JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

# WILDLIFE WONDERS OF THE CLOUD FOREST AND GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

13 days from **£6,900pp**

**ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS ISLANDS / QUITO / MINDO AND THE CLOUD FOREST / GALAPAGOS ISLANDS**



# WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

## WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

## OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

### WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

### TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

### THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

# OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This wildlife focused holiday combines the bird watching paradise of the Ecuadorian cloud forest, with the Galapagos Islands, famed for being home to one of the richest and most unique populations of animals on Earth.

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| **DAY 1** | **Arrive in Quito and transfer to your hotel.** |
| **DAY 2** | **Guided walking tour of colonial Quito.** |
| **DAY 3** | **By road to the cloud forest** |
| **DAYS 4-5** | **Range of hikes from the lodge** |
| **DAY 6** | **By road to Quito.** |
| **DAY 7** | **Fly to the Galapagos and board your expedition cruise** |
| **DAYS 8-12** | **Expedition cruise around the Galapagos Islands** |
| **DAY 13** | **Fly to the mainland and connect with your international flight home.** |

# ITINERARY

You begin in Quito, Ecuador's cultural capital steeped in colonial history, but with a keen movement towards modernity and a growing reputation for culinary splendour. Then head northwest to the cloud forest, where the varied elevations and resulting divergence of flora provide the range of habitats and food sources required to host a vast array of distinctive and beautiful birds. The tour ends with a 6-night cruise around the Galapagos Islands, arguably the greatest wildlife spectacle in the world, and of course, once the inspiration for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

You will stay in a mid-range hotel in old-Quito, a comfortable and memorable eco-lodge in the cloud forest, a convenient airport hotel, and a spacious upper-mid-range vessel in the Galapagos, meaning you can spend your days searching for photo perfection, safe in the knowledge that a comfortable bed awaits you every evening.

## DAY 1

**Arrive in Quito and transfer to your hotel.**



Transfer to your hotel in Quito, the Andean capital of Ecuador. The active volcano Guagua Pichincha, to the east, glowers over the dynamic city which, at 2,850m, is one of the highest capital cities in the world. Quito is divided into two contrasting districts. The modern zone is characterised by towering glass buildings and houses banks, international companies, hotels, shops and restaurants, while the central colonial area has well-conserved and spruced-up 16th-century buildings, open-air markets and graceful Spanish-style mansions and churches.

## DAY 2

**Guided walking tour of colonial Quito.**



Get to know Quito on a full-day excursion taking you on a historical journey through Ecuador's capital city. You will learn about its ancient pre-Columbian origins, its foundation and the transition through its Colonial and Republican periods. After a drive up to a viewpoint for a bird's-eye view of the city's layout, stroll through the colonial centre, founded by the Spanish on the ruins of an Inca settlement. Admire the Baroque architecture and art; its many plazas; the cobblestone street of La Ronda with its flowery balconies; and the splendidly restored Jesuit church.

### DAY 3

**By road to the cloud forest**



Transfer by road along winding mountain passes through the varying elevations of the cloud forest. You will stay at a charming property based deep in the forest, surrounded by well-marked hiking trails designed to get you in amongst the chattering and squawking of the bountiful bird life.

For an even more extraordinary experience we recommend upgrading to a stay at **Mashpi Lodge**. This contemporary eco-lodge sits in the heart of the Mashpi Reserve, home to a sensational variety of flora and fauna, including nearly 400 species of bird. Potential activities there include: birdwatching, jungle and waterfall hikes, canopy tower climbs, canopy sky-bike rides; And the Dragonfly – an unparalleled gondola journey through the jungle treetops, at eye level with some of the forest critters that are normally difficult to spot from the ground.

### DAYS 4-5

**Range of hikes from the lodge**



Enjoy two full days of activities within the reserve. There are several well signposted trails for you to follow, either with a guide (at additional cost) or on your own.

Bellavista's 400-hectare reserve is home to a huge variety of birds, including the mountain toucan, white-faced nunbird and countless hummingbirds. It is also home to some spectacular flora, with many different species of orchids, just some of those hiding beneath the canopy. 270 kinds of mammals also roam these lands.

There are also several different waterfalls and conservation projects that can be seen, with sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture and sustainable development all key focuses for the region.

### DAY 6

**By road to Quito.**



After enjoying another morning at the lodge, transfer back to Quito for an overnight stay near the airport.

### DAY 7

**Fly to the Galapagos and board your expedition cruise**

Transfer to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos Islands where you will embark your vessel for a 7-day/6-night cruise around the archipelago. Your naturalist guide will be waiting to take you to the quayside.



### DAYS 8-12

**Expedition cruise around the Galapagos Islands**



The Galápagos Islands emerged in the Pacific Ocean 6 million years ago following a spate of volcanic activity and, isolated from the continental mainland, have become home to unique plant and animal species. Without fear of humans, they are sufficiently trusting to allow you to approach them and observe them up close. The islands were the inspiration for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which formed the basis for his revolutionary book 'On the Origin of Species', published in 1859.

Although geologically constantly on the move, these islands remain suspended in time, with giant tortoises, iguanas, penguins, frigate birds, waved albatross, blue-footed boobies and a wealth of rare flora all thriving there. For many, the fascinating and unique wildlife and natural beauty of the islands are matched by the thrill of being at sea. Find a spot on deck as you make your way through the ocean, often trailed by flocks of birds and playful dolphins.

The itinerary for your days in the Galápagos will depend on your date of departure and is subject to change. There are normally two landings a day to seek out the different wildlife that inhabits the islands.

### DAY 13

**Fly to the mainland and connect with your international flight home.**

Disembark the vessel and transfer to the airport for your flight back to the mainland and onward flight home or contact us for ideas on how to continue your adventure.

## INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Walking tour of Quito
- Self guided hikes at Bellavista
- Kayak excursions in the Galápagos
- Snorkelling and land excursion in the Galápagos
- 6 night cruise in the Galápagos

# ESSENTIALS

### TRANSPORT
2 road transfers (approx. 2 hrs each); 2 flights (approx 2-3 hrs depending on routing); 7-day/6 night cruise.

### ACCOMMODATION
You will stay in a mid-range hotel in old-Quito, a comfortable and memorable eco-lodge in the cloud forest, a convenient airport hotel, and a spacious upper-mid-range vessel in the Galapagos that holds a maximum of 16 passengers.

Upgrades and alternate options are possible. Please contact us for details.

### MEALS
Breakfast daily; Full board on days 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

### SUMMARY OF NIGHTS
13 days, 12 nights: Quito 2, Cloud Forest 3, Quito Airport 1, Galapagos 6.

### CURRENCY
The unit of currency in Ecuador and the Galápagos is the US dollar.

### HOW TO TAKE IT
Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds.

We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can spend as the dollar is the local currency. Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

### DAILY SPEND
It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US$50 per day should cover the cost of good quality meals on those days in the holiday itinerary when they are not included, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the very best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

### TIPPING
Tips are welcomed and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Tips are also common for guides and crew members on Galapagos cruises.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

### INSURANCE
Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance pages.

### AIRPORT TAXES
If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

### TRIP SUITABILITY
This holiday is suitable for all able, reasonably fit visitors.

The streets in Quito are cobbled and steep and you must be cautious taking these on at altitude (see "Altitude" below). Hikes in the cloud forest and the Galapagos Islands can be challenging and on uneven terrain, but, with some collaboration, your guides will normally be able to match the trails to your level of mobility and fitness.

## VISAS

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

## CLIMATE

Lying at 2,850m on the equator, the highlands have a permanent spring-like climate: altitude is the determining factor with regard to temperature. The rainy season in the Andes runs between January and April when there are showers most afternoons. The dry season is June, July and August when the sun is strong during the day, but at night the temperature drops dramatically (maybe as low as freezing point). May, September and October are less predictable, with both rainy and sunny spells. In the mountains at any time of year you should expect a variation between 15°C and 25°C.3

In the Galápagos, from January to April it's hot and the sun is relentless, with some sudden showers. May to July, and October to December is cloudier; In August and September it's often cloudy and cool, and a stiff breeze makes the waters choppier. High and Low seasons reflect demand rather than the best time to go. Many boats are in dry dock in September.

## ALTITUDE

Several days are spent at high altitude (over 2.500m). You may notice the effect of high altitude; symptoms vary: most common are mild headaches and breathlessness. If you drink plenty of water and allow your body to acclimatise (don't exert yourself or drink alcohol) in the first couple of days after arrival, you will minimise your chances of being adversely affected.

Please refer to our Briefing Dossier for further information.

## CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

For day-to-day wear you should go prepared to encounter all seasons. Both warm clothing and a sun hat are essential at altitude; a light fleece jacket and a waterproof/breathable outer shell makes a good combination. Trousers, skirt or shorts made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials work well on the Galápagos Islands and in the jungle. Long-sleeved shirts will protect you from insects.

Strong, comfortable footwear is essential and you should bring insect repellant, sun block, hat and sun glasses. You should take swimwear for ocean swimming (Galápagos). Snorkelling equipment is included but you may prefer to bring your own. Aqua-socks or rubber sandals are useful for embarking and disembarking on wet landings.. For June to November departures, wetsuits are recommended, as the waters can be chilly for snorkelling. Some vessels will charge an additional cost for these onboard.

Don't forget your binoculars, camera, charger and memory cards.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment is very important and hard to come by in South America and the Galápagos Islands.

## VACCINATIONS

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. You should consult your GP for specific requirements.

For admission to the Galápagos a yellow fever certificate is required for anyone over 1 year old coming from an area with risk of yellow fever transmission.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

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## GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

**0208 747 8315**

**OPENING HOURS**

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

**SEND US AN EMAIL**

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