EQUDAOR

Galapagos

The Galapagos Islands are a volcanic archipelago in the Pacific Ocean. They belong to Ecuador. The islands are famous since Charles Darwin passed by and found so much proof to state his Evolution Theory. Because the islands are almost 1000km/620mi west of South America, the fauna and flora are completely different than that on mainland. The Galapagos has a large number of endemic species. The Humbolt Current and the Panama Current give these islands an unique wildlife: marine iguanas, penguins, whales, dolphins, sharks, sea lions… The Galapagos are a wet dream for many divers!

Most of the divers will go on a liveaboard to dive around all the islands. Also because they want to see the whale sharks and those are up north, around the furthest islands of Darwin and Wolf. Bear in mind that you cannot see these gentle giants the whole year trough. Whale shark season runs from June till November.

We went day diving from Santa Cruz. Diving the Galapagos is very expensive, especially for a liveaboard, so we did it this way. It was still not cheap: $160/day for 2 dives. We dived with Academy Bay Dive Center. Some other dive centers asked up to $200/day. Anyway, I fell in love. Nowhere I had seen more pelagics together than here. Almost every dive we had different sharks (White tips, black tips, Galapagos sharks or hammerheads), different rays (cowrays, eagle rays, mobullas or mantas). We saw lots of playful sea lions and the Galapagos batfish. At Gordon Rocks, my favourite dive site, we had 7 mola molas. I went nuts! You did not see 1 hammerhead but dozens! Not one Golden Cowray, but a whole fever passing you left and right!  
So bad my newly bought Ikelight divehousing malfunctioned form day one, and eventually flooded. That put a big bummer on diving with all these lovely animals. On the other hand, time to go back with a bitter housing…

The Galapagos are a National Park. They are also an UNESCO World Heritage Site and strict rules are implemented. Everybody visiting will have to pay an entrance fee of $100 and needs a return ticket. You cannot bring in any food or animals from the mainland.   
You can dive the Galapagos the whole year round but you must book in advance. The liveaboards can be full for the coming year(s). The water temperatures are around 25C/77F from December till May. The Humbolt Current brings cooler water, 21C/70F, and more nutrient rich waters from June till November.