# EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

## Comfort Itinerary Version (TMEC6)

TOURDURAT
**11**
DAYS

Tour Code: TM

### Tour Essentials

**Accommodation:**
**Included Meals:** 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners
**Transport:**
**Countries:** Ecuador

# Tailormade Galapagos Adventure

## Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

# Your tour itinerary

### Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

### Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

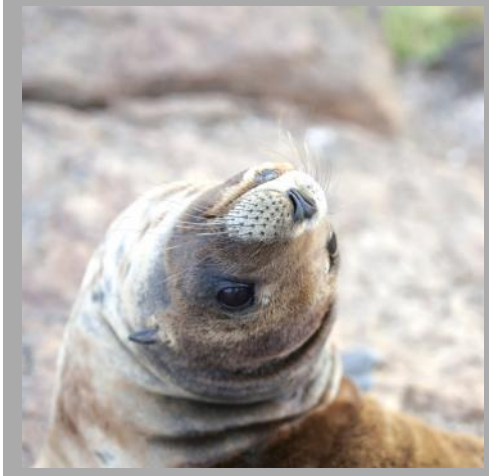
## DAY 1 Depart UK

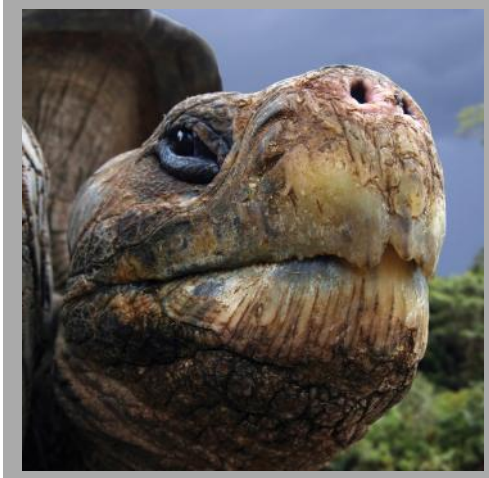
Depart UK and arrive in Quito later the same day.

### Why Book this tour?

Ecuador's mainland climate varies according to altitude. The highlands are drier from June to September and are at their best from July to August with clearer skies caused by higher winds.The jungle has rain all year round but the wettest months are from April to June. The coast is especially hot, humid and wet from January to April.

The Galapagos climate is influenced by ocean currents. It is most popular to visit from December to May as the seas tend to be calmer, warmer for snorkelling, the sun shines and it is generally very hot with sudden showers. The temperature drops from June to November as the Humboldt current reaches up from the south bringing much richer seas and an increase in wildlife activity. However in August and September the sea and land temperatures drop, it is often cloudy and the sea is especially choppy (when many boats put in to dry dock).





**Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 Arrive into Quito

Today you arrive into Quito and transfer to your hotel. Depending when your flight arrives you may wish to spend some time exploring this interesting city.

**Included Meals:** None

## DAY 3 Arrive at the Galapagos Islands

Today you depart Quito, fly to Baltra Island and arrive at your boat. The afternoon will be spent at Las Bachas beach.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 4 Las Tintoreras

Today you sail to Las Tintoreras and spend the morning snorkelling, this is an area home to sea line, turtles, marine iguanas and ray. You will also have the opportunity to explore the island's wetlands, before visiting the a tortoise breeding centre in the afternoon.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 5 Isabela Island

Arrive at Punta Moreno on the southwest coast of Isabela where you will see the lava formations, flamingos, and amazing views of the three most active volcanoes in the Galápagos Islands. In the afternoon you visit Tagus Cove, a favourite spot for early pirates, on Isabela's west coast where many birds can be seen, including flycatchers, hawks, finches and penguins.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 6 Fernandina Island

Fernandina Island is the youngest of the Galápagos Islands, less than one million years old. You will visit Punta Espinosa to witness the largest colony of marine iguanas in the archipelago and flightless cormorants. You explorations continue to Punta Vicente Roca, back on Isabela to observe the volcanic rock formations with opportunities for more snorkelling.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 7 Santiago Island

Playa Espumilla is one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galapagos, with thick mangroves along with flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites, this morning's visit will not disappoint. You will then continue to Buccaneer Cove to witness the towering cliff wall rock formations before going to Puerto Egas to see the salt crater as well as a dark-sand beach and tidal pools.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 8 Rabida Island and Chinese Hat Island

Morning excursion to the red sand beach and salt water lagoon of Rabida Island, home to wading flamingos and pelicans. You can see the pelicans nesting - watch as the parents return with gullets full of fish for the squawking youngsters. You then sail to Sombrero Chino, or Chinese Hat Island to snorkel and birdwatch.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 9 Santa Cruz Island

Arrive on Santa Cruz Island and visit The Charles Darwin Research Station, where you can see adult Galapagos tortoises and young tortoises being raised; they stay here until they are old enough to be released into the wild.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 10 Quito

After a visit to the interpretation centre, fly to Quito for an overnight stay.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 11 Fly to the UK

Transfer to the airport for your flight to the UK.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 12 Arrive UK

Arrive in the UK.

**Included Meals:** None

# Accommodation and Meals

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches,7 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

# Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

#### Ecuador

**Lunch £:** 10.00

**Dinner £:** 13.00

### Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

#### Ecuador

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.70

**Water £:** 1.3

### Foreign Exchange

#### Ecuador

**ATM Availability:** Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

**Travellers Cheques:** Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

**Local Currency:** US Dollar.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Carry all your funds in U.S. Dollar Cash (NOT Sterling, which is almost impossible to change). The US dollar is the currency used in Ecuador. It is advisable to bring some US$400 - $500 of your total spending money in cash, in small denomination notes (in good condition). 100US$ bills are very difficult to use.

**Where to Exchange:** Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

# Joining your Tour

## Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

## Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

## Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

## Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

# Important Information

## Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

## Vaccinations & Protection

### Ecuador

We recommend protection against yellow fever, malaria, (for the Amazon & Coastal regions only) infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

# Preparing for your Tour

## Climate

### Ecuador

Temperature ranges are similar all year round. In the highlands: the dry season lasts from June to mid-September. November and December are partially dry. The rainy months are October and from January to May, but showers are short and mostly in the afternoons. Temperatures range from 12°C to 24°C. Nights are cold at altitude (4°C - 10°C). The Coastal Region: from December to May it is hot and wet. From June to November it is generally cool and misty with sudden light showers. Temperatures range from 16°C to 32°C. The Amazon Area: it is humid all year round. Temperatures range from 16°C to 32°C. From April to August the rainfall is heavier. The Galapagos: On the Galapagos, the hot season is January to April with largely sunny days and the possibility of heavy showers; the cool season runs from May to December and is generally more cloudy with much cooler seas. Please note that although it is windier from July to November the sea can be rough at any time of the year. On the mainland the dry season lasts from June to October, though September can be wet.

Luggage allowance on tour:

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company

# General Information

## Country details

### Ecuador

**Population:** 15,007,343

**Size of Country:** 272,046

**Major Language:** Spanish

**Religion:** Roman Catholic

**Time Difference to GMT:** -5

## Electric Supply & Plugs

### Ecuador

2 Pin Flat

# Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

## Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups,  respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer ( a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

## Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

## Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

## Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety andÂ security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. ForÂ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link atÂ http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

# Booking Your Holiday

## Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ  granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

## Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is ‘Available’ or ‘Guaranteed’ we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

## 100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

## Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 6 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 6. 7/ itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 7.

These tour notes were printed on 05/05/2015 05:06:40