

Ecuador & The Galapagos Islands – Gateway to the Galapagos

Quito, Otavalo Valley and The Galapagos Islands

Daily Itinerary

Day One

Arrive in Quito

Upon arrival at the Quito Airport, an **Adventures by Disney** representative meets you and escorts you to your transfer vehicle. Relax as the driver assists with your luggage and brings you to the JW Marriott Hotel.

JW Marriott Hotel

Welcome to Quito, also known as "The Middle of the World"! This luxury hotel in the capital of Ecuador is surrounded by spellbinding views of the magnificent, snow-capped mountains and volcanoes outside of the city. Sit back and stretch your legs while your Adventure Guides check you in. If your flight arrives earlier in the day, opt to have a family dinner in the hotel.

Meals Included: None

Day Two

Welcome Breakfast

Meet your fellow adventurers and Adventure Guides during an exclusive breakfast at the hotel. Say "Buenos días!" and fuel up for a day of excitement.

Quitsato Equator Sundial

Stand at the center of the world as you visit this enormous sundial. A local expert introduces you to the monument and its history. Sitting precisely on the equator, the sundial marks not just the location but the cultural identity of Ecuador.

Lunch at Molino San Juan

Begin lunch with a hands-on, biscuit-baking class as you whip up the golden brown *biscochos* that Ecuadorians adore for dessert. Then gather for a story about Ecuadorian cuisine as you savor a traditional lunch featuring a special presentation of their famous *quinoa*, as well as *aji* "hot" sauce that's made with peppers, cilantro, garlic, onion and lime.

Arrive at Hacienda Cusín

Climb aboard a motor coach for a 30-minute drive as you head to Hacienda Cusín (elevation 8,500 feet above sea level), a 17th-century hacienda and estate brimming with Spanish colonial charm. Wander the vivid gardens and delight in the many bird species.

Welcome Greeting at the Hotel

The hacienda's staff greets you with a glass of juice before you head off on a tour of the grounds. Learn about the history of this grand estate in the Andean Highlands as your Adventure Guides check you in.

Folkloric Dance Show

Traditional dancers welcome you in the grassy courtyard as you sip hot *canelazo*, a delicious cinnamon and sugar cane liqueur or enjoy the non-alcoholic version if you prefer! Join the jubilant show as the dancers in their brilliantly hued costumes draw you into the joyous swirl.

Welcome Dinner at the Hacienda

Meet in the private dining room of El Monasterio for an exclusive three-course meal of Ecuador's robust and piquant cuisine!

Evening Activities at the Hacienda

Enjoy this evening and head to the game room or relax and read by the fire in this one-of-a-kind retreat.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day Three

Depart Cusín

Have a leisurely breakfast at the hacienda before you board the motor coach for an excursion to the indigenous village of Peguche.

Peguche Waterfalls Nature Walk

Follow the path through a leafy forest as your Adventure Guides share the lore and legends of the misty waterfalls that cascade like white diamonds down the mountainside.

Private Flute Making and Musical Demonstration

Create your own keepsake when you make a wooden Andean flute with a famous musical family. Then learn about the variety of panflutes and other instruments that make the joyful music of Ecuador during an exclusive musical demonstration.

Lunch at Mindala Cultural Center

Step back in time in this center as you learn about the local traditions and artistry of the Otavalo Valley. Then delight in a hearty dish of traditional Ecuadorian cuisine prepared with special care at this restaurant set in a local home.

Mindala Weaving Demonstration

Discover why the woven handcrafts of Ecuador are world-famous for their bold colors and dazzling craftsmanship during this weaving demonstration. Join in the weaving process with these expert artisans as they also teach you the secrets of how the diverse dyes are created.

Otavalo Market

Lose yourself in this magnificent market of vivid artistry and master craftsmanship! Practice your bartering skills as you interact with the sellers and unearth great finds at this renowned marketplace.

On Your Own at the Hacienda

Return to the hacienda to unwind from your day with a bit of biking*, hiking or horseback riding*. Relax with a cool beverage under the shade of a eucalyptus tree. Or even visit the stables and learn about the famous breeds of Andean horses. The afternoon is yours to enjoy as you wish.

Kite Making

In this very special demonstration, meet locals from the community who will teach you how to make an Andean kite in this hands-on, interactive experience.

Dinner and Exclusive Pizza Party at the Hacienda

While adults dine at their leisure in the hacienda dining room, Junior Adventurers break away for a special pizza party! Grownups are invited to join if they choose.

*Available at an additional cost.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day Four

Drive to Hacienda Zuleta

Have a hearty breakfast at the hacienda before heading out on motor coach to Hacienda Zuleta.

Condor Project and Kite Flying

Hear about the history and important work in progress at the Condor Huasi Rehabilitation Project. Located on the grounds of Hacienda Zuleta, this initiative is saving these regal birds from the threat of extinction. Then take your kite and fly it above the lush grasses that blanket over ancient pyramids buried beneath the ground.

Hacienda Zuleta Tour

Built on what was once the location of a Caranqui pyramid, this gorgeous hacienda and working farm sits like a jewel in the emerald fabric of the surrounding countryside. Tour the grounds, which include a cheese farm, organic garden, trout farm, horse stables and embroidery shop.

Lunch at Zuleta

Feast on farm-fresh foods including cheeses made at the hacienda for this bountiful buffet lunch! A local expert joins you to continue telling tales about this site and its history of Incan and Spanish invasions. After lunch, feel free to admire the unique embroidery work at the shop, or explore some other part of the hacienda at your leisure.

Cooking Lesson at Hacienda Cusín

Return to Cusín for an exclusive culinary demonstration to create a rich, homemade ice cream, crunchy empanadas and an unbelievably delicious banana fritter appetizer!

BBQ Dinner in the Courtyard

Join this private outdoor cookout in the winsome, old-world courtyard as the hacienda cooks up a variety of BBQ meats, especially succulent pork and veal sausages. Vegetarian options are also available.

Disney Movie Night

Time for adults to take a break at the hacienda from the day's activities while Junior Adventurers enjoy a Disney movie with snacks and soft drinks! If grownups prefer, they can join in on the fun.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day Five

Fly to The Galapagos Islands

Take a breakfast box to go as your Adventure Guides bring you to Quito for your flight to Baltra, where upon landing you and your fellow adventurers will unwind in the V.I.P. lounge before boarding your ship.

Welcome Aboard the Galapagos Explorer II Ship

Climb into the dinghy for a short ride to the ship. Then ascend the staircase to board this elegant vessel that's the best in both comfort and communication with scientists. The ship is 293 feet long and carries a total of 100 passengers, including several bilingual naturalist guides. Share your shipboard experiences with people from all walks of life as you sail into adventure!

Lunch on the Ship

Gather in the main dining room for your first meal at a luscious buffet lunch.

Orientation and Drill

Hit the deck for a lifeboat drill and ship orientation to make your sailing as smooth as possible.

Santa Cruz Island and Dragon Hill Hike

On a privately guided tour, hike along the beach of this verdant. Watch for the slim necks and legs of bright pink flamingos perched in the waters as you make your way to the red volcanic sands of Dragon Hill, where iguanas scurry over the rocky surfaces.

Dinner Aboard the Ship

Unwind in the main dining room with a satisfying meal. You and your fellow adventurers are the first to be seated.

Private Stargazing

Gather on the ship's deck for a brilliant view of night's glittering tapestry as a guide describes the legends, lore and scientific marvels sewn into its star-strewn fabric.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

*This itinerary is a sample configuration of the possible activities that happen each day while sailing through the islands.

Day Six

Journey to Bartolomew Island

Have breakfast at your leisure in the ship's dining room before disembarking for a hiking tour of rugged Bartolomew Island.

Hiking Expedition

Hike through the volcanic landscape like the young Charles Darwin did in 1835. The island teems with life as you encounter elusive iguanas and birds of every feather, not to mention the unusual cactus plants. As you hike with a private naturalist, marvel at the panoramic view of the sapphire waters, reddish sands and fabulous peaks of the archipelago.

Snorkeling in Paradise

Submerge yourself in an exotic underwater world where tropical fish swish through feathery floral tendrils and rocky crags as sea lions and penguins play in the waves. Then spend some time on the broad beach exploring the fascinating rock formations that crouch at the water's edge.

Lunch Aboard the Galapagos Explorer II Ship

Return to the ship in the main dining room to refresh yourself with a leisurely lunch.

Save the Ocean Seminar and Cocktail Lessons

Meet a naturalist with your fellow adventurers and other ship passengers for an informative talk about the efforts of Ecuador to save the ocean's many valuable resources. Then attend a cocktail-making lesson from the bartender where you learn how to prepare special island-themed concoctions.

Main Bridge Tour

Come for a private meet-and-greet with the Captain of this impressive ship at the main bridge and learn how he keeps everything even keel for the smoothest sailing possible.

Journey to Santiago Island

Hike across the fourth largest island of the Archipelago, and witness a spectacular array of wildlife across the terrain. The mottled Galapagos hawk, coppery lava lizards, smoky fur seals, blue heron and other creatures abundantly populate the shores and inland areas. Dive into the waters for an otherworldly snorkeling escapade that shows you even sweeter sea mysteries. Then stroll the dark sand beaches that make up this dramatic landscape.

Dinner Aboard the Ship

Be seated together with your fellow adventurers before everyone else on the ship for a fantastic family meal in the main dining room.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

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Day Seven

Journey to Fernandina Island

After a buffet breakfast on the ship, hike over the pristine terrain of one of the most active volcanoes on earth during a privately guided tour. Venture into one of the largest populations of multicolored marine iguanas with their scaly hides and thick, swishy tails as they swim. And don't miss your chance to see the flightless cormorant, one of the world's rarest birds!

Lunch Aboard the Galapagos Explorer II Ship

Return to the ship in the main dining room to refresh yourself with a leisurely lunch.

Naturalist Talk

Join fellow adventurers and other ship passengers to hear more from a naturalist about the animals of this unique ecosystem that inspired Charles Darwin's revolutionary theories of evolution and natural selection.

Snorkeling

Ride out on a dinghy off the coast of Isabela Island for a truly thrilling swim into the deeper mysteries. Feel the awe of nature's beauty as you swim with sea lions, penguins and sea turtles. After snorkeling, join a naturalist in a dinghy for a boat tour around the coast of the island.

Junior Adventurer Private Pizza Party

While adults enjoy dinner in the ship's dining room, Junior Adventurers savor their own pizzas.

Disney Movie Night

Adults can relax on the ship while Junior Adventurers enjoy a Disney movie with snacks and soft drinks.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

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Day Eight

Privately Guided Tour of North Seymour Island

After breakfast, ride a dinghy boat from the ship to take a privately guided tour of this island. Although smaller than the others, this island is superabundant with wildlife such as flocks of blue-footed boobies and the scarlet-throated frigate birds who swoop down to steal their food. Pelicans and penguins crowd the shores, along with barking sea lions and swallow-tailed gulls.

Snorkeling

Escape into the waters one last time for an unforgettable glimpse of the amazing array of sea creatures and underwater flora.

Lunch Aboard the Galapagos Explorer II Ship

Return to the ship in the main dining room to devour lunch as you exchange tales of the morning's exploration and sail to Santa Cruz Island.

Tour of Santa Cruz Island

Roam this island with a private naturalist and explore inside the rocky lava tubes left by the liquid magma of the volcanoes. Meanwhile the giant Galapagos tortoises show you the leisurely life as they ramble across the land. Follow their lead as you discover the powerful sights and sounds of Darwin's paradise.

Dinner on the Ship

Savor one last dinner prepared by the chefs on the ship with your fellow adventurers in the main dining room.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

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Day Nine

Visit to San Cristóbal Island

Start the day with a hearty buffet breakfast onboard the ship, then disembark to visit the town, Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. Discover scientific history at this place where Charles Darwin first disembarked from his famous voyage on the "Beagle." At the Interpretation Educational Center of the Galapagos, learn about the cultural and geological history of the archipelago.

Shopping Time On Your Own

Indulge in a bit of souvenir seeking at the island shops before saying goodbye to the Galapagos and boarding the plane back to Quito.

Journey Back to Quito

Fly back to Quito and enjoy lunch on the plane as your return to Quito. After you land, your Adventure Guides once again check you into the JW Marriott Hotel for the evening.

Farewell Dinner in Quito

Meet with your fellow adventurers for this final feast in Ecuador. A surprise awaits as you relive together the highlights of your trip.

Traditional Ecuadorian Musical Entertainment

Sway with the rhythms that rock the Andean mountains at this exclusive musical show featuring Ecuadorian musicians. They even give music lessons to all who want to try playing the pipes!

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

*This itinerary is a sample configuration of the possible activities that happen each day whilst sailing through the islands.

Day Ten

Breakfast at the JW Marriott Hotel

Enjoy one last meal in Ecuador before your departure.

Transfer to Airport

Board pre-arranged transportation to the airport and say "Adiós" until you return again!

Meals Included: Breakfast