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TRIP DETAILS

15 days / 14 nts - Ecuador

Departures Daily

Trip Ref 2393

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Quito 4 nts

Amazon 3 nts

Galapagos cruise 7 nts



PRICES FROM \$5,158

Galapagos and Amazon

This trip includes 7 nights cruising around the Galapagos islands on board the [Explorer II](#), a 100 passenger luxury small cruise ship. You can of course select any [other yacht](#) and even cruise length, and we will send you the revised itinerary and prices by email.

Day 1: Arrive in Quito

Upon arrival in Quito transfer to the hotel.

Day 2: Quito - Galapagos - San Cristobal Island



Breakfast at hotel and transfer to the airport to board the flight to Galapagos. The flight from Quito (via Guayaquil) to the Galapagos is approximately 2 ½ hours on a Boeing 727. Arrival to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno Airport, your guide will meet you and drive you from the airport to the pier and a zodiac ride, you'll board the ship Explorer II and settle into your cabin.

Cerro Brujo: a beautiful white sand beach where brown pelicans, blue-footed boobies, sea lions, and marine iguanas are all found. An onshore version of nearby Kicker Rocks, Cerro Brujo is a very striking, eroded tuff cone.

Day 3: Galapagos - Española Island

Punta Suarez: This morning you visit Española, southernmost island of the archipelago. Because it is so isolated, the island has a large population of indigenous wildlife. You will explore Punta Suarez, one of the most spectacular spots in the Galapagos, where you'll look for sea lions surfing the breaking waves and groups of iguanas basking in the sun. Further inland, Masked and Blue-footed Boobies nest beside the trails. You can hike a trail towards the cliffs to the Blowhole, a fissure in the lava cliffs where seawater jets high in the air.

Bahia Gardner: About 1km long beach that is among the most magnificent in all Galápagos. It is home to many sea lion colonies and the turquoise colored water makes a beautiful contrast to the white sand that consists of shell dust. Mocking birds fight for their territory and inspect the backpacks of the tourists. About 50m of the coast there is a rock where you can encounter tropic fish and rays while snorkeling. But more spectacular is the Gardner Rock that can be reached with a panga. It is home to white-tipped reef shark, cactus finch and other colorful sea dwellers and very popular among snorkelers.



Day 4: Galapagos - Santa Cruz & Rabida Islands

Charles Darwin Station and Puerto Ayora Town, Santa Cruz: The second largest of the Archipelago and colonized since the 1920's, Puerto Ayora, the populated part of the island, is the most important harbor of the Archipelago. The headquarters of the Galapagos national Park and the Charles Darwin Station are located on Santa Cruz. Visit Darwin Station to learn about the research conducted on the island. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a Galapagos tortoise breeding and rearing center, where tortoises of different subspecies are prepared for reintroduction to their natural habitats. Afterwards, you can stroll through Puerto Ayora, largest town on the islands.

Rabida Island: A small island (5 km²), covered by dry and coastal vegetation, has a central volcano of 367 m². Rábida contains the largest variety of lava types, being red the dominant color. A salt-water lagoon provides occasional sights of Flamingos. While the beach holds a large sea lion colony, fur seals also may be seen here. Red sands and teal waters characterize this island. Sea lions cover the waterfront, and the bull is always making a show of his bravado. There's a short walk to the top of the trail where you can take fabulous photos of the clear waters and volcanic peaks. There's also great snorkeling. Keep near the rocks and keep your eye out for sharks and rays.

Day 5: Galapagos - Santa Cruz Island

Bachas Beach: White sand beach where you can see some nesting site for sea turtles, a small lagoon, whimbrels, heron, pelican, Sally



Lightfoot crab and other species

Dragon Hill: A bay located at the northwest site of the Santa Cruz Island, known as Cerro Dragon since long time ago by the whaling men because of the important colonies of land iguanas that lived in this area.

During almost all the year, you can see flamingos in marshland lakes as some migratory birds. You will also have the opportunity to see Darwin Finchs, hood mockinbird, lava lizards. This area

has an arid vegetation where you can find some oppuntia cactus, palo santo (bursera) and some other endemic plants. This place has a wonderful landscape as you can see the Rabida Island at the west and Santa Cruz Island at the East. In the beach zone you can see some endemic coast plants and also some marine iguanas, sea lions, American oystercatchers, pelicans and a small blue-footed bobbies colony. The visit has a wet landing and a 2 km flat trail (2 hours hiking), we suggest comfortable walking shoes, walking sticks (if it is necessary) and binoculars for birdwatching at the marshland lakes.

Today some passengers disembark and others will join us for the remainder of our cruise.

Day 6: Galapagos - Bartholomew & Santiago Island

Bartholomew Island: The first destination is Bartolome, an island of varied volcanic formations with a 350-foot summit and a fabulous 360° view. Depending upon the weather, you may be able to spot five other islands, one of the most spectacular views of the archipelago. You'll make a wet landing in a cove to see a small colony of Galapagos penguins—the only penguins north of the equator. Sea lions are also found here. Behind the beach can be found red and white mangroves, salt bush, morning glory and prickly pear cactuses.

Puerto Egas: This afternoon you'll visit Puerto Egas on James (Santiago) Island. The landing is on a black beach with eroded rock formations in the background. The trail crosses the dry interior, where the remains of a salt-mining enterprise can still be seen and then continues along the coast. Intertidal pools are home to a variety of invertebrate organisms. Land iguanas are scattered around feeding on exposed algae while Oyster Catchers try to capture Sally Lightfoot Crabs. The trail then leads to the Fur Seal Grottos, one of the only places in the islands where Fur Seals can be seen. Puerto Egas is a good spot for taking pictures.

Day 7: Galapagos - Fernandina & Isabela Islands

Punta Espinoza: On the youngest and westernmost island in Galapagos, you'll land at Punta Espinoza, a narrow stretch of land where some of the most unusual Galapagos species can be seen. While the panga driver skillfully eludes the reef to reach the landing site near a small mangrove forest, look for penguins diving off the rocks into the water. Sally Lightfoot Crabs disperse on the lava near the shore and herons, sandpipers and wimbrels explore the mangrove roots. Marine iguanas congregate in larger groups here than on any other island. They are everywhere: basking in the sand, swimming near the shore, grazing on the exposed seaweed in the lava and blocking the way at the landing dock. This is one of the few places where there is the opportunity, if the water is clear, of watching them feed underwater while snorkeling.

Following a trail inland, two different types of lava flows can be seen and compared. At the tip of one of the small peninsulas, Flightless Cormorants are found. Without predators on the island, these serpent-necked birds adapted for swimming and not for flight, another example of evolution at work in "nature's laboratory."

Punta Vicente Roca: Located on the north-western tip of Isabela island, the visit of Punta Vicente Roca is completely by dingy. The dingies are launched on a coastal dingy-ride that skirts 400-500-foot cliff sides. Blue-footed boobies, masked boobies & pelicans can be seen here. Also, very many sea-turtles feed along this shoreline. Reaching a rocky pile of large basalt, there are colonies of fur-seals & marine iguanas in groups, basking in the sun. Sea lions are also present. Continuing along the sheer cliffs, the dingy now, approach a secluded cove where, at it's end, dark and yellow rock are superposed. Now we are close to the large cave that allows for snorkeling or sight seeing. Snorkeling at the cave produces a great variety of marine life, specially marine invertebrates. One starts at the intersection



between the dark and yellow rock and swims all the way around the small point into the cave, all the way into the cave & then out of the cave until the next point. The water is often murky and very cold as it is called the Galapagos Ice-box. Therefore, one must snorkel very close to the rock in order to see anything but it may produce some of the most exiting snorkeling in Galapagos. Manta rays, sea turtles, sea-lions, sting-rays, many fish, even dolphins & sunfish have been seen and snorkeled with in this bay. Along the cave there are Galapagos penguins, marine iguanas, swallow-tailed gulls, masked boobies, brown noddy's, blue footed boobies and a breathtaking scenery unparallelled.

Day 8: Galapagos - North Seymour & Santa Cruz Islands

North Seymour: A small flat island. Rocks then a long sandy stretch where sea lions and marine iguanas hang out next to a surf wave. The interior has a Palo Santo small Opuntia cactus forest with Bluefooted boobies and magnificent Frigate bird colonies. An hour and a half visit. Dry landing.

Highlands and lava tunnels: You and your family will board a bus for a 45-minute ride through changing vegetation zones to the Santa Cruz Highlands. Here, about 40 giant tortoises live in the wild. By approaching quietly, you can find and observe a turtle on your own. You also hike to tunnels made by cooling lava.

Day 9: Galapagos - San Cristobal Island - Quito

Considering the changes in the flight schedules, weather conditions and National Park Regulations, we have included several alternatives to the visits offered to our passengers the last day of the cruise program, some of the options are detailed below: Lobería or Islas Lobos or Tijeretas or El Junco Visit or Interpretation Center, San Cristobal Island.

Then transfer to the San Critobal airport on time for your flight to mainland. Upon arrival in Quito. Transfer from the airport to hotel.

Day 10: Quito

Breakfast at hotel. Colonia and middle of the world excursion (5hrs.- lunch not incl): due to the beauty and history of colonial Quito, the main emphasis of this tour is given to the old city. The tour begins with a quick and general view of some residential neighborhoods in modern Quito and then continues on to colonial Quito, stopping at Independence Square, from which it is possible to see and photograph the magnificent architecture of the Cathedral, the Archbishop’s Palace and the City Hall. From there you can walk towards the most striking churches in the city. The last part of the city tour is a visit to El Panecillo, the most famous landmark in colonial Quito from which it is possible to observe not only the City but also the snow- capped peaks volcanoes which surround the city.



Then to the Equator monument which is located north of Quito, about 30 minutes drive from the hotel. The main attractions are the equator line and an ethnic museum inside the monument. Near the monument there is a visitors center, built in Spanish style which contains restaurants, art galleries, folk shops and a post office.

Day 11: Quito - Amazon

Breakfast. Transfer from the hotel to airport for your flight to Shell. Upon arrival at the Shell airport you will be meet by the lodge representative then taken to the Kapawi Lodge.

Days 12 - 13: Kapawi Lodge (Fri - Mon)

3 nights program. Kapawi is an excellent lodge if you want to experience the depths of the Amazon. Close to the border with Peru, there are no roads, logging or oil exploitation in the area, and access is only by air. Here you can experience first-hand how the Achuar indians live and preserve their way of life. Birding is also very good.

The lodge accommodates up to 50 guests and was built in accordance to the Achuar concept of architecture. Kapawi offer 20 double and



triple rooms with private bathrooms, sun heated showers and electricity provided by a solar panel system. The Lodge provides multiple activities in programs that are characterized by their flexibility: they allow you to design day by day, with the rest of your group and your guide, the most suitable program for your interests and desired activity level. Most itineraries include visits to the Achuar communities, hikes in the rain forest, canoeing, bird watching, and other activities. According to your interests and physical condition (but not your age!), they offer three alternative programs: easy, moderate, and difficult. These programs depend mainly on the distance and time you would like to

spend on our trails; all other activities can be included in any program.

Day 14: Amazon - Quito

Transfer from Kapawi to the airfield on time to board the flight back to Quito. Upon arrival in Quito transfer from airport to hotel.

Day 15: Fly out from Quito

Breakfast at hotel and transfer to airport for your international flight

Price per person

PRICE	SUPERIOR	DELUXE
High Season:	\$5,825	\$7,115
Low Season:	\$5,595	\$6,825
Hotel/cruise:-	Hotel Mercure (Quito) Kapawi Lodge (Amazon) Explorer II (Galapagos-Classic Cabin)	Swissotel (Quito) Kapawi Lodge (Amazon) Explorer II (Galapagos-Deluxe Cabin)

**Low season: Jan 8-14, May 1- Jun 15, Nov 24 - Dec 15
Prices valid until December 2010

Prices can change without notice

Price includes:

Air fares (subject to change) for Quito-Galapagos-Quito, Quito-Amazon-Quito. Galapagos cruise includes: Accommodation in double cabins with air conditioning and private bathroom, All meals on board, 2 daily visits to the islands conducted by multilingual naturalist guides, sightseeing, snorkelling opportunities and transfers in the islands. Evening lecture by guides regarding next days visits. Transfers in/out airports, piers, and hotels. Porterage at airport, pier, and hotel on transfers. Official Spanish/ English speaking guide on all tours. Twin or double room in the hotel you select (assumes 2 pax) although if unavailable specific properties may be replaced by others of same quality. Meals as per itinerary. Hotel taxes

Kapawi includes: Domestic Terminal tax (Shell Airport), accommodation in the lodge, all meals and guided excursions in the rain forests. Visits to Achuar communities, trips in motorized canoes or excursions on inflatable kayaks or rafts. Birdwatching activities and lectures are also offered.

Price does not include:

International and domestic airport departure taxes. Cruise fuel surcharge. Galapagos entrance fee (\$100 per person), TCT/Ingala tax (\$10 per person), Amazon Achuar community fee: \$10.00 per passenger, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, gratuities to cruise guides and crew, bar, gifts, travel insurance. Meals not mentioned in the itinerary. Personal expenses (laundry, beverages, communications, etc).

Note:

-Yellow fever vaccination require to visit Amazon area. It is generally easiest to get a yellow fever vaccination in your home country before you leave on your trip. You will need to especially request a yellow fever vaccination from a designated yellow fever vaccination center. Immunity is considered to start 10 days from the time of the vaccination, so be sure to get vaccinated 10 days before you enter an infected country.
- Galapagos Cruise itineraries are subject to change by the authorities of the Galapagos National Park or acts of providence.

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