neighboring island, Fernandina. The walk takes about six hours, with a snack provided. Later, return to Scalesia Lodge for lunch. In the afternoon, you’ll have free time to enjoy the beach in Puerto Villamil or take part in an optional activity like biking, surfing, or kayaking (at additional cost). *Overnight at Scalesia Lodge. (BLD)*

#### DAY 10 - ISABELA ISLAND

This morning, visit the infamous Muro de las Lágrimas, or “Wall of Tears.” This wall was erected by convicts back in the days when the island housed a penal colony. The wall reaches up to 65 feet high and runs over 300 feet long. Due to sickness and dangerous working conditions, numerous prisoners died in the course of building the stone wall, leading many locals to give it the now-famous name. In the afternoon, visit the small beach of Concha de Perla. Here, the bay’s calm, clear, shallow waters are ideal for observing the incredible array of marine life during a snorkeling excursion. Swim and snorkel alongside tropical fish, sea lions, penguins, and turtles; it is also possible to observe up to 20 bird species. *Overnight at Scalesia Lodge. (BLD)*

## DAY 11 - PUEMBO

After an early breakfast, take the speedboat back to Puerto Ayora and transfer to Baltra for your flight to Quito. Lunch will be on your own. (At Baltra airport, there are opportunities to get a sandwich and drink.) This afternoon is at leisure. Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Rincón de Puembo. (BD)*

## DAY 12 - DEPARTURE

This morning, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. *(B)*

## LAND PRICING

**\$4,975** (15 participants + 1 leader)

**\$5,545** (10 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, Galápagos National Park fee, internal flights, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

## TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. 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.

## THE FINE PRINT

*A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payments are due no later 95 days prior to departure.*

## MORE FROM HOLBROOK

Holbrook was founded on the principle that travel fosters a greater understanding of our world's cultural and natural treasures and that these experiences allow individuals to become agents for global change. We hope that your experiences in Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands will remain with you forever and will challenge you to make a difference in the world we share!



*This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at [holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe](http://holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe)*