



Education First

College Study Tours

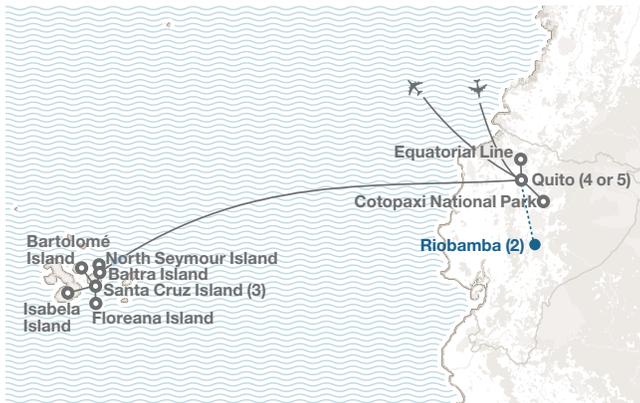
THE GALÁPAGOS

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Let your English majors see why Coleridge wrote about the magnificent Albatross and allow your scientists to observe the Blue-footed Booby. Or just come and take in the land of craters for yourself. Whatever reason you have for exploring this phenomenal set of islands, you'll quickly discover how nature reigns supreme in the Galápagos.

The rich environmental habitats of the Galápagos are home to a vast array of unique animal species, which are protected by

the archipelago's national park designation. Discover this natural wonderland from a firsthand perspective, including the Charles Darwin Research Station. You'll also visit the historic sites of Quito and take an excursion to spectacular Cotopaxi National Park, home of the world's highest active volcano.



Day 1: Fly to Ecuador

Arrive in Quito: Touch down in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Depending on your arrival time, you may have free time to settle in and explore the city on your own.

Day 2: Quito

Sightseeing tour of Quito: Carved into a narrow plateau high above the Andean valleys, Ecuador's capital is overshadowed by soaring peaks and the looming Pichincha Volcano. On your sightseeing tour, explore the well-preserved colonial quarter of Quito, where wrought-iron balconies and majestic stone pillars grace its 300-year-old plazas, churches and palaces. The area was declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations in 1978. Stroll amid the shady palm trees and colorful gardens of Independence Plaza, admire the stunning Government Palace and visit the charming Santo Domingo Monastery.

Equatorial Line: Stand exactly on the equator, the namesake of Ecuador. At the Intinan Museum, a guide will conduct several experiments to demonstrate what happens at the midpoint of the planet. Which way will water rinse down the drain? Can you balance an egg on the head of a nail? If you've ever wanted to stand in both hemispheres at once, this is your chance.

Day 3: Baltra Island | Santa Cruz Island

Travel to the Galápagos Islands: Fly from Quito to Baltra Island, arriving amid the ecological paradise of the Galápagos Islands. In 1959, the archipelago was declared a national park in order to protect its unique flora and animals, including giant tortoises (from which the islands took their name), iguanas, penguins, cormorants and Darwin's 13 species of finches. Please keep in mind that the island's ecosystems are fragile. Park regulations are designed to protect this earthly treasure for future generations.

Travel to Santa Cruz Island: Make the transfer to Santa Cruz Island, the gateway to the Galápagos and your home base for the next three days.

Charles Darwin Research Station: Operated by the Charles Darwin Foundation, the research station is home to a team of more than a hundred scientists, educators, volunteers, research students and support staff from all over the world. Observe how they conduct scientific research and promote environmental education.

Day 4: San Cristóbal Island

Journey by boat to San Cristóbal Island: San Cristóbal Island is one of the most dramatic moonscape scenes in the archipelago. Here you will find the largest fresh water lake in the archipelago, Laguna El Junco, located in a crater in the San Cristóbal highlands. The lake is home to dozens of tropical bird species, but the nearby breeding grounds of Galapaguera is where you'll find large crowds of giant tortoises. You'll may also discover frigate birds, Galápagos sea lions, blue and red footed boobies, marine iguanas and dolphins.

Day 5: Floreana Island

Visit Floreana Island: Floreana Island was named after Juan José Flores, the first president of Ecuador. With a relatively flat surface and abundant supply of fresh water, Floreana was a popular stop for whalers. In the 18th century they established Post Office Bay, where whalers kept a wooden barrel for letters to be picked up and delivered by ships from all over the world. Cards and letters are still placed in the barrel without postage, and visitors are encouraged to sift through them to see if they can deliver by hand back home.

Day 6: Santa cruz Island | Baltra Island | Quito

Travel to Baltra: En route back to the airport in Baltra, stop in the highlands of Santa Cruz. Observe the unique and diverse vegetation zones of the area and visit the Twin Craters. The area is also excellent for observing the wild tortoises.

Fly to Quito: Board your flight for Quito.

Day 7: Cotopaxi

Cotopaxi National Park: Walk in the shadow of snow-capped Volcán Cotopaxi, the world's highest active volcano (19,700 feet), on your visit to Cotopaxi National Park. Now recognized as the last refuge of the endangered Andean condor, the park was originally founded in 1975 to protect Ecuador's declining llama population.

Day 8: Depart for home

Transfer to the airport and check in for your return flight home.

3-DAY TOUR EXTENSION

Days 8-10: Riobamba | Guamote | Quito

Travel to Riobamba: Pass through Ambato, the city of flowers and fruits, and the Iqualata ridge on the Urbina moorlands as you travel to Riobamba. The Iqualata ridge is the highest point on the Pan-American Highway. Travel through the beautiful mountains surrounding Riobamba, which was the birthplace of Ecuador's first constitution in 1830. Visit Andean villages in Guamote, an area with a large indigenous population known for its community programs.

School visit: Take the opportunity to meet with local children at a primary school in Guamote.

Cultural activity: About 90% of Guamote citizens are descended from the pre-Spanish Puruhá tribe, whose culture remains tangible even today. Explore its legacy for yourself as you become familiar with the local way of life—including farming, handicraft-making and cooking techniques.

Day 11: Depart for home

Transfer to the airport and check in for your return flight home.

INCLUDED ON TOUR:

-  Round-trip and internal flights on major carriers
-  Full-time Tour Director
-  Land and water transportation
-  Hotels with private bathrooms
-  Light breakfast; 5 lunches; 4 dinners or 7 with extension
-  Sightseeing tours
Quito; Equatorial Line
-  Entrances
Santo Domingo Monastery; Intinan Museum; Charles Darwin Research Station; Cotopaxi National Park
-  Experiential learning
School visit and cultural activity with extension

The itinerary on the Galápagos Islands is subject to change based on government regulations.

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