

Table Of Content

Geographical location	4
Neighbouring cities/countries	5
Significance	6
History	7
Cultural identity	8
Natural resources	9
Key site seeing places (paid and free)	10
- Paid	10
-- El Chato - Giant Tortoise Reserve	10
-- Rancho Primicias - Giant Tortoise Reserve	10
-- Lava Tunnels	11
-- Parque Nacional Galápagos	11
-- Casa del Ceibo	12
- Free	14
-- Galapagos Beach at Tortuga Bay	14
-- Urbina Bay	14
-- Punta Cormorant	14
-- Volcan Trillizos	15
-- Cueva de Sucre	15
-- Los Tuneles	16
-- Kicker Rock	16
-- North Seymour Island	17
-- El Garrapatero	17
-- Playa Loberia	18
-- Las Tintoreras Islet	18
-- Mirador Cerro Tijeretas	19
-- Great Darwin Bay	19
-- Santa Fé Island	19
-- Isla Lobos	20
-- Puerto Chino	20
-- Concha de Perla	21

-- Centro de Crianza Tortugas	21
-- Laguna las Ninfas	21
-- Sierra Negra	22
-- Wall of Tears	22
-- Charles Darwin Research Station	22
-- Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado	23
-- Bartolomé Island	23
-- Cerro Brujo	24
-- Volcán Wolf	24
-- Las Grietas	25
-- Centro de Interpretacion	25
-- Galería Aymara	25
Key sites sports & adventure	27
Adventure sports, Local sports, stadiums	29
Spas and relaxation	30
Events calendar	31
Key local guides and tours	34
Transportation hubs	35
Transportation cost	36
Baggage allowance	37
Must try food and local savouries	38
Restaurant & Nightlife	40
Average meal cost	45
Shopping	46
Tourist benefits	47
Essential local apps	48
Driving	49
Travel essentials	50
Essential clothes	51
Local currency	52
Change vendor's commission, ATM charges	53
Staying connected	54
Time Zone	55

Languages 56

Political Scenario 57

Economic Scenario 58

Religious belief 59

Visa requirements 60

Essential vaccination 61

Theft and Safety 62

Embassy/Consulate 63

Accessibility 64

Emergencies 65

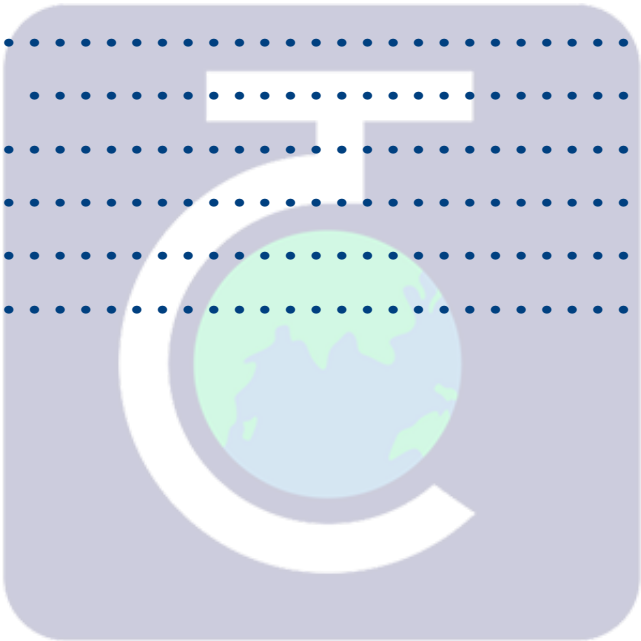
Do's and Don'ts 66

Tipping basics 67

Pet info 68

Conclusion 69

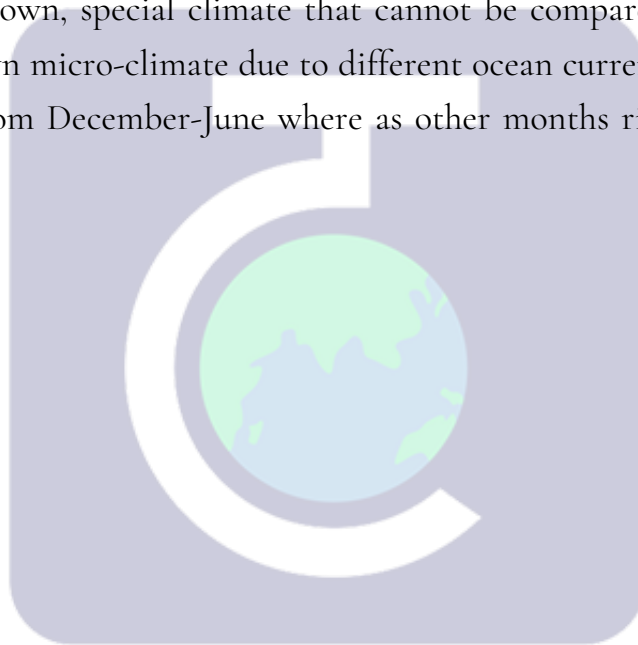
Disclaimer 70



Index

1. Geographical location

The Islands find themselves in the eastern Pacific Ocean that is to the North West of the continent and the closest land mass to the islands is of Ecuador that lies 600 miles off the coast, the country to which they belong. The islands are situated both in the northern and southern hemispheres and the group consists of 18 main islands, 3 smaller islands and 107 rocks and islets. Galapagos Islands are an archipelago of volcano islands with a population of 25,000 people. The archipelago has its very own, special climate that cannot be compared with anywhere in the world. Boasting of its own micro-climate due to different ocean currents, the temperature falls between 24 and 27°C from December-June where as other months rise to 17-20°C with everlasting drizzling.



Index

2. Neighbouring cities/countries

Galapagos Islands Are Neighbours To Guayaquil That Falls 1202kms Away Followed By Piura At 1230kms, 1267 Km To Santo Domingo, 1318 Km To Cuenca And 1339 Km To Quito. Peru, Colombia And Costa Rica Are The Nearest Countries To Ecuador.



Index

3. Significance

The Galápagos Islands are probably the most acknowledged wildlife-watching destination on the planet and it's impossible to exaggerate the sheer spectacle of the place that provided inspiration for Charles Darwin's ground-breaking theory of natural selection. This remote archipelago is a land of stark lava formations, cactus forests, lush green highlands, turquoise bays and quintessential tropical beaches. But, best of all, it is overflowing with wildlife at every turn. There's a surprising level of development in the towns of these islands, mostly to attract tourists from the world. Finding itself roughly 620 miles off the coast of Ecuador, the Enchanted Islands consists of 18 main islands, 3 smaller islands and 107 rocks and more than 100 islets, everyone boasting of its own unique atmosphere, distinctive landscape and inimitable wildlife. Tourism began in a limited fashion after the Ecuadoran government declared the islands a national park in 1959, however some 6 decades later, the Galapagos witnesses more than 170,000 visitors each year. The place might be fascinating for all the ecologists, zoologists or ornithologist, but that doesn't mean you cannot visit this one where human footprints are controlled. The site was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in the year 1978 making it more evident on people's radar. The Charles Darwin Research Station, works to alleviate the effects of human-made and natural disasters and is devoted to conserving the fragile ecosystem.

Index

4. History

Discovered by accident in the year 1535, by the Bishop of Panama, Tomas de Berlanga. The Bishop reported his discovery to King Charles V of Spain and included in his report a description of the giant Galapago (tortoise) from which the islands received their name. It is possible that the Indian inhabitants of South America were aware of the islands' existence before 1535 but there is no record of this. In 1953, Norwegian explorer Thor Heyedahl discovered what he thought to be pre-Colombian pottery shards on the islands, but the evidence seems inconclusive. For more than three centuries after their discovery, the Galapagos were used as a base by a succession of sealers, whalers and buccaneers. The islands provided sheltered anchorage, firewood, water and an abundance of food in the form of giant Galapagos tortoises which were caught by the thousands and stacked, alive, in ships holds. The first rough charts of the Galapagos Islands were made by buccaneers in the late 17th century, and scientific exploration began the late 18th century. The Galapagos' most famous visitor was Charles Darwin, who arrived in 1835, exactly 300 years after the Bishop of Panama. Darwin stayed for five weeks, making notes and wildlife collections that provided important evidence for his theory of evolution, which he was just then beginning to develop. In the year 1978 UNESCO had awarded the islands World Heritage status. Officially obtained by Ecuador in 1832, for roughly one century thereafter, the islands were inhabited by a few settlers and were used as penal colonies, the islands were declared wildlife sanctuaries in 1934, and the archipelago officially became a national park in 1959. Organised Galapagos tours began in the late 1960's and now an estimated 170,000 people visit the islands each year.

5. Cultural identity

Ecuador's rich history and diverse geography has definitely built up the cultural identities that extends its arm along Pacific coastlands, Andean mountainscapes and extending through the lush vegetation of the Amazon rainforest. A multi-ethnic country dealing with African and European communities, Ecuadorians are bustling and mestizo, a blend of Spanish and indigenous ancestry. The country's many indigenous groups have all contributed to Ecuadorian culture as it stands today. From the rich and distinctive food traditions to customs for celebrating various holidays and religious festivities, Ecuador's culture is a pleasure to explore. The peppy sounds of folkloric trumpets and drums and saxophones blare on the streets, the music in the Galapagos has been evolving from a blend of sounds from elsewhere. In general costumes are very similar to the ones practiced in mainland Ecuador, people is very warm, friendly and always willing to help visitors. Galapagos culture is a mixture between the people that came from the highlands, the Amazon Jungle and the coast of Ecuador. Boasting of many diverse indigenous groups, Pre-Columbian influence is seen around in every part of the country, whether it is the architecture, language or customs and traditions. There is no one food that is especially Ecuadorian, as cuisine varies from region to region of the country, however there are certain dishes that are world class. From Patacones, seco de chivo, llapingachos and fancesca to ceviche and encebollado, these are some dishes that you will bump into when travelling the country. With Spanish as a dominating language, the country is widely acknowledged for its music scene that brings out many influences together. Albazo, Pasacalle, Tonada, Capischa, Bomba, Incaico and Rockola and some of the excellent examples of the music scene along with Sanjuanito ruling the dancer affair. The culture of the islands is captivating and fascinating. The island's culture can be seen in its many architectural buildings and local customs that still prevail from centuries.

Index

6. Natural resources

The island are home to Galápagos National Park established in the year 1959, the park is also Ecuador's first national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. About 97% of the entire area of the Galapagos Islands are part of the National Park system and remain uninhabited. The Ecuador land is rich in petroleum, tubers, vegetables, flowers, fruits, timber and hydropower, however fish stands out as the major natural resource of the Islands.



Index

7. Key site seeing places (paid and free)

7.1. Paid

7.1.1. El Chato - Giant Tortoise Reserve

Get acquainted with the enigmatic dome-shaped creatures at this 5 acre park that is all set for you to wander and stroll around while interacting with the beautiful wildlife in their native habitat. Watch the giant turtles roam around like joggers in the park while the Darwin finch chirp in the background. Nestled within the highlands of Santacruz, the reserve is the best place to spot the endemic species of short-eared owls hooting on one of the branches. The only rules to be followed are: No touching and No Flash Photography. Top Secret: Walk around the backside of turtles in order to get up and close to them.

Address : Santa Cruz Island, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.667465, -90.43064299999998

Contact : +593 5-252-6189

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station (not recommended)

Entry Fee : Entrance to the Reserve: \$3

Open & Close Timing : Daily 08:00hrs-17:00hrs

Time Required : 2

Expected Wait Time : 15 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

7.1.2. Rancho Primicias - Giant Tortoise Reserve

Right next to El Chato reserve is a private ranch maintained by the Devine Family. Come across dozens of giant tortoises and just wander around them to see their natural habitat. There's also a cafe on-site selling soft drinks and steaming hot tea. If you're lucky you may even see a Paint-billed Crake, Purple and Common Gallinules, as well as finches.

Address : Isla Santa Cruz, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.670376, -90.428232

Contact : +593 5-252-6189

Website : <http://www.galapagospark.org/>

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station (Not Recommended)

Entry Fee : General Admission: \$4

Open & Close Timing : Daily 08:00hrs-17:00hrs

Time Required : 2

Expected Wait Time : 5-10 minutes

Buy Ticket : No

7.1.3. Lava Tunnels

Explore these fascinating underground passages that were formed when the outside skin of a molten lava solidified while the inner lava flowed out. Fenced by dense vegetation that shelters birds like flycatchers and finches, the Lava Tunnels warrants a visit of those enthusiasts who seek some land adventure on the Santa Cruz island. The longest tunnels can be visited through an official guide since they are privately owned. Most of the tunnels have electrical lighting that eliminates the fear of dark and makes room for good photographs, hence do find yourself here and be stupefied by the beauty of the passageways.

Address : Puerto Aroya 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.639479, -90.335535

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station (Not Recommended)

Entry Fee : Entrance: \$3

Open & Close Timing : Daily 08:00hrs-17:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.1.4. Parque Nacional Galápagos

Established in 1959, the Galapagos National Park is the oldest national park of Ecuador. A beautiful parallel world in itself, the park cover 97% of the archipelago's land surface and was declared as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2007. Comprising of volcanic terrains and intrepid fauna like giant tortoises, sea lions, fur seals, marine iguanas, frigate birds, patios-blue gannets and more,

visit one of the best preserved jewel of nature to experience how the endemic creatures have evolved remarkably without fearing the mankind. Apart from interacting with the fauna, you will also be captivated by the alluring white sand beaches and lava tunnels at the "Enchanted Islands", as some popularly referred them. Its geological features and unique species has set a benchmark on a global scale and attracts both researchers as well as nature lovers from all over.

Address : Charles Darwin s/n, 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.6144343, -90.3451351

Contact : +593 5-252-6189

Website : <https://www.galapagos.org/>

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus station (Not Recommended)

Entry Fee : \$10

Time Required : 4

Expected Wait Time : 15 minutes

Buy Ticket : Yes

7.1.5. Casa del Ceibo

A small shed constructed halfway up on the oldest and the widest standing ceiba tree of the island, Casa del Ceibo is your private and peaceful retreat. This man-made marvel encloses you with picturesque landscapes that will leave you spellbound. Come here and spend a night in the wilderness or climb up the treehouse to experience one of the most memorable stays ever.

Address : Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200150

Location : -0.900591, -89.610619999999

Contact : +593 5-239-9399

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal Terrestre ANSELMO VERA SALAVARRÍA Bus Station

Entry Fee : Admission: \$1.50, Climb: \$3, Tree House stay per person: \$25.

Open & Close Timing : Open 24 Hours

Time Required : 1

Expected Wait Time : 10 minutes

Buy Ticket : No



Index

7.2. Free

7.2.1. Galapagos Beach at Tortuga Bay

A living paradise, the shoreline of Tortuga bay will leave you enchanted with its golden brown sand and green-blue waters that play as a perfect backdrop to the vast sky. Take a walk along the well maintained road to reach this pristine beach and marvel at the gorgeous seascapes. Protected by Tortuga bay, Galapagos beach shelters endemic wildlife specimens like iguanas, Galapagos crabs and more. Though you cannot swim here, picnicking amidst the wildlife is worth your while. As the beach closes before sundown, you can also spot some birds flocking here in the broad daylight.

Address : Tortuga Bay, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.7610533999999, -90.3325730999999

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus station (Not Recommended)

Open & Close Timing : Daily 06:00hrs-17:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.2. Urbina Bay

Quaintly sitting on the foothills of Alcedo Volcano, Urbina Bay offers a hiking trip to enjoy jaw-dropping scenery as well as local flora and fauna. Begin your hike at the beach surrounded by swampland and come across some native island species like yellow land iguanas, flightless cormorants, penguins on land and in water, dive bombing blue-footed boobies and many more creatures as you climb your way to the top.

Address : Ecuador

Zipcode : 200150

Location : -0.398439, -91.232358

Open & Close Timing : Open 24 Hours

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.3. Punta Cormorant

You will feel like you have been transported to an aquarium as reach the shores of Punta Cormorant, a charming white sand beach on Floreana Island. This peaceful location hides colorful school of fishes of all shapes and sizes along with sharks that make this journey a little more than interesting. Stroll through the beach and reach the brackish lagoon where you will see a large number of flamingos coming out of their mud-pie like nests and white cheeked pintails. Keep your binoculars handy as birds like black-necked stilts, whimbrels, frigate birds, willets, ruddy turnstones and phalaropes have also built their nests here. Note: Swimming is not allowed here.

Address : Isla Floreana, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200150

Location : -1.225299, -90.425170499999

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.4. Volcan Trillizos

Founded accidentally in 2011 when someone fell down this 180 meters hole while clearing the land, Volcan Trillizos is a place to learn everything about the flora and fauna. Climb down the ladder of this extinct volcano and stumble upon a two tunnel cave where one leads to the sea and the other leads to Vulcán Sierra Negra. However, visitors are not allowed embark on a discovery beyond the cave. This excursion also includes rappelling tours that will take your breath away.

Address : Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200250

Location : -0.9558108, -90.9671429

Contact : +593 5-252-9146

Website : <https://www.facebook.com/volcantrillizos/>

Time Required : 2.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.5. Cueva de Sucre

Explore the entrails of the volcanic island at Cueva de Sucre, a 1/8 mile long cave situated on the agricultural zone of Isla Isabela. Just about 15 minutes away from

town of Puerto Villamil, the lava tunnels charms you with its diverse geology and gold mine like roofs. Admire the beauty of nature as you traverse through the strip of ecotourism trail that is formed completely of volcanic materials, the lava tunnels and reach the endemic forest nursery. However, it is too dark so do carry flashlights while you explore the beautiful architecture. A little surprise in the name of turtles find refuge here along with some flamingos.

Address : Isla Isabela, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.9471813, -90.9739124

Open & Close Timing : Daily 06:00hrs-18:00hrs

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.6. Los Tuneles

Surround yourself with lava tunnels at this fantastic place. Known for is snorkeling, at Los Tuneles you can weave in and out of the rocky coves and shallow corals to reach the most mellow and untouched depths of water. Swim with a school of fish or play with the friendly long-tailed green sea turtles or watch out for a giant sea horse camouflaged in the tangly root system, there is just so much to experience at this maze of lava tunnel arches. If you are lucky, you can also spot the blue footed boobies here.

Address : SE Isabela Island | Nr. La Union Rock, Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200250

Location : -0.9571504, -90.9650474

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.7. Kicker Rock

This remains of a lava cone split into 2 is considered to be an excursion worth going for. Kicker Rock or León Dormido offers unique snorkeling experience wherein you can swim along the wildlife like white-tip reef sharks, turtles, hammerhead sharks, Galapagos sharks and fishes in underground tunnels and just get lost into the beauty of this impostor of a lion-like rock. However, there's only one catch - the water temperature keeps changing as you snorkel your way

through the pacific coast. After a tiring underwater journey, sunbathe on the white sand Manglesito Beach while enjoying the breath-taking scenery. This rock stands 500 feet high above the ocean and attracts numerous bird species.

Address : Puerto Baquerizo Moreno 200150, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200150

Location : -0.9043066, -89.611770299999

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.8. North Seymour Island

This small island located near Baltra Island is a haven for the most sought after residents of the islands, the blue-footed boobies. Formed by uplift of a submarine lava formation, the whole North Seymour Island covers itself with low, bushy vegetation. Meander through the trails and witness the Frigate birds, swallow-tailed gulls and Blue-Footed Boobies perform their daily routine. On your excursion, you can also observe the dynamics between the mother and the chick or if you visit at the right time, you can also watch the partners performing the mating ritual. The Island also offers breath-taking tours and is a place for someone who loves to keep themselves around nature. The nearby isolated Bachas beach and Flamingo lagoon adds to the beauty of the tour.

Address : Ecuador

Location : -0.3960225, -90.2878326

Time Required : 4

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.9. El Garrapatero

One of the prettiest beaches in the area, El Garrapatero is the place to be for some relaxing time with friends and family. Take out those playing cards and display it with some sandwiches and coke on the picnic cloth, while also admiring the crystal clear waters where people are mostly seen kayaking. This picturesque beach is also home to some amazing birds and marine Iguanas that find themselves surrounded by beautiful mangrove trees, making the whole scene a perfect canvas. After lunch in a local farm, we will go to Garrapatero beach, a sandy beach surrounded in mangroves. You can find herons, flamingos, stilts

birds and other shore birds. It is located on the northern part of Santa Cruz Island. Its enchanting turquoise waters are magnificent to do snorkeling, kayaking, or simply relax and enjoy the islands. Diego Escobar. Flamingos, marine iguanas, lava lizards, lava gulls, yellow warblers, and brown pelicans, among other wildlife. The beach also allows camping.

Address : NE of Puerto Ayora 19 km, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.6946486, -90.2208023

Open & Close Timing : Open 24 Hours

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.10. Playa Loberia

The beach that finds itself 20 minutes away from the main center is home to numerous sea lions who will just make your day. Swim in the clear waters with the turtles or go take a snorkeling tour. Las Loberias is a charming one out there since you can also just relax with sea lions and truly feel tranquility and peace. White Sands play a good company to your picnic cloth, just come here and chill the day with your favorite food, book and a glass of wine.

Address : frente ala pista del avion, Ecuador

Location : -0.9250063999999, -89.613902699999

Contact : +593 5-252-0031

Open & Close Timing : Open 24 Hours

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.11. Las Tintoreras Islet

Take different tours to Las Tintoreras and lose yourself around penguins and footed boobies along with Iguanas. Get some great shots of these animals and then head straight for some great snorkeling adventures and swim with turtles, sharks, penguins and sea lions. A Gluttony for a natural lover, this mix of nature and adventure will play a perfect host to you.

Address : Puerto Villamil, Ecuador

Location : -0.966667, -90.966667

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.12. Mirador Cerro Tijeretas

Hike to Cerro Tijeretas through a well made path from the Interpretation center, this view point overlooks the bay and surrounding area and doesn't fail to surprise you with the amazing views that will just make you an admirer. Click some great photographs to take back home and just get lost into the beauty of the surroundings.

Address : Isla de San Cristóbal 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.8878511, -89.6088608

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station (not recommended)

Time Required : 3

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.13. Great Darwin Bay

Cruise through this volcanic caldera and reach the island which is popularly known to be "a bird paradise". Snap some close-up pictures of the nesting colonies of frigate birds, swallow-tailed and lava gulls, lava herons, brown pelicans, red footed boobies, wedge-rumped storm petrels, mockingbirds, fur seals and Galapagos Sea Lions at Darwin Bay. Move ahead with some kayaking or snorkeling and play with some native marine wildlife. Hike through the only two trails past the beach, the tide pools and lava tunnels to the highest point of the island and be treated with the most rewarding views of hundreds of birds flocking their wings or humming a tune or even some of them mating at this island.

Address : Genovesa Island, Ecuador

Location : 0.31132779999999, -89.955678299999

Open & Close Timing : Open 24 Hours

Time Required : 3

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.14. Santa Fé Island

The endemic species of Iguanas find their way at Santa Fe Island along with other interesting creatures. Snorkel your way through the waters with sea lions and get lost into the amazing views under-water. Carry your go-pro for some breath taking photos and just get up close and personal with the wildlife here.

Address : Ecuador

Location : -0.819877, -90.065334099999

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.15. Isla Lobos

Take a small tour of these islands and get your way through the red chested frigate birds, pelicans, blue footed boobies and a bunch of other marine life creatures too. There's also snorkelling and swimming in the waters of this Island. Just another place trying to fit in the natural scene which is a worth visit.

Address : San Cristobal Island 200350, Galapagos, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.8363889, -89.4197222

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.16. Puerto Chino

This attractive swimming beach located on the south east side of San Cristobal Island is a popular weekend destination for local farming families in the area and is very well liked by the tourists. Sparkling white sand beach with the finest grains, like icing sugar, complemented by the greenish-blue waters that keeps changing. There is no much natural shade at the beach except around the mangroves that surrounds the back hence do come here with some good sun protection and an umbrella, if possible. If you can carry a tent, then it definitely will be your perfect location to attain serenity.

Address : Isla de San Cristóbal 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.9260465999999, -89.429146599999

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora (not

recommended)

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.17. Concha de Perla

Concha de Perla is another natural wonder located in Puerto Villamil and can be reached through wooden walkway that makes you pass through the mangroves. Swim with the sea lions and penguins and just chill the day away by the clear waters. Highlights includes the pink flamingos in their natural habitat that makes your sight out-of-the-world.

Address : Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200250

Location : -0.9622214, -90.957454699999

Time Required : 0.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.18. Centro de Crianza Tortugas

It's all about the tortoise here. This breeding center is home to several different species of giant tortoise whose conservation efforts are proving vital to the population growth of these archaic creatures. Get up close and personal with tortoise and gather as much information as you can about these species that sort of rule the whole Island.

Address : Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200250

Location : -0.9471813, -90.9739124

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.19. Laguna las Ninfas

The lagoon that encloses itself with mangroves and a lot of bird life is a place where people come for some broad-walks in the serene environment. A nice tranquil lagoon with blackish water, just sit under the moonlight and have your deepest confessions at this very place.

Address : Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.7474029, -90.316983499999

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.20. Sierra Negra

The islands are more than just animals or diving/snorkeling and Sierra Negra stands as a perfect example to prove it. Hike to this mountain that is home to an active volcano and learn more about the topography of the region. A nice 3 hour trek followed by some breath taking views, just observe the surroundings and get lost into the many ecosystems that this single place has to offer. Tons of birds, fresh guava and passion fruits to sample, the site is best visited on a clear day.

Address : Isabela Island 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.83, -91.17

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.21. Wall of Tears

A historical site located just 5kms away from Isabela Islands, Wall of tears was constructed between the years 1945 and 1959 by the prisoners in the penal colony. The wall is said to be 65feet tall and is best explored on bike. The wall also takes on through the rich history of the Islands.

Address : Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200250

Location : -0.9646024, -91.0135111

Time Required : 0.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.22. Charles Darwin Research Station

An iconic national site where more than 200 scientists and volunteers are

involved with research and conservation efforts, Charles Darwin Research Station is a must when visiting the islands. It works to alleviate the effects of human-made and natural disasters and is devoted to conserving the fragile ecosystem. The attractions over here include several land Iguanas along with giant Tortoise that hover around the area.

Address : Ave Charles Darwin, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.7423151, -90.3037655

Contact : +593 5 5 252 6146

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station

Open & Close Timing : Daily 06:00hrs-18:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.23. Galapaguera de Cerro Colorado

This giant tortoise breeding facility tucked way up in the highlands is your place to be where you will come across tortoises from babies to 90 years old. Get into the natural habitat of these creatures and get to know them personally in this center. A trip to this one is both Educational and Entertaining!

Address : Isla San Cristóbal 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.9136511, -89.436808199999

Contact : +593 (0)5 252 0497

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station

Open & Close Timing : Daily 06:00hrs-18:00hrs

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.24. Bartolomé Island

Surround yourself with gorgeous colorful fish, sea lions and turtles as you snorkel your way through in the waters of Isla Bartolome. Hike to this island where you will not only come across excellent views but also get lost in the Natural beauty of the island. Pinnacle rock stands as the highlight of Bartolome and the postcard photos ever-glorifying! So Pose and Post!

Address : Ecuador

Location : -0.2842964, -90.550602

Contact : +593 (0)5 252 0497

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station

Time Required : 1.5

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.25. Cerro Brujo

This wonderful beach is all about spectacular sceneries and marine biodiversity. Take your time admiring at marine iguanas, plants, shells, mockingbirds, sea lions and the remote beauty of this special site. A naturalist's dream place, the beach boasts of some white sand along with clear blue water playing a perfect home to the marine creatures here. Stroll around or just relax on the beach, but do not miss it!

Address : Isola San Cristobal 200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.7677778, -89.3802778

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.26. Volcán Wolf

Wolf Volcano is the highest peak in the Galapagos islands and finds itself on the Isabela Island. It is a shield volcano with a characteristic upturned soup bowl shape, the volcano was named after Theodor Wolf, a German geologist who studied the Galapagos Islands in the 19th century. The volcano is home to unique fauna differing from the other islands and neighboring volcanos and has its own subspecies. Though it is not very much recommended to take up hikes here, people still go ahead, but beware for the trails are quite risky.

Address : Ecuador

Location : 0.0424999, -91.337222199999

Nearest Public Transport : Terminal terrestre de Puerto Ayora Bus Station

Time Required : 3

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.27. Las Grietas

Las Grietas is a place to swim in cool ocean water between two tall cliffs, where the earth has opened like a “crack” or “crevasse”. One will reach here through a rocky/sandy trail and a short ferry ride across from Puerto Ayora. The area not only offers great views but also snorkeling options where you'll bump into numerous fish making your overall experience just amazing.

Address : Ecuador

Location : -0.757188, -90.3154556

Time Required : 2

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.28. Centro de Interpretacion

An attraction that combines fun and education, the Interpretation Center of San Cristobal aims to introduce visitors to the rich history of the islands. Visitors exploring the center will learn many fascinating pieces of information about the island's history. For example, the Natural History Room goes into an in-depth exhibit of the volcanic origin of the islands. There are other rooms dedicated to the island's colonization, flora and fauna species, and conservation of the land.

Address : Avenida Alsacio Northia, Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.8935671, -89.609124399999

Website : <http://galapagos.unc.edu/gsc/>

Time Required : 1

Buy Ticket : No

7.2.29. Galería Aymara

The best part about Galeria Aymara is that you don't have to be at the Galapagos Islands to walk away with some unique treasures. Their online shop has a detailed catalog of items ranging from jewelry to baskets to art. But visitors who are in the area are in for a real treat, as they get to explore the showroom filled with textiles, masks, and so much more. Everything listed with Galeria Aymara is of extremely high quality, and some of the most popular pieces include hand woven baskets, Mola tapestries, and handmade jewelry by Lugi.

Address : Av. Charles Darwin and Marchena, Puerto Ayora EC200350, Ecuador

Zipcode : 200350

Location : -0.742463, -90.310572999999

Time Required : 0

Buy Ticket : No



Index

8. Key sites sports & adventure

The Islands are home to a spectacular adventure life. Come here to get lost into the waters of Galapagos and let that adrenaline rush pumping. From Kayaking, Snorkelling to Hiking and Scuba Diving, Surfing one will definitely enjoy this magnificent purpose.

- **Hiking and Kayaking -**

Address : San Cristóbal Island, Lugo Centre N24-255, Ecuador

Location : -0.866458,-89.436043

Contact No : +593 866.836.9335

Website : <http://www.rowadventures.com/Galapagos-Islands-Vacation>

Entry Fees : Tours starting from \$2,125

Open / Close Time : Daily 08:00hrs-17:30hrs

Time Required : 8.00

- **Scuba Diving -**

Address : General Rodriguez Lara S/N | and Indefatigable, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.747448,-90.314561

Contact No : +593 99 983 9347

Website : <http://tiptopdiving.com/>

Entry Fees : Tours starting from \$175

Open / Close Time : Monday-Friday 08:30hrs-10:00hrs, 15:00hrs-18:00hrs

Time Required : 3.00

- **Water Sports -**

Address : Puerto Baquerizo Moreno EC200150, Ecuador

Location : -0.908233,-89.608623

Contact No : +593 2521858

Website : <http://www.galapagos-underwater.com/>

Entry Fees : Tours starting from \$220

Open / Close Time : Monday-Saturday - 08:00hrs-19:00hrs

Time Required : 12



Index

9. Adventure sports, Local sports, stadiums

The islands are seen bustling with the young generation hitting a goal or two on the beaches followed by some volleyball adventures. Unfortunately there are no professional clubs and stadiums representing the area.



Index

10. Spas and relaxation

There are not many Spas and relaxation centers located on the islands. Just dig deep down into the natural environment that solely brings peace to one's mind and body. However if still unsatisfied, do take a visit to the following Spas –

- **Famai Thai Massage:**

Address : Av. Charles Darwin y Marchena, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.742463,-90.310755

Contact No : +(593)99 2488215

- **Zenia Spa:**

Address : Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.742502,-90.311108

Contact No : +593 99 399 0102

- **Golden Bay Galapagos Hotel & Spa:**

Address : Puerto Baquerizo Moreno EC200150, Ecuador

Location : -0.899414,-89.609085

Contact No : +593 2-255-7755

Website : <http://www.goldenbay.com.ec/>

11. Events calendar

Month

Events

New Years Day

The city celebrates New Year with as much enthusiasm and passion as anywhere else in the world. Firework displays, live concerts and fun events light up the New Years, continuing well past midnight.

Día de Reyes

Celebrated with Christmas Carols, Masses, Fireworks, Processions, Popular music bands and traditional dances, this festival known as Epiphany day is celebrated in many different towns in the first week around the 5th or 6th every year.

Carnival

Celebrated all over the country, the carnival depends on the date of the Easter. People play with water, live music, costume displays, parades and dances are held on the streets of the city. The festival takes place in the first week of February.

Semana Santa

Observed on March 24, Holy Week, or Semana Santa, is held the week before Easter.

Celebrated throughout Ecuador, it is particularly impressive in Quito, where a sombre procession makes its way through the streets on Good Friday

Labour Day

Celebrated on May 1, Labour Day is a very big deal in the country. A national holiday, hence don't be surprised to see the streets and attractions crowded.

Corpus Christi

Taking place on the Thursday and weekend after Trinity Sunday, this festival is a chance for masked dancers with towering elaborate headdresses to rule the streets. Dates are flexible.

Independence Day

Most important day for the country and also a national holiday, festivities take place on August 10th every year with activities like bullfighting, cockfighting and horse exhibitions in the city

Día de los Todos Santos (All Saints' Day) and Día de los Muertos (All Souls' Day)

Commemorating the dead, one will see the locals lighting candles at the cemeteries and masses being held across the city. Traditional breads are cooked in the shape of dolls and many ceremonies are brought to the cemeteries. The festival takes place on November 2.

Christmas

Christmas is celebrated with very high spirits, the city is decorated with beautiful lights which attract the tourist to the city especially during the time of Christmas.

Index

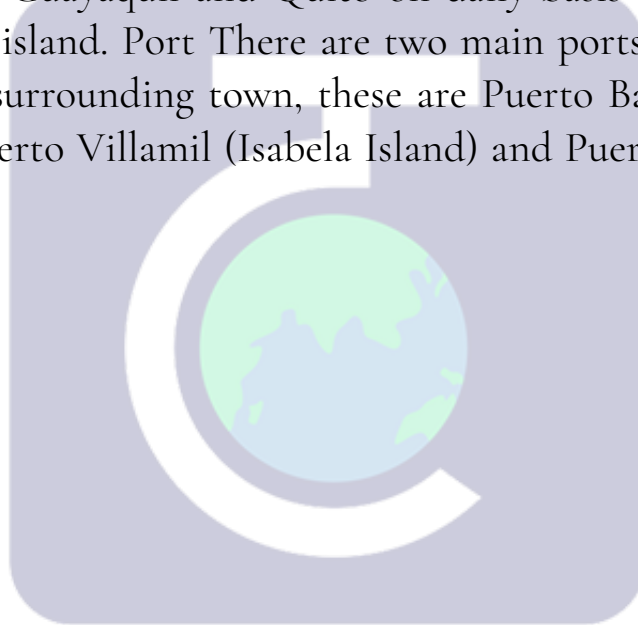
12. Key local guides and tours

Some of the top tours include – Galápagos Island Hopping: Take this 7 day tour to hop between the islands and explore the native wildlife along with different towns and observe flamingos at an isolated lagoon, hike up Sierra Negra Volcano and many other adventurous things. Galápagos Express Camping Adventure: Snorkel with sea lions, camp in the middle of it all, travel by public speedboats around the Galápagos Islands, visit Charles Darwin Research Station and the Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre, hike Sierra Negra Volcano in this 7 day tour. Galapagos Islands Cruise: Take this 5 day Cruise and explore the deep waters of the Galapagos Islands. Day Galapagos Land Tour: Take this land tour to visit 2 Islands in 5 days. Taking you through the most amazing spots in the islands, this tour will get you up and personal with the wildlife. Darwin Footprints Tour: This 5 day tour rather explores the two top Galapagos volcanic islands: Santa Cruz and Isabela with their wild scenery. Authentic Galápagos: This 4 days tour take excursions to Tortuga Beach and full day Excursion in yacht to Santa Fe Island with fishing and excursion to Cerro Mesa & Garrapatero. Galapagos Islands Highlights Tour: Enjoy this 5-day tour in the Galapagos Islands and visit 4 islands to see the best highlights of this archipelago. This is an all-inclusive tour with a knowledgeable guide and conducted in a small-group.

Index

13. Transportation hubs

Airport Seymour Airport: This is the main airport serving the island of Baltra and one of the Galápagos Islands in Ecuador. The airport also receives flights from Guayaquil and Quito on daily basis and is located 1.6kms away from the main island. **San Cristóbal Airport:** This is the main airport serving the island of San Cristóbal, and one of the Galápagos Islands in Ecuador. The airport also receives flights from Guayaquil and Quito on daily basis and is located 22kms away from the main island. **Port** There are two main ports that receives cruises and boats from the surrounding town, these are Puerto Baquerizo Moreno(San Cristobal Island), Puerto Villamil (Isabela Island) and Puerto Ayora(Santa Cruz Island).



14. Transportation cost

One can travel around Galapagos Islands through bikes, taxis and water taxis, however if willing to travel to other towns and islands, one can make use of speedboats and flights that offer daily routes. Following are the costs – Bikes: Most of the locals ride around on bicycles since it's better for the environment. Tourists can rent bicycles for the day (\$15), or per hour (\$3). Taxis: The Galapagos taxis aren't the yellow cabs of the mainland. White pickup trucks with their "names" sprawled across the front windshield drive around town looking for business, often honking to attract the lost tourist's attention. All of the taxis charge \$1 to any destination in town, regardless of how many passengers clamber on board. You can flag a taxi down from the street at pretty much any time of the day, you do not need to call ahead to book one, like in big cities. Water taxis: From Puerto Ayora, if you want to go to "el otro lado", or The Other Side, you will need to take a water taxi. You generally catch these from the pier in front of the main street grocery store, Proinsular. These cost 60 cents each way, and take a couple of minutes. Air: Emetebe is an inter-island flight company in the Galapagos. International tourists pay \$158 dollars one way, or \$260 return, and are permitted to bring 10 kilos of luggage. Sea: Several speedboat companies offer inter-island shuttling. From Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz Island) to Puerto Villamil, (Isabela Island), it takes about 2.5 to 3 hours. The cost is \$25-30 one way. Boats to San Cristobal leave Puerto Ayora at 2pm, and leave San Cristobal at 7 am daily. The cost is \$25-\$30 one way.

Index**15. Baggage allowance**

When commuting on a bike it is obvious that heavy amount of baggage is not allowed, however one can carry heavy baggage in taxis or water taxis, but not enough to cause inconvenience to self and those around you. When commuting between two islands through airways, make sure not to carry more than 10kgs of luggage since one is not allowed to carry more luggage. One should also carry minimum baggage while commuting through speedboats.



Index

16. Must try food and local savouries

Ecuadorian cuisine is vibrant in its own way and is known for its diversity. Pork, beef, chicken and roasted guinea pig (cuy) are the most popular in the region. The cuisine also pays attention to seafood and major spices. However, if visiting the city do not, do not in any condition forget to try llapingachos since this is the traditional food of the city. While the country isn't well known for its international cuisines, this small country has a few traditional delectable dishes that cannot be missed – Cuy: One of the important dish of the country and especially in the highlands. This is a traditional Andean dish that dates back to the Inca period. A traditional Cuy is generally cooked over an open fire or may be fried and taste like a cross between pork and chicken, just a little more greasy. Quimbolitos/Humitas - A sweet-dish with a flavor redolent of a sweet cornbread made from corn, wrapped in corn leaves further topped with raisins is one thing that you will bump into on every other street or corner. Encebollado - Referred to as Ecuadorian hangover food, this fish soup is brewed with tomato, yuca, onions and topped with chifles and popcorn. A must try, this is considered as a National dish by many Ecuadorians. Bolónes - This Ecuadorian treat, made of plantain is served with cheese or meat fillings. The mixed plantain is fried to perfection and goes well the spicy aji salsa sauce is your perfect deal for some great breakfast. Pan de Yuca - Made with starch, eggs, cheese and salad these comes in chewy rolls making for a perfect afternoon snack. Have it with the fruity yogurt of this unfamiliar yet tasty flavored dish. Fritada - Usually eaten for dinner, the dish features pork which is layered on the top of friend plantains, seasoned with corn, onions, cilantro and llapingacho. Batida de Maracuya (Passionfruit Smoothie) - Passion fruit rules the country, from maracuya cheesecake, yogurt to even maracuya beer, it is everywhere. This odd-looking fruit blends with the smoothie to make the flavor irresistible. A blend of tangy and sweet, Batida de Maracuya is a refreshing drink found almost everywhere. Llapingachos - A Traditional Andean potato Pattie filled with cheese and cooked on a griddle, the dish is further topped with a fried egg and layers of cheese and avocado, ultimately served with beef and salad. Encocado - Typically coastal, Encocado is made with fish, shrimp or the combination of the two and is

dipped in sweet creamy sauce made with fresh coconut. Served with a side of patacones and rice, one will find this dish anywhere near the coast for sure. Choclo con queso - Literal meaning corn with cheese, this dish consists of Andean corn or choclo and Ecuadorian cheese is served with earthy beans making it a nutritious meal. Ceviche - This dish is one of the most iconic one in the city. Coming from seaside, this marinated fish dish are in Lima and it's the healthiest, freshest and zestiest dish you will ever have. Ceviche comes from the indigenous quechua language meaning fresh fish and is definitely not to be missed. Some of the must tries include –



Index

17. Restaurant & Nightlife

The food in your plates on the islands is rather diverse and delectable. Seafood, obviously being the highlight, there's also Exotic fruit juices, Homemade meals and Hearty and Traditional Ecuadoran dishes that steal the show. The islands are bustling with a huge variety of restaurants, main ones located in the towns of Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz Island), Puerto Villamil (Isabela Island) and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal Island). From street stalls serving fresh grilled fish to sophisticated dining, there's something for everyone. For an authentic, casual and fun dining experience, be sure to head to Calle de los Kioskos, located in Puerto Ayora. When it comes to the whole nightlife scenes, the inside towns are sprawling with bars, however most of them do shut early due to the silent surroundings that they are surrounded with. Puerto Ayora is one place where you will find a lively happening nightlife, as far as other towns are concerned there's not much to do, nonetheless that won't stop you from visiting the following places for sure –

Food -

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- **Il Giardino:**

Address : Ave Charles Darwin, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.744042,-90.312362

Contact No : +593 5-252-6627

Website : <http://www.ilgiardinogalapagos.com.ec/>

Open / Close Time : Monday-Wednesday 08:00hrs-18:00hrs

- **Galápagos Deli:**

Address : Thomas de Berlanga, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.746334,-90.313514

Open / Close Time : Tuesday-Sunday 07:00hrs-21:45hrs

- **La Garrapata Restaurante:**

Address : Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.745067,-90.311565

Contact No : +593 5-252-6264

Website : <https://www.facebook.com/garrapata.restaurante>

- **Isla Grill:**

Address : Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.744575,-90.312006

Contact No : +593 98 462 7240

Open / Close Time : Tuesday-Sunday 12:15hrs-22:15hrs

- **Booby Trap:**

Address : Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador
Location : -0.956392,-90.969600
Contact No : +593 5-252-9500
Open / Close Time : Daily 09:00hrs-21:00hrs

- **Coco Surf Restaurant:**

Address : Antonio Gil, Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador
Location : -0.957020,-90.967093
Contact No : +593 5-252-9465
Open / Close Time : Daily 12:00hrs-21:30hrs

- **The Rock:**

Address : Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador
Location : -0.746345,-90.312500
Contact No : +593 5-252-7505
Website : <http://www.therockgalapagos.com/index.php>
Open / Close Time : Daily 14:00hrs-22:15hrs

- **Lo & Lo:**

Address : Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador
Location : -0.746477,-90.313660
Contact No : +593 53524681
Open / Close Time : Daily 10:00hrs-22:00hrs

- **El Descanso Marinero:**

Address : Puerto Baquerizo Moreno 200150, Ecuador

Location : -0.901462,-89.609991

Contact No : +5987282863

- **El Cafetal Galapagos:**

Address : Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador

Location : -0.956813,-90.965935

Contact No : +593 5-301-6775

- **Calypso:**

Address : Avenida Quito, Puerto Baquerizo Moreno 200150, Ecuador

Location : -0.902733,-89.612401

Open / Close Time : Daily 09:30hrs-23:00hrs

- **Bongo Bar:**

Address : Av Darwin, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador.

Location : -0.745509,-90.311693

Open / Close Time : Daily 19:00hrs-02:00hrs

- **Bugan Villa:**

Address : Av Darwin, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.742344,-90.310188

Open / Close Time : Daily 19:00hrs-02:00hrs

- **Free Soul Café:**

Address : Av Padre, Julio Herrera, Puerto Ayora 200350, Ecuador

Location : -0.717727,-90.326279

- **Iguana Point Bar:**

Address : Puerto Villamil 200250, Ecuador

Location : -0.957816,-90.966720

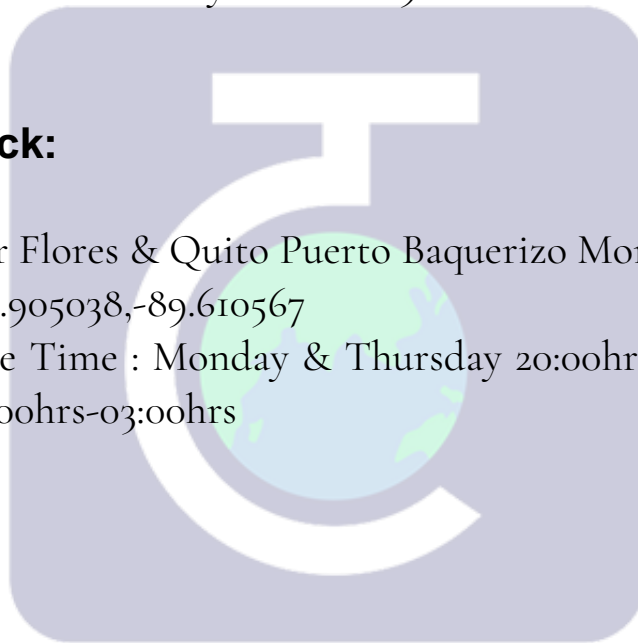
Open / Close Time : Daily 16:00hrs-19:00hrs & 20:00hrs-02:00hrs

- **Iguana Rock:**

Address : cnr Flores & Quito Puerto Baquerizo Moreno 200150, Ecuador

Location : -0.905038,-89.610567

Open / Close Time : Monday & Thursday 20:00hrs-midnight, Friday & Saturday 20:00hrs-03:00hrs



Index**18. Average meal cost**

Soft drink = US\$2 Meal at an inexpensive restaurant = US\$5 Economical Meal: \$30
Mid – Segment Restaurant: \$30-100 Luxury Dining: \$100 and above Average cost
of beer: \$3-5



Index

19. Shopping

Shopping is certainly not the first thing that will come to your mind when visiting the Islands, however you'll find several souvenir shops where you can pick up some fascinating mementos of these wonderful islands, Objects depicting the myriad wildlife of the islands, T-shirts with ethnic-style drawings or painting of Galapagos turtles, birds and other animal top the list in the most sold items. One will also find a lot of items made by local Galapagos artists. One can shop in the town of Puerto Ayora that is located on the Santa Cruz Islands. This waterfront town is best considered for walking, relaxing and some local shopping. One will find a unique selection of souvenir items, travel journals, jewellery, chocolate, ornaments, coffee and shots etc. Basically anything and everything. There's also a handicrafts market to take back some objects to decorate your house. Following are some of the stores in the city worth going to – Galeria Aymara: Come here to buy objects and local products that have been made in Ecuador and the surrounding countries. There's Jewellery, Latin American art and craftwork. Angelique Art Gallery: Quirky art gallery selling a variety of crafts made by a Galapagos-based British artist, including paintings, prints, jewellery, mirrors, silk scarves, fabrics, tiles and ceramic kitchenware. Tortoise Gallery: You'll find one-of-a-kind gifts at this jeweller, with exquisite handmade works by Ecuadorian artisans. There's everything from Pre Columbian art to pieces incorporating lava forms and themes from native Ecuadorian wildlife. Maki-Art Gallery: Art Gallery commercializes fine Latin America art, 100% handmade and fair traded. Darwin's Cotton: From Tshirts to bags and pouches, everything made here is of excellent quality. The town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on San Cristobal Island also has several souvenir stores, and you'll find a few in Puerto Villamil (Isabela Island). There's a pleasant craft market at Avenida Charles Darwin and Tomás de Berlanga. So you won't be disappointed for sure with the amount of options these Islands have to offer.

20. Tourist benefits

The VAT charged in the country is 12% which is comparatively lower compared to the other countries. One will hardly find any duty free shops around the towns of Galapagos however duty free shopping at the airport also doesn't have much to offer, hence don't have high expectations. There are no tourist cards available and know that Galapagos Islands in generally is very expensive compared to others in Ecuador. The INGALA Transit Control Card: INGALA, the Ecuadorian governmental agency that regulates all things pertaining to the Galapagos Islands, began issuing the "Transit Control Card" (in Spanish, tarjeta de control de tránsito, or TCT). This card is designed to help control immigration to the islands. Visitors must go to a booth in the airport with their plane tickets to get the card, which costs \$20 (cash only). The card is turned in at the end of the trip. A pre-registry is needed in <http://preregistro.gobiernogalapagos.gob.ec:8082/SentinelAeropuertos/> NOTE: There is a separate \$100 park entrance fee to pay when you land in Galapagos (\$50 for children). Make sure you have cash for that as they will not accept Visa.

Index

21. Essential local apps

Following are the applications that can be used in order to make your trip a little better, a little local – Radio Ambato Ecuador: One of top most radio applications of the city, download this app for some live traditional music. Easy Spanish Language Learning: This application will definitely come in handy to learn a few basic Spanish words while on your way to the city, since English is not widely spoken or understood.



Index**22. Driving**

One can rent a car in certain towns of the city to commute around, however one cannot get in the islands through roads. Renting a car requires you to carry your passport, driving license, International driving permit and patience to handle the traffic. Yes, the Islands are pretty traffic-y too.



Index**23. Travel essentials**

Following are the necessary things to keep in mind while travelling in the country –

1. Adapter/Plug – The standard voltage in the country is 140-160V with a frequency of 60 Hz. Power sockets: type A / B in Ecuador.
2. It is always advised to carry sufficient prescribed medicines as OTCs are not allowed.
3. One needs to carry a money belt in order to avoid theft or pick pocketing.
4. Do carry Flashlight, Sunscreen and Umbrellas with you.
5. Do carry a swimsuit.
6. Do carry Teva-style sandals since they are the most useful footwear you can bring to the island.
7. Motion sickness medication for boat tours.



Index**24. Essential clothes**

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7. Motion sickness medication for boat tours.



Index**25. Local currency**

The present currency of Ecuador is United States Dollar



26. Change vendor's commission, ATM charges

The islands aren't home to many ATMs. Most of the cards are accepted in the ATMs. Banks are likely to charge you with a foreign transaction fee in an ATM, hence make sure to confirm with your bank about the fee charges prior to your transaction. One can only take out a limited amount, so it is recommended to take out the maximum amount in one go. But it is highly recommended to carry cash with you at all times, since most the ATMs located in different towns might not cater to the banking needs. The biggest advantage is that the country's currency is in US Dollars. However if you are travelling from some other country and need to exchange the native currency you can exchange the currency at the airport. If willing to exchange from the towns know that there aren't many options hence the commission charged will be extremely high ranging between 5-20% higher than the usual. Most boats accept Traveller's checks. But the only accepted credit card on the archipelago is MasterCard. But most places don't take credit cards at all.

27. Staying connected

Major networks that dominate Ecuador are Porta, Claro, Movistar, and Alegro. However make sure to unlock your phone prior to your travel in order to use any SIM card in the country. If your stay is for a longer period of time, it is recommended that you buy a local SIM to stay connected. One can purchase a SIM card at the airport upon arrival. Buying a SIM card in the country is affordable and one is surly to get good network at almost all the areas. However to buy a SIM card, you will need a Xerox of your Passport for identification purposes. It is highly recommended that one buys a SIM of Porta or Movistar since it has the best connectivity in and around the town. However know that the islands don't have great network connections so don't worry if your phone randomly doesn't make calls to anybody. There are a lot of Internet cafes in Puerto Ayora and Puerto Baquerizo that one can rely on. Also, some of the hotels and restaurants on the islands do have a Wi-Fi connection however do not count on it. When it comes to Wi-Fi connectivity there are not many Wi-Fi hubs all over the city hence carry your own dongle, although connectivity will still be a issue.

28. Time Zone

Ecuador Standard Time (ECT) is 5 hours behind the Coordinated Universal time (UTC -5).



Index**29. Languages**

Linguistically, Ecuador is dominated by the Spanish language, however it is different from the Spanish spoken in Spain since Ecuador slang differs from region to region. Followed by a large number of people (local communities), speaking in the Quichua language, the English language has made its mark as the most spoken foreign language



Index**30. Political Scenario**

Being a unicameral representative democracy, the president of the country is head of state and the government head on a multi-party system. The central government is elected after ever 4 years and leads cabinet with executive power, legislative power and the judiciary. The Islands are governed by a provincial government. Galapagos was made a province by presidential decree by President Guillermo Rodríguez Lara in 1973. The province is divided into cantons, each covering certain islands where Puerto Baquerizo Moreno stands as its capital.



Index**31. Economic Scenario**

Financially speaking, Galapagos is one of the most prominent tourism hub of the country. Hence it goes without saying that tourism is the biggest contributor in the island's economy followed by Agriculture and Fishing.



Index**32. Religious belief**

Roman Catholicism dominates the country with 80% Catholics being devoted to the religion, followed by 11% of the population that identifies themselves as Protestants. The country is ethnically diverse, other religions include Buddhism, Judaism, Bahá'í Faith, Latter-day Saints and Islam.



Index**33. Visa requirements**

Ecuador welcomes its tourist with open arms from each and every country. Citizens of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and most of the European countries do not require a visa unless the stay is expected to cross more than 90 days. One just needs to show a valid passport, return ticket and proof of economic means to support yourself. Countries like India, Cuba, Jordan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Algeria, Iran, Iraq etc do require a valid visa to enter the country. Below is the link for more information – <http://www.ecuador-travel-guide.org/general/VISASs.htm>



Index**34. Essential vaccination**

One needs to be any disease free before travelling in the country and during the visit in the country. Hence it is recommended that one should visit their General Doctor for a routine check-up. Also, when travelling to Ecuador, some basic vaccines are suggested – • Yellow Fever • Typhoid Fever • Malaria • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Diphtheria



Index**35. Theft and Safety**

Crime is not a problem in the Galapagos. However Misdemeanours may occur in the towns, and occasionally fisherman will stage strikes or demonstrations that affect tourists, but for the most part, there is little to be concerned about. However do take your belongings with you since they are reported to be missing from the boats. Stay away from animals while snorkelling or swimming in the waters since they can attack you.



Index**36. Embassy/Consulate**

Below is the list of embassies and consulates located in the country
<http://www.embassypages.com/ecuador>



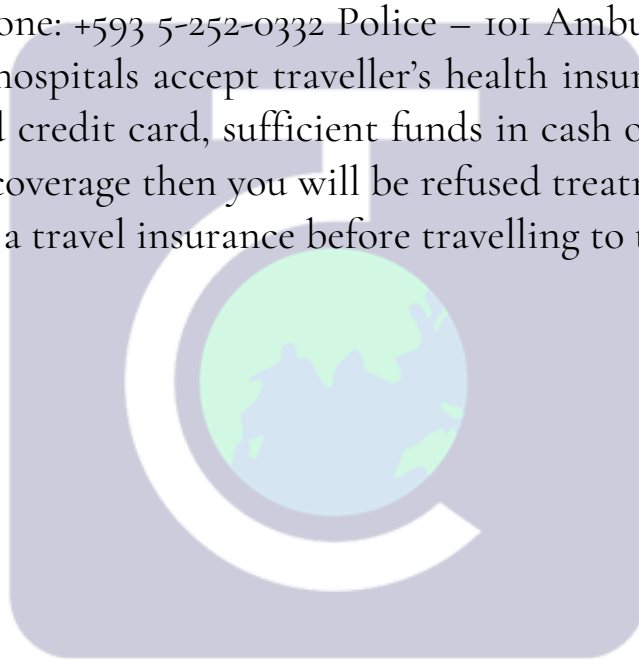
Index**37. Accessibility**

Galapagos Islands are definitely not the best place for people with reduced mobility, since a few hotels and hospitals offers wheelchairs or assistance to the disables. The islands are a disappointment as most of it is surrounded by the water which makes it difficult for the disables to travel around the city.



38. Emergencies

There are only two hospitals located on the islands however they are not fully equipped but can be reached in case of minor agencies. There's a hospital located on Av. Padre J. Herrera, but is not sophisticated and poorly supplied and there's also another hospital called "Oskar Jandi" located at Av. Northia y Av. Quito whi can provide you basic help. Hospital Oskar Jandl Address: Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, Ecuador Phone: +593 5-252-0332 Police – 101 Ambulance – 131 Fire - 102 Note: All the above hospitals accept traveller's health insurance, however if you fail to present a valid credit card, sufficient funds in cash or check or a proof of traveller's insurance coverage then you will be refused treatment. It is mandatory for travellers to issue a travel insurance before travelling to the islands.



Index

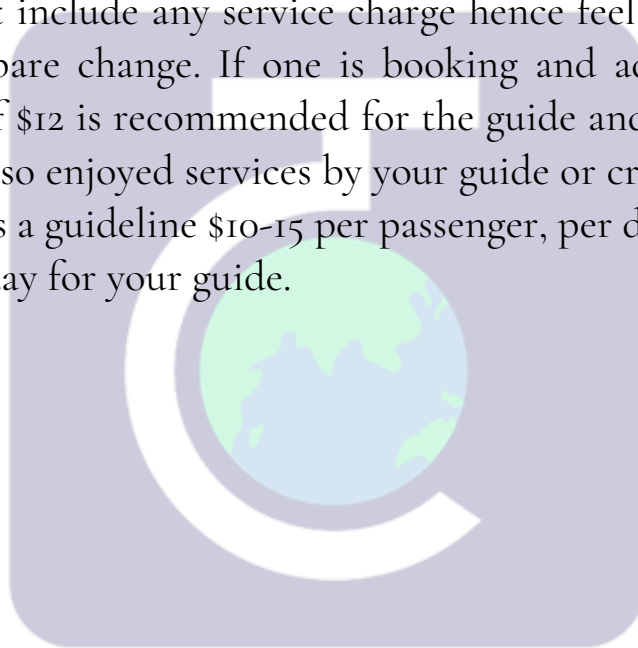
39. Do's and Don'ts

Do's • Do learn basic Spanish. • Always carry your bag on your lap while travelling in public transport. • Do explore all the major and minor islands since all of them boast of rich history. • Do tour the Charles Darwin Station on your own. • Do stick to designated paths to avoid trampling delicate plants, some of which only grow on the Galápagos Islands. • Do cooperate with the quarantine regulations when you fly to the Galápagos Islands. • Stay within the designated walking trails, both for your own safety and that of the flora and fauna. Don't's • Don't wear typical gringo clothes, since you automatically will become a target of the thieves and pick- picketers around. • Don't associate with drugs at all since the country has strict laws against possessions, exporting or using illegal drugs. • Don't drink local tap water. For environmental reasons, try to avoid buying bottled water. Fill a reusable water bottle or canteen with filtered water or use water purification tablets. • Don't forget a Waterproof Camera. • Don't forget your sunscreen and an umbrella. • Don't take anything home. This includes rocks, shells, and souvenirs made from a banned item such as coral shells, lava rocks, sea lion teeth, and tortoise shells. • Don't Smoke in the national park areas. • Refrain from supporting businesses that exploit or abuse animals, or that sell endangered animal products. • Do not touch the animals. Stay more than 2 meters from the animals at all times, both for your own safety and theirs.

Index

40.Tipping basics

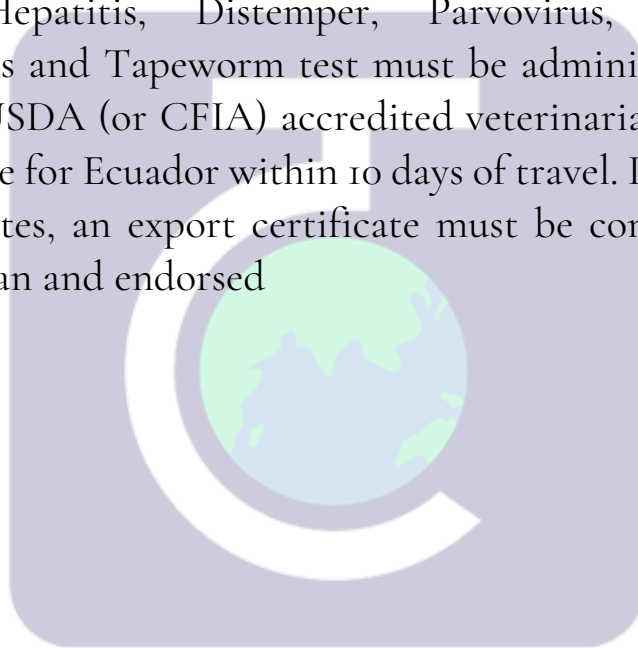
The service charge in Ecuador is around 12%. Taxis drivers need not be given any tip unless you have hired them on a full day basis, then a tip of 5% is expected to be given. In hotels it is accustom to the tip to the maids or the bell boys which is around US \$1 whereas some restaurants on the islands may already include 10% service charge in the bill hence in that case an extra tip isn't required. There will be places that do not include any service charge hence feel free to round up the bill or leave some spare change. If one is booking and additional tour in the country, a gratuity of \$12 is recommended for the guide and \$7 for the diver, per person. If you have also enjoyed services by your guide or crew, a top will be very much appreciated. As a guideline \$10-15 per passenger, per day is standard for the crew and &7-10 per day for your guide.



Index**41.Pet info**

Following are some of the guidelines to get your pet into the country –

- Your pet dog or cat must have a current rabies vaccination. If it was previously unvaccinated for rabies, it must wait for at least 21 days after the vaccination before entering Ecuador. The vaccination must not have been administered more than 12 months prior to entry into the country.
- Dogs should be vaccinated against Canine Hepatitis, Distemper, Parvovirus, Leptospirosis and Parainfluenza.
- Ticks and Tapeworm test must be administered within 21 days prior to travel.
- A USDA (or CFIA) accredited veterinarian must complete the Veterinary Certificate for Ecuador within 10 days of travel. If your pet is traveling from the United States, an export certificate must be completed by a USDA-accredited veterinarian and endorsed



Index

Conclusion – Why to select this destination

Finding itself 620 miles away from the South American mainland but a world apart from anywhere else on the planet, Galapagos Islands are an archipelago of volcanic islands where three ocean currents converge and are famed for the unique animal species that are nowhere to be found on Earth. From marine Iguanas, Flightless Cormorants, Giant Tortoises, Flamingos and a diverse variety of finches, there's everything. The group consists of 18 main islands, 3 smaller islands, and 107 rocks and islets, each with their own unique identity. These aren't your typical tropical paradises or the Bahamas; in fact, most of the islands find themselves bushed with vegetation and fascinating wildlife who merely treat humans as just another disturbing element. Although the population lies up-to 25,000 which is surprisingly more than what it should be, the town of the islands are prospering, making it mark on the travellers compasses. This UNESCO World Heritage site is your place for some wild adventures under waters making your journey worthwhile. Scuba-diving and Snorkelling with the marine life not only gives you an adrenaline rush but also is a living proof of heaven in front of your eyeballs. A full 97% of the islands is protected by the National Park, accessible only via a cruise. Explore volcanic craters, fascinating lava flows, forests of bizarre cacti or fragrant palo santo trees, barren deserts and beaches in all sorts of colors: white, black, red, or gold and just get lost into the beauty of it. This zoologist's or evolutionary biologist's paradise is not a tough riddle, just visit the islands, surrender yourself to the nature and go back with some unforgettable memories! PS: Don't forget that camera of yours and an umbrella!

Index

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