

# Galapagos FAQ

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### Galapagos Travel Essentials

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:** Only a valid passport is required to enter Ecuador. However, passports must be valid for six months after you intend to leave Ecuador. No Visa is required for visitors from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and most European countries. Visas are required for some Asian, Central American and Eastern European countries. It is the passenger's responsibility to check with local immigration offices or the Ecuadorian consulate prior to sailing to determine if a visa is necessary.

**IMMUNIZATIONS:** As of 2005, no inoculations are required for visitors to Ecuador and Galapagos (excluding jungle areas). Please check with your local health office at least two weeks prior to your departure.

**INCLUDED IN YOUR CRUISE RATE:** The cruise rate includes your cabin accommodation on board, all meals and snacks, shore excursions, guide services, use of snorkeling equipment, sea kayaks and wet suits, mineral water, non-alcoholic beverages, welcome and farewell cocktails, transfers between the airport and dock in Galapagos.

**NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR CRUISE RATE:** Airfare to Galapagos, Galapagos entrance fee (park tax), gratuities for guide(s) and crew, purchases on board, alcoholic beverages, and purchases from our boutique.

**GALAPAGOS ENTRANCE FEE:** The Islands are part of the Ecuador National Park system and the entrance fee is \$100.00 per person. Children age 11 and younger pay a reduced rate of \$50.00. The fee is divided up among various entities including the GNPS, Marine Reserve, agriculture, municipalities, INEFAN and INGALA. The park tax is not included in the cruise rate. However, it will be added to your cruise invoice and prepaid by us for your convenience. For any passenger who elects not to prepay the park tax through us, their fee will be collected at the airport upon arrival in Galapagos by National Park authorities. The park only accepts cash in U.S dollars as a form of payment and is subject to change without prior written notification.

**LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS:** For international flights, please check with your carrier. Local customs authorities allow two suitcases with a total combined weight of 60 kilos per person. A fee of \$200.00 is charged for a third suitcase and \$400.00 for a fourth suitcase. This does not apply to carry-on bags. For the flights to Galapagos, the Airline allows one checked suitcase (44 lbs.) and one carry-on bag.

**TIME ZONE:** Ecuador is in the Eastern time zone (GMT-5 in the mainland). Daylight savings time is not observed. Galapagos is one hour behind mainland Ecuador. On board, we observe mainland Ecuador time.

**LOCAL CURRENCY:** In 2000, Ecuador adopted the US Dollar as their monetary unit.

**LANGUAGE SPOKEN:** English is spoken aboard the vessels by guides and Captains.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110/AC 60 cycle

**SAFETY BOXES:** We recommend that you leave all valuables at home. They are not appropriate for an adventure cruise. The yachts do not have safety boxes. Cabins lock from the inside only.

**MEDICAL FACILITIES ON BOARD:** The yachts carry first aid kits and the guides are trained in first aid procedures. All vessels have radio contact with the mainland for any medical emergencies.

**COMMUNICATION:** It is possible to make long distance calls from our vessels through a radio patch phone call to our main office in Guayaquil, Ecuador during office hours. In an emergency, you can be reached on board your vessel.

**SMOKING POLICY:** Smoking is prohibited in enclosed areas aboard the vessels & on the Islands. Smoking is only allowed on the outside decks in designated areas.

**DRINKING WATER:** Bottled water is provided in your cabin and at the bar at all times free of charge. Drinking water is provided during meal times. We do not recommend you drink water from the tap in your cabin.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Passengers on our 7-night itinerary will be offered laundry service provided by a local company in Santa Cruz. On Friday morning, passengers can arrange to have their clothing laundered. The laundry will be delivered in the afternoon when passengers return from the visit. All laundry bills must be paid directly to the company in cash (US dollars). The cost is \$2.50/kilo, subject to change.

**SEA KAYAKS:** Each yacht carries two sea kayaks (one single and one

double). They are available at designated sites during the cruise at no charge on a first come first serve basis.

**SNORKELING EQUIPMENT:** Masks, fins and snorkels in average sizes are available on board free of charge for use during the cruise. There is no guarantee there will be all equipment available in your size and therefore passengers may bring their own equipment.

**WET SUITS:** Wet suits are available for passengers to use during the cruise at no additional charge. Wet suits are most popular from June to November when water temperatures are between 65 and 72 degrees. Any passenger who would like to reserve a wet suit in their size prior to the cruise may do so for a charge of \$25.00 for 7 nights or \$20.00 for 5 nights. The fee will be charged to the account on board and paid at the end of the cruise. Reserved wet suits will be removed from the inventory and set aside for your exclusive use during the cruise.

Passengers are entitled to use the remaining wet suits on board at no additional charge. However, they are available on a first come first serve basis and there is no guarantee there will be one available in your size unless it is reserved in advance.

**SCUBA DIVING:** Scuba diving is available year-round on our custom 16-passenger dive live-aboard, the M/Y Sky Dancer. Diving is not available from the Eric, Flamingo and Letty. Galapagos is recommended for intermediate to advanced divers due to strong currents, cold water, thermo-clines and large marine life. Please inquire for information on daily dive trips offered from Santa Cruz with a local dive shop on Fridays.

**SPECIAL OCCASIONS:** You may order wine (\$20) or birthday cake (\$10) to be served at dinnertime or a fruit basket (\$5) for your cabin. It is prohibited to bring flowers to Galapagos. Please ask us at least 30 days prior to arrival.

**PURCHASES ON BOARD:** Every passenger has an open tab at the bar and boutique, which are paid the last day of the cruise. We accept cash (US Dollars), Travelers checks, Master Card, VISA, American Express and Diners. Preference of payment is in that order.

**TIPPING POLICY:** Aboard our vessels, gratuities are not included. We prefer that our guests reward our crew based on their performance. Tipping is a personal matter and passengers are encouraged to tip an amount they find appropriate. For those passengers who inquire, we suggest they follow our guidelines of \$175.00 per person on a 7-night cruise and \$125.00 per person on a 5-night cruise. Gratuities are divided among all crew members including guides.

**DEPARTURE TAX – ECUADOR:** There is an airport tax of \$25.00 from Quito

or Guayaquil for passengers departing on international flights.

**MOTION SICKNESS:** Due to strong currents, there will be moderate movement of the vessel while navigating. Most passengers are not affected. However, if you are prone to seasickness, we strongly urge you bring some type of medication to prevent motion sickness.

**PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS:** Passengers able to walk a few hours a day unassisted will be able to fully enjoy Galapagos. Some of the excursions require more physical activity than others involving short steep climbs or long walks in hot weather. However, most excursions require moderate activity and the walks are at a leisurely pace. Entering and exiting the pangas (local word for dingys) require that you need to be reasonably fit and sure footed. If you are concerned about your ability to do any particular day hike, please consult with the naturalist beforehand. In order to enjoy your trip to its fullest potential, it is a good idea to do some exercise before your trip, such as walking, swimming or bicycling. Please see your doctor for a check-up before traveling to Ecuador. Any medical condition or physical disability that may require special attention or treatment must be advised to Ecoventura at the time of booking.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** We highly recommend that you purchase Travel Insurance. Many adventure travel companies are now making travel insurance mandatory for everyone. Upon making your reservations, we will send you a brochure for Travelex's "Travel Plus" program, which services all of Wild Planet's adventures. The code on the back of the brochure refers to the particular trip you are on. Travel insurance provides for many contingencies you may encounter in adventure travel, although the chances of any of these are remote, the consequences can be extremely expensive. They include emergency evacuation from remote areas, repatriation, emergency medical care, additional costs due to lost baggage, inclement weather, quarantine, strike, lost or stolen passports, natural or political disaster, trip or flight cancellation and many other unforeseen problems. Basic insurance is highly recommended. The benefits if something does happen far outweigh the minimal costs. If you have questions about Travelex insurance, please contact Travelex directly. Highly recommended

**FLIGHT MISCONNECTION:** We recommend that all passengers traveling to Galapagos allow two nights in mainland Ecuador prior to their cruise to allow for potential flight delays and misconnection. This is particularly important for passengers traveling over holidays when flights tend to be overbooked and/or delayed caused by poor weather conditions.

**TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT:** The transportation of passengers and their baggage is governed by the terms and conditions of the Transportation Contract contained in the passenger's travel documents. It is recommended that you read the terms carefully because you will be required to sign a liability waiver prior to boarding your Galapagos vessel. Your signature of the company waiver is required and is a contract of acceptance of passage on the vessel, which constitutes acceptance of the terms, conditions and information contained in the transportation contract.

**ISLAND VISITS:** The vessels anchor offshore at two visitor sites or Islands per day. Passengers are ferried to the landing point in small boats (locally called "PANGAS"). The landings are either wet (where one must step into water anywhere from your ankles to your knees and wade to shore) or dry (where one steps from the panga directly to the volcanic rock). Your guide and panga driver will assist you with a steady hand. On the Islands, one follows marked trails set by the National Park walking at a leisurely pace. You will spend 3-4 hours at each site allowing plenty of time to explore and photograph the wildlife.

**ITINERARY:** On a 7-night / 8-day itinerary, passengers will visit twelve visitor sites. On a 5 night/ 6 day itinerary, passengers will visit nine visitor sites. Passengers must fully understand that the first and last day of the cruise are considered transportation days and no island visits are guaranteed. Wild Planet Adventures reserves the right at its sole option and discretion and that of the Captain of the vessel without liability for damages or refund of any kind to deviate from the vessel's advertised or ordinary itinerary providing substitutions. Wild Planet Adventures will not be held responsible for any refund whatsoever for changes to the printed or scheduled itinerary.

**NATIONAL PARK RULES:** During the orientation, your guide will go over the Galapagos National Park rules. These rules require that you do not disturb or remove anything (not even a rock or shell), do not touch or feed the animals, do not leave any liter and stay on the marked trails. Please show a conservationist attitude!

#### CONSERVATION OF THE ISLANDS:

The Charles Darwin Foundation is committed to the preservation of Galapagos plant and animal species. The Foundation provides scientific and technical support to Ecuador for the protection of the islands' fragile ecosystems. Equipment, fieldwork, guide training, local, environmental education programs and other related activities require financial assistance.

You can help by sending a tax-deductible donation to the Charles Darwin Foundation. A donation of \$25.00 or more makes you a "Friend of Galapagos." You receive La Carta and "Noticias" the Station's biannual, technical journal. The Foundation invites "Friends" to seminars and other informal gatherings where scientists report on current conservation programs.

In the U.S. contact: CHARLES DARWIN FOUNDATION, INC. [www.galapagos.org](http://www.galapagos.org)

407 N. Washington Street, Suite 105 Falls Church VA 22046 Tel: 703-538-6833

In the U.K. contact: GALAPAGOS CONSERVATION TRUST [www.gct.org](http://www.gct.org)

5 Derby Street, London W1Y 7HD United Kingdom Tel: 020-7629-5049

Galapagos Forever Fund Since 1999, WildAid has provided urgent protective measures to support the Galapagos National Park Service in its fight against critical threats including invasive species, over-fishing and pollution. WildAid's goal is to establish the Galapagos Forever program as the standard to which marine parks around the world will be protected in the new millennium.

In the US contact: WildAid 450 Pacific Avenue, Suite 201 San Francisco, CA 94133 Tel: (415) 834-3174 In the UK contact:  
Environmental Justice Foundation, 5 St. Peters Street London N1 8JD Tel: +44-20-7359-3543 [www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

#### WEATHER CONDITIONS:

Located on the equator, the Galapagos Islands have a surprisingly cool, sub-tropical climate. The larger islands with volcanic peaks have a variety of climatic zones. The coastal areas are arid and covered with plants adapted to desert conditions. The highland areas receive moisture almost all year round, which support lush vegetation. Temperatures are determined almost entirely by ocean currents, which are influenced by the trade winds.

There are two seasons, both of which have some precipitation. The Galapagos get an average of ten inches of rain per year, so it is never considered "rainy". During the months of December to May, the cooling currents subside, temperatures rise and the climate is warm and sunny with occasional showers. In June, the trend begins toward cooler temperatures with moderate breezes, which continue through November. This period is often referred to as the "garua" (pronounced gah-ru-ah) season, which means mist in Spanish.

#### MONTHLY TEMPERATURES:

JAN	FEB	
MAR	APR	MAY
JUN	JUL	
AUG	SEP	
OCT	NOV	DEC

#### MAX AIR TEMP:

84  
86  
88  
86  
82  
78  
76  
74  
76  
77

78 80

MIN AIR TEMP:

70  
74  
74  
72  
72  
68  
66  
64  
62  
64  
66 68

AVG SEA TEMP:

74  
76  
76  
76  
74  
74  
72  
66  
68  
70  
72 74

AVG RAINFALL (In inches)

1  
1  
2  
1.5  
.75  
.25  
.50  
.25  
.50  
.25  
.50 .50