

# ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS

Quito, the Galapagos Islands & Guayaquil



*Our tour to Ecuador & the Galapagos Islands is your chance to experience one-of-a-kind wildlife watching. Get unusually close to sunbathing iguanas, playful sea lion pups and male frigate birds who proudly display their red pouches. Swim with turtles, marvel at the majestic volcanoes and be taken aback by the magical charm of the islands. City tours of Quito and Guayaquil give an excellent insight into the country's vibrant past. This tour allows you to access one of the most exclusive travel destinations in the world.*

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

#### DAY 1: UK to Quito, Ecuador

Depart London on your scheduled flight to Quito. Upon arrival you will be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel.

#### DAY 2: Quito

Upon arrival you will be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel.

#### DAY 3: Quito

After breakfast your guide will pick you up from the hotel to commence a half day walking tour of the historic Old Town of the city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Your guide will lead you through Independence Square, stopping at the awe-inspiring Cathedral and Presidential Palace. Next admire the church of La Compañía, then on to the church of San Francisco whose atrium runs from one side of the square to the other. Your tour then takes you to the summit of El Panecillo Hill, meaning "the little bread loaf" which is the perfect location for a panoramic view of this memorable capital city over a well deserved lunch. You will then be returned to your hotel where the rest of the afternoon is at leisure.

#### DAY 4: Quito to The Galapagos Islands

In the morning you will be transferred to the airport for your domestic flight to Baltra Island, then taken via speedboat to board the deluxe MV Santa Cruz ship. Holding just 90 passengers, this ship was built exclusively for touring these islands and once on board you will receive an introductory welcome briefing, a safety drill and lunch. No time is wasted as you disembark the ship in the afternoon on North Seymour Island for your first glimpse of the islands' wildlife. Moving past prickly pear cacti and a tiny forest of silver Palo Santo trees you will chance upon colonies of blue footed boobies, magnificent frigate birds, swallow tailed gulls as well as sea lions and marine iguanas. Guests are divided into small groups of no more than 15 with their own expert "naturalist" guide.

#### DAY 5: The Galapagos Islands

Today you will start by exploring the coast by a small boat known as a panga, whilst your guide explains the dramatic geology of the area and the nesting place for the flightless cormorants, whose wings no longer function for flight but has evolved instead to swim and dive for its prey, propelling itself by powerful kicks. Depending on weather conditions, you may be able to snorkel alongside the cliffs, rich in marine life with the chance to swim amongst green sea turtles and gigantic Mola Mola, the world's largest bony fish. After lunch back on board and a little time to relax, the afternoon is dedicated to exploring the youngest island of the archipelago, Fernandina, which having had no introduced mammals, boasts a very unique environment with an unusually high density of marine iguanas. Other sightings may include the wildly bright Sally light-foot crabs, hordes of penguins and waved albatrosses too.

#### DAY 6: The Galapagos Islands

Following breakfast, you will arrive on the northwest of Isabela Island, at Tagus Cove. A gentle uphill hike takes you to the edge of Darwin Lake, a crater filled with salt water supposedly caused by a tidal wave when a volcano erupted centuries ago. A panga ride will then take you to spot local wildlife and provides another opportunity to swim and snorkel with multi-coloured tropical fish and marine life. After a break for lunch, you will continue on to Urbina Bay, the fascinating result of an uplifting of the ocean floor back in 1954. Those wishing to snorkel will have the chance to swim with the exceptionally fast flightless cormorants and playful penguins, dipping and diving around you. Others may prefer to remain on land, perhaps spotting a giant tortoise or vibrant-coloured Galapagos land iguana.

#### DAY 7: The Galapagos Islands

In the morning you will visit the Charles Darwin Research Station located on Santa Cruz Island. Charles Darwin arrived in 1835, and was so inspired that he wrote his most famed "The Origin of The Species" and set up his headquarters for scientific investigation and conservation. The highlight here is the giant tortoise breeding centre where you can explore a walk-in adult tortoise enclosure to come face-to-face with these famed Galapagos giants. You will then be taken to enjoy lunch in the cooler highlands of Santa Cruz Island before embarking on

an afternoon of activities depending on your preference. Choose from mountain biking, kayaking or a hike to discover the flora and fauna.

#### DAY 8: The Galapagos Islands

Your final day amongst these captivating islands takes you to the volcanic isle of Floreana. Your group will explore the north shore by foot, perhaps spotting flamingos, pelicans and other birds. In the afternoon your final excursion will either be on a glass-bottom boat or a panga for those wishing to explore the underwater wonders with their snorkel and mask. You'll be taken to Champion Islet, known as one of the best snorkelling spots in the archipelago then on to Cormorant Point to walk alongside the lagoon where pintail ducks, common stilts, herons and greater flamingos gather. Enjoy your final dinner on board as the sun sets over some of the most mystical and fascinating islands on planet Earth.

#### DAY 9: Galapagos Islands to Guayaquil

The cruise ship will return to Baltra Island where you will disembark and be transferred to the airport for your flight to Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest and most populated city. Your guide will accompany you to your hotel which is centrally located in the heart of the tourist and commercial district. The rest of the day will be at leisure.

#### DAY 10: Guayaquil

After breakfast your guide will meet you to begin a half day walking tour of the city. Guayaquil is situated on the Guayas River, and has undergone considerable development over recent years, reflected in the numerous modern shopping centres and happening eateries nestled amongst revitalized squares and parks. You will be led down the Malecon 2000, an impressive boardwalk overlooking the Guayas River, then visit the picturesque neighbourhood of Las Peñas which looks like a cross between a Mexican and Greek fishing village. Stroll down Avenue 9 de Octubre, the main downtown thoroughfare and shopping district and arrive at Parque Bolívar, one of the only parks in the world to have land iguanas, some measuring over a metre in length. The tour will end here and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

#### DAY 11: Guayaquil to the UK or Extension

Transfer to Guayaquil airport for your flight to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

### Your hotel information

**Quito (2 nights):** 4★ Dann Carlton Hotel - República Del Salvador N34-377 e Irlanda, Quito, Ecuador,

Contact number: +593 2-397-2600

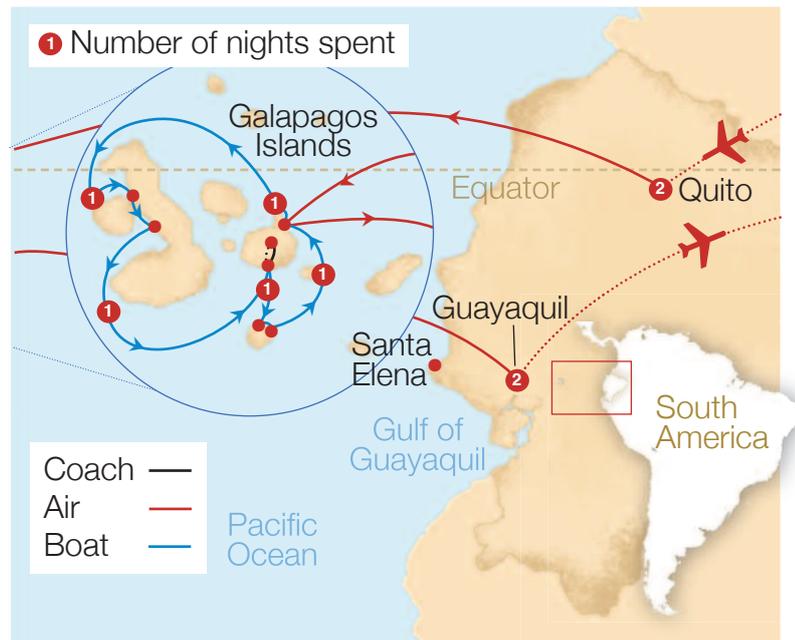
**Galapagos Islands (5 nights):** MV Santa Cruz Ship -

Contact number: +874 373505910

**Guayaquil (2 nights):** 4★ Hampton Inn by Hilton -

Av 9 de Octubre 432 y Baquerizo Moreno, Guayaquil, Ecuador. Contact number: +593 4-256-6700

All accommodation is 4★, with the cruise being of a 4★ standard. All accommodation features an en suite bathroom and air conditioning. Mercury Holidays has visited and inspected all hotels used, as well as the cruise, to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels or cruise detailed are not available, alternatives will be used of a similar standard. Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.



### On your arrival

On your arrival in Quito you will be met by a representative from our local agent, Pure! Ecuador, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Pure! Ecuador representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your representative available 24 hours a day should you have any queries.

If you need to contact Pure! Ecuador during your stay the details are:

**Pure! Ecuador**  
Muros N27-94 y González Suarez  
Quito  
Ecuador  
Contact number: 00593 2 5123358/2 2234336

### Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details  
**Pure! Ecuador**  
24 hour contact number: 00593 98448414

### Visas

A visa is not required for entry into Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands for UK passport holders. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding required passport validity. Your transit card (worth \$110) is included for entrance into the Galapagos Islands.

### Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices:

Age in years	Up to 64	65-74	75-85
Up to 17 days cover	£42	£79	£135

Prices are for worldwide insurance, excluding the USA. For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival in each destination and will have a regional guide with you during your stay at each place, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

### Tipping

It is customary to tip approximately the following for the duration of your cruise: £3.00 (\$5.00) per person per day for the barman, £6.40 (\$10.00) per person per day for your guide and £8.30 (\$13.00) for the crew. There are three separate boxes located in the main lobby of the ship, where you can deposit your tips the evening before the cruise ends. During the land stay tipping is at your discretion, however we would recommend approximately

£2.00 (\$3.00) per person per day for your driver and guide. Tips are accepted in US dollars, however should you wish to pay these on a credit card you can do so when you pay for personal expenses on board.

### Health and Vaccinations

We recommend that you consult your local GP for advice on travel health and vaccinations before departure. It is not advisable to drink the tap water.

### VERY IMPORTANT

Please note that due to new regulations from the Ministry of Tourism in Ecuador, you will be provided to state any pre-existing medical conditions and your blood type on arrival into the Galapagos Islands.

This information can be given to your tour guide on arrival. Please be aware that failure to provide this information by the time you arrive in the Galapagos Islands may result in you being refused entry.

### Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves full days of sightseeing, often on foot and includes some climbing of stairs and getting on and off coaches and boats. **This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.**

### Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 30. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

### Currency Exchange

The currency in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands is the US Dollar. Cash machines are available in Quito and Guayaquil, but there will not be a chance to exchange currency during your cruise.

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to

cover any drinks and personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, and any extra snacks. If you would like to hire a wetsuit on the cruise this is available for approximately \$18. Approximately £400-£500 will be sufficient for the duration of the tour.

### Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

### What to Pack

- Loose fitting t-shirt or tank top and shorts for your island adventures
- 2 pairs of old comfortable walking shoes as these can get damaged from saltwater, volcanic rock and sand
- High factor waterproof sunscreen and lip balm
- 2 swimsuits and a towel
- Snorkelling equipment if you would prefer to use your own
- Camera and spare batteries
- Travel plug adapter - the voltage is 120 volts and is a 2 or 3 flat pin plug
- Binoculars
- Wide brim hat
- Waterproof, light poncho or rain jacket
- Sunglasses

### Flight and Airport Information

Your flight is to Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito with Avianca (AV), departing from London Heathrow Terminal 2.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
Heathrow - Bogota	22:05	04:30	11 hours 25 mins	AV121
Bogota - Quito	08:20	10:00	1 hour 40 mins	AV8371
Quito - Galapagos	10:40	11:50	1 hour 10 mins	AV1688
Galapagos - Guayaquil	10:00	12:50	2 hours 50 mins	AV1633
Guayaquil - Bogota	18:10	20:00	1 hour 55 mins	AV8382
Bogota - Heathrow	23:04	14:45	11 hours 25 mins	AV120

**IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times/numbers are given for guidance and are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.**

### Baggage Allowance

Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 23kg of hold luggage plus one item of hand luggage providing the exterior dimensions (height + length + width) do not exceed 115cm and 10kg in weight. Weight restrictions will be finalised on your e-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Heathrow Airport advises that check-in should be three hours before your flight departure time.

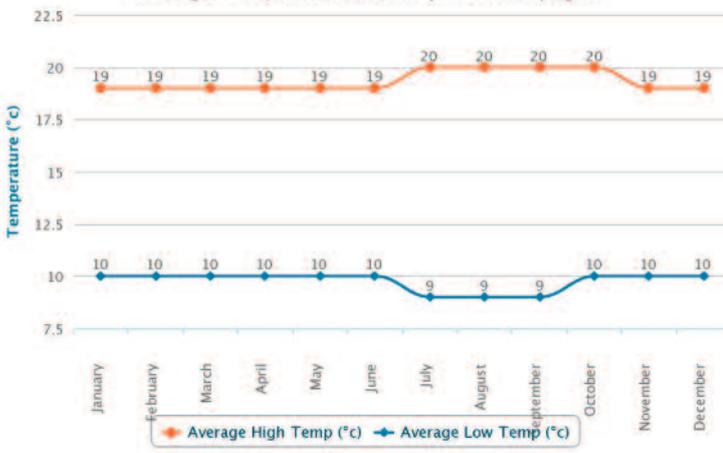
### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras - Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

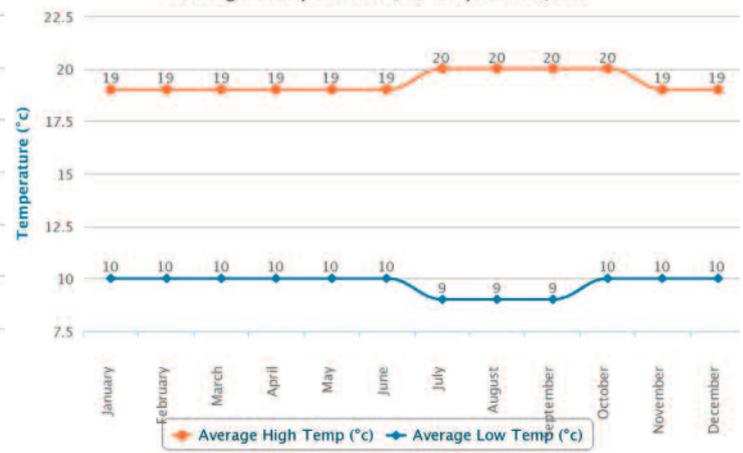
### Weather and Climate

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.

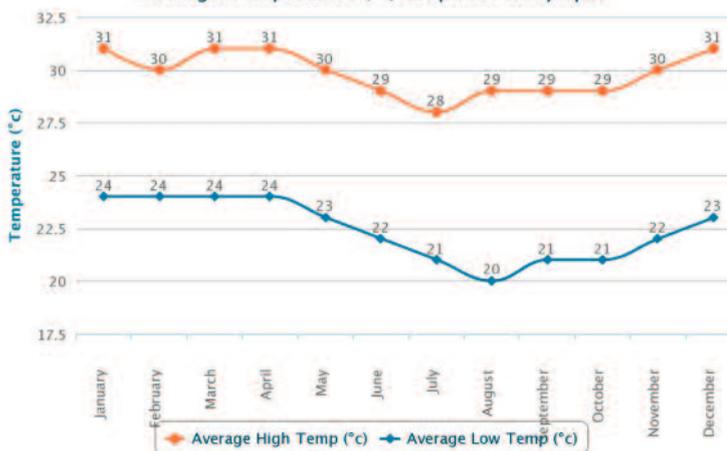
Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Galapagos



Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Quito



Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Guayaquil



# HIGHLIGHTS OF PERU

## Lima, Cusco & Machu Picchu



*Your extension to Peru is the perfect way to see a little more of South America. You will visit the traditional towns of Lima and Cusco, as well as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World - Machu Picchu.*

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your Highlights of Peru tour.

**Your included meal guide:** B=Breakfast, L=Lunch

**DAY 11: Guayaquil to Lima**

Take an early morning flight to Lima. Your guide will meet you on arrival and accompany you to your hotel, then the rest of the day is at leisure.

**DAY 12: Lima and Cusco**

This morning you will fly to Cusco. In the afternoon your guide will commence your half day tour, taking you around all the most important sites.

**DAY 13: Cusco & Machu Picchu B/L**

Today is the highpoint of this extension – a visit to the world renowned Machu Picchu. Board the Vistadome train to climb up through the Andes, then a bus to the summit of the archaeological site.

Constructed on a saddle between two Andean peaks, Machu Picchu was one of the greatest achievements of South American civilisation.

**DAY 14: Cusco B**

After breakfast at your hotel the rest of the day is free for you to relax and explore Cusco.

**DAY 15: Cusco to UK B**

After breakfast return to the UK via Lima and Madrid.

**Hotel Information**

**Lima (1 night):** 3★ Hotel Casa Andina Classic Centro - Petir Thouars 5444, Lima 00000, Peru, Contact number: 0051 1 4470263

**Cusco (3 nights):** 3★ Casa Andina Koricancha - Calle San Agustin 371, Cusco, Peru Telephone Number: +51 84 252633

**Personal Expenses**

You will need to take money with you to cover additional breakfasts, lunches, dinners & purchases.

**Visas**

British passport holders are not currently required to obtain a visa in order to travel to Peru.

**Tipping**

Tipping is a common practice in Peru and it is customary to top on average £2-£3 per person per day. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip.

**Currency Exchange**

The currency in Peru is the Nuevo Sol, the symbol is S/. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. Cash machines are available in all the major cities to withdraw local currency.

**Flight Information**

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
Guayaquil - Lima	18:27	20:22	1 hours 55 mins	AV7390
Lima - Cusco	06:40	08:05	1 hours 25 mins	AV807
Cusco - Lima	14:30	15:55	1 hours 25 mins	AV808
Lima - Bogota	17:45	20:38	2 hours 53 mins	AV024
Bogota - Heathrow	23:04	14:45	11 hours 25 mins	AV120

**IMPORTANT: Flight times/numbers are for guidance only & are subject to change. Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 23kg of hold luggage plus one item of hand luggage providing the exterior dimensions (height + length + width) do not exceed 115cm and 10kg in weight. Weight restrictions will be finalised on your e-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Heathrow Airport advises that check-in should be three hours before your flight departure time.**

