

Galapagos

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION



JOURNEYS travelers have been exploring the Galapagos & Ecuador since 1981. Whether you've chosen a scheduled departure or a private trip or charter for your adventure, you'll be traveling in true JOURNEYS style. That means touring on small yachts with naturalists aboard. You'll have the opportunity to learn first hand about the rich history and observe the unique lifeforms of these famous islands. More and more, people are also discovering the beauty and allure of Ecuador, the smallest of the Andean countries, with the opportunity to learn first hand about the rich culture and history while exploring four regions and two hemispheres.

Located at the equator in the Pacific Ocean, the Galapagos is made up of 13 large islands, six smaller ones, 42 yet smaller ones with names, and untold minor islets that were never officially named. It is a territory of the Republic of Ecuador. Most visitors to the Galapagos have found its haunting beauty difficult to describe. The islands are quite unlike anyplace else on earth, and while they may seem barren and forbidding at first glance, are not at all unfriendly.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR TRIP

Passports

- ❖ Passports are required of U.S. Citizens to enter Ecuador
- ❖ Must be valid for at least 6 months after your trip – if not, apply or renew immediately
- ❖ Keep a copy of the picture page of your passport in a separate place while traveling
- ❖ Carry an extra passport photo in case you need to apply for a quick replacement

Visas

- ❖ No visas required for US citizens
- ❖ T-3 tourist card will be given to you either on board the plane or on arrival. Keep it in a safe place because you will need it for any document check, and also for departure from the country
- ❖ Nationalities of other countries please inquire regarding visas

Health, Immunizations

- ❖ Some immunizations are highly recommended, but none are required for entry to Ecuador
- ❖ Recommended standard immunizations include: polio, tetanus, MMR, hepatitis A & B
- ❖ A vaccination certificate for yellow fever is required for entry, if arriving from other infected countries, including Peru, Bolivia, Panama, Columbia, Brazil
- ❖ In Ecuador's mainland, especially tropical lowland and rainforest areas, yellow fever & typhoid vaccinations are highly recommended, and malaria prevention may also be advisable
- ❖ In the Galapagos and the Andes region around Quito, yellow fever and malaria are not a problem
- ❖ SEEK INDEPENDENT MEDICAL ADVICE from your physician or local travelers health service
- ❖ For the latest recommendations for immunizations or malaria prevention contact the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia: 800-311-3435, or visit their website: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
- ❖ Many universities have immunization clinics that can assist you

Time Difference

- ❖ Ecuador is on Eastern Standard Time (-5 GMT) all year round
- ❖ The Galapagos is on Central Standard Time, but Ecuador time is observed on board the boats

Electricity

- ❖ 110/AC 60 cycle
- ❖ Plug outlets are generally the same as found in the U.S. in Ecuador & Galapagos
- ❖ Electric shavers or hair dryers can be used on most of the boats. Be sure to check with hotel or boat personnel before plugging in any electrical appliance

ARRIVAL

Entry

- ❖ You will need a minimum of one night stay in Ecuador before your cruise departs, although we recommend at least two nights to avoid missing the cruise due to potential flight delays and misconnections
- ❖ Flights to Quito tend to have more delays due to the altitude and weather conditions around the Andes, and we often recommend flying to Guayaquil instead.
- ❖ Your flight to the Galapagos is booked by our office in Ecuador. Be sure to check in one and one-half hours before your flight to the Galapagos. On all our regular Galapagos trips there will be someone at the appropriate airline ticket counter to help you and your group check in for your flight to the islands.
- ❖ Please be aware that your baggage will most likely be checked by hand both on the mainland before your departure to the islands, and in the Galapagos on arrival and departure. This is a necessary extra measure to ensure that no plants or animals are introduced to or removed from the Galapagos.



- ❖ Your Galapagos guide will meet you upon arrival in the islands. Your park tax receipt (which you receive on arrival in Galapagos) and your baggage claim will then be collected by your guide, who will assist you to the docks via one of the regular shuttle bus services (a five minute drive) where you are ferried to your boat. Lunch is served and you are off!

Customs

- ❖ Arriving in Ecuador, you are required to have an onward or return ticket and sufficient money for your stay, although American tourists are seldom asked to show evidence of either
- ❖ Anything you are bringing into the country for personal use - camera gear, snorkeling equipment, binoculars, etc. - will be readily allowed.

Departure tax

- ❖ When you depart from Ecuador, you must pay departure tax at the airport. This tax is approximately \$42.00 per person.
- ❖ This must be paid in cash, so remember to save at least this amount in cash for the end of your trip.

GETTING ALONG AS A VISITOR

Food & Restaurants

- ❖ IN ECUADOR:
- ❖ Look for a restaurant where lots of locals are eating - chances are the food will be delicious and reasonable
- ❖ Eat only foods that are thoroughly cooked, and raw fruits and vegetables that you have peeled yourself
- ❖ Drink only bottled drinks, and avoid tap water, fountain drinks and ice cubes
- ❖ Don't buy food from street vendors or stalls
- ❖ Avoid fresh salads unless the vegetables are washed with purified water, and avoid dairy products that are unpasteurized or may not have been refrigerated properly
- ❖ IN GALAPAGOS:
- ❖ All meals in Galapagos are included, and will be served on board the boat
- ❖ It will be safe to eat anything you are served on the boat, as they use only purified water for cooking.
- ❖ Bottled/purified water will be provided for your use on board at all times free of charge.
- ❖ Do not drink the tap water onboard and remember to use only purified water for brushing your teeth.
- ❖ If you disembark in a city in the Galapagos, follow the same guidelines as in Ecuador

Accommodations

- ❖ The boats generally have bunk-style twin beds in air-conditioned cabins, each with private bath and shower. Some yachts offer two lower berth twin beds, or one double bed.
- ❖ There are mattresses on the bunks and clean sheets, pillowcases, blankets and towels are provided. (They will supply separate towels for the beach.)

Money and Currency Exchange

- ❖ Currency is the U.S. Dollar
- ❖ Major credit cards and travelers checks are accepted by most hotels and restaurants. You may need to show your passport when using a credit card.
- ❖ ATM machines are available in major cities, but not all accept foreign cards
- ❖ We suggest bringing at least \$300-\$500 for items and meals not included in the cost of the trip, emergency money, and for shopping
- ❖ Be sure to have small bills, as many shops may not be able to give change for even a \$20 bill
- ❖ Although Ecuador has adopted US dollars as their currency, it is advisable to bring bills in good



condition that are newer than 2001, and not torn or marked – older bills may be refused

- ❖ The yachts will accept credit cards for your tab onboard
- ❖ Airport departure tax is about \$45, subject to change without notice, payable in cash only

Tipping

- ❖ Galapagos travelers should plan to take an extra \$150-\$250 cash per person for tips.
- ❖ Each boat has its own recommendations for tipping, which will usually be presented to you on board. The following are general guidelines.
- ❖ Suggested tips for the guides and crew onboard are \$140-\$175 per person for an 8 day/7 night cruise.
- ❖ Tips are usually pooled and collected at the end of the cruise to be divided among the guides and crew.
- ❖ Any passenger who would like to reward a particular crew member more is encouraged to do so independently directly with that person.
- ❖ Be sure to carry enough small bills for tips on the mainland.
- ❖ Tipping is not an obligation in Ecuador, but if you wish to tip in appreciation of great service, we suggest \$5-8 per person/per day for a guide, and driver \$5-6 per person/per day, depending on your group size
- ❖ If you have private airport transfers, \$2-5 per person/per transfer would be appropriate, depending on the group size and length of the transfer
- ❖ Anytime you especially appreciate someone particularly informative or helpful, an extra tip is always gratefully accepted.

Climate

- ❖ The Galapagos Islands have a surprisingly pleasant, even cool, sub-tropical climate.
- ❖ Even if it rains and clouds persist, daytime temperatures tend to be warm the year round.
- ❖ The larger islands with volcanic peaks have a variety of climatic zones. The coastal areas are arid and covered with plants adapted to desert conditions. The highland areas receive moisture almost all year round, which support lush vegetation.
- ❖ Temperatures are determined almost entirely by ocean currents, which are influenced by the trade winds.
- ❖ There are two seasons, both of which have some precipitation.
- ❖ The Galapagos get an average of ten inches of rain per year, so it is never considered "rainy."
- ❖ During the months of December to May, the cooling currents subside, temperatures rise and the climate is warm and sunny with occasional showers.
- ❖ In June, the trend begins toward cooler temperatures with moderate breezes, which continue through November. This is often referred to as the "garua" (gah-ru-ah) season, which means "mist" in Spanish.

Average Temperatures

Temperatures	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
max air temp. (°F)	84°	86°	88°	86°	82°	78°	76°	74°	76°	77°	78°	80°
min air temp. (°F)	70°	74°	74°	72°	72°	68°	66°	64°	62°	64°	66°	68°
avg. sea temp. (°F)	74°	76°	76°	76°	74°	74°	72°	66°	68°	70°	72°	74°
rainfall (inches)	1	1	2	1.5	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.25	0.5	0.25	0.5	0.5

Emergency Services

- ❖ Medical care is available for minor medical conditions, and the guides are trained in first-aid
- ❖ There is no doctor onboard most yachts (unless specified)
- ❖ Prevention of injury is always the best policy. Some shore excursions are rigorous, involving day hikes over rough trails in the hot tropical sun. You must be reasonably fit, healthy and sure-footed. If you are concerned about your ability to do any particular day hike, please consult with the trip leader before beginning the hike. The trip leader also has the right to ask any passenger to remain onboard or on the beach if he/she believes the passenger's health and/or physical ability will make any hike, climb or landing a substantial risk.
- ❖ Emergency services and care for major medical illnesses may be limited on the Galapagos Islands, but your boat is seldom more than a few hours from one of the island cities for emergency medical care



- ❖ Good medical services are available in all major cities in Ecuador, including Quito and Guayaquil
- ❖ Ecuador has many prescription drugs for sale, some of them available without prescription. Before purchasing any, determine that the date hasn't expired and the drug has been properly stored in a cool place.
- ❖ Your guide will advise you in the case of urgent medical need during your cruise or land tour

SPECIAL REMARKS

People

- ❖ You will find the people very friendly and welcoming
- ❖ It is best to ask permission before taking portrait photos. If in doubt, ask your guide

Time

- ❖ Relax and enjoy the easy-going rhythm of Latin America
- ❖ In Ecuador, do not expect everything to happen on time; remember that in some places time is not as important as it is back home, and there is often little concern for punctuality
- ❖ Despite best efforts, departures and arrivals could be a little before or after the time given. This applies particularly to aircraft movements. Operating requirements, weather and terrain sometimes present problems, and on these occasions, to ensure your safety, flight times may vary

Restroom Facilities

- ❖ It is a very good idea to carry your own small supply of toilet paper in Ecuador. In cities where there are flush toilets you will usually find a wastebasket next to the toilet - most sewage systems can't handle paper. Most bathrooms will neither look nor smell as sanitary as those you are used to.

Safety

- ❖ Observe the same precautions taken at home
- ❖ Do not flaunt a bulging wallet, always lock unattended vehicles, do not leave baggage unattended in public
- ❖ Make use of security facilities provided for valuables in your accommodation and on the boat
- ❖ In towns, the best place to carry your passport and money is in a pouch worn around the neck inside of the shirt or in a money belt around the waist
- ❖ It is highly recommended that you buy travel insurance that covers your baggage before you leave
- ❖ Don't take anything you can't afford to lose or can't replace

Shopping

- ❖ IN ECUADOR:
- ❖ Popular items include alpaca sweaters, scarves, hats and gloves, as well as jewelry, ceramics, carvings, leather and hand embroidered clothing, Panama hats, t-shirts, wall hangings and other textiles, rugs, books and music.
- ❖ Original objects of archaeological or historical artistic value may not be taken out of the country.
- ❖ Bargaining is a way of life in most of Latin America, but be aware that many prices are fixed in urban stores where prices are marked. Where bargaining is routine from street vendors and at open markets, most items have a lowest price. The idea is to come as close to it as possible.
- ❖ After asking "Cuanto cuesta?" (How much?) you make a counter offer at about 50-60 percent of the seller's first price. After the vendor laughs in your face and you make various counter offers, settle on between 70 to 80 percent of the original price. Sometimes you need to decide if the item is really worth it to you, accept the fact that you are paying more than an Ecuadorian, and enjoy your new acquisition. Remember, while it may seem like a novelty trying to bargain down as much as you can, a relatively



small savings for you usually translates into a very significant loss for the artisan

- ❖ IN GALAPAGOS:
- ❖ There is little shopping to be done on the Islands, except at the airport and in the few towns, which you may or may not visit on your trip. The yachts do not have a gift shop.
- ❖ The famous Galapagos T-shirts are generally considered to be the best value in souvenir shopping. You can also find hats, jewelry, and many other souvenirs in the Galapagos.
- ❖ Bartering is not as customary in the Galapagos as on the mainland; plan to pay the prices as marked
- ❖ Do not buy any souvenirs made from Galapagos Tortoise shell, sea lion teeth or black coral. It is illegal to use any part of these protected animals in the manufacture of such items.
- ❖ Buy any film, medications, toiletries, sunblock and other items you might need before leaving home. These items may be much more expensive and only available at the airport or in town, not on your boat.

Sea Sickness

- ❖ If you begin to feel sea sick, try to relax in that part of the boat which is most comfortable for you, whether lying down in your cabin, in a central common area, or outside in the fresh air
- ❖ Most people in the Galapagos find seasickness to be a mild problem that lasts only a short time
- ❖ The captain will adjust the cruise itinerary if conditions warrant avoidance of open water crossings for the comfort of the passengers
- ❖ If you anticipate severe sea sickness, contact your physician before you depart to discuss the issue

Snorkeling

- ❖ Bring your snorkeling gear! There are many opportunities to snorkel in the Galapagos
- ❖ The yachts usually have snorkeling gear available for all passengers, but it's best if you bring your own to be sure of the right fit and availability.
- ❖ Be sure to bring your own if your fin size is smaller than 6-7 or bigger than 10-11. Basically, you'll need a mask, snorkel and fins.
- ❖ From June to November, you may want a wet suit, also available onboard most yachts in average sizes.
- ❖ Plan on wearing a t-shirt while you're snorkeling as protection against sunburn. Sometimes the backs of the legs can get sunburned too, so you may want to bring some lightweight pants to wear underwater.
- ❖ Be sure to use waterproof sunscreen.

Equipment & Packing

- ❖ A good goal is to fit everything into a single piece of checked luggage and a carry-on daypack
- ❖ We recommend a durable, water-resistant, soft duffel bag or lightweight soft-sided suitcase as your checked luggage. Hard suitcases are not practical due to space limitations.
- ❖ A small backpack or hip-pack is ideal for carrying bottled water, camera, extra sunblock, etc, while on excursions where the terrain requires your hands to be free.
- ❖ Choose a distinctive, easily identified bag, and use a JOURNEYS luggage tag for bag identification by staff, and your name and address should be also indelibly affixed inside the luggage.
- ❖ Lightweight & light colored clothes will help keep you cooler. Also keep in mind that synthetic fabrics dry faster than natural fibers like cotton, especially in humid areas, so you can pack less if you are able to wash and dry your clothes easily.
- ❖ Casual clothing is appropriate at all times
- ❖ Some hotels may have laundry services, but you will probably need to wash out some clothes en route
- ❖ Be aware of weight limits on checked luggage and pack accordingly
- ❖ You may want to bring an extra smaller, collapsible (lockable) duffel, to leave items in a city hotel while you are on an excursion or to use on your return for souvenirs



CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT SUGGESTIONS CHECKLIST

Pre-Departure Tasks

- Obtain or renew passport
- Buy travelers checks in low denominations
- Evaluate and obtain trip cancellation, baggage and medical insurance
- Consult with physician for immunizations and prescription medicine recommendations
- Break-in primary footwear
- Make final payment to JOURNEYS at least 60 days before trip departure

Clothing

- Lightweight hiking boots or comfortable athletic or walking shoes
- "Teva" style sport sandals with Velcro strap
- Flip-flops or sandals
- Shorts
- Comfortable, lightweight pants
- Nicer pants or skirt (optional)
- Lightweight long-sleeve shirt, for warmth and/or protection from sun or mosquitoes
- T-shirts, short sleeve shirts and/or tank tops
- Sweater/Jacket and windbreaker (July-Nov, and anytime in the Andes)
- Rain gear - poncho or jacket and pants
- Sun hat or cap with wide brim
- Bandana
- Swim suits
- Socks
- Sleepwear & under clothes

Personal Items

- Sunblock (waterproof, high SPF)
- Lipbalm with SPF
- Insect repellent with DEET content
- 2 spare passport photos (in case of lost passport)
- Wrist watch and/or travel clock
- Sunglasses (with strap, case)
- Extra eyeglasses/contacts
- Money belt or pouch for valuables
- Small flashlight with extra batteries
- Copies of all important documents
- Day pack (can also serve as an airline carry-on bag)
- Camera, memory cards, film, batteries, charger
- Underwater camera (disposable kind is very handy)
- Lead bag/containers to protect film in X-ray machines
- Lightweight binoculars
- Plug adapter (if needed)
- Soft duffel with shoulder strap or durable suitcase
- Luggage tags
- Ziploc-type bags for packing shampoo or other liquids
- Stuff sacks or plastic bags for organizing inside luggage (also useful for dirty laundry)
- Thread, needles, safety pins for minor repairs
- Small packable umbrella
- Envelopes for tips



Personal First Aid Kit

- Aspirin or other pain killer
- Cold relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops
- Band-aids, gauze pads
- Antibiotics
- Prescription medicines
- Aloe gel or lotion in case of sunburn
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Antibiotic cream/ointment
- Supply of feminine hygiene items
- Motion sickness tablets
- Earplugs

Essential Items For Your Carry-On Bag

- Passport
- Domestic and international air tickets
- Travelers checks, money and credit cards
- Insurance certificates
- Address and telephone number of emergency contact
- Prescription medicines
- Extra set of underclothes
- Toiletries in small leak-proof bottles
- Camera gear, film and other valuables

Optional Items

- Binoculars
- Address book, writing paper, or journal, pen/pencil
- Small washcloth
- Wet wipes/moist towelettes and Kleenex
- Favorite snack foods (pre-packaged)
- Pictures of your house and family
- Mask, snorkel, fins, wetsuit (if applicable)
- Map
- Silica bags for moisture (protect camera equipment)
- Video camera
- Phrase book

