



Ecuador Galapagos Private Adventure Cruise on Endemic

11 Days



The Adventure Company | EST. 1969

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MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

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AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

Ecuador Galapagos

Private Adventure Cruise on Endemic

Experience the Galapagos Islands in comfort and refinement on this small-group adventure, featuring a 7-night cruise on 16-passenger luxury catamaran Endemic. Start your trip in UNESCO-listed Quito, then cruise in style through the Galapagos. Following your MT Sobek naturalist guide, you'll kayak and snorkel with sea turtles, penguins and fur seals, walk among giant tortoises, frigatebirds, all three types of boobies (Nazca, blue-footed and red-footed), and land and marine iguanas. This classic Northern Loop route takes in the natural wonders of Genovesa, Santa Cruz, Santiago, Isabela, Fernandina and Rabida islands.

Details

Arrive: Quito, Ecuador

Depart: Quito, Ecuador

Duration: 11 Days

Group Size: 10-16 Guests

Minimum Age: 6 Years Old

Activity Level:



Testimonials

"The Galapagos trip is a once in a lifetime experience. So many great memories."

Julia S.

"Having visited the places that Darwin visited for his evolution theory makes you appreciate all we have in this world!"

Laura C.

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.

1-800-974-0300

info@mtsobek.com

Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01

MT Sobek was one of the first North American companies to bring visitors to the Galápagos Islands, with an inaugural charter for the Sierra Club in 1970.

REASON #02

Guests love our Galápagos adventures because we charter truly small (maximum 16-passenger) vessels for an exclusive experience with your

REASON #03

Our guide and crew work hard maximizing the amount of wildlife encounters both on land and sea, and the guide will always snorkel with you.

What to Expect



ACTIVITIES

Island cruising by luxury catamaran with daily Zodiac excursions to explore hidden coves. Hike, snorkel, kayak, and swim among unique endemic wildlife.



LODGING

Luxurious comfort aboard a sleek new catamaran with private balconies and a full crew to cater to your every need. Also includes an upscale hotel in Quito.



CLIMATE

Mild climate year-round. Dec-May has daytime temperatures of 76-86°F and water temperatures of 70-75°F. Jun-Nov has daytime temperatures of 67-77°F and water temperatures of 65-72°F.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

Luis was born in Seville, Spain, and graduated from the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid with a degree in Environmental Biology. He is fluent in Spanish, English, and French and has guided in Galapagos since 1999. In addition to being a professional nature photographer, Luis has a Master's Degree in Geographic Ecology and is active with conservation groups. A born teacher, he enthusiastically shares his knowledge of Galapagos with people of all ages. He lives in Quito with his wife, twin sons, and daughter and is MT Sobek's head naturalist guide.

Luis Die

Fernando is an Ecuadorian marine biologist who has worked and lived in Galapagos for over 25 years. An accomplished diver, he has enjoyed more than 5,000 dives in the Galapagos, Ecuador, Cayman Islands, Cozumel, Baja California, Palau, Malaysia, and Costa Rica. He joined Conservation International in 2005 after working for the Galapagos National Park as Head of the Department of Control and Conservation of Marine Ecosystems. Fernando returned to guiding to re-encounter the environment that he is so passionate about and loves inspiring MT Sobek travelers on their adventures in the Galapagos.

Fernando Ortiz

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Itinerary

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN QUITO

Welcome to the historic city of Quito, the capital of Ecuador. An MT Sobek representative will meet you outside customs at the airport and escort you to your hotel. After settling in at the hotel, the rest of the day is free to unwind, take advantage of the pool's spa services or begin your exploration of this dynamic city. Dinner is on your own tonight.

DAY 2

TOUR QUITO'S OLD TOWN

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before setting out on half-day guided tour of colonial Quito. The city's UNESCO-listed old town contains the best examples of Colonial Baroque architecture in South America! After lunch, you are free to explore more of the old town, return to the hotel, or shop for handicrafts made by local artisans.

Gather in the hotel at 6:30pm for a briefing with your fellow travelers and MT Sobek representative, who will discuss tomorrow's flight to the Galápagos Islands and the adventure ahead. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Meals: B, L

DAY 3

FLY TO THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Rise for breakfast and an early transfer flight from Quito to Baltra Island in the Galápagos. After meeting your naturalist guide, take a short transfer from Baltra to Bachas Beach on the north side of Santa Cruz Island. Encounter sea lions on the beautiful, white-sand beach, look for flamingos and great blue herons in the lagoon, and spot hatchlings' footprints leading from the nest to the water's edge (sea turtles nest here from December to April). Return to Baltra and board your private luxury catamaran. Enjoy a welcome dinner onboard.

Activity: PM 1.5 hours easy walk (1 mile), option to swim or snorkel from beach

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

HIKE & SNORKEL AMID RICH BIRDLIFE OF GENOVESA ISLAND

Genovesa Island is known as Bird Island and is one of the most interesting for visitors! Make a wet landing this morning and hike along Darwin Beach on the north side of Darwin Bay, formed by the rim of a sunken crater. Red mangroves along the trail provide habitat for yellow warblers, yellow-crowned night herons, and pintail ducks. The highlight of this site is the incredible abundance of Red-footed Boobies, Great Frigatebirds and Swallow-tailed Gulls. Despite being the most abundant species of booby in the islands, the red-footed is rarely seen unless you visit Genovesa. The bay also offers several places to snorkel; from deep waters along the cliffs across the bay,

to shallow waters by the beach. In either case, there are many fish to see and great chances of seeing sharks, rays and sea lions.

After lunch, explore the cliffs by panga before climbing Prince Phillip's Steps to the island's plateau. The landing sport is a rock fall that forms a natural staircase up the cliffs but the rest of the trail is quite easy and leveled. Walk through massive colonies of Red-footed and Nazca Boobies and an extraordinary Palo Santo forest on the way to a lava ridge where thousands of storm petrels dart about while Short-eared owls stalk them for prey. Along with Darwin Beach, this is one of the trails in the entire Galápagos with the most abundance of fauna. Snorkelers can explore the cliffs, where there are many fish and great chances of seeing sharks, rays and sea lions.

Activity: AM 2 hours easy hike (1 mile) plus snorkeling & kayaking; PM 2.5 hours moderate hike (2 miles) plus snorkeling

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

SEE GIANT TORTOISES IN THE WILD ON SANTA CRUZ AND EXPLORE SANTIAGO ISLAND

This morning, explore the lush highlands of Santa Cruz Island. Walk along a shady trail between the Twin Craters, actually two sinkholes created long ago by underground lava tunnels that collapsed. Learn about the special nature of the surrounding forest, with its Scalesia pedunculata trees (endemic to the Galápagos) and abundant bird life including finches, Vermilion Flycatchers, and mockingbirds. Continue for a special opportunity to see giant tortoises in their wild and natural habitat. The Galápagos Islands are named after these magnificent, ancient creatures and the experience with them is magical.

Cruise over lunch to Santiago Island, and venture ashore at Sullivan Bay. Hike along the sandy shore, surrounded by lava fields that formed only about 100 years ago. Your guide will point out the hardy "pioneer" plants, specialized flora that are the first to colonize a lava field. Conclude with a refreshing swim and chance to do some snorkeling!

Activity: AM 1.5 hours easy walk (1 mile); PM 2 hours easy walk (1.5 miles) plus snorkeling

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

ISABELA ISLAND'S WETLANDS, SIERRA NEGRA VOLCANO AND TORTOISE BREEDING CENTER

Isabela Island's wetlands are home to abundant bird life, including flamingos, stilts, whimbrels, gallinules, finches, Pintail Ducks, Brown Pelicans and more. Marine iguanas creep through the marshes as well. Part of the trail goes up Orchilla hill, which offers a nice view of the nearby town of Puerto Villamil. Continue to the Sierra Negra Volcano (4,890'), one of the most active volcanoes in the Galápagos. Hikers are rewarded with an unforgettable lesson in volcanic geology, with the chance to see the main volcanic caldera, very recent lava flows and fumaroles, and several smaller craters at the Chico Volcano site. Along the way, enjoy spectacular views of the ocean and surrounding islands.

Enjoy lunch on board, then visit the Arnaldo Tupiza Breeding center, a highlight of any visit to Isabela Island. Here, giant tortoises of the Isabela Island subspecies are hatched and cared for until they can survive on their own in the wild. Hundreds of adorable baby tortoises lumber about in raised pens, designed to protect them from predators including rats and ants. Even the walk to get to the breeding center from town is fun, as it is connected to Puerto Villamil by a boardwalk over some marshy wetlands where sightings of flamingos and other water birds are common.

Activity: AM 3 hours moderate walk (4 miles); PM 2 hours easy walk (2 miles)

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

EXPLORE ISABELA'S ELIZABETH BAY & URBINA BAY

Head out by panga this morning to explore Elizabeth Bay, located along the west coast of Isabela Island. This is one of the island's breeding sites for penguins. Exploring the mangroves, channels and coves by panga, you'll have the chance to see many sea turtles, penguins, pelicans, flightless cormorants, herons and rays. After lunch, anchor near Isabela's Urbina Bay - famous for having uplifted 15 feet along 2 miles of coastline exposing corals and invertebrates in its strata. Make a wet landing then follow your guide on the trail to look for Galápagos land iguanas, Galápagos hawks, and finches. You can also snorkel at this location and look for turtles, cormorants, a large diversity of fish and, with a bit of luck, octopus and lobsters.

Activity: AM panga cruise; PM 1.5-2 hours easy walk (1-2 miles) plus snorkeling

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8

EXPLORE ISABELA'S TAGUS COVE & FERNANDINA ISLAND, THE ARCHIPELAGO'S YOUNGEST ISLAND

In the morning, visit Tagus Cove, located to the west of Darwin Volcano on Isabela Island. While walking, inspect the inscriptions left by pirates in the 1800's. From here, you can see Darwin Lake, perched above sea level, but full of saltwater. It contains no fish, but it is very common to see a variety of bird species. After the walk, cruise by panga along the coast of Isabela to look for wildlife. Snorkelers will have great chances of swimming with penguins, cormorants and sea lions.

Rest for lunch, then set out from your anchorage near Punta Espinosa on Fernandina Island - said to be the largest ecologically pristine island in the world and one of the highlights of the trip. This island is an active shield volcano which had an eruption as recently as 2018. Upon landing, take a walk on black lava fields in search of marine iguanas, colorful Sally Lightfoot crabs and Galápagos sea lions lounging in its tidal pools.

Activity: AM 1.5-2 hours moderate hike (2 miles) plus panga cruise & snorkeling; PM 2-2.5 hours moderate hike (1.5 miles) plus snorkeling

Meals: B, L, D

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DAY 9

HIKE & SNORKEL ON SANTIAGO ISLAND & RÁBIDA

Wake for a wet landing on Santiago's soft, sandy Espumilla Beach. Walk the island's lagoon and beach in search of raptors and finches before suiting up for cliff-side kayaking and snorkeling. Perhaps the finest snorkel of the trip, you will be amazed by the array of colorful marine life, from angelfish and rays to sea turtles and white-tipped reef sharks.

After lunch, make a wet landing on the small red volcanic island of Rábida near the center of the archipelago. Its red-sand beach is home to sea lions and pups. Behind the beach is a brackish lagoon, home to migratory shorebirds, wading birds, and ducks. Two species of boobies nest along the cliffs. Snorkel with colorful fish and reef sharks along the cliff face or swim with sea lion pups - another highlight of the trip! Back on the boat tonight, enjoy a festive farewell cocktail hour and a group dinner with the captain.

Activity: AM snorkeling, kayaking & panga cruise; PM 1.5 hours moderate walk (1 mile), plus snorkeling & kayaking

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10

MOSQUERA ISLET & RETURN TO QUITO

Arrive this morning for a wet landing at Mosquera Islet, and set out on foot to see a large sea lion colony. Then disembark the Endemic and head to the Baltra airport for your return flight to Quito. An MT Sobek representative will greet you at Quito airport and provide assistance to your nearby hotel.

Activity: AM 1-1.5 hours easy walk (0.5 miles)

Meals: B

DAY 11

DEPART QUITO

Use the complimentary airport shuttle to transfer to the airport in time for your outbound flight, or opt to stay on in Quito to join us for one of our extensions in Ecuador or Peru!

Meals: B

Dates

For full terms and conditions please visit www.mtsobek.com/terms. Please note that our itineraries may be subject to change.

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Inclusions & Exclusions

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expertise and services of our experienced adventure guides
- All accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, almost all lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Snacks and water between meals
- Additional regional guides and experts on many trips
- Comprehensive Trip Planner with detailed pre-trip information
- Private guided tours at historic sites, museums, wineries and other select attractions as noted in the itinerary
- Special events and other select attractions as mentioned in the itinerary
- All gratuities at hotels and restaurants
- Equipment and experienced guides for activities as described in the itinerary
- Park and other entry fees (unless otherwise noted)
- Fares for trains, ferries and other modes of travel as listed in the itinerary
- Select transfers as mentioned in the itinerary
- Wetsuit rentals
- Baggage transfers and portorage

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Galapagos National Park fee, collected upon arrival (Age 13 and older: \$100 current fee, increasing to \$200 from Aug 1 2024 / Age 12 and younger: \$50 current fee, increasing to \$100 from Aug 1 2024)
- International airfare, airport taxes, and excess baggage fees
- Alcoholic beverages (MT Sobek provides wine at select events)
- Gratuities for MT Sobek guides and catamaran crew
- Travel Protection Program
- Personal expenses
- Galapagos Transit Control Card

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➤ **The World of MT Sobek**

At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world's most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

Our small group and custom adventures span the globe, and the spectrum—of interests, environments and activities—every one expertly planned and knowledgeably and passionately guided. And our commitment to making every experience a remarkable one has earned us preferred travel outfitter status for National Geographic Active Expeditions, Active New York Times Journeys, and Smithsonian Active Journeys.

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Awards



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