

CLASSIC JOURNEYS

THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



Galápagos

Ultimate Wildlife Exploration



“

*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*



TRAVEL + LEISURE

“Best Wildlife Encounter” - AFAR magazine

AFAR magazine named our Galápagos trip the “Best Wildlife Encounter” in the world. Blue-footed boobies do their slap-happy dance for you. Galápagos penguins dart under your sea kayak. A pod of sea turtles performs their graceful ballet around you. Baby sea lions paddle up for a better look. The giant land tortoises? They’re close enough to touch. If you go wild for wildlife, you’ve found it. Join our island-based adventure to skip the cramped confines of a cruise ship and get up close to the creatures you came to see. Naturalist guides lead you to extraordinary wildlife experiences, minus the flocks of tourists. Enjoy getting to walk, kayak, snorkel – and sip on a poolside cocktail at your waterfront boutique hotel. We proudly follow ‘Leave No Trace’ environmental standards and support more than 50 local residents.



DAY 1 »

Quito - Gateway to the Enchanted Isles

- Explore at your leisure La Ronda's cobblestone streets, experiencing traditional music and dance
- Savor authentic Ecuadorian cuisine, including empanadas and locro de papa

Your extraordinary Galapagos odyssey begins in Quito, a captivating tapestry of pre-Columbian ruins, Spanish colonial grandeur, and vibrant indigenous culture. Wander the cobblestone streets of La Ronda, where traditional music and dance echo through the centuries-old neighborhood. Indulge in culinary delights like empanadas and locro de papa, savoring the rich flavors that have delighted Ecuadorians for generations. Or just relax at your hotel in preparation for the explorations of the islands that begin tomorrow.

MEALS: NA

OVERNIGHT: QUITO

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 2 »

San Cristobal Island – In the Footsteps of Darwin

- Snorkel alongside playful sea lions and tropical fish in Darwin Bay
- Hike to Frigate Hill, learning about endemic species and evolutionary processes

After fueling up for adventure, take flight to the enchanted Galapagos Islands. And just like Charles Darwin, your first landing spot is San Cristobal Island, the easternmost island in the archipelago. After settling into your beautiful boutique hotel, savor a delicious lunch featuring fresh, locally-sourced ingredients.

In the afternoon, embark on a fascinating walk through San Cristobal's diverse landscapes. Starting from your hotel, follow a trail that winds through the island's dry forest. As you traverse this gently undulating path, your expert naturalist guide will point out the endemic Mockingbirds unique to San Cristobal, as well as Darwin's finches and frigate birds soaring overhead. The trail leads you to Darwin Bay, the very spot where Charles Darwin first set foot in the Galapagos aboard the HMS Beagle in 1835. Here, you'll don snorkeling gear for an unforgettable aquatic adventure. Glide alongside playful sea lions, graceful sea turtles, and a kaleidoscope of tropical fish in the crystal-clear waters.

After snorkeling, trade your flippers for walking shoes. As you follow the scenic footpath to Frigate Hill, your guide shares a wealth of insights about the unique flora and fauna that define the Galapagos ecosystem. You'll learn about endemic species thriving in this arid landscape, including the striking San Cristobal mockingbird, renowned for its distinctive songs and behaviors. Your guide explains how these birds have adapted to their environment, showcasing the remarkable evolutionary processes that Darwin himself studied during his historic visit. Along the trail, you'll encounter various plants uniquely suited to the dry forest habitat, including the Opuntia cactus and the fragrant palo santo tree. Ascending Frigate Hill, enjoy breathtaking views of the coastline and surrounding islands, with your guide highlighting the ecological significance of these landscapes on this extraordinary archipelago.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 3 »

San Cristobal Island - A Trifecta of Galapagos Adventure

- Kayak along the northern coast, observing marine life and seabirds with your naturalist guides
- Snorkel at iconic Kicker Rock with sea turtles, colorful fish and even sharks

Today, you experience the Galapagos from multiple perspectives, starting with a leisurely morning kayak along San Cristobal's northern coast. Paddle through calm waters, keeping an eye out for marine life beneath the surface and sea birds wheeling overhead. After kayaking, pass your kayaks to your very own boat captain and embark on a scenic ride to iconic Kicker Rock, a dramatic volcanic formation rising from the sea. Here, you have the unforgettable opportunity to snorkel with your naturalist guides in one of the Galapagos' premier sites, whose waters are home to a variety of shark species, sea turtles, and an array of colorful fish.

After a delicious lunch onboard your boat, you'll arrive at a pristine beach for an afternoon of exploration and relaxation. Your guides will lead you on a fascinating walk along the shoreline, revealing the intricate ecosystem where land meets sea. Feel the soft sand between your toes as you learn about the unique adaptations of shore plants and animals. Keep an eye out for marine iguanas basking on sun-warmed rocks, Sally Lightfoot crabs scuttling across the beach, and even Galapagos sea lions lounging near the water's edge. The salty sea breeze carries the calls of frigate birds and blue-footed boobies, creating a symphony that epitomizes the raw beauty of the Galapagos.

A benefit of basing yourself on the islands is that you have plenty of time to swim in the turquoise waters or simply relax on the beach, soaking in the unspoiled beauty of your surroundings before returning to your basecamp boutique hotel on San Cristobal.

Regenerative Travel: Witnessing the Galápagos Through the Eyes of a Local

One of the most remarkable aspects of exploring with Classic Journeys is our commitment to regenerative travel, where we collaborate with local families to ensure you experience the authentic heart of the Galápagos. Today, you'll have the privilege of venturing into these waters under the expert guidance of our captain, a former fisherman whose generational knowledge runs as deep as the currents themselves. As he navigates the boat through secluded coves and channels, he'll unveil the islands' hidden wonders - from the elusive octopus camouflaged among the rocks to the kaleidoscope of marine life that flourishes in these nutrient-rich waters. And should you encounter any wildlife in distress, like the two sea turtles a previous Classic Journeys group freed from illegal fishing lines, you'll have a front-row seat to witness the profound impact of regenerative travel. It's one of those signal moments in life where you realize you're not just a visitor - you're a guardian, playing an active role in preserving this extraordinary archipelago for generations to come. (Just ask, and we'll share the heartwarming video!)

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 4 »

Isabela Island - Unveiling Nature's Wonders

- Join your naturalist guides on a walk through diverse landscapes, from white sand beaches to flamingo-filled wetlands
- Observe Galapagos penguins at Las Tintoreras as you snorkel with them in crystal-clear waters

This morning, you'll transfer to Isabela, the largest and youngest of the Galapagos Islands at just one million years old. Straddling the equator, this remarkable isle offers no shortage of wildlife sightings from the moment you arrive. Isabela Island was Darwin's final stop in the Galapagos before he set sail for Tahiti aboard the HMS Beagle in 1835. It was here that he collected many of the species that would later form the foundation of his groundbreaking research on evolution. Join your guides on a trail that showcases the Galapagos' incredible diversity of landscapes and wildlife. Your path winds past white sand beaches, wetlands teeming with pink flamingos, otherworldly lava formations, and mangrove forests where giant land tortoises roam. Just as Darwin did nearly two centuries ago, you'll have the opportunity to witness the iconic blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, iguanas, and the famous finches that helped inspire his theory of evolution.

Ceviche is a deeply rooted tradition across South America, with each country offering its own unique recipe, and this diversity is even reflected on the individual Galapagos islands. Midday, you'll have the chance to dive into this culinary heritage with a hands-on experience, learning to slice, marinate, and balance the flavors and textures of ceviche like a true islander before savoring your creation for lunch.

This afternoon, your explorations continue with a stroll to the dock, where your snorkeling gear – masks, snorkels, flippers, and wetsuits – awaits, perfectly fitted and ready for adventure. Alongside your expert naturalist guide, you'll board a panga (a comfortable flat-bottom fishing boat) and set course for Las Tintoreras, a cluster of small islets that are home to one of the few Galapagos penguin colonies in the world. As you approach, you'll quickly discover that these curious creatures are unafraid of human visitors, making them nearly foolproof subjects for your camera lens. Observe them lounging on the lava rocks, soaking up the equatorial sun, or grab your snorkeling gear and camera to witness these remarkable birds diving and swimming in the crystal-clear waters of the lagoon – a genuinely incredible experience. The lagoon is a haven for an array of marine life, from graceful green sea turtles and vividly colored reef fish to the fearsome-looking yet utterly harmless marine iguanas that bask on the rocks, their prehistoric forms adding to the sense of having stepped back in time.

Island Hopping = Wildlife Spotting

When flying between islands, your guides transform transits into aerial flightseeing adventures, pointing out unfolding landscapes and spotting birds, animals, and marine life from above.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: ISABELA ISLAND

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 5 »

Volcan Sierra Negra - Walking on Mars

- Hike along the rim of Sierra Negra, exploring its massive caldera
- Create authentic ceviche during a hands-on culinary experience

The Galapagos Islands are among the most volcanically active spots on Earth, and Isabela was formed by the merger of six massive volcanoes. Today, you'll experience this volcanic terrain firsthand as you get an up-close look at how millennia of eruptions and lava flows have shaped the unique Galapagos habitat.

Your morning walk along the rim of the 500,000-year-old Volcan Sierra Negra will be an experience you'll never forget. From this vantage point, you'll be treated to one of the most spectacular views in the islands, gazing into the six-mile-wide crater – one of the largest active calderas on the planet. With its orange, red, and yellow lava formations and puffing fumaroles, your guides will show you how this otherworldly landscape is more akin to walking on Mars than Earth.

Despite the volcanic origins, the island is surprisingly lush at this altitude, with verdant ferns, papaya trees, and angel's trumpets (with blossoms a foot long or more) lining the trail. Darwin's finches, hawks, flycatchers, and many other birds provide a natural soundtrack to your otherworldly hike. After refueling over a leisurely lunch at our friends' private hacienda, you'll have time in the late afternoon to relax by the beach with the local colony of sea lions or stroll through the laid-back beach town, soaking up the authentic island life.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: ISABELA ISLAND

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 6 »

Santa Cruz Island - Walking Among Giants

- Hop aboard a boat for wildlife spotting while making your way to beautiful Santa Cruz Island
- Get up close to giant tortoises at a secluded watering hole with 'only with Classic Journeys' access

This morning, follow the migratory birds as you move to Santa Cruz Island, which features all the different life zones found in the Galápagos, making it a hotspot for biodiversity. Arriving on the island, you'll have the remarkable opportunity to walk among some of the oldest inhabitants of the Galapagos – the giant tortoises. These ancient creatures can grow up to 500 pounds and live for an astonishing 175 years or more. Follow your guides along a scenic woodland trail to a peaceful watering hole, the natural habitat of these gentle giants, in a way that is truly 'only with Classic Journeys.' While cruise ship passengers are limited to crowded coastal sites, you'll venture deep into the highlands, where it's just you and a couple of dozen tortoises in their undisturbed environment. With no fences or barriers separating you from these amazing creatures, your naturalist guides ensure you get close enough to hear their gentle breaths and the sound of them chomping on grass – a close encounter like no other.

After this unforgettable experience, you'll visit the family-owned plantation of our friend Adrianno. Here, you'll spend time with the family, learning about their organic, sustainable operation and tasting the delicious coffee, sugar cane, and fruit grown on the property in the same rich volcanic soil that's also favored by the animals.

Island Hopping = Wildlife Spotting

A hallmark of our Galápagos adventures is our privately chartered boats, allowing us to follow wildlife movements and adapt itineraries for optimal encounters, even when we're moving between islands. Imagine adjusting course to follow whale migrations, sea lion feeding grounds, or booby nesting sites – ensuring you witness nature's greatest spectacles.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 7 »

Santa Cruz Island - Immersion in Nature's Grandeur

- Kayak through Divine Bay, spotting stingrays and diverse marine life
- Relax on Tortuga Bay's pristine beach, observing marine iguanas and sea turtles

Did you know that stingrays do not really sleep, but they do dial back their activity nightly? That makes morning a particularly good time to kayak between the lava channel walls of Divine Bay. As you paddle through the crystal-clear, tranquil waters, keep your eyes peeled for an array of marine life and seabirds. We often see stingrays gliding beneath our kayaks, while blue-footed boobies, lava gulls, and herons soar overhead or perch on nearby rocks. This intimate encounter with nature allows you to observe these remarkable creatures in their natural habitat, providing a unique perspective on the island's diverse ecosystem.

After lunch, enjoy a scenic walk on the Tortuga Bay trail to one of the most beautiful beaches in the Galapagos. Spend the afternoon relaxing on the pristine white sands, taking in the breathtaking coastal scenery, and spotting marine iguanas and sea turtles near the shore.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

DAY 8 »

Quito - Homeward Bound

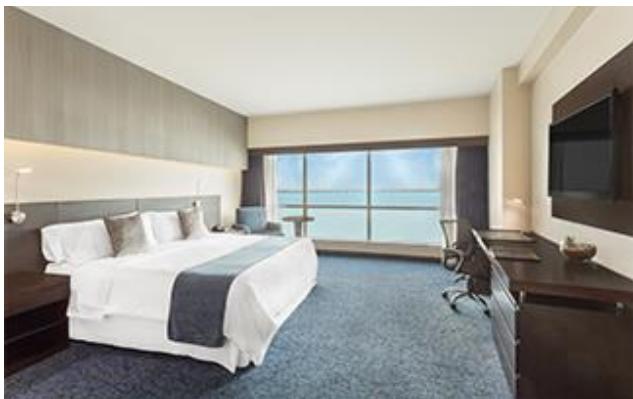
- Wake to blue-footed boobies diving into the water for breakfast and seasonally doing their comical mating dance
- Enjoy a bird's eye view of the islands during the return flight to mainland Ecuador

After an unforgettable journey through the Galapagos Islands, you'll make your way first to Baltra Island and then to the mainland. No doubt, you'll carry memories of nature's unparalleled splendor in the world's best wildlife experience.

MEALS: B

DAILY MILEAGE OPTIONS: SEE CURATED WALKS CHART

Tour Hotels



[Wyndham Quito Airport](#)

Surrounded by mountains, this hotel is adjacent to Quito airport and is furnished with a minimalist contemporary style.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



[Hotel Indigo Galapagos](#)

Located on beautiful San Cristóbal Island, Hotel Indigo is a tranquil and luxurious retreat. Marvel at the ocean views from your balcony, relax in the outdoor infinity pool, and savor fine dining during your memorable stay.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



[Iguana Crossing](#)

The ocean laps at this beautiful eco-friendly hotel, with beach access out front and a National Park nearby. Enjoy staying in their comfortable rooms with modern amenities and swimming in their outdoor pool or roof-deck jacuzzi.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



[Angermeyer Waterfront Inn](#)

Built of native lava rock and driftwood, this first-class hotel is situated right on the waterfront. Guests enjoy peace and total privacy, plus a perfect chance to experience what the owners call the true 'Galápagos spirit'.

NIGHTS: 2 nights

Curated Walks

CONNECT. ON FOOT. AT EYE LEVEL.

Join us to walk the most cinematic footpaths in a region. With thoughtfully curated walks that are about so much more than just counting miles. Yes, it's likely that your Fitbit or Apple watch will buzz when you hit your step count. But you probably won't notice because your soul will be buzzing from the connections you make with the people and place. Each day, we'll offer you one or two walks. Each walk is generally between an hour or two in duration. And our support vehicles are often nearby and add to your flexibility. Choose one or both to curate the right amount of walking for you each day. It's why Forbes magazine calls our tours their 'Luxury Walking Favorite'.

CURATE YOUR OWN MILEAGE OPTIONS EACH DAY

Walks are measured in miles. Other activities in hours.

	MINIMUM	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
DAY 1	Quito - Gateway to the Enchanted Isles		
Walk	*	*	*
DAY 2	San Cristobal Island - In the Footsteps of Darwin		
Walk	2	3.5	3.5
Snorkel	1	1.5	2
DAY 3	San Cristobal Island - A Trifecta of Galapagos Adventure		
Walk	.5	1	1.5
Snorkel	1	1.5	2
Guided Kayak	1	2	2.5
Boat Excursion	2	2	2
DAY 4	Isabela Island - Unveiling Nature's Wonders		
Walk	1.5	2	4
Snorkel	1	1.5	2
Boat Excursion	1	1.5	2
DAY 5	Volcan Sierra Negra - Walking on Mars		
Walk	4.5	5.5	9.5
DAY 6	Santa Cruz Island - Walking Among Giants		
Walk	1.5	1.5	2.5
Boat Excursion	2	2	2
DAY 7	Santa Cruz Island - Immersion in Nature's Grandeur		
Walk	2.5	2.5	4
Guided Kayak	1.5	2	2.5
DAY 8	Quito - Homeward Bound		
Walk	*	*	*

*No scheduled walks.

ROUTE NOTES

The terrain on this trip includes a mix of sandy beach paths, trails on volcanic rock and lava flows, compressed dirt, elevated boardwalks, and well-maintained countryside and coastal trails. Generally, the paths along the coast are mostly level, although in limited instances such as on the volcano and in the highlands, there will be some elevation gain and loss.

THE ART OF THE UNPLANNED: CRAFTING UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

We've carefully crafted each day's walking adventures with our expert local guides. Your daily itinerary serves as a well-thought-out plan, and we empower our tour leaders to adapt to unexpected opportunities or challenges. Whether it's an impromptu local invitation or a weather-related change, we're adept at making adjustments. So, while your experience may closely follow the itinerary, it might also include some variations. In essence, we invite you to "expect the unexpected" – knowing that our promise is to provide you the most genuine and authentic walking tours in the world.

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

LOCATION: Wyndham Quito Airport Hotel - hotel lobby
CITY: Quito, Ecuador
TIME: 6:15 AM
Airport transfers to the tour starting location included

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

LOCATION: Baltra Airport with continuation on to mainland Ecuador
CITY: Baltra Island, Santa Cruz, Ecuador
TIME: 1:15 PM

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ▶ CURATED WALKS THAT LEAD TO 'ONLY WITH CLASSIC JOURNEYS' EXPERIENCES
 - Immerse and connect you across cultures as you explore on foot
- ▶ EXCEPTIONAL LOCAL GUIDES
 - Bring authentic experiences to life
- ▶ ENCHANTING ACCOMMODATIONS
 - Where luxury and local mean you feel at home
- ▶ EAT LIKE (& WITH) THE LOCALS
 - Local flavors and time to savor the moments together
- ▶ SMALL GROUPS, GUARANTEED
 - Mean deeper, richer experiences while making friends along the way
- ▶ REGENERATIVE TRAVEL
 - We take strides to preserve cultures, traditions, and nature

What's Included

- Accommodations for 7 nights
- All breakfasts, 5 lunches and 3 dinners
- All activities in the itinerary, including gear for snorkeling and kayaking
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip
- Award-winning ocean-front boutique hotels that provide you unlimited access to the wildlife you came to experience

Above & Beyond Benefits

▶ INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately.

▶ PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

Enhancing Your Journey

We're constantly seeking ways to improve your experience. Count on us to update you with any significant changes before departure. Minor adjustments may be communicated by your guides during the trip to ensure you have the best possible journey.