Galapagos Extension



DURATION:

8 days

The Galapagos Islands, an isolated rocky archipelago lying roughly 1000km off the coast of Ecuador, are neither easy nor cheap to get to, but they are justifiably world-renowned for their unique wildlife and incredible biodiversity. They are also inextricably linked to Charles Darwin, whose later Theory of Evolution owed a great deal to his observations in these volcanic islands.

Known as one of the best places to view wildlife on the planet, many of the species here can be found nowhere else, and the marine habitat is fiercely protected. The creatures are largely unbothered by human presence, allowing for the unparalleled close-up encounters which make the Galapagos so special.

Our time is packed with highlights, including snorkelling, kayaking, and walking as we discover these volcanic islands and see the famous giant tortoises, as well as penguins, turtles, sea lions, marine iguanas and a rich array of birdlife. We also visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, known for its giant tortoise breeding programme. While our days are active, there's always some down-time, where you can explore the small towns we stay in, have a dip in the sea, or relax and watch the fascinating wildlife that is never far away.

This tour is not private to our group, which has the advantage not only of assuring guaranteed departures, but also making the costs of visiting this bucket-list destination more realistic for our customers.

Please note that circumstances can occur where we are unable to operate this extension exactly as detailed; the order of activities may change, for example, and wildlife presence can never be guaranteed.

Contact the office for pricing and availability.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Papallacta Hot Springs - Quito

(main group departs for Quito airport)

We transfer back to Quito. After saying our farewells to our fellow trekkers heading home, we check into our hotel.

Breakfast provided. Hotel accommodation

Day 2: Quito – Santa Cruz - Isabela

(main group arrives in UK)

We take a morning flight from Quito to the Galapagos Islands, and travel by bus and boat via Santa Cruz to Isabela, the largest island in the archipelago, and home to most of the volcanic activity. This is a long day of travelling, but by the time you get to our hotel, you're already likely to have seen many exciting creatures, including marine iguanas and sea-lions basking in the sun around the port areas, and sea-birds such as pelicans and frigate birds diving for fish. Our hotel for the next three nights is located on the beachfront in Puerto Villamil – a small town, but the largest settlement on Isabela – and if you have the energy, you can wander the main street to get your bearings, or there may be time for a quick dip in the sea.

Breakfast provided. Hotel accommodation (*dependant on time of flight)*

Day 3: Snorkel at Lava Tunnels

More unforgettable marine life today! A scenic boat trip (approx 45 mins) takes us to our snorkelling site, a labyrinth of lava arches on Isabela's coast – formed by cooling lava flows over and under the water into a series of striking natural bridges and arcs. It's a haven of clear, calm water for many marine creatures which use it as a natural highway from the coastal mangroves to the open sea. Snorkelling allows us to appreciate these unique rock formations underwater, as well as swim among colourful fish and green sea turtles; if we're lucky we'll also spot sea horses, rays such as eagle rays, and white-tipped reef sharks. We'll also have the opportunity to walk on some of the lava flows, discovering the cacti that can grow on them, and yet more birds, including blue-footed boobies. The water is so clear that you can often see marine life such as rays and turtles swimming beneath the arches while you stand above.

Breakfast and Lunch provided. Hotel accommodation

Day 4: Sierra Negra Volcano Hike & Sea-Kayaking

Another active day, at a relaxed pace! An easy hike takes us to the rim of Sierra Negra, Isabela's most active volcano. This vast caldera is one of the world's largest, over six miles across at its widest point. This is a wild landscape with colourful volcanic terrain and plenty of interesting flora and bird life – look out for the famous Darwin's finches. We can walk on to further viewpoints around the crater, time permitting. In the afternoon, we take to two-man sea-kayaks for a relaxed paddle (no experience necessary) around Tintoreras, an offshore area of rocks and islets that are home to marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, Galapagos penguins, turtles, sea-lions and, if we're lucky, white-tipped reef sharks. If sea conditions are good, we can also snorkel in the sheltered water.

Breakfast and Lunch provided. Hotel accommodation

Day 5: Isabela – Santa Cruz; Charles Darwin Research Station

An early morning boat trip takes us back to Santa Cruz Island, where after checking in to our hotel, we visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, home to a giant tortoise breeding programme. Here we can see tortoises young and old, including hatchlings, and learn about many of the other endemic wild creatures, as well as the ongoing conservation efforts to protect them. Later, we head up to El Chato Reserve in the highlands, where the famous Galapagos tortoises can be spotted in the wild.

Breakfast provided. Hotel accommodation

Day 6 - 8: Depart Galapagos; Fly to Quito and on to UK

Depending on flight schedules, we may have free time before we transfer back to the airport and board our flight back to mainland Ecuador. If connection times permit, you may be able to connect to your international flight back home without a hotel stay, but sometimes this will be necessary. Flights will be confirmed to you well in advance with a more detailed breakdown of these travel days.

Breakfast provided. Hotel Accommodation

It's advisable to book as early as possible to avoid any problems with availability.

Contact the office for pricing and availability.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Flights between mainland Ecuador and Galapagos Islands; any locally-paid internal flight tax
- Transfer between Papallacta and Quito, and airport transfers
- Transportation in Galapagos (by bus and boat)
- Good standard hotel accommodation, twin-share basis: Quito (4*) and Galapagos (3*)
- Meals and activities as indicated in itinerary

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED?

- Galapagos National Park Fee: US$200 cash (payable on entry)
- INGALA transit card: US$20 cash (payable at Quito airport)
- Pier/port tax: US$10 cash (can change without prior notice)
- Optional activities
- Meals (lunches & dinners) as indicated
- Personal spending, drinks, etc
- Tip for guides

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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 8 Nov 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.