

Galapagos Wildlife Holiday

Land Based Galapagos



land based exploration – comfortable hotels – private guiding – responsible tourism - spectacular scenery – fearless wildlife – carefully paced – cultural interaction – off the beaten track

Explore the Galapagos on this, the most comprehensive land-based stay.

Visit three islands for unique Galapagos wildlife: sea lions, giant tortoises, marine iguanas and much, much more.

Walk, bike, kayak and snorkel to get close to the islands' wonderful and varied wildlife.

Enjoy private guiding for a Galapagos wildlife holiday tailored to you.

Perfect for active couples, friends or families who prefer not to travel by boat

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

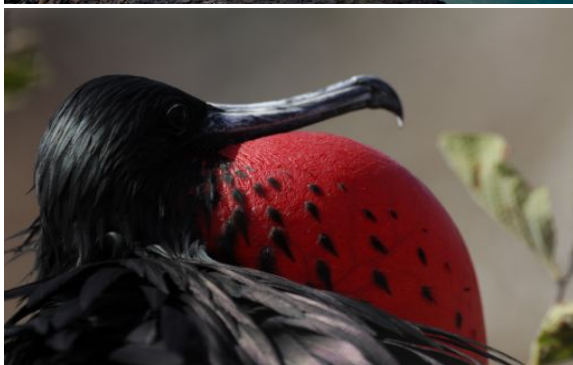


Enjoy great wildlife, landscapes and private guiding to go at your pace.



"We had a marvelous time. We got to do more on each island, had much more flexibility and were able to be more active than would have been the case on a boat. It was wonderful!" Raki S

Holiday Itinerary



A frigate bird with distinctive inflated throat.

Day 01 | San Cristobal | **swim with sea lions**

Fly from the mainland of Ecuador to San Cristobal Island. *Please note: flights are quoted separately for this holiday.*

On arrival transfer to your hotel in San Cristobal.

Hotels on this holiday are comfortable, equivalent to a decent three star, upgrades are available.

After dropping your things off at the hotel, enjoy a tasty lunch and then head for the National Park Visitor Centre on mountain bikes in the company of your San Cristobal guide.

Please note that you will have a different guide leading you on each island, ensuring that you get local expertise on each island.

Here you will learn about the breeding program and their work to bolster the populations of giant tortoises throughout the Galapagos.

The timescales involved are amazing since these tortoises can live to be hundreds of years old.

From here you cycle down to the Loberia, a beach home to large colonies of sea lions.

Questions? Ready to book? Call us on **01273 676 712**

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Visit the giant tortoise breeding program.



Kayak to a sea lion colony.



Looking out over Sierra Negra, the second largest crater in the world.

This will be your first chance to get in the water and swim or snorkel with the playful and fearless inhabitants of the islands. (l,d)

Day 02 | *San Cristobal* | **watch birdlife**

Start the day with a relaxed and fun sea kayak trip paddling from Puerto Baquerizo beach to Frigate hill.

The hill gets its name from the large number of Frigate Birds that live and nest there.

Continue to Leon Dormido or Kicker Rock to enjoy some fantastic kayaking next to the cliff filled with Galapagos birdlife.

These activities are suitable really for any level of kayaker. The kayaks themselves are comfortable and stable. You can also relax knowing that there is a support boat with you at all times.

Slip into the water for a gentle drift around Kicker Rock, one of the best snorkel sites in the Galapagos.

See dozens of harmless sharks and colorful rock channel teeming with tropical fish. (b,l,d)

Day 03 | *Isabela* | **see Galapagos penguins**

This morning you fly from San Cristobal Island on the east to Isabela Island on the west of the Galapagos.

Check in to your hotel on the beachfront in the charming small town of Puerto Villamil.

While here you can take a swim in the turquoise waters as often as you like. There are usually sea lions and sea turtles to keep you company.

After breakfast take a boat across to the small Tintorerías Islands, a Galapagos in miniature.

Apart from the ever-present sea lions and pelicans, you will see a colony of the tiny Galapagos penguin. Not only the smallest of the penguin species but also the only one to live in equatorial waters.

From here, walk across surreal lava landscapes to a huge iguana colony.

The mangrove-lined beaches are also home to sea lions, white tipped reef sharks, rays and turtles.

There's also the chance to snorkel in the clear, turquoise water of the bay to get a close up of the islands' famous underwater life. (b,l)

Day 04 | *Isabela* | **walk on Sierra Negra**

Today you hike up Sierra Negra, the largest crater of all Galapagos volcanoes, in fact it's the world's second largest caldera behind Ngorogoro.

Up here you should see lots of bird life, including short-eared owls.

The scenery is breathtaking as you look north along the line of volcanoes along Isabela's spine and across to Wolf where the recently discovered Pink Iguana live.

In the afternoon visit the giant tortoises breeding center before enjoying time to simply relax and wander along the golden sands of the beach. (b,l)

Day 05 | *Isabela* | **see marine iguanas**

This morning leave directly from the white sandy beach in front of your hotel and paddle to Villamil Bay, passing rays, penguins, and blue-footed boobies.

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Land based Galapagos vs. live aboard cruises

The short answer is that it depends on your interests. For a truly comprehensive and in-depth Galapagos wildlife experience then it is hard to argue against a full 14-night Galapagos cruise.

However, most people travel to the Galapagos islands out of a general interest and desire to experience the wildlife and the landscapes. In this case you will find that a week in the islands is enough.

For a week long trip the choice between land based and a live aboard boat becomes very relevant.

The following mini-guide might help.

What will I see?

The truth is that you are likely to see a greater variety of islands and species on a seven night cruise than on a land based trip.

However, even on the latter, you are going to see so much wildlife that you are highly unlikely to feel that you have missed anything.

In addition, on a land based trip you spend almost all of your time actually on shore and therefore interacting with the animals throughout the day.

On a boat you will find that your interactions are defined by your landings which tend to total around four or five hours a day.

On a land based trip you are also going to have far more interaction with the human side of the Galapagos islands which makes for an arguably more 'complete' experience of the Galapagos.

What will I do?

On a cruise activities will generally be limited to gentle walking and snorkeling.

On this land based exploration you will find that activities include more strenuous walking, mountain biking, sea-kayaking and snorkeling. It's ideal for people who are more energetic, particularly families.

How flexible is it?

This is the great advantage of this particular holiday, it is based on private guiding so you can really set the pace that best suits you.

On a Galapagos cruise you tend to be led by a guide with a guide to passenger ratio of 1:16. On this trip it's just you with your guide.

You can also start your holiday to the Galapagos Islands on any day you want as opposed to a boat which obviously operates on fixed departure days.

How responsible is this holiday?

Boats are very closely controlled by the Galapagos National Park authority, it's one of the great advantages of live aboard yachts.

Land based tours are subject to few such controls and can therefore be a source of some concern to those who protect the Galapagos Islands.

This makes the choice of operator all the more important. Our local partners have impeccable credentials in working in sensitive environments and supporting local community projects which ensure responsible, sustainable and positive tourism.

How much does it cost?

Surprisingly, even for just two people this private guided land based Galapagos wildlife holiday is actually cheaper than most boats.

Watch the friendly sea lions that paddle alongside.

In the afternoon walk the Wetlands Trails through the mangroves and marine iguana colonies, to the Wall of Tears, built in the late 1940's by WWII prisoners housed at the island's US base. (b,l)

Day 06 | Santa Cruz | explore lava tunnels

Leave Isabela Island early this morning to travel by speedboat to Santa Cruz Island.

Please note that this boat journey is a fast two-hour crossing which can be bumpy.

The town of Puerto Ayora is the largest on the Galapagos, by far. It will be quite a culture shock after your time in two basically sleepy villages.

Head up to the highlands to see Giant Tortoises, and then explore lava tunnels and the "los Gemelos" a pair of giant volcanic craters.

In the afternoon drop back down to the spectacular white sand beach at Tortuga Bay to swim, snorkel, walk on the beach, and paddle amongst marine iguanas, sharks, and sea turtles.

Enjoy your last night on the Galapagos Islands. (b,l,d)

Day 07 | Santa Cruz | visit the Darwin center

Early this morning walk along the seafront road to visit the Charles Darwin Research Center. Transfer to Baltra for our return flight back to mainland Ecuador.

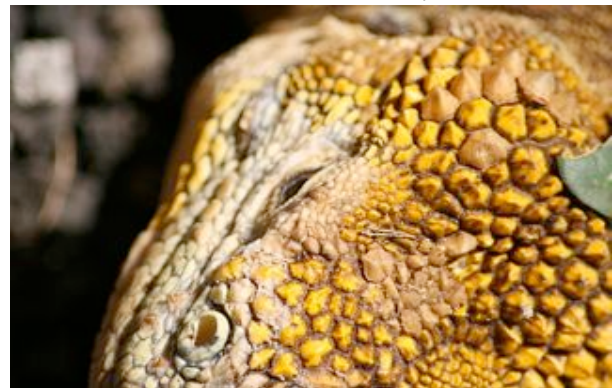
Of course, being a private trip, you can decide to extend your stay for few days.

There's lot of scuba diving and naturalist day trips you can take to explore some of the other fascinating Galapagos Islands.

For these Santa Cruz is the ideal start point. (b)



Snorkel and swim the clear, cool waters on most days.



A land iguana in close up.

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Holiday Information

Pura Handpicked

This holiday is delivered by our partners on the ground in the Galapagos.

We have worked with them to bring you a land based Galapagos holiday that gives you a true insight into the wildlife, people and landscapes of the archipelago.

Your holiday is carefully paced to allow you time both to stretch yourself and also to relax. Crucially for a land based trip, this holiday is run on strictly sustainable, responsible lines.

How active?

Wildlife viewing is the main activity but there is quite a lot of walking on this itinerary as well as relaxed sea kayaking and mountain biking. There is also swimming and snorkeling. 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.

The sea kayaking is suitable for any level from beginners up as the kayaks are stable in the water. You also have a support boat with you at all times as well as a guide with you on the water.

How comfortable?

Because of the low permanent population, there is nothing luxurious on the islands!

Boat crossings between islands can be bumpy. The comfort of the hotels varies by island but in all cases you can expect clean and comfortable rooms with en suite facilities. Expect hotels of around a 3* standard.

Suggested accommodation:

San Cristobal Island, Hotel Pimampiro

Isabela Island, Hotel Albermarle

Santa Cruz Island, Hotel Villa Laguna.

How independent?

Fully guided by expert guides authorised by the Galapagos Islands National Park Authority. We run this trip as a private departure so you can set the pace and can choose to go when you like.

You can expect different tour guides on each island so they are locals expert in the specific environments you are visiting.

How responsible?

Land based tourism to the Galapagos is not yet closely regulated by the National Park authority. For this reason, it is imperative to be very selective with the services being delivered on the ground.

Our partners in the Galapagos have impeccable credentials built up over many years working in and around the islands.

We stay in small, locally owned and run hotels and inns, eating out in a range of restaurants.

Your guide is fully authorised and trained by the National Park authority so that you get the most out of your time on the islands but also to ensure that the impact of your visit is minimised.

The longer your stay on the islands, the better. Fewer flights means less risk of invasive species arriving.

When should I go?

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.

For a land based trip the sea conditions matter much less. You might find that September is an ideal month to travel, but for the possibility of sea mists, it's the quietest month for travel to the islands yet the wildlife is fantastic.

How do I book?

If you would like to book onto this holiday, please call us on **01273 676 712** with the following information:

- Full names
- Address
- Contact telephone numbers & email
- Deposit of 15%

Deposits can be paid by card, cheque or bank transfer, whichever suits you best. The balance of your holiday is payable 60 days prior to travel.

Once we have the details above we send you a confirmation email detailing all of the services agreed between us.

Prices & departures

Dates & prices	Daily £1,735pp
Price includes	Accommodation (twin or double); Private guides on the Galapagos (different guide on each island); Transfers and transport within the islands; activities and excursions mentioned. Meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary.
Not included	Flights to the Galapagos; National Park entrance fee and transit card; tips, personal expenses.

*Prices are per person based on two sharing.
Prices may be subject to change.*

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