



Red footed booby, Galápagos

Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands

27 May – 8 June 2019

Quito • Mindo Cloud Forest • Andes • Galápagos Islands

With Amazon extension

27 May – 12 June 2019



Jon Baines
tours



A traditional Andean market

Ecuador is a land of enormous cultural and natural diversity. Its cultural legacy encompasses the descendants of Spanish conquistadores and many distinct indigenous communities, markedly different in dress and lifestyle. Its biodiversity is extraordinary, the jewel in its crown being the incomparable Galápagos Islands. Due to its exceptional geographic features, flora and fauna, each island offers a completely different travel experience. The remote island group encompasses cool lava landscapes, cactus forests, lush green highlands, turquoise coves and perfect white sand beaches, and is the only place in the world where it is possible to swim with penguins and tropical parrot fish at the same time. There is also the option to extend at a luxury eco lodge in the Amazon jungle after the tour.

This tour encapsulates the great variety to be found within this compact country, with visits and specialist talks from tour leader, museum curator and natural historian, Jan Beccaloni. Experience colonial Quito, the exquisite cloud forests of Mindo, the high country thermal springs at Papallacta in

the Andes and finally the incomparable Galápagos islands on a private charter first class yacht. We understand that the Galápagos Islands are a once in a lifetime experience for most people, so have carefully designed this tour to visit at the best time of year, on a private yacht and in the company of an experienced tour leader, who is also an expert natural historian. This tour is strictly limited to fifteen people.

Arrive in Quito, a beautiful city containing superbly preserved colonial architecture, and



Rooftops of Quito



See the jewelled hummingbirds of Mindo (top);
A waterfall in Mindo (above)

settle in at your hotel. Spend the rest of the day at leisure until your welcome dinner in the evening.

Explore Quito on a guided tour the following morning. Walk through the attractive, palm-shaded Plaza de la Independencia, visit the gorgeously ornate 16th century church of La Compania de Jesus and visit Monasterio de San Francisco, the oldest church on the American continent. Spend the afternoon on a walking tour of the lovely old quarter of Quito, finishing with dinner at a modern Ecuadorian restaurant.

Next morning visit El Mitad del Mundo - the 'Middle of the World' – and straddle the Equatorial line. Drive up to the rim of the biggest volcanic crater in South America, the extinct Pululahua Volcano, for wonderful views and lunch. Continue to Mindo cloud forest, where you will stay at the Sachatamia Lodge. Take a nature walk and hear a talk on butterflies by tour leader Jan Beccaloni.

The cloud forests are a unique ecosystem fed by the misty clouds sitting on the slopes of the Andes. Rise early the following morning to watch an incredible variety of birdlife, including hundreds of species of jewelled hummingbirds. Visit the Mariposario Mindo Butterfly Farm before taking a cable car high above the cloud forest valley and the Rio Nambillo below. Walk with a naturalist guide along trails through delicate clusters of wild orchids, ferns and waterfalls wreathed in silver mists, amidst swarms of vivid birds and butterflies. Jan Beccaloni is a world leading authority on arachnids and she will give a talk introducing spiders and their relatives before a night walk to see spiders and other nocturnal creatures.

Rise early again to spot the early bird activity in Mindo. After breakfast drive to the high Andes of Ecuador, into the paramo and the montane forest, rich in unusual flora and fauna such as the rare, gnarled *Polylepis* tree. Continue to Papallacta, a thermal area high in the Andes where hot springs bubble up next to the Papallacta River. Check into Termas de Papallactas thermal resort, where the waters reputedly have healing properties.

The following day visit the Antisana Ecological Reserve in the central highlands, located at the feet of the 5705 metre volcano, Mount Antisana. Explore the dramatic altiplano landscapes with spectacular snow capped mountains as backdrop and look out for the various species



Cotopaxi volcano



An imperious marine iguana

of condor that inhabit the area. Return to Papallacta and spend the rest of the day at leisure enjoying the hot springs. In the evening have dinner at the Guyango Lodge before setting out on a nocturnal nature walk.

Next morning visit the local market at Sangolqui, a pretty colonial village in pastel hues, and browse among the stalls with the locals. Return to the resort and spend the afternoon enjoying the natural springs. In the evening hear a talk on Wallace and Darwin and their pioneering theories of evolutionary biology in preparation for your visit to the Galápagos.

Your next stop is Ecuador's ecological wonderland – the Galápagos Islands. Fly to San Cristobel Island and board the yacht for four nights cruising around Santa Cruz, Isabela, Fernandina, Santiago and Rabida Islands.

There is nowhere else in the world like the Galápagos Islands, where each island is distinct with its own landscapes, flora and fauna. During your stay you will encounter a dazzling variety of landscapes and fearless animals and birds. Each day, depart with your naturalist guide and explore on foot and by boat different islands. Visit the nesting sites of prehistoric marine iguanas; walk along black volcanic beaches to watch playful sea lions; snorkel amongst dolphins, tropical fish and turtles; see giant tortoises in the wild; and come face to face with a huge variety of strange and wonderful birds. Details on daily visits can be found on the itinerary overleaf.

At the end of your Galápagos experience fly back to Quito where you will spend a final night at the Hilton Colon Hotel and enjoy a farewell dinner with the group. Next day is at leisure before departing for the airport, or you may join the extension to the Amazon.

A pelican with Kicker Rock in the background



Facts on the Galápagos Islands

- The first recorded visitors to the Islands were the Spanish. Bishop Tomás de Berlanga arrived in 1535 and nicknamed the giant tortoises he saw 'Galápagos', after a popular type of saddle.
- The Spanish also called them 'the Enchanted Isles' as treacherous currents and swirling mists caused sailors to frequently lose sight of islands right in front of them.
- The Galápagos Islands were home to the only surviving giant Pinta tortoise, 'Lonesome George', who sadly died in June 2012.
- The convergence of three major oceanic currents brings an incredible mix of marine life to Galápagos.
- The endemic Galápagos marine iguana is the only lizard to swim in the ocean.
- Darwin's research in Galápagos led to his theory of The Origin of Species.
- In 1978 UNESCO designated Galápagos as the first World Heritage site.
- Due to the early presence of both Spanish and English inhabitants in Galápagos, the Islands now have both Spanish and English names.
- The Galápagos penguin is the only to be found in the northern hemisphere and to breed in the tropics.
- A Galápagos tortoise can weigh up to 595lb (270kg) with a carapace length of 4ft (1.2m) and outlive most humans.
- The Galápagos Islands are home to the world's largest cormorant and the only one unable to fly.
- Galápagos has one of the world's rarest ecosystems in which the herbivores at the top of the food chain are reptiles.
- Galápagos swallow-tailed gulls are the only gulls in the world to feed at night.
- The scolopendra centipede is an 11-inch (28-cm) long carnivorous centipede. It's not unusual for it to devour whole lava lizards or baby rats.

Weather in June

The month of June is the start to the garúa season (June to November), meaning the weather is relatively cool and dry, with sunny or overcast skies, significantly less rain and a refreshing cool humidity brought in by the shifting Humboldt Ocean Current. The cool current originates in the nutrient rich waters of Antarctica and brings plankton and other sources of food for the Galapagos ocean species. Though any month is excellent for visiting Galapagos, many consider the month of June to offer the best weather because of its balance between cooler temperatures and relatively clear sunny skies

June is a busy month for migrant species both in the sea and the sky. Groups of humpback whales arrive from the south, following the Humboldt current past the shores of Peru and mainland Ecuador to the Galapagos. Many migratory birds

begin their journey north during June as well. Red-footed boobies, masked boobies, flightless cormorants, penguins and greater flamingos are breeding and nesting and the Galapagos tortoise starts its nesting season.



Blue footed boobies

Itinerary 27 May – 8 June 2019

2 nights Quito – 2 nights Mindo Cloud Forest – 3 nights Papallacta
– 4 nights Galápagos Islands – 1 night Quito



27 May (Mon) Quito

D

Pm Arrive Quito and transfer to the Hilton Colon Hotel
Eve Welcome dinner

28 May (Tues) Quito

B D

Am Tour of colonial Quito. Visit Independence Plaza, flanked by the Cathedral and Archbishop's Palace, La Compania Church and San Francisco Monastery
Pm Walking tour of the old quarter of Quito
Eve Dinner at Urku – a modern Ecuadorian restaurant

29 May (Wed) Quito / Mindo

B D

Am Drive to the "Centre of World." Continue to the rim of the enormous extinct Pululahua Volcano
Pm Lunch by the crater with spectacular views. Continue onto Mindo and Sachatamia Lodge. Take a nature walk in Mindo
Eve Talk: *"The beautiful world of butterflies"*

30 May (Thur) Mindo

B L D

Am Early morning birdwatching including the hummingbird feeders. Visit the Mariposario Mindo Butterfly Farm
Pm Travel by cable car across the Rio Nambillo with the cloud forest valley below. Take a nature walk to Mindo waterfalls. Talk: *"An introduction to spiders and their relatives"*
Eve Night walk to see spiders and other nocturnal creatures

31 May (Fri) Mindo / Papallacta

B D

Am Early morning birdwatching including the hummingbird feeders. Drive to the high Andes into the paramo to see the Polylepis trees, some of the oddest and rarest trees on the planet
Pm Continue to Papallacta and check into the Termas de Papallacta thermal resort

1 Jun (Sat) Papallacta

B D

Am Visit the Antisana Ecological Reserve to see condors and spectacular views of the surrounding snow-capped volcanoes. Walk in the park
Pm At leisure in Papallacta to enjoy the hot springs
Eve Visit the Guyango Lodge for dinner followed by a nocturnal nature walk

2 Jun (Sun) Papallacta

B D

Am Visit the weekly traditional Sangolqui market. Return to the resort and enjoy the thermal springs
Eve Talk: *"Darwin and Wallace - the pioneers of evolutionary biology"*

3 Jun (Mon) Papallacta / San Cristobal Island, Galápagos

B L D

Am Transfer to airport to fly to San Cristobal Island in the Galápagos and board the Tip Top II private yacht. Visit the highlands which may include nesting waved albatross
Pm Cruise to Kicker Rock, a nesting site for many sea birds. Optional snorkelling. Cruise onto Cero Brujo to walk on a white sand beach, and observe sea lions, brown pelicans, marine iguanas and blue footed boobies. Options for swimming, snorkelling or kayaking
Eve Talk: *"Evolution in practice"*

4 Jun (Tues) Floreana Island

B L D

Am Visit the historic site of Post Office Bay and the ruins of the house of Baroness Eloisa von Wagner
Pm Visit the Devil's Crown, a submerged volcano and the best site for snorkelling in the Galápagos. Continue to Point Cormorant and see the Flamingo Lagoon. Onto La Picona beach to see marine turtles. Options for swimming and snorkelling

5 Jun (Wed) Espanola Island

B L D

Am Land at Punta Suarez and see marine birds, including the nesting waved albatross



Pm Wet landing at Gardener Bay and walk along the beach to see sea lions. Take a panga ride around Osborn Inlet and the islets of Gardner to see sea lions, corals and colourful fish including parrotfish

6 Jun (Thur) Santa Cruz Island **B L D**

Am Drive into the highlands of Santa Cruz Island to visit the forests to see giant tortoises in the wild

Pm Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station

7 Jun (Fri) Galapagos / Quito **B D**

Am Visit Black Turtle Cove to observe white tipped sharks, marine turtles, spotted eagle rays and yellow cow-nosed rays. Disembark the yacht and transfer to the airport. Fly to Quito

Pm Transfer to the Hilton Colon Hotel
Eve Farewell dinner

8 Jun (Sat) Quito **B**

Am At leisure before transferring to the airport, or take extension

Extension into the Amazon

8 Jun (Sat) Quito / Sacha Lodge **B L D**

Am Transfer to the airport for flight to Coca
Pm Transfer by river to Sacha Lodge
Eve Nocturnal guided tour

9 Jun (Sun) Sacha Lodge, Amazon **B L D**

Am Take dugout canoes along creeks and lakes, past orchids, bromeliads and palm trees, looking for wildlife such as the tiny pygmy marmoset, ocelot or puma
Pm Trekking through pristine Terra Firme forest, where 150-foot kapok trees tower above. Look out for the crest owl and howler monkeys
Eve Optional night walk

10 Jun (Mon) Sacha Lodge, Amazon **B L D**

Am Board the motorized canoe along the Napo River to visit the Providencia Community of Yasuni. Learn of their way of life and experience their cooking techniques. See the 'parrot disco' on the clay lick along the way back
Pm Walk along the treetop Canopy Walk to spot dozens of animals and birds
Eve Optional night canoe trip

11 Jun (Tues) Sacha Lodge / Quito **B**

Am Transfer back to Coca
Pm Fly to Quito and transfer to the Hilton

12 Jun (Wed) Quito **B**

Am Transfer to the airport

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.



Sacha Lodge - extension



Sachatamia Lodge (top); Termas de Papallacta (above)

Hotels

Hilton Colon Hotel (Quito)

A modern 5-star hotel, this is a typical Hilton venue – comfortable, efficient and centrally located with good, friendly customer service. It also offers some wonderful views.

Sachatamia Lodge (Mindo)

This is a charming lodge with cabins, as well as rooms in the main building, making good use of beautiful local woods and crafts. Located in a private ecological reserve consisting of more than 750 acres, it incorporates five pristine rivers within the cloud forest and has a pool.

Termas de Papallacta (Papallacta)

Termas de Papallacta is perched in a high Andean valley, surrounded by green mountains. The spa resort offers relaxing natural thermal baths, spa treatments, an excellent restaurant and attractive rooms.

Sacha Lodge (Amazon extension)

Each cabin, built of traditional materials with a high thatched roof and private shaded terrace with hammock, nestles subtly into the lush surroundings. The cabins provide a spacious private bathroom with flushing toilet and hot shower, some with floor-to-ceiling windows for an immersive jungle shower experience. All cabins are screened against insects and contain ceiling fans above two comfortable double beds. There is the lovely 'Balsa', a covered al fresco lakeside lounge, as well as a bar, restaurant and shop.



Tip Top II and Kicker Rock

Tip Top II - Galápagos Private Yacht

This first class, stylish yacht is on private charter for this tour. It accommodates just 16 passengers in 10 cabins with private facilities. Redesigned in 2015- 2016, this superbly comfortable yacht is both stable and stylish, with facilities including a lovely open deck area with lounge chairs and a bar, an indoor dining room and comfortable lounge area. There are eight experienced crew members, a chef who combines Ecuadorian and international cuisine to create delicious dishes, and a bilingual naturalist guide.



Sunbathe on the top deck



Relax on deck (top); A standard cabin;
The view off the yacht (above)



The mighty Amazon

Amazon extension at Sacha Lodge

The Sacha Lodge team will meet you in Coca and guide you to the Lodge, which blends seamlessly into its forest surroundings. You could see giant otters duck, dive and call to each other as you eat breakfast; caimans glide under the walkway as you head back to your room; hear monkeys chattering outside your balcony; or see giant sloths hanging out on trees by the cabins.

A typical day at Sacha begins at sunrise or earlier, taking advantage of the cool morning hours when the rainforest's animals are most active. Each day you will return to the Lodge after the morning activity for lunch. Relax until the afternoon excursion between 3pm and 4:30pm, which often continues into the evening when the nocturnal insect and frog chorus begins. Days at Sacha Lodge do not end with the fading of the light, or even with dinner. Night walks and canoe trips, with the aid of flashlights, often reveal creatures seldom seen during daylight.

Between excursions you are at leisure to enjoy the Lodge, lounging on sun chairs on the Balsa with a book or cooling off in the Lake Pool.

***Please note: activities are subject to weather, though Forest Walks, the Kapok Tower, and Canopy Walk are the keystones of the Sacha Lodge experience.**



Inside a room at Sacha Lodge (top); A toucan in the Amazon; Thatched bungalows (above)



A treefrog (top); A basking marine iguana (above)

Tour Leader

Jan Beccaloni is a museum curator specialising in spiders and their relatives as well as a natural historian, Secretary of the Wallace Memorial Fund, the Meetings Secretary of the British Arachnological Society and the author of the acclaimed book "Arachnids". Jan is an experienced and popular tour leader who enjoys travelling and has conducted scientific fieldwork in the UK, Brunei, Madagascar and Costa Rica.

"(Tour leader) Jan was a delight and her knowledge, combined with a relaxed and warm manner, made the trip."

Maggie Silver, In the Footsteps of Wallace in the Malay Archipelago, September 2014

The cost of the tour is US \$7,243 per person sharing (excluding international flights & transfers)

The cost includes:

- Comprehensive pre-departure information
- The services of experienced tour leader and speaker, Jan Beccaloni

In Ecuador the cost includes:

- Eight nights' accommodation in twin bedded rooms with private facilities in a 5-star hotel, a cloud forest lodge and an Andean resort

Hotel only single supplement: US \$551

- Breakfasts and dinners daily and one lunch
- Drinks with meals (soft drinks, water, tea and coffee) and water throughout
- A full programme of sightseeing, walks and talks as per the itinerary, admission fees and tips
- Services of experienced English speaking guide
- All transport, including internal flights

In the Galápagos the cost includes:

- Four nights' accommodation with private facilities on the Tip Top II in twin or double bedded cabins*
- Full board including soft drinks with meals
- Visits with an English-speaking naturalist guide
- Galápagos National Park tax, dock fee and tips

The cost excludes:

- International flights
- All personal extras such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls etc.
- All optional excursions, tours and visits.
- Travel insurance

The Sacha Lodge extension costs US \$1,728 per person sharing and includes:

- Three nights' accommodation in twin bedded rooms with private facilities in a 5-star jungle lodge and one night in a 5-star hotel

Single supplement: US \$754

- All meals at Sacha Lodge, breakfast in Quito
- Drinks with meals (soft drinks, water, tea, coffee) and water throughout
- A full programme of activities as per the itinerary and tips
- Services of experienced English speaking guides
- All transport, including internal flights

* Yacht single supplement on request only – please contact us.

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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See condors in the Andes (top); The Andean highlands in Ecuador;
A Galápagos giant tortoise; Basking sea lions (above)



Jon Baines
tours

