**Last Updated:** April 29, 2013

# Superior Galapagos - Western Islands - EV10SA

10 days: Ecuador

## What's Included

7 nights in the Galápagos Islands aboard the San Jose (G5). Arrival transfer on Day 1. Flights to and from the Galápagos Islands. Certified Galápagos National Park Service guide. All landings, excursions and transportation. Snorkelling equipment. Visit to a wildlife interpretation centre.

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT**: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY**: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2013 - December 31st, 2014

## Trip Style

**Small Ship Cruising & Sailing**: **Great trips that float.**

Explore the frozen beauty of Antarctica and the Arctic aboard an expedition ship, or sail the sun-kissed islands of Thailand, the Galapagos, Greece and Croatia from our small, exclusive yachts.

## Service Level

**Comfort**:

- All the adventure you want, with a softer landing
- Handpicked, character-rich accommodations with upgraded amenities services
- Upgraded and private transport, including flights to maximize time
- More included meals, activities and transfers

## Physical Grading

**2**: There'll be some light walking and hiking. Suitable for most fitness levels. Nothing too challenging.

## Itinerary

**Day 1 Quito**

Arrive in Quito at any time. There are no planned activities, so check into our hotel and enjoy the city. A G Adventures representative will greet you at the hotel and brief you on the various aspects of the tour. If you are not able to attend the welcome meeting, our representative will leave all important information at your hotel's reception indicating what time to be ready on Day 2 of your trip. If there is any confusion on arrival, please do not hesitate to call the contact number listed in this dossier.

Located 2850m (9348 ft) above sea level, the Ecuadorian capital of Quito enjoys a wonderful spring-like climate, despite the fact that it is only 22 km (14 miles) south of the Equator. Nestled in a valley flanked by mountains, on a clear day several snow-capped volcanoes, including nearby Pichincha, are visible from the city centre. Add to its beautiful location a rich history and well-preserved colonial district, and you begin to understand Quito's appeal to thousands of tourists every year.

In 1978 UNESCO declared Quito a World Heritage site, and any new development in Quito's old town is now strictly controlled. Life in Quito tends to be peaceful, though the drivers are fond of using their car horns! There are approximately 2,000,000 inhabitants in the metropolitan area, but the pace is relaxed and the residents hospitable.

Since pre-Columbian times, the site of Quito has been inhabited by the Quitus, the Shyris and the Puruhas. The Inca reached this city before the Spaniards, but levelled it to the ground rather than give it up to the Spanish. The present capital was founded by the Spanish on December 6th, 1534. Quito is separated into two basic sections, the old and the new cities. The old city is full of historical buildings and churches. One of the more noteworthy is the Catedral de Quito, located on the Plaza de la Independencia. Built between 1550 and 1562, it was one of the first neoclassical works in Quito. La Compañía de Jésus Church is considered one of the most beautiful in the Americas. The decorations in the Compañía contain approximately one and one-half tons of gold, and construction of the church took 170 years (1605-1775).

There are several excellent museums scattered throughout the city. The Casa de la Cultura Ecuadoriana has an interesting display of traditional musical instruments and Ecuadorian traditional dress, a large art collection, and a small natural history museum. For archeology the best museum to visit is the Museo del Banco Central with its well displayed pottery, gold ornaments, skulls showing deformities and early surgical methods, a mummy and many other objects of interest. The small, rounded hill dominating the old town is El Panecillo or 'the Little Bread Loaf,' a major Quito landmark. From here there are marvelous panoramic views of the entire city and surrounding volcanoes. You can easily take a trolley (streetcar) or a cab between the Old Town and New Town.

Quito's large foreign population and steady stream of travellers have given it a varied and vibrant nightlife, and salsotecas and other dance clubs abound. For a real Ecuadorian experience though, be sure and drop by a peña if you can; these are great places for meeting locals and dancing, as well as enjoying local cooking.

Just a couple of hours south of Quito is Parque National Cotopaxi, home to Cotopaxi Volcano (5897 m/19342 ft). the beautiful cone-shaped, snow covered volcano is Ecuador's second highest peak and the highest active volcano in the world. This is a great spot for a days hiking (up to the refuge on the glacier's edge) or mountain biking (downhill all the way). True enthusiasts attempt the climb to the summit (overnight excursion). Allow yourself an extra day or two in Quito, before or after your trip, if you want to conquer Cotopaxi.

**Day 2 Baltra / Bachas Beach (B,L,D)**

Early flight to Baltra, in the Galapagos Islands. Upon arrival meet our naturalist guide who will assist with the transfer to our boat, the g5. We visit the Bachas beach in the afternoon.

The Galapagos Islands are located about 1000 km (620 miles) off the Pacific coast of South America. The archipelago is comprised of 13 major islands and scores of islets that served as a living laboratory for Charles Darwin, the renowned evolution theorist.

Long before Darwin arrived in the Galapagos, seafarers knew these isolated islands as home to some of the strangest and most wonderful wildlife imaginable, including birds that could swim but no longer fly, aquatic iguanas, dragon-like lizards left over from prehistoric times, and the giant Galapagos tortoises for which the islands were named.

Covering nearly 5000 square km (3100 square miles), the Galapagos Islands are now a National Park. The Galapagos National Park is the institution that controls the preservation of this environment, assisted by the Charles Darwin Research Station. Inaugurated in 1964 and based in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island, the Charles Darwin Research Station is the one place where visitors can easily see the famous Galapagos Tortoises, which may live up to two hundred years. This is also the training centre for naturalist guides who accompany all visitors landing at more than 40 approved sites on the islands, and members of the international scientific community often come to study at the station.

The National Park charges a visitor fee of $100 USD, payable on arrival, which funds Park maintenance and supervision in the Galapagos, as well as ecological study, conservation and infrastructure development in Ecuador's other National Parks. Entry fees and the funds they generate for the National Park System are among measures taken by the Ecuadorian government to protect its natural heritage.

**Day 3 Isabela (B,L,D)**

After a snorkelling excursion in the morning to "Las Tintoreras," we will explore the islands wetlands which are an extensive system of lagoons and mangroves that provide a home to the aquatic bird colonies.

In the afternoon we will visit the historic “The Wall of Tears." From 1946 to 1959 Isabela was designated a penal colony by the Ecuadorian government for prisoners who were obligated to build a wall with enormous blocks of lava. Due to the arduous labor and harsh conditions in which the prisoners lived, this site is known as “El Muro de las Lagrimas”.

Before returning to the boat we will make a stop at a Giant Tortoise breeding centre to learn about the incredible animals and see them in various stages of development.

Distinctively shaped like a sea horse, Isabela is the largest island in the Galapagos archipelago at around 4590 sq km. that is lined with a chain of active volcanos, with the highest peak (Wolf Volcano) standing at 1700m. Not many tourists visit this Island, even though it has the largest colony of Galapagos tortoises and the beach is beautifully set with coconut palms. The main town, and the port we call on is Puerto Villamil.

Isabela is relatively young island (approximately 1 million years old), and boasts fascinating geological evidence of the island's volcanic past that left it as we see it today. There is also fantastic flora and fauna, particularly on some of the island's volcanoes, which support completely different ecological zones than other islands in the archipelago. Many wild tortoises roam the highlands of Isabela, more so than any other island, and the rich waters surrounding the island provide plenty of nutrients for vast marine life, which allows for fantastic snorkelling opportunities.

**Day 4 Isabela (B,L,D)**

This morning we will visit Punta Moreno on the southwestern side of Isabela. The landscape is pristine and desolate with impressive black lava floes and a unique system of brackish lagoons, which are a magnet for wildlife. From here there is a spectacular view of 3 volcanoes that are so distinctive to Isabela Island: Alcedo, Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul. This newly opened visitors site allows us the opportunity to see Darwin’s finches, Galapagos doves, penguins, blue-footed boobies, mockingbirds and flightless cormorants as well as unusual vegetation.

In the afternoon we will visit Tagus Cove, located west of Darwin Volcano on Isabela Island, which is a small bearing inscriptions dating back to the 1800s. The site's name originates from a British warship that went through the islands in 1814 with a crew that were looking for Galapagos Tortoises for food. This cove was a favorite spot for pirates and whalers over the years, which is evident from the inscriptions of the various boat names. We can hope to see various land birds and will be able to identify the characteristic vegetation of the arid zone. Land iguanas are ocationally spotted here.

**Day 5 Fernandina / Isabela (B,L,D)**

After breakfast we will visit Punta Espinoza on Fernandina Island, which is a narrow ledge of lava and sand extending from the base of the nearby volcano to the sea. This place is famous for its large colonies of marine iguanas and as the habitat of unique species like the flightless cormorant, Galapagos penguin, Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snake, among others. It is an ideal place to observe the lava cactus (Brachycerus nesioticus), which grow on young lava and survive with little water.

Fernandina Island is the youngest in the Galapagos Islands (approximately 700,000 years old) and is also one of the most volcanically active. A fascinating mix of mangroves, rocky shores, black sand beaches, and wildlife that have had relatively little human contact, Fernandina boasts some of the most diverse marine, wildlife and vegetation in the Galapagos. The Island has erupted several times in the last 30 years, which has resulted in dramatic changes to the geographical landscape, even shifting the lake in the caldera from one side of the crater to the other.

In the afternoon we return to Isabela and visit Punta Vicente Roca, located at the "mouth" of the head of the sea horse shape of the island. Here we will see the remnants of an ancient volcano which form two turquoise coves and a bay that is well protected from the ocean swells. From this spot we have the opportunity to a take panga rides along the volcano's cliff wall or explore a partially sunken cave at the water’s edge. Masked and blue-footed boobies sit perched along the point and the sheer cliffs, while flightless cormorants inhabit the shoreline. This site offers excellent snorkelling opportunities.

**Day 6 Santiago (B,L,D)**

Morning excursion to Playa Espumilla, one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galapagos islands, with thick mangroves along with flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites. Continue to Buccaneer Cove to witness the towering cliff wall rock formations before reaching Puerto Egas to see the salt crater as well as a dark sand beach and tidal pools.

Santiago Island has seen it's share of human activity from whalers and pirates over the years, and despite the introduction of goats to the island many years ago, the wildlife of Santiago has flourished otherwise and provides outstanding viewing opportunities. The island boasts marine iguanas, sea lions, fur seals, land and sea turtles among others, which provide great wildlife viewing both on land and in the water.

**Day 7 Rábida / Chinese Hat (B,L,D)**

In the morning we will make our way to Rabida Island, where we land on a red sand beach. From here a short trail leads to a salt water lagoon, often home to wading flamingos. Another trail goes past the lagoon to the interior, where the revered palo santo trees grow. When burned, the branches of this tree give off a pleasing aroma and ward off mosquitoes. Back on the beach among low-lying bushes nest the prehistoric-looking pelicans. This is the best area for close viewing of these nesting birds, and it's a rare treat to watch parent pelicans return with gullets full of fish for the squawking youngsters.

In the afternoon the boat arrives to a small little island off the southern tip of Santiago called Chinese Hat, for it's unique shape. Here it is often possible to see Galapagos penguins and the marine life is fantastic for snorkelling. There is also a large sea lion colony here as well as many marine iguanas that can be seen on our guided walk amongst the volcanic scenery, with good views to the cone of the island's volcano.

**Day 8 Santa Cruz (B,L,D)**

In the morning we arrive in Puerto Ayora, on Santa Cruz Island. Santa Cruz is the second largest in the island group, and has the largest population, with Puerto Ayora as its main town. It also boasts the most varied of the islands’ vegetation zones: coastal, transition, scalesia, miconia and pampa. The Charles Darwin Research Station is a 10 minute walk from the centre of the town. Here, an exhibition centre displays photos of recent volcanic eruptions, charts outlining geological formations and drawings of the evolutionary development of endemic species. A corral houses adult Galapagos Tortoises, and a nursery cares for young tortoises until they are about three years old, when their shells have hardened enough to resist attack from feral dogs.

In the afternoon we have the opportunity to visit the highlands and hopefully see giant land tortoises in the wild. There will be free time to explore the town and go shopping.

**Day 9 North Seymour / Baltra / Quito (B)**

Visit North Seymour in the morning to see the observe the birdlife, including frigate birds and blue-footed boobies. Disembark at Baltra and transfer to the airport for our flight back to Quito.

**Day 10 Quito (B)**

Depart at any time.

## What's Included

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## Highlights

7 nights cruising the Galápagos National Park aboard the San Jose (G5, visit Fernandina—home to the largest colonies of marine iguanas in the Galápagos, choose to search for sea turtles or simply relax on the white-sand beaches of Santiago, snorkel with sea lions and search for unique aquatic life, marvel at the spectacular volcanoes of Isla Isabela

## Dossier Disclaimer

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## Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## Important Notes

1. G Adventures requires your passport number, full name and date of birth at the time of booking. Please make sure you give this information to your travel agent.

2. Once you have confirmed your booking please give us your international flight details and advise us if you have any important issues such as allergies, special diets, etc.

3. The Ecuadorian government currently levies a Galapagos Islands Park entry fee of $100 USD per person. This is payable at the airport upon arrival in the park. It is not included in the cost of the tour, and must be paid in CASH. This fee funds Park maintenance and supervision in Galapagos, as well as ecological study, conservation and infrastructure development in Ecuador's other National Parks. Entry fees and the funds they generate for the National Park System are among measures taken by the Ecuadorian government to protect its natural heritage.

4. The Galapagos National Park authorities have implemented a system of Transit Control Cards at a fee of $10 USD per person. This card is to be purchased in CASH at a counter in the Quito airport before boarding the flight to the Galapagos. Please retain this card along with your passport as you will be required to present this upon arrival to the Galapagos Islands. Please note that this applies to all tourists entering the Galapagos Islands and is a supplement to the existing entry fee to the National Park and is not controlled by tour operators or travel agencies. It is the first of a number of initiatives to track, control and maintain the sustainable tourism targets set out by the Galapagos National Park and the Ecuadorian government in an attempt to preserve the fragile environment of the archipelago.

5. Please note that the rooming on our Galapagos yachts is done on a first-come, first-serve basis, and we are not able to guarantee the specific cabin you will receive on board. The cabins are comfortable and clean, all with private bathrooms. Due to the specific location of the cabins on board, the window sizes vary as well as the noise at times when the boat is navigating, given the proximity of the cabin to the engine room. Our friendly and competent crew will ensure the smooth and comfortable journey for the duration of your tour.

## Group Leader Description

Your G Adventures group trip is met in Quito by a G Adventures representative. The aim of the representative is to give you the required information for the rest of your journey and to assist with changing money, restaurant and excursion suggestions and general information about the city. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places

we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds. For your shipboard voyage we have a highly experienced shipboard staff and crew, including a local naturalist guide in the Galapagos (certified by the Galapagos National Park).

## Group Size Notes

Max 16, Avg 12.

## Your Fellow Travellers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and are likely to be of a variety of ages too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

## Meals Included

9 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners.

## Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. On our Galapagos yachts, food is included, plentiful and made of fresh local ingredients. The above information applies to G Adventures group trips. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

## Meal Budget

Allow USD75-100 for meals not included. Drinks and tips while on the yacht are extra. You must pay a USD10 Transit Control Card fee at the Quito airport and a USD100 (cash) Galápagos park entry fee immediately upon arrival to the Islands (subject to increase).

## Transport

Local flight, San Jose (G5) motorized yacht, van, Zodiac, public bus.

## Local Flights

All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

## Single Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

## Accommodation

Hotel (2 nts), aboard the San Jose (G5) in twin-share cabins (7 nts).

## My Own Room

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops.

## Joining Hotel

Hotel Hilton Colon
Avenida Amazonas N19-14 y Avenida Patria
Quito, Ecuador

Tel: (593-2) 2560-666

## Joining Instructions

The Quito International Airport is approximately an hour outside of the city centre where your joining hotel is located.The easiest way to get there is via taxi (approximately $30-40 USD). Immediately after the customs and immigration area, as you head to the exits, you will find a taxi stand. We strongly recommend you pay for the car at set rates from the taxi stand and therefore won't need to worry about sorting out a ride outside the airport facilities, where the situation tends to get more chaotic with many drivers vying for few clients. The taxis outside the airport area do not belong to the Taxi Airport Union and may charge higher fares.

If you have paid in advance for an arrival transfer, a G Adventures representative will be at the airport to meet you. If for any reason you are not met at the airport, please call to our guide locally at 09 99506000. If you are unable to contact him, please make your way to the joining point hotel via taxi.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned for that day so you can arrive at any time.

It is very important that we have your arrival flight details in order to contact you at the joining point hotel in Quito.

## Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

## Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER
If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS
G Adventures Office Quito, Ecuador
During office hours (Weekdays 9am-6pm Local Time)
From outside Ecuador: +593 2250 6610
From within Ecuador: 022 506 610

After hours Emergency number
From outside Ecuador: +593 999 506 000
From within Ecuador: 0999 506 000

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Germany: 01805 70 90 30 00
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## What to Take

There is not a lot of extra space on the boat in the Galapagos. Life aboard the yacht is very informal, making casual, comfortable clothing a must.

Please note that Galapagos is a protected National Park so your luggage will be checked before arrival and departure to and from the islands. Don't bring with you any food, seeds or other organic material that could affect the delicate ecosystem of the islands.

Porters are not often available, so be prepared to carry your own bags. Please remember that you can leave unnecessary articles in your joining hotel storage room. On arrival day, our customer support will provide you with a special bag of the correct size that you are allowed to bring to the Galapagos.

Please do not bring any alcoholic beverages aboard, as your boat has a bar offering a variety of alcoholic drinks and prices are reasonable.

LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE ON THE BOAT: Please note that the amount of luggage you can bring on the boat is LIMITED due to small cabin size. You can leave unnecessary items in your joining hotel storage room. On arrival day, our customer support will provide each passenger with a standard-sized duffel bag to give you an indication of how much you should pack for the Galapagos (please also bring a separate day pack for each person). Our designated bags are about 50L in capacity, allowing you to carry some 12-15 kg of luggage. They measure 72x30x26 cm and provide you with ample storage space for the duration of the cruise. The personal luggage allowance is therefore 1 special bag (provided by us) and 1 day pack (your own).

Please note that the electric outlets on this boat are 110v and will have either 2 flat prongs or two pin-like prongs. If necessary please bring an adaptor with you for your electric devices, ie, battery chargers.

## Checklist

- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- Credit or debit card (see personal spending money)
- G Adventures vouchers and trip details
- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required
- Camera and film
- Playing cards or other favourite games
- Reading/writing material
- Binoculars.
- Fleece top
- Windproof/waterproof jacket
- Small towel and swim wear
- 4 shirts/t-shirts
- Sun hat
- 1 pair of shorts
- 2 pairs of long trousers
- 1 pair hiking pants/track pants
- Sunblock
- Insect repellent
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion)
- Watch or alarm clock
- Hiking boots/ sturdy walking shoes
- Sport sandals
- First-aid kit (should contain motion sickness medication, lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, and extra prescription drugs you may be taking).

## Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## Visas

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THE CORRECT TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION.

## Destination Guide

For practical information on weather, typical costs, visa information, special events and much more, our Destination Travel Guide is the place to visit! This handy guide will tell you everything you need to know about everywhere we go! Head to http://www.gadventures.com/travel-guide for detailed information on the countries and cities we visit.

## Detailed Trip Notes

G Adventures YACHT
g5
Enjoy your cruise on the g5; it offers a clean and casual setting with all the necessary comforts. It is staffed by experienced crew members, including a certified naturalist guide. Your comfort is ensured by our helpful, cheerful staff who will attend to your every need. Additional vessel features include outside decks and dining room and bar. Comfortable Cabins are all on the upper decks with all lower berths, WC, shower, hot water and air-conditioning. All meals are provided and are served aboard the vessel. You may purchase alcoholic beverages, water and soft drinks on the boat.

PLEASE NOTE:
At times, when the g5 is being serviced, we will use another boat of equivalent standard and size.

LIFE ON BOARD
The daily schedule consists of a shore excursion immediately following breakfast, lunch aboard and perhaps a siesta before the afternoon shore excursion. In the evening after dinner, your naturalist guide will brief you on the islands to be visited the following day. You are ferried from the yacht to shore via small boats called pangas. Landings are either “dry” or “wet”, where you may have to wade ashore in shallow water. Your naturalist guide will accompany you during all excursions.

ACCOMMODATION
This is a G Adventures Classic tour, all accommodation will be Tourist Class and of a Standard service level.

CLIMATE
Located on the Equator, the Galapagos climate is tempered by the Humboldt Current, so you do not experience extreme heat found elsewhere at this latitude. The warmest weather is December to June, when temperatures range from 22-33°C (72-90 °F), and the water temperature is in the mid 20s (mid 70°F). From July to November, temperatures are cooler and range from 18-24°C (60s -75°F), when average water temperature rarely reach 21°C (70°F).

## Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## Money Exchange

Credit cards and debit cards are very useful for cash advances. Visa cards are the most widely accepted cards. While ATMs are widely available some may not accept all international credit or debit cards. You may need to try at more than one machine if the first does not accept your card. You should also check with your bank before leaving to ensure that your card works internationally. You should be aware that to purchase products or services on a credit card a fee of 5%-10% usually applies. Do not rely on credit or debit cards as your only source of money. A combination of US dollar cash and cards is best. Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spoil the trip by constantly feeling short of funds. Please bring USD banknotes in denominations smaller than 100, as they can be hard to exchange in Ecuador. 100 dollar bills of certain series (e.g. CB B2) can be especially hard to cash! CURRENCY EXCHANGE TIP: Please be advised that slightly torn notes, notes that have been heavily marked or are faded may be difficult to exchange. It is best to bring notes in fairly good condition, in denominations lower than 100USD (or equivalent). As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com

## Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD $200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## Tipping

Onboard the Galapagos yacht, tipping the Naturalist guide and boat crew is customary. There will be two envelopes presented at the end of the voyage, one for the guide and one for crew members. The recommended amount is $15-18 USD per day from each traveller ($5-7 USD for the guide and $10-11 USD for the crew members). This is only a suggestion as we understand that tipping is a personal choice.

## Optional Activities

CITY TOUR OF QUITO
We visit the new and old town of Quito, including the Palace of Congress, Presidential Palace, Independence Square and the Churches of San Francisco, La Compania and La Catedral. After this we go to the Panecillo (a lookout point in the old town), which affords the best view of Quito, then return to the hotel. This trip takes about 3.5 - 4 hours and can depart everyday at anytime.
- Entrance fees for the churches and Panecillo are not included in the price and is about $4USD p/p.
- Price: $24 USD P/P, minimum 2 persons.

CITY TOUR AND THE EQUATOR LINE
After the city tour we go to the Equator line located 45 minutes away from Quito to visit the world monument and shops. Here we also visit the Inti Ñan local museum where you can see different experiments to prove that you are at the Centre of the Earth. This trip takes about 5 hours and can depart everyday at anytime.
Optional visit to The Pululahua crater 10 minutes away from the monument.
- Entrances fees for City Tour (Churches): total approx $4USD
- Equator line USD5 Museums Entrance fee: Total approx $9USD
- Price: $32 USD P/P, minimum 2 persons.

COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK
A spectacular 2-hour drive in private transport takes us to Cotopaxi Volcano, 5897m, the highest active volcano in the world. We visit a museum in the park and hike around a lagoon at the bottom of the volcano to learn about the flora and fauna found at this altitude. We then continue by car up the volcano to the parking lot, at over 4500m. Then we walk approximately 1.5hrs to the refuge at 4800m, and after a short break, continue to the glacier (if the weather holds out). We head back to the Pan-American highway to have lunch somewhere near Latacunga, or buy a box lunch on the way to have more time in the park. Return to Quito in the afternoon.
The full-day trip has departures every morning at 8AM.
- Entrance fee to the National Park: $2USD pp.
- Price: $55USD P/P, minimum 2 persons (private services)

SAQUISILI MARKET AND COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK
Saquisili is another important market close to Quito, located in the south of Quito. A wonderful scenic drive of approximately 3 hours gives you the opportunity for great views of the volcanoes. Here, the local natives bring their products from over the highlands to sell, such as handicrafts from Salasaca, Otavalo and Chimborazo. You will also find an animal market.
This is an intensive day and leaves at 6AM every Thursday.
- Entrance fee to the National Park: $2USD pp.
- Price: $90USD P/P, minimum 2 persons.

OTAVALO MARKET
Otavalo market is considered one the biggest and best native markets in South America. Here you can find all the handicrafts that are made in Ecuador. We head north along the Pan-American highway for 2.5 hours. On the way we visit the village of Calderon to see the bread figures and Cayambe to taste the typical ‘biscochos’ (local biscuits). After you have explored the Otavalo market, we go to the leather market at Cotacachi or to Cuicocha Lake for a hike. The official Market Day is Saturday, but any other day is still interesting, and has less tourists. This is a full-day tour, leaving at approximately 8AM any day.
- Price: $45USD P/P, minimum 2 persons.

COTOPAXI BIKING
Your biking adventure begins as we drive south to the Coattail National Park along the Pan-American Highway. Within two hours we reach the trailhead (4600 m) at the base of the Cotopaxi Volcano. After donning our biking gear and catching our breath in the thin,

high-altitude air, we begin our downward descent. Get ready for high-speed adventure and hang on tight, as the dirt road will take you on a wild ride. The road will whisk you past silvery smooth Limpiopungo Lake and eventually through a pine forest, until you reach the park's guard station, where you can see a corralled Llama herd. Our 4-wheel-drive vehicles will drive you to Inca ruins (tolas), where a box lunch will be served. After a snack we return to Quito by jeep, bikes loaded on top.
Departures daily at 7AM. We ride approximately 50 kilometres on bike (5 - 6 hours) and 4 hours in the jeep.
Included: box lunch, 21-speed mountain bikes, all transportation and veteran bilingual guides.
- Entrance fee to the National Park: $2USD pp.
- Price: $50 USD P/P (pool services)

BELLAVISTA CLOUD FOREST
To see the cloud forest and to experience the changes in the temperature and vegetation, you have to go to Bellavista cloud forest. Bellavista cloud forest reserve is located at 0,00,46 latitude in northwestern Ecuador, on the edge of Choco which is among the most diverse places in the word.Things to do:
a)Birds here are always active, from the joy of watching hummingbirds on your private balcony, to exploring in search of elusive forest species, 320 species of birds have been recorded in the Tandayapa valley.
b) Hikes through primary and secondary forest.
c) Naturalist guides and specialist birding guides available (extra cost)
This trip is a full day and starts at 7AM.
- Entrance fee to the reserve $15 USD p/p
- Price: $50USD P/P, minimum 2 persons.

PAPALLACTA HOT SPRINGS
Two hours drive to the east are the Termas de Papallacta. They are located on the Cinnamon trail, (65km from Quito) which is the same route that Francisco de Orellana took in 1542 when he crossed the Andean mountain range in search of spices and gold, and discovered the Amazon River. We take a short cut, passing by the church of Guapulo and have a wonderful ride in the paramo (tundra). The highest point reached is 4150m; we descend to a spectacular setting at 3300m. Things to do:
a) Hot springs (different temperatures) big and small ones, while enjoying views of the Antisana volcano 5750m. Entrance $5USD.
b) Trekking up the river
c) Horseback rides
d) Relax in the new spa recently inaugurated (ask for details in the hotel).
Lunch at the restaurant offers typical dishes such as trout. Return to Quito in the afternoon.
This full-day trip departs daily at 8AM. Entry to the pool costs USD 6 per person
- Price: $50USD P/P, minimum 2 persons.

ARCHEOLOGICAL TRIP IN QUITO
Start with an amazing panoramic view of the old town of Quito and learn about the pre-colombian and pre-inca ethnic groups that live around the region. Enjoy the “Rumipamba” archeological and ecological park and visit the necropolis of “La Florida in situ Museum”. Finally, go down to the equatorial valley and visit the “Rumicucho” ruins, considered one of the biggest archeological sites of the area. This trip takes about 5 hours and can depart from Wednesday to Sunday. Entrance fees are not included and total approx $2.50 P/P. Price $32 USD P/P minimum 2 persons (private services)

QUITO CUISINE TRIP
A different way to learn about Quito's traditions and culture. Drive to a local food market, where your will see many varieties of fruits, vegetables and flowers grown in Ecuador. After this, head south to the old part of the city, where you can visit historical monuments and buildings, and also see the manufacturing site of Quito`s traditional sweets. The tour finishes at one of the most traditional ice cream parlours in Quito. This trip takes about 5 hours and departs every day at anytime! Entrance fees and shopping in the market are not included and total approx $12 P/P. Price $32 USD P/P minimum 2 persons (private services)

1 DAY RAFTING TOUR -2 rivers in 1 day.
The Ríos Toachi and Blanco are fantastic introduction to the rivers of Ecuador. Flowing off the coastal side of the Andes they have some of the longest navigable sections of whitewater in the country. Combine this with the sights and sounds of the forest environment we pass through and you are guaranteed a day to remember.
We travel west down from Quito for about 3 hours through beautiful cloud forest to the bank of the river.
Rafting time approx 3 to 3.5 hrs. (NB. From March to May we usually run the upper Blanco river – 43km, approx. 4 hrs).
River Grading: III - IV (Depending on the time of year).
Includes: Professional guides, top of the line rafting equipment, lunch, transport to and from Quito.
-Departures: Daily with a minimum of 4 people
-Price: $ 75 USD P/P.

HORSEBACK RIDING
Transport from Quito to the Green Horse Ranch, inside the National Reserve Pululahua, about 25 miles north from Quito. Quiet sure footed mountain horses will take us through the stunning landscape of this ancient volcanic crater, the biggest one on the whole American continent and one of only two inhabited craters in the world. With its constantly changing sceneries and bio-diversity it's a great day.
Guided day tours are available for all standards of riders - and if you've never ridden before what better place to start than in the Andes .
- Minimum 2 person
- USD75 USD P/P

NOTE: These prices are based on 2 clients but if you are a single traveller we can accommodate your trips as well. If there are more than 2 clients booking, the prices may be less than those quoted above. Please note that many optional activities will need to be paid in cash.

## Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our group leader they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Please note your Adventure travels to high altitude, in Quito. This is medically defined as anything over 8,000 feet (2,440 meters). Most people can travel to 8,000 feet with minimal effects. However, everyone reacts to altitude differently and altitude sickness can on set with some people irrespective of fitness and age. For details on how to best prepare and what to do in the unlikely event you are effected on your Adventure, please consult your physician.

## Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

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www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

## Trip Specific Safety

Please take care when wandering about Quito on your own, as pick pockets and purse-snatchers are common, particularly in the Old Town. Be safe and leave your passport, credit cards, traveller's cheques and cash you don't need in the hotel's safety deposit box. Most Quiteños are honest and genuinely helpful and friendly, but be safe and enjoy the city!

## Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.
Please note that all passengers traveling to Antarctica are required to fill out this questionnaire.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

## A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## Responsible Travel

Being a responsible tour operator is at the heart of what G Adventures is all about. From the start, G Adventures has been committed to offering low-impact tours that benefit traveler and host alike. While our sustainable tourism policies are constantly evolving, our commitment to socially conscious, grassroots style travel has never changed. We work with local communities, businesses and individuals to develop sustainable tourism opportunities that help local economies while minimizing negative environmental and cultural impacts.

We would like to give you a couple of tips to start you thinking about traveling sustainably.
-Please bring rechargeable batteries, a battery charger (and plug adapter if necessary). Batteries are incredibly toxic and many places that we travel do not have proper disposal facilities. Rechargeables are best but if this is not possible we recommend that you bring any used batteries back home with you for proper disposal.
-Please ask before taking pictures. Just as you would not like to have a stranger come up to you and take a picture of you while sitting on your front porch either do the locals of the places that we visit. As you can imagine pictures of their children are also not appreciated.

For more information about our commitment to responsible travel, please visit the Sustainable Tourism section of the G Adventures website: www.gadventures.com

## Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program
Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

## Associated Planeterra Project

Through Planeterra, G Adventures supports the Galapagos Conservancy.

The Galapagos Conservancy (GC) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to promoting conservation, education and scientific research in and on behalf of the Galapagos Islands. GC raises funds from individuals and institutions to support projects in the Galapagos. They also conduct seminars, briefings and other public education and advocacy efforts to inform the general public about conservation issues and the work being undertaken in Galapagos by the Charles Darwin Research Station and the Galapagos National Park Service.

All donations to this project through Planeterra directly support the Marine Turtle project at Quinta Playa in the Galapagos Islands. Implemented by the Charles Darwin Research Station, this is an ecological project monitoring one of the green sea turtles' most important nesting sites in the Galapagos Islands.

The overall goal is to evaluate the green turtle colony in Quinta Playa through systematic monitoring of nesting parameters, hatchling recruitment, basking behaviour and nesting habitat quality.

Main Objectives of this project are:
• Estimate the size of the green turtle nesting colony in Quinta Playa
• Study the effects of human activities such as tourism, fishing and garbage on the green turtle population
• Promote the conservation of green turtles
• Share results with Galapagos National Park in order to protect and conserve sea turtles

For more information about this project and/or to make a donation please visit our website: www.planeterra.org or contact us at info@planeterra.org

## Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that you'll receive a special discount code for free online prints and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Please visit http://www.gadventures.com/evaluations

## Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletter_signup

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for Planeterra's monthly news to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

## Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by The Watering Hole, our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the Departure Lounge section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.

## Keeping in Touch

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road, rather than relying on postal mail. Email cafes are becoming increasingly commonplace and cheap throughout the regions we visit, and have quickly become the preferred way for our CEOs and travellers to stay in touch. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our Emergency Contact. We recommend that family and friends don't try to contact you through phoning hotels en route, as our hotels are subject to change, and our hotel receptions often don't have English speaking staff.

## Departs

DEPARTS MON EVERY 2 WEEKS, MON-WED

## Recommendation

Too long? For a shorter Galapagos experience, consider our 7-day version of this trip EV07SB.