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LATIN TRAVEL COLLECTION

## | Voyages Ecuador



### **Program:** *Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands*

*| Looking for diversity? Are you a nature lover? Do you want to see Paradise on Earth? Then this 17 days in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands is what you are looking for. With us you will experience the cultural, historical and natural diversity of this beautiful country, participate in some fun adventures in the Amazon Rainforest and see a real Paradise on Earth! |*

<b>Requested by:</b>	<b>Nicole Ballard</b>
<b>Pax Number:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Tour Length</b>	<b>17 Days</b>
<b>Tour Start Date:</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> April, 2020</b>
<b>Guide language:</b>	<b>English &amp; Spanish</b>
<b>Hotel Category:</b>	<b>3*</b>

## | Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands

### Quito:

#### **13 April: Arrival to Quito**

Welcome to Quito, the capital of Ecuador! Arrive at the Mariscal Sucre International Airport (UIO), where your driver will meet you to transfer to your accommodation in the city center, a one-hour trip. Along the way, you'll get a short introduction into Quito's history and a quick briefing on the next day's activities. The entire city of Quito is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, standing at an altitude of 9,350ft (2,850m). It welcomes visitors with its picturesque plazas situated between mountain peaks. The city has an abundance of market stands, shamanistic healers, and fourth-generation hat makers, as well as a vibrant and sophisticated culinary and nightlife scene. Overnight: Quito

**Included:** *Private transportation, English/Spanish speaking guide, hotel.*

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#### **14 April: Quito Historic Center & Middle of the World Tour**

The human occupation of Quito dates back thousands of years. Prior to the arrival of Spanish *conquistadores*, the main cultures in the area were the Quitus, as well as the Inca, whose empire spread across vast stretches of South America. The city was colonized by the Spanish and recognized as a city in the mid-16th century. In 1978, together with Kraków in Poland, the entire city became the first UNESCO World Heritage Site. After breakfast at the hotel, visit the old town and meander down romantic narrow streets to see the colonial Churches of San Francisco, La Compañía, and other historical landmarks. This visit is followed by a short stop at the top of El Panecillo Hill where the impressive statue of the Virgin Mary is located. It's a great place for photos of panoramic city views. In the afternoon, visit the Equator Monument, which highlights the exact location of the equatorial line according to the Franco-Spanish mission that determined its approximate location. It's also the location of the Ethnographical Museum that showcases the indigenous culture and ethnography of Ecuador. After a full day, return to your hotel.

**Included:** *Private transportation, English & Spanish speaking guide, entrances, breakfast, accommodation.*

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## 15 April: Otavalo indigenous market town & surroundings

Depart from Quito in the morning and drive north to the city of Cayambe. Stop for some delicious *bizcocho* pastries before continuing to the town of Otavalo. The city is the home of the well-known indigenous market where artisans come to sell colorful textiles and other traditional goods. Snack on fruits and other snacks while you browse the stalls for paintings, carvings, handpainted bowls, and much more. Enjoy street food for lunch (try the salted mango or fritada con mote—fried pork with cooked corn, then continue to the nearby town of Cotacachi for some free time and more shopping (the town is famous for its leather products). Stretch your legs with a hike around the crater lagoon of Cuicocha. On the trail, your guide will explain to you the high altitude flora and fauna and the history of the once active volcano. Alternatively, enjoy a short walk and take some photos, or ride in a boat around the two islands. Return to Otavalo for the night.

**Included:** *Breakfast, private transportation, English & Spanish speaking guide, accommodation.*

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## 16 April: Quito – San Cristobal: Embarkation

**AM:** This morning, you will fly from the mainland of Ecuador to San Cristobal, Galapagos. Our guides will be there to greet you and escort you to the yacht. **PM:** After getting settled in, we will have lunch and briefings followed by a check dive at Isla Lobos. Lobo is Spanish for wolf and sea lion is lobo del mar in Spanish. Expect to see sea lions. We sail to Marchena overnight.

**Included:** *Transfer to Quito Airport, breakfast, lunch, dinner, accommodation, Galapagos naturalist guide, activities.*

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## 17 April: Punta Carrion & Seymour

**AM:** Punta Carrion is located on the island of Santa Cruz. Sometimes we get lucky and see mola molas here. It's a good first dive to acclimatize to Galapagos diving. **PM:** Seymour is an island known for having great dives. Sightings include mobulas, white tip reef sharks, Galapagos sharks, sometimes Hammerheads and many fish species.

**Included:** *Breakfast, lunch, dinner, accommodation, Galapagos naturalist guide, activities.*

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## 18 April: Wolf

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**AM:** Wolf is one of the reasons Galapagos is on most divers' bucketlist. Scientists have designated Wolf and Darwin (together as they are so close together) as the sharkiest place on earth because they have the largest biomass of sharks on the planet, 17.5 tons of sharks per hectare (2.47 acres). Only divers visit Wolf. There is no chumming in Galapagos. This is where sharks come naturally. There are no land visits. Wolf is located 115 miles north of the central islands. **PM:** Sightings include huge schools of Hammerhead sharks, Galapagos sharks, Whale sharks (in season), Silky sharks, Eagle Rays, Sea Lions, Fur Seals, Mantas, Turtles, Jacks, Trumpetfish, Butterfly fish, Morish Idols, Moray Eels and Dolphins. Some sites at Wolf are covered in coral and all of the tropical fish species that live on coral reefs. Dive sites include Shark Bay, The Landslide, La Banana and Islote La Ventana. On the island itself, there are hundreds of thousands of seabirds including all 3 types of boobies in Galapagos – Red footed, blue footed and Nazca. There are frigates, pelicans, lava gulls and red billed tropicbirds.

**Included:** *Breakfast, lunch, dinner, accommodation, Galapagos naturalist guide, activities.*

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## 19 April: Darwin

Darwin's Arch is an icon, the symbol of diving the Galapagos. It is located 229 km / 142 miles north of the central islands. In addition to Wolf, this is where we find massive schools of Hammerheads. Huge, pregnant Whale sharks pass through Darwin each year for reasons unknown. Darwin is the warmest dive site in Galapagos due to the tropical Panama current. You spend a lot of the dive stationary, on a platform that drops into the blue where Hammerheads swim against the current. It's like being on the side of a Hammerhead highway watching traffic pass. You leave the platform to swim out into the blue when a Whale shark is spotted. That sometimes means swimming through the Hammerheads, a truly magnificent experience you will carry with you forever.

**Included:** *Breakfast, lunch, dinner, accommodation, Galapagos naturalist guide, activities.*

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## 20 April: Darwin - Wolf

**AM:** We have 2 more dives at Darwin in the morning. **PM:** We have 1-2 more dives at Wolf in the afternoon. There is an optional night dive at the Anchorage site. Anchorage has a sandy bottom where you may see garden eels and the red-lipped batfish.

**Included:** *Breakfast, lunch, dinner, accommodation, Galapagos naturalist guide, activities.*

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## 21 April: Isabela - Fernandina

Cabo Marshall (Jan-June) is located on the eastern side of Isabela Island. Giant mantas, large schools of barracudas, Galapagos sharks, Sea Lions, Flightless Cormorants and enormous schools of Black Striped Salemas in Galapagos. These tiny fish can be so numerous, a diver inside the school cannot be seen, only the bubbles rising above the school. 4 dives at 2 Cabo Marshall dive sites.

**Included:** *Breakfast, lunch, dinner, accommodation, Galapagos naturalist guide, activities.*

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## 22 April: Cousins Rock – Santa Cruz: Highlands

**AM:** Cousins is a small rock, the remains of an eroded crater sticking up out of the sea. On the eastern side, the rock cascades down in a series of recessed ledges strewn with black coral, which is bright green under the water. Taking cover in the coral, you may find Seahorses, Frogfish, Octopus, Turtles and the elusive Longnose Hawkfish. It's not unusual to spot pelagics from Cousins including Mantas, Eagle rays, Mobulas and Hammerhead. Sea lions and fur seals are also at Cousins. 1-2 dives depending on the mood of the divers. **PM:** We disembark head for a reserve in the Santa Cruz Highlands to see the iconic Galapagos Tortoise in its natural habitat. After the Highlands, we descend into the largest town in Galapagos, Puerto Ayora. You may opt to visit the Charles Darwin Research Center in the Galapagos National Park or wander about town. Our farewell dinner will be at a restaurant in Puerto Ayora. After dinner, we will say good-bye to the rest of the group as we will stay overnight in Puerto Ayora for further activities the next days.

**Included:** *Breakfast, lunch, dinner, accommodation, Galapagos naturalist guide, activities.*

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## 23 April: Full day Uninhabited Island Tour (Shared)

At around 7.20 AM we will be picked up from our hotel in order to be transferred to the Itabaca Channel. We will navigate for about 1 hour to South Plaza Island to the East of Santa Cruz. North and South Plaza Islands are two islets separated by a small channel of turquoise waters. We will be able observe a red-ish flora as well as cactus forests. Upon arrival to South Plaza, we will be welcomed by one of the biggest sea lion colonies on the Archipelago. During our visit, we will observe a variety of marine birds, land and marine iguanas. South Plaza is the only island where we can observe the hybrid iguanas, a mixture between land and marine ones. Lunch on board, followed by an amazing snorkeling activity at

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Punta Carrion. Here, we will see fish, manta rays, as well as there are high chances to observe white tipped sharks. We will return to Puerto Ayora at around 4 – 4.30 PM. The rest of the afternoon is free.

**Included:** *Breakfast, Lunch, Shared tour to Plaza Island, Accommodation.*

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## 24 April: Baltra – Quito

After breakfast, we will be transferred to the Itabaca Channel. After crossing it, we will take a public bus to the Airport of Baltra Island in order to take our domestic flight to Quito. Upon arrival, we will be transferred to our hotel.

**Included:** *Breakfast, transfer to Itabaca Channel, Galapagos naturalist guide, Ferry tickets, public bus on Baltra island, accommodation, transfer in Quito.*

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## 25 April: Quito – Yacuma Ecolodge

After breakfast, we will leave Quito in a private transportation towards one of the world's most biodiverse places: the Amazon Rainforest. Upon arrival to Santa Rosa, we will board our motorized canoa and start an approximately 20 minute navigation on the river until we finally arrive to our lodge. We will be welcomed with the traditional local drink "Guayusa" which locals drink at dawn as a natural energizer for the rest of the day. After a short briefing, we will be accommodated in our bungalows and after a short rest, we will participate in a fun piranha fishing activity. Afterwards, we return to our lodge for a delicious, locally prepared dinner. After dinner a 45 minute night walk can be organized around the lodge to explore the wildlife at night (optional).

**Included:** *Private transportation, English & Spanish speaking driver-guide, breakfast, dinner, accommodation, activities.*

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## 26 April: Full day jungle activities

After breakfast, at 8 AM, we will begin a hike to the primary jungle. The hike can be 2 or 4 hours long. During the short walk, we will get to see and learn about medicinal plants that local communities use on an everyday basis. The 4 hours hike takes us to the so-called Bat Cave, which is still not completely explored. Inside the cave, we can observe an interesting fauna of bats, spiders, snakes and other creatures. Shamans come to this cave to gain energy for their rituals. After the hike, we will return to the lodge for a nice lunch. A short rest will be followed by a fun tubing activity on the Napo River. Here, we will also learn about the traditional gold

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panning which is practiced by a lot of local communities. Gold is later sold in the nearest town. If time allows, we will also go tubing on the Napo river. Afterwards, we return to the lodge for dinner and overnight.

**Included:** *English & Spanish speaking driver-guide (translator), local native Spanish speaking guide, breakfast, lunch, dinner, activities, accommodation.*

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## 27 April: Full day jungle activities

This day, we will be going on a full day hike to the so-called Rio Bueno Camp. We will leave Yacuma in the morning and hike for about 3 hours in primary jungle. During the hike, we will be explained about the local plants we observe. We will be able to see endemic birds, and with luck maybe monkeys. Upon arrival to the Bueno River, we will have some time to enjoy the place and our box lunch. In the afternoon, we will start hiking back to Yacuma. Alternatively, we can camp and overnight at the river and return the next day.

**Included:** *English & Spanish speaking driver-guide (translator), local native Spanish speaking guide, breakfast, lunch (or lunch box), dinner, activities, accommodation.*

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## 28 April: Full day jungle activities

After breakfast, at 8 AM, we will visit a local Kichwa indigenous family where we can observe and learn about their lifestyle, and the process of making and painting ceramics. Here, we will also be able to try some local specialties, as well as support the family with buying some of their handicrafts. Later, we will have lunch at the lodge. After a short rest, we will make chocolate from locally grown cocoa beans. After the chocolate-making activity, we will have dinner and a farewell campfire.

**Included:** *English & Spanish speaking driver-guide (translator), local native Spanish speaking guide, breakfast, lunch, dinner, activities, accommodation.*

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## 29 April: Yacuma Ecolodge - Quito

For those interested in bird-watching, an early hike can be arranged to Yacuma's parrot clay-lick or to the viewpoint. Breakfast at 8 AM and then we say good-bye to our friends. With our motorized canoa we return to Santa Rosa and with our private transportation, we begin our last car ride back to Quito. Upon arrival, we will be transferred to our hotel.

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**Included:** Private transportation, English & Spanish speaking driver-guide (translator), local native Spanish speaking guide, breakfast, activities, accommodation.

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### 30 April: Tranfer Out

After breakfast, and at the right time, we will be transferred to the airport of Quito. **\*\*End of Services\*\***

**Included:** Private transportation, English & Spanish speaking driver-guide, breakfast.

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## | 2020 Net Prices per Person

Pax Number	1
NET US\$ pp	11380

**Included:** Private transportation, English/Spanish speaking guide, entrance fees, meals as indicated, accommodations in 3 star hotels, excursions and visits as mentioned in the itinerary, For diving: BCD, Regulator, 7mm Wetsuit, Hood, Fins, 5mm booties, Gloves, Mask, Lantern, AL100 Tank, 1 x Nitrox (additional available on board for an extra charge).

**Not included:** Extras, tips, beverages, personal expenses, travel insurance, entrances to Galapagos National Park (\$100/Person – subject to change), Transit Card to Galapagos (\$20/Person – subject to change), Flights to and from Galapagos (Approx. \$520/Person – subject to change).

**Grading: Moderate**

## | Hotels Used in the tour:

- Quito: Ikala Quito Hotel (<https://www.ikalaquitohotel.com/en/>) Standard Room or Similar
- Puerto Ayora: Lobo de Mar (<https://lobodemar.com.ec/>) or Similar
- Jungle: Yacuma Ecolodge (<http://yacuma.travel/>) or Similar

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### | General Reservation Policies:

Once the client confirms their interest in the offered touristic package, Ecoandes Travel will block services, such as hotels and tours in order to secure what was initially proposed. Providers generally set a time limit until which Ecoandes Travel needs to confirm or cancel the blocked services. This time limit can be extended under certain circumstances. In case, it is not an option, and the client is yet unable to confirm the tour, Ecoandes Travel will look for alternative services of the same category. Upon confirmation, our general payment and cancellation policies apply.

### | General Payment Policies:

- 20% Deposit to be paid upon confirmation.
- Balance to be paid 65 days before the tour starts.

### | General Cancellation Policies:

- Until 65 days prior arrival: No Fee
- Between 64-60 days prior arrival: 30% Penalty
- Between 59 – 46 days prior arrival: 50% Penalty
- Within 45 days prior arrival: 100% Penalty

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