

# ECUADOR & THE GALÁPAGOS

Quito – Otavalo – Papallacta – Tena – Baños – Galápagos

February 14 – March 01, 2019



Discover Ecuador's natural wonders and amazing biodiversity on this unique tour – the UNESCO-listed City of Quito, the Amazon jungle, vibrant markets, hot springs, volcanoes, and a 4-night private cruise through the southern and eastern islands of the Galápagos, home to some of the best snorkelling spots and most diverse and impressive marine wildlife around.

## Highlights:

- Witness the amazing biological diversity of the tropical rain forest, home to a vast array of birds and plant species, from your jungle lodge on the Amazon
- Get up close and personal with some of the world's most unique animals on a 4-night Galápagos Island cruise – sea lions, tortoises, prancing blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas and a host of unusual species both on land and sea
- Explore Quito, situated high up in the snow-capped Andean mountains, for a taste of Ecuadorean culture and Spanish colonial history and architecture
- A small group tour of 16 people makes it an intimate and personalised experience, allowing you to truly immerse yourself in the discovery of this diverse country



## SPECIAL TRAVEL INTERNATIONAL

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# ITINERARY

## Day 1 / Thu, Feb 14 / DEPART CANADA

Depart for Ecuador.

## Day 2 / Fri, Feb 15 / ARRIVE QUITO

After an early arrival at Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport, transfer to your hotel by private vehicle. Morning at leisure.

This afternoon, enjoy a **city tour of Ecuador's capital, Quito**, visiting key sites including the Old Town, the Cathedral of Quito and the Panecillo. Explore the **Mitad del Mundo** ('Middle of the World'), where you can straddle both sides of the Equator.

Tonight, join your tour leader and fellow travellers for a welcome meeting.

## Day 3 / Sat, Feb 16 / QUITO – OTAVALO

Drive to the highlands with a stop at the small weaving community of **Peguche** for a local lunch.

Continue to **Otavallo** and visit the largest handicraft market in South America, famous for its amazing local art, tapestries and textiles. The market dates back to pre-Inca times when jungle products were transported from the eastern lowlands and traded for highland goods. Villagers from the surrounding countryside come here every week to sell handmade goods as well as livestock, fruits and vegetables. Wander the stalls to meet local artists, find one-of-a-kind souvenirs and try your hand at haggling – it is expected for every purchase. One of the most obvious signs of the Otavaleños' cultural integrity is their traditional dress, worn throughout their daily life.

Overnight at a **historic highlands hacienda**. (B,L)

## Day 4 / Sun, Feb 17 / OTAVALO – PAPALLACTA

Visit the **home and studio of Don Miguel**, a man working to keep his culture's traditions alive. For thousands of years the indigenous people of the Otavalo region have used the backstrap loom to create their woven goods, however new technologies have slowly been pushing out the tradition. Learn how Don Miguel and his family are working to help revive this ancient art as he demonstrates every step of the process, from cleaning the wool, to naturally dyeing it, to backstrap weaving.

Afternoon at leisure at the **Papallacta Hot Springs Resort**. Relax in the natural hot springs and enjoy the mountain views.

Optional spa treatments are available, as well as a hiking excursion in the areas surrounding Papallacta (not included; to be booked locally). (B)

## Day 5 / Mon, Feb 18 / PAPALLACTA – TENA

Excursion to **Guango private cloud forest reserve**, where you will learn about the unique flora and fauna of the region. A bird lovers' paradise, keep your eyes peeled for a variety of parrots, toucans, tanagers and more. Enjoy the orchid garden lunch at the lodge and observe a multitude of dive-bombing hummingbirds. Seeing 14 species of hummingbirds within an hour is not uncommon, and the Sword-billed hummingbird with its unique, long bill is sure to amaze you. Visit the cheeky Capuchin monkeys at **Misahuallí**.

Continue to **Tena** to catch a motorized canoe to your **Amazon lodge**, located along the bank of the Arajuno River approximately 40 min from Tena. Stay in comfortable cabañas next to the river, which have private bathroom with hot water in the rainfall shower, electricity and a balcony. From your balcony, you can relax in a hammock or deck chair and observe hummingbirds, shore river birds and butterflies. In the evening, listen to the night music of the multitude of frogs and other nocturnal creatures. The lodge also has an open-air lounge with pool and full service bar, all connected by a raised and roofed boardwalk to guests rooms. The lodge is dedicated to protecting the pristine jungle environment and has a dedicated recycling program, energy conservation program and offer biodegradable amenities including shampoo and shower gel in the bathrooms.

After settling in, receive a briefing from the local naturalist guide about the lodge and the area, before embarking on a **night walk** to learn about nocturnal creatures of the Amazon. A flashlight and camera are the most important tools on this excursion; search out bats, owls, a variety of insects, tarantulas, toads and frogs, and possibly snakes, and hear the nocturnal sounds of the forest. If the sky is clear, you might have the chance to do some stargazing. (B,L,D)



Otavalo Market



Papallacta Hot Springs

#### Day 6 / Tue, Feb 19 / TENA

Depart early by canoe to visit a **parrot clay lick** (Saladero) with a naturalist guide. This unique site is where parrots and parakeets gather to eat mineral-rich clay that will help them digest the fruits or seeds they have consumed. Return to the lodge for breakfast.

Continue on to **AmazOOnico**, an animal rescue centre that rehabilitates, reintroduces and cares for animals who are victims of illegal trafficking. See large cats and reptiles up close, and learn all about the important work of this sanctuary.

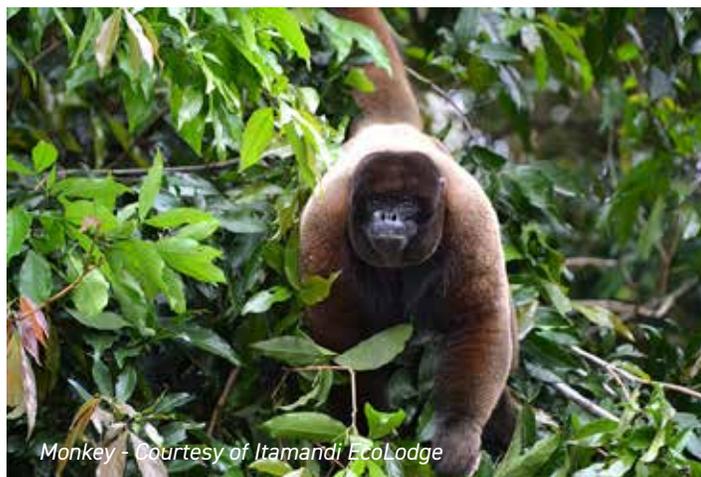
Enjoy a truly unforgettable **cultural experience with a local Ecuadorian family** who will welcome and host you for the afternoon at their home in the jungle. Discuss their traditions, beliefs and history and hear about what daily life is like for them in such a unique environment. Go fishing with them and then watch and listen as they prepare lunch and share insight about their deep connection to nature, as well as their thoughts on the encroachment of the modern world on their traditional way of life here. (B,L,D)

#### Day 7 / Wed, Feb 20 / TENA – BAÑOS

Depart the Amazon to **Baños**, a stunning town surrounded by volcanoes. Along the way, visit the **Omaere Ethnobotanical Park** and discover ethnobotany – the study of the relationship between cultures and the plants around them. Plants are integral to the lives of Amazonian indigenous groups who use them for shelter, nourishment, medicine, and in spiritual practices. Set out on the trails with an expert guide to learn about the diverse plant life and the local Shuar and Waorani people, and enjoy unique botanical experiences like tasting cinnamon and being painted with Achotillo sap.

Baños is one of the most popular spots in the country. Many Ecuadorian families vacation here. One look at this delightfully green mountain town and you will know why. Baños means 'baths' and this is precisely what the town is famous for. Some are thermal springs from the base of Tungurahua Volcano, which means 'little hell' in Quichua. Other baths have melt water running into them from Tungurahua's glaciated flanks.

Optional horseback ride to explore Baños' beautiful countryside (not included; to be booked locally). (B)



Monkey - Courtesy of Itamandi EcoLodge

#### Day 8 / Thu, Feb 21 / BAÑOS

Free day to further explore **Baños** at your own pace. The town is the perfect setting for outdoor pursuits. Optional activities include horseback riding, canyoneering, hiking, mountain biking, climbing and rafting on the River Patate (not included; to be booked locally). (B)

#### Day 9 / Fri, Feb 22 / BAÑOS – QUITO

Drive back to **Quito** along the scenic **Avenue of Volcanoes** and visit to **Cotopaxi National Park** en route. The beautiful cone-shaped, snow-covered Cotopaxi Volcano stands at 5,897 metres and is Ecuador's second highest peak and the highest active volcano in the world. Keep an eye out for park wildlife, including condors, foxes, deer and spectacled bears. (B)

#### Day 10 / Sat, Feb 23 / QUITO

Spend the day at your own leisure, or join an optional full day tour to Mindo Cloud Forest (not included; to be booked locally). Drive northwest for 2 hours, enjoy the dramatic change of vegetation heading down from the Andes into the cloud forest. Mindo is a tiny town set amidst some of the most beautiful and peaceful countryside in the entire country. It is a centre for both nature and adventure activities. Walk through the cloud forest and enjoy the peace and tranquility of the different waterfalls, take time to ride up the cable car, visit a butterfly farm and see an array of colourful hummingbirds for which Mindo is renowned. In the afternoon, opt for an organic chocolate tour and tasting.

Later this afternoon, meet your tour leader for a briefing on the next portion of your tour. (B)

#### Day 11 / Sun, Feb 24 / QUITO – GALÁPAGOS (NORTH SEYMOUR)

Transfer to Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport. Take an early flight to Seymour Airport in **Baltra, in the Galápagos Islands** (with a short refuelling stop in Guayaquil; you will not disembark the plane).

Embark on the **Yolita**, your home for the next 4 nights, in time for lunch. This afternoon, visit **North Seymour Island**, teeming with wildlife. Follow trails to see all the action; you may need to give way to a passing sea lion or marine iguana while walking.



Quito Plaza Grande © Ecuador Travel

See blue-footed booby nests where mating pairs perform their courtship dance. Head to a rocky shore to see flocks of pelicans having lunch in a dive bomb feeding frenzy, then turn inland to a large nesting site of magnificent frigate birds. These huge, dark acrobats have two-metre wingspans, and males, with their puffed-up scarlet throat sacks, sit precariously perched in low bushes to watch over their equally large chicks. Top off the excursion with a snorkel among sea lions and rays.

Dinner and overnight on board the Yolita. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 12 / Mon, Feb 25 / GALÁPAGOS (S. CRISTÓBAL & ISLA LOBOS)**

Morning landing at **Cerro Brujo on San Cristóbal**. Explore its coastline, and look for sea lions, marine iguanas and seabirds along the beach. Learn about the human and natural history of the area from your naturalist guide. Take a refreshing dip in the turquoise water, and head out on a short walk to a freshwater lagoon – a great place to see flamingos. Lunch on board.

In the afternoon, continue to the dramatic **Kicker Rock**, one of the most stunning landmarks in the Galápagos Islands that is home to an incredibly diverse range of marine life that inhabits the nutrient-rich water. Embark on a snorkelling adventure and explore the rock which rises 150 metres above the ocean's surface, and is divided into two parts by a narrow channel. See an array of sharks and fish that are drawn to the rock. Kicker Rock provides some of the best snorkelling in the Galápagos.

Continue to **Isla Lobos**, where you can snorkel right off the beach, amid the families of sea lions and their inquisitive pups looking to play. Take a panga ride to view the sea and shore birds nesting and feeding. Spot a small colony of blue-footed boobies as well as two species of sea lions. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 13 / Tue, Feb 26 / GALÁPAGOS (ESPAÑOLA ISLAND)**

Sail in to **Gardner Bay**, an excellent swimming and snorkelling site. Its magnificent white sandy beach is home to sea lions and sea birds. Enjoy fantastic snorkelling in the turquoise water of the bay; spot young sea lions and large schools of surprisingly big tropical fish, including yellow-tailed surgeonfish, king angelfish and bump-head parrot fish. Further out towards Tortuga Rock and Gardner Island, see schools of large colourful tropical fish. Spot an occasional manta ray gliding by as well as whitetip reef sharks napping on the bottom. Also, get the chance to swim with the sea lions!



*Underwater Wildlife © Attit Patel, G Adventures Inc.*

This afternoon, head to **Punta Suarez on Española Island**. The southernmost island in the Galápagos archipelago is home to several wildlife species, including masked and blue-footed boobies. Hike to the top of the cliff for spectacular photo opportunities. Follow the trail through a rookery and learn the geological history of the island from the naturalist, including its dramatic volcanic features, climate, flora and fauna. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 14 / Wed, Feb 27 / GALÁPAGOS (SANTA FÉ & SOUTH PLAZA)**

Visit **Santa Fé Island**; hike towards the cliffs along the island's northern shore to view the forest of giant prickly pear cactus (Opuntia), which is home to endemic land iguanas. It is also one of the best locations to see sea turtles, swim with sea lions, and get a glimpse of a white tip reef shark.

Continue to **South Plaza**, one of the smallest islands in the Galápagos, which has one of the largest populations of land iguanas. Walk along a path through a cactus forest and view a combination of dry and coastal vegetation on this lively island, home to a wide range of fauna, including incredible birdlife. Spot red-billed tropicbirds and indigenous swallow-tailed gulls resting on the cliffs, and sea lions playing in the waters. (B,L,D)

#### **Day 15 / Thu, Feb 28 / GALÁPAGOS (PUERTO AYORA) – QUITO**

In the morning, visit the **Charles Darwin Research Station**, a scientific organization initiated in 1964, which works to preserve the Galápagos' ecosystem through the conservation efforts of scientists, researchers and volunteers. The station is also a great place to observe many species of tortoises and land iguanas in captivity in the Fausto Llerena Breeding Centre. Brought back from the brink of extinction, see the famous Galápagos tortoise up close – a corral houses adult tortoises, and a nursery cares for the young until around age three when their shells have hardened. Wander through **Puerto Ayora** before transferring to Seymour Airport for your **flight back to Quito**.

Upon arrival at Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport, transfer to your hotel. Evening at leisure. (B)

#### **Day 16 / Fri, Mar 01 / DEPART QUITO – ARRIVE CANADA**

Make your way to Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport for your return flights to Canada (not included; to be booked locally). (B)



*Turtle in Puerto Ayora © Daniel Sendeckí, G Adventures Inc.*



## TOUR COSTS in Canadian funds

Tour costs per person, based on twin occupancy (max. 16 passengers):

<b>Per person, twin-share</b>	<b>\$5,990</b>
<b>Single supplement</b>	<b>\$4,590</b>

## AIR OPTIONS in Canadian funds

Airfares are generally released 11 months prior to departure. Notice will be sent to all tour members. Flights can be booked through our office, which will make sure to select the best option for you, or you can purchase your own flights (booking on points etc.) and meet the group at the hotel.

Approximate flight costs incl. taxes (based on 2018 airfares):

<b>from Toronto</b>	<b>\$700-\$900</b>
<b>from Vancouver</b>	<b>\$1,000-\$1,200</b>

## INCLUDED

- 11 nights in comfortable tourist class hotels
- 4-night Galápagos cruise on the Yolita
- Snorkelling equipment and wetsuits on board the Yolita
- Meals as per itinerary (B=breakfast, L=Lunch, D=dinner)
- Private airport transfer on arrival in Quito
- Private van transportation throughout
- Internal return flights Quito – Baltra
- English-speaking tour leader, certified Galápagos National Park guide and local guides
- Comprehensive sightseeing including admission fees as per itinerary

## NOT INCLUDED

- Return airfare Canada – Quito (please contact our office for a quote)
- Travel insurance (emergency medical insurance mandatory; please contact our office for a quote)
- Baggage handling
- Gratuities for drivers, guides and on board the Yolita
- Airport transfer on departure in Quito
- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Drinks with meals
- USD 120 Transit Control Card and Galápagos Park fee (to be paid locally)
- Optional tours and activities to be paid locally
- Items of a personal nature

## YOUR HOTELS

- Quito: Hotel Quito
- Otavalo: Hotel Pinsaqui
- Papallacta: Hotel Termas de Papallacta
- Tena: Itamandi EcoLodge
- Baños: Sangay Spa Hotel

*NB: hotels of a similar standard may be substituted*



*Ocean Red Shrubs © Sarah Schleder, G Adventures Inc.*

# THE YOLITA

The attractive 16-passenger ship boasts surprisingly spacious cabins for its size, and the large upper deck allows you to soak up as much of the Ecuadorian sun as you need. Travel is done overnight so you can wake up at a new destination rested and ready to explore.

With seven dedicated crew members and one Naturalist Guide familiar with the local flora and fauna and certified by the Galápagos National Park Service, there is always someone available to answer your questions.

## LAYOUT

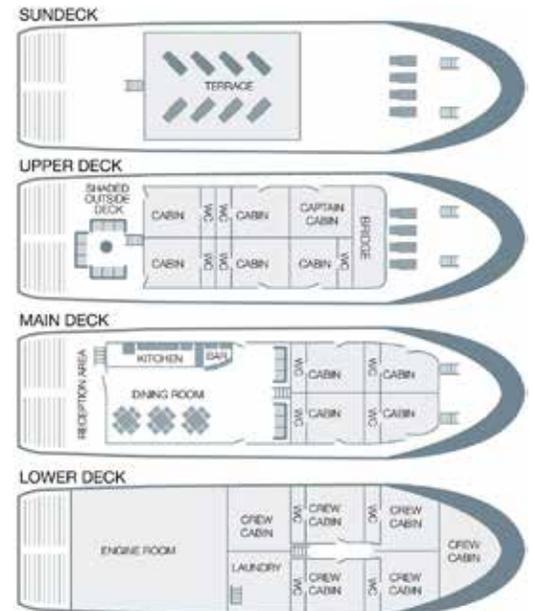
Built in 2007 and refurbished in 2016, the Yolita makes the most of its interior dimensions, combining roomy cabins and spacious exterior spaces that make you feel at home when you are not out exploring the islands and their waters. The boat features a large aft porch with couches and lounge chairs, an elegant dining room, a lounge and bar for meals and briefings as well as an observation deck boasting outstanding sightlines.

## CABINS

The 8 spacious cabins are air-conditioned and feature large windows, twin beds and are all with en suite. Basic toiletries in all cabins, large closet spaces for storage, snorkelling equipment, wetsuits and beach towels are provided.

## DINING

Comprehensive breakfast and gourmet Ecuadorian and international cuisine is prepared fresh daily, and all meals on board are included.



# RESERVATION FORM

**ECUADOR AND THE GALÁPAGOS**

**February 14 - March 01, 2019**

**Please fill out this form in full and mail it with your deposit of \$800.00 and travel insurance payment for each traveller. Emergency medical insurance is mandatory. Please write name(s) exactly as listed in passport (e.g.: William, not 'Bill').**

TRAVELLER #1		TRAVELLER #2	
Mr/Mrs/Ms	First name	Mr/Mrs/Ms	First name
	Middle name(s)		Middle name(s)
	Last name		Last name
Date of birth:	dd/mmm/yyyy	Date of birth:	dd/mmm/yyyy
City + country of birth:		City + country of birth:	
Passport #:		Passport #:	
Passport expiry date:	dd/mmm/yyyy	Passport expiry date:	dd/mmm/yyyy
Passport issuing country:		Passport issuing country:	
Preferred first name (for name tag):		Preferred first name (for name tag):	

## ADDRESS

Street:	
City:	Province/State:
Postal code:	Country:
Cell #:	Home #:
Email:	
Accommodation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Double <input type="checkbox"/> Twin <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing with:
Seating preference on aircraft:	<input type="checkbox"/> Aisle <input type="checkbox"/> Window
Special dietary meal request:	(where available)
Next of kin (in case of emergency):	Phone #:

## TRAVEL INSURANCE (to be purchased at time of deposit)

<input type="checkbox"/> All Inclusive <input type="checkbox"/> Trip Cancellation <input type="checkbox"/> Declined
Amount of premium (see next page): \$ .....

## PAYMENT

<input type="checkbox"/> Please make cheques payable to: <b>SPECIAL TRAVEL INTERNATIONAL</b> 4603 Main Street Vancouver, BC V5V 3R6 Canada Tel: 604-291-1332 or 1800-665-0998
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa/MasterCard (a 2% service fee applies to payments made by credit card)
Card #:
Expiry date:
Name on card:
Amount to be charged: \$ .....

**I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the brochure.**

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

### RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENT:

A deposit of \$800 per person is required at the time of reservation on this Special Travel International (hereafter called STI) tour. A second payment of \$800 per person is due by May 14, 2018. A third payment of \$800 per person is due by August 14, 2018. The final payment is due by November 14, 2018. Travel documents will be sent to you approximately 14 days prior to your trip departure, provided full payment has been received.

### TOUR PRICES:

All tour prices for land and cruise arrangements are based on rates effective at the time of printing and are expected to be in effect at the time of departure. Should these rates change, it may be necessary to surcharge the price of your vacation. Should the tour price increase by more than 10%, the passenger shall have the right to cancel within seven days of notification without penalty.

### CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS:

Notice of cancellation must be made in writing. The effective cancellation date is the date when written notification is received by STI. The deposit of \$800 is non-refundable. The following scale of charges will apply when cancellation is received prior to departure:

Until May 13, 2018	deposit of \$800
May 14 – Aug 13, 2018	\$1,600
Aug 14 – Nov 13, 2018	\$2,400
From Nov 14, 2018	100%

*NB: different payment/cancellation policy applies to airline tickets; you will be advised at time of booking.*

### RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY:

STI acts only as an agent in securing all services related to the tours described in this brochure, including transportation, sightseeing and accommodation. STI shall not be responsible or liable for any loss,

cost, damage, injury, delay or expense arising from the use of any conveyance, accommodation or service or from acts of God, strikes, weather, quarantine, accidents, sickness, government regulations, insufficient documents and any loss expense resulting from the above contingencies shall be borne by the tour member. In the event it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort of the passenger, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the operators. Additional expense, if any, shall be borne by the passenger. The right is reserved to withdraw any or all tours should conditions warrant, and also to decline to accept or retain any passenger as a member of the tour. In such instances, full or equitable amounts will be refunded.

### TRAVEL INSURANCE:

It is mandatory for all tour participants to have Emergency Medical insurance that covers for both emergency evacuation and repatriation to the sum of \$200,000 USD. STI also strongly recommends purchasing an all inclusive plan that covers cancellation, interruption, accident and baggage for the duration of his/her travel.

### TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

It is entirely the passenger's responsibility to possess whatever documents and visas are required by the law of the countries visited on the tour.

### AIRLINE RESPONSIBILITY:

Any airliner carrier providing transportation in connection with these tours is not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time the passenger is not on board its planes or conveyances. The passenger contract in use by the airlines concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airline and the purchase of these tours and/or passenger. Similar responsibility as noted applies to all types of carriers, including car rental companies.



North Seymour Frigatebird © Daniel Sendecki, G Adventures Inc.



Sally Lightfoot Crab © Stephanie Kretschmer, G Adventures Inc.



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