

VOYAGERS
ADVENTURES

GALAPAGOS

ECUADOR

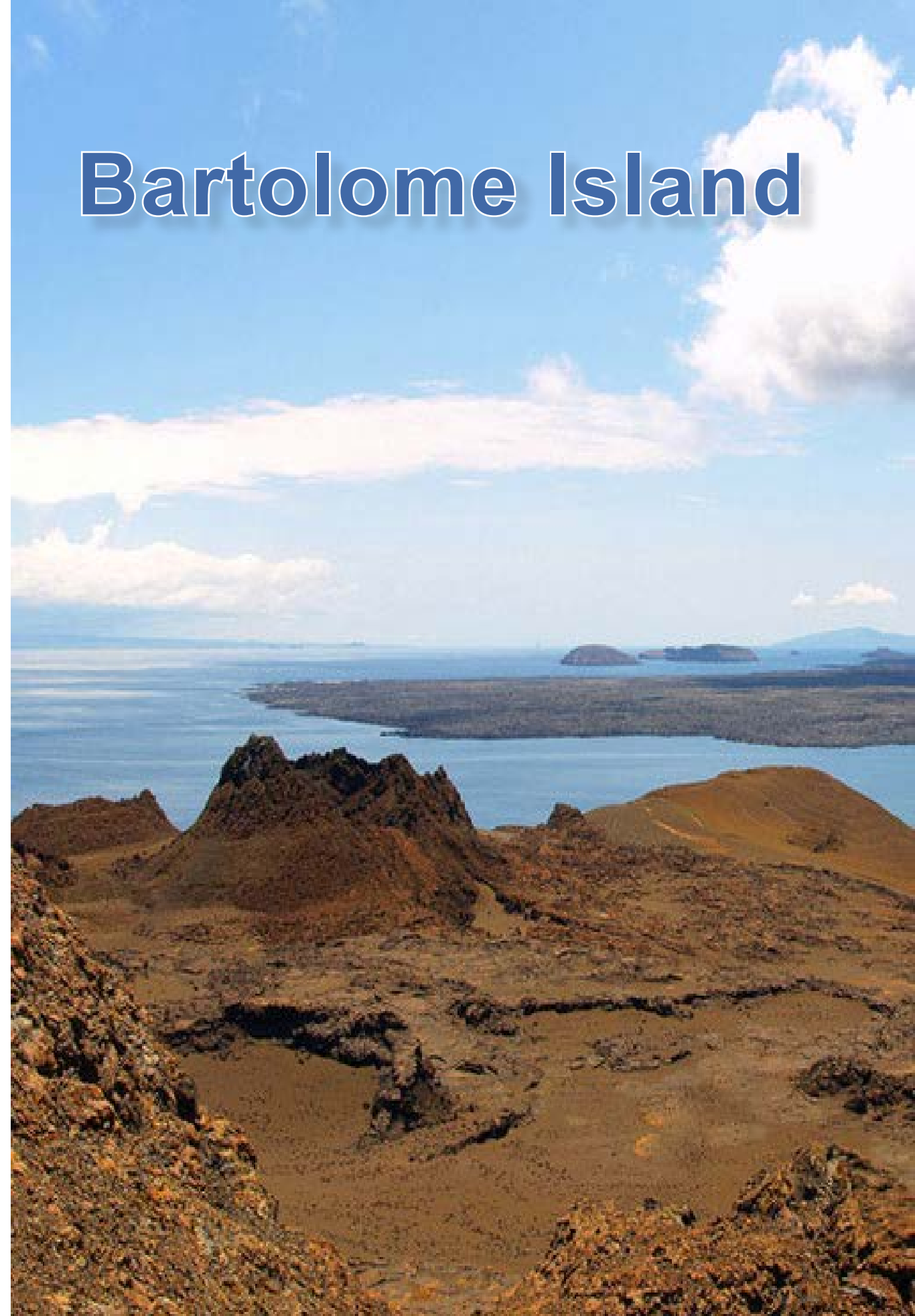
Family Travel
Planning Guide



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Bartolome Island



1. Introduction

Welcome to the Galapagos Family Travel Planning Guide, your official travel companion to the Galapagos Islands and its breath-taking sights. Located at the Pacific, Galapagos is comprised of 19 islands with a vast marine and wildlife reserve which serves as the natural habitat of numerous endangered species. It is a province of Ecuador, a South American country.

This travel planning guide is designed to give you a clear picture of the Galapagos, including its geographical structure, maps, key cities, and favorite tourist spots. Find out why Galapagos is the leading destination for family vacations and tours worldwide.

We've also included the factsheet for Ecuador and its governance over Galapagos, along with useful contact information to authorized agencies that you can approach once you get to the islands. This travel guide also includes a detailed map of Galapagos' main wildlife attractions, so you'd have an idea of what you can request from Voyagers.

But that's not all—we've made things easier for you by providing a list of the best hotels and yachts you can avail of during your island cruise. If you have kids, don't worry; we've also included the best accommodations and restaurants for families who will be bringing children with them.

If this is your first time to travel overseas, check out our travel checklist in the last few sections for the things you need to bring for your trip.

PLUS: You can book a family island trip to Galapagos almost immediately after you finish reading this guide. It contains step-by-step instructions on how to book with us, along with important links to booking and contact forms on our site!

Who we are: Voyagers Travel Galapagos is a regular tour operator which specializes in organizing first-class tours to the Galapagos Islands. We take pride in the quality of our service, especially for families who are looking forward to having a great vacation in an exotic place like no other.

You can find out more about us and our scheduled trips by visiting our website at: www.galapagoscruise.com.ec.



2. Basic information about Galapagos Islands and Ecuador

Not many people know much about Galapagos Islands, except perhaps that it is the home of the famous and critically endangered Galapagos Tortoise. You may not even know that it is actually only a province of Ecuador and not a separate nation.

This section of the travel guide will tell you all the basic information, facts and figures that you probably would like to know about Galapagos before you consider booking



Territorial map of Ecuador. The Galapagos Islands are located 1,000 km from the mainland's coastlin

Geography

Galapagos is an archipelago comprised of 19 islands and located 1,000 km away from the coastline of Ecuador. It sits comfortably in a marine area where three ocean currents meet, which accounts for its vast marine ecosystem (one of the largest in the world today). There is also considerable seismic and volcanic activity in the islands.



Galapagos Islands Map

The relative isolation of Galapagos has made it one of the most biologically diverse wildlife reserves in the entire world. It is home to unusual plant and animal life, including giant tortoises, marine iguanas, endemic trees and gigantic cacti, among others. In fact, the islands' vast biodiversity contributed largely to Charles Darwin's initial research about evolution and natural selection, way back in 1835.

This is why Galapagos is a popular itinerary for scientists and biologists—because it is unrivaled in terms of biodiversity and geological activity.

3. Island Composition



A detailed map of Galapagos with the names of its islands

The islands which make up Galapagos are as follows:

A. Baltra (South Seymour) –When you go on tour to Galapagos, this might be the first island you will ever set foot on (the other is San Cristobal). It is located at the center of Galapagos. You will take a bus from Baltra headed either to the docks to board your cruiser or towards another island, if you decide to find lodgings in the main islands. This is an arid island which houses mostly salt bushes and cacti. It is one of the two islands which have airports, and the only one with the facilities to handle planes overnight. It is home to the Baltra Airport, which is also known as Seymour Airport. It has been renovated several years ago. It now has restaurants and shops for tourists. A snack bar is also available in the area. It has been serving the Galapagos Islands since the Second World War. The airport is also quite people-friendly; in this airport, you are likely to be treated as a VIP. There is also Wi-Fi access in the whole Airport.

B. Bartolome – This is one of the younger islands of Galapagos and also has active volcanic activity. Located east of Santiago Island, Bartolome (also known as Bartholomew) is named after a lieutenant who was aboard the HMS Beagle (the navy ship which docked in Galapagos in 1835), Sir Bartholomew James Sullivan. Bartolome Island is home to several endemic species, including the Galapagos penguin and the green sea turtle.



C. Darwin – Named after Charles Darwin, this island is home to a lot of exotic species, which is why it is a prime destination for tourists who visit the islands to experience its amazing diversity first-hand. It is also known as Culpepper Island (as shown on the map above).

D. Española – This Island is named in honor of Spain, although it is also known as Hood Island, named after Viscount Samuel Hood. It's located at the southernmost part of the archipelago. It's also the oldest island of Galapagos at 3.5 million years old. Perhaps because it is relatively isolated from the rest of Galapagos, Española also houses distinctive species of lizards, tortoises, and mockingbirds. It is also the only nesting place of the waved albatross. Española also offers two main tourist spots, the Gardner Bay beach and snorkeling site, and the Punta Suarez, where you can find a lot of endemic wildlife.



E. Fernandina (also known as Narborough) – This island is named after King Ferdinand II of Aragon, the monarch who sponsored Columbus's journey. It is the youngest island of Galapagos, located at the west-most part of the archipelago. It has a land area of 642 square kilometers, and currently has active volcanic and geological activity since 2005.

F. Floreana (Santa Maria/Charles) – an island named after the first president of Ecuador (Juan Jose Flores), who was in power when Ecuador acquired the Galapagos Islands as one of its territories. Its other name, Santa Maria, comes from one of the ships of Columbus. Floreana is said to be one of the earliest islands to have served as a home for humans. The Post Office Bay is located at this island, which served as a post office as early as the 19th century, for mail that will be delivered by home-bound ships (mostly to Europe and the U.S.). This island also has underwater volcanic cones and corals.



G. Genovesa – This Island is named after the province of Genoa in Italy, although it is also called Tower Island and “the bird island” because it has a lot of endemic species of birds. It only has 14 square kilometers of land area, but it’s a popular spot for tourists who enjoy bird-watching; it also has a sizable forest named Palo Santo.

H. Isabela (Albemarle) – Named after Queen Isabela, this island is the largest of all Galapagos Islands, with 4,640 square kilometers of land area. Shaped like a seahorse, Isabela Island was formed out of six large volcanoes. Isabela also houses the Puerto Villamil, one of the biggest human settlements of Galapagos. Isabela is also the home of a lot of endemic species, including the Galapagos tortoise.



I. Marchena – with a land area of 130 square kilometers, Marchena Island (also known as Bindloe) is inhabited by Galapagos hawks, the Marchena lava lizard, and sea lions.

K. Pinta – This island is named after one of the caravels (ships) of the expedition, and has a total land area of 60 square kilometers. Pinta is best known for having been the home island of the last Pinta tortoise, which died in 2012. Pinta Island also is the habitat of sea lions, tortoises, marine iguanas, and dolphins, among other species.



L. Pinzon (Duncan) – The Pinzon Island is named after two brothers who have captained two ships (caravels) in the Columbus expedition. It has a land area of 18 square kilometers.

M. Rabida (also known as Jervis) – Rabida was named after the convent where Columbus left his son after he left for his voyage. This Island only has 4.9 square kilometers of land area. Rabida lava contains a high amount of iron, which gives the land of this island a distinct red color. This island is inhabited by different species of birds, including pelicans, pintail ducks, and finches. Flamingos also used to flock on Rabida, but have long since deserted the island due to lack of food.



N. San Cristobal (Chatham) – San Cristobal is named after St. Christopher, the patron saint of sea voyagers, but its other name, Chatham Island, comes from the name of an English earl. This island's area is 558 square kilometers, and it was the first island Charles Darwin visited in 1835. San Cristobal is rich not only in wildlife but also abundant in vegetation and trees. It is also where Laguna El Junco (the largest lake of Galapagos) is located. The capital of the province, Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, can also be found here. As one of the main islands of Galapagos, San Cristobal is the only other island which has an airport, along with Baltra.

O. Santa Cruz (Indefatigable) – The name of this island comes from the Spanish translation of the holy cross, while its other name, Indefatigable, comes from the name of the British HMS Indefatigable vessel. With an area of 986 square kilometers, Santa Cruz is the island which has the largest number of human population in the entire archipelago. The town of Puerto Ayora is found here, as are the Galapagos National Park Service (GNPS) and the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS).



P. Santa Fe (Barrington) – Santa Fe Island is named after a Spanish city with the same name, and only has an area of 24 square kilometers. Santa Fe has a cacti forest (the largest in the entire Galapagos), and also hosts a lot of bird species (gulls and tropic birds), land iguanas, and lava lizards.

Q. Santiago (James/San Salvador) – This island goes by many names, including the Spanish equivalent for Saint James, and San Salvador, after the first island that Columbus discovered in the Caribbean. At 585 square kilometers, Santiago is inhabited mostly by endemic marine species. Humans introduced domesticated animals including pigs and goats on the island, harming most of the endemic species, but they have been completely eradicated from Santiago in 2006.



R. Wolf (Wenman) – Wolf Island's name is derived from Theodor Wolf, a German geologist. This island only has 1.3 square kilometers in terms of land area, and best known for the blood-drinking vampire finch, along with other endemic species of frigate birds, sharks, boobies, gulls, dolphins, and whales.

Other Islands:

a) Daphne Major – this is a small, inaccessible island located west of Baltra and north of Santa Cruz Islands.



b) South Plaza (Plaza Sur) – named after General Leonidas Plaza (a former Ecuadorian president), this island is only 0.13 square kilometers big, and is inhabited by iguanas, tropic birds and sea gulls. It also has a rich cacti and Sesuvium vegetation.



c) Nameless Islet – a scuba diving site.

4. Galapagos Islands Facts and Figures

OFFICIAL NAME: Galapagos Islands; Archipelago de Colon

NAME ORIGIN: The archipelago was named after the endemic tortoise which inhabits the islands

COUNTRY: Ecuador

CAPITAL: Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, with an estimated population of 4,214 as of 2010

POPULATION ESTIMATE (AS OF 2010): 25,000

OFFICIAL CURRENCY: USD

TOTAL LAND AREA: 45,000 square km.

WEATHER: Tropical with two seasons — warm and wet during December to May and cool and dry from June to December

ANNUAL RAINFALL: 60 to 100 mm

TEMPERATURE: 21 to 29 degrees Celsius (69 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit)

CLIMATE: dependent on ocean currents, but mostly tropical and arid for some islands

LARGEST ISLANDS (ACCORDING TO POPULATION):

- Santa Cruz
- San Cristobal
- Isabela
- Floreana
- Santiago
- Baltra
- Española
- Fernandina
- Genovesa

RELIGION: Roman Catholic, others

LANGUAGES: Spanish, English



Brief History

Located in the Pacific Ocean, the Galapagos Islands are on the west coast of South America. The archipelago is 1,000 km. away from Ecuador, and was first discovered accidentally on March 10, 1535. Fray Tomas de Berlanga stumbled upon the islands during a voyage going to Peru.

Not much is known about the earlier history of the islands, although some historians think that the islands could have been visited by Incans. However, no proof exists to back these claims, and they remain theories to date.

The Islands were first plotted on a map in 1570 by Abraham Ortelius. He marked the archipelago as “Isolas de Galapagos,” which translates to “Islands of the Tortoises.” The given name was based on sailor accounts of seeing the gigantic tortoises which inhabit the islands.

During the 17th century, Galapagos became a renowned hideout of British ships and settlements because it remained uninhabited and mysterious world. It didn't help that a heavy fog shrouded the islands at certain times of the year. Some Spanish voyagers even said that Galapagos was only comprised of shadows and weren't really islands.



On the 18th century, the islands became a regular route for British and American whalers as they attempted to setup a new center for trade and commerce in the Pacific. By 1800, the “post office” for whalers was established in Floreana. It still exists at present and still fully functional—tourists can leave mail for their home countries, which will be sent along with homebound ships.

An Irish crew of a British ship named Patrick Watkins was sent ashore in 1807 at Floreana Island. There are varied accounts of his entire stay in Galapagos and how he left, but he eventually managed to reach Ecuador.

It was nearly three decades after (in 1832) that a formal human settlement was formed in the Islands. It was also the year when Ecuador officially acquired Galapagos as one of its territories and provinces.

The early settlers of Galapagos created small farming communities on the islands of Floreana and Santa Cruz. They cultivated grains and vegetables for domestic consumption, but they also supplied to ships that docked on the islands.



Charles Darwin visited Galapagos in 1835, as part of his work as a naturalist. It was a five-year journey aboard the H.M.S. Beagle. Darwin's research and discoveries on Galapagos became the grounding which strengthened the theory of adaptation of plants and animals according to their environment.

The name Archipelago de Colon (translates as “Columbus's Archipelago”) is a fairly new name given to Galapagos by Ecuador. It was declared official in the early 1900s in honor of Christopher Columbus.

Because of the vast wildlife found in Galapagos, the Ecuadorian government took measures to protect the ecological system of the archipelago in 1934. It was later declared as a national park and presently remains under the administration of the Ecuadorian National Park Service.

In 1964, the CDRS (Charles Darwin Research Service) was established on Santa Cruz Island, marking a significant change in the function of Galapagos Islands as a central site for tourism and further scientific study.

Presently, there remains a continuous stream not only of visitors and tourists, but also numerous scientific expeditions headed to Galapagos. These expeditions are designed to collect information regarding the Galapagos ecosystems and how humans can work to preserve them for the next century and beyond, for the benefit of future generations.



Economy

Since Galapagos is merely a province of Ecuador, substantial information about its economy independent of Ecuador isn't always available. The latest estimates come from 2005 to 2006, wherein Galapagos Islands generated an income of \$185.8 million. Based on figures, the Galapagos economy can be broken into the following major contributors:

1. Tourism and eco-tourism. As a national reserve park, Galapagos generates most of its income from tourism, which comprises a major part of its economy at 53 per cent. An estimated 180,000 tourists visit Galapagos annually.

2. Public sector. Public sector jobs make up 38 percent of the Galapagos economy. The Ecuadorian government explains that this expansion has been driven by the oil industry of Ecuador and continues to grow as the local population of the island grows.

3. Non-profit. Six percent of the economy of Galapagos is funded solely by non-profit organizations, in the name of conservation and scientific studies.

4. Fishing. This is a dwindling portion of the economy, making up only three percent in 2006. The rise of fishing as a source of income in the early to mid-2000s came from the international demand for spiny lobsters and sea cucumbers (including white fish as well), both of which are endemic on the islands. However, the population of these "delicacies" has since dwindled, so there might not be a significant growth for this sector of the Galapagos economy.

5. Agriculture. The agriculture sector has the smallest share of the Galapagos economy. Although it is necessary to make Galapagos independent from imported produce, most farms were eventually abandoned as farmers and farm owners sought to find a more lucrative income source in the tourism sector.



Politics and Territory

Galapagos adheres to the Ecuadorian political system, which is a representative democratic republic. It is governed as a province of Ecuador, and its provincial capital is Puerto Baquerizo Moreno located at San Cristobal Island. Galapagos is also administratively divided into three cantons (a smaller political territory under a province), namely:

1. Isabela, which has 5,367 square kilometers of land area and covers the islands of Isabela, Darwin, Wolf, and Fernandina. The capital of this canton is Puerto Villamil.

2. San Cristobal, which houses the provincial capital of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, and only has 849 square kilometers in terms of land area. The canton of San Cristobal administers over the islands of San Cristobal, Genovesa, Santa Fe, Española, and Floreana.

3. Santa Cruz is the canton which rules over the rest of the Galapagos Islands (Santa Cruz, Baltra, North Seymour, Marchena, Bartolome, Rabida, Pinta, Santiago, and Pinzon). This canton only covers 1,794 square kilometers of total land area (smaller than Isabela).

With a marine reserve of 130,000 square kilometers, Galapagos is considered the second largest protected marine reservoir in the entire world, second only to the Great Barrier Reef found in Australia.



San Cristobal



Isabela



Santa Cruz

Demographics

The Galapagos Islands do not have an indigenous population. Most of its residents are Ecuadorian Mestizos, descendants from Native Americans and Spanish colonists. There are also Spanish people, as well as descendants of European and American people who arrived in Galapagos early in the 1900s. Galapagos maintains a relatively low population, although experts worry that the population growth rate has spiked up in recent years.



Education

Education in Galapagos remains weak, with local teachers trained mostly on traditional pedagogy, and the islands are lagging behind in terms of international educational standards. However, educational reform has already been initiated by concerned parents as well as the government of Ecuador. Several non-profit groups had also taken action about improving the quality of education in the islands. There have been various changes implemented, including the integration of environmental conservation themes into the curriculum.



Culture and Religion

Since Galapagos is merely a province of Ecuador, substantial inGalapagos 'culture is a hodgepodge of cultures from people from the coast, highland, Amazonian regions of Ecuador, as well as second World War German refugees and their Ecuadorian descendants, and some late European immigrants. Galapagos is predominantly Roman Catholic. The local culture and customs are still heavily influenced by the dominant religion of the islands. If you are going to visit the islands, here are just some of the Ecuadorian customs and cultural beliefs you can expect to see:

1. Clothing is relatively varied since Galapagos became a tourist spot as well as a center for scientific study. The locals respect the way visitors dress, as long as you respect their local customs as well. However, understand that not all locals might share this view, so to be on the safe side, bring some respectable attire for your trip.
2. The people of Galapagos are inherently polite and hospitable, as long as you exhibit the same characteristics. Avoid being overly aggressive, critical, or direct since it may be construed as rudeness. Facial expressions are open for interpretation, so strive to be patient when you are dealing with locals.
3. Shaking hands is an important custom for the people of Galapagos—it is a sign of cordiality especially for new acquaintances. Other basic greetings you should learn include: “buenos dias” for good morning, “buenos tardes” for good afternoon, and “buenos noches” for good evening. “Disculpas” is the Spanish for excuse me, and “con permiso” is used to ask for permission.

4. Scientists have become an ingrained part of the local culture, since the islands have become a host for numerous scientific research and conservation studies.

5. You can tell where a local comes from according to the way he speaks. People who hail from the highland areas of Ecuador speak slowly with a calm tone, while people who originate from the coastline tend to speak faster, with a loud tone.

6. The large numbers of tourists who visit Galapagos annually have also contributed to some changes in the local culture.

7. In Galapagos, women are expected to take charge of caring for the children and do household chores, while most men are either employed in the tourism sector or as fishermen.

8. Galapagos locals enjoy soccer, especially since Ecuador is an active participant in World Cup events related to this sport. There is also another local sport, known as ecuavolley, which is played like a volleyball game but uses a soccer ball instead.

9. Environmental awareness has also become part of the local culture, since the ecological systems of Galapagos are very fragile. Ironically, tourism posts the highest risk for endemic species, since foreigners might smuggle alien species into the islands.

The local government is very strict when it comes to the introduction of foreign species into the island, and a thorough search is commonly done for tourists to ensure that no alien species can pass through.



Conservation issues

Environmental conservation is a key concern when it comes to the Galapagos Islands. As the province relies mainly on eco-tourism for its primary income source, protecting the endemic species and bio-diverse ecologies is the top priority for the local government.

Unfortunately, Galapagos is currently on the list of UNESCO's World Heritage in Danger, mainly because the endemic species are in frequent danger of becoming exposed to alien, possibly invasive species, as well as exploitation and other causes like pollution and climate change. A clear example would be the sea cucumbers which became an exotic delicacy traded in by the locals.

Galapagos locals always welcome tourists and visitors, but be reminded that to help conserve the natural beauty of the islands, you should adhere to policies about bringing foreign species, pollution or littering, and trying to collect endemic species or vegetation as "souvenirs". The increased human activity on the island has already tipped the balance against the survival of the island ecosystems, and we are doing our best to preserve them, no matter what.

Islas Galápagos, cuna de especies únicas

Científicos descubren una especie única de iguanas terrestres que no fue vista por Charles Darwin en 1835

Iguana rosada

- ▶ Perteneció al género de las *Conolophus*
- ▶ De color rosado con manchas negras.
- ▶ La cresta no termina en puntas.

Hallada en la zona del volcán Wolf



1707 Volcán Wolf



1,80 m

Especies endémicas

- Tortuga gigante
- Pinzones
- Pingüino de Galápagos

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VOYAGERS





Traveling to Galapagos

The Galapagos Islands are currently reachable by plane from mainland Ecuador, although the Seymour airport located on Baltra Island can accommodate private flights.

Before 1969, only ships (private or chartered) can reach the islands. Now, some 85 private cruise ships, boats, and yachts are allowed to operate within the archipelago to provide accommodations for tourists and guests. The local government has limited the capacity of these vessels to an average range of only 16 to 100 passengers.

Only recently, in 2006, has the Baltra Island allowed overnight camping and stay on the beaches (for up to three nights only for most of the beaches). The other inhabited islands soon followed, allowing recreational use of their beaches.

You can find most of the island hotels on Floreana, Isabela, San Cristobal, and Santa Cruz, as well as most restaurants. Most visitors prefer hotel accommodations and day tours via boats; however, you might find this option uncomfortable since economy tours are always swamped and full.

Cruise ships and yacht accommodations are still the best option if you want a full-blown tour of the Galapagos with maximum comfort and enjoyment. These vessels can take you to all the famous tourist spots of the islands, including the complex ecosystems and diverse wildlife which can only be found on certain islands.

In total, you can tour 116 tourist spots in the Galapagos Islands, with 54 land-based sites and 62 sites for people who wish to snorkel or scuba-dive. All tours are administered by licensed travel guides.



5. Ecuador: Country Information Sheet

The Galapagos Islands is inevitably tied to the country of Ecuador in terms of political and economic policies, culture, and other important aspects. Ecuadorian government always has a say in the goings-on within the islands, especially for the tourism sector. As such, we present you with a basic information sheet about everything you might need to know about Ecuador and Ecuadorian policies, customs, beliefs, and general culture.



The flag of Ecuador

Ecuador Facts and Figures

Official Name: Republic of Ecuador; Republica Del Ecuador

Name origin: "Ecuador" is the Spanish term for the equator, where the republic is approximately located.

Capital: Quito

Major city: Guayaquil

Land Area: 283,561 square kilometers

Geographical Location: Shares northern borders with Colombia, Peru on the southeast, and the Pacific Ocean on the west.

Official Language: Spanish, with local ethnic languages including Kichwa and Shuar

Population estimate (as of 2011): 15,223,680

Official currency: USD

Political system: unitary presidential constitutional republic; legislature is national assembly

Weather: Tropical with two seasons — warm and wet during December to May and cool and dry from June to December

Annual rainfall: 60 to 100 mm

Temperature: 21 to 29 degrees Celsius (69 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit)

Climate: varies according to altitude—coastal areas experience humid subtropical climate, while lowlands and the Amazon have a rainforest climate. In the Pacific coast, tropical climate can be observed, while the highlands have a temperate/dry climate. Because the country is located near the equator, the length of day and night almost doesn't change for the entire year. Sunrise and sunset always occurs at approximately 6:00 am and 6:00 pm respectively.

Religion: Mostly Roman Catholic

Languages: Spanish, English, Kichwa, Shuar

Independence: declaration was on August 10, 1809, actual independence from Spain was on May 24, 1822; independence from Gran Colombia is May 13, 1830; recognized as a sovereign state on February 16, 1830

Nominal GDP: US\$84.53 billion

Nominal GDP Per Capita: US\$5,310



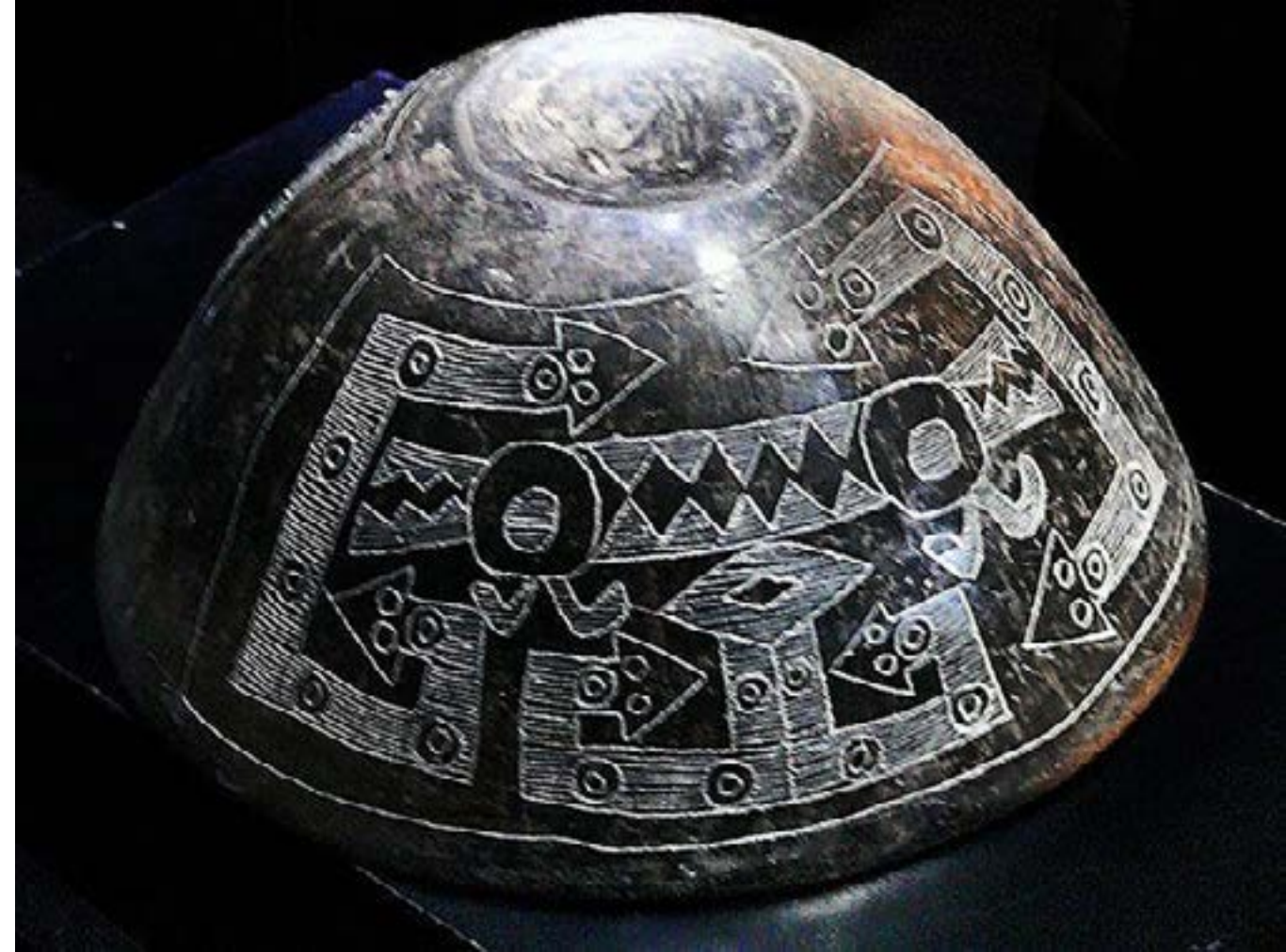
Brief History

Ecuatorian history can be divided into several eras, the first of which is the era before the Incas arrived on the territory. At the time, the land was occupied by Native American families, and soon different ethnicities emerged with varied cultures and languages.

Some of these natives came from Central America via rafts, while others reached Ecuador from the jungles of Amazon. Still others came from the northern part of the continent, while others come from the south near the Andes River.

Although comprised of different ethnic groups, the early Ecuadorian natives developed a similarity in their cultures, most likely caused by the similarities in their environment. People who lived along the coastline had a mixed culture of fishing and hunting-gathering, while those who lived in the highland parts (near the Andes) developed agriculture. The Amazon people lived mostly through hunting-gathering, with their nomadic existence.

As time passed, these various groups interacted with each other, and soon developed larger communities and tribes with similar languages and cultures.



Numerous civilizations found their roots in Ecuador, including Valdivia and Machalilla—all of which had their own distinct architecture, art, and even religion.

Near the Andes, tribes also began to cooperate with each other, thus forming the first agricultural villages (and eventually nations) in the area where Ecuador now stands. After numerous wars and marriage-based alliances, these nations formed several confederations. Eventually, a big chunk of the region formed the Shyris, a confederation which organized the barter between the neighboring regions. The Shyris was led by the Duchicela blood line.



The next era in Ecuadorian history is the arrival of the Incas who colonized the confederations and eventually absorbed them into the Inca Empire. It took two generations of rulers to bring down the natives to heel. Rebellious confederations were sent to far away territories (modern-day Peru, Argentina, and Bolivia). Loyal Inca subjects were also sent in to circumvent any possible rebellion of the confederations.

In 1463, highland Ecuador officially went under control of the Incas. However, the scenario was different for the coastal regions and Amazonian communities, where the natives were hostile and even used guerilla tactics to fight the Incas.

As such, this part of Ecuador remained autonomous from foreign rule, until the Spanish arrived. Only two groups were successful in resisting both Inca and Spanish occupation, namely the Amazonians and the Cayapas tribe from Coastal Ecuador. These two groups also managed to preserve their original culture and language until today.

The Inca Empire faced a civil war prior the arrival of the Spanish, following the death of Emperor Huayna Capac and his heir Ninan Cuchi from a disease which originated from Europe. The deaths of the two monarchs divided the empire into two factions: the northern faction, led by Atahualpa, and the other, by Huascar.

Huayna Cupac is said to have deeded the territory of modern-day Ecuador to Atahualpa, who should take helm at Quito, while Huascar should have ruled from Cuzco. However, Huascar did not heed Huayna Cupac's will because it wasn't made in the traditional Inca way, wherein heirs are named through priests. Huascar wanted to take over the entire Inca Empire, and ordered his brother Atahualpa to recognize him as the new ruler of the empire and to pay homage to him.



Atahualpa ignored his brother's demands, which sparked the civil war within the Inca Empire. He marched down to Cuzco with his father's veteran soldiers, captured Huascar, and massacred the remaining royal family who was related to Huascar.

Soon after the war ended, a Spanish group stumbled upon the area, headed by Francisco Pizarro. They marched over Andes and eventually reached Cajamarca, where they were interviewed by Atahualpa. A priest who was part of the group tried to convince the new Inca to embrace Catholicism and become a vassal for Spain.

The arrogance of the invaders enraged Atahualpa, and he threw the Bible to the ground—prompting the attack and eventual massacre of Atahualpa's escorts. They captured and eventually executed Atahualpa as well. His death marked the end of the Inca Empire and the start of the Spanish colonization.

The first few decades of Spanish colonization in Ecuador and its neighboring territories were riddled with numerous deaths, caused mainly by infectious diseases brought by the European invaders. The natives were also enslaved under the "Spanish encomienda" and forced labor system, and in 1563 Quito became the center of a Spanish administrative district called Real Audiencia.

Spanish colonization of Ecuador lasted for almost 300 years, until in 1809 the natives in Quito started to clamor for independence, as led by Juan Pío Montúfar, Salinas, Quiroga, and a bishop named Cuero y Caicedo. In modern times, Quito's initiative is actually perceived as a crucial role in gaining the independence of Ecuador, although Guayaquil was the first Ecuadorian city to have gained independence from Spanish rule in October 1820.

Two years later, the entire nation of Ecuador was liberated following the defeat of the Spanish forces at the historic Battle of Pichincha. Ecuador immediately joined the Republic of Gran Colombia after they emerged victorious from the Spanish. Colombia and Venezuela are also both part of Gran Colombia. Gran Colombia stood for eight years until Ecuador bowed out in 1830 and declared independence from the other nations under it.

However, independence wasn't easy for Ecuador especially during the first century, which was marked with political instability and a quick change of political figureheads. The first president Juan José Flores was ousted from office, and his regime was closely followed by authoritarians. In 1860, Gabriel García Moreno united Ecuador once more (he had the support of the Church behind him).



Juan Jose Flores



During the 19th century, the boom in cocoa demand led the Ecuadorian economy to become tied to exporting commodities. Natives from the highlands migrated to the coastline where the agricultural frontier of Ecuador was located at the time. Ecuador also outlawed slavery in 1851, freeing the black slaves in the country.

Although religion still plays an important role in modern-day Ecuadorian culture, the influence of the Church was already considerably lessened, thanks to the Liberal Revolution of 1895, which gained power until the military "revolution" took over in 1925. Subsequently, the next two decades were also politically unstable for Ecuador, wherein populist politics began to take root.

There have also been several disputes regarding the territories of Ecuador, especially after the nation separated from Gran Colombia in 1830. The first president originally claimed the land which came with the Real Audiencia of Quito. However, after losing a war versus Colombia (then called New Granada) Juan José Flores signed a treaty which reduced the territories of Ecuador.

Because of its turbulent and unstable political leadership, Ecuador lost most of its controversial territorial claims to its neighbors, including Colombia (1823 and 1916), Peru (1942), and Brazil (1904). The Galapagos Islands were one of the few disputed claims won by Ecuador (Peru also sought to claim the archipelago).

Military regimes followed during the 1970s for Ecuadorian politics, which lasted for less than a decade. Civil society groups called for a democratic system with elections and thus, a plan was implemented to create a new constitutional system led by a democratically-elected president. In 1979, elections were held once more, and Jaime Roldos Aguilera was declared president, with over a million votes.

To date, Ecuador remains a democratic republic with a fairly peaceful political atmosphere. The people welcome tourists openly, especially those who stop by the mainland on their way to Galapagos. Ecuadorians are proud of their heritage, and take great care to be hospitable to tourists in general, so you won't encounter any problems in case you wish to visit the mainlands shortly along with your tour of the Galapagos Islands.



Jaime Roldos



Politics and Government

Ecuadorian history can be divided into several eras, the first of which is the The Ecuadorian national government is divided into five major functions, namely:

1. Executive

The executive function lies with a democratically-elected President, who will serve office for four years. The president resides in the Palacio de Carondelet located in Quito, the capital of the republic. A vice-president is also elected to assist the president for the executive function. This branch of the government is responsible for making decisions regarding foreign policy, and also for making appointments for the official Chancellor of the Republic, along with other administrative positions including:

- Ambassadors
- National Coordinators
- Ministers (for 25 ministries)
- Public Servants
- Ministers of State
- Consuls

The President also exercises full control and authority over the military and police force of the government.



2. Legislative

The Ecuadorian legislation is embodied by the National Assembly, which is comprised of 130 duly-elected assemblymen who also serve for a four-year term. Located in the Legislative Palace in Quito, the National Assembly has 10 committees and 15 national constituency elected assemblies.

3. Judiciary

Ecuador's judiciary system is comprised of the Judicial Council (which functions as the main judicial body), the National Court of Justice (with 21 judges), followed by provincial courts and tribunals. Ethnic groups also have special justice systems in accordance to their respective cultures and beliefs.



4. Electoral

The electoral function occurs only every four years, wherein elections are organized and controlled. The National Electoral Council is the main office which takes charge of this function, and is made up of seven members from major political parties which garnered the most votes in previous elections.



5. Transparency and social control

This branch aims to empower the people by promoting government transparency and anti-corruption schemes. This function often involves the participation of Ecuadorian citizens as a check-and-balance for the government.



Foreign Affairs

Ecuador is generally a peaceful country which believes in peaceful negotiations and multilateral approach to foreign affairs. The country is an approved member of the United Nations, along with many other regional groups within South America.



Territorial Divisions

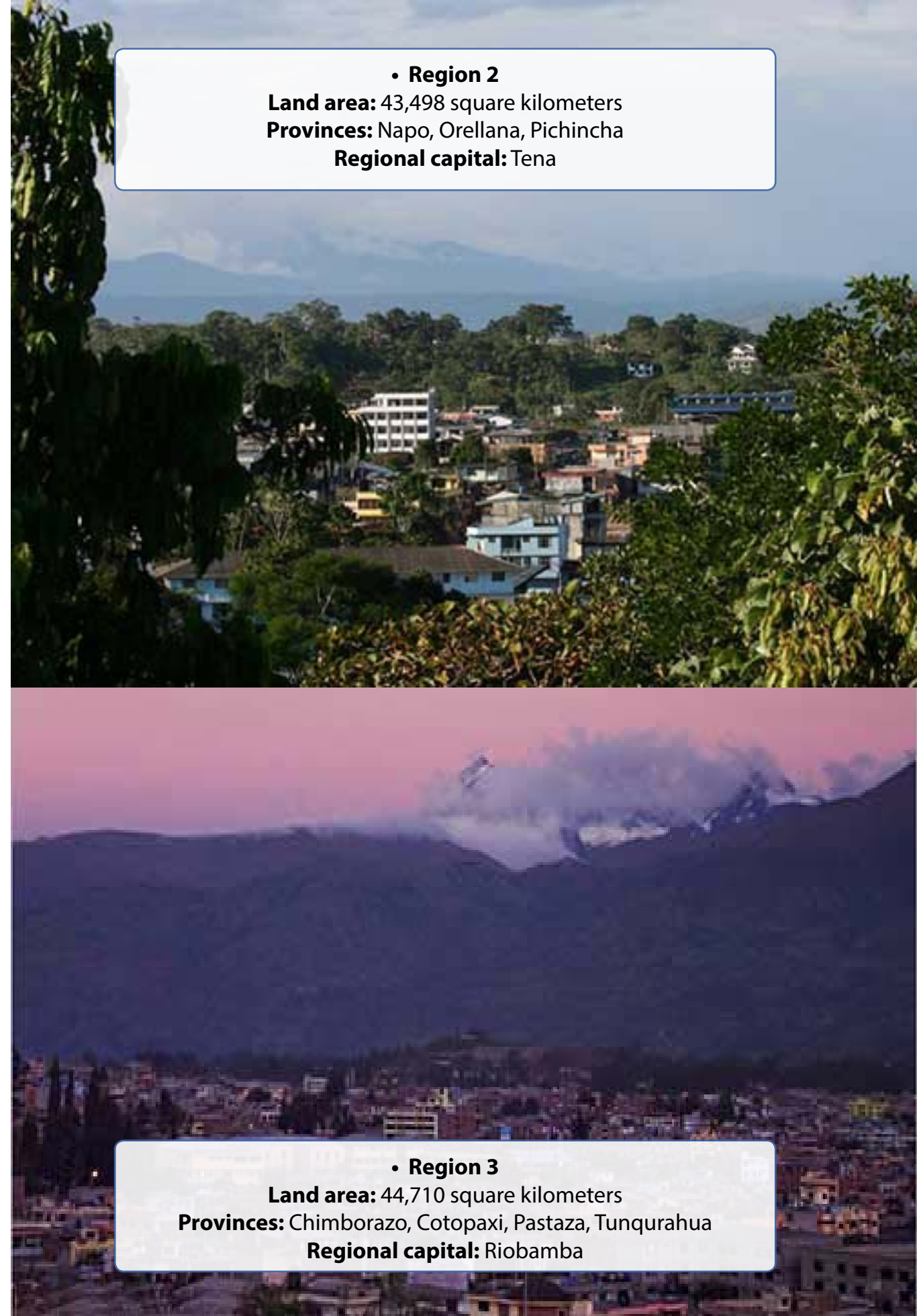
Ecuator has seven main regions, which is sub-divided into 24 provinces (including Galapagos). Each province has an administrative capital, and provinces are divided further into cantons. The smallest governmental unit are parishes or parroquias.

The seven regions of Ecuador are as follows:



- **Region 1**

Land area: 42,126 square kilometers
Provinces: Carchi, Sucumbios, Esmeraldas, Imbabura
Regional capital: Ibarra



- **Region 2**

Land area: 43,498 square kilometers
Provinces: Napo, Orellana, Pichincha
Regional capital: Tena

- **Region 3**

Land area: 44,710 square kilometers
Provinces: Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Pastaza, Tunqurahua
Regional capital: Riobamba

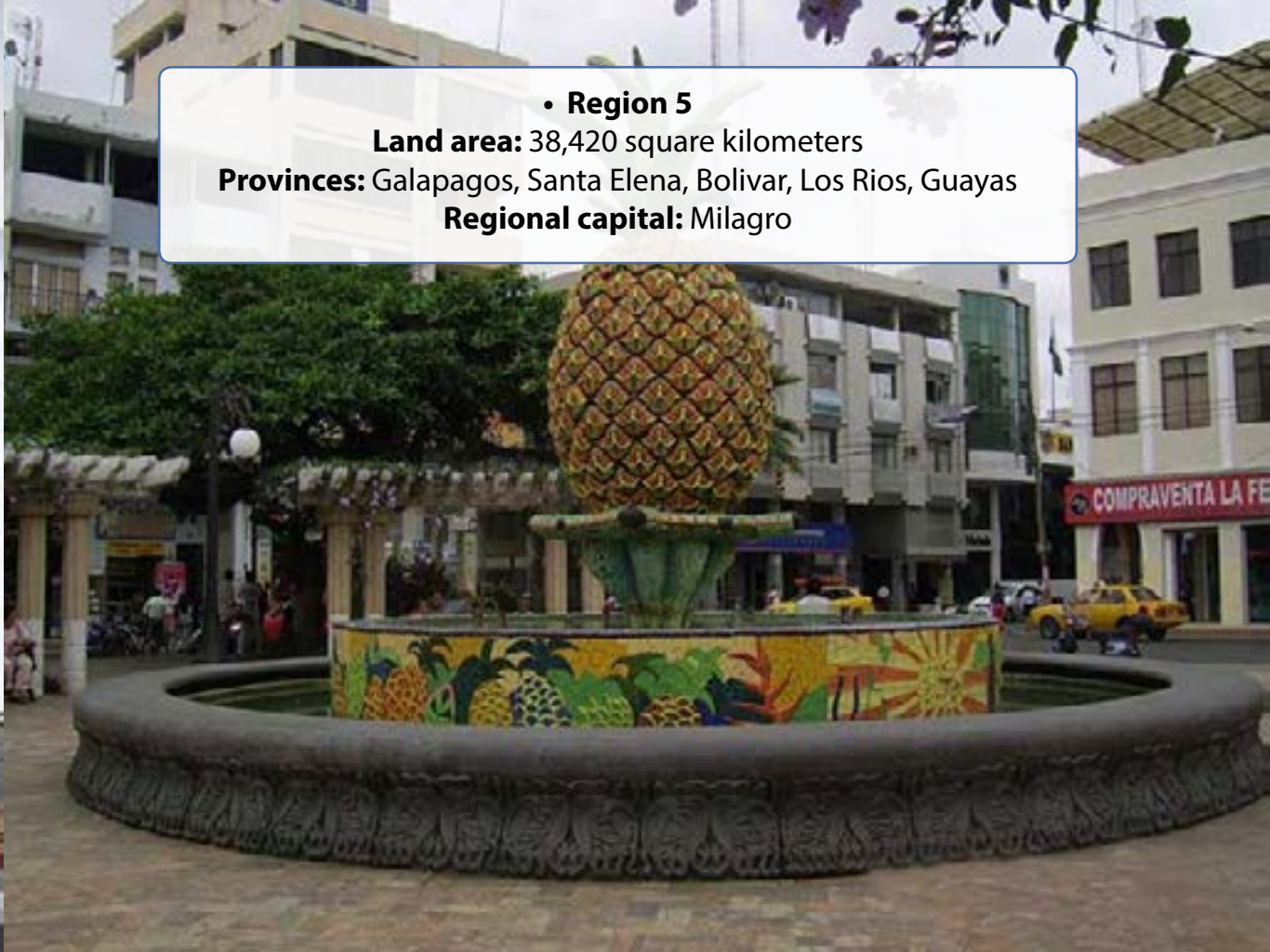
• **Region 4**

Land area: 22,257 square kilometers
Provinces: Santo Domingo de Los Tsachilas, Manabi
Regional capital: Ciudad Alfaro



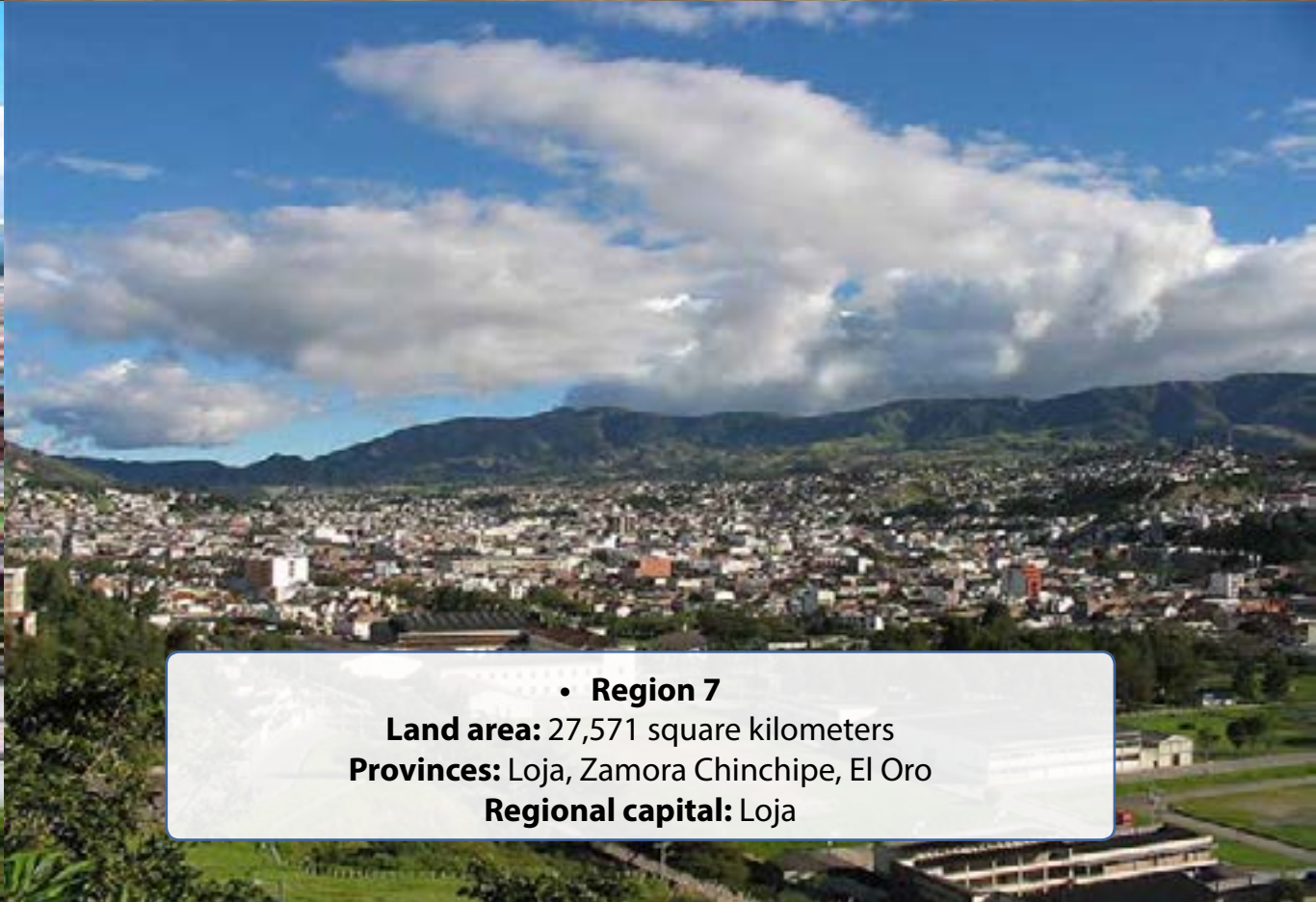
• **Region 5**

Land area: 38,420 square kilometers
Provinces: Galapagos, Santa Elena, Bolivar, Los Rios, Guayas
Regional capital: Milagro



• **Region 6**

Land area: 38,237 square kilometers
Provinces: Azuay, Cañar, Morona Santiago
Regional capital: Cuenca



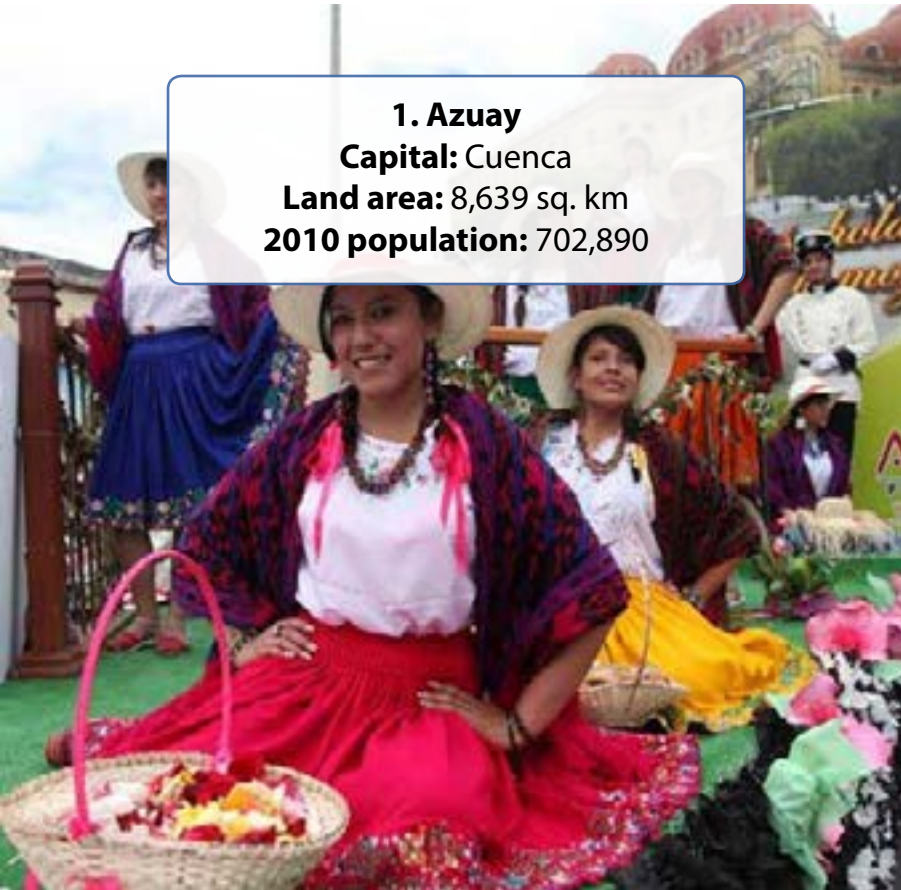
• **Region 7**

Land area: 27,571 square kilometers
Provinces: Loja, Zamora Chinchipe, El Oro
Regional capital: Loja

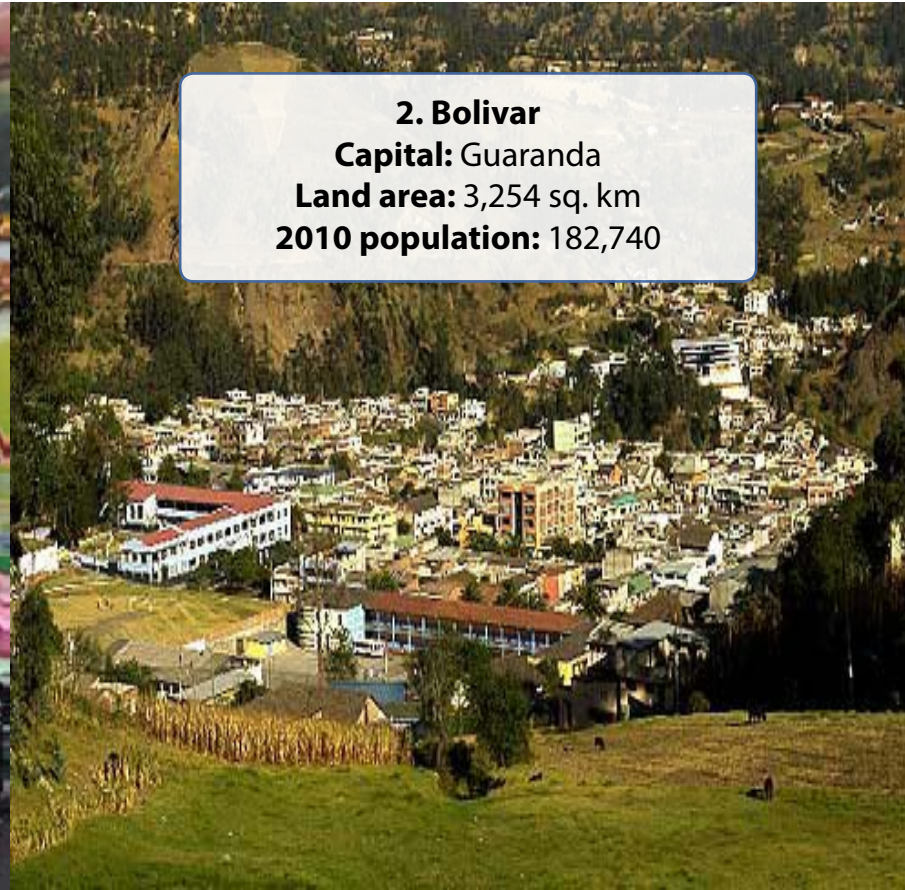
A map showing the provinces of Ecuador



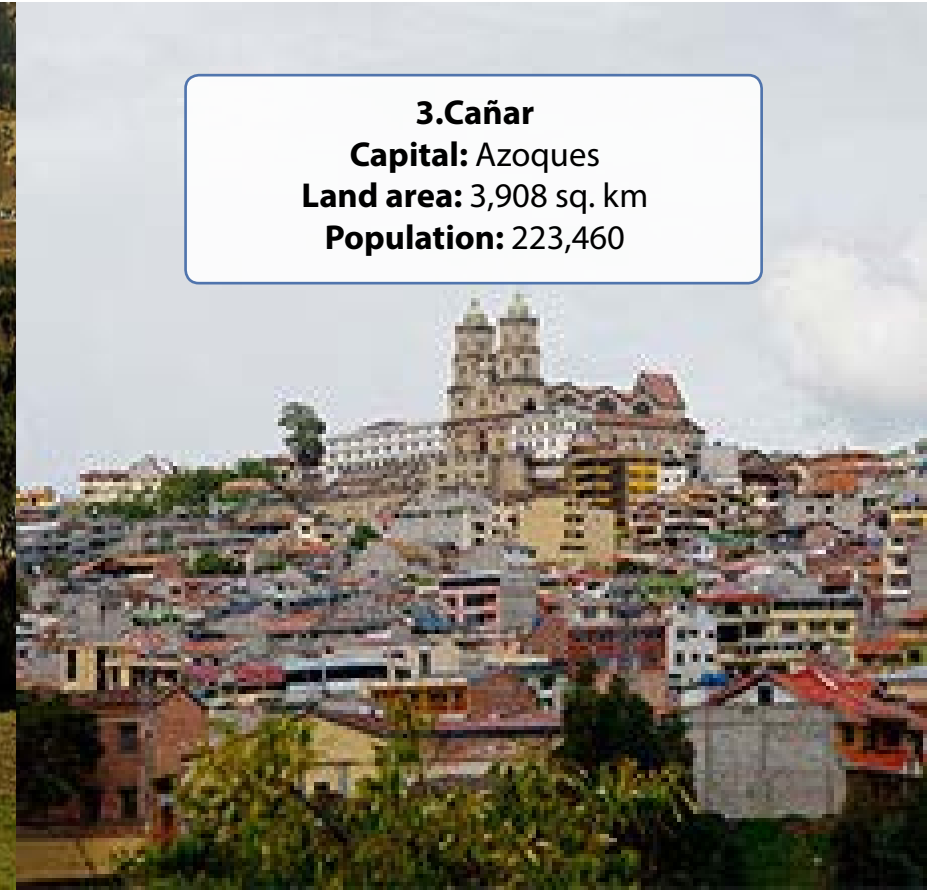
Meanwhile, the 24 provinces of Ecuador are (population figures are merely estimates):



1. Azuay
Capital: Cuenca
Land area: 8,639 sq. km
2010 population: 702,890



2. Bolivar
Capital: Guaranda
Land area: 3,254 sq. km
2010 population: 182,740



3. Cañar
Capital: Azoques
Land area: 3,908 sq. km
Population: 223,460



4. Carchi
Capital: Tulcan
Land area: 3,699 sq. km
2010 population: 165,660



5. Chimborazo
Capital: Riobamba
Land area: 5,287 sq. km
2010 population: 452,350



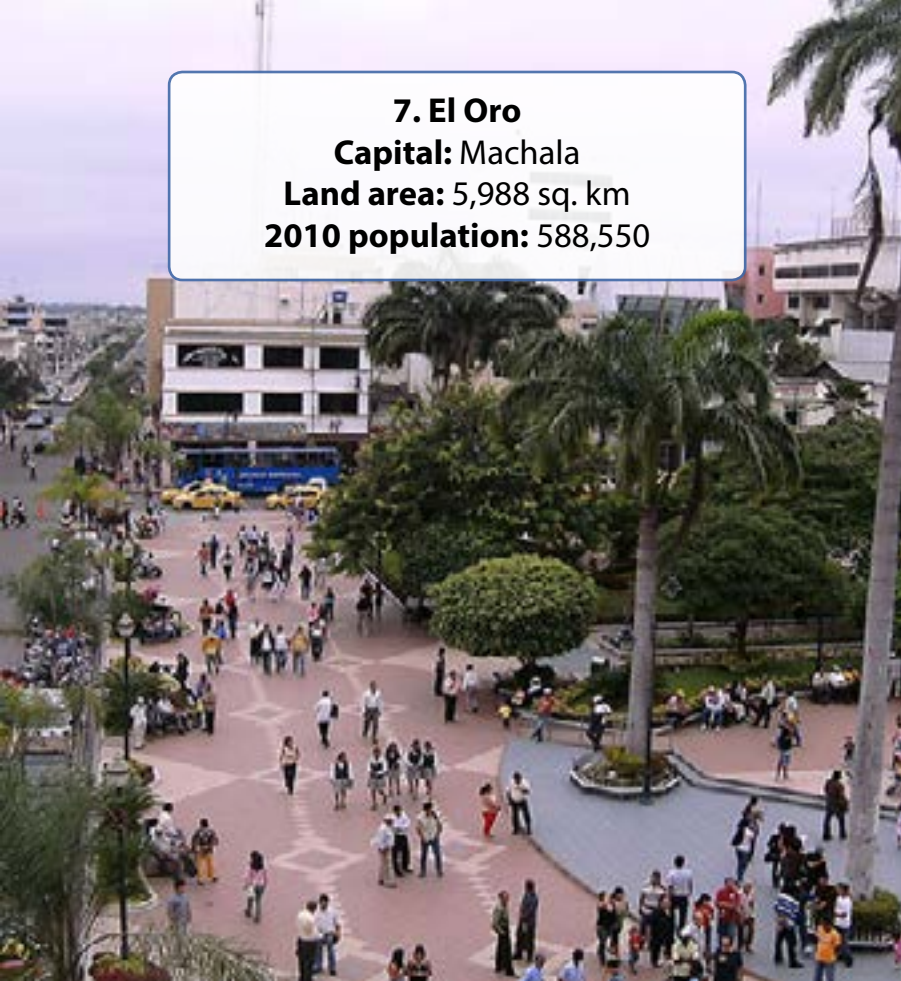
6. Cotopaxi
Capital: Latacunga
Land area: 6,569 sq. km
2010 population: 406,800

7. El Oro

Capital: Machala

Land area: 5,988 sq. km

2010 population: 588,550

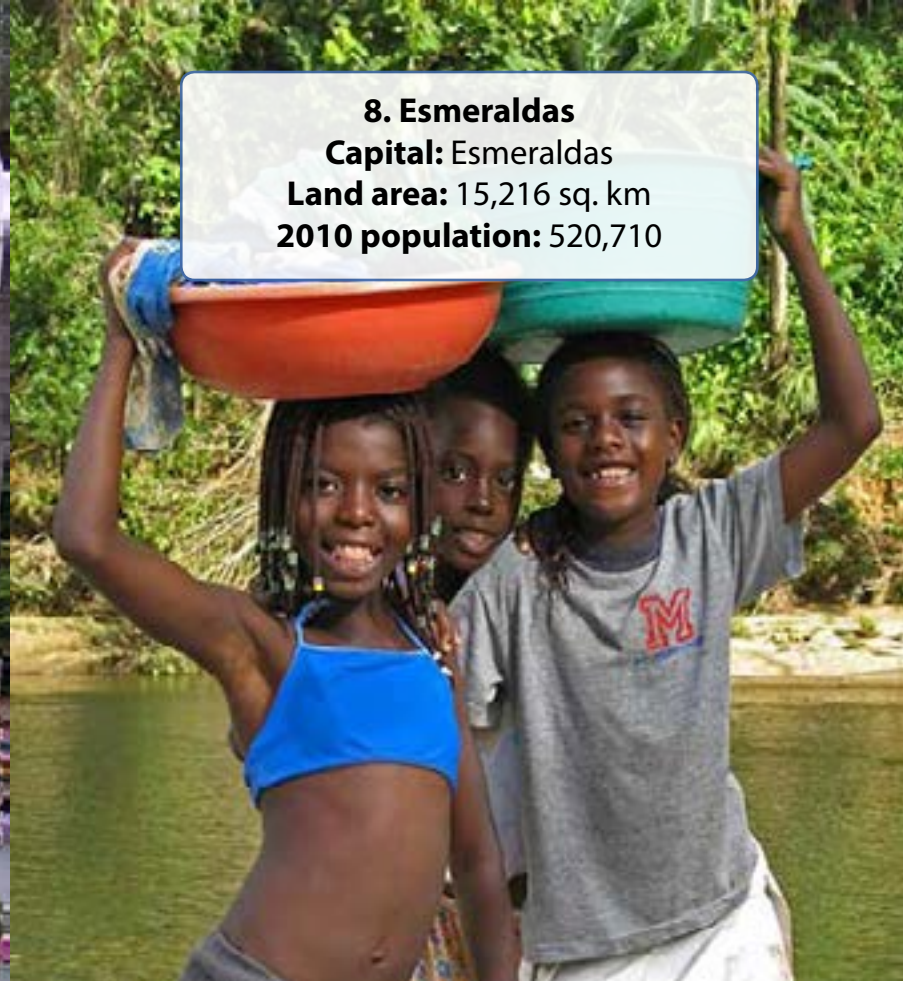


8. Esmeraldas

Capital: Esmeraldas

Land area: 15,216 sq. km

2010 population: 520,710

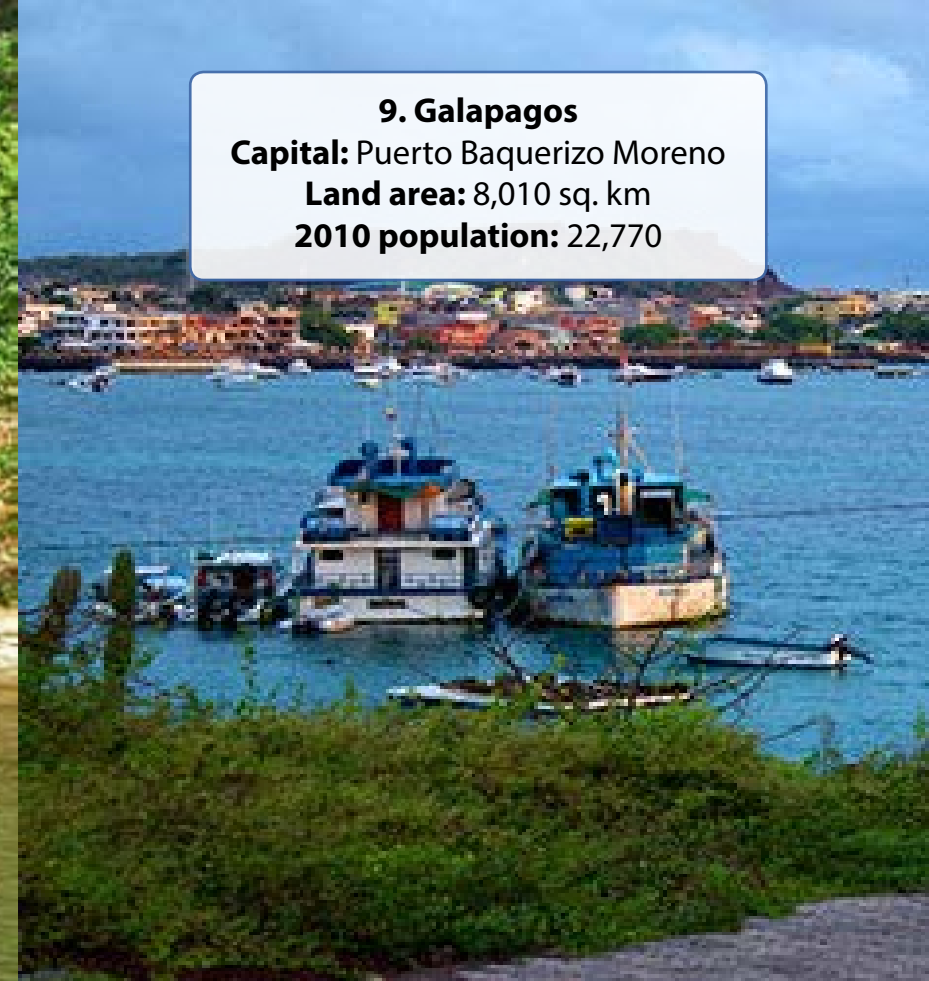


9. Galapagos

Capital: Puerto Baquerizo Moreno

Land area: 8,010 sq. km

2010 population: 22,770

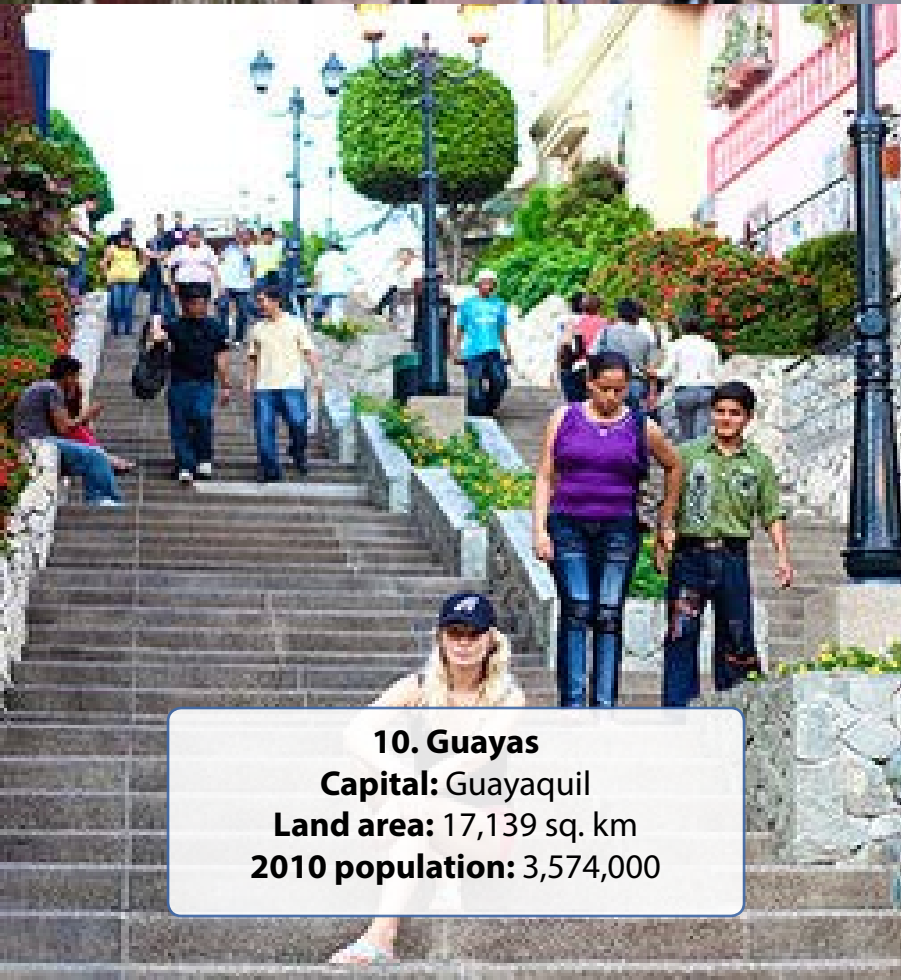


10. Guayas

Capital: Guayaquil

Land area: 17,139 sq. km

2010 population: 3,574,000

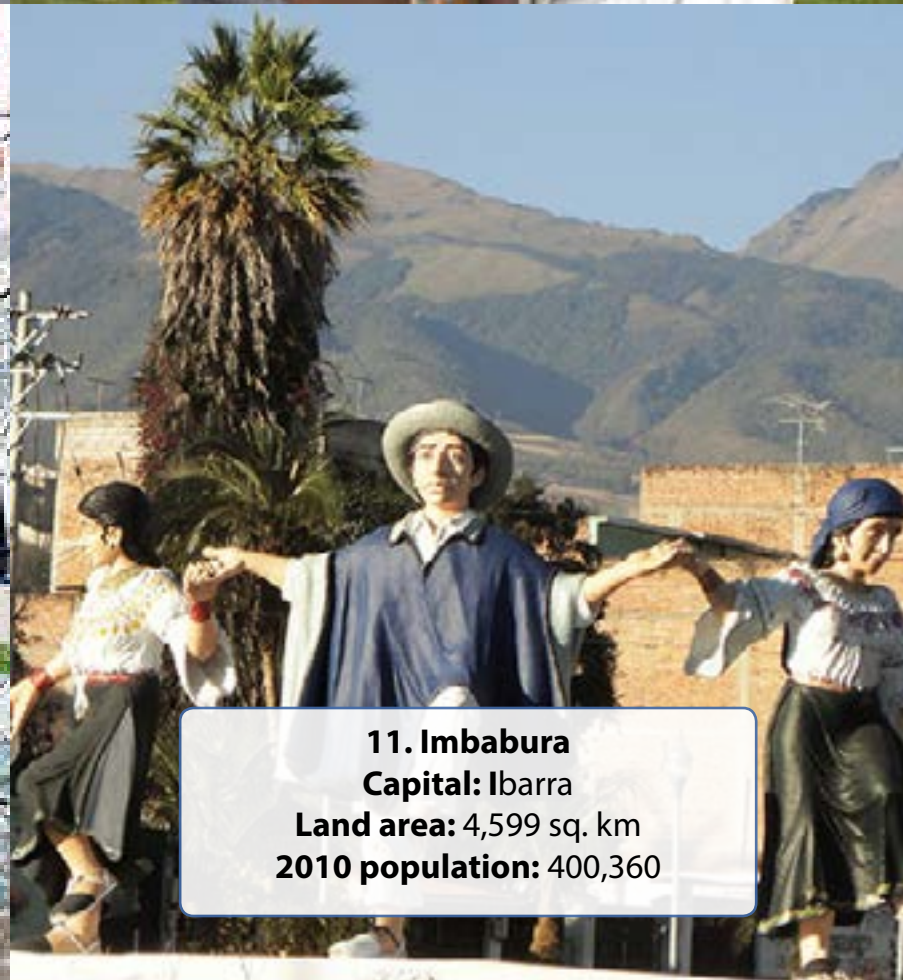


11. Imbabura

Capital: Ibarra

Land area: 4,599 sq. km

2010 population: 400,360



12. Loja

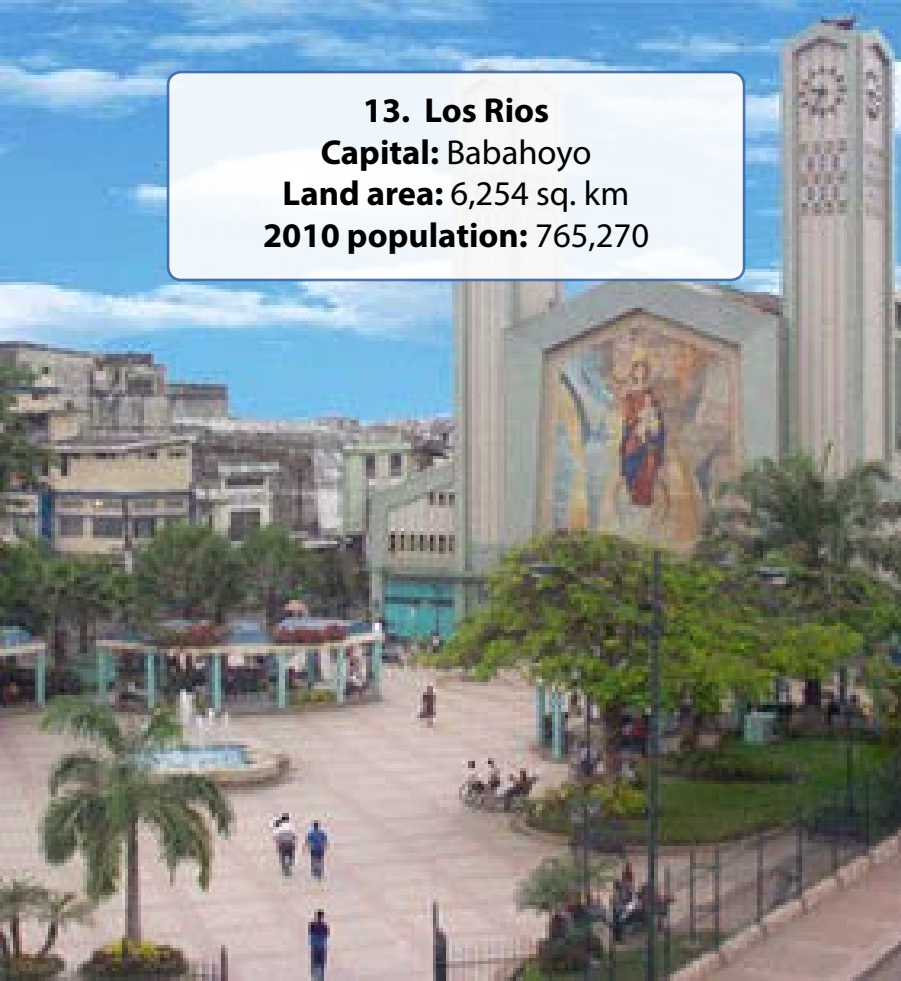
Capital: Loja

Land area: 11,027 sq. km

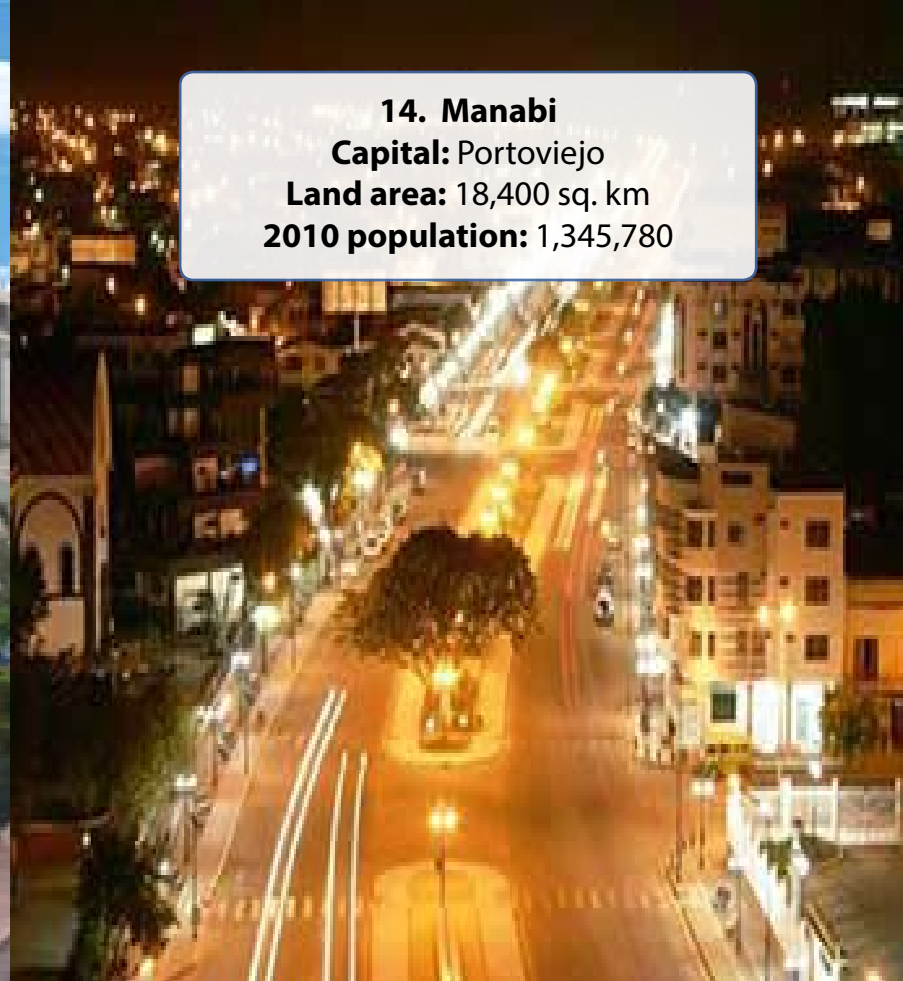
2010 population: 446,740



13. Los Rios
Capital: Babahoyo
Land area: 6,254 sq. km
2010 population: 765,270



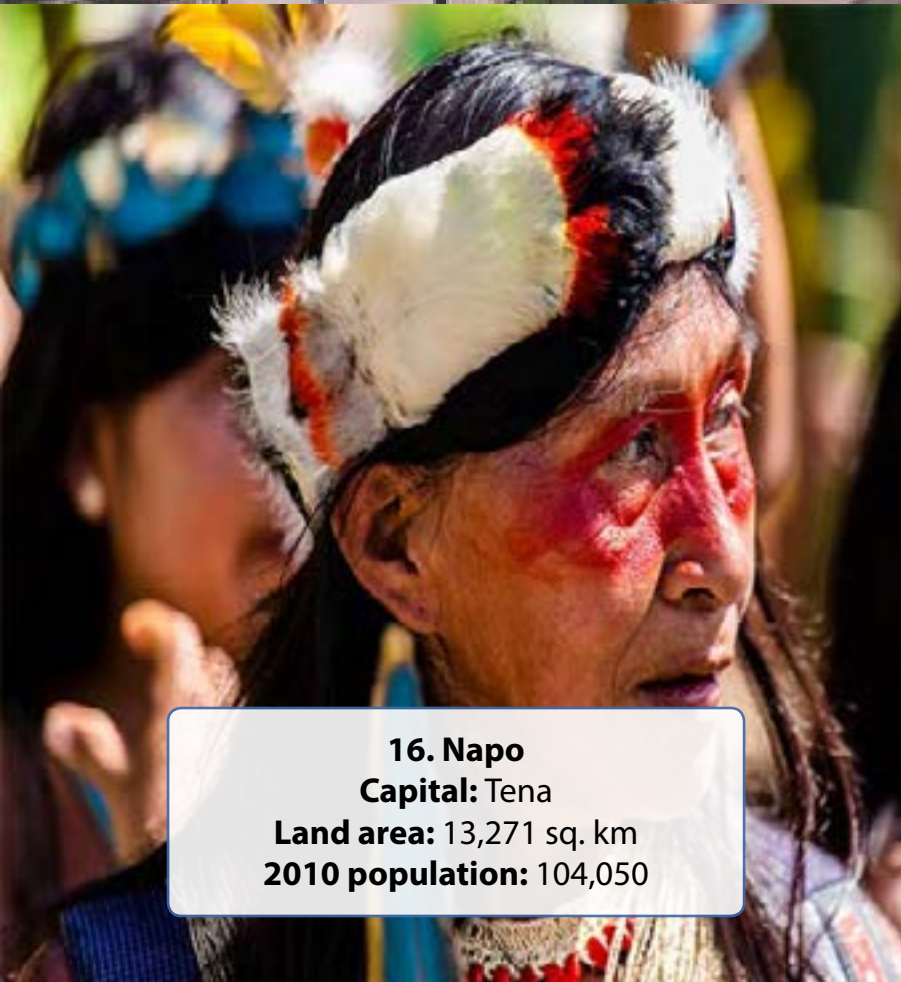
14. Manabi
Capital: Portoviejo
Land area: 18,400 sq. km
2010 population: 1,345,780



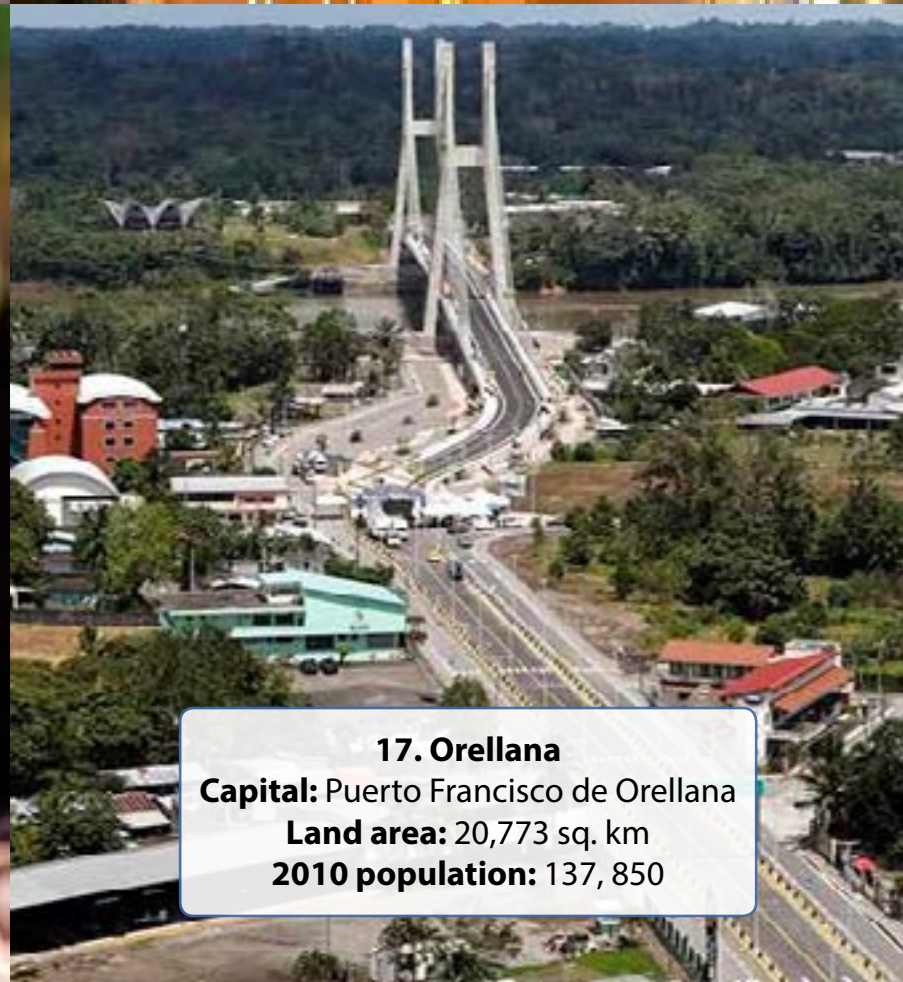
15. Morona-Santiago
Capital: Macas
Land area: 25,690 sq. km
2010 population: 147,890



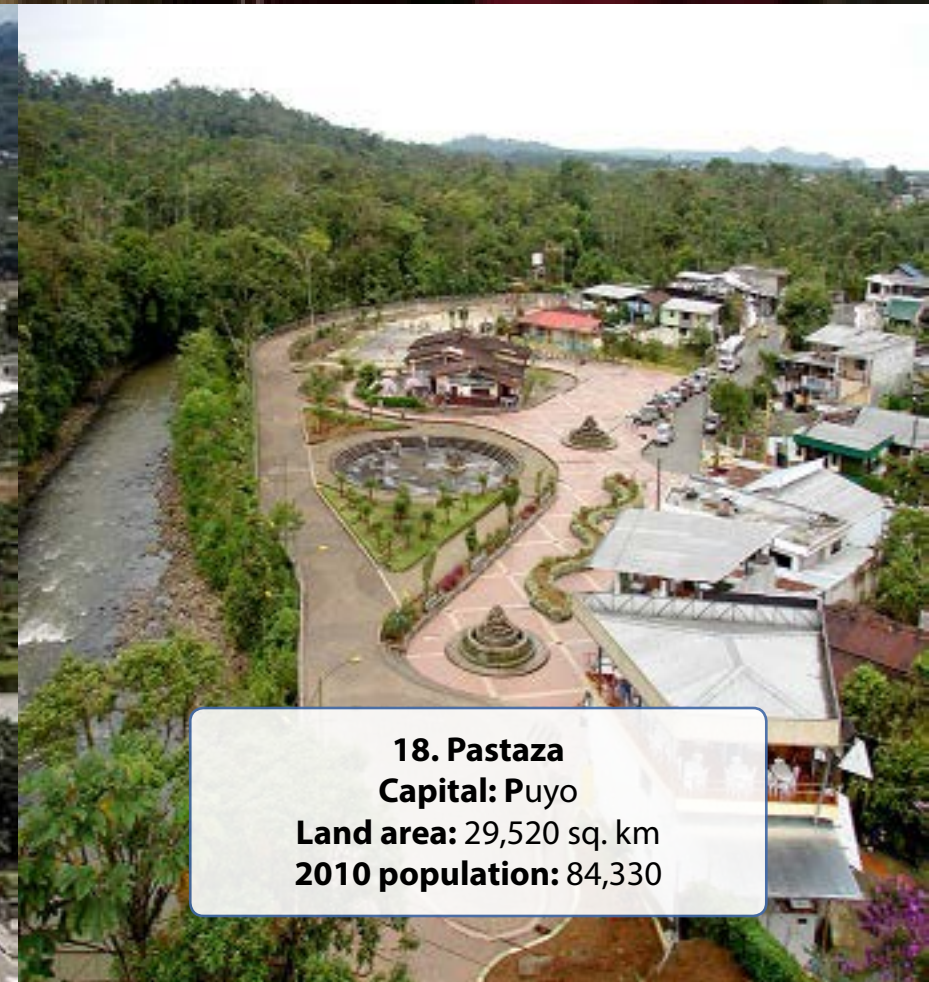
16. Napo
Capital: Tena
Land area: 13,271 sq. km
2010 population: 104,050

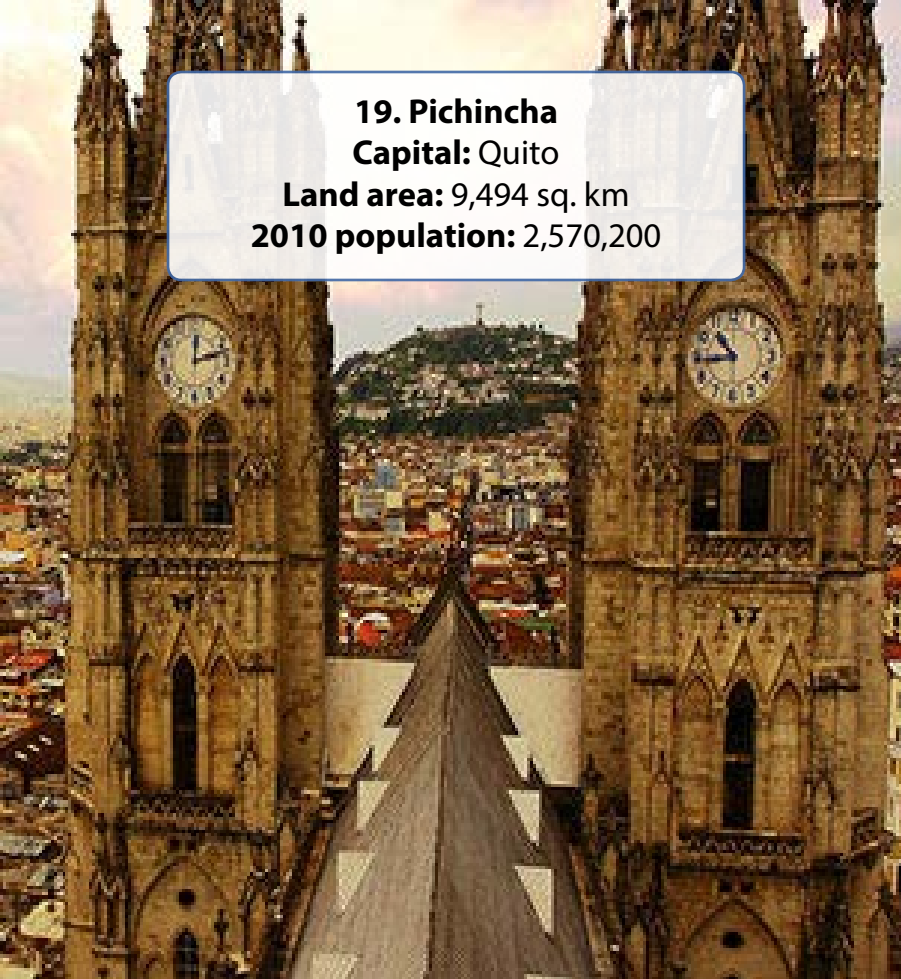


17. Orellana
Capital: Puerto Francisco de Orellana
Land area: 20,773 sq. km
2010 population: 137,850



18. Pastaza
Capital: Puyo
Land area: 29,520 sq. km
2010 population: 84,330





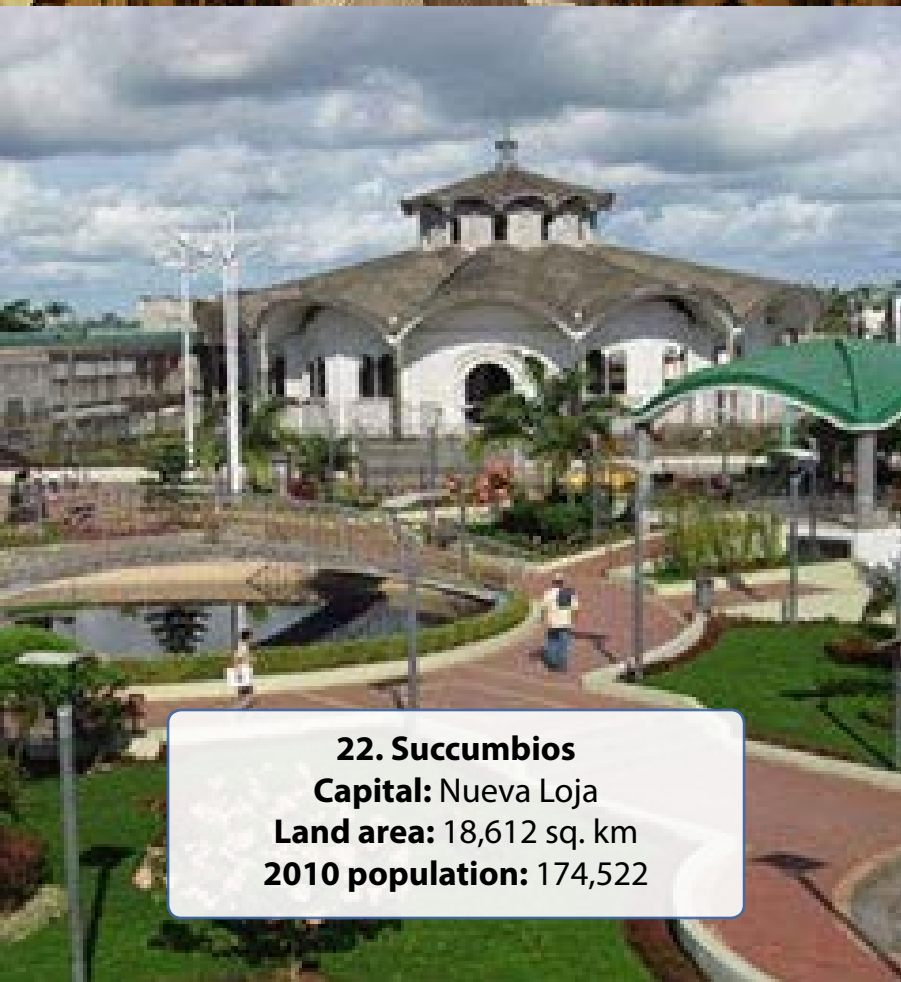
19. Pichincha
Capital: Quito
Land area: 9,494 sq. km
2010 population: 2,570,200



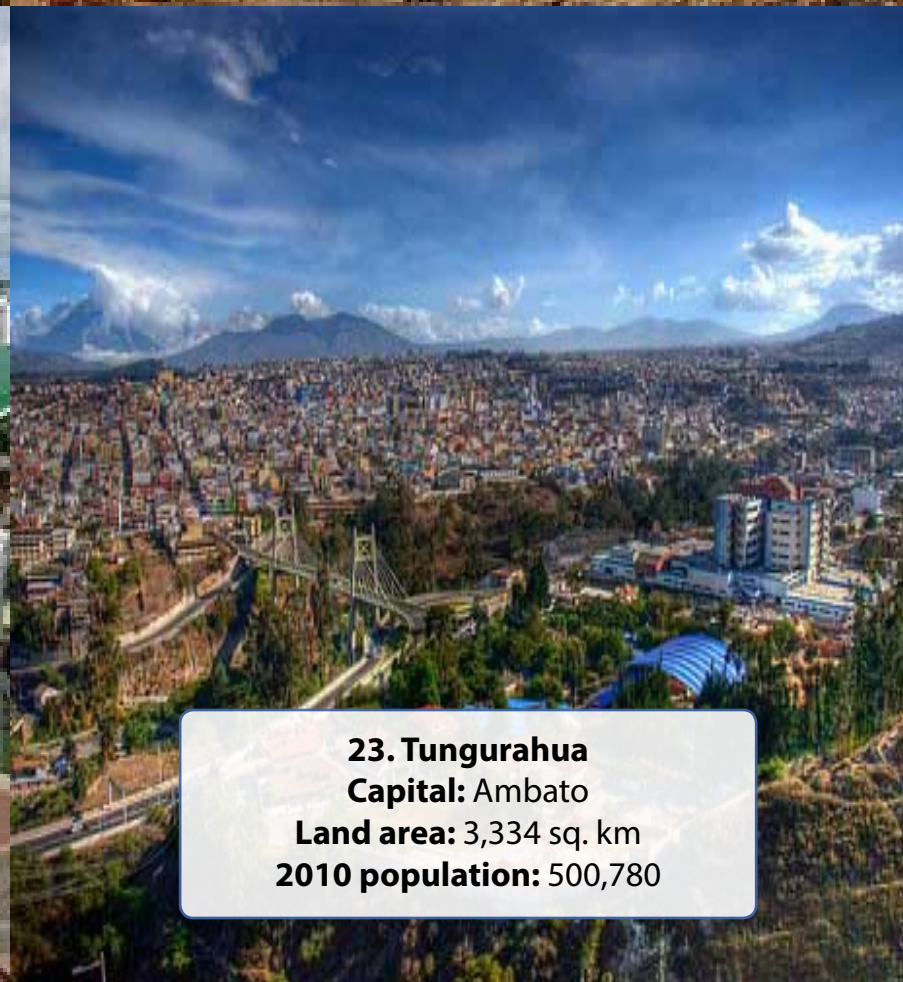
20. Santa Elena
Capital: Santa Elena
Land area: 3,763 sq. km
2010 population: 301,170



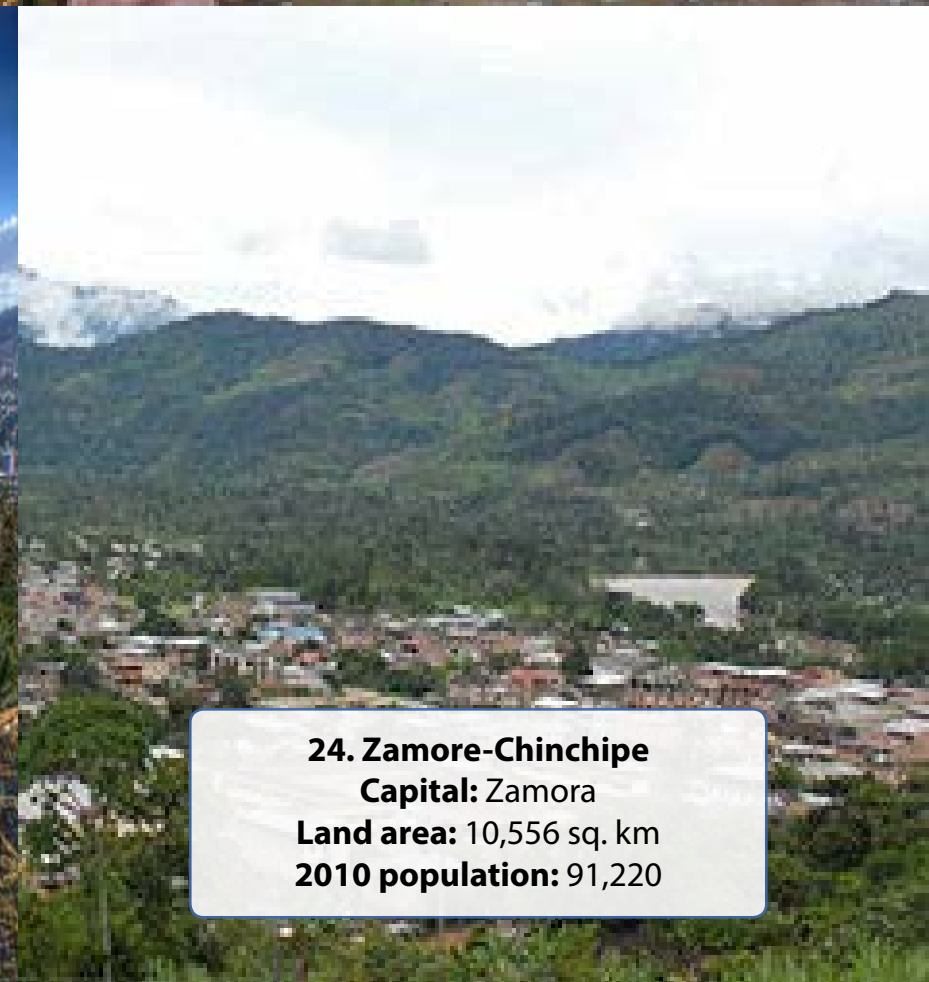
21. Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas
Capital: Santo Domingo
Land area: 3,857 sq. km
2010 population: 365,970



22. Succumbios
Capital: Nueva Loja
Land area: 18,612 sq. km
2010 population: 174,522



23. Tungurahua
Capital: Ambato
Land area: 3,334 sq. km
2010 population: 500,780



24. Zamore-Chinchi
Capital: Zamora
Land area: 10,556 sq. km
2010 population: 91,220

Geography

With a total surface area of 283,520 square kilometers, Ecuador is considerably larger than other countries in South America, including Surinam, Uruguay, and Guyana. Bordered by the Pacific Ocean on its west coast, Peru in the Southeast, and Colombia in the North, Ecuador also has four geographic divisions or regions, namely:

1. The coast or La Costa, the lowlands located at the western coast, including the coastline of Ecuador facing the Pacific Ocean.
2. The highlands or La Sierra, the high-land located at the center of the country from north to south. La Sierra is part of the Andes mountain range in South America.
3. The east or El Oriente (La Amazonia), which refers to the eastern part of Ecuador where the Amazon rainforest can be found. This part comprises almost half the surface area of Ecuador, although it is inhabited by less than five percent of the country's population.
4. The insular region (La Region Insular), which refers to the Galapagos Islands.

Although the Galapagos Islands are arguably the best tourist spot of entire Ecuador, other parts of the country also have some interesting sights. These include Cotopaxi, where you can find an active volcano (one of the highest in the world), and Mount Chimborazo, which is said to be the point on Earth's surface which is located closest from the center of the Earth.



Biodiversity

The Galapagos Islands represent only a fraction of Ecuador's biodiversity. In fact, Conservation International has included the country in the list of 17 mega-diverse countries (it actually tops the list for the most biodiversity per square kilometer).

Just to illustrate, mainland Ecuador currently has over 1,600 endemic bird species, 16,000 plants, 6,000 butterflies, 138 amphibians, and 106 reptiles (to name a few). Because of this, the Ecuadorian government has actually included environmental protection in its national plans and policies.

Currently, approximately 19 percent of Ecuador's total area is under protection of the government, and another 32 percent is targeted for future protection. Ecuador presently has 11 national reservation parks, nine eco reserves, and 10 wildlife havens, among other protected areas.

The government also pays private landowners and indigenous communities just to maintain the endemic ecosystems in their lands. Despite these efforts of the Ecuadorian government, however, Galapagos and the Amazon rainforest are among critically-endangered heritage sites according to UNESCO.



Economy

Ecuator boasts one of the largest economies in South America, ranking eighth overall with an average 4.3 to 4.6 percent economic growth rate during the previous decade (even during periods of economic crisis). Poverty incidence has also declined significantly in the past decade (17.4 percent by 2011 from 40 percent in 2001), while unemployment rate has dwindled from 8 to 9 percent in 2008 to merely 4.8 percent by 2012. The government has also begun to spend more on education and health and other social services.

Majority of the economy's growth comes from the oil industry, which accounts for 40 percent of the total exports of the country. In terms of agriculture, Ecuador remains the biggest exporter of bananas worldwide, and also one of the leading producers of cocoa. Other major agricultural products include sugarcane, corn, rice, cotton, coffee, palm, and shrimps. Timber is also an important product, especially wood from mangrove trees and eucalyptus plants.

Ecuador's industrial and business centers are Guayaquil, Quito and Cuenca, with Guayaquil as the largest industrial district of the country. Industrial production is geared mostly for domestic consumption, although there's also a manufacturing industry where imported goods are processed locally.

The country's official currency is the US dollar, although this is only a fairly recent change made in 2000 from the old currency of Ecuador, sucre.

Religion, Language and Culture

Spanish is the primary language of Ecuador, although it also has other official native languages including Quichua and Shuar, while its primary religion is Roman Catholic.



6. Important Contacts in the Galapagos Islands

Since you may not be familiar with Galapagos Islands, it is essential that you know some important contact numbers that will help you keep safe during your stay in the Island.

If you are planning to travel to the area, you should take note of the Smart Traveller Enrolment Program, or STEP. This is a program designed in order to let the government of Ecuador know that you are going to visit Galapagos Islands which means that they will make sure that you will be well taken care of and that you will be well-attended to. And, in case of an emergency, your family and friends would be able to contact you easily since your numbers and your information are already listed in the government's records.

For your safety, please keep these contact information in mind:



The U.S. Embassy in Quito:

- Ave Avigiras E12-170 y Ave. Ely Alfaro, Quito, Ecuador
- For concerns and emergencies, call: (011) 593-2-398-5000
- Phone lines are open 24/7 for your convenience. You may also fax them at the same number.
- You may also try **The U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil**, which is what most Galapagos
- Island visitors do since it is closer to the island. Keep these contact numbers in mind:
- For concerns during office hours (8 am to 5 pm), call: (011) 593-4-232-3570
- For emergencies, especially during night time, call: (011) 593-4-232-1152.
- You may fax them at: (011) 593-4-232-0904.
- You may also download the Smart Traveler app on your Apple or Android devices in order to have some information ready wherever in the Islands you may be.
- Remember, it's better to be safe than sorry.



7. A Map of Wildlife Attractions in the Galapagos Islands

One of the things that make Galapagos Islands famous is that there is a lot of wildlife in the area, and that Galapagos Islands is home to one of the world's largest tortoises, the Galapagos tortoise, which is the 13th heaviest reptile in the world. And, as you well may know by now, Charles Darwin once visited the area in 1835 and one of the oldest tortoises was born then. Aside from tortoises, there are a lot of other animals in the area that you have to see. **There are some factors that would influence in your fortune to watch these exotic creatures such as the weather, the mating and migration season.**



Fernandina Island

The province of Fernandina, the first island on the left side of the map, is home to Galapagos Penguins, a type of penguin that is endemic to the Galapagos Islands and can live in a tropical climate; Sea lions; Pelicans; Galapagos Island Iguanas, one of the largest breeds of Iguana in the world; and Rice Rats, or rats that live in trees.



Santiago/San Salvador Island

The island of Santiago, also known as San Salvador is home to the Masked Booby, a white kind of the Booby bird who lives near the ocean; Marine Iguanas; Fur Sea Lions; Fur Seals; Sea Turtles, which are found in all of the world's oceans, except for the arctic ocean; Flamingos that are really nice to look at when there are a lot of them; Sharks, Dolphins, and Crabs, as well. Recently, inhabitants have brought pigs and goats in the area, as well.



Isabela Island

Meanwhile, Isabela Island, the largest island in the Galapagos, is full of fields unlike the other islands in the Galapagos which makes it interesting and worth visiting. It is also home to animals such as Land Iguanas; Marine Iguanas; Sea Lions; the famous Giant Galapagos tortoise and small lava lizards. Most of the tortoises found in Isabela roam around the calderas of Wolf, Alcedo, Sierra, Darwin, and Cerro Azul.

There are also at least 100,000 species of goats in the area; Penguins; Boobies, or sea-birds that are usually known for their Blue feet; Sally Lightfoot Crabs, crabs that are famous for being colorful and unusual-looking; and Pelicans, as well. Other species of animals that were discovered by Charles Darwin are also found in this island. These include the Galapagos Hawks, some weirdly spotted hawks that are endemic to the Galapagos Islands; Darwin's Finches, or passerine birds that frequent the area; and the majestic and unique Galapagos Doves, that you probably would mistake for Robins because they certainly do not look like doves, at all.

Santa Cruz Island

The second largest island in the Galapagos is Santa Cruz. Its capital city, Puerto Ayora, is home to volcanoes and many different animals such as Brown Pelicans; Frigate Birds, or sea birds that are known for the Red flap on their necks; Golden Rays; Herons; Marine Iguanas; Galapagos Sea Lions; Boobies; and Lava Gulls, some of the largest gulls in the world. Galapagos Crabs, White Tip Reef Sharks and the Galapagos Tortoise are also prominent in the area. Santa Cruz is also home to the Charles Darwin Research Station, a biological research facility that was established with the help of the Charles Darwin Foundation, in honor of the late geologist who once set foot in the Galapagos archipelago.



San Cristobal Island

San Cristobal, an island on the far right side of the Galapagos, is the oldest known island in the area. The island is home to frigate birds; Galapagos tortoises; Galapagos Sea Lions; Blue and Red footed Boobies; Marine Iguanas; Dolphins; the Galapagos Tortoise and Swallow-Tailed Seagulls, as well. Lobsters, Rays and Sharks can also be found in nearby seas.

Floreana Island

Santa Maria, one of the smallest islands in the Galapagos, and is also known as Floreana, is a very interesting place to visit since it was formed because of the eruption of one of the many volcanoes in the area. Flamingos, Green Sea Turtles and Sally Light-foot Crabs are very prominent in the area. You will also see the Joint-footed Petrel, a very beautiful nocturnal seabird that mostly spends its time away from land, if you are lucky. It also has some of the best snorkeling sites, such as Devil's Crown, where an incredible variety of marine life thrive, such as sharks, sea turtles, rare eels and sea lions,



Espanola Island

Lastly, the small island of Espanola, is home to unique creatures such as the Espanola Mockingbird, which is one of the endemic residents of the Galapagos archipelago; the Espanola Lava Lizard, a part of the family of Iguanas; the Marine Iguana, which is known for the red markings on its back; and other tropical birds such as swallow-tailed gulls.

8. Wildlife Itineraries (Some creatures would show up according to their migration and mating season)

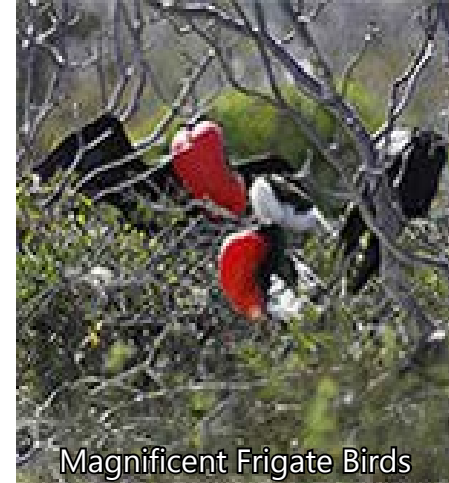
If you truly want to experience the beauty of Galapagos Islands and see the many different flora and fauna in the area, then you should check out the three different itineraries below. These will be your guide in knowing where to go and what to do once you are in the area.

Here are the three main wildlife itineraries that we have provided for you:

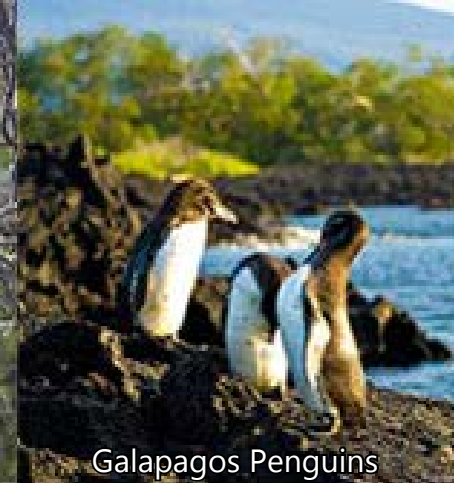
1. Galapagos Birdlife – If you are a lover of our aerial friends, then you have to try this wildlife itinerary. There are around 140 birds in the Galapagos islands that you can see—58 of which are residential, while 76 are migratory, and 8 have currently been introduced to the archipelago. Some of these birds include:

- Frigates (Magnificent Frigate Bird, which have a large wingspan; Male Frigates, with Purple and Gold beaks; Great Frigate Birds. What you have to know about these sea birds is that their wings are not waterproof! How ironic!)
- Galapagos Penguins
- Boobies
- Flamingos
- Red billed Tropic Bird
- Flightless Cormorant (a large bird that does not have an ability to fly)
- Waved Albatross
- Storm Petrels
- Shearwaters
- Lava Gulls
- Brown Noddies
- Swallow-tailed Gulls

We'll be taking you to the islands with most number of birds for you to be able to maximize your bird watching experience. These islands are: North Seymour Island, Espanola Island, and San Cristobal.



Magnificent Frigate Birds



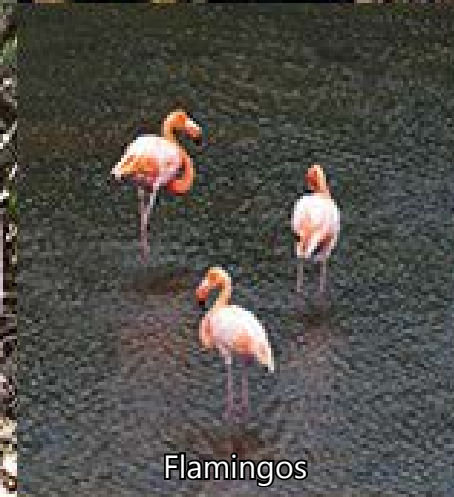
Galapagos Penguins



Blue Boobies



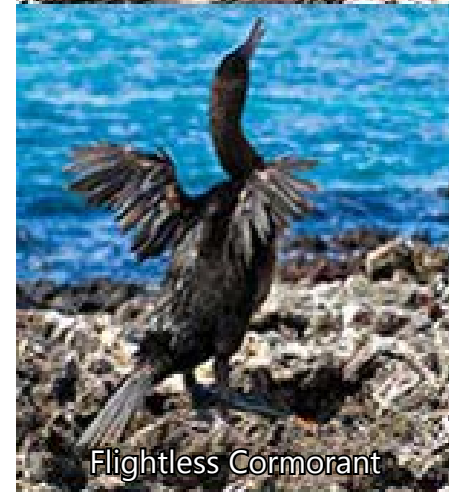
Red Boobie



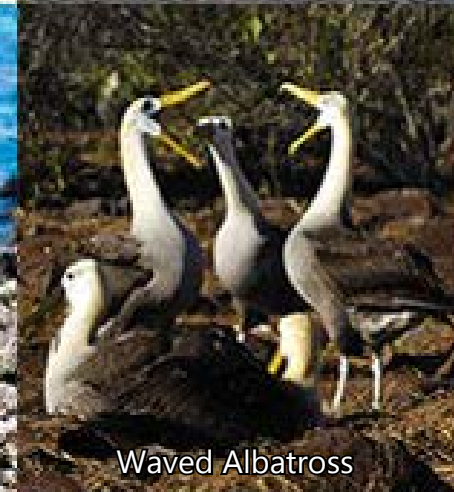
Flamingos



Red billed Tropic Bird



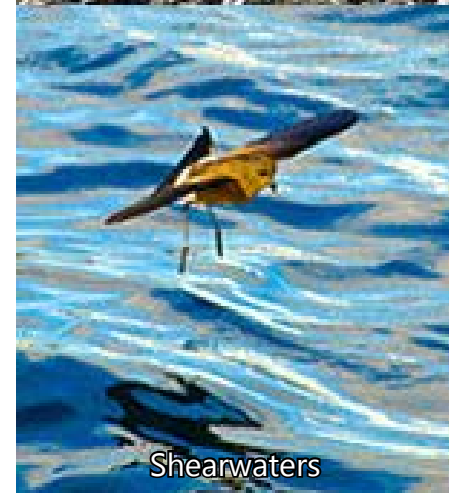
Flightless Cormorant



Waved Albatross



Storm Petrels



Shearwaters



Lava Gulls



Brown Noddies

2. Sea Lions and Fur Seals – Since the Galapagos archipelago is very much surrounded by different bodies of water, it would be great if you'd get to see fur seals and sea lions all around. And, because seals and sea lions are social creatures, they are more likely to approach humans rather than get away from them so maybe you'd get to shake the hand or flapper of one of them, or even get a kiss from them during the trip.

You'll be able to:

- Go to Puerto Egas on the Island of Santiago and see a large colony of fur seals
- See mother seals take their babies to the water so that they could nurse them
- Snorkel or kayak with baby sea lions/fur seals
- See the sea lions/fur seals feed on fish or squid



3. Galapagos Reptiles – SAs mentioned in the earlier chapters, there are a lot of reptiles lurking around in the Galapagos Archipelago. And you know what the best part is? Ninety percent of these animals are endemic to the Galapagos Islands—which mean that they aren't found anywhere else on earth.

Charles Darwin was right when he said that the Galapagos Islands is a paradise for reptiles. Most of the time, weather in the island is hot or dry, which is just about right for the reptiles.

There are basically two main types of reptiles that you will see and these are:

- **Land Reptiles:** Tortoises, Iguanas, lava lizards, Geckos, and Snakes
- **Marine Reptiles:** Marine Iguanas and sea turtles



9. Island Hopping Alternatives

Isabela Island

Now, if you are the type who wants to go island by island, then you can do that, too. Since the largest island is the Island of Isabela, because it is the main island, might as well start there.

What to do in the area:

- Since Isabela is the result of many volcanic eruptions, you'll be able to appreciate the beauty of the place even more by checking out the Tagus Cones Tuff Coves. These are some remnants of the past that will make you realize that once upon a time, there was no Isabela Island and it was just the end result of big volcanic eruptions;
- Check out the many fields in the area, which are different from the ornamental and vegetable plants of other provinces.;
- See the famous volcanoes Cerro Azul and Volcan Wolf;
- See the Giant Galapagos tortoises in Los Tuneles, and see beautiful birds such as Boobies;
- See turtles in Centro de Crianza, which is famous for being impeccably clean and a good breeding ground for turtles;
- See the sharks and iguanas in Las Tintoreras;
- Climb up the trail to one of the dormant volcanoes in the area, the Sierra Negra Volcano and go horseback riding in there, during the dry season too;
- Go to Concha de Perla, enjoy the feeling of being like you are in Central Park, New York, because of the beautiful, twisted mangrove trees and the path decking, and then go swimming with sea lions afterwards;
- And, go scuba diving and see many different fishes and turtles.



Santa Cruz Island

It is the second largest island in the Galapagos archipelago and is situated near Isabela and the smaller island of San Salvador.

What to do in Santa Cruz:

- The first thing you have to do is check out the famous Charles Darwin Station, which is just a 20 minute walk from the capital city of Puerto Ayora. What's good about this place is that there are around 200 scientists and biologists in the area who will help you out in learning more about how to conserve the ecosystem; about what are the different kinds of flora and fauna in the area; see the baby giant Galapagos tortoises; see some large land iguanas; and even see mother tortoises feeding their infants. Plus, seeing this place would be like adding some sense of culture and history in your life because of the fact that Charles Darwin was once in the Galapagos Archipelago and because of that, you'd feel the need to understand the creatures and attractions in Galapagos even more;
- See the Lava Tunnels in Bellavista, a sign of the historical past of the Galapagos archipelago;
- Check out the Lava Tunnel and see the amazing turtles that live just nearby;
- See Canal de Itabaca, which is the body of water that separates Santa Cruz from the island of Baltra. You can see birds, and even the sharks;



Floreana Island

Sure, it may not be as big as Isabela or Santa Cruz but there are also a lot that you can do in the area.

- You wouldn't have to go to Antarctica just to see a penguin because you can do it here. You'll also be able to see Moray Eels and some Galapagos Sharks while snorkeling, so that must definitely be on top of your list.
- If you walk over a hill near Flour Beach, you could even see various species of rays gliding through the waters near the shore!
- See the flamingos in the lagoons during early morning and see them as they walk through the mangroves. Never forget to bring your cameras to capture this special moment!
- See some different kinds of spiders, as well. And no, do not worry because they are very much harmless and won't do you any wrong.
- Check the white sand beach and check out the numerous sea turtles, and even see turtle eggs! Do not take the turtle eggs away, though, as it is important to conserve the natural biodiversity in the Galapagos archipelago.

Now that you know what you can do in Galapagos Islands, it's important that you find out how you could help with the government's conservation efforts.



10. Helping Out With Conservation

Indeed, Galapagos Islands is a great ecological and biological reserve. If you are going to visit the islands, here's what you can do to contribute to the Galapagos Islands' efforts in conservation:

- Not throwing garbage around – Always have a paper bag or a plastic bag with you where you can place your trash. Throwing them in the sea or anywhere in the islands is just plain disrespectful.
- If there are trashcans around and they are labelled with "non bio-degradable" and "bio-degradable", make sure that you use them correctly. Bio-degradable items include food wastes, paper, cotton clothing and even leaves. Basically, these are the things that can be broken down by nature. Non-bio-degradable items include plastic, tin cans and bottles.
- Do not buy souvenirs made from animal bones or corals. This is because since those are made from the body parts of animals, or even corals, it means that animals' lives were put at stake just to create these products. Also, corals should be preserved because if there are no corals around, fishes and other inhabitants of the sea would have nowhere to live in.
- Do not feed animals – Because they are not used to food that is not from the islands, and because you never really know if the food you are eating is good for them or not. Plus, if the animals get sick or worse, if they die because of what you have fed them, then it definitely would not be good for the environment.
- Do not touch animals – Let them live the way they're supposed to, the way they're used to. Touching them may just make them agitated and may cause them to retreat to their hiding places.



Interacting With Animals

When it comes to animals that are living in the Galapagos Archipelago, you have to make sure that you do not just come near them and disturb their peace. Sure, you can take pictures, but it would be best to use cameras that are not noisy as noisy cameras easily distract most birds such as Albatrosses and Galapagos Mockingbirds, which are endemic to the area.

As for tortoises, sea lions, and other kinds of animals, especially reptiles unless your guide tells you that you can touch them—don't. The animals have to feel that they are free and that no one should ruin their peace. If they feel like they are being threatened, they might start fleeing to other places which is definitely not good for the tourism of Galapagos Islands. Plus, if they attack you because you have provoked them, then it would not be good for you, as well. You just have to let them live freely and just watch them. After all, you are the visitor.



11. Hotels in the Galapagos Islands

Hotels in Puerto Ayora - Santa Cruz Island

Hotel Sol y mar -This is an oceanfront hotel with 17 available rooms, which is good because it'll give you a sense of privacy. According to many tourists, this certainly is one of the best and most recommended hotels in the area. It was established way back 1958 by a man named Don Jimmy Perez who realized that the Galapagos Archipelago is truly a bit of paradise on earth.



Room Amenities:

- All rooms are oceanfront
- There are individual air-conditioners for each room & TV.
- Free water for guests
- Pillows are all hypo-allergenic and made out of foam, which ensures maximum comfort
- an in-room safe box
- reading lamp
- working desk/study table
- complimentary card and board games
- complimentary crib
- you can also ask for an in-house laundry service and a rollaway bed for a minimal fee

All bathrooms have:

- a make-up mirror
- a hair dryer
- organic shampoo and conditioner
- hot water

Other features

- The Pelican Bar, an oceanfront bar that serves delicious tropical cuisine
- an oceanfront pool, where you and your family and friends can frolic in
- breakfast buffet includes cereals, cheese, seasonal fruits, bread, pancakes, cured meat and eggs
- drinks include herbal tea, fresh juice, milk, yogurt and coffee
- Events such as business meetings and weddings are also encouraged to be held in the place.
- Isla Sol Tower, a building that is situated near the hotel and is affiliated with it, is home to a couple of restaurants, bars, pools, and the famous fisherman's wharf, where you can catch your own food and have it cooked for you.

Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- rates are per room, per night
- all rates include a hefty breakfast buffet
- are exclusive of taxes and service charge
- to be able to have a room reserved under your name, you will have to pay 50% of the full room rate.



Red Mangrove Inn -This inn is designed in such a way that it blends with the load of mangrove trees in the area, hence the name. The main purpose of this hotel is to help you understand the importance of mangroves in the Galapagos Archipelago and also let you see the beauty of the flora and fauna all around. With trees and stairs flanking the hotel, it'll surely give you a relaxed, chill-out vibe and let you just lounge around. The hotel is also just 200 meters away from the Charles Darwin Research Station.



Room Amenities:

- all rooms are air-conditioned
- rooms all have stylish wooden furniture
- Plasma Television with cable/satellite channels
- Free Wi-Fi
- rooms have upholstered chairs for you to lounge on

Other features/Amenities:

- Free buffet breakfast that includes bread, fruits, yogurt, and eggs.
- A restaurant that serves an array of international dishes
- a bar
- spa/massage services
- bikes can be rented to help you explore the island
- laundry/ironing service
- airport shuttle (for a fee)
- banquet/business services

Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- All kids below two years old are free to stay in the hotel, provided that they are with their parents or guardians
- Reservation Rates differ per room, and so are the cancellation policies





Angermeyer Waterfront Inn - Located in a peninsula in Academy Bay, the look and feel of this hotel is amazing, because it looks as if it is from the olden times, and it looks like a marine vehicle but is situated on land. The use of drift wood and lava rocks to create the hotel also makes it all the more special. Boasting of quality and privacy at the same time, this is the perfect hotel for those who want some sense of peace and quiet and do not like overly large hotels. It will definitely make your stay in the Galapagos Archipelago even better.



Room Amenities:

- air-conditioning and TV in each room
- private bathroom with hot water
- cable TV
- in-room safe

Other features/Amenities:

- a lavish breakfast buffet
- since the hotel is a waterfront hotel, you will have a magnificent view of the bay and of nearby islands, as well.
- a wooden deck that's built over water which will help you see the area better, and will also help you see some of the best forms of wildlife in the Galapagos archipelago including turtles, dolphins, sea lions, and the giant Galapagos tortoise.
- Free Wi-Fi
- a bar
- laundry service
- a travel information desk, which is helpful for most tourists
- an airport shuttle that will pick you up from the airport and bring you back here in case you need to go back already.

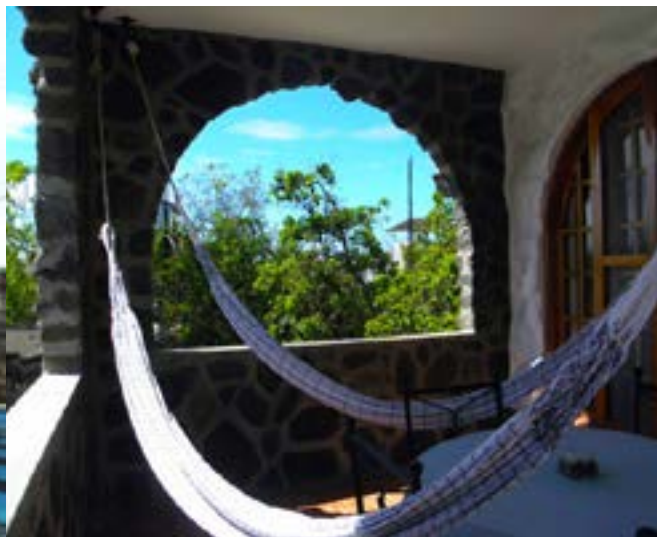
Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- Rates are based on double occupancy per night. This means that even if there's just you, you'd still have to pay for two.
- If there are more than two of you, extra person charge is \$43 per night.
- All rates include a full breakfast meal.
- Rates are 50% higher during the Christmas season so it would be better to book early.





El Castillo Galapagos -This is one of the most unique hotels out there. Close to the Galapagos National Park and the Charles Darwin Research Station, it is crated in such a way that it looks like a tree house located in a bridge with trees all around. It really makes you appreciate the islands even more because of the fact that you'll really feel one with nature if you stay in here.



Room Amenities:

- Private Bathroom
- Refrigerator
- Shower
- Balcony
- Garden view
- comfortable mattresses
- daily housekeeping
- extra bedding/towels
- free Wi-Fi in all rooms

Other features/Amenities:

- laundry service is available
- computer station
- luggage storage
- television in the lobby
- a safe at the front desk
- there are also some picnic areas around the hotel

Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- Charges may vary depending on the length of your stay.
- Some fees will also be charged in case you have some extra persons with you.
- Rates will be discussed during check-in/check-out.





Galapagos Suites - Close to the city center and to many tourist attractions such as Tortuga Bay and the Charles Darwin Research Station, it truly is one of the best places to stay in. Elegance and comfort go together in this lovely hotel because of the intricate brocade upholstery and baroque style of the hotel itself.



Room Amenities:

- Air conditioning
- daily housekeeping
- private bathroom
- shower
- in-room safe box
- televisions service
- free Wi-Fi in all rooms
- ironing board and hair dryer are also available upon request

Other features/amenities:

- free continental breakfast
- airport shuttle/transportation (with surcharge)
- free Wi-Fi at the lobby
- safety deposit box is also available at the front desk
- you can also request for accessibility needs such as accessible paths of travel; accessible bathrooms; in-room accessibility and roll-in shower, as well

Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- Rates will be discussed upon contacting the hotel.
- Children 2 years old and below can stay in the hotel for free, but only if they are with their parents.





Hotels in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno - San Cristobal Island

Casa Iguana Mar Y Sol - One of the top caliber hotels in San Cristobal, this hotel boasts of giving their guests privacy, sophistication and a great quality of service. With only five suites available, namely the Flamingo Suite, the Tortuga Suite, Fragata Suite, Pez Suite and the Lobo Suite, you'll surely be able to get the kind of privacy and comfort that you need.



Room Amenities:

- king size beds
- air conditioning
- ceiling fan
- private bathroom with hot shower
- separate sitting room
- mini refrigerator

Other features/Amenities:

- most rooms are oceanfront
- ull breakfast, complete with the famous San Cristobal Organic Coffee

Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- In order to reserve your room, you have to make a 25% deposit off the original fee.
- Be sure to book your rooms 30 days before your arrival in order to make sure that you'll be able to have a room reserved under your name
- Room rate is for two guests; extra person fee is charged \$50 per night
- It would be best to choose this hotel if you are staying for over one night, because they prefer guests who will stay in the hotel for at least two days or more.



Blue Marlin Hotel - This is a family friendly hotel that would be best to stay in if you are travelling with your family or with some friends. They have a variation of amenities per room, and these are as follows:

Single Room- queen size bed, individually controlled air-conditioning, wooden furniture, coffee maker, telephone, mini-bar, and chairs and desks. Aside from that, there is also a 32 inch screen LCD TV, free internet access, plus a sink, mirror and a dresser, as well.

Double Room – two full size beds, individually controlled air-conditioning, wooden furniture, telephone, mini-bar, and coffee maker. It also has a full bathroom, mirror, sink, and a large dresser.

Triple Room – three full size beds, individually controlled air-conditioning, internet access, 32 inch LCD television with international channels, coffee maker, sink, tub, and a full bathroom, plus a large dresser and a view of the garden.

Matrimonial Room – One Queen Size bed, individually controlled air-conditioning, 32 inch LCD television with satellite and international channels, mini-bar, coffee maker, internet access, telephone, wooden furniture, desk and chair, large dresser, full bathroom, sink, tub and mirror. It also has a great view of the garden.

Junior Suite – One of the best rooms in the hotel, you will be welcomed with a basket of fresh fruits in here. There is also a Queen size bed, a sofa, wooden furniture, individually controlled air-conditioning, coffee maker, telephone, desk and chair, 32 inch LCD television screen with satellite and international channels, internet access and mini bar. The room also has a full bathroom with a tub, mirror and sink, and a view not

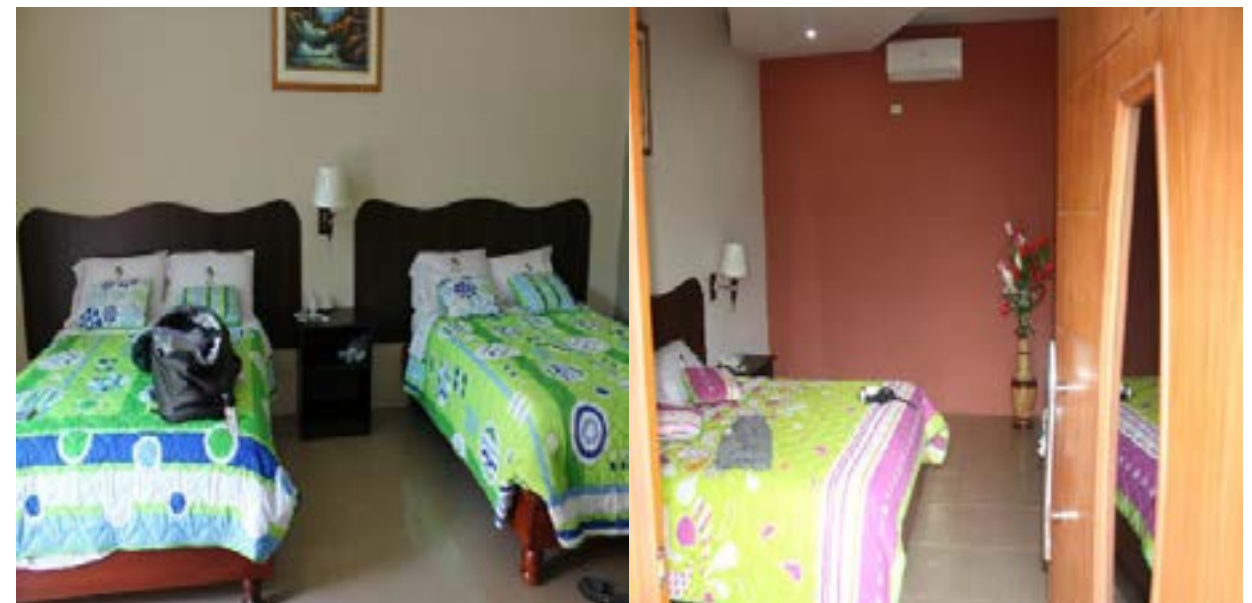
Presidential Suite – Queen size bed, internet access, a sofa, wooden furniture, individually controlled air-conditioning, telephone, desk and chair, mini bar, coffee maker, 32 inch LCD television with satellite and international channels, full bathroom with sink, mirror, tub and a dresser, as well. You'll also be welcomed with a basket of fruits in here, plus, the room also has its own private balcony. It also has a view of the swimming pool and the garden.

Room Amenities:

- spacious lobby
- business center is also available for those who has conferences/meetings to attend to
- Cafeteria offers a sumptuous all-American breakfast
- swimming pool
- airport shuttle/transfer

Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- Reservations shall be done through e-mail. Wait for an invoice e-mail in order to confirm your reservation.
- In order to have a room reserved under your name, you have to make a down payment of 50% the original price.
- Reservations cancelled 10 days before the date of your arrival are subject to a change of 10% of the total amount of reservation.
- Reservations cancelled 2 days before the date of your arrival is subject to a





Hotel Casa Opuntia - This is a waterfront hotel that was just recently refurbished so you can be sure that it is in good condition. This is also close to the kayaking and surfing areas in San Cristobal, so if that's more your thing then this hotel would be perfect for you.



Room Amenities:

- air conditioning
- free internet access
- hot water is available
- biodegradable amenities which is a sign that they care about the environment
- private bathrooms in each bedroom

Other features/Amenities:

- Complementary tea and coffee
- free Wi-Fi
- laundry service
- gourmet restaurant service
- jacuzzi
- pool bar
- pool

Rate Conditions (subject to change):

- Rates are per person, per night.
- All rates include breakfast.
- Rates do not include gratuities/tips to staff





12. Hotels in Quito, Ecuador

Plaza Grande Hotel - Designed in a style that speaks of the colonial era, this is one of the grandest and most sophisticated places to stay in. It is near the Plaza de la Independencia, and the Presidential Place, and is across the Cathedral. Truly, this hotel speaks of the Spanish influences of Galapagos Islands and Ecuador.



Room Amenities:

- all rooms are designed in a colonial era theme
- noise-reducing windows, to help you sleep better and not feel stressed about what's going on outside
- air-conditioning
- climate-control in each room
- Color television with cable service
- all pillows and blankets are anti-allergic
- feather comforters
- hair dryers

Other features/amenities:

- free Wi-Fi
- spa treatments
- gym
- jacuzzi
- valet and limousine service
- carriage rides by moonlight, which is one of the most romantic things that you can experience in the area
- a ballroom is also available





The JW Marriot - This is one of the best hotel chains in the world so you can be sure that your stay would really be comfortable and that you would not have to worry about a thing. This hotel boasts of a great quality of service, plus the fact that you will be well taken care of, as well.



Room Amenities:

- color television
- air-conditioning
- climate control
- direct international dialing
- in-room snack bar
- personal security box/safe
- PC jack is also available

Other features/Amenities:

- Fax and Xerox machines available
- ATM
- laundry services
- bookstore
- beauty parlor
- gift shop
- florist
- the famous JW health club that features a steam Jacuzzi on the terrace, and asun room, as well
- a spa





13. Yachts and Cruises

Now that you know about the different hotels in the area, you should also know about the yachts that you can ride, in case cruises and seeing the Galapagos Archipelago by means of being in the sea is more your thing. We've also included the best itineraries for you, so that you can make the most out of your stay in the islands.



Galapagos Seaman Journey - The Galapagos Seaman Journey is a boutique yacht known for its beauty and the comfort that it is able to give the passengers. Guest can enjoy well-furnished amenities and great food that are being served on board. This yacht is also known as something that can hold up to 16 passengers and is the perfect mix of style, comfort and adventure.

Room Amenities:

- Comfortable sun chairs where you can sit and lounge around in
- Gourmet cuisine with local Ecuadorian dishes, and dishes inspired by other countries, as well. The best thing is that these dishes are prepared by internationally well-trained chefs and cooks.
- kayaks and snorkeling equipment are also available

All Rooms have:

- Panoramic windows
- air-conditioning
- chic bathrooms



Itinerary C1/Activities (subject to change):

Day 1

- On the first day of the cruise, you'll be able to visit Baltra in the island of Santa Cruz where you'll be introduced to the different flora and fauna in the Galapagos Archipelago during lunchtime.
- In the sandy shores of Las Bachas, you'll be able to see some sea turtles resting, and see some sea flamingos in the nearby lake. Aside from that, you'll also have an awesome view of the Pacific Ocean.
- Via a panga (boat) ride, you'll be able to see White Tipped Reef Sharks, Yellow Rays and Spotted Eagle Rays, after which, once you get back to the yacht, you'll be treated to a pre-dinner cocktail which will serve as a welcome gift for you. If you're lucky and the skies are clear during that time, you might get to see awesome constellations such as the Big Dipper, the Orion and the Southern Cross.



Day 2

- The following day, you'll be taken to the Island of Genovesa where you visit el "Barranco steep", which is a rocky path that leads to a high cliff-face. In the afternoon you will visit Darwin Bay, which is the only sandy beach found in the caldera of Genovesa Island.



Day 3

- Day three would bring you to the small island of Plaza Sur /South Plaza which is located at the east side of Santa Cruz island. This place is famous due to its extraordinary flora. In the afternoon we continue to Santa Fe island, also called Barrington Island. The vegetation of this Island is characterized by the vast presence of brush, Palo Santo trees and prickly pear cactus.



Day 4

- On your fourth day in the cruise, you'll be taken to the San Cristobal Center "Crianza Jacinto Gordillo Junco" where you can see the different stages of development of the Galapagos Tortoise. Then in the afternoon you will visit the San Cristobal interpretation center, where you will learn more about the origins of the Galapagos Islands, and the evolution theory of Charles Darwin among other information.



Day 5

- Day five would then be all about a trip to "San Cristobal Galapaguera natural" where you can watch the big tortoise in their natural environment. In the afternoon you will go to "cerro brujo", which is a beautiful white sandy beach where tourists can do snorkeling and watch birds and sea lions.



Day 6

- Day six will bring you to Gardner Islet in Espanola Island famous for its marine landscapes and other snorkeling activities. In the afternoon you will visit islet Osborn and Punta Suarez.



Day 7

- You'll be taken to Floreana Island where you visit Punta Cormorant and the Post Office bay.



Day 8

- On your eight and last day on the cruise, you'll be able to visit Charles Darwin Station in Santa Cruz Island, where you would see more big tortoise in captivity.





Galapagos Evolution - With a capacity for 32 passengers, and with 8 matrimonial suites and 1 Grand Odyssey Suite, your stay in this yacht will surely be memorable. If you're looking for a great kind of service, plus being able to stay in a yacht with amazing accommodations and with fine dining restaurants, then you should definitely ride the Galapagos Evolution.

Features and Amenities:

- sea kayaks
- well-stocked bar
- an ample amount of deck space to help you relax and lounge around
- sun deck
- jacuzzi
- wetsuits
- snorkeling gear
- TV/Video system
- stereo system
- choose to dine indoors or in the Al-Fresco dining area outside
- sundeck with a great view of the surroundings, plus a bar, too
- sun chairs are also available

Rooms:

- There are a total of 16 cabins that have everything that you will need in a hotel
- All rooms are fully air-conditioned and have hypo-allergenic pillows and blankets which will surely make your stay even more comfortable.



Itinerary/Activities (subject to change):

Day 1

- On the first day, after your arrival at Baltra Airport, a guide would be waiting for you.
- o In the afternoon you will be taken to Whalers Bay and Eden Islet in Santa Cruz Island



Day 2

- The following morning, you'll be taken to Isabela Island to Punta Vicente Roca.
- In the afternoon you will visit Punta Espinoza in Fernandina Island



Day 3

- On the third day, and during the morning you will visit Urbina Bay in Isabela island
- In the afternoon, you'll get to visit Tagus Cove.



Day 4

- On the morning of the fourth day, you'll get to visit Pinnacle Rock at Bartolome Island.

- During the afternoon, you'll be taken to Santiago Island in order to visit Sullivan Bay.



Day 5

- On the fifth day, you'll be visiting in the morning Bachas Beach in Santa Cruz island.
- In the afternoon, you'll get to see a lot of iguanas at Dragon Hill Island, but don't worry because iguanas are not all that you will see: Flamingos, Pintail ducks, and birds are all over the place, too. You can walk up the hill and go snorkeling after.



Day 6

- On the six day, you'll be taken to Santa Cruz and visit the sites of Pit Craters, Highlands, and Wild Tortoise Reserve.
- During the afternoon, you'll be taking to Charles Darwin Research Station Breeding center, so you can see the Big Tortoise.



Day 7

- On the seventh day, you will be visiting Punta Suarez in Española Island.
- In the afternoon you will visit Gardner Bay, Gardner Islet, and Osborn Islet.



Day 8

- On the eight day you would be taken to the Interpretation center at San Cristobal Island.
- Late in the morning you would be departing from the airport to Mainland Ecuador.





Galapagos Odyssey - Galapagos Odyssey focuses on making sure that passengers have a great time and have one of the most memorable times in their lives by putting up itineraries that will surely let the passengers have some sense of adventure and fun, and that they'll see and experience the wildlife of the Galapagos Archipelago. Over 100 years in the business and tested by many, you'll surely have a grand time in the Galapagos Odyssey.

Features/Amenities:

- A salon/den area with wide, sliding doors
- Alfresco dining areas
- a seating and sunning space
- Bose Sound System

Rooms:

- **Master Suite** – center lined king-size bed, vanity desk, sofa, his and her sinks, Jacuzzi tub
- **Other Cabins** – queen size bed, vanity desk, sofa, his and her sinks and Jacuzzi tub

All Cabins are fully air-conditioned and have large shower units with massage rooms; television; and natural lighting.



Itinerary Tuesday-Sunday /Activities (subject to change):

Day 1

- Upon arrival at San Cristobal Airport, travellers pass through an airport inspection point to insure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands, as well as to pay the park entrance fee of \$100 (unless it has been prepaid). A guide will meet you, help you collect your luggage, and escort you on a short bus ride to the harbour.
- In the afternoon, visit to Cerro Colorado Tortoises Protection and Growing Center, located at 40 minutes aprox by bus to the south east of the island. This center was built to improve the status of the population of the island tortoises. The center includes a large corral, a Visitors center, breeding center and an interpretative trail. Along this trail is possible to see different species of native and endemic plants as well birds as the San Cristobal Mockingbird, Yellow Warblers, and many species of finches and the Galapagos flycatcher, then we will continue to Puerto Chino beach and enjoy the view at El Mirador.

* Snorkeling



Day 2

- The following day, you'll be taken to Gardner Bay provides an excellent beach for relaxing, swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, and the opportunity to observe sea lions. Here we can also observe sharks in the crystal clear ocean waters.
- On the afternoon, you will be visiting Punta Suarez This rocky land spot sustains one of the most impressive and varied colonies of sea birds in the Galapagos. Along its southern shore, high cliffs rise up from the sea affording the visitor spectacular views of soaring birds and of the blow hole where water spouts up to 50-75 feet into the air according to the intensity of the surf.

* Snorkeling, kayak



Day 3

- On the third day of the cruise, you'll be able to visit Punta Cormorant in Floreana Island. This site offers probably the best Flamingo lagoon in the Galapagos; it is also one of the largest in the islands. It's situated between two tuff lava cones that give the area a special atmosphere. There are various species of shorebirds to observe besides flamingos; the most frequent are common stilts, white-checked pintail ducks and other migratory birds. It is very interesting to see the two distinct beaches: "The Green Beach" (due to its high percentage of olivine crystals in the sand) and the "Flour Sand Beach" which is made up of coral.
 - * Snorkeling, panga ride
- In the afternoon, you will see The Post Office Bay and the Baroness lookout. Historically, this site is the location of a wooden barrel that was placed in the 18th century by the crew of a whaling ship. It has been used since this time by mariners and tourists as a post office. The idea is to carry letters or postcards to their destination by hand. Apart from being the Post Office Barrel, this site was the landing area for some of the first colonists. We will continue to the north of the island and will ascent to an elevated slope to enjoy a beautiful vista at the Baroness Lookout. It is said that Baroness Eloisa von Wagner loved this place and spent several hours watching the horizon. Within walking distance (30 m) are the ruins of what is known as her House. From this lookout, the landscape covers the coastline from the Enderby islet to Post Office Bay, as well as Cerro Pajas, the pool of flamingos and wide forest of Palo Santo.
- In the afternoon, you'd get to see the Sesuvium, which is one of the endemic plants in the area. During the dry season, it is in the shade of yellow or green, but during the rainy season, it turns a brilliant shade of red.



Day 4

- On the following day, you'll get to visit Santa Fe Island. Located in the southeastern part of the Galapagos, this island was formed from an uplift instead than a volcanic origin, this is why it is mostly flat. There are some theories which assure this could be the oldest island in the Archipelago. Santa Fe is the home of a number of endemic species like the Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos snake, Galapagos mockingbird, rice rats and one of the two species of land iguanas of the islands. After disembarkation in the beautiful and clear waters you will be in contact with one of the many sea lion colonies. Along the trail many salt bushes can be seen as well giant Pickly pear cactus, gigantism is a characteristic of oceanic islands. There are great possibilities of snorkeling with playful sea lions and tropical fishes.

* Snorkeling, panga ride

- On the afternoon, you'll be visiting Plazas island located at the east of Santa Cruz Island, and forms part of two islands known as Islas Plazas. Despite its small size, some of the most interesting and outstanding species of the Galapagos are found here. The Plazas land iguanas are smaller than its relatives found at other islands. Throughout the island are several hybrid iguanas, a result of crossing a male marine iguana and a female land iguana, they are unique, recognizable at first glance by their black/gray color, with a land iguana's crest, but face and tail of the marine iguana. The big population of iguanas is due to the presence of tunas, their favorite food. Swallow Tailed Gulls nesting in the rugged cliffs are seen along with other sea birds as: Audubon shearwaters, red-billed tropicbirds, frigate birds and brown pelicans



Day 5

- Seymour is an uplifted (as opposed to volcanic) island and so is generally flat and strewn with boulders. There are good nesting sites here for a large population of magnificent frigate birds. Blue-footed boobies perform their courtship dance in the more open areas and swallow-tailed gulls perch on the cliff edges. Despite the tremendous surf that can pound the outer shore, sea lions haul out onto the beach and can be found bodysurfing. Watch your step, as the boobies don't worry much about where they nest, and you might just step on one.

- The trees are dotted with male frigate birds trying to attract the attention of the ladies by inflating their bright red skin flaps. They sometimes fly in the air to call more attention to themselves. There's a circular path that takes you through the island to a beautiful, rocky shore where the waves crash a silvery-blue.
 - * Snorkeling, panga ride

- On the afternoon, These two small beaches are found to the West of Turtle Cove. Their sand is made of decomposed coral, which makes it white and soft, making it a favorite nesting site for sea turtles. Behind one of the beaches there is a small brackish water lagoon, where occasionally is possible to observe flamingos and other coastal birds, such as black-necked stilts and whimbrels. The other beach is longer, but it has two old barges that were abandoned during the Second World War, when the USA used Baltra Island as a strategically point to protect the Panama Channel.



Day 6

- On the sixth and final day of your cruise, you will be taken to Mosquera Islet is located between Baltra and North Seymour. This is a small islet formed by a geological uplift, with a reef of rocks and coral and a great white sand beach, where lie a big population of sea lions. You can also observe several species of shorebirds. This site offers great snorkeling and swimming. Along the rocks are commonly running Red Lava crabs or Sally light-foot crabs
 - *Snorkeling

- Then transfer to the airport at Baltra Island for flight back home





Galapagos Grand Odyssey - The Galapagos Grand Odyssey will surely make your stay in the Galapagos Archipelago unforgettable and comfortable. With privacy, luxury and comfort, you'll surely enjoy your stay. You can also look forward to experiencing the Galapagos Archipelago's wildlife and get to see many different tourist attractions.

Features/Amenities:

- a vast sundeck
- two Jacuzzis
- hot shower
- large dining areas
- kayaks are also available

Rooms:

- All cabins are fully air-conditioned, with television and large windows that will give you a view of the islands



Itinerary Thursday-Tuesday/Activities (subject to change):

Day 1

- Upon arrival at Baltra Airport, travelers pass through an airport inspection point to insure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands, as well as to pay the park entrance fee of \$100 (unless it has been prepaid). A representative of our M/Y Odyssey I will meet you, help you collect your luggage, and escort you on a bus ride to the Itabaca Channel and then transfer to Puerto Ayora.
- In the afternoon you will visit the the National Park information center, the Van Staelen Exhibition Hall, the Breeding and Rearing Center for young tortoises, former home of the famous Lonesome George (tortoise from Pinta), and adult Galapagos tortoises in captivity.



Day 2

- On your second day, you will check out a delightful place called Tintoreras in Isabela Island. Tintoreras are small islands in front of Puerto Villamil coast. There is Heron lava on the lookout on mangrove branch, and Galapagos Penguin and sea lion often pop out on shore. White-tipped reef sharks are fairly common in the archipelago. Their name in Spanish is Tintorera, thus the name of this site as they are always found here resting in the shallow waters.

* Snorkeling, panga ride, kayak

- Isabela Island is the largest and one of the youngest islands in the Galapagos archipelago. We land in Puerto Villamil, which has the second smallest population in Galapagos with approximately 3000 hab. We head up to the highlands from Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra slope, and later we will do some hiking on uneven terrain until we arrive to the Sierra Negra volcano rim. Sierra Negra is the second widest crater in the world. From this viewpoint, you have fantastic sights to the 6 x 5 -mile-wide crater, the rest of the volcanoes, and Perry Isthmus, a 12 Km wide lava field. From here we can hike to Chico Volcano to watch the striking lava formations, examples of the geological occurrences that have created the Galapagos Islands.

- After lunch will disembark in Puerto Villamil and will be transfer by bus to the Wetland areas here will find a nice Lagoon with Flamingoes and different shore birds. After this will back to the truck and will get to a beautiful mangrove lagoon where you can Swim or snorkeling there its sea turtles, stingrays, Galapagos penguins, sea lions, tropical fish, etc.



Day 3

- In the morning you are going to Punta Moreno is located on the north coast of Isabela Island between the volcano Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul volcano. The trail runs along a lava flow Pahohoe (solidified lava in the form of corrugated or an accordion) into a complex of coastal lagoons, its main attraction are several species of birds which can be found around this lakes and mangroves

*Snorkeling, panga ride

- This is a marine visitor site, the excursion is carried out in a zodiac and so there is no landing point. Your zodiac ride starts with a visit to the Marielas islets where there is the largest and most important penguin colony in the Galapagos Islands. The excursion continues into the cove that is surrounded by red mangroves where you can admire their red roots and green leaves. It is here that you are able to observe sea turtles, flightless cormorants, spotted eagle rays, golden rays, brown pelicans and sea lions. Frequently visitors have been able to see Galapagos Hawks soaring overhead whilst schools of Pompano and Dorado fish swim below

*panga ride



Day4

- Visit Fernandina is the third largest island in the archipelago and has a single visitor site:

- Punta Espinoza, located at the northeastern tip of the island. Just across Tagus Cove, is a visitor site where some of the unique species of Galapagos can be seen. Marine iguanas conglomerate in larger groups than in any other island. They bask around in the sand, swim near the shore and some time block the way at the landing dock. Among the unique species found here, is the Flightless Cormorant. A bird that due to the lack of predators, had to adjust their way of survival and improve their skills of finding food in the ocean. Their wings, tails and feet progressively adapted for swimming. To see these birds, is to witness evolution happening right in front of you. Stay within 2m of the cormorants and penguins.

* Snorkeling



Day 5

- On the Espumilla beach is located in northern coast of Santiago Island in James Bay. During the last presence the El Niño phenomenon, one of the two lagoons in this site, underwent a process of sedimentation, thus causing the disappearance of a representative colony of flamingos. The main attractions are the Palo Santo forest and the marvelous. The beach is an important site for nesting marine turtles.
- * Snorkeling, panga ride, kayak
- In the afternoon you will go to Puerto Egas in Santa Cruz Island. Its black beach is located at the west side of the island and is the main attraction of the island. Their volcanic tuff deposits have favored the formation of this special black sand beach. This site is called Puerto Egas, because there was an attempt of company of Hector Egas, to start the exploitation of salt, which failed because the price of salt in the continent was very cheap, and did not justify its exploitation in Galapagos. The project was abandoned and they left their infrastructure.
- * Snorkeling



Day 6

- This little island is reach at approx 1 hour by panga from Port Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Island. The trail will lead across a dry vegetation zone, substrate of volcanic rocks and sandy areas. There is a small population of blue-footed boobies and frigate birds, which nest in this site. At the beach you will see a large colony of sea lions. It is common to see shorebirds.
- * Snorkeling, panga ride
- After your visit to Isla Lobos, transfer to the airport in San Cristobal and Flight back to Quito or Guayaquil.





Galapagos Integrity - This yacht was built in 1977 and was refitted in 2004. This yacht can accommodate up to sixteen people at once, so if you are planning to bring your family and friends with you on your trip to the Galapagos Islands, then you might as well try this yacht. The Integrity is very warm and inviting with its wood panels and decors and warm wood tones.

Features/Amenities:

- Formal dining room on the first deck, 4-6 guests per table are allowed
- salon/den area on the first deck, as well
- chaise lounges and a bar
- spa tub
- a foredeck with a large, U-shaped sofa that can accommodate up to ten people
- Purified water is free to drink
- draft beer and other alcoholic beverages are also available

Rooms:

Master Cabin – king size bed, toilet and shower

Guest Cabin – queen size bed, toilet and shower

Other cabins – twin beds, shower, toilet, but you can ask for the twin beds to be converted into one king size bed for your convenience

All cabins are fully air-conditioned and have large windows, a satellite telephone, individual climate control, a television with CD/DVD/VHS player and LCD



Itinerary/Activities (subject to change):

Day 1

- On day one and in the afternoon, right after your arrival at the airport, you will be embarking your cruise in the harbor of Puerto Ayora at Santa Cruz island.



Day 2

- On your second day, you will be taken to Punta Cormoran and Champions islet for snorkeling and panga ride at the island of Floreana
- In the afternoon you will be taken to Post Office Bay and Black Beach located at the highlands of Floreana Island.



Day 3

- On your third day you will visit Punta Moreno for a panga ride and shore visit at Isabela Island.
- In the afternoon you will visit Elizabeth Bay



Day 4

- On your fourth day and in the morning you will visit Urbina Bay for a shore visit.

- In the afternoon you will be taken to Fernandina Island in order to visit the site of Punta Espinoza for a shore visit.



Day 5

- On the fifth day you will visit Tagus Cove for a shore visit at Isabela island.
- In the afternoon you will visit the site of Punta Vicente Roca for a panga ride and snorkeling.



Day 6

- On your six day, you'll be taken to Santiago Island in order to visit the site of Puerto Egas for a shore visit, panga ride, snorkeling, and kayak.
- In the afternoon you will be taken to Espumilla Beach and Bucaneer cove for a shore visit.



Day 7

- On your seventh day on the cruise, you'll be taken to the small island of North Seymour for a shore visit, panga ride and snorkeling.
- In the afternoon you would be taken to Santa Cruz Island for a panga ride to Black Turtle cove and las Bachas Beach for a shore visit.

Day 8

- On your eight and last day tour would be taken in the morning to Baltra island in order to pick up your flight at Baltra airport.





Galapagos Grace Motor Yacht - This motor yacht has been around since 1928 but has been refurbished a couple of times to enhance the quality of service and to let it stay strong. It is one of the most recommended marine vehicles when it comes to touring around the Galapagos Archipelago.

Features/Amenities:

- sundecks where you could rest and relax
- snorkeling equipment is available if you want to really see the various marine plants and animals
- kayak equipment is also available
- an on-board mini library to satisfy bookworms' needs
- bar and lounge area for those who want to chill out and have some fun

All rooms have:

- air-conditioning
- private bathroom
- large windows that'll help you enjoy the beauty of the Galapagos Archipelago even more



Itinerary/Activities (subject to change):

Day 1

- Day one and after your morning arrival at San Cristobal, you would be bring on-board the cruise where the crew would be waiting for you.
- In the afternoon you will visit Lobos islet and Kicker Rock.
- Kicker Rock is also known as the Sleeping Lion because it bears resemblance to a Sleeping Lion and is located on the coast of San Cristobal. In here, you'll get to ride small boats known as "pangas" and get to see Frigates, boobies and tropical birds frolicking around.



Day 2

- The following day, you will be taken to Española Island in order to visit Punta Suarez.
- In the afternoon you will visit Gardner Bay, Gardner Islet, and Osborn Islet.



Day 3

- On the third day of your stay, you'll be taken to Floreana Island in order to visit the Post Office Bay, and Asylum of Peace.
- In the afternoon you will visit Punta Cormorant and Champions islet.



Day 4

- On the fourth day you will be taken to the Breeding center at Santa Cruz island.
- After that, you'll be taken to the Highlands where you'll see the Wild Land Tortoise Reserve.



Day 5

- On the fifth day you will visit the site of Bachas Beach at Santa Cruz Island.
- In the afternoon you will be taken to Santiago Island in order to visit the Chinese Hat spot.



Day 6

- On the morning of your six day in the cruise, you'll be taken to Rabida Island.
- In the afternoon you will the site of Sullivan Bay at Santiago island.



Day 7

- On the seventh day you would visit the sites of Pinnacle Rock and Overlook at Bartolome Island.

Day 8

- On the final day of the cruise, which is the eight day, you'll be taken to Mosquera Islet and late in the morning you will be taken to Baltra Island Airport in order to return to Ecuador Mainland.

14. Child Friendly Venues in Ecuador's Main Cities and Towns

If you have a kid with you and you are in Ecuador, it is definitely important that you visit places that the child would appreciate and that you know will be safe for the kid. If you see a kid happy because you brought him/her somewhere nice, then you can be sure that you did a good thing. Here are the most recommended child friendly places in the main cities of Ecuador.



Quito

1. Museo Nacional de Banco Central del Ecuador (National Museum and Central Bank of Ecuador) – Visiting this place would help you get to know more about the culture and history of Ecuador. You need at least four hours to see everything in the museum and to really soak in the culture.

Things to see:

- **Archaeological Gallery** – Artifacts from 11,000 B.C. are on display right here. You will understand the influence of the Inca and Columbian Civilization in the Ecuador that we know today. One of the best things you will see in here is the Canari Mummy, a mummy of one of Canary Islands' ancestors, the Guanache people. You will also see how much the early people respected and worshipped the sun through the many chest decorations and figurines that were made as a representation of the sun.
- **Colonial Art Gallery** – showcases artworks by local women from 1534-1820.
- **Museum of Musical Instruments** – Kids will surely love the many instruments they will see in here such as percussion and string instruments. It's best to bring kids with musical inclinations or gifts in here.



2. Mini City – Ever played the game “The Sims”? Well, this is a real life representation of that. Kids aged 4 to 14 are encouraged to play here. They will be given play money that they can use to “pay” for their needs and their bills while part of the game. Establishments such as the government office, malls, hospitals, bakeries, restaurants, schools, parks, theatres, fire stations, and even factories where people could work are recreated. Children’s ambitions will also be seen as they try to become mini versions of firemen, teachers, bakers, doctors, actors and actresses, and whatever else they could dream of. This will certainly be a fun and unforgettable experience for the kids.



3. Amazonia Jungle – This time, you get to play, as well, because you will try the life of someone who lives in the jungle for a couple of minutes or an hour or two. You will be camping in the jungle, will gather food from the fruit trees and vegetation all around, and will also hunt some fish. You and your kids will surely enjoy this moment and this will also help you appreciate what you have even more.



4. La Mitad de Mundo – The name of this place literally translates to “The center of the earth” because it is located very near the equator. Here, they can visit the Intinan Museum where they would be able to see cultural and scientific exhibits. There are monuments, and picture-taking sessions that they could delve into in this place. Families can also buy a lot of souvenirs here.



5. Vulkano Park – This is the most popular amusement park in Quito. Kids and kids at heart will certainly love it here because there are 2 rollercoasters and 24 more attractions that they can ride in such as Barca Pirata (Viking), Carrusel (Carousel), Convoy Race (Bump Cars), Family Swinger, La Torre (The Tower, a vertical rollercoaster), and the Kite Flier, amongst others. They can also celebrate their birthdays here, eat delicious food and take a tour of the park via Vulkano Park's very own tour bus.



6. The Teleferico – Try this cable car ride which will allow you to see the Andean mountains and Quito from up above. The Teleferico is known as one of the world's highest cable car rides, which can take you up to 12,000 feet high. 6 passengers can ride one cable car altogether.



7. Cotopaxi National Park – This is not just your regular park. Visiting this place would be able to help you see an indigenous market nearby, and also watch at randomly some bands or singers playing live. Kids will also enjoy the number of shops in here where they could buy toys or souvenirs. The market is particularly colourful, too.



8. Papayacta Hot Springs – If you want to relax and just have some great bonding time with the whole family, this place is perfect for you. If you're not fond of hot springs, don't worry because there are also cold pools in the area where you and your family could swim and play around. You can also go horseback riding and hiking here.



9. Guayllabamba Zoo – a mere thirty minutes away from the city center, birds, snakes, and Iguanas in this zoo. There are also some plants around that you have to check out.



10. Parque la Carolina – If you want some unabashed bonding time with your kid, then you can choose to go in the beautiful Parque la Carolina. This park is very much full of lush trees and some flowering plants, so you can just lay a mat somewhere and have a picnic. And, since it is close to the city center, you can hang out in malls and various restaurants or shops after.

11. Pichincha Volcano – Going here with your kids, family and friends would certainly be a treat. Don't worry because you do not just have to walk to get to see the volcano—you can ride the tram or teleferico/ferry to get to see this volcano. There's also an amusement park nearby so you and the kids would certainly enjoy this experience. Do not forget to bring food and water with you as there are not that many shops around the area



Guayaquil

1. Parque Historico Guayaquil (Guayaquil Historical Park) – Featuring different ecosystems, kids will surely learn something about the various flora and fauna from the mainland. Some historic buildings are also recreated in here in order for kids to see them up close. Skits are also staged daily in front of a beautiful hacienda in order to depict the kind of life in the 19th century, and you'll also appreciate that the streets are designed to mimic that of the 1900's so you'll definitely feel like you've gone back in time to watch history unfold right in front of your eyes.



2. Botanical Garden of Guayaquil – It's always nice to see flowering plants and that's why the Botanical Garden of Guayaquil is a must-see, not just for kids but for people of all ages, as well. Since this is located in the suburb of Las Orchideas, Orchids are very prominent in the area and you'll see them in almost all colors imaginable. Palm trees, and other kinds of plants such as Heliconias and Bromeliads can also be seen in here, plus there are also some small ponds with some Koi fish and Carps swimming that your kids will surely enjoy seeing. A cafeteria and a coffee shop overlooking the beautiful Pacific Ocean is also somewhere you can lounge in and relax after walking around the garden.



3. Museum of Anthropology and Contemporary Art – Since its opening in 2004, this museum has been one of the most favorite places of tourists in the harbor's city. Aside from showcasing art, short films about those who made the art are also being shown in here which makes it different from most museums. Aside from that, there is also a library and a bookstore in the area that you could visit.



4. Playas – Considered as the best beach in the province of Guayas, it has recently developed a vast infrastructure in hotels and restaurants, keeping the same traditional outlook. Enjoy swimming and playing games with your family and friends in here. Kids will also love seeing shells and some hermit crabs all around.



5. Las Penas – Kids who have early been taught that walking is good for one's health would surely appreciate this place because you can just walk and eat around the line of vintage houses that will let you see how Guayaquil looked like back in the day.

Puerto Ayora- Santa Cruz Island

1. Galapagos Beach (Tortuga Bay) – With mangroves and different flora and fauna all around, this is the perfect place to bond with your kids. They will surely love seeing the Blue and Red footed Boobies, the land and marine iguanas, and so many other animals, as well.





2. Charles Darwin Research Station – Let kids be inspired by the studies and discoveries and the life of the famous geologist, Charles Darwin. The Research Station's volunteers and staff will show you around and help you understand about the Galapagos Archipelago's biodiversity and also help you get to know more about Charles Darwin. You will also get to see Iguanas, Turtles and even baby turtles all over the station which will help you appreciate the different kinds of life even more. In 2002, The Charles Darwin Research Station also won the International Cosmos Prize, which is in honor of the fact that the place contributes to the harmonious coexistence of humans and animals.



3. El Chato Reserve – If you and your kids want to see Giant Galapagos Tortoises, then this is the place to visit. Tortoises frequent the area, especially during the rainy season (June to November), and if you're lucky, you might get to see a giant one. You can also ride horses in here, or go bird-watching, if that's more your thing. The point is, if you want to be one with nature, then this place is definitely somewhere that you have to go.



4. Puerto Ayora Fish Market – You'll be treated to a series of boats filled with freshly caught fish that you can buy or even ask to be cooked for you. You can also watch the fishermen catch the fish, or even try catching some yourself. It's also a great place to take photographs.



5. Punta Estrada Beach in Puerto Ayora – One of those beaches that has not been polluted by contaminants and the like, you will enjoy how relaxing it is to swim and just stay there. It is considered as a protected beach because of its natural beauty and cleanliness. You can also go snorkelling there and relax on the lounge chairs that you can rent from nearby shops.

Puerto Baquerizo Moreno- San Cristóbal Island

1. Laguna El Junco – A freshwater lake that's situated in the middle of a dormant volcano, this is a good place for nature-tripping. Giant Frigate Birds often frequent the area, alongside some bull sea lions.



2. La Galapaguerra de Cerro Colorado – Aside from seeing tortoises, you will also get to see some frigate birds in here. Plus, you can also go hiking with the whole family as this is said to be one of the safest places in the area when it comes to hiking and exploring.



Puerto Velasco Ibarra- Isla Floreana

- **1. Boat tours in Floreana** area will usually take you to La Loberia, where there are a lot of sea lions around, blue footed boobies and iguanas. This is a good way to see the wildlife in San Cristobal and learn about the different kinds of animals that are living there. Swimming is also okay in La Loberia, just as long as you do it in the calm areas in the beach.
- **2.** Another part of the boat tour is that you will be taken to the caves where early settlers once lived. You will also get to see a lot of corals and then eat lunch at Puerto Ibarra and swim at Playa Negra. Most cruises also take you in the said places because these are some of the most popular and beautiful tourist attractions in the Galapagos Islands.
- **3.** There are two beautiful beaches in Floreana; there is the green sand beach, the color of which is brought by the presence of olive crystals. There is also the white sand beach called Flour Beach where you could walk on fine, pulverized coral.



Puerto Baquerizo - Isla Santa Cruz

1. Cabo de Hornos – If your kid wants to see some sea lions, then this beach is the place to visit. Sea lions frequent this place and most of them are really, friendly, too so you may touch them or even get a kiss, if that's what you want.



2. Most beaches are good for surfing – So, if you have some equipment and you or the kids would love to go surfing, then you could do so in here. Just make sure that the weather is not that rainy if ever you choose to go surfing for a better experience.



16. Restaurants for family meals

Of course, one of the most important things to think about when going to a new place is where you should be eating. Food is definitely very important and that's why you have to know where the best places to eat are and what these places offer.



Quito

1. Edo Sushi Bar – If you love Japanese food and cannot leave your love for it behind, even if you're in another country, then you'd be glad to know that one of the best Sushi Bars in the world is in Quito. A fusion of Japanese plus Peruvian influences, your Sushi experience will surely be one of a kind in here. Customers also say that the staff is really helpful and that the ambience is warm and cozy.

What they offer:

- Teru Maki
- Tataki Salad
- Amaimo Mirugai
- Edo Salad
- Seaweed Salad
- Edamame
- Shuriken





2. Zazu Bar and Restaurant – Named as one of the best restaurants in Quito, customers agree that Zazu is certainly one of the places that you have to visit in case you're planning to visit the Capital. They serve some of the best dishes, plus you can also have the dishes customized and cooked according to your preferences. If you're a vegetarian or a Vegan, then they surely can make some changes in the menu for you—all you have to do is ask.



What they offer:

- Peruvian Ceviche (a combination of Fish fillet, onions, lemon, coriander, red hot pepper) – this is best served with Potato chips, corn or sweet potato
- Grilled Ceviche (a combination of swordfish, lemon, bok choy, onions, yellow pepper, garlic crunchies and potatoes)
- Ceviche Pangora (made from Pangora, olive oil and lemon)
- Almond Tiradito (made from almond oil, sesame seeds, ginger, corvine, almonds and lemon)
- Grilled Salmon (with Asparagus, Pancetta, Spinach and Pepper Sauce)
- Tuna in Pistachio Crust (with mashed potato and Wasabi)
- Mero and Prawns (a combination of prawns, groupers, sautéed vegetables and seafood hot sauce)
- Organic Chicken (made out of Chicken, corn mash, demi glace pepper and vegetable icing)
- Cream of Tomato Soup (made from baked tomatoes, tomato powder, mascarpone, and croutons)
- Locro Pangora (made from Pangora, Avocado, quail eggs and cream cheese)
- You may also try their snacks such as: Crab cakes, crispy squid, and Pangora Canelones.
- They also offer salads such as: Tomato Mozzarella Salad, Organic Salad, Asparagus and Cheese Salad, and Pangora Salad.
- Champagne and Wine are also available here.





3. Ciao Bella – With its beautiful name, you can expect great dishes from Ciao Bella. It is one of the most recommended restaurants when it comes to breakfast meals and pastries, so if you have a sweet tooth, or need to start your day early, then you definitely have to check this restaurant out. Their staff is also very friendly and accommodating, and customers say that the owners are wonderful people, as well.

What they offer:

- Tiramisu – this is considered as their best seller and have received rave reviews from mostly everyone
- Coffee con dulce – sweetened coffee at its best
- Other breakfast sandwiches





4. Fried Bananas – a great restaurant with a quirky name, customers love the casual and relaxed atmosphere of this place, and of course, the really great variety of dishes, too.

What they offer:

- Shrimp Ceviche (Ecuadorian style Shrimp Ceviche)
- Fried Banana Shrimps (Shrimps fried with mushroom sauce and shaped like a banana)
- Mozzarella and Honey Rocklette (Grilled Mozzarella with honey sauce)
- Lettuce Soup (a combination of fresh lettuce and chicken)
- Garden soup (a soup made with fresh vegetables and chicken)
- Avocado cream soup (Ecuadorian style soup made from avocados and chicken)
- Baked Trout (baked trout with friend green vegetables, fried yucca, and rice and is best served with salad)
- Shrimp Pasta with Saffron Cream
- Grilled Chicken (Grilled chicken breast with fresh potatoes, yucca and other vegetables)
- Grilled T-Bone (New York style grilled beef mixed with fresh vegetables and potatoes)





5. Lua – This is one of the best Peruvian restaurants not just in Quito, but in the world, as well. Situated in the streets of La Mariscal, it's a good hideaway from the hustle and bustle of the city.

What they offer:

- Mediterranean Trout (Trout cooked in garlic, vinegar, olive oil and nuts)
- Parmesan Trout (Trout mixed with Parmesan cheese, plain yogurt and milk)
- Shrimp Ceviche (Ecuadorian Shrimp Ceviche mixed with banana chips and tomatoes)
- Glazed Tuna (Tuna cooked in soy sauce, ginger and brown sugar)
- Ravioli stuffed with Oxtail (made with tomato sauce and machengo cheese)
- Oriental broth (made from shrimp filling and almonds)
- Quesadilla (made with creamy vanilla shortbread)
- Goat cheese flan (with Granny Smith Apple compote, cinnamon ice cream and caramel)





6. Carmine – Known for its elegant building and royal ambience, eating here would certainly make you feel like royalty, even for just a couple of minutes or an hour or two. This is also a good place for dating. The restaurant serves a fusion of Italian, Mediterranean and other international dishes, too.

What they offer:

- Caesar Salad
- Fried Calamari
- Smoked Salmon
- Vitello Tonnato
- Grilled Portobello Mushrooms
- Caprese with Prosciutto and Pepper
- Seafood Spaghetti
- Fettucinni alla amatriciana
- Veal Ravioli
- Three Pastas
- Ink black Risotto
- Grilled Veal Steak
- Lobster Steak
- Grilled King Prawns
- White Sea Bass Frutti di Mare
- Grilled Salmon with Balsamic Sauce





Guayaquil

1. La Trattoria Piccolo Mondo – Having been in the industry for 34 years, La Trattoria Piccolo Mondo only serves the best Italian dishes that will surely make your mouth water. The ambience of the place is also very authentically Italian and it'll surely make you feel like you are in Italy—you see, it'll feel like you were able to travel to two new places at once: Galapagos Islands, and Italy!

What they offer:

- Pirata Spaghetti
- Carapccio de Polipo
- Minestrone
- Capresse Salad





2. Ta Taberna Libanesa – a restaurant that offers authentic Lebanese dishes that's great for those people who want to eat out late, late at night. The ambience of the place is also very calm and comforting and is a good place to hang out with one's family and friends. The food here is really great and they are kept in bamboo boxes which keeps them fresh and great for a long time.

What they offer:

- **Lebanese Pastries** – Made from dried fruits and is just the right amount of sweet and tangy.
- **Puff Pastry Rolls** – Made from walnuts, pistachios, honey, almonds and a combination of syrup and other dried fruits.
- **Hummus** – A popular Lebanese/Arabic dip made from chickpeas mixed with olive oil, lemon, tahini, garlic and salt.
- **Waraa Anab** – Spring Roll made out of grapes
- **Waraa Malfout** – Spring Roll made out of cabbage





3. Riviera – Another Italian Restaurant situated just near the old city of Las Penas. After a day of walking in Las Penas, you can spend some time in here and eat some great food while enjoying a good view of the river. It's a great way to bond with your family and friends. Plus, they offer a variety of unique dishes, too, so your experience here would definitely be memorable.

What they offer:

- Soft Peppers (made with Italian Pesto and Anchovies)
- Carpaccio de Corvina (made with Latin salsa and olio de luigi mixed with naranjilla)
- Carpaccio di Meat (Parmiaggiano Reggiano made with arugula, lemon and salt)
- Carpaccio di Smoked Meat (made with arugula and olio)
- Tomato Mozzarella (made with sea salt and olio basil)
- Crunchy Corvina Cubes with Tartar sauce
- Calamaretti Frutti (this is a light meal made from Fried Apanadura mixed with tartar sauce)
- Portobellos (mixed with Italian cream cheese)
- Polpo Alla Brace (Soft Octopus freshly caught from the Pacific Ocean and cooked in Marinara sauce)
- Papardelle and Zucchini Pasta (cooked in mild sauce with shrimp and zucchini)
- Taglierini with Alba Truffle Butter
- Spaghetti Provocatini (Pasta in Avocado sauce mixed with basil and aromatic olio)
- Spaghetti Mar Ligure (Pasta cooked in wine with mussels, clams, and parsley)





4. Marrecife Marisqueria – An Ecuadorian seafood restaurant that would certainly fill up your stomach and let you enjoy your stay in the Galapagos Archipelago even more. Non-meat lovers would also appreciate this place a lot.

What they offer:

- Calamari Ceviche
- Shrimp Ceviche
- Marinara Soup
- Shrimp soup
- Shrimp Salad
- Octopus Salad
- Shrimp with rice
- Seafood sweat
- Cup of wine





5. Sweet and Coffee – a coffee and pastry shop that's unique because all of the food and coffee they serve are fresh from their farm, meaning you'd know that they use only the best kind of ingredients and that everything is clean and new. With their unique products and the great ambience of the restaurant, you'd certainly have a fun, amusing time. And, since the owners of this restaurant gets to help a lot of people out by donating to charities, eating here would be a good thing not just for you but also for those who will be getting help with the payment you have given.

What they offer:

- Oreo Cookie Shake
- Cold Coffee Latte
- Chai Tea Latte
- Cappuccino Cold House
- Spinach Pie
- Ham and Cheese Pie
- Caprese Sandwich
- Apple and Walnut Cake
- Caramel Apple Cheesecake
- Strudel
- Cuatro Leches
- Muffins
- Tiramisu
- Chard Tart





6. Caracol Azul – another great seafood restaurant in Guayaquil, the food here is great and freshly caught from the Pacific Ocean. They also provide discounts to groups of people, especially during the holidays, so if you are travelling with your family or friends, then you might as well try eating out here. What's also good is that they allow customers to choose the level of spiciness of the food they serve, so if you are not very much into spicy food, then you can ask them to tone down the hotness of what you have ordered.

What they offer:

- Breaded Shrimp (fried breaded shrimps)
- Breaded fried crab claws (fried crab claws with breading)
- Smash Shrimp (shrimps marinated in a mixture of butter and white wine)
- Deep Fried Cracking Sea Bass (deep fried sea bass cooked in onion and tomato sauce)
- Sea Bass Peruvian Ceviche (Sea Bass marinated in chilli and onion)
- Mixed Peruvian Ceviche (different kinds of shellfish marinate in a mixture of garlic, lemon, onion and chilli)
- Pangora Salad with Avocado (Pangora mixed with olive oil, tomato and avocado)





7. Red Crab – a restaurant known for its laid-back, festive vibe, you'll surely feel like you're one of the locals if you decide to eat here because the crabs that will be served will be freshly caught from the sea, and there are also some aquariums all around the place to make sure that you feel the vibe of the sea. Wear something cool and casual in here because eating might be messy. After all, you'll be eating crabs, so you know what to look forward to. But, don't worry because they offer other non-crab dishes, as well.

What they offer:

- Creole Crab (Whole Crabs boiled in a mixture of spices, corn and tubers)
- Special Crab Sauté (cooked in a special recipe of garlic sauce)
- Sweet stuffed Crab Shell
- Special Pesto Crab
- Crab with Garlic Sauce
- Crab salad
- Shrimp Salad
- Lobster Salad
- Stuffed Avocado (avocado stuffed with shrimps and crab meat)
- Beef Stroganoff
- Chicken Cordon Bleu
- Chicken Sauté (sautéed chicken in orange sauce)
- Breaded chicken (cooked with grated cheese and ham)
- Milanese (broiled steak)
- Coconut Cheesecake
- Passion fruit Cheesecake
- Chocolate Volcano





Puerto Ayora - Isla Santa Cruz

1. Galapagos Deli – As many people say, breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it sets your mood for the rest of the day. If you were able to eat something good in the morning, then surely, you'll feel better for the rest of the day and this restaurant is perfect for that. Aside from breakfast meals, they also serve dishes that are perfect for brunch and snacks, too.



What they offer:

- Thin crust pizza (this is definitely a must-try since its one of those dishes that people have been talking about, with regards to this restaurant. The pizzas are with generous amounts of cheese and meat, so you'll definitely be looking forward to that.)
- Ground coffee
- Sandwiches made with their famous homemade bread
- Milkshakes
- Ice Cream (in a variety of flavours such as Tamarind, Strawberry, Mango, and even Fruitilla, or a combination of different fruits)





2. Isla Grill – Aside from being a well-known Pizza restaurant, Isla Grill also serves Ecuadorian and Argentinean dishes that are perfect for every time of the day. This is one of the best restaurants to do some bonding time with your family and friends. Best of all, everything on the menu will be served with your choice of side dishes—broccoli and arugula are very much recommended.

What they offer:

- Grilled Steak
- Grilled Fish
- Pizza
- Burgers
- Salads





3. Cafe Hernan – A vegan-friendly restaurant that's perfect for brunch, snacks, or even late night eating, this restaurant is growing in popularity because of the fact that their staff is really amicable and friendly, and that they serve not just Vegan dishes, but dishes for meat lovers, as well. You can also ask the staff to remove certain ingredients for you, in case you're not fond or you are allergic to those ingredients. In short, everyone is allowed to eat in here.

What they offer:

- Caprese Salad
- Shrimp cooked in garlic wine sauce
- French toast with bacon
- Pizza (with tuna, parmesan cheese and chilli)
- Pescado con salsa olivio
- Milkshakes
- American Breakfast (Fried or scrambled eggs or omelette, cheese, jam, bread, butter, coffee, and milk or tea)
- Ice cream





4. The Rock – With a vast selection of meals and drinks, you'd surely find something that you like in this restaurant. The ambience here is very warm and welcoming which makes it a great place for bonding with the ones you love.

What they offer:

- Rey de Mares (cod with a crispy crust stuffed with cheddar cheese and vegetables)
- Pork's ribs in summer sauce (Tender pork ribs with cardamom, honey and pine apple sauce)
- Seafood barbecue (A mix of grilled lobster, octopus, shrimps, scallops and tuna fish cooked garlic butter and served with vegetables and The Rock potatoes)
- Ocean Spaghetti (Pasta with sauce made from tomatoes and fresh, ocean shrimps)
- Termidor Lobster (Fresh Lobster served with The Rock potatoes and vegetables)
- Espresso with whipped cream
- Hot chocolate
- Frappuccino
- Capuccino
- Irish coffee (made with coffee, whiskey, and whipped cream)
- Nutella Capuccino
- American Breakfast (Fried or scrambled eggs or omelette, cheese, jam, bread, butter, coffee, and milk or tea)
- Continental Breakfast (bread, cheese, jam, coffee and milk or tea)
- Galapagueno Breakfast (fried plantain served with cheese, coffee, juice, milk or tea)
- The Rock Breakfast (granola, bread, yogurt, cheese, butter, milk or tea)
- Chicken Salad (made with chicken, celery, nuts, lettuce, tomato, onions and ma yonnaise)
- Salmon Salad (smoked salmon with celery, nuts, onions, and organic lettuce and tomato)





5. ServiSabroson – If you're looking for an authentic kind of Ecuadorian dining experience, then you must definitely check out the ServiSabroson line of cafeterias in Puerto Ayora. A whole cobblestoned street is lined up with kiosks that serve only the best Ecuadorian dishes. You'll definitely feel one with the islands if you choose to eat in here. Plus, it's very budget-friendly, too, and customers agree that they serve really delicious food in large servings without burning a hole in your pocket. You'll also have a great view of the sea and the Tortugas Bay while dining in here.

What they offer:

- A variety of fish dishes
- A variety of crab dishes
- Grilled Lobster
- Grilled Shrimp
- Churrasco
- Menestra (beans)
- Salad
- Fried Potatoes
- Encebollado soup
- Maremoto soup





6. La Tintorera Restaurant and Pub – With a tropical atmosphere and good music all day long, you can be sure that your dining experience in here would be a blast. You can also ask the staff for food recommendations in case you're not sure of what you'll be ordering.

What they offer:

- Ecuadorian coffee
- Tuna with soy sauce and sesame seeds
- Vegetarian burger
- Carrot soup
- Sushi
- A various selection of burgers
- Grilled Fish
- Locro de Papas (cheese and potato soup)
- Mojitos





7. Angermeyer Point Restaurant – dubbed as the Ecuadorian restaurant with the most atmospheric location. It is a waterfront restaurant that serves fresh and superb seafood dishes and is known for being impeccably clean. The restaurant is an old stone house and is the former home of Karl Angermeyer, one of the most famous painters and artists in Galapagos Islands. You'll also love the ambience of the place and the fact that you'll have a great view of the Pacific Ocean and some animals such as Boobies, crabs, sea lions and hawks, amongst others, since you can choose to dine by the decks of the house.

What they offer:

- Red Sushi
- Smoked tuna (best eaten as an appetizer)
- Fish fillet (stuffed with seafood and has a crustacean-like texture which is very interesting)
- A variety of seafood dishes
- Mojitos





Puerto Baquerizo - Isla San Cristobal

1. Rosita – the most recommended restaurant in Puerto Baquerizo, San Cristobal because of its reasonably prized meals and the fact that it's close to tourist destinations such as the Galapaguerra de Cello Colorado, Punta Suarez and Bahia Gardner.

What they offer:

- Spaghetti Bolognese
- French Fries
- Fish soup
- La Cena (dinner meal with meat, rice, soup and a side dish)
- Chicken Pasta
- Vegetable Cream Soup
- Lobster Fettuccine





2. Calypso – If you like American or Italian food, then this is the place to visit. Think of it as an Ecuadorian version of a fast food.

What they offer:

- Pizza
- Hamburgers
- Sandwiches
- Desserts
- A vast selection of juices





3. Mi Grande (The Happy Man) –Aside from a breakfast meal, this restaurant is your best stop for an array of drinks that are very delicious and filling.



What they offer:

- Batidos (handmade beverages that are popular in Latin America which are similar to smoothies and are made from a combination of milk, fruits and ice)
- Fruit juices
- Espresso made with fresh coffee beans

Now that you know everything that you need to know about the places you have to see, the hotels or yachts you'll be staying in, and the kind of food that you could try in the Galapagos Archipelago, it's time to start packing.



17. Packing Checklist

Before going to the Galapagos Islands, you first have to pack your clothes and your things in order to make sure that you have everything that you need with you during your trip. It would be hard to realize that you do not have the right amount of clothes with you, or that Here are the things that you have to pack now:

- **Your travel documents (Passports, Tickets, Valid ID, hotel/cruise voucher)** – Of course, you cannot go on with your trip if you do not have your passport or any other of your travel documents with you. It's also important that you have your hotel voucher, and of course, your plane ticket with you. Do not let yourself undergo the hassle of not being able to push through with your trip just because you did not bring the necessary documents with you.
- **Money** – Make sure that you have US Dollars with you as this is the currency used in the Galapagos Islands.
- **Clothes** – This is a given since it would be unruly if you parade around in the streets naked, right?



Best kind of clothing to bring in the Galapagos Islands:

- **For Daytime** – A comfortable/loose T-shirt or a tank top and shorts for women; A T-shirt or wife beater shirt and shorts for men
- **For Nighttime** – a dress shirt, or a sundress for women/ Loose t-shirt and shorts/ pajamas; T-shirt and shorts/pajamas for men
- **At least two pairs of light pants**
- **A jacket, sweater or a sweatshirt for cold nights**- bringing these is also essential if you're going to spend some time by the beach because it may get too cold for you.
- **Underwear** – Of course, you need some couple of pairs of underwear with you because it might be hard to look for an underwear/lingerie shop around and it's always important to have these pieces of clothing with you wherever you go.
- **Sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat** – To protect your face and protect your eyes from the harsh rays of the sun.
- **A bathing suit/swimwear** – Since there are a lot of beaches in the Galapagos archipelago, it is highly recommended that you bring some swimwear with you during your trip.
- **Toiletries** – It is essential to bring a toothpaste, toothbrush, some razors (for shaving), shaving kits, soaps, conditioners, and combs with you. Of course, you have to look presentable during your trip and good hygiene really is very important all the time.
- **Foot wear** – Teva-style sandals are best used for traversing the Galapagos Islands because they are very reliable when it comes to keeping your feet protected from getting burns or blisters and are great for both muddy, and dry paths.
- **A duffel bag or a backpack** – It would be useless bringing a shoulder bag to the sea because it is very inconvenient. A duffel bag or a backpack would be able to hold all of your things, which is great because it means that you'd have no worries about where to place your things. A suitcase or a bag with wheels could also be good and you can just leave them at the hotel or at the cruise ship if you're going to get around.
- **A Camera** – It's very important to document your trip and take some photos/videos because this is a once in a lifetime experience and there are so many things to see and so many places to visit in the Galapagos Archipelago.

- **A mobile phone** – So that you can contact emergency number or your family/friends, in case something happens. It would also be good if you choose to bring one of the earlier phone models
- **Batteries** – For your camera, and for your phone, too.
- **Travel adapters** – because not every electrical socket is the same, especially in a different country. NA Plugs are the ones used in the Galapagos Archipelago.
- **Binoculars (7 x 25 is the most recommended one)** – in case you want to see the plants and animals clearly
- **Medication** – If you are suffering from allergies, asthma or other ailments that require you to have some medication handy at all times, then please do not forget to bring your medicine with you.
- **First Aid kits** – It is very important to have a first aid kit with you if you are traveling to a new place since you never really know what could happen so it's always best to be prepared. A first aid kit should contain:

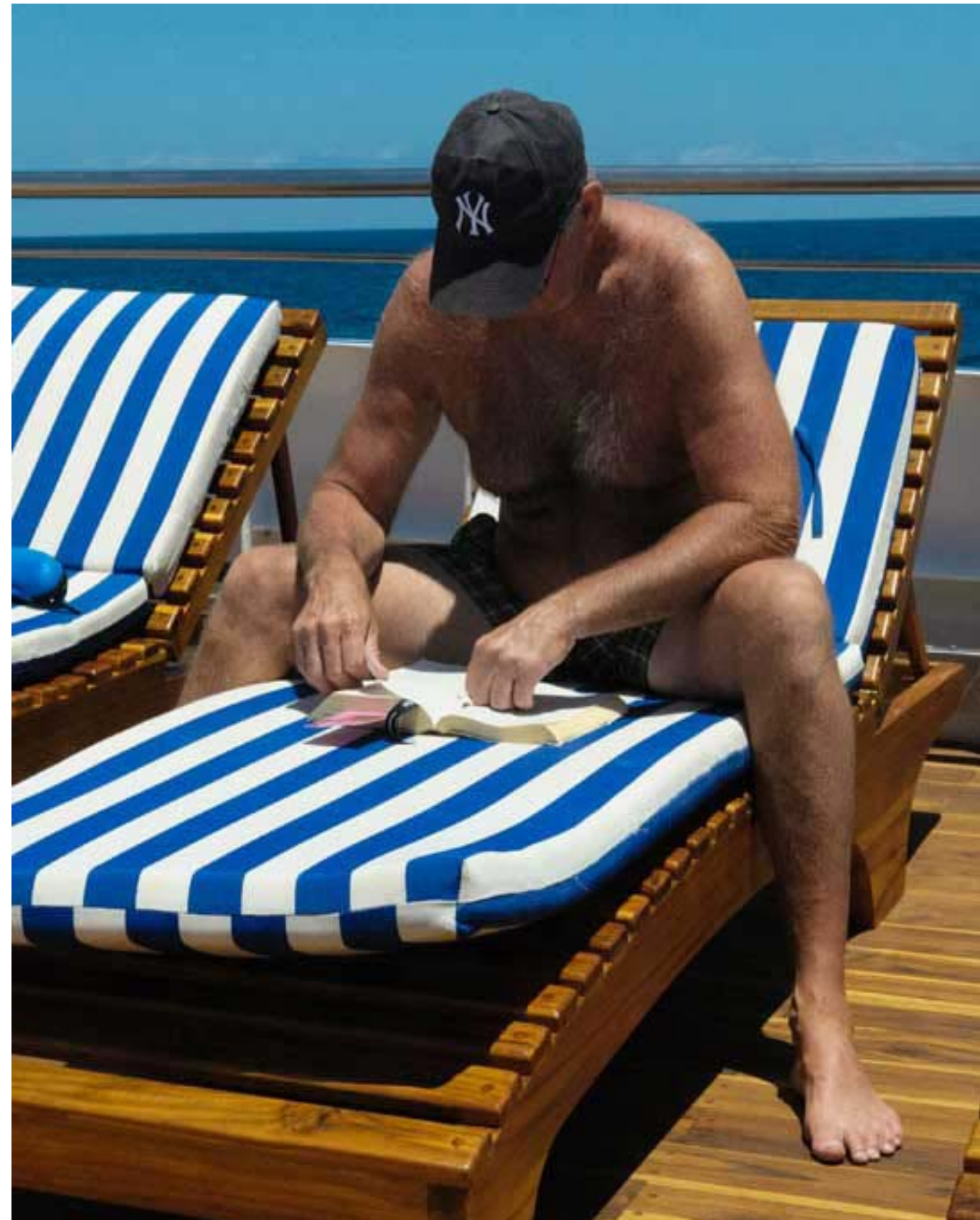
- **Over the counter medicine such as Ibuprofen;** Aspirin; Anti-histamine; cough and cold medications
- **Anti-diarrhea medication** – because the cuisine in some restaurants is different and since the Galapagos Islands is a different place from wherever it is that you're from, it's best to prevent diseases and other ailments from happening.
- **Hydrocortisone Cream** – this is good for minor skin irritations and insect bites
- **Aloe Vera Gel** – is best for keeping the skin moisturized
- **Sun Block/Sunscreen** – because you'll be getting around a lot and you need something that will keep your skin healthy and nourished. It's always good to keep your skin and yourself protected from the harsh rays of the sun because if your skin gets burned, you might get skin cancer, and your skin will age easily which is never good
- **Calamine Lotion** – is used not just to relieve itch and skin irritation, but also to relieve pain. This is best used if your skin gets irritated from plants such as poison ivy, poison sumacs or poison oaks.
- **Antiseptic solution** – to prevent the possibility of infection in case something happens
- **Towels/handkerchiefs**
- **Medical gauze**
- **Elastic wrap and bandage strips**
- **Cotton balls**
- **Q-tips/cotton-tipped swabs**
- **Tweezers or Scissors, to help you cut the gauze/bandage, if needed**
- **Hydrogen Peroxide**
- **Latex gloves**, so that in case something happens to your companion/s, you can try to help them out because the gloves would make sure that you will not get to infect them more, in case your hands are dirty or if you are in dirt roads
- **Eye drops- eyes** easily get irritated by pollutants and pollen/other allergens in the air so it's best to have some eye drops at the ready



- **Petroleum Jelly**
- **A Thermometer**
- **Hand sanitizer**
- **Anti-bacterial soap**
- **Eye drops- eyes** easily get irritated by pollutants and pollen/other allergens in the air so it's best to have some eye drops at the ready
- **Water** – It's always best to bring water with you wherever you go because it's always good to be hydrated as this keeps you healthy and well-nourished. Don't bring just one water bottle with you—bring a couple (or a number that's right for the length of your stay) so that you can be sure that you'll have something to drink all the time.



- **It would also be good if you bring some gadgets, or a book or two with you,** in case you're the type who easily gets bored and would like to do a little something when you're not traversing the archipelago.



18. Celebrities who have visited the Galapagos Islands

The Galapagos Islands is becoming more popular by the day; so much so that even celebrities and high-profile people have come to visit the islands in recent years:

Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie and their kids Zahara, Pax, Maddox, Shiloh, Vivienne and Knox

The famous brood visited the islands in April 2012, stayed in a villa, and went around the island via a private yacht. Jolie, in particular, is an envoy to the islands because of her connections to UNESCO. Her visit to the island along with her family brought fourth curiousness and enthusiasm about going to the Galapagos Islands, which definitely helped in the island's tourism.



Leonardo Dicaprio, Edward Norton, Daryl Hannah, Chevy Chase, Cheryl Cole and Damien Rice

These celebrity friends went on a 6 day tour of the islands in 2010 for a marine protection project. What's good is that the celebrities posted twitter updates not just to share how much they are enjoying their stay in the Islands, but also to promote the importance of conservation and the things that could be done to conserve the area.



Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla of Cornwall

The Royals visited the islands in 2009, and specifically enjoyed the islands of North Seymour. They got the chance to see giant Galapagos Tortoises and it was very evident how Duchess Camilla enjoyed them. The two have also asked others to come visit the area.



Bill Gates

The Billionaire visited the Galapagos Islands in 2009, accompanied by Galapagos Tourism Administration chief Edwin Naula, and came to see the giant tortoises in Santa Cruz, particularly in the Charles Darwin Research Center and even campaigned for the conservation of biodiversity in the area.



19. Book with Voyagers Now!

We're here to make things easy for you. Now that you have read everything you need to know about the Galapagos Archipelago, and are ready to pack your things, why don't you book your Galapagos Island tour with us?



Since we have booked trips for so many people in the Galapagos Islands, you can be sure that your experience with us will be the best experience ever and that it is something that you will never forget.

We have a variety of tour packages that you can choose from and these are as follows:

1. Expedition Cruise – This entitles you to an eight day, seven night stay in a luxurious cruise ship that will visit 14 different ports in the Galapagos Archipelago. This package would allow you to:

1. Be away from traffic or pollution, because you will be in a cruise ship and away from the hustle and bustle of the city
2. Eat delicious gourmet meals and not worry about a thing because your meals will be cooked for you, so you don't have to bring your own food
3. Fall asleep easily with the help of the soothing waves and breeze of the sea
Go snorkeling
4. Access remote islands such as the Island of the birds, Plaza Sur, Isla Seymour and San Salvador
5. See a lot of wildlife attractions
6. Visit famous spots such as the Charles Darwin Research Station
7. Learn so much about the islands from our very own tour guides

2. Island Hopping Tours – This is best for the more adventurous ones. These tours are more action-packed and concentrate on going from island to island. You'll be able to experience a couple of different things such as:

- a. Scuba diving
- b. Getting on a speedboat that will take you to the island of Santa Cruz
- c. See finches, tortoises, boobies, crabs, hammerheads, Giant Galapagos, Tortoises, iguanas, and every other flora and fauna in the Galapagos Archipelago



You may also choose from other tour packages such as:

1. Day Trips from Santa Cruz Island, where you'll be taken to:

- Tortuga Bay
- Charles Darwin Research Station
- Lava Tunnel



2. Day Trips from San Cristobal Island , where you will see:

- Puerto Baquerizo Moreno
- Frigate Bird Hill
- El Junco Lake
- Lobos Island



3. Day Tours from Isabela Island, where you will see:

- Puerto Villamil
- Sierra Negra Volcano



And to help you decide even, more, here's a list of what you can do per island:

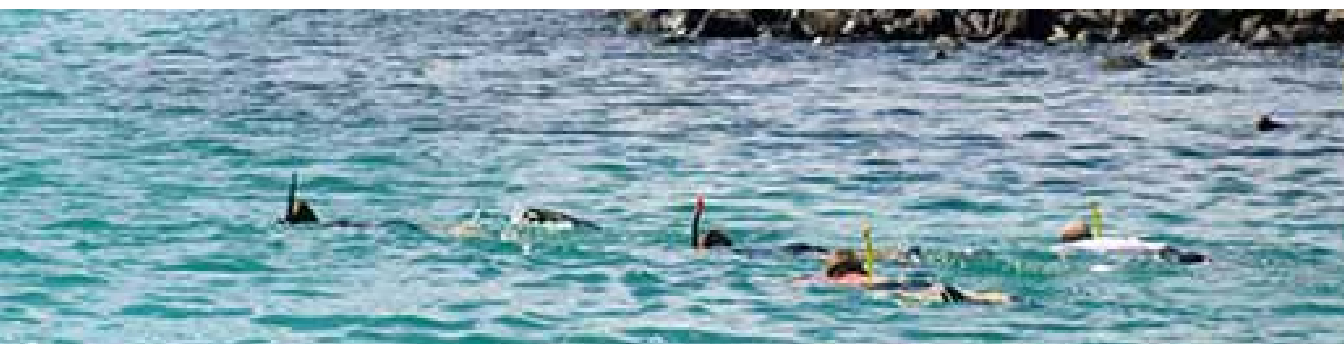
- **Bird Watching** – As you may know by now, a lot of birds occupy the Galapagos Archipelago, and most of them are endemic to the area or cannot be found anywhere else in the world. You'll get to see the thirteen Darwin finches that were discovered by none other than Charles Darwin himself, the Flightless Cormorants and the waved Albatrosses, amongst others. Binoculars will be of great use here. You can go bird-watching in the islands of North Seymour, Santa Fe, Santiago, Santa Cruz, San Cristobal, Rabida, South Plaza, Genovesa Island, Mosquera, Isabela, Fernandina, Floreana, Espanola, Daphne Major, Chinest Hat and Bartolome.



- **Sea Kayaking** – Kayaking is a good way to be close to sea birds such as Blue-footed Boobies, Galapagos Penguins and Sea lions, too. Plus, Kayaking is a great way to feel the breeze of the wind and to relax and just chill out for a bit. You can go sea kayaking in the island of Santa Cruz.



- **Snorkeling**– As there is a great biodiversity and a vast amount of flora and fauna in the Galapagos Archipelago, it would be best if you get to see these creatures on a close range. By snorkeling, you'll get to see turtles, penguins, sharks, boobies, and many other kinds of plants and animals. You can go snorkeling in the islands of North Seymour, Santiago, Santa Fe, Santa Cruz, San Cristobal, Rabida, South Plaza, Pinta, Genovesa, Marchena, Mosquera, Isabela, Floreana, Fernandina, Espanola, Darwin, Wolf, Chinese Hat and Bartolome.



- **Hiking** - Because the Galapagos archipelago is full of uplifts, cliffs, a and unique-looking terrestrial spots that were the result of many volcanic eruptions from years ago, it is a great area for hiking because it will help you see how beautiful and one of a kind the archipelago is. You can go hiking in the islands of North Seymour, Santiago, Santa Cruz, Santa Fe, San Cristobal, South Plaza, Rabida, Genovesa, Mosquera, Isabela, Floreana, Fernandina, Espanola, Chinese Hat, Daphne and Bartolome.



- **Surfing** – Blf surfing is one of your hobbies, then you'd be glad to know that you can do it in certain places in Galapagos Islands. And, if you want to try surfing for the first time, then you certainly can do it here, too. Body-boarding is also possible in the islands. You can go surfing in the islands of Santa Cruz, San Cristobal and Isabela, as well.



- **Sun-bathing/Swimming** - Not all tourists are that adventurous and that's why it's important for them to get occupied by things that will just help them relax and enjoy the beauty of nature. The best beaches for you to swim and go sun-bathing in are in the islands of Santiago, San Cristobal, Santa Cruz, Rabida, Genovesa, Mosquera, Isabela, Fernandina, Floreana, Espanola and Bartolome.



- **And yes, there's a night life, too!** If you're the type who wants to go partying and feeling the happy vibe everywhere you go, then you can also do that in the Galapagos Archipelago. Some bars even have poetry-laden nights where you can listen to people's poetry, and where you can also watch some live bands sing or perform. Casa del Lago in Puerto Ayora is one of the most recommended bars in Galapagos Islands. Aside from that, the best places to go dining and bar hopping are in the islands of Santa Cruz, Floreana, San Cristobal, and Isabela, too.



Aside from what was mentioned above, you can also choose from the cruise ship packages that were discussed in an earlier chapter. Note that the itineraries given are merely samples and that you can still choose from four days to 11 days stay. Whatever your decision will be, know that you'll be well taken care of and that your vacation in the Galapagos Islands will be one for the ages.

You see, there is really so much to see and so much to do in the Galapagos Islands. If you want to experience it for yourself, then it's time to book with us to ensure that you'll be able to experience only the best of the islands.

Just fill up the form found in here: <http://www.galapagoscruise.com.ec/galapagos-custom-vacations> It's easy, and surely, our friendly staff will be able to help you in planning your trip.

If you want to have a trip reserved under your name, then what are you waiting for?
Call us at 1-866-725-3255 right now and get that trip started.
You may also call us via Skype: voyagerstravel.



Don't waste time and make the most of your life by visiting the Galapagos Islands.
We assure you that it will be an experience that you will not forget. See you there!