

# Ski Wildlife Chile Galapagos



ski the Andes – empty slopes – pristine Galapagos Islands  
fearless wildlife – swim with sea lions - varied cruise route - expert local guides  
carefully paced –first class hotels –tailor made to suit you

Enjoy the unique contrast of these two exceptional experiences.

Ski the Andes at Chile's finest ski resort with its own hot springs.

Explore the unique Galapagos Islands on board a carefully selected small boat

Visit the outer islands to see a greater diversity of animals and landscapes.

Enjoy walking, swimming and snorkeling to get close to the islands' wonderful and varied wildlife.

This is a Pura *handmade* holiday with an activity rating *medium* and a comfort rating *first*.



Isabela Island: a tiny Galapagos penguin looks on



**"Great to be able to ski in August, especially on such beautiful and empty slopes." Geoff W.**

## Holiday Itinerary

### Day 01 | flight | **travel to Chile**

Fly overnight to Chile.

Please note: transatlantic flights are quoted separately for this holiday.

### Day 02 | Chillán | **arrive on the slopes**

Early morning arrival in Santiago.

Take connecting flight south to Concepción and transfer to the beautiful spa resort of Chillán.



Enjoying the empty slopes of Chillán

You may have a long layover in Santiago. If this is the case then we pick you up from the airport to show you round the city and have lunch before you continue your journey.

Arrive in time for a spot of skiing or a soak in the natural hot springs of your five star hotel at the foot of the slopes.

The hotel is the best of Chile's ski hotels and it very comfortable indeed. (d)

### Day 03 | Chillán | **ski in the Andes**

Chillán offers 10,000 hectares of skiable terrain spread over the slopes of two volcanoes in the heart of the Chilean Lake District.

From the top of the resort (2,700m) you look out across the beautiful Andes.

It has wide slopes, great off-piste, and South America's longest chair lift as well as enough variety to satisfy any group of skiers.

With nine lifts (one triple seat, three double seats and five surface) it has the longest run in South America, at 13kms. (b,d)

### Day 04 | Chillán | **ski in the Andes**

Of the 35km of groomed runs, 30% are for beginners, 40% for intermediate and 30% for experts.

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Off-piste in Chillán.



An aerial view of the resort



The hot spring pool at the hotel – swim between indoors and outdoors.

To get you up to speed with your skills you might like lessons while you are here.

Instructors are a mix of locals and North Americans & Europeans who come here in their off season.

Many instructors have English as a first language and come from the best northern hemisphere resorts. (b,d)

### **Day 05** | Chillán | **ski in the Andes**

The large outdoor pools are fed by natural volcanic hot springs and are a lovely way to relax after a day on the slopes.

The hotel has dedicated lifts serving the spa and hot spring area so you can come and go from your room in your bathrobe and slippers.

For some real pampering, book in for a massage or treatment in the modern spa facility. (b,d)

### **Day 06** | Chillán | **ski in the Andes**

If you fancy a change there is a cross-country skiing area as well as dog-sledding, both of which can be great fun.

For the most serious enthusiasts, there is a helicopter on site for some serious off-piste adventure. (b,d)

### **Day 07** | Chillán | **ski in the Andes**

After a week at the resort you should be really relaxed and at home.

Chillán is particularly special as it gives you a real flavour of Chile as well as being a world-class ski resort. (b,d)

### **Day 08** | Chillán | **ski in the Andes**

Enjoy your final day of skiing. (b,d)

### **Day 09** | Santiago | **ski, train, nightlife**

Check out of your hotel for your shuttle transfer back to Chillán where you catch train north to Santiago once more.

Timings are up to you – we assume that you ski as much as possible today and catch as late a train as possible.

On arrival in Santiago, transfer the very short distance to your hotel for two nights. Enjoy the bright lights of the big city. (b)

### **Day 10** | Santiago | **free time to explore**

Today is yours to explore Santiago.

Your hotel is in the centre of this bustling city so you can explore on foot quite comfortably.

Alternatively you can take a bus or taxi out to visit a vineyard. Concha y Toro for instance have their property right on the edge of town. (b)

### **Day 11** | Quito | **travel to Ecuador**

Fly north to Quito today. You should arrive in the Ecuadorian capital early this afternoon.

Settle in to your charming and very comfortable hotel where you spend the next two nights.

The city is very high so you may well feel the effects of altitude. Take it easy and drink lots of water and you should be fine by the morning. (b)

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## Day 12 | Quito | explore the city

Today usually starts slowly to give you time for a lie in and to enjoy a leisurely breakfast.

Your local guide comes to find you and take you on a tour of the city, including a walk around the newly renovated colonial centre.

The tour ends at around lunchtime to allow you the full afternoon and evening to explore at your own pace.

There is a fantastic national museum, an excellent artisan market and some very good restaurants all within walking distance of your hotel. (b)

## Day 13 | Galapagos | North Plaza wildlife

Fly to the Galapagos early this morning, a flight of around three hours since the islands are some 600 miles offshore.

When you arrive in the islands, you pay the national park entrance fee before heading down to the dock to board your boat.

After lunch, set sail the short distance to North Plaza where you walk close to the fearless wildlife: Sally Lightfoot crabs, sea lions and land iguanas.



We offer a wide range of boats to take you round the Galapagos Islands.

Here we describe the itinerary and services of the 16 passenger first class motor sailor, Cachalote.

Your boat has eight cabins all with private bathrooms and air conditioning. Cabins tend to have single upper and lower bunks.

Cabins are generally small, you are unlikely to spend much time in them other

than to sleep.

You have a crew of five plus a grade II or III naturalist guide with you at all times.

Please note that the wildlife and activities described below are based on personal experience of a May trip around the islands.

They are an accurate and typical representation of the itinerary but we can't guarantee weather conditions or wildlife.

Precise itineraries are subject to change according to weather conditions and instructions from the Galapagos National Park.

Continue round the short distance to the main town in the islands: Puerto Ayora.

If you like, you can go out on the town tonight. (b,l,d)

## Handpicked Galapagos cruises

Not all Galapagos Island cruises are the same. The National Park authority defines which boats go where and when. All boats follow their specified route, week in, week out.

We don't operate our own boats so we are very careful about who we work with.

As well as excellent boats and crews, we believe that the quality of the itinerary is fundamental to your enjoyment of the Islands.

We have first-hand knowledge of the islands and can advise you on different boats to suit your preferences.

Having said that, our favourite boats are those that follow a neat circular route around the islands. There are only a handful of boats that are allowed to do this. These are the ones that we use for our Pura charters.



The benefits to you are that:

First, you visit more remote and quieter parts of the archipelago giving you a more intimate experience.

Secondly, you see the greatest spread of geological time. The wildlife and vegetation on each island is completely different according, in large part, to its age.

Finally, the boats with the most 'logical' looking itineraries are usually those operated by people who have been doing it for the longest and these tend to be local families. Locals recruit more staff and source more provisions on the islands rather than the mainland which means that more of your money stays in the islands.

## Day 14 | Galapagos | Santa Cruz wildlife

Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station first thing today to learn about their breeding, conservation and education programs.

Walk amongst giant land tortoises in the extensive enclosures of the centre.

Meet 'Lonesome George', long thought to be the last of the Pinta Island giant tortoise sub-species but now apparently joined by a new species mate, called Eva.. After lunch, drive up to the Santa Cruz highlands to see giant tortoises in the 'wild'.

Really this is a farmer who has created a network of trails on his land where you will usually find giant tortoises.

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*Santa Cruz Island: a giant tortoise having lunch.*

Interesting but probably the most crowded part of your time in the Galapagos and the most stage-managed.

Visit some very pretty rock formations and walk through the mature vegetation of the highlands – this is likely to be the most greenery you will see all week. (b,l,d)

### **Day 15** | Galapagos | **seabirds and sea lions**

Start today with a landing on 'sea lion beach'. This is your first chance to get into the water – you can snorkel if you like but really it's just a lovely swimming beach.

All along the sand are sea lions basking in the sun.

Wander along the beach and enjoy watching them play in the surf.

Return for lunch on board and an hour or so navigation to the next landing site on the west of the island.

Mid-afternoon snorkeling excursion to the nearby bay where you might get to swim with sea lions.

Walk to the rugged cliffs of Punta Suarez to see a spectacular blow-hole.

Along the way you should see a broad spectrum of birdlife, including blue-footed boobies, Galapagos hawks and albatrosses. (b,l,d)

### **Day 16** | Galapagos | **snorkel and walk**

After breakfast, land at Punta Cormorant to walk across Floreana island.

Enjoy the somewhat incongruous sight of flamingoes feeding in a lagoon just inland.

Carry on along a good path to a very pretty sandy beach where you can spot rays and sea turtles.

Return to the boat mid-morning to get ready to go snorkeling in the distinctive Devil's Crown crater.

Swim through pretty coral formations and teeming marine life.

You should see some sea lions and lots of fish. With luck you will see sharks – on a good day you might see hammerheads here.

Travel the short distance around the island to land at Post Office Bay. Here the old sailors' postal system still functions.



You leave your letter in a barrel but not before taking out mail bound for your home port.

This way, all letters are slowly distributed around the world for free.

Walk down into a deep lava tunnel for a close look at the geology of these young islands.

This evening is the longest single navigation of your cruise as you make your way between Floreana and Isabela Islands.

It is worth bearing in mind that on this stretch particularly there can be a fair amount of swell.

The movement of the boat and noise are obviously greater during navigation.

If you are worried that this will be an issue, we can recommend the most suitable boats for you. (b,l,d)

### **Day 17** | Galapagos | **iguanas and penguins**

Walk across a lava flow this morning on Isabela Island. There is very still little sign of life on these fairly new flows although a couple of isolated lagoons are now home to some vegetation and birdlife.

Pass flightless cormorants on your way back to the boat. Make your way directly to a nearby stretch of shore where you snorkel.

Sail north this afternoon to Urbina Bay. Get into the zodiacs (small boats) to explore the coastline.

First stop is a couple of small rocky outcrops where you should see your first penguins, living alongside marine iguanas and blue-footed boobies.

Carry on in-shore to a series of mangrove rimmed lagoons.

Cut off the engines as you drift in the silence of the late afternoon looking for sea turtles, sharks and penguins in this unusual setting. (b,l,d)

### **Day 18** | Galapagos | **walk amongst iguanas**

Visit the shores of one of the world's most active volcanoes to walk amongst the flightless cormorants, sea lions and marine iguanas.

Start today with a walk on Isabela to see if you can see giant tortoises in the wild. You will almost certainly see land iguanas along the way.

Return to the beach to swim or snorkel directly offshore possibly with rays, sea turtles and sharks.



*Isabela Island: a friendly sea turtle.*

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Fernandina Island: a marine iguana.



Espanola Island: approaching sea lion beach.



Isabela Island: blue footed boobies on the rocks.



Humans and sea lion waiting to be picked up at Bartolomé

For those of you less inclined to swim, you can take time to simply relax and read a book on the beach.

This afternoon cross the narrow strait to the youngest of the Galapagos Islands, Fernandina.

Here you walk to the jagged lava of Punta Espinosa to see marine iguanas on the rocks.

You may well need to watch where you are treading as there are lots and lots of them piled up against each other for warmth. (b,l,d)

## **Day 19** | Galapagos | **fur seals and views**

Santiago: Puerto Egas. Bartolome: Sullivan Bay.

Walk along the coastline to see Galapagos fur seal basking in pools along the shoreline. The water here is improbably pretty.

Because you are walking on lava, this is one of the places in the islands where you have a degree of freedom to wander.

Return to the beach for some great snorkeling. Here you might be swimming with white-tipped sharks, sea turtles, sea lions and a colourful variety of fish.

Carry on around the island to the small, barren outcrop of Isla Bartolomé.

Walk up to the top of the island on a wooden walkway for beautiful views across the eastern Galapagos Islands.

Head back down the hill to snorkel around the base of the emblematic Pinnacle Rock.

The visibility here is amongst the best of the week and you might be lucky enough to swim with penguins and sharks.

Certainly the channels and rock formations underwater make for a beautiful snorkeling environment. (b,l,d)

## **Day 20** | flight | **travel home**

Get up early this morning to paddle through mangroves in the dawn light. Observe the delicate marine life in the sheltered cove before returning to the boat for breakfast.

Disembark at around 8am. Fly back to the mainland and Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil.

Take a tour of the city before you check in for your flight early this evening.

*Please note: transatlantic flights are quoted separately for this holiday. (b)*

## **Day 21** | home | **arrive back**

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## Holiday Information

### Pura Handpicked

This holiday is delivered by our partners on the ground in Chile and Ecuador/Galapagos.

This itinerary is exclusive to Pura and has been designed to show the amazing variety of South America.

We have first hand knowledge of all of the major ski resorts in Chile. We have recommended Chillán but we can also advise on other resorts, such as Valle Nevado and Portillo.

We use our favourite Galapagos first class yachts.

On board guides are expert naturalists

We have chosen small, locally owned and run properties which are closely integrated with their communities.

### How active?

A great combination of skiing (as energetic as you want to make it) and relaxation in the spa at Chillán.

In the Galapagos, wildlife viewing is the main activity.

There is some gentle walking and snorkeling.

The yacht carries a couple of sea kayaks so you can have a paddle during your time on board.

Conditions underfoot in the Galapagos can sometimes be rough as the islands are volcanic. You should therefore be prepared for some walking over uneven terrain. You can always opt out of excursions.

### How comfortable?

Exceptional five star hotel in Chillán with all of the facilities one would expect. In addition, the hotel has its own spa and natural hot springs. There is a bar which hosts live music and events every evening.

In Santiago your hotel is a locally owned five star in the centre of the city. First class colonial style hotel in Quito off the main square.

In the Galapagos, the boat is a first class motor sailor with large open deck space, warm wooden interiors and a lovely atmosphere. Cabins themselves are small and beds are mostly single upper and lower bunks.

Navigation usually happens for an hour or two during the day with the main movement in the evenings to reach a mooring for the night at around 1 or 2 am.

On one night you are sailing all night, on two you do not move at all. The movement of the boat and noise are obviously greater during navigation.

### How independent?

You're independent skiing in Chile, but with access to support in case of need.

You join a non-Pura group for the Galapagos Islands cruise. The size of this group will depend on the boat you choose. In Quito you have a private city tour and private transfers.

### How responsible?

Pura Aventura is passionate about the places it visits.

To help preserve the integrity of these destinations we:

- Keep groups small to minimise environmental impact.
- Work directly with local businesses and organisations to directly benefit local economies. We use small, locally owned hotels and restaurants. We know the owners except in the large cities.
- Work with local guides so that our holidays are more interesting for clients and more beneficial locally.
- Make payment to suppliers before our clients arrive.

In the Galapagos Islands only use only naturalist guides trained and licensed by the Galapagos Natural Park Service and the Charles Darwin Research Station.

Pura Aventura pays for you to become a benefactor of the Galapagos Conservation Trust ([www.savegalapagos.org](http://www.savegalapagos.org)) for a full year.

### Weather

The ski season at Chillán runs from late June to the end of September. You can expect 80% clear days.

In the Galapagos, wildlife viewing is excellent year round. Weather and sea conditions do vary somewhat through the year:

September is the coolest and choppiest-sea month.

From October onwards the weather warms up and the waters calm down until the hottest, calmest-sea month of February.

Between March and August conditions become gently cooler and the water choppier until September.

### Prices & departures

2011	Jun - Sep   from £4,495pp
Flights	International flights are quoted separately for this holiday. You can book these directly ( <i>guide price £750 - £950 depending on season</i> ) or we can book them on your behalf.
Prices include	Internal flights; week at five star hotel in Chillán; lift passes; first class hotels in Santiago and Quito; seven night Galapagos cruise; private transfers; meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary.
Not included	Transatlantic flights; ski equipment hire; Galapagos park entrance fee (US\$110); Ecuador departure tax (US\$26 from Guayaquil); personal expenses; tips.
Please note	Whilst we keep this itinerary as up to date as possible, the definitive list of our departure dates & prices can be found at <a href="http://www.pura-aventura.com/departures">www.pura-aventura.com/departures</a>

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### A year in the Galapagos

#### January

Beginning of the rainy season. Land birds start nesting, generally after the first rain. On Hood (Española) Island adult marine iguanas become brightly colored (green/red/black). The green sea turtles arrive at beaches to lay eggs. Land iguanas mate on Isabela Island. Both water and air temperatures rise and stay warm until June. Ideal time for snorkeling.

#### February

On Floreana Island flamingos start nesting in greater numbers. Marine iguanas nest on Santa Cruz Island. Peak nesting season for the Galapagos dove. Breeding season begins for black-tailed pintail ducks. End of nesting season for Nazca (masked) boobies on Hood islands. The highest water temperature reaches 25C (77F) temperatures remain high until April. Penguins move from Bartolomé Island to follow the cool waters back to the west.

#### March

Height of the rainy season (this does not mean it rains everyday). Sporadic tropical rains, intense sun and hot climate. Air temperature can reach up to 30C (86F) high humidity. Warm waters excellent for snorkelers. Penguins still active in the water next to tropical fish! Deep surge from the northern currents on some shores, wet landings at places like Puerto Egas, Gardner Bay, Bartolomé can sometimes be a challenge. Marine iguanas nest on Fernandina. March 21st, the beginning of the summer equinox signals the arrival of the waved albatross to Española. Punta Vicente Roca (Isabela) can be an amazing site.

#### April

Massive arrival of waved albatrosses at Española, amazing courtship starts. Eggs of green sea turtles begin to hatch. Eggs of land iguanas hatch on Isabela. End of hatching season for the giant tortoises. While the rains have ended, the islands continue to be quite green. Good visibility in the water for snorkelers.

#### May

North Seymour's blue-footed boobies begin their courtship. Sea turtles are still hatching on Gardner Bay, Punta Cormorant and Puerto Egas. Most of marine iguanas' eggs hatch from nests on Santa Cruz. Palo santo trees begin to shed their foliage. Waved albatross on Española start laying their eggs. Ban-rumped storm petrels begin their first nesting period.

#### June

Beginning of the cold (garúa) season. Giant tortoises migrate to the lowlands on Santa Cruz island for the nesting season. South east trade winds return. Currents become a bit stronger. Seas pick up in surge and wave action. Male frigatebirds show off their red pouches on North Seymour. Southern migrating birds stop in the Galapagos on their journey north. Some groups of Humpback whales migrate up to equatorial latitudes along the coast of Ecuador reach Galapagos.

#### July

Sea bird communities are very active (breeding), specially the Blue footed boobies on Española. Flightless cormorants perform beautiful courtship rituals and nesting activities on Fernandina. American oystercatchers nest along the shores of Puerto Egas

(Santiago Island). Lava lizards initiate mating rituals until November. Cetaceans (whales & dolphins) are more likely to be observed, specially off the western coast of Isabela. Great month to see the four stages of nesting in Blue footed boobies: eggs, chicks, juveniles and sub-adults. Water temperature around 21C (68F).

#### August

Galapagos hawks court on Española and Santiago. Nazca (masked) boobies and Swallow-tailed gulls nest on Genovesa Island. The temperature of the ocean drops to 18C (64F), this varies according to the geographic zones among the islands. Migrant shore birds start to arrive. Giant tortoises return to the highlands of Santa Cruz. Oceans are quite choppy, currents at the strongest levels, surge can be expected along the shores that face west or south. Popping season of sea lions has started. Western and central islands are common places for such sightings.

#### September

The air temperature reaches its lowest levels (19C-66F). Galapagos Penguins active around Bartolomé. Snorkelers can swim with penguins active at the surface or torpedo-like while underwater. Sea lions are very active. Females have reached estrus stage, and so harem-gathering males are constantly barking and fighting. Shore fighting is common. Most intense sea lion activity on western and central islands. Most species of sea birds remain quite active at their nesting sites.

#### October

Lava herons start nesting until March. The Galapagos Fur Sea lions begin their mating period. Blue footed boobies raise chicks all over Española and Punta Vicente Roca (Isabela). Giant tortoises are still laying eggs. Days are not always sunny. Garúa can be expected in most locations, except the western islands where most days have a misty start but after few hours of daylight it burns off. Sunrises in the west can be quite beautiful as the garúa covers only certain locations of the western volcanoes. Summits are clear, but low-lying fog covers the shoreline.

#### November

Popping of sea lions continues. Sea lions are sexually active on the eastern part of the archipelago. Breeding season for the brown noddies. Some species of jellyfish can be seen around the islands. The Genus Physalia is commonly seen floating around Gardner and Tortuga Islets. Some can also be seen stranded on the shores of Flour Beach (Floreana). Band-rumped storm petrels begin their second nesting period. Seas are calm. South east trade winds decrease, generally great weather. Water temperatures rising and good visibility for snorkelers. Sea lion pups (specially at Champion Islet) play aqua-aerobics next to snorkelers. Most pups here are curious enough to nibble at fins of snorkelers.

#### December

Giant tortoise eggs begin to hatch. Green sea turtles display their mating behavior. The rainy season begins, all of the plants of the dry zone produce leaves. Galapagos becomes "green". The first young waved albatrosses fledge. Great weather.

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