



## **ECUADOR & THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS**

### **12 Days**



**Ecuador is the smallest country in the Andes Mountains and one of the most fascinating tourist attractions in South America. Thanks to the diversity of the native cultures, the well-kept colonial architecture, the volcanic scenery and the lush forests, this country has more points of interest within its borders than those of a country twice its size. Ecuador ranks as one of the richest countries in the world when it comes to its variety of animals and flora. Ecuador is considered one of the safest and most comfortable countries for travelers. Ecuador's tropical climate allows for tourism any time of the year, and the fact that it lies on the equator keeps the weather stable all year long. The weather in Ecuador is fickle and has a tendency for extremes. The only sure thing that can be said about the weather in Ecuador is that it is totally unexpected, and it's not rare to experience all 4 seasons in one day. Despite all this, the fact that Ecuador is located on the equator, gives one the opportunity to tour Ecuador on most days of the year, and anywhere in the country: The Andes, the rain forests, the beaches and the Galapagos.**

**Day 1, Wednesday: arrival Quito**

Arrival Quito, Ecuador, where we will be met by staff from Shai Bar Ilan Geographical Tours at the hotel. Quito is without a doubt the prettiest city in South America. It's located at 2850 meters above sea level, 22 Kilometers from the equator, and enjoys a great spring climate and a magnificent view all around. The scenery is surrounded by mountains and a number of snowy volcanoes that can be seen from a distance. The city itself lies at the feet of Mt. Roca Pichincha, which rises to a lofty 4,700 meters. Architecturally, Quito holds vast colonial treasures, and construction in the modern city is under strict supervision ever since 1978, when UNESCO placed Quito on the list of World Heritage Sites.

**Day 2, Thursday: Quito, Mindo Cloud Forest**

The western slopes of the Pichincha volcano are part of a wonderful dense ecosystem: Mindo, which we visit today is located in the cloud forest. The cloud forest is perhaps the ecosystem that holds the greatest variety of birds and plants in the world. It includes birds and plants from the rain forest, some from the highlands, and others that have evolved in this unique ecosystem. Some of the most impressive bird species of the cloud forest are: Cock of the Rock, an abundance of Hummingbirds, Tanagers, Mountain Toucans, Cotingas, and Manakins, among others.

**Day 3, Friday: Quito- Mitad Del Mundo and Jewish Community**

Today we will travel to the equator! We will stop and see a caldera- a place where green vegetation has replaced the top of a volcano. We then will proceed to Mitad Del Mundo. Approximately 11 miles (18 Km.) north of downtown Quito, we visit "Mitad del Mundo" (Middle of the World) and the Equator Monument situated at 0°0'0" latitude where the eighteenth century French Geodesic Expedition built one of the three pyramids as landmarks for their planet calculations to deduce the shape of the earth in a complex which replicates colonial Spanish-American village. We also visit the Intiñan Solar Museum, where you'll find scientific and experimental aspects of being right at the Equator- an experiential look at the equator and how straddling the equator we can see a number of very interesting phenomena! We then will visit the Jewish community and see their lovely synagogue. We will be their guests for lunch! Later we return to the hotel to prepare for shabbat. We will have tfilot and our Shabbat meal.

**Day 4, Shabbat: Quito**

After prayers and breakfast, we shall go for a walking tour of Quito. Today we will visit the Botanic Garden which is a delight to the senses! The varieties of plants and flowers reflect the different landscapes of Ecuador. In the evening, we will enjoy the Chiva Quiteña night city tour.

**Day 5, Sunday: Quito Mount Pichincha, City Tour**

Today we will ascend Mount Pichincha on the Teleferico cable car. Next we will have a Colonial city tour: We will explore the bustling streets and plazas in the largest colonial town of the Americas and first UNESCO's World Heritage Site. We will enjoy super eclectic architecture ranging from the modern quarters to impressive colonial facades on churches and private residences decorated with beautiful balconies; a superb sample of the architecture of the last five centuries including parks like El Ejido and Alameda, the monument of Simon Bolivar, the gothic Basilica Of the Heart of Jesús, Independence Square flanked by the Presidential and the Archbishop's palaces, the Metropolitan Cathedral and unique churches such as La Compañía de Jesús, El Sagrario or San Francisco, which display

a rich sample of artistic and cultural heritage. Later we will visit the Visit Guayasamin Museum.

### **Days 6-9, Monday– Thursday:**

#### **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS CRUISE 4D/3N IN THE GALAPAGOS LEGEND LUXURY BOAT**

Morning Flight to the Islands



Quito – Galapagos Islands – Quito

Today we fly out to the Galapagos Islands for a fascinating cruise around the Islands. This is a volcanic group of Islands that rose from the ocean approx 4-10 million years ago. Man discovered the islands in the year 1535, and just like any other place, started destroying his surroundings. The animals, that weren't yet familiar with humans, didn't run away, and the sailors massacred them mercilessly, both for food and for pleasure. In addition, they also unleashed goats, cats and dogs that destroyed the area. The sailors took the giant tortoises back with them on the ships as a supply of fresh meat. Later they butchered the tortoises too for their fat. For these reasons and others, dozens of unique species became extinct.

### **DETAILED CRUISE ITINERARY**

#### **Monday - Baltra Airport - Highlands Tortoise Reserve (Santa Cruz Island)**

Departure from Quito to Baltra (2 ½ hours flight). Passengers are picked up at the airport by our naturalist guides and taken on a ten minute bus drive to the pier to board the M/V Galapagos Legend.

Afternoon - Dry landing. In the mountains of Galapagos is possible to admire different kinds of birds, such as tree and ground finches, vermilion flycatchers, paint-billed crakes, yellow warblers, and cattle egrets (usually standing on the tortoises' shell). The journey to the reserve offers great opportunities to see the contrasts that the island offers in reference to the variety of ecosystems. The road goes from the coast through the agricultural zone and straight up to the dense humid forests. Often, Galapagos Giant Tortoises are also seen on the way, wandering through pastures in the paddocks. This spot is a bird watchers' haven since almost every land bird present on the island lives or migrates here.

#### **Tuesday– El Barranco, Prince Philip's Steps - Darwin Bay (Genovesa Island)**

Be marveled at the variety of sea life that uses the crevices of the lava cliffs for shelter. Red-billed Tropicbirds fly overhead, switching between their nests and the bay, and a small colony of fur seals may be found near the landing site. You will be dropped off at a steep stairway that begins on rocks at the foot of a path that leads through a seabird colony full of Nazca and Red-footed Boobies. At the plateau, the trail continues inland allowing you to see more nesting booby colonies in the thin Palo Santo forest. Near the end of the trail, over a rocky lava plain, Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels can be observed flying in all directions.

Afternoon - Disembark onto a small sand and coral beach. A short trail heads west along a tidal lagoon and then up a rocky hill that leads to a point overlooking the cliffs and Darwin Bay. Along the trail near the tidal lagoon, visitors will see pairs of Swallow-tailed Gulls, Lava Gulls, Yellow-crowned and Lava Herons. The trail continues through Palo Santo trees, Opuntia cacti, and Saltbushes inhabited by Great Frigate birds and Red-footed Boobies. This is one of the few places in the

islands where visitors are guaranteed to see Red-footed Boobies. It is estimated that more than 200,000 Red-footed Boobies live in the trees and bushes of Genovesa.

#### Wednesday – Dragon Hill (Santa Cruz Island) - Santa Fe Island

Dry landing. Walk by a brackish lagoon to see flamingos. The trail leads across typical dry zone vegetation. Keeping up until Dragon Hill, see an important nesting ground for endemic land iguanas, offering lovely views of the anchored boats and neighboring islands. The forest is home to mockingbirds, Darwin's finches, yellow warblers, and Galapagos doves.

Afternoon - Wet landing. Santa Fe shows white sand beaches surrounded by sea lion colonies; through the island path, an endemic cactus forest is passed, home the Santa Fe land iguanas (the largest in the islands). This island is the habitat for a number of species, including the Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snakes, rice rats (one of the few endemic Galapagos rodents), a variety of finches and one of the four mockingbird species of the archipelago.

#### Thursday – Bachas Beach (Santa Cruz Island) - Baltra Island Airport

Wet landing. On the north side of Santa Cruz; behind the beach lies two small flamingo ponds where iguanas sunbathe, see coastal birds, Darwin finches, mockingbirds, and gulls, as well as interesting native vegetation like red and black mangrove, salt bushes. This beach is one of the main sea turtles nesting sites in the Galapagos. At this paradisiacal site, we will also find the remains of barges that sank a long time ago, when the United States Navy operated a base during World War II on Baltra Island. Local people modified the word barges to "Bachas". After the visit, passengers will be transferred to the airport for their return flight to Guayaquil or Quito.

#### Day 9, Thursday: Galapagos Islands – Quito - Otavalo

Today we will fly back to Quito. Arrival Quito and transfer to Otavalo, capital of Otavalo Canton, is a largely indigenous town in the Imbabura province of Ecuador. We will visit San Pablo Lake that lies 5km from Otavalo. This wonderful lake is located on the feet of the Imbabura Mountain and refuges on its borders many small indigenous communities.

#### Day 10, Friday: Otavalo, Cotacachi Village, Cuicocha Lake

Today we will visit Cotacachi Village, a small town nearby Otavalo, its narrow streets are full of stores that sell a great variety of leather goods. We will continue to Cuicocha Lake. Located on the south side of Cotacachi Mountain has in its middle two islands surrounded by water. an impressive landscape of deep blue waters surrounded by hills. After the tour we will go back to the hotel to prepare for Shabbat. Tfilot and Shabbat dinner.

#### Day 11, Saturday: Otavalo

After prayers and breakfast, we shall go for a walking tour of Otavalo.

### **Day 12, Sunday: Otavalo –Parque Condor – Back home**

Today we will visit Parque Condor, a rocky outcropping above Otavalo. But the stone pathways are not natural, they were laid to connect the numerous aviaries built to house condors, falcons, eagles, and hawks. The stone amphitheater is site of daily flight demonstrations that awe visitors. The condor is an Andean symbol, as identifiable to Ecuadorians as the bald eagle is to North Americans. And like the bald eagle before it, the condor has lived under threat of extinction. Estimates place the wild population in Ecuador between 40-60 birds. But despite their rarity, several condors can be found in captivity at Parque Condo, which is also home to 27 species of raptor. After dinner, transfer to the airport of Quito and flight Back home.

### **Dates, Prices and Important Information**

| Tour Code | Departs     | Returns     | Duration | Price  | Single Supplement | Guide |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------|--------|-------------------|-------|
| EECG0102  | 07 FEB 2024 | 18 FEB 2024 | 12 DAYS  | \$7390 | \$3840            |       |
| EECG0908  | 14 AUG 2024 | 25 AUG 2024 | 12 DAYS  | \$7390 | \$3840            |       |
| EECG1511  | 13 NOV 2024 | 24 NOV 2024 | 12 DAYS  | \$7390 | \$3840            |       |

#### **The rate includes:**

- Domestic Flights
- First class hotels or the best available locally
- Comfortable air-conditioned touring coach for travelling
- Kosher half board & supplies for making sandwiches for lunch
- Professional experienced Shai Bar Ilan guide
- Local English-speaking guide as required
- Tips for local service providers
- Entrance fees to all sites mentioned in the tour plan

#### **The rate does not include:**

- International Flights
- Travel and baggage Insurance
- Personal expenses
- Tip for Israeli guide (Recommended: \$5 per person per day)

#### **Terms of cancellation**

- From the time of registration, US \$ 47 per passenger for cancellation fees which will be charged in any case
- \* From 21-60 working days before embarking on the trip: 30% of the price of the trip to the traveler (on trips to South America cancellation fees apply from 60 working days before the departure of the trip from Israel)
- \* From 7-20 working days before embarking on a trip: 50% of the price of the trip to the passenger
- \* Less than 7 working days before departure: 100% cancellation fee including all associated costs such as visa,
- \* Cancellation fees for domestic flights: Any flight booked will be subject to full cancellation fees on the passenger.

**Important Information**

- ❖ Fridays and Saturdays, holidays and holidays in Israel, Sundays and holidays abroad are not counted as a working day.
- ❖ If any flight tickets were issued or additional services such as visas were purchased, etc., their prices will be added to the above cancellation fees
- ❖ The price of the trip is based on a minimum of 15 paying travelers
- ❖ The passenger is responsible for the final updates, all the many changes that are made in the final route after updating domestic flights and changes of travel agents abroad. Tour itineraries undergo changes according to the above, as well as due to serious climatic changes or hazards which require necessary changes. As travel agents, we do not have control over many changes that are required, which are made many months after the tour was originally planned. In the event that the passenger finds it necessary to cancel registration for the tour due to these changes in the itinerary, the passenger will be refunded all his/her money.
- ❖ The trip is subject to the conditions and responsibilities as they appear on the website
- ❖ Passports must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the return date from the tour
- ❖ There may be changes in the itinerary due to changes in internal flight times and other objective reasons