



An imperious marine iguana, Galápagos

Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands

29 April – 11 May 2022

With Amazon Extension

29 April – 15 May 2022

Quito – Cloud Forest – Andes – Galápagos Islands



Jon Baines
tours



Cotopaxi Volcano

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 we have carefully designed this tour to visit at an ideal 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

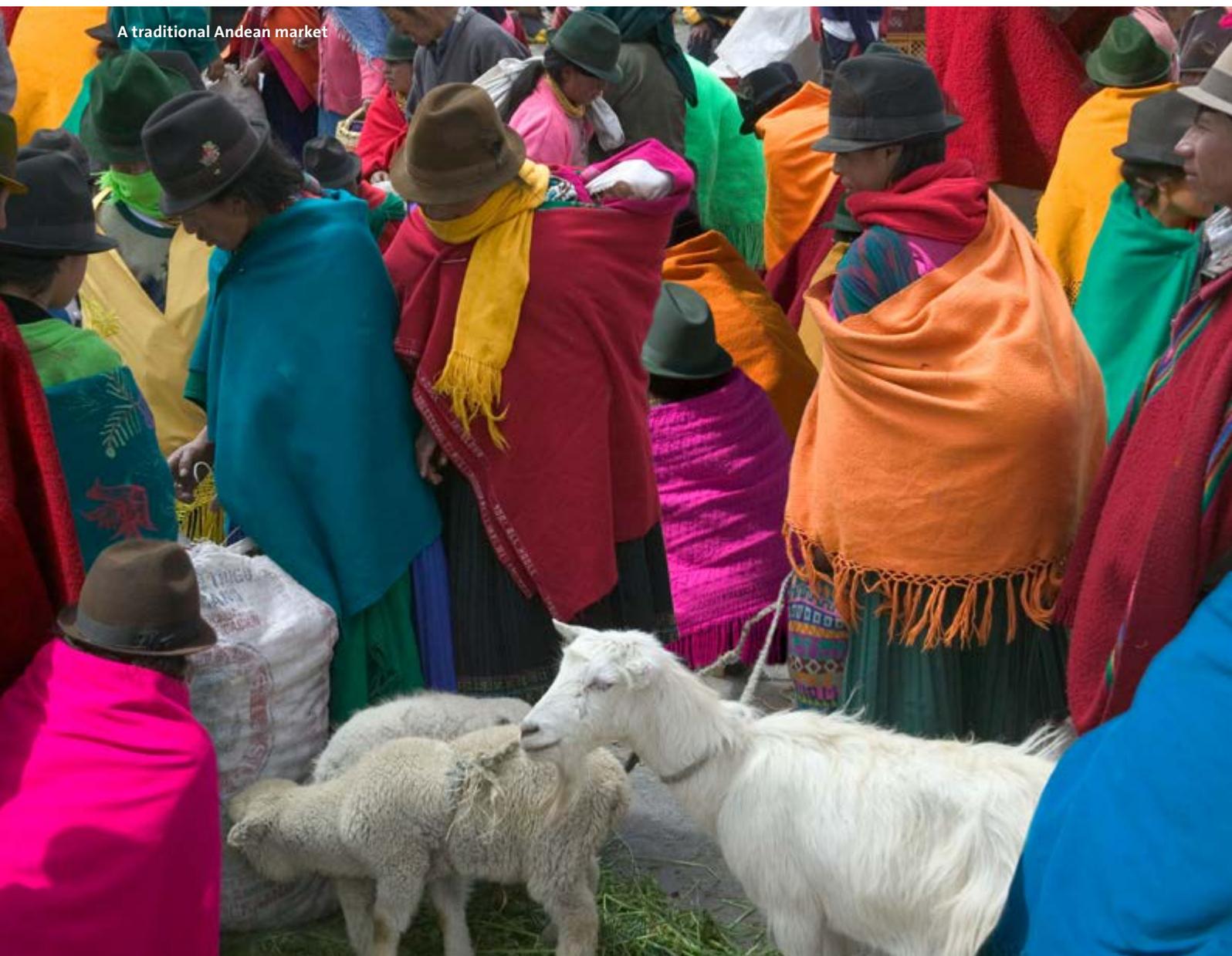
Jan Beccaloni is a museum curator specialising in spiders and their relatives as well as a natural historian, Secretary of the Wallace Memorial Fund, the Meetings Secretary of the British Arachnological Society and the author of the acclaimed book "Arachnids". Jan is an experienced and popular tour leader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



"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

A traditional Andean market



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



Day 1: Quito (Fri, 29 Apr) **D**

Pm: Arrive Quito and transfer to the Hilton Colon Hotel.

Eve: Welcome dinner.

Day 2: Quito (Sat, 30 Apr) **B 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, one of the oldest churches on the American continent.

Eve: Dinner at Urku – a modern Ecuadorian restaurant.

Day 3: Quito / Mindo (Sun, 1 May) **B D**

Am: Drive to 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.

Pm: Lunch by the crater with spectacular views. Continue to Mindo cloud forest, where you will stay at the Sachatamia Lodge, and take a nature walk.

Eve: Talk: *"The Beautiful World of Butterflies"* - JB

Day 4: Mindo (Mon, 2 May) **B L D**

Am: 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.

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.

Eve: Take a night walk to see spiders and other nocturnal creatures. Talk: *"An introduction to spiders and their relatives"* - JB

Day 5: Mindo / Papallacta (Tues, 3 May) **B D**

Am: 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 Polylepsis tree - one of the oddest and rarest trees on the planet.

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 (Wed, 4 May) **B D**

Am: 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 birds, and the Andean condor, that inhabit the area.

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

Eve: Have dinner at Guango Lodge before setting out on a nocturnal nature walk.

Day 7: Papallacta (Thurs, 5 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.

Pm: Talk: *“Darwin and Wallace - the pioneers of evolutionary biology”* - JB

Day 8: Papallacta / San Cristobal Island, Galápagos (Fri, 6 May) B D

Am: Your next stop is Ecuador’s ecological wonderland – the Galápagos Islands. Fly to San Cristobal Island and board the Solaris private yacht for four nights cruising around Española, Floreana, Santiago, Bartolomé and Santa Cruz Islands.

Pm: Tour the Interpretation Centre and see giant tortoises. This evening’s talk is: *“Evolution in Practice”*.

Day 9: Española Island (Sat, 7 May) B L D

Am: Wet landing at white-sand Gardener Bay, home to sea lions, three species of Darwin’s finches, Española mockingbirds, green sea turtles, colorful tropical fish, including yellow-tailed surgeon fish, angelfish, parrotfish, manta ray, white-tipped reef sharks and playful sea lions. Opportunity to snorkel.

Pm: Land at Punta Suarez to spot sea lions, red and green marine iguanas, Española lava lizards and diverse seabirds including Galápagos hawks, mockingbird, finches, Galápagos doves, blue-footed and Nazca boobies, swallow-tailed gulls, red-billed tropicbirds and waved albatross.

Day 10: Floreana Island (Sun, 8 May) B L D

Am: Visit Cormorant Point to see Galápagos flamingos and many other birds. Continue to Champion islet to see marine turtles, sea lions and many fish. Options for swimming and snorkelling.

Pm: Visit Post Office Bay, where you can still post a postcard in the historic post barrel, and a lava tube.

Day 11: Santiago Island / Sullivan Bay / Bartolome (Mon, 9 May) B L D

Am: Visit Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island, with its dramatic lava field. Option to snorkel.

Pm: Continue to Bartolome Island for wonderful views and lava cones. See lava lizards, sea lions, Galápagos penguins, herons, finches.

Day 12: Santa Cruz / Quito (Tues, 10 May) B D

Am: Visit Black Turtle Cove, a mangrove estuary, home to sea turtles, black-finned reef shark, white-tipped reef shark, Galápagos shark, spotted rays, egrets, pelicans, herons and various plants. Transfer to airport for flight back.

Pm: Transfer to the Hilton Colon Hotel.

Eve: Farewell dinner.

Day 13: Quito (Wed, 11 May) B

Am: This morning is at leisure before transferring back to the airport for your flight home or take the Amazon Extension.

**Extension into the Amazon:
11 – 15 May 2022**

Day 13: Quito (Wed, 11 May) B L D

Am: Transfer to the airport for flight to Coca.

Pm: Transfer by river to Sacha Lodge.

Eve: Nocturnal guided tour.

Day 14: Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Thur, 12 May) 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.

Day 15: Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Fri, 13 May) B L D

Am: Travel by 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 16: Quito (Sat, 14 May) B

Am: Transfer to Quito and Hotel Hilton Colon.

Day 17: Quito (Sun, 15 May) B

Am: Depart Quito after breakfast.

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

Basking sea lions





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, relaxing 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 (above)



Solaris at sea

Galápagos Yacht - Solaris

This first class motor yacht is on private charter for this tour. Built in 2019, Solaris accommodates just 16 passengers in 11 cabins with private facilities. This spacious and comfortable yacht has large and bright cabins on the main and upper deck with panoramic sea view windows and is both stable and stylish. Facilities include lovely open deck areas with lounge chairs and shade, an indoor dining room and bar and comfortable lounge area. There are eight experienced crew members and a bilingual naturalist guide.



Sun deck



Sun deck dining area (top); Shaded seating area; Cabin (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 '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 type 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 a 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 numbers 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.



An imperious marine iguana



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.

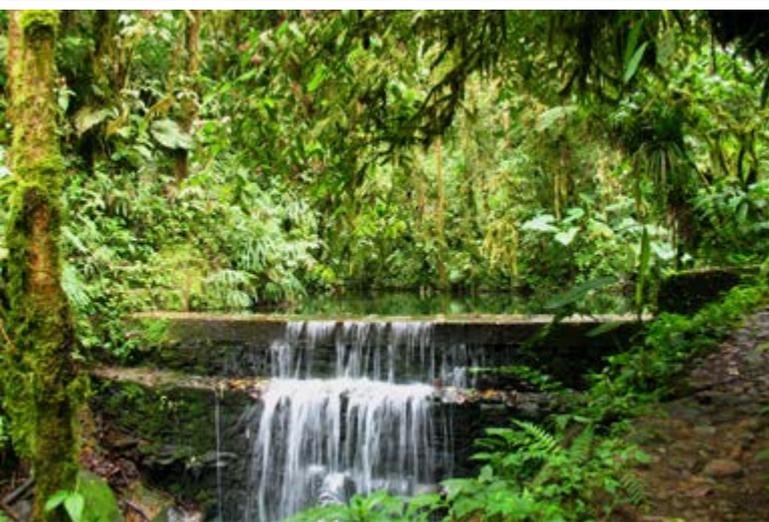
Sacha Lodge (Amazon extension)

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.



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)

Tour cost is US \$7,812 per person sharing (excluding international flights and transfers)

The cost includes:

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

In Ecuador the cost includes:

- Eight nights' accommodation in twin bedded rooms with private facilities in a 4-star hotel, a cloud forest lodge and an Andean resort

The single supplement for the eight nights in Ecuador is USD \$546

- 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 Solaris in twin or double bedded cabins

There is no single supplement for The Solaris yacht. However, there are a limited number of single cabins so please book early if you require one.

- Full board including soft drinks with meals
- Visits to Islands with English speaking naturalist guides
- Galápagos National Park tax, dock fee and tips

The extension to Sacha Lodge costs USD \$2,062 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 \$403

- 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

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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Jon Baines Tours (London)
Hyde Park House, 5 Manfred Road,
London, SW15 2RS
Tel: +44 (0) 207 223 9485 / 5618
Email: info@jonbainestours.co.uk
www.jonbainestours.co.uk

Jon Baines Tours (Melbourne)
PO Box 68, South Brunswick,
Victoria 3055
Tel: +61 (0) 3 9343 6367
Fax: +61 (0) 3 9012 4228
Email: info@jonbainestours.com.au
www.jonbainestours.com

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(Toll Free) 1-8777-398-764



See condors in the Andes (top); The Andean highlands in Ecuador;
A Galápagos giant tortoise; A magnificent frigatebird (above)



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