



## 11 DAY BEST OF ECUADOR + GALAPAGOS

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**Trip Duration:** 11 days

**Trip Difficulty:**

**Destination:** Ecuador

**Begins in:** Quito

**Activities:** 



### INCLUDED

- Round-trip airfare from Quito to Baltra Island
- Airport transfers
- Land & sea transportation
- Accommodations
- Meals as described in itinerary
- Trekking poles, bikes & gear, raft & gear, snorkeling gear
- Expert guides

### EXCLUDED

- International airfare
- INGALA transit card
- Galapagos NP fee
- Pier fee at Puerto Villamil
- Snorkeling gear for optional activities
- Wetsuit
- Tips

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Ultimate Expeditions® was born out of our need for movement, our connection with nature, and our passion for adventure.

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**Why Ultimate Expeditions®?** We provide high quality service without the inflated cost. Our goal is to work with you to create the ideal itinerary based on your needs, abilities and desires. We can help you plan every aspect of your trip, providing everything you need for an enjoyable experience.

### Ultimate Expeditions®

500 N. Michigan Ave., Suite #600

Chicago, IL 60611

PH: (312) 809-7007

FAX: (312) 348-7223

[Info@UltimateExpeditions.com](mailto:Info@UltimateExpeditions.com)

[www.UltimateExpeditions.com](http://www.UltimateExpeditions.com)

# 11 DAY BEST OF ECUADOR + GALAPAGOS

## Itinerary

### DAY 1 Quito

Your first day begins in Quito, the biggest and best preserved colonial city of America. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978, Quito is imbued with rich history and culture – home to an ancient Inca Empire just waiting to be explored. Depending on your arrival, you will spend the day exploring the history of this cultural capital. In the evening, our trip leader will greet you at the hotel for a tour briefing. Today offers a great opportunity to soak in information, while allowing your body to acclimatize. Overnight in Quito. (Dinner)

### DAY 2 Trekking into the Quilotoa Crater Lake

After breakfast, you will be transferred to Illinizas Ecological Reserve, a beautiful drive through the Andes. Here you will begin your hike to the base of Quilotoa (just under a mile). The steep trail features unbeatable views of the turquoise water-filled caldera. Once at the bottom, you are free to explore the banks of this mythical, active volcano. You can enjoy a swim in the volcanic waters or kayak (optional approximately 1 hour). The hike back, takes roughly an hour and a half to complete. Alternately, you can rent a mule and ride your way up the crater wall. In the afternoon you will head toward the Amazon, where you can explore the nightlife of Baños, and discover the flow of salsa dancing. Overnight. (Breakfast, Box Lunch, Dinner)

### DAY 3 Mountain Biking in the Llanganates National Park

This morning brings an invigorating mountain bike ride from Llanganates National Park to Pastaza River Canyon. The cloud forest is stunning, dotted with breathtaking waterfalls, Andean farmlands, and a beautiful canyon. The bike ride descends into the lush jungle offering great views of Baños, nestled in the foothills of Tungurahua volcano which has been active since 1999. A short hike (20 minutes) provides magnificent views of "Pailon Del Diablo," the second largest waterfall in Ecuador. In the afternoon, we visit Misahualli also known as "monkey town," a small village where monkey and human have learned to live in harmony. Overnight in an eco-lodge. (Breakfast)

### DAY 4 Jatunyacu River Rafting and Volcanic Hot Springs

After an hour drive to the Jatunyacu River, rafting guides will conduct a safety briefing as you prepare to embark on this class III whitewater rafting expedition. The gorgeous scenery is sure to inspire, revealing the magic of the Amazon rainforest. After the rafting adventure you head to the paradise of hummingbirds in Guango Reserve then continue to the volcanic Hot Springs resort. Overnight. (Breakfast and Box Lunch)

### DAY 5 Exploring Cayambe-Coca Eco-Reserve

Today you enjoy a 3 hour hike, exploring the enchanted thick cloud forest. Wildlife encounters are boundless and an incredible variety of birdlife are sure to be spotted. Abounding wildflowers blanket the terrain in this region offering an assortment of orchids, bromeliads and ferns. A soak in the volcanic hot springs at the Papallacta Spa Resort is a great way to spend the afternoon and in the evening we are transferred to Puenbo, a small village near the Quito airport. Overnight.



### **DAY 6 Travel Day to Galapagos**

From Quito, you will board a flight to Baltra Island. Once here, we travel to Puerto Ayora, the largest town in Galapagos. We'll discover the spectacular Pacific coast archipelago with its gleaming waters and brilliant topography, which coincidentally is also one of the locations that laid the foundation for Charles Darwin's origin of species theory. You will then take a speedboat to Isabela, the biggest island within the archipelago and the area where lively volcanic activity takes place. The island is fringed with six volcanoes, five of which are still active, making it one of the most volcanically active regions on earth. When crossing islands, be prepared for the enthralling display of whales and dolphins around you (July to October). Overnight. (Breakfast)

### **DAY 7 Hike to Sierra Negra and Snorkel in Tintoreras**

The day begins with a drive from Puerto Villamil to the trailhead. Where we will prepare our backpacks for a hike to a fledgling forestry ecosystem, built on modern geological history. We will reach the rim of the still-active Sierra Negra Crater volcano. On arrival, immerse in panoramic vistas and discover different nuances of the lava-filled crater, extending over six miles across at its widest points. If you're up to continue hiking, we continue to the mesmerizing Volcan Chico for the opportunity to indulge deeper in puffing fumaroles and colorful lava formations. Discover the geological marvels as you hike through events that have sculpted the spellbinding beauty of Galapagos Islands over centuries. In the afternoon we will visit the Tintoreras Islet, a short distance from Puerto Villamil and home to impressive wildlife. The gorgeous turquoise waters are made even more exquisite thanks to the presence of Galapagos Penguins, reef sharks, sea lions and turtles. You can also visit a mangrove-fringed beach where marine iguanas successfully reproduce. Overnight. (Breakfast, Lunch)

### **DAY 8 Lava Tunnels Snorkeling & Free Time**

We discover the remarkable lava formations shaped by the last Volcanic Island eruptions along the seashore. This mystical brilliance is a labyrinth of lava arches set amongst crystal-clear water filled with sea lions, eagle rays, reef sharks, sea turtles and much more. You'll have the opportunity to snorkel with these gorgeous creatures, while you relish the excitement of the curious Galapagos penguins playing around you. Some optional activities like kayaking in Tintoreras, snorkeling at Concha de Perla, surf lessons and biking are also available. Alternatively, you can unwind on one of the exotic white-sand beaches of Isabela Island. The giant tortoise breeding center is worth visiting thanks to the unique splendor it offers. Overnight. (Breakfast, Lunch)

### **DAY 9 Santa Cruz, Charles Darwin Research Station**

The morning begins with a speedboat ride from Isabela to Santa Cruz Island. Don't forget your photo-ready cameras to capture the jumping whales and dolphins around you (July to October). On arrival, you will check in at the hotel, with time to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to explore more of the endemic species you met on your adventure. In the afternoon a visit to El Chato in the Santa Cruz highlands, is home of the famous Galapagos tortoise. Your hike is brought to life with the enchanting scenery and paradise-like topography as you indulge in nature at its best. You'll also see other wildlife like egrets, flycatchers and pintail ducks along the way. Savor the opportunity to observe frigate birds gathering to wash salt off their feathers at the fresh water lake. Spend the evening back in Puerto Ayora, Galapagos' most populous and lively town. Overnight.(Breakfast)

### **DAY 10 Travel Day back to Quito**

After your last breakfast on the Galapagos Island, you'll be transferred to the Baltra airport to catch your flight back to the mainland. Overnight. (Breakfast)

### **DAY 11 Depart**

After breakfast you are transferred to Quito Airport for departures. (Breakfast)the Amazon rainforest. After the rafting adventure you head to the paradise of hummingbirds in Guango Reserve then continue to the volcanic Hot Springs resort. Overnight. (Breakfast & Lunch)

## ECUADOR

### Best Time to Visit

The climate of Ecuador varies by region, due to differences in altitude and proximity to the equator. The coastal lowlands to the west of Ecuador are typically warm. Coastal areas are affected by ocean currents and between January and April are hot and rainy. The weather in Quito is consistent to that of a subtropical highland climate. The city has a fairly constant cool climate due to its elevation and proximity to the equator. There are only really two obvious seasons in the city: dry and wet. The dry season (summer) runs from June to September and the wet season (winter) is from October to May.

#### Temperature

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Average High (F)	64	65	65	65	65	65
Average Low (F)	49	49	49	50	49	48

Month	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High (F)	66	67	67	67	66	65
Average Low (F)	48	48	48	49	48	49

### Entry Requirements

No visas required for Argentina. A passport valid for six months after date of entry is required.

### Vaccinations

Hepatitis A and B, Tetanus, and Typhoid immunizations are recommended for all travelers. Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

### Travel Advisories

Make two photocopies of valuables such as your passport, tickets, visas and travelers' cheques. Keep one copy with you in a separate place to the original and leave another copy with someone at home.

Be sure to inform your credit card company as well as your bank you will travel internationally into South America. This will eliminate any credit card holds for fraudulent activity.

### Currency

Carrying cash, an ATM or traveler's check card and also a credit card that can be used for cash advances in case of



emergency is advisable. The best places to exchange money are normally bureau de change, which are fast, have longer hours and often give slightly better rates than banks. Local currency is the US dollar (USD). Better hotels, lodges, and camps will accept credit cards, however it is advised to withdraw cash when visiting remote areas and villages.

### Government

Ecuador is a presidential republic.

### Religion

Religion in Ecuador is an expression of the different cultural heritages in the Ecuadorian culture including the Spanish colonization, the Native Amerindian and the Afro-Ecuadorian. There are majority Catholic and Protestant. There are also small communities of Jewish and Baha'i faith.