



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

## Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands

26 April – 8 May 2021

Quito • Cloud Forest • Andes • Galápagos Islands

With Amazon extension

26 April – 12 May 2021



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. 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 expert tour leader, 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 an exclusive 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, natural historian tour leader. This tour is strictly limited to fifteen people.

## 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.



*"Jan is very personable and knowledgeable. Impressed by her quick and thoughtful reactions to situations that arose. Very good company and fun to be with."*

Pat and Ian Barden, Ecuador and Galápagos, May 2019

Rooftops of Quito



# Itinerary 26 April – 8 May 2021

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



## Day 1: Quito (Mon, 26 April) D

**Am:** 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.

**Eve:** Enjoy a welcome dinner with the rest of the group.

## Day 2: Quito (Tues, 27 April) D

**Am:** Explore Quito on a guided tour. 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.

**Pm:** Take a walking tour of the lovely old quarter of Quito.

**Eve:** Dinner at Urku – a modern Ecuadorian restaurant.

## Day 3: Quito / Mindo (Wed 28, April) B D

**Am:** Drive to El Mitad del Mundo - 'The Middle of the World' – where you can straddle the equatorial line, with each foot in different hemispheres. Drive up to the rim of the biggest volcanic crater in South America, the extinct Pululahua Volcano, for wonderful views and lunch.

**Pm:** Continue to Mindo cloud forest and check

into the Sachatamia Lodge. Take a nature walk through the cloud forest, which is a unique ecosystem fed by the misty clouds sitting on the slopes of the Andes.

**Eve:** Hear tour leader Jan Beccaloni give a talk: *"The Beautiful World of Butterflies"*.

## Day 4: Mindo (Thurs, 29 April) B L D

**Am:** 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.

**Pm:** Take 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.

**Eve:** Night walk to see spiders and other nocturnal creatures.

## Day 5: Mindo / Papallacta (Fri, 30 April) B D

**Am:** Rise early again to watch 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.

**Pm:** 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.

## Day 6: Papallacta (Sat, 1 May) B D

**Am:** Visit the Antisana Ecological Reserve in the central highlands, located at the foot 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.

**Pm:** Return to Papallacta and spend the rest of the day at leisure enjoying the hot springs.

**Eve:** Visit the Guyango Lodge for dinner followed by a nocturnal nature walk.

**Pm:** Visit the Fausto Llerena Tortoise Breeding centre, located in the same premises as the Charles Darwin Research Station. This is the only place where it is possible to see many different species of giant tortoises at the same time.

**Eve:** Talk: *“Evolution in practice”* - JB.

**Day 7: Papallacta (Sun, 2 May)** **B D**

**Am:** 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.

**Pm:** Spend the afternoon enjoying the natural springs.

**Eve:** Hear Jan Beccaloni speak on Wallace and Darwin and their pioneering theories of evolutionary biology in preparation for your visit to the Galápagos.

**Day 9: Floreana Island / Post Office Bay / Cormorant Point (Tue, 4 May)** **B L D**

**Am:** Floreana has an unusual human history and was home to the very first person to live full time in the Galápagos, a fearless Irishman called Patrick Williams who was marooned and lasted 2 years, from 1807. This morning make a wet landing at Post Office Bay where one can still send a postcard in the lava tube of a post barrel.

**Pm:** Continue to cruise round Baroness viewpoint. Return to the yacht for lunch and then make a wet landing at Cormorant Point on the northern point of Floreana, before a final stop at Champion’s Islet, one of the best snorkeling spots in the whole archipelago.

**Day 8: Papallacta / Baltra, Galápagos (Mon, 3 May)** **B L D**

**Am:** Your next stop is Ecuador’s ecological wonderland – the Galápagos Islands. Fly to Baltra Island and board the Tip Top II private yacht to commence four nights cruising around the Galápagos Islands.

**Day 10: Espanola / Punta Suarez / Gardner Bay (Wed, 5 May)**

**B I D**

- Am:** Land at Punta Suarez to spot sea lions, red and green marine iguanas, Espanola lava lizards and diverse seabirds including Galápagos hawks, mockingbird, finches and many more. Take a walk along the beach and observe a colony of sea lions.
- Pm:** Explore Gardner Bay with an opportunity to snorkel and discover the extreme biodiversity beneath the waves.

**Day 11: San Cristobal / Cerro Brujo and Kicker Rock (Thur, 6 May)**

**B I D**

- Am:** After breakfast make a wet landing on Cerro Brujo and walk on the white sand beach whilst observing brown pelicans, marine iguanas and blue-footed boobies.
- Pm:** Cruise to Kicker Rock, a nesting site for many sea birds. Optional snorkelling. Visit the interpretation centre Jacinto Gordillo and embark on a highland tour to explore the interior, home to nesting waved albatross and mating frigate birds.

**Day 12: Black Turtle Cove / Quito (Fri, 7 May)**

**B D**

- Am:** Visit Black Turtle Cove, a mangrove estuary that is home to sea turtles, black and white-tipped reef sharks, spotted rays, a variety of seabirds and various endemic plants. Transfer to airport for flight back to the mainland.
- Pm:** Transfer to the Hilton Colon Hotel.
- Eve:** Farewell dinner.

**Day 13: Quito (Sat, 8 May)**

**B**

- Am:** At leisure or take extension.
- Pm:** Transfer to the airport.

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## Extension into the Amazon

**Day 14: Quito / Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Sat, 8 May)**

**B I D**

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

**Day 15: Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Sun, 9 May)**

**B I 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.

**Day 16: Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Mon, 10 May)**

**B I D**

- Am:** Motorised canoe along Napo River to visit the traditional Yasuní community. See the parrot disco on the clay lick.
- Pm:** Take the treetop canopy walk.
- Eve:** Optional night canoe trip to see caiman.

**Day 17: Sacha Lodge / Quito (Tue, 11 May)**

**B**

- Am:** Transfer to Quito and Hotel Hilton Colon.

**Day 18: Quito (Wed, 12 May)**

**B**

- Am:** Transfer to the airport

A red marine iguana, Galápagos





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. The spacious cabins are built of traditional materials with a high thatched roof and private shaded terrace. They each have a hammock, private bathroom, flushing toilet and hot shower, large windows for an immersive jungle experience and ceiling fans. 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, in the cool morning hours when the rainforest animals are most active. Each day you will return to the Lodge for lunch after the morning activities. Relax until the afternoon excursion, 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. 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 al fresco lakeside lounge, in the Lake Pool, or at the bar, restaurant or shop.

\* Please note: activities are subject to weather.

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



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)

## 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 wildlife 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.

There is nowhere else in the world like the Galápagos Islands, where each island is distinct with its own landscapes, flora and fauna. 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 and the displaying of the male

magnificent frigatebirds on Genovesa and San Cristobal, who attract a mate by showing off their vivid red throat pouches. Waved albatross are laying eggs on Espanola Island.



Blue footed boobies mating dance



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 (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.



Sachatamia Lodge, Mindo (top);  
A cabin at Termas de Papallacta Resort (above)



See the jewelled hummingbirds of Mindo (top); A waterfall in Mindo; Mount Antisana; A sea turtle in the Galápagos (above)

**The cost of the tour is US \$7,532 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 \$616**

- 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 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 extension to Sacha Lodge costs US \$1,807 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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