



ECUADOR

GALAPAGOS WILDLIFE ODYSSEY ABOARD THE M/V ECLIPSE



- DURATION:** 9 days / 8 nights
- SEASON:** Year-round
- DEPARTURES:** Guaranteed with a minimum of 2 participants.
An exceptional itinerary departing every other week.
- TRIP RATING:** Easy/moderate coastal tour & natural history Cruise, Grade (I) - This trip includes activities at elevations of up to 2,000' as well as a 6 day/5night cruise with occasional wet landings (ankle to knee deep water) to reach the observation sites. Optional water activities include swimming, snorkeling and kayaking with marine wildlife and easy hikes of up to 4 hours duration on occasionally rough or rocky trails. Anyone in reasonably good fitness and condition, who is able to walk unassisted for up to 4 hours, should be able to enjoy a visit to the *Enchanted Isles*.
- 2015 DATES:** On request throughout the year, subject to availability
Eclipse will be on dry dock from Aug 29 through Sep 26, 2015

INTRODUCTION:

Galápagos National Park straddles the equator 600 miles west of Ecuador's Pacific coast. Undisturbed for centuries and isolated from the mainland, unusual species of birds, plants, reptiles and some mammals developed on the rocky, volcanic atolls of these stunning islands. Darwin's visit and subsequent studies of the island's flora and fauna in 1835 contributed to the formulation of his theory on the evolution of species and brought this fascinating ecosystem to the attention of the world. The park, Ecuador's largest, was established in 1959 to protect the archipelago's unique environment and wildlife. Its landmass consists of nearly 3,000 square miles which is divided between 6 large islands, 12 smaller islands, and over 40 islets. In 1986, the creation of the Marine Resources Reserve expanded the preserved area to include more than 27,000 square miles of ocean. This exciting program offers a great value in the archipelago, featuring one of the most complete 6-day cruise itineraries, aboard one of the most comfortable vessels in these waters. It is an ideal opportunity to explore these remarkable islands, and to watch and photograph their unique wildlife.

Starting with an overnight in Guayaquil, our first day is spent touring this historical and vibrant city. Then, we catch a flight to Baltra Island and start exploring aboard our 48-passenger superior expedition ship. Accompanied by some of the best English-speaking naturalist guides in the Galápagos, we learn about the natural history of these enchanted islands, visiting the most outlying sites as well as important central and southern islands. We learn about fascinating species such as marine and land iguanas, flightless cormorants, and the diving blue-footed boobies. Water activities include swimming with Galápagos penguins or snorkeling with sea lions and fur seals! Enjoy beautiful views of white, olive or red sand beaches and turquoise water and prepare to be impressed by powerful forces of nature. Following the 6-day cruise we fly back to Guayaquil for a night before returning home.

Ecuador: Galápagos Wildlife Odyssey

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01 (THU): USA / GUAYAQUIL

Arrive this evening to Ecuador's coastal, vibrant and commercial center city of **Guayaquil**, located at the western banks of the Guayas River. Our friendly local staff greets you and bring you by private vehicle to one of the city's finest hotels just 20 minutes away, the centrally located [Oro Verde](#) for the night.

DAY 02 (FRI): GUAYAQUIL

The full day city tour of Guayaquil starts with a stop at the historical park, a glimpse into the beginnings of this important port city, as well as its lively present-day culture and natural environment. The park's gardens burst with the region's endemic flora. It is also an ideal location to learn about the birds, reptiles, and mammals of this region. Then we go for a short walk to the Southern Malecon 2000, a boardwalk overlooking the Guayas River, where you'll peruse the Integration Plaza with its famous Southern Marketplace and Cristal Palace. Lunch is included at a traditional Ecuadorian restaurant with samples of fine local cuisine. Next, visit the Olmedo Plaza and see the monument to Jose Joaquin Olmedo, a recognized Ecuadorian poet. We also stop at the Morisca Tower for excellent views of the city and the famous monument to the four elements of the planet. For our final visit of the day, we head over to the oldest sectors of the city, the colonial neighborhood of Las Peñas (declared as Cultural Heritage in 1982) where we can admire the magnificent wood architecture. From here you'll have the opportunity to climb up to the Cerro Santa Ana for a breathtaking view of Guayaquil and the Guayas River. Overnight at the [Oro Verde](#) hotel. (B,L)

DAY 03 (SAT): GUAYAQUIL / BALTRA ISLAND / NORTH SEYMOUR (GALAPAGOS)

Following breakfast, we're picked up at the hotel to return to the airport. Our guide assists us with checking in for the 2 hour commercial jet flight to **Baltra Island**. Upon arrival, we pass through an inspection point where park officials ensure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands. We meet our naturalist guides and transfer to the boat docks to catch the motorized zodiac rafts, or dinghies, out to our well-appointed vessel, the [M/V Eclipse](#). After our crew welcomes us aboard there is a briefing and safety drill. Lunch is served onboard en route to **North Seymour**. This visit with a dry landing may very well be the perfect introduction to the Galápagos. Although the island is characterized by arid vegetation, fauna abounds and you will soon find yourself surrounded by sea lions, blue footed boobies, marine iguanas, frigate birds and more. With some luck you may even get to see land iguanas. Back on board we receive a briefing and a welcome cocktail before dinner. (B,L,D)

DAY 04 (SUN): SOUTH PLAZA / SANTA FE ISLANDS

After breakfast our dry landing excursion is on **South Plaza Island**. Although small, this site is home to a large Opuntia cacti forest, land iguanas and one of the largest sea lion colonies in the central region of the archipelago. An endemic plant, *Sesuvium*, inhabits this island and is a great climate indicator as its color is a greenish-yellowish during the rainy season and a bright red during the dry season. Nazca boobies, swallow-tailed gulls, variety of sea birds and finches are found here. Back on board we enjoy lunch and leisure time. This afternoon we experience a wet landing and excursion at **Santa Fe Island**. Formed by uplifting, rather than by a volcano, Santa Fe is known for having one of the most beautiful coves in all the Galápagos. Some of the island's endemic species include the Galápagos Hawk, Galápagos Snake, rice rats, different types of finches, and the Galápagos Mockingbird. The visit includes a hike on a trail past salt bushes where Galápagos hawks as well as the Santa Fe land iguanas tend to roam. Playful sea lions will usually accompany swimmers and snorkelers during beach time. Go swimming and snorkeling from the beach or kayak or zodiac ride before dinner and briefing on board. (B,L,D)

DAY 05 (MON): SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

Wet landing this morning at **Punta Pitt**, which is located on the eastern top of San Cristóbal Island. The visit begins with a rewarding 2.5 hour hike up to a plateau where views of the landscape are spectacular. At Punta Pitt, conditions are good for spotting the rare Red Footed Boobies nesting in the cliffs. In fact, it is the only visitor site where it is possible to view all three types of Booby. To complete this active morning of hiking, you can choose between water activities like kayaking, snorkeling, and zodiac rides to catch a glimpse of the astounding marine life at Punta Pitt. After lunch on board the ship, we'll disembark at **Cerro Brujo**, famously the first coast where Charles Darwin stepped foot on the archipelago in September of 1835. Here, we'll enjoy a fantastic white coral beach landscape with fun swimming, snorkeling and zodiac ride experiences among the white sands and clear turquoise waters. You can expect to see healthy populations of sea lions on the beach. Birdwatchers are likely to spot boobies, herons, and possibly the Chatham mockingbird, which is endemic to San Cristóbal Island and not to be found anywhere else. Return to the ship for dinner and the daily briefing. (B,L,D)

Ecuador: Galápagos Wildlife Odyssey

DAY 06 (TUE): FLOREANA ISLAND

Dry landing this morning on Floreana Island. This is one of the Galápagos most famous islands due to many strange stories of past settlers. There are many wonderful and diverse sites to visit including **Post Office Bay** and the “Baroness’s Viewing Point” followed by snorkeling or kayaking. Marine life abounds on Floreana’s coast making it a fantastic site for snorkeling. Flamingos also populate the island and may be seen during your visit. The Baroness’s Viewing Point is the perfect place to take in the special environment that defines Floreana, and a great spot to talk and ponder regarding the intriguing history of the Baroness and her three lovers! In the 18th century whalers passing through the islands placed a wooden barrel on Floreana Island for use as an unofficial mail box. The tradition continues today as visitors leave addressed postcards (see your ship log book) in the barrel and sort through left mail to deliver at home. For the more adventurous, there is the option to visit a lava tunnel, which has been kept untouched and completely natural. This afternoon, we visit **Punta Cormorant** and **Champion islet** with snorkeling, kayaking or a zodiac ride. A great site for birdwatching, Cormorant Point has a large lagoon where everything from Flamingos to stilts and pintail ducks can be observed. The beach nearby has a unique green hue from a high percentage of olivine crystals in the sand. Returning to the vessel, we enjoy dinner before beginning our navigation to the next island. (B,L,D)

DAY 07 (WED): ISABELA ISLAND

The morning light shines on the summit of Darwin Volcano, and as one of the most active volcanoes in the archipelago this area is a perfect example of the geological activity of the islands. While navigating the waters between Fernandina and Isabela islands, if we’re lucky, we may observe whales or dolphins. Morning zodiac ride to the **Elizabeth Bay** mangroves. Here, we enter a sheltered cove – a wonderful mangrove ecosystem that is a refuge for sea turtles, rays, blue-footed boobies, penguins, herons and perhaps circling overhead, Galápagos Hawks. A small colony of penguins inhabits a rocky islet at the entrance to this bay. After lunch onboard, this afternoon offers snorkeling or a zodiac ride at **Punta Moreno**. Moreno Point is located just southwest of Elizabeth Bay on the west coast of Isabela Island and is known for large populations of sea birds which can be appreciated during a zodiac ride along the striking rocky shores or a hike along path through lava rock leading to tide pools and mangroves. In the tide pools green sea turtles or white-tip sharks can be spotted. (B,L,D)

DAY 08 (THU): SANTA CRUZ ISLAND / GUAYAQUIL

This morning we anchor in Academy Bay on **Santa Cruz Island**, home to the bustling village of Puerto Ayora. After breakfast, say goodbye to our crew and board a zodiac to the **Charles Darwin Research Station**. Here we learn about the threats that exist to the wildlife and the conservation efforts to protect the islands. We watch both hatchling and young Galápagos tortoises in the baby tortoise house where the young are raised until large enough to survive on their own. We also watch some of the remaining 11 subspecies found on the islands and interact with them during our visit to the bachelor pad where 4 or 5 solitary males pass their days, quietly munching on greens and greeting visitors. These lumbering vegetarians are very impressive; for many guests coming face-to-face with the giant tortoises is a trip highlight. A full-grown adult can weigh up to 550 pounds, and we see just how large they are as we approach to within a few feet! Later this morning, board a private bus to the Baltra airport for the flight back to **Guayaquil**. Back in the city, Southwind’s friendly staff greets you at the airport and transfers you to the familiar **Oro Verde** hotel. This evening dinner is on your own to try some of the city’s gourmet restaurants that feature international and Ecuadorian cuisine. (B)

DAY 09 (FRI): GUAYAQUIL / USA

Early pick up at the hotel, transfer to the airport with check-in assistance for your flight home. (B)

NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: Although we do our best to adhere to the schedule listed above, the day-by-day activities on these itineraries are subject to change at any time for numerous reasons beyond our control including Galápagos Park Regulations and/or participant health, weather, sea and/or road conditions. Reservations are recommended at least 4-6 months in advance (1 year or more for holiday departures) to ensure space on the trip of your choice. Reservations made less than 90 days prior to departure are subject to availability and must be paid in full at the time of booking.

Our Galápagos trips are suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities age 7 and up. Cruises may include families and children onboard. Hiking, driving distances and altitudes are approximate, times indicated are NET (they do not include lunch breaks, rest stops, time to explore the area, etc.).

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2015 LAND COSTS:	<u>Stateroom cabins</u>	<u>Superior Stateroom cabins</u>
	<u>(Main deck)</u>	<u>(Upper Boat deck)</u>
	\$6,965 ppd	\$7,565 ppd (2-3 participants)
	\$6,785 ppd	\$7,385 ppd (4-6 participants)
	\$6,655 ppd	\$7,255 ppd (7-12 participants)
	ppd = per person double occupancy	

There are eleven outside “Stateroom Doubles” on the main deck (cabins 3-12 & 14) at the Land Cost indicated above as well as eight larger outside “Superior Staterooms” (cabins 21-28). These cabins have either two twin beds or one king/queen bed. Larger “Deluxe Staterooms” (with one queen only) are also available for \$350 per person additional to the Superior Stateroom land cost. For families traveling with children, 2 Triple “Deluxe Staterooms” are available (cabins 19 & 20). Eclipse also features 2 connected Staterooms (cabins 8 & 10) and 2 connected Superior Staterooms (cabins 24 & 26). Additionally, there are 2 “Single Staterooms” (cabins 1 & 2).

Due to Government measures in Ecuador, most vessels operating in the Galápagos have implemented a fuel surcharge. Effective for cruises departing after Jan 01, 2015, the additional \$260 per person will be added to above land costs.

Low Season discount: For cruises departing Jan 03 & 10 and cruises from Sep 26 through Dec 12, 2015 save \$250 for Stateroom cabins & \$350 for Superior cabins per person off the *Wildlife Odyssey* Land Cost as indicated above.

Peak Season cruises: For departures during Easter (Mar 28-Apr 04), Christmas (Dec 19-26) and New Year (Dec 26-Jan 02), there is a higher land cost in addition to a \$400 per person Holiday surcharge. Different deposits, cancellation fees and payments procedures apply for these departures. Please contact your Travel Consultant for details.

Children’s Discount: Kids 7-11 years old at the time of travel are entitled to a discount of \$1,250 ppd (Main deck) or \$1,400 ppd (Upper Boat deck) on the *Wildlife Odyssey* Land Cost. On designated family departures children as young as 4 years old can participate. • **Note:** Children’s discounts are limited to one per each accompanying adult sharing a Cabin. No discounts are allowed during the Easter, Christmas and New Years departures. Other restrictions may apply.

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled (transfers on different days are additional). Ground transportation in comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers. Occasionally, other Southwind travelers may share the same vehicle, particularly for transfers in Guayaquil.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance**.
- Galápagos National **Park entrance fee** of \$100 per person (\$50 per child 11 or under).
- Galápagos **Transit control card fee** of \$10 per person.
- All **accommodations in first-class (5 star) hotels** as listed (or at similar hotels) on a shared basis with private bath. Double beds for couples (primarily queen or king-sized) can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as most hotels offer very few rooms with double beds.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification required). For other diets, consult your travel specialist before making a reservation. Bottled or filtered water is provided on the cruise and mainland.
- All **guided tours** and excursions listed on the mainland (including applicable entrance fees), accompanied by a bilingual resident guide in Guayaquil.
- Arrival & departure transfers in the Galápagos.
- Accommodations on the luxury-class, 48-passenger, **M/V Eclipse** in an outside cabin with private bath. Wetsuits and snorkeling gear is provided on board at no extra cost.
- Experienced sailing crew & staff of 31 plus up to 4 naturalist guides. Officers on board are also bilingual.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, International nor local flights to/from the islands (see **Estimated Airfare** on page 6).
- Ecuadorian departure taxes (\$41 when leaving the country and \$6-8 per local flight; although these taxes are currently included in your airfare).
- Alcoholic beverages, nor items of a personal nature like laundry, telephone calls, souvenirs etc.

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- Tips to the local staff as warranted.
- Any expenses incurred in preparing for this trip, such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets or travel insurance, nor additional costs resulting from flight schedule changes, cancellations or missed connections.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing coverage to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance is important in case of unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, geologic events, local strikes, personal injury/illness for you, your traveling companion or family members, could require itinerary interruption or changes. Missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or the need for medical attention or evacuation are also reasons why coverage is important. Southwind offers several plans through Travel Insured International (TII) to fit your budget and coverage amount. We recommend TII's *Worldwide Trip Protector* which offers a good value and **free coverage for kids 17/under traveling with a related adult**. If you, your traveling companion or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you can still receive coverage if a recurrence of the condition forces you to cancel your trip (some restrictions apply and plan purchase needs to be done **within 21 days of your deposit date**). **Please call our office for a quote** or to discuss your insurance options. See our [Travel Insurance](#) page to learn more and purchase a plan.

M/V Eclipse: The [M/V Eclipse](#) entered into operation in November 1999, bringing a new level of comfort and elegance to Galápagos cruises. She is a 210-foot-long, 41 foot-wide expedition cruise ship accommodating up to 48 passengers (half the number carried by other vessels her size) in 26 cabins situated on two of the three decks. A smaller boat atmosphere is preserved by supplying a naturalist guide for every 12 guests and offering "al fresco" dining for all passengers. Additional amenities include 3 double and 1 single sea kayaks, a jacuzzi, a souvenir shop, an observation deck with exercise equipment, a library/video room, a lounge with a side bar and an air renewal system. Eclipse provides snorkeling equipment and wet suits at no extra charge. She also has an infirmary with an M.D. on board at all times. Comfortable and attractively decorated with rich Seike furnishings and writing desks, the Eclipse's eight Superior Staterooms are among the largest of any vessel in the Galápagos and feature large closets, ocean view windows and spacious private baths. There are four double-bedded Deluxe Staterooms, located on the boat deck, plus thirteen outside Stateroom Doubles & two outside Stateroom Singles with porthole windows on the main deck. All doubles feature either a king/queen or two twin beds, and each is equipped with air conditioning and internal communication phones.

ON BOARD: A typical day on board begins with a beautiful sunrise and breakfast served generally at 07:00. Afterwards, at about 08:30, we join our English-speaking naturalist for a 3-4 hour shore excursion. (Certified by the Charles Darwin Research Station and the National Park Service, the guides aboard these boats are typically level III, meaning they have achieved the highest level of certification and experience.) We board our zodiac, or small motorized dinghy, and travel to a specified visitor's site for disembarkation. We may have either a dry landing on a rocky beach or special jetty, or a wet landing where wading through knee or thigh deep water is required. Once on shore our guide will explain the unique features of this location and talk about the life forms we encounter as we hike along designated trails and beaches. There is typically time for about 45 minutes of swimming or snorkeling before lunch for those that enjoy these activities. Lunch is onboard with siesta time while cruising to the next visitor site. In the afternoon, a 3 hour excursion might include snorkeling amid colorful tropical fish, swimming with sea lions or cruising in the zodiac to view marine birds and wildlife along the cliffs if there is not a designated landing site. Guides will discuss the next day's activities and special features of the observation sites we visit before we enjoy a delicious dinner featuring Ecuadorian as well as International specialties, which is served on board at about 19:30. The ship guarantees all its departures without a minimum of passengers and a maximum of 48. SWA offers this trip for a minimum of 2 Southwind passengers. There will be other passengers on board the ship who have booked through other tour companies and/or travel agencies. They will not participate in the full Southwind program that includes the other mainland services and does not count toward group size for land cost pricing.

OPTIONAL TRIP EXTENSIONS: Travelers with a few extra days may wish to include a visit to the Amazon Rainforests, Cuenca & the southern highlands or Mindo Cloud forest and the Western rainforest. Extensions require a minimum of 2 participants. To view the extensions on our website, click on '[Extend Your Trip](#)'.

COMBINATION TRIPS: For those who would like to spend an extra week exploring South America, and wish to see other areas of interest, our *Galápagos Wildlife Odyssey* departures have been designed to coordinate with our tour to Machu Picchu in Peru for the once-in-a-lifetime 15-day [Galapagos and Machu Picchu aboard the M/Y Eclipse](#).

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FAMILY ADVENTURES: A visit to the enchanted Galápagos Islands makes an ideal family vacation. Adults and children alike love communing with wildlife and the water activities. Children age 4-11 are welcome aboard and qualify for the discounts indicated on page 4. Ask for designated Family Departures aboard the M/V Eclipse (Mar-Apr, Jun-Aug & Dec).

PRIVATE GROUPS: Special charters of the Eclipse (or any of our other vessels) are available for private parties. We suggest making charter arrangements 1.5-2 years in advance.

WEATHER: The Galápagos Islands have a surprisingly cool, sub-tropical climate. Weather is regulated by the cold Humboldt Current (flows north-westward along western coast of South America and out to the islands) during the dry season and the warm waters from the Panama Basin during the wet season. The islands only receive an average of 10" of rain per year so it is never "rainy". Temperatures vary according to the trade wind strength.

December – June: Cooling currents subside and temps rise. Many consider this the hot/wetter season. Daytime highs are upper 80's-low 90's and 70's at night. The water temp is at its warmest (ave 72-76°F). Feb-Apr have the highest precipitation levels (1-2"/month), rest of year is less than 1"/month.

July – November: The trade winds pick up and the climate becomes cool & breezy. Many consider this the cool/drier season. Daytime air temp average is 73°F and 62°F at night. The ave water temp is 68°F. The sea can be a bit choppy during these months and the sky can be misty, a phenomenon locally called "garua."

TEMPERATURES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
MAX AIR TEMP	84	86	88	86	82	78	76	74	76	77	78	80
MIN AIR TEMP	70	74	74	72	72	68	66	64	62	64	66	68
AVE SEA TEMP	74	76	76	76	74	74	72	66	68	70	72	74
AVE RAINFALL	1	1	2	1.5	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.25	0.5	0.25	0.5	0.5

Temperatures are given in degrees Fahrenheit and rainfall amounts are in inches.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost for this trip DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Round-trip airfare from Miami to Guayaquil is about \$700-\$900 per person. This amount does not include the local flight Guayaquil-Galápagos-Guayaquil estimated at \$500 per person round-trip. Non-stop flights to Guayaquil are offered by American (from Miami & JFK), and LAN Airlines (JFK). United (Houston) and Delta (Atlanta) only have service to Quito; if you need to use these carriers, we can assist with Quito arrangements, but we recommend Guayaquil as the most convenient and lower-cost routing. You are welcome to redeem award tickets or Southwind can help coordinate all your flights. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send you more information about booking your flights to match your land itinerary.

- **Note:** We recommended you **DO NOT** purchase any airline tickets until your trip has been confirmed.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Submit Southwind's [Trip Reservation Form](#) along with a \$1,500 per person per trip deposit by credit card via our secure [Online Payment Form](#). If you prefer, you can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements or send a check. **Your deposit will be charged and your reservation confirmed once we receive your Trip Reservation Form.** Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive comprehensive pre-departure planning documents by email.

Land Balance: Final payment is due at 90 days by Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express or check. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due. Provided services and space are available, reservations can be accepted up to 30 days before departure.

Galápagos vessels are relatively small compared to other cruises, so they typically sell out several months in advance. Early booking is required for all departures. Galápagos trips do not qualify for any Southwind discounts except the Low Season and Children Discounts mentioned under the Land Cost section. Cancellation Fees and other policies are outlined under the [Terms & Conditions](#) on Southwind's website.

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