

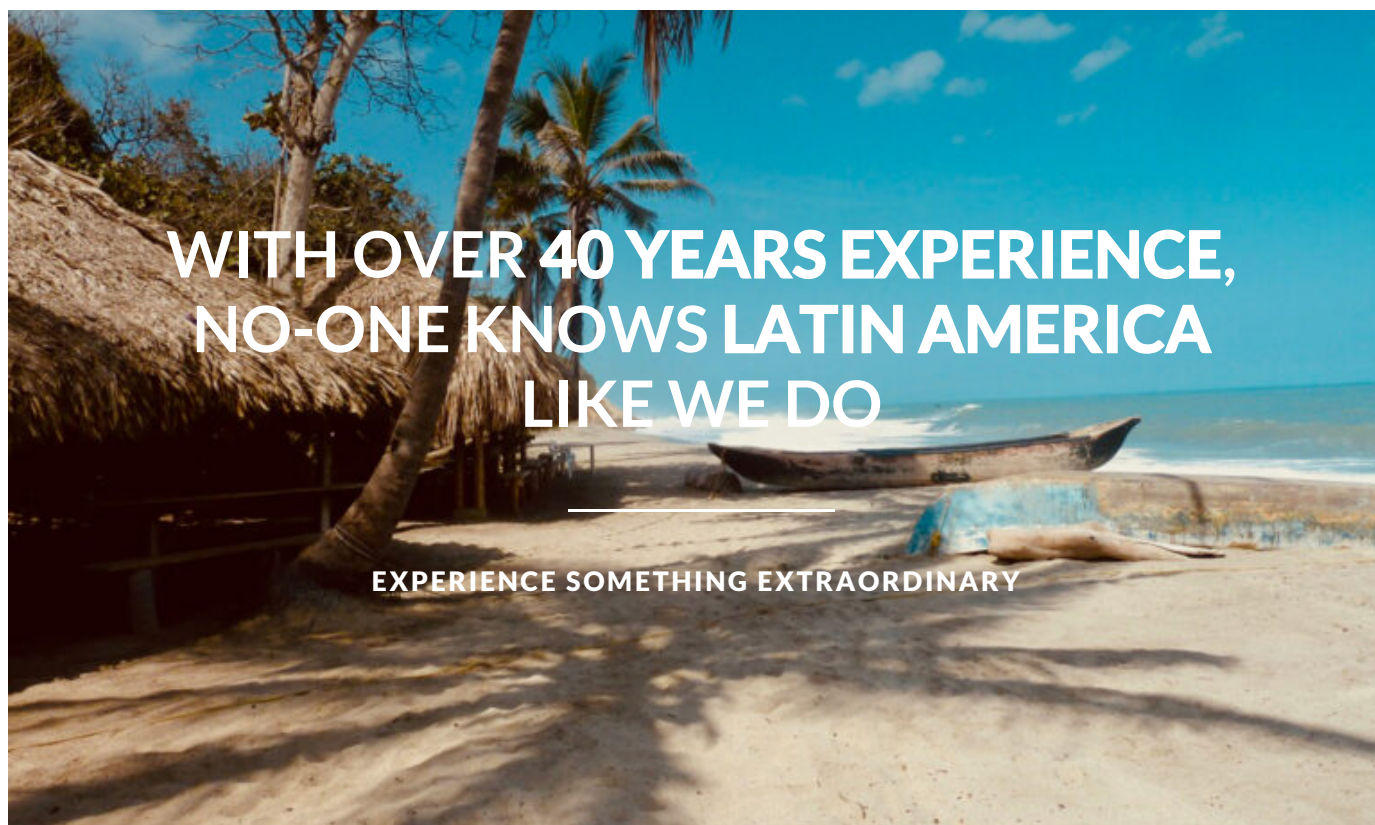


PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

VALUE ECUADOR AND GALAPAGOS: AT A GLANCE

9 days from **£3,140pp**

**ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS ISLANDS / QUITO / OTAVALO AND THE NORTHERN
HIGHLANDS / AVENUE OF THE VOLCANOES / GALAPAGOS ISLANDS / SANTA CRUZ
ISLAND (INDEFATIGABLE)**



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

A passion for the region runs through all we do

All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America

Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Fully bonded and licensed

ATOL-protected

On your side when it matters

Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks

We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions

Let us show you the Latin America we know and love



OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This is a great value, short but variety-packed holiday suitable for families and individuals alike. Discover the Avenue of the Volcanoes in Andean Ecuador and explore Santa Cruz Island and further afield in the Galápagos from the well regarded, guesthouse-style Hotel Mainao.

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|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DAY 1 | Arrive Quito high in the Andes. Transfer to hotel. |
| DAY 2 | Full day guided tour of the Andean highlands and market towns. |
| DAY 3 | Guided city tour of Quito |
| DAY 4 | Full day excursion to the Avenue of the Volcanoes, Cotopaxi and Quilotoa. |
| DAY 5 | Fly to the Galápagos Islands, transfer to hotel on Santa Cruz Island. |
| DAY 6 | A motor yacht day trip to neighbouring islands. |
| DAY 7 | Full day tour with a local resident |
| DAY 8 | At leisure in the Galápagos, optional excursions. |
| DAY 9 | Fly to the mainland and connect with international flight. |

ITINERARY

You might have thought that a holiday to the remote Pacific Galápagos islands would be prohibitively expensive. While cruising on a yacht can still be pricey, you now have the option of a land-based visit, where you can get to know one or two islands on shared guided day trips by boat. This holiday bases you at the popular Mainao hotel on the principal island, Santa Cruz, with a couple of motor yacht cruises included and a day at leisure to explore the sparking beaches, Puerto Ayora town, visit the Charles Darwin Research Centre or even venture inland to spot giant tortoises. You don't have to decide in advance: book up and pay locally.

Spend a few days on the mainland too, well worth exploring in its own right. Based at historic Quito, visit the famous Andean mountain town Otavalo with its indigenous market and travel down the aptly named Avenue of the Volcanoes, dominated by the towering snow-draped mountain Cotopaxi.

DAY 1

Arrive Quito high in the Andes. Transfer to hotel.

As soon as you arrive at Quito's high altitude airport you are whisked off to your hotel located in the colonial part of this historic city.

DAY 2

Full day guided tour of the Andean highlands and market towns.

Set off on a variety-packed full day exploration of the Andean highlands, discovering traditional villages and mountain landscapes as well as the world-famous market town Otavalo.

Cayambe is a large town overlooked by the snowy bulk of the volcano of the same name. The mountain's icy flanks contrast with the gentle dairy cattle pastures and flower plantation below. Your route then takes you alongside the silvery waters of Lake San Pablo, the largest natural lake in the country.

Continue to Otavalo, a growing, bustling town with tourism at its core. Long celebrated for its market, its main square is flooded with stalls and salespeople, particularly on Saturdays. Originally the articles sold were household goods, livestock, foodstuffs and traditional clothing for the population of the town and the villages within its hinterland, and business was done by bartering. The indigenous Otavaleños, easily identified by their striking blue and white attire, are famous for their business acumen and have for many decades travelled beyond the country's frontiers seeking out new markets.

Nowadays the market is well absorbed into the cash (and credit card) economy, and alongside the colourful textiles, intricate jewellery, woollen bags and paintings of bucolic local landscapes you will find Manchester United football shirts and base-ball caps made in China.

Move on to Peguche, a settlement famed for the manufacture of Andean musical instruments – visit a traditional workshop here – and thence to Cotacachi, where the speciality is leather goods. You might pick up a bargain here.

DAY 3

Guided city tour of Quito

Today you will explore the historic centre of Quito, the joint first heritage city to be UNESCO listed. It may well be the largest in South America, and is certainly one of the best preserved: no attempt has been made gratuitously to gentrify the residencies and commerce: there is still a medley of old-style upmarket mansions and more humble homes, interspersed along narrow cobbled streets by tiny grocery shops and traditional bars.

Visit the Basilica del Voto Nacional Church, with its ornate Gothic exterior, and move on to the viewpoint on Panecillo Hill, an iconic spot from where you can survey the whole city and which you will share with the giant statue of the Winged Virgin.

Later, continue to two of Quito's emblematic squares, graceful Plaza de San Francisco and Plaza Grande, the historical and political centre of the city fringed by some of the capital's most important buildings including the Cathedral, the Government Palace, the Archbishop's Palace and La Compañía church, as ornate in its gilded interior as it is without. The tour ends in the traditional La Ronda neighbourhood, where you'll find artisan workshops where the crafts and trades of yesteryear are still thriving.

DAY 4

Full day excursion to the Avenue of the Volcanoes, Cotopaxi and Quilotoa.

It's a long day (12 hours door to door) but on this guided tour you will really be able to enjoy the privilege of seeing the top highlights of Ecuador's glorious Andean landscapes. The country's consists of a string of snow-capped volcanoes, viewed from the stretch of the Panamerican Highway known as the Avenue of the Volcanoes, along which they stand sentinel. Climb out of the bowl in which Quito is situated rising through ethereal cloud-forest, to reach a plain of farms and pastures pitted with many small colonial market towns and indigenous indian settlements linked by a network of rural roads.

Soon, on a clear day, you will witness the towering and sometimes smoldering form of active Volcan Cotopaxi – enter the national park to get close-up views. Pop into the park's museum, stroll along the shores of the bird-flecked lake Limpiopungo, and walk through an upland forest at a cool 4,200m. Drive on to Quilotoa volcano which has at its heart a stunning turquoise lagoon, and climb to a viewpoint over the crater.

DAY 5

Fly to the Galápagos Islands, transfer to hotel on Santa Cruz Island.

Drive back to Quito's airport and fly to the Galápagos islands (2-3hrs, depending if there is a stop in Guayaquil on the way). From the airport at Baltra there's a speedboat ride over to the archipelago's mountainous principal island, Santa Cruz, which hosts the capital, Puerto Ayora. Transfer to your hotel.

DAY 6

A motor yacht day trip to neighbouring islands.

Embark a small motor yacht and enjoy a full day exploring more remote islands from the sea, accompanied by a welcoming crew and knowledgeable naturalist guide. The itinerary will vary day to day but you will visit one or two of the nearby islands. Each island has its own characteristics, but all are characterised by rocky lava fields, white sandy beaches and a plethora of wildlife.

DAY 7

Full day tour with a local resident

Set out to sea on the motor yacht Niña Bella with an ex-fisherman, his welcoming crew and a knowledgeable naturalist guide for a full day excursion to experience the waters close to one of the Galápagos more remote islands. Recent history has transformed the Galapagos Islands, reshaping the local economy from one of subsistence fishing and small-scale agriculture to one where tourism employs some 40% of local residents. Their lives have been transformed from harvesting sea life to introducing the rich marine ecosystem to visitors, while also helping to preserve them.

Heading out toward Santa Fe Island and its marine reserve you will have the chance to appreciate the biodiversity unique to this area. You'll enjoy a variety of marine activities including swimming with sharks and snorkelling where you can observe colourful fish and sea cucumbers. All the while, you will enjoy watching wildlife in its natural state – including the chance to view one of the most important sea lion colonies in the entire reserve. Note that different islands are visited on different days of the week – contact us for full details.

DAY 8

At leisure in the Galápagos, optional excursions.

There are also sporting activities you might dip into including mountain biking, introductory scuba diving classes, snorkelling, sea kayaking and hiking.

You can also explore further Puerto Ayora, where you are staying. It's lively but laid-back place' bursting with shops, cafés, restaurants and banks. It's a busy harbour, with tourist yachts and fishing boats coming and going, and the bay is full of fearless pelicans, iguanas and blue-footed boobies. Spend some time on the beach there and you may well be joined by a sea-lion or two. Nearby is the Charles Darwin Research station, where you can learn about the history of the islands and conservation projects, and Tortuga Bay, where you might spot giant tortoises and reef sharks.

DAY 9

Fly to the mainland and connect with international flight.

Transfer back to Baltra Airport and fly to the mainland. Connect with your international flight. UK clients arrive home the following day.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Services of our team of experts in our London office

Services of Journey Latin America local representatives and guides

All land and air transport within Latin America

Accommodation as specified

Meals as specified

Excursions as specified, including entrance fees

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Full-day excursion to the famous Otavalo market (shared)

Walking tour of historic colonial Quito (private)

Visit the Cotopaxi National Park and Quilotoa (shared)

4 days land based exploration in the Galápagos Islands (shared)

Explore Santa Cruz and visit neighbouring islands (shared)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Tips and gratuities

Meals other than specified

International flights to Latin America

Airport taxes, when not included in the ticket

Optional excursions

ESSENTIALS

TRANSPORT

2 flights (2-3hrs and 90 mins); 2 boat journeys to the island of Santa Cruz.

ACCOMMODATION

This holiday uses great value, mid-range properties on both the mainland and in the Galápagos.

MEALS

Breakfast daily, lunch days 6,7.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

9 days, 8 nights: Quito 4, Galápagos 4.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Ecuador and the Galápagos is the US dollar.

HOW TO TAKE IT

Cash machines are available in Quito and Puerto Ayora so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds.

We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can spend as the dollar is the local currency. Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

DAILY SPEND

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US\$50 per day should cover the cost of good quality meals on those days in the holiday itinerary when not on the cruise, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the very best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

TIPPING

Tips are welcomed and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will welcome a tip so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, guides etc. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance pages.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

TRIP SUITABILITY

This holiday is suitable for all able, reasonably fit visitors.

The streets in Quito are cobbled and steep and you must be cautious taking these on at altitude (see "Altitude" below).

VISAS

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip

begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

CLIMATE

Lying at 2,850m on the equator, the highlands have a permanent spring-like climate: altitude is the determining factor with regard to temperature. The rainy season in the Andes runs between January and April when there are showers most afternoons. The dry season is June, July and August when the sun is strong during the day, but at night the temperature drops dramatically (maybe as low as freezing point). May, September and October are less predictable, with both rainy and sunny spells. . In the mountains at any time of year you should expect a variation between 15°C and 25°C.³

In the Galápagos, from January to April it's hot and the sun is relentless, with some sudden showers. May to July, and October to December is cloudier; August and September it's often cloudy and cool, and a stiff breeze makes the waters choppy.

ALTITUDE

Several days are spent at high altitude (over 2,500m). You may notice the effect of high altitude; symptoms vary: most common are mild headaches and breathlessness. If you drink plenty of water and allow your body to acclimatise (don't exert yourself or drink alcohol) in the first couple of days after arrival, you will minimise your chances of being adversely affected.

Please refer to our Briefing Dossier for further information.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

For day-to-day wear you should go prepared to encounter all seasons. Both warm clothing and a sun hat are essential at altitude; a light fleece jacket and a waterproof/breathable outer shell makes a good combination. Trousers, skirt or shorts made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials work well on the Galápagos Islands.

Long-sleeved shirts will protect you from insects.

Strong, comfortable footwear is essential and you should bring insect repellent, sun block, hat and sun glasses. You should take swimwear for ocean swimming (Galápagos). For June to November departures, the waters can be chilly for snorkelling.

Don't forget your binoculars, camera, charger and cards.

VACCINATIONS

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. You should consult your GP for specific requirements.

For admission to the Galápagos a yellow fever certificate is required for anyone over 1 year old coming from an area with risk of yellow fever transmission.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

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ISLAND (INDEFATIGABLE)

GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

GIVE US A CALL

We'd love to chat

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

tours@journeylatinamerica.com