

## Ecuador & The Galapagos



### TRIP OVERVIEW

Experience the unique wildlife encounters that inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution as you tour spectacular Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. Get unusually close to sunbathing iguanas, playful sea lion pups and male frigate birds as your yacht sails among the isles of this volcanic archipelago. Enjoy the region's natural beauty as you swim with turtles and reef sharks and take in its urban wonders on city tours of Quito and Guayaquil.

### ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important details such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

#### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

#### DAY 1: UK to Quito, Ecuador

Depart London on your scheduled overnight flight to Quito, via Bogotá.

#### DAY 2: Quito

On arrival in Quito, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Take in the breath-taking mountain backdrop of the highest capital city in the world as you enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

#### DAY 3: Quito B/L

Tour Quito's well-preserved old town, experience the colonial charm of the buildings which line Independence Square and wander the churches of La Compañía and San Francisco before taking in the views from Panecillo Hill. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure or take an optional trip to the equator monument.

#### DAY 4: Quito to the Galapagos Islands B/L/D (San Cristobal Island)

Fly to the Galapagos Islands for four nights of cruising around this archipelago, known for its unrivalled number of endemic animal species. An afternoon excursion takes you to the Galapagos Interpretation Centre, where you will learn more about the islands' history. A walk up nearby Tijeretas Hill offers magnificent views. Return to the yacht for the night.

#### DAY 5: The Galapagos Islands B/L/D (Española Island)

Visit the white coral beaches of Española Island and watch the sea lions, marine iguanas and birds on the shore. Swim or snorkel in these warm waters for the chance to spot manta rays, reef sharks and other marine life. In the afternoon, spot endemic wildlife on a hike to Suarez Point and "Soplador", a seaward blowhole. Return to the yacht for the night.

#### DAY 6: The Galapagos Islands B/L/D (Floreana Island)

Visit Floreana Island, where a wooden barrel installed in the 1700s serves as an informal post office. Drop off a postcard in the hopes that some other traveller will deliver it to its destination, then enjoy a morning of swimming and snorkelling on the beach. This afternoon, hike to a flamingo-filled lagoon and a large sea turtle nesting site. Return to the beach for some swimming and snorkelling before boarding the yacht again.

#### DAY 7: The Galapagos Islands B/L/D (Santa Cruz Island)

Arriving at a lava dock, we first encounter marine iguanas camouflaged perfectly against the dark rock. Walking past prickly pear cacti, we reach a long, sickle-shaped beach with Dragon Hill in the distance. A circular walk takes you past a shallow lake where flamingoes feed. Moving inland, reach a dry, forested area where land iguanas nest and burrow. This afternoon, head to Punta Bowditch on Santa Cruz Island for an unparalleled sense of solitude. Relax on a powdery beach, snorkel around turquoise water islets, and hike beside salt pools and dried white corals.

#### DAY 8: The Galapagos Islands to Guayaquil B

This morning, explore the Highlands Tortoise Reserve, where you can spot various bird species including yellow warblers, and cattle egrets (often seen perched on tortoises' shells). Along the way, you'll witness the island's diverse ecosystems as you travel from the coast, through agricultural zones, and into dense, humid forests. Look out for Galapagos giant tortoises wandering through pastures in the paddocks. Later, fly to Guayaquil.

#### DAY 9: Guayaquil B

Tour the picturesque port city of Guayaquil, strolling along the Malecon 2000 boardwalk to the colourful hillside neighbourhood of Las Peñas. Continue on to Parque Bolivar, known locally as Iguana Park for the many iguanas that bask on its lawns. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure or take an optional excursion to Parque Historico, a thematic open-air park.

#### DAY 10/11: Guayaquil to the UK or Extension B

Enjoy a free morning before you are transferred to the airport for your return flight to the UK, via Bogota, or continue on to your chosen extension.



### ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

#### Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to boats. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Ecuador. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

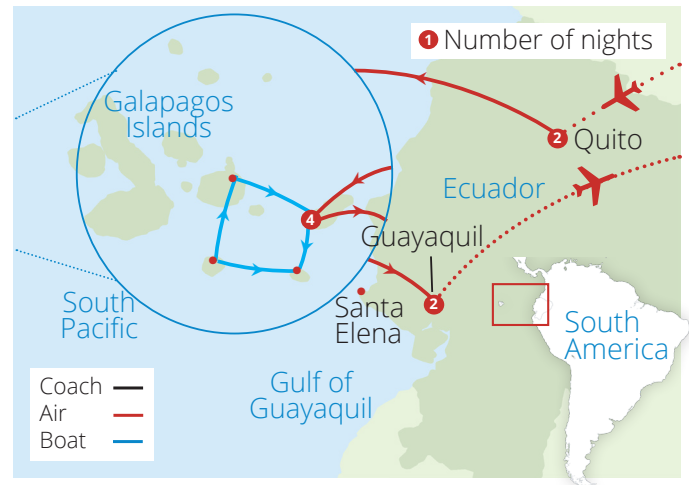
**Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.**

#### Galapagos Cruise Information

**Galapagos Cruise - MV Galapagos Legend (4 nights):** The MV Galapagos Legend is a deluxe expedition ship that can accommodate 100 guests. There are four decks for guests to enjoy: The Sky Deck provides a sundeck, swimming pool, bar, lounge, and barbeque area; The uppermost Moon Deck for stargazing and sunbathing; The Sea Deck with a medical service and restaurant; The Earth Deck which has a spa, jacuzzi, sauna, hammocks and a boutique. Each Standard Plus Cabin has a porthole with an ocean view, television, air-conditioning, hairdryer, safety deposit box and en suite bathroom.

#### Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



### ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Quito you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Pure! Ecuador**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Pure! Ecuador representative will show you to your transfer vehicle.

Your representative available 24 hours a day should you have any queries. If you need to contact Pure! Ecuador during your stay the details are:

#### Pure! Ecuador

Calle Isla Santa Fe N-43-106 entre Thomas de Berlanga y Río Coca.

Quito - Ecuador

Contact number: 00593 2 2441721

E-mail: [info@pure-ecuador.com](mailto:info@pure-ecuador.com)/[marcia@pure-ecuador.com](mailto:marcia@pure-ecuador.com)

#### Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for Pure! Ecuador

24 hour contact number: 00593-9 84484148

24 hour e-mail: [info@pure-ecuador.com](mailto:info@pure-ecuador.com)

### WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

#### Visas

A visa is not required for entry into Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands for UK passport holders. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding required passport validity. Your transit card (worth \$120) is included for entrance into the Galapagos Islands.

#### Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

#### Tour Guides

You will have different guides in Quito, Galapagos and Guayaquil, please note you won't have a Tour Leader who accompanies you throughout the journey.

#### Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

#### Group Size

The maximum number of travellers in your group will be 30.

#### Tipping

Tipping is at your discretion, however we would recommend approximately £2.00 (\$3.00) per person per day for your driver and guide. On board your cruise, we would recommend USD\$15 for the crew and USD\$10 for the guide, per person per day. Tips are accepted in US dollars; however, should you wish to pay these on a credit card you can do so when you pay for personal expenses on board.

#### Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk), [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

#### Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Ecuador & the Galapagos is rated as Advanced. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spend at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

#### Currency Exchange

The currency in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands is the US Dollar. Cash machines are available in Quito and Guayaquil, but there will not be a chance to exchange currency during your cruise. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before



you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £400- £500 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

### Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

## WHAT TO PACK

- Loose fitting t-shirt or tank top and shorts for your island adventures
- 2 pairs of old comfortable walking shoes as these can get damaged by saltwater, volcanic rock and sand
- High factor waterproof sunscreen and lip balm
- 2 swimsuits and a towel
- Wide brim hat
- Snorkelling equipment if you would prefer to use your own

### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

- Camera and spare batteries
- Travel plug adapter - the voltage is 120 volts and is a 2 or 3 flat pin plug
- Binoculars
- Sunglasses
- Waterproof, light poncho or rain jacket
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

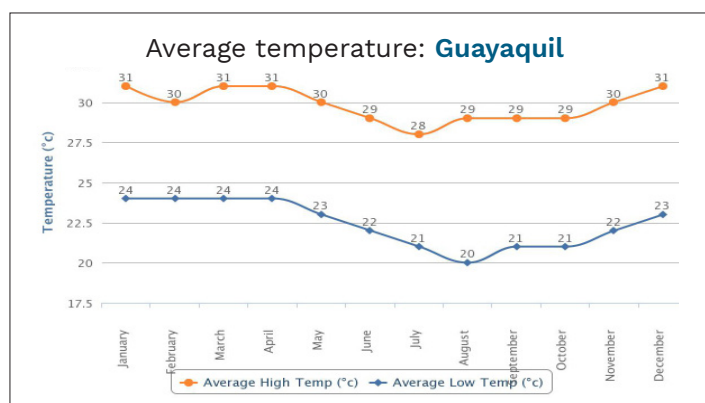
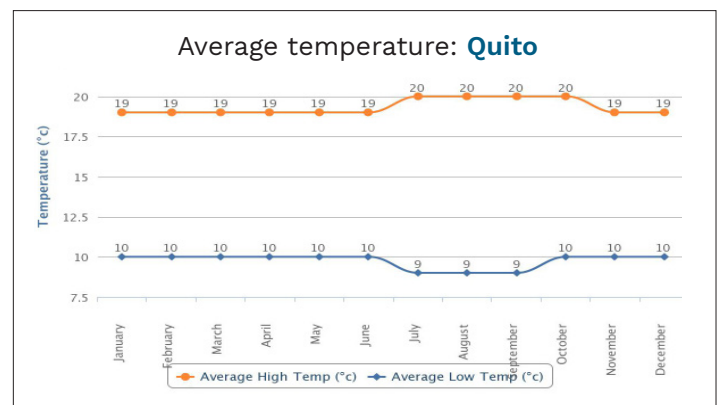
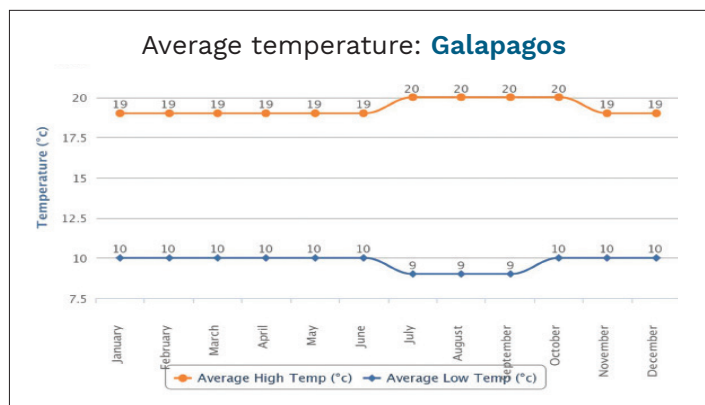
**IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.**

### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



## Santa Elena Beach Stay Extension

*If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522*



### TRIP OVERVIEW

Your add-on to Santa Elena offers a relaxing end to your journey in Ecuador. Unwind on this province's beautiful beaches, enjoy the calm weather of the Pacific Coast and reflect on your wonderful tour memories.

### ITINERARY & DETAILS

*This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your add-on to Santa Elena.*

#### Santa Elena (4 nights)

The beautiful coastal province and town of Santa Elena provides a relaxing setting to complete your tour. Enjoy the wide range of facilities on offer at your resort, unwind on the beach or explore some of the area's sights.

#### Hotel

Your stay will take place at the below resort:

**4★ Royal Decameron Punta Centinela** on All-Inclusive, an excellent resort boasting an oceanfront location.

Located in the Province of Santa Elena, one of the most exclusive areas on the Ecuadorian coast, about 2 hours by road from the Jose Joaquin de Olmedo International Airport in the city of Guayaquil. Punta Centinela is one of Ecuador's most beautiful beaches, an ideal location that offers many recreational options to enjoy the beach, the marine fauna and the exquisite national and international gastronomy.

This amazing natural destination will allow you to enjoy whale watching between the months of June and October. You can also snorkel, scuba dive, fish and sail to explore the wealth of Ecuadorian waters. This resort has 197 comfortable rooms, 3 buffet-style and a la carte restaurants, 4 bars, a discotheque, 2 large pools, sports courts and a convention center with a 400-person capacity, furnished with the best technology for events.

Hotel information: Km. 10.5 vía Santa Elena, Manglaralto, Urbanización Punta Centinela. Contact number: 00593 43716200

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

#### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any snacks, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks (Ecuadorian drinks and snacks are already included, additional charges may apply for specific imported drinks).

#### Tour Guides

Your stay in Santa Elena is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are shared with other Decameron guests.

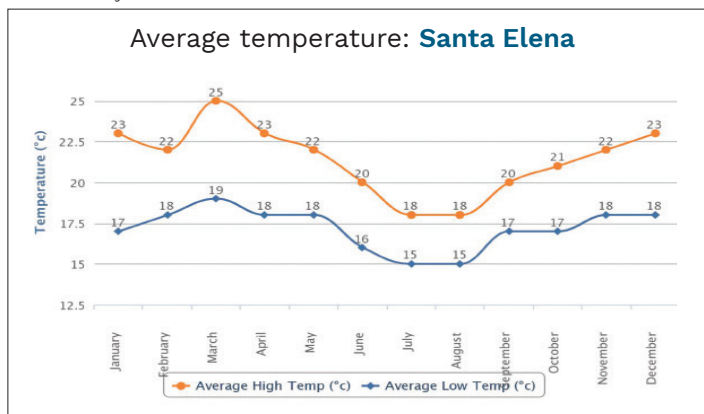
#### Please note

The transfer from Guayaquil to Punta Centinela departs from a certain meeting point in the city, and it is a shared basis service, with Spanish speaking drivers. Full transfer details, including transfer times will be provided to you in resort.

This extension takes place after your main tour. Your flight back to the UK will be via Colombia.

### WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



4★ Royal Decameron Punta Centinela

### FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**



## Highlights of Peru Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



### TRIP OVERVIEW

Your extension to Peru is the perfect way to see a little more of South America. You will visit the traditional town of Cusco, as well as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World - Machu Picchu.

### ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your Highlights of Peru tour.

Your included meal guide: B = Breakfast, L = Lunch

#### DAY 10: Guayaquil to Lima

After a day at leisure in Guayaquil, take an evening flight to Lima. Your guide will meet you on arrival and accompany you to your hotel.

#### DAY 11: Lima to Cusco B

This morning you will fly to Cusco. In the afternoon your guide will commence your half day tour, taking you around all the most important sites.

#### DAY 12: Cusco & Machu Picchu B/L

Today is the highpoint of this extension – a visit to the world renowned Machu Picchu. Board the Inca Rail train to climb up through the Andes, then a bus to the summit of the archaeological site. Constructed on a saddle between two Andean peaks, Machu Picchu was one of the greatest achievements of South American civilisation.

#### DAY 13: Cusco to Lima B

Today is at leisure for you to explore Cusco. Take a late afternoon flight back to Lima for your overnight stay.

#### DAY 14: Lima to the UK B

Spend the morning at leisure in Lima, before your return flight back to the UK, via Bogota.

#### Hotel Information

**Lima (1 night):** 4★ Wyndham Costa del Sol Lima Airport – Av. Elmer Faucett SN, Lima 07031, Peru. Contact number: 0051 1 7112000

**Cusco (2 nights):** 3★ Casa Andina Standard Cusco Koricancha – C. San Agustín 371, Cusco 08002, Peru. Telephone Number: 0051 84 252633

**Lima (1 night):** 4★ Casa Andina Standard Benavides – Av. Alfredo Benavides 271 Miraflores, Miraflores 15074, Peru. Contact number: 0051 1 3791610

#### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover additional breakfasts, lunches, dinners and purchases.

#### Visas

British passport holders are not currently required to obtain a visa in order to travel to Peru.

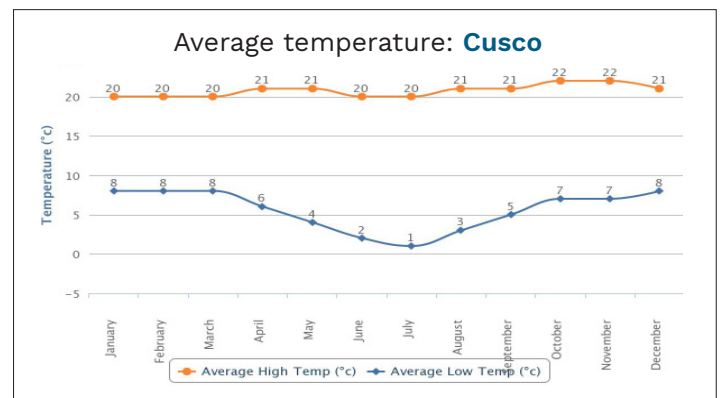
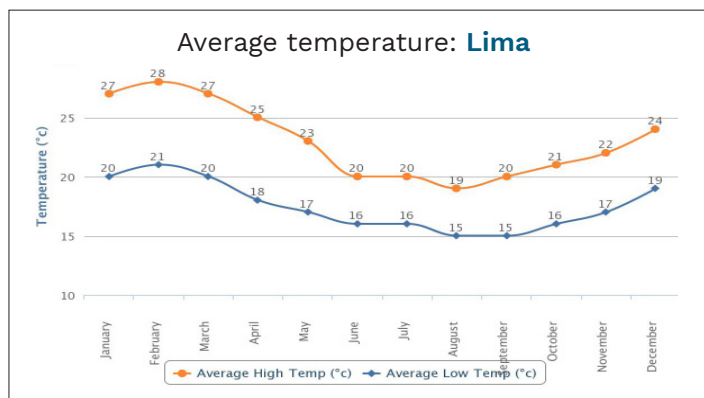
#### Tipping

Tipping is a common practice in Peru and it is customary to top on average £2-£3 per person per day. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip.

#### Currency Exchange

The currency in Peru is the Nuevo Sol, the symbol is S/. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. Cash machines are available in all the major cities to withdraw local currency.

### WEATHER AND CLIMATE



### FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**