



ECUADOR & THE GALAPAGOS

Private Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 2

Quito - Galapagos Islands - Guayaquil - Cuenca - Quito

Combining the wonders of the spectacular and unique Galapagos Islands with the natural beauty, history and culture of mainland Ecuador, this tour is a fascinating adventure through one of South America's most astonishing nations. See the unique and iconic wildlife of the Galapagos up close on a four-day cruise aboard the Isabela II before flying to the mainland to discover mysterious Inca sites, UNESCO-listed historic cities and to revel in spectacular Andean landscapes on this unforgettable journey of epic proportions.

- Cruise the Galapagos Islands
- Spot unique and wonderful wildlife
- Stand at the foot of Cotopaxi
- Explore Quito's neighbourhoods
- Discover the Inca archaeological site of Ingapirca

TOUR MAP



ECUADOR & THE GALAPAGOS PRIVATE TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Domestic flights and flights between mainland Ecuador and Galapagos Islands
- All accommodation
- Meals as specified
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as listed
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR: international flights, visas, drinks, optional excursions, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, meals not included, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

PRIVATE TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who want some independence and flexibility. They offer the choice to explore local cuisine, leisure time for optional activities or excursions, and travel when it suits you. Our Private Tours offer excellent value holidays alongside the assurance that most of your arrangements are taken care of. You will also be accompanied by a dedicated and professional guide whose knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Ecuador & The Galapagos' is rated as a physical level 2 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time

Of course, our local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more Information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Quito

Meals: D

Arrive to Ecuador's capital Quito, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



Destination Information

Quito - Ecuador's enchanting capital city proudly possesses one of the most extensive and best preserved historic centres and is a UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Spend time exploring this beautiful city that sits at a height of 2850 metres above sea level.

Day 2: Galapagos Islands

Meals: B, L, D

The adventure begins with a morning flight (2 hours 15 minutes) to Baltra Island and then a drive to the Itabaca Channel to board a ferry bound for Santa Cruz Island. Take a 30-minute bus ride to a restaurant in the island's highlands for lunch before continuing to Puerto Ayora on the coast, the largest town in the Galapagos archipelago. Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre, both pivotal hubs for scientific research and conservation on the



islands and one of the best places to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat. There's also time to explore several lava exciting tunnels. Enjoy a leisurely stroll along Puerto Ayora's bustling main street before setting sail on the Isabela II, the yacht that will be your home for the next 4 nights. Tonight, there'll be a Captain's welcome cocktail and dinner.

Destination Information

Galapagos Islands – Consisting of 19 islands, the Galapagos remains a hub to a vast range of marine life that inspired the likes of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution. In 1959, the Galapagos became Ecuador's first national park and in 1978, it was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Day 3: Bartolome Island and Sullivan Bay

Meals: B, L, D

In the company of a naturalist guide, leave the yacht behind for this first day of explorations. Start with an invigorating climb up the staircase that leads to the summit of Bartolome's extinct volcanic cone, rewarded by the breathtaking panoramic view at the top.



After the hike, embark on a panga ride (inflatable dinghies) around the impressive Pinnacle Rock, a volcanic cone hoping to catch sight of Galapagos penguins and other fascinating wildlife. Next, take a panga over to Sullivan Bay and disembark on the east coast of Santiago Island, where a pristine white coral sand beach invites you to take a refreshing swim. Along the shore, a trail meanders through a relatively young lava field, offering a unique opportunity to witness and comprehend the volcanic origins of the Galapagos archipelago.

Destination Information

Bartolome Island – Named after Sir Bartholomew James Sullivan, a friend of Charles Darwin, and home to unparalleled views of volcanic landscapes, Bartolome Island hosts a wide variety of underwater wildlife, including whitetip reef sharks, tropical fish and more.

Sullivan Bay – The volcanic site, featuring eerie yet beautiful swirls of solidified lava fields, hosts two distinguished types of lava that are otherwise rare to the rest of the world. Pahoehoe and 'a'a are present throughout the bay where you may also find signs of plant life that have emerged over the past century.

Day 4: Santa Cruz & Santiago Islands

Meals: B, L, D

Admire the captivating landscapes of Santa Cruz's Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill) as you disembark to enjoy a stroll by a brackishwater lagoon, a favoured haunt of shorebirds, ducks and flamingos, through desert landscapes and past cacti forests and Palo Santo trees. Follow the trail further inland for majestic views over the bay and the islands of the western Galapagos and an opportunity to spot land iguanas. After the walk, head out a snorkelling adventure from the shore, on which you might encounter rays, green turtles, and blue sharks.



After lunch, venture to Santiago Island and stop at Buccaneer Cove to admire the impressive cliffs and to learn about the area's history. The cove teems with marine birds, sea lions and inter-tidal species like sea stars, snails and crabs. Here you can see awe-inspiring natural formations like 'Elephant Rock', 'The Bishop' and an impressive natural cave. While here, there are opportunities to snorkel or ride in a panga or glass-bottom boat.

Destination Information

Santa Cruz – The second largest of the Galapagos Islands and located at the centre of the archipelago, Santa Cruz, which means “Holy Cross” in Spanish, has a history of human settlement and agriculture. Since the 20th century, settlers have raised cattle and planted crops such as coffee, sugarcane and fruits here.

Santiago Island – Formed from two overlapping volcanoes, Santiago Island was once used as a staging post by both pirates and whalers, who used the island to source wood, water and food. Today the island is home to a number of bird species including the famous flamingos, Galapagos hawks and more.

Day 5: Punta Vicente & Fernandina Islands

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the coastline aboard pangas today, seeking out abundant wildlife such as colonies of Galapagos fur seals, nesting sites of Nazca boobies, flightless cormorants, penguins, and marine iguanas.

If the ocean conditions are favourable, you can snorkel along the cliffs, where you may spot sea turtles. Afterwards, return to the Isabella II and sail the Bolivar Channel, keeping an eye out for whales and dolphins who are attracted here by the rich waters and plentiful fish.



Your final visit is to Fernandina Island, one of the youngest in the Galapagos archipelago and one of the planet’s most pristine ecosystems. Whilst at Punta Espinoza, dominated by its imposing volcano, your naturalist guide will be able to point out hawks, penguins, marine iguanas, and flightless cormorants, on the edge of the island’s lava flow.

Destination Information

Fernandina Island – The third largest and also the youngest of the Galapagos Islands, Fernandina Island remains as the most volcanically active and resides in the centre of the hot spot that formed the Galapagos Islands.

Day 6: Guayaquil

Meals: B, D

Your journey ends back at Baltra Island where you will disembark the Isabella II and transfer to the airport for your flights to Guayaquil. On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel.



Destination Information

Guayaquil - Guayaquil, known as the 'Pacific Pearl', is Ecuador's main port city. Founded in 1538, this coastal town is known for its rich culture, architecture, and growing economy. Given its tropical climate, street activities are a big part of everyday life. Guayaquil is also known for having the most flavourful gastronomy of the coastal region.

Day 7: El Cajas National Park

Meals: B, L, D

Today, as you journey towards Cuenca, you'll see the landscapes change from tropical greenery to dramatic mountainscapes.

You'll explore one of Ecuador's most extraordinary regions, El Cajas National Park. Consisting of hundreds of bodies of water, including four rivers, here you'll find a range of habitats, including paramos, wetlands, Andean rainforest and polylepis forest which shelter over 40 mammal species and more than 150 bird species.



Explore the area by hiking along rugged trails around the Llaviuco Lagoon and wander through a stretch of enchanting Andean rainforest, listening out for the melodious calls of Andean toucans. Continue a further 40 minutes to Cuenca.

Destination Information

Cuenca - Ecuador's third largest city, yet it still retains its pleasant provincial air. Its red tiled roofs, cobblestone streets, flowery plazas and museums make it very special.

Cajas National Park - El Cajas National Park has an area of 28, 544 hectares, with 235 lakes of glacial origin (Mesozoic and Quaternary Periods). It sits in the western Cordillera of the Andes at an altitude of 3200 to 4000 meters above sea level with humid Andean cloud forests which act like a sponge by soaking up water and it's also home to a large variety of animals including the condor, pumas and birds of prey.

Day 8: Cuenca Old Town

Meals: B, L, D

Discover Cuenca's essence on a full-day journey through this UNESCO World Heritage city's highlights. There is so much to explore here, so the best place to begin is with panoramic views over the city from the Turi Lookout, where you can look over orange roof tiles, wide avenues and lush parks.



Delve into the city's historic heart around the main square, Parque Calderon where you can marvel at architectural gems like the unique colonial style of the old cathedral, built in 1557, and the distinctive neo-Gothic and Romanesque beauty of the new cathedral, completed in the 1960s. You can also wander the cobbles and soak up the charms of Calle Santa Ana, smell the roses at the Plaza de las Flores, a vibrant outdoor floor market and watch the world go by in San Sebastian Square.

Next, explore along the Tomebamba River, passing through the picturesque Barranco neighbourhood. While here you can immerse yourself in the world of the Vega family, Ecuador's most important ceramists. Pay a visit to their workshop and gallery before seeing the place where the iconic but misnamed 'Panama Hat' is made.

Destination Information

Cuenca Old Town – Towering above the scenic countryside, Cuenca Old Town remains a well-preserved medieval fortified city that features Spain's first Gothic cathedral as well as the iconic casas colgadas (hanging houses).

Day 9: Cuenca Ingapirca

Meals: B, L, D

Begin today exploring the Pumapungo Museum, where you can discover more about the indigenous culture of the city and Ecuador as a whole as well as some excellent modern art. Behind the museum is an archaeological site, the sole one nestled within the city where Canari and Inca settlements once thrived – Spanish settlers used much of the stone to build Cuenca itself but the setting and atmosphere give an idea of what life was once like here. This is the perfect introduction to today's centrepiece,



Ingapirca, Ecuador's paramount Inca archaeological site. Located 80 kilometres outside of the city, this extraordinary complex is still dominated by its Temple of the Sun. Now a series of weathered stones nestled amid rolling hills, when explored with patience it offers a glimpse into the rich history of the Inca Empire, despite its relatively brief 72-year presence in the region. Fly to Quito this evening

Destination Information

Ingapirca – Built atop a Cañari adobe base, the Incas brought in andesite stone to build the unusual elliptically shaped ceremonial space, as well as the homes, roads and terraces that comprise this amazing archaeological site. Now a series of weathered stones nestled amid rolling hills, when explored with patience it offers a glimpse into the rich history of the Inca Empire, despite its relatively brief 72-year presence in the region.

Day 10: Cotopaxi

Meals: B, L, D

Explore Cotopaxi National Park, starting at the Interpretation Centre to gain an understanding of the park's flora and fauna before strolling through a mystical pine forest. Next, marvel at the snow-capped Volcano Cotopaxi and its reflection in the glassy waters of Limpiopungo Lake. The area also happens to be a birdwatcher's paradise, so you may spot Andean lapwings, coots, gulls and caracaras.



Head to Hacienda San Agustin de Callo, a historic Incan fortress then Augustinian monastery. Here you'll have a meal amidst the remaining masonry of an Incan palace – you can try locro de papa, a hearty potato soup emblematic of the Andes. After lunch, enjoy a friendly encounter with llamas in the courtyard.

Next, visit Vunka Vodka factory, a family-owned distillery offering a unique vodka tasting experience. Sample a variety of flavoured Ecuadorian vodkas, including blackberry, coca leaf and Andean Potato Vodka, crafted from organic Andean potatoes.

Destination Information

Cotopaxi – The second highest summit in Ecuador, Cotopaxi remains an active stratovolcano in the Andes Mountains and forms part of the chain of volcanoes that make the Pacific Ring of Fire.

Day 11: Quito Cultural Tour

Meals: B, L, D

Experience this UNESCO World Heritage city as a native, with a full day exploration of this UNESCO World Heritage city. Begin at the Panecillo, a hill on the city's southern limits, where you'll enjoy panoramic vistas and encounter the iconic Virgin of Quito statue. Explore the vibrant San Roque neighbourhood to catch a glimpse of life in a traditional barrio. While here you'll visit markets, meet a medicinal healer, and discover local artisans. Stroll through Independence Square, the main plaza, where you can see the buildings that are at the heart of Quito's society – the Presidential Palace, the Archbishop's Palace, the Cathedral of Quito and the Municipal Place.



Then visit the gold leaf covered La Compania Church, then San Francisco Church and Monastery with its extensive museum of Colonial religious art. Explore the Casa del Alabado Museum where you can admire ancient artefacts that date as far back as 4,000BC. Wander La Ronda, a street of artisanal shops and local eateries before ending the day with a delightful chocolate tasting at the family-owned Chez Tiff, owned by an Ecuadorian-Swiss couple who will help you experience the chocolate-making process.

Destination Information

La Compañía Church - one of Quito's most well-known Jesuit churches that was built in 1605 and a magnificent example of the extraordinary artistic ability of Ecuadorian artisans. The large central nave is decorated almost completely with gold leaf, gilded plaster, and wooden carvings, above which are two green and gold domes in the vaulted ceiling.

San Francisco Church & Convent - construction commenced in 1535 over an Inca Empire and was the first built in Quito. It forms part of the city of Quito World Heritage Site.

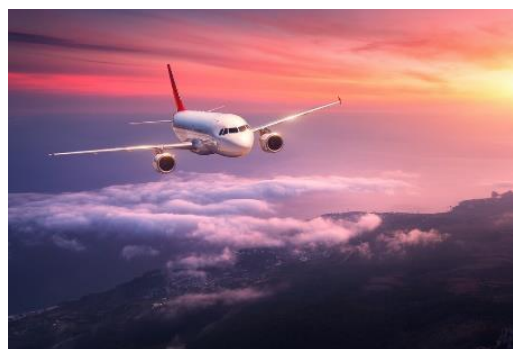
Day 12: Depart Quito

Meals: B

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight.

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



ECUADOR & THE GALAPAGOS TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Australian nationals can enter Ecuador for up to 90 days as a visitor without a visa. You need a minimum of 6 months validity from your return date on your passport to travel.

For entry to the Galapagos islands there is usually a fee of \$120 plus a CGG migration card to be purchased, however both of these have been covered as part of your tour, so you will not need to pay.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

ALTITUDE:

On this tour you will be spending several nights at altitude in Quito at 2850m and in Cotapoxi National Park at 3800m. At these sort of altitudes, Altitude Sickness is a risk. Symptoms may include dizziness, fatigue, nausea and shortness of breath. It is recommended that travellers utilize their first day in high altitude destinations to acclimatise. To help you acclimatise we have designed our tours to be at a slower pace with more convenience stops and more free time, during the first few days. Staying hydrated, eating light meals and following a very light schedule will all help. We recommend that any symptoms that are unusual should be brought to the attention of your National Escort. Your National Escort will be extremely well-trained in dealing with its effects – taking it easy and taking some time to acclimatise are the best ways to prevent and combat it. Serious cases, meaning that you must descend immediately, are rare. We have adapted the itinerary to make sure that your time at these heights is as relaxed and easy as possible.

There are no specific factors, such as age or fitness, that can cause you to suffer from altitude sickness. This can affect anyone at any time and symptoms may vary. There is medication that can help treat and prevent symptoms. Consult a doctor before taking any of these medications, before engaging in strenuous activity at high altitude and regarding any necessary vaccinations in plenty of time before travelling.

EATING IN ECUADOR:

The diversity of the landscape provides Ecuador a tremendous amount of produce, meat and seafood. The unique environments are well represented in Ecuadorian cuisine, being equally as varied. Typical dishes are hearty and filling, containing a combination of meat or seafood and vegetables. Some examples of Ecuadorian cuisine in general include patacones (unripe plantains fried in oil, mashed up, and then refried), llapingachos (a pan-seared potato ball), and seco de chivo (a type of stew made from goat). A wide variety of fresh fruit is available, particularly at lower altitudes, including granadilla, passionfruit, naranjilla, several types of banana, uvilla, taxo, and tree tomato. Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. Those with dietary requirements will be well catered for - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation on Ecuador mainland has been selected for convenience of location and comfort. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality may exist between Australia and South America. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

In the Galapagos your ship will be the Isabela II, a comfortable vessel with all onboard facilities.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. However, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers). Roads in Ecuador have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Within Latin America flights are often changed multiple times before departure, both timings and flight numbers. The utmost care will be taken to ensure that your final documents will have the latest information, however your local guide will confirm this in destination. Boarding passes can be collected directly at the airport. The flights booked as part of your itinerary will always reflect the best timings to suit the touring itinerary, with direct flights wherever possible, however due to limited schedules some flights may require an early departure or late arrival.

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

When packing for a trip to the Galápagos Islands, it's important to consider the unique environment and activities you may engage in. Here's a general packing list to help you prepare:

TOP 5 ESSENTIALS	TOP 5 WEARABLES
Small back-pack	Wide brimmed hat with strap
Water bottle (provided on board)	Cotton T-Shirts
Ziplock with medicine and sickness pills	Water shoes with non-slip soles
Insect repellent	Rain gear
Sunscreen	Clothing for varying climates

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and South America is no exception. We will provide suggested tipping amounts with your final documents for your convenience, however tipping is entirely at your own discretion.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in Ecuador. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like boats and coaches.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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