Natural History of Galapagos and Ecuador

Designed by Professor Brian Hazlett | 11 days | January 2018
Natural History of Galapagos and Ecuador

Included on tour

- Round-trip flights on major carriers; Full-time Tour Director;
- Air-conditioned motorcoaches and internal transportation;
- Superior tourist-class hotels with private bathrooms; Breakfast daily.

Entrances:
- Santo Domingo Monastery
- Intinan Museum
- Bellavista Cloud Forest
- Activities on Isabela Island
- Activities on Santa Cruz Island
- Activities on Floreana Island
- Activities on San Cristobal
- Antisana Ecological Reserve

Overnight Stays:
- Quito (1)
- Bellavista (1)
- Quito (1)
- Isabela Island (2)
- Santa Cruz Island (2)
- San Cristobal Island (1)
- Quito (1)

NOT INCLUDED ON TOUR

Optional excursions; Insurance coverage; Beverages and lunches (unless otherwise noted); Transportation to free-time activities; Customary gratuities (for your Tour Director, bus driver and local guide); Porterage; Adult supplement (if applicable); Weekend supplement; Shore excursion on cruises; Any applicable baggage-handling fee imposed by the airlines (see efollegestudytours.com/baggage for details); Expenses caused by airline rescheduling, cancellations or delays caused by the airlines, bad weather or events beyond EF’s control; Passports, visa and reciprocity fees

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Your itinerary

Day 1: Depart for Ecuador

Fly to Quito
Welcome to Quito, the Ecuadorian capital. Depending on your arrival time, you may have free time to settle in with your group.

Overnight in Quito

Day 2: Quito | Bellavista Cloud Forest

Guided sightseeing of Quito
Carved into a narrow plateau high above the Andean valleys, Ecuador’s capital is overshadowed by soaring peaks and the looming Pichincha Volcano. On today’s sightseeing tour, explore the well-preserved colonial quarter of Quito, where wrought-iron balconies and majestic stone pillars grace its 300-year-old plazas, churches and palaces. The area was declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations in 1978. Stroll amid the shady palm trees and colorful gardens of Independence Plaza, admire the stunning Government Palace and visit the charming Santo Domingo Church.

Excursion to the Equatorial Line
Sixteen miles from Quito, the Equator crosses the Ecuadorian countryside at Mitad del Mundo (“middle of the world”). Here you’ll have the opportunity to stand with one foot in each hemisphere. A monument at the Equatorial Line honors the long history of diversity in Ecuador, its obelisk perfectly aligned with the cardinal points of the compass. Here you will also visit the Intinan Museum.

Transfer to Bellavista Cloud Forest
Travel to the conservation areas on the North-Western slopes of the Andean mountain range.

Lunch and dinner are included today

Overnight in Bellavista

Day 3: Bellavista Cloud Forest | Quito

Bellavista Cloud Forest
Spend the day at this nature lover’s paradise. Located at the top of the famed Tanndayapa Valley, this certified private ecododge spans nearly 2000 acres. Bromeliads and orchids, hummingbirds and tanagers, toucans and antpittas, all vie for your attention and could keep any dedicated naturalist enthused for a lifetime of observation.

Return to Quito
Return to the Quito for the evening.

Dinner is included this evening.

Overnight in Quito

Day 4: Quito | Isabela Island

Fly to Baltra and transfer to Isabela Island
After landing in Baltra, continue on to Isabela Island, the largest of the Galápagos Islands. An extremely beautiful place, Isla Isabela has a rich and intriguing past with many visitor sites on the island. A favorite hideaway for early pirates, buccaneers and whalers, there are a number of high cliffs here which enclose a protected bay. In 1959, the archipelago was declared a national park in order to protect the flora and fauna that Charles Darwin observed while formulating his theory of evolution. Critical to his studies were the islands’ iguanas, penguins, flightless cormorants and 13 species of finches, whose beak sizes and shapes provided invaluable insights into the process he called natural selection. Photo opportunities will be endless over the next week, but please remember that the islands’ ecosystems are fragile. Park regulations are designed to protect the area for future generations.

Lunch and dinner are included today.

Overnight on Isabela Island

Day 5: Isabela Island

Activities on Isabela Island
Isabela Island is the largest island, in the shape of a sea horse, this island measures around 100 kilometers in length and is home to five young active volcanoes. Today you will participate in a volcano walk and take an excursion to a pink flamingo habitat.

Boat excursion to Tintoreras and snorkeling
Home to a great variety of wildlife, its turquoise, crystalline waters are inhabited by white-tipped reef sharks, Galapagos penguins, marine turtles and sea lions. One of its beaches, surrounded by mangroves, is one of the few sites where marine iguanas can reproduce successfully.

Lunch and dinner are included today.

Overnight on Isabela Island

Day 6: Isabela Island | Floreana Island | Santa Cruz Island

Excursion to Floreana Island
More commonly known as Isla Floreana or Isla Charles, Isla Santa Maria as it is officially known, is the sixth largest island in the Galapagos at 173 square kilometers. With the fourth largest human settlement, this island has a very colorful history and has often been associated with whalers, pirates, buccaneers, convicts and colonists over the years.

Transfer to Santa Cruz Island

Lunch and dinner are included today.

Overnight on Santa Cruz Island

Day 7: Santa Cruz Island

Visit the lava tunnels
The lava tubes were formed when surface lava cooled and solidified, while the underground hot lava continued to flow, eventually leaving an emptied cave. Explore these mysterious tunnels by flashlight and headlamp!

Visit Los Gemelos
Los Gemelos are two large craters that were once underground magma chambers.

Visit Tortuga Bay
Visit Tortuga Bay and see the perfectly preserved beach that is home to marine iguanas, Galapagos crabs and birds. You will have time to visit Media Luna, one of the largest craters in the highlands, as well as El Puntudo and Cerro Crocker, the highest peak on the island.
Visit Rancho Manzanillo Tortoise Preserve
Continue your study of tortoises during your visit to the preserve today.

Lunch and dinner are included today.

Overnight on Santa Cruz Island

Day 8: Santa Cruz Island | San Cristobal Island

Transfer to San Cristobal Island
San Cristobal Island is one of the most dramatic moonscape scenes in the archipelago. Here you'll enjoy a hike up Tijeretas Hill, visit the San Cristobal Interpretation Center, go snorkeling and explore La Loberia—a piece of coast famously named for the large number of sea lions resting on the rocks and sand of its shoreline.

Lunch and dinner are included today.

Overnight on San Cristobal Island

Day 9: San Cristobal Island | Quito

Morning activities in San Cristobal
Choose between a walk to Punta Carola, where you'll discover frigate birds, Galapagos sea lions and blue-footed boobies, or choose to spend some free time shopping.

Lunch is included today.

Return to Quito
Arrive back in Quito this evening.

Overnight in Quito

Day 10: Quito | Antisana Volcano Reserve

Excursion to Antisana Volcano Reserve
Enjoy a day excursion into the Andes Mountains to visit the ecological reserve.

Transfer to the airport for your return flight
Your Tour Director assists with your transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your overnight return flight home.

Day 11: Arrive home

Itinerary is subject to change

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions at www.efcst.com/bc.
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