



Magnificent frigate bird bird attracting mate by showing off his red throat pouch, Genovesa Island, Galápagos

Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands

21 April – 3 May 2020

Cloud Forest • Andes • Galápagos Islands

With Amazon extension

21 April – 7 May 2020



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



Rooftops of Quito



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

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 morning bird activity in Mindo. After breakfast drive to the high Andes, 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 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



Mount Antisana



South Plaza Island, Galápagos (top);
Turtle in the Galápagos (above)

have dinner at 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 Cristobal 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.



Great heron 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 'las islas encantadas' (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 and wild life activity in April and May

April and May are warm and sunny although there may be rain in the afternoon. The temperatures range from a low of 24°C to a high of 31°C and there is an average of seven and half hours of clear sunny skies. The sea is warm enough for swimming and is calm – snorkelling is highly recommended during these months.

During April and May there are large number of species around the islands such as marine iguanas, sea turtles, land iguanas, flamingos, white-cheeked pintails, masked boobies, marine iguanas, albatross and blue-footed boobies. Mating activity includes the mating dance of blue-footed boobies on North Seymour. It is also mating season for magnificent frigatebirds on Genovesa and San Cristobal, when the males

attract a mate by showing off their red throat pouches. Waved albatross are laying eggs on Espanola Island.



Blue footed boobies mating dance

Itinerary 21 April – 3 May 2020

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



21 Apr (Tues) Quito D

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

22 Apr (Wed) Quito 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

23 Apr (Thur) Quito / Mindo B D

Am Drive to the "Centre of World." Continue to the rim of extinct Pululahua Volcano
Pm Lunch by the crater with spectacular views. Continue to Mindo for a nature walk
Eve Talk: "*The Beautiful World of Butterflies*" - JB

24 Apr (Fri) Mindo B L D

Am Early morning birdwatching including the humming bird 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 the Mindo waterfalls. Talk: "*An introduction to spiders and their relatives*" - JB
Eve Nocturnal walk to see spiders and other nocturnal creatures

25 Apr (Sat) Mindo / Papallacta B D

Am Early morning birdwatching including the humming bird feeders. Drive to High Andean paramo and forest to see the polylepis tree – one of the oddest and rarest trees on the planet
Pm Continue to Papallacta and check into the Termas de Papallacta thermal resort

26 Apr (Sun) Papallacta B D

Am Visit the Antisana National Park in the Andes to see condors and spectacular views of the surrounding snow-capped volcanoes. Walk in the park
Pm Enjoy the hot springs in Papallacta
Eve Visit the Guyango Lodge for dinner followed by a nocturnal nature walk

27 Apr (Mon) Papallacta B D

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

28 Apr (Tues) Papallacta / San Cristobal Island, Galápagos B L D

Am Transfer to airport to fly to San Cristobal Island, the Galápagos and board the Eco Galaxy II private yacht
Pm Cruise to Kicker Rock, a nesting site for many sea birds. Optional snorkelling. Cruise to Lobos Island, the habitat of seals, frigates, finches, marine iguanas, lava lizards, and the small endemic Galápagos snake. Options for swimming and snorkelling
Eve Talk: "*Evolution in practice*" - JB

29 Apr (Wed) Santa Fe and South Plaza Islands B L D

Am Cruise into a beautiful bay with turquoise water protected by a natural barrier of rocks and see colonies of seals, land iguanas and hawks. It is also the habitat of crabs, nocturnal herons, marine iguanas, cucuves and land doves. The bay is excellent place to swim and snorkel with marine tortoises, rays, sea lions and tropical fish
Pm Cruise to the small South Plazas (two islets). Take part in a walk, viewing land iguanas, sea birds and sea lions

30 Apr (Thur) North Seymour / Mosquera Islet B L D

Am Explore North Seymour and see magnificent frigatebirds and blue



Pm	footed boobies (perhaps performing the mating dance) as well as land iguanas At Mosquera Islet see the largest sea lion colony and several species of birds
1 May (Fri)	Genovesa Island: Darwin Bay and Barranco (Prince Philip Steps) B L D
Am	Land on a coral beach and take short walks; options for swimming and snorkeling. Visit a small mangrove forest and see a colony of frigate birds as well as marine iguanas, red-foot boobies and masked boobies, the great terrestrial finch, seagull, herons and cactus finch
Pm	Land at Barranco and hike to view tropical birds, petrels, common frigate, red-foot boobies, masked boobies, doves and finches
2 May (Sat)	Galápagos / Quito B D
Am	Cruise to Punta Carrión in north east Santa Cruz and see various sea birds nesting on the rock cliffs. Drive into the highlands to look for giant tortoises. Transfer to airport for flight back
Pm Eve	Transfer to the Hilton Colon Hotel Farewell dinner
3 May (Sun)	Quito B
Am Pm	At leisure or take extension Transfer to the airport

Extension into the Amazon

3 May (Sun)	Quito / Sacha Lodge, Amazon B L D
Am Pm Eve	Transfer to the airport for flight to Cocoa Transfer by river to Sacha Lodge Nocturnal guided tour
4 May (Mon)	Sacha Lodge, Amazon B L D
Am	Take dugout canoes past bromeliads and palm trees, looking for wildlife such as the pygmy marmoset, the ocelot and puma
Pm	Trek through pristine forest, with 150-foot kapok trees and roots forming huge buttresses. Look out for the crest owl and howler monkeys
Eve	Optional night walk
5 May (Tues)	Sacha Lodge, Amazon B L D
Am	Motorised canoe along Napo River to visit the traditional Yasuní community. See the parrot disco on the clay lick
Pm Eve	Take the treetop canopy walk Optional night canoe trip to see caiman
6 May (Wed)	Sacha Lodge / Quito B
Am	Transfer to Quito and Hotel Hilton Colon
7 May (Thur)	Quito B
Pm	Transfer to the airport



Termas de Papallacta Resort

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 (Mindó)

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, blends 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 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.



Hilton Colon Hotel (top); Room at Sachatamia Lodge, Mindó;
A cabin at Termas de Papallacta Resort (above)



EcoGalaxy

EcoGalaxy (Galápagos Private Yacht)

This EcoGalaxy Galápagos Catamaran has 8 cabins and will take a maximum of 16 passengers (15 participants plus tour leader). The large catamaran has spacious cabins with large windows and well equipped bathrooms. The catamaran includes a lovely sundeck with day beds, a terrace for sundowners, a large dining room and lounge with bar. There is a dedicated area where guides provide background on the daily island tours, wildlife and suggestions on additional walks, sightseeing, birdwatching, snorkelling etc. There are eight crew including a chef and bilingual naturalist guide.



EcoGalaxy in the Galápagos



EcoGalaxy cabin (top); EcoGalaxy Lounge;
EcoGalaxy Sundeck (above)



Sacha Lodge

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;
The mighty Amazon (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 (excluding international flights and 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

The single supplement for the eight nights in Ecuador is 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 in twin bedded rooms with private facilities aboard the EcoGalaxy 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 extension to Sacha Lodge 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
- Soft drinks with meals
- A full programme of activities as per the itinerary
- Services of experienced English speaking guides
- All transportation services including internal flights
- Tips

The cost excludes:

- International flights
- Personal extras such as laundry etc.
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance

* 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.



The courtyard of San Francisco Monastery, Quito (top); See condors in the Andes; A Galápagos giant tortoise; Basking sea lions (above)

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