



📍 Snorkeling with a Green Turtle, Galapagos

7 nights

📍 **\$7,995*** p.p.

Departs Toronto:

Apr. 14, 2020

Group size: 20 maximum

🗺️ **Visits to:**

Quito - Galapagos Islands: Tagus Cove (Isabela Island) - Espinosa Point (Fernandina Island) - Vicente Roca Point (Isabela Island)

✔️ **What's Included:**

* Round-trip airfare

- Plaza Premium airport lounge pass
- Domestic flights
- Quito: three nights 4-star hotel accommodation
- Cruise: four-night cruise onboard *M/V Galapagos Legend* in a junior suite, ocean view stateroom with meals (coffee, tea and snacks available 24 hours)
- Seven breakfasts, four lunches, and four dinners
- Multilingual-speaking naturalist guides onboard the cruise
- All excursions as per the itinerary
- Snorkeling gear provided onboard the cruise
- Galapagos National Institute Migration control card and entrance fee to Galapagos National Park
- Merit Travel tour host**
- All taxes and gratuities

WONDERS OF ECUADOR & THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Round-trip by land & sea: Quito

Embark on an experience of a lifetime on an adventure to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, a place like nowhere else on earth! Start your once-in-a-lifetime journey with two nights in Quito, the first city to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Then we fly to Baltra Island in the Galapagos and board a four-night Galapagos cruise onboard the luxurious *M/V Galapagos Legend*.

There will be time to explore the islands, walk amongst volcanic formations and see the unique animals that have made the Galapagos Islands famous; the blue-footed booby, Galapagos tortoise and the land iguanas.

M/V Galapagos Legend: This legendary, 100-passenger, luxury vessel offers all the amenities of a large cruise liner without sacrificing the intimacy you'd expect on a small sailing craft. *The Legend* is equipped with five decks, a swimming pool, a library, and much more.

Single supplements available!
Call your local Merit Travel expert.



ACTIVITY LEVEL:
SIGHT-SEEING

APPROPRIATE FOR:

Travellers who are physically fit and comfortable with longer days of touring by transport and by foot and do not require mobility aids.

Your Itinerary | Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner = (B, L, D)

DAY 1 | Apr. 14, 2020 | Toronto - Quito

Today board your same-day flight from Toronto to Quito.

Upon arrival, we meet our representative and transfer to our hotel.

Overnight at Dann Carlton Hotel (2 nights)

DAY 2 | Apr. 15, 2020 | Quito (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. The city of Quito was designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site, in 1978. Today we will go on a city tour and enjoy the eclectic architecture ranging from the modern quarters to varied colonial facades on churches and private residences.

See the gothic Basilica of the Heart of Jesús, Independence Square developed during the past five centuries and flanked by the Presidential and the Archbishop's palaces, dating back to the 17th and 19th centuries.

Walk along the streets to see the Metropolitan Cathedral with excellent samples of the Spanish renaissance. See the street of the seven crosses and pass by the Jesuit convent, once headquarters of the first university in the country.

Visit the Jesuit temple of the baroque art in the Americas "La Compañía de Jesús", and the jewel of the crown of the colonial architecture in Quito. Continue to the Plaza of San Francisco, with the

temple and convent which displays a rich sample of artistic and cultural heritage.

From there we head approximately 18 km's north of downtown Quito to visit "Mitad del Mundo" (Middle of the World) and the Monument to the Equator, situated at 0° latitude, 0 minutes, 0 seconds. We will also visit the museum of Ethnic groups of Ecuador before returning back to the hotel in the late afternoon.

DAY 3 | Apr. 16, 2020 | Quito - Galapagos (B, L, D)

Breakfast at the hotel then check out. Transfer to the airport for your flight from Quito to Baltra Island, Galapagos.

Arriving in the Galapagos, we will be met at the airport by the naturalist guides and transferred by coach to the pier to board the luxurious *M/V Galapagos Legend*.

We will then enjoy lunch onboard before starting our afternoon of cruising to the Mosquera Islet. Mosquera Islet is located between North Seymour and Baltra Island. This flat, sandy island has a large colony of sea lions. It is also an excellent site to observe shorebirds such as herons and lava gulls. There is no trail on the islet, so you can enjoy the open area. Most of the islet is covered with sand and barren lava rock with little perennial herbs (*sesuvium portulacastrum*).

Overnight onboard *M/V Galapagos Legend* (4 nights)

DAY 4 | Apr. 17, 2020 | Galapagos (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we visit Egas Port (Santiago Island). Egas Port is a black volcanic sand beach, visited by Darwin in 1835. The first section of the trail is formed of volcanic ash (eroded tuff), and the other half is an uneven terrain of volcanic basaltic rock. The unique, truly striking layered terrain of Santiago shore is home to a variety of animals including the bizarre yellow-crowned night heron and marine wildlife including lobster, starfish and marine iguanas grazing on algae beds alongside Sally light-foot crabs. It is easy to see colonies of endemic fur seals swimming in cool water volcanic rock pools.

In the afternoon we visit Rabida Island. Dark-red sand covers the unique beaches of this island, home to sea lions' colonies. Rabida is considered the epicentre of the Galapagos Islands due to the diversity of its volcanic geology. Nesting brown pelicans are found from July through September plus nine species of the famous Darwin's finches. Here a dinghy ride along marine cliffs is done, to observe nesting seabirds. Snorkel off the coast, where marine life is particularly active.

DAY 5 | Apr. 18, 2020 | Galapagos (B, L, D)

After breakfast we visit Urbina Bay (Isabela Island), made of mostly volcanic sand; depending on the season, it is possible to find giant tortoises, land iguanas, and the unusual flightless cormorant. After a short walk inland it's snorkeling time, a chance to swim with sea turtles, sea lions, and countless tropical fish. Urbina Bay features a wide variety of plants with multi-coloured flowers, attracting different insects, birds, and reptiles. One of the highlights of the island is the uplifted coral reef that resulted from seismic activity in 1954. When navigating from Urbina to Tagus Cove whale-watching is usual from May to December.

In the afternoon we visit Tagus Cove (Isabela Island). This is the Galapagos' largest island where we will learn about the eruption of the five volcanoes that formed it. The trail leads to Darwin's salt-water crater lake and excellent views of lava fields and volcanic formations.

We will return by the same path for a dinghy ride along a shoreline full of marine wildlife, where we will admire a variety of seabirds, such as the blue-footed booby, brown noddy, terns, flightless cormorant, and depending on the season, a large number of Galapagos penguins which are only 35cm tall; the only penguin species in the world to live in the tropics.

The population of penguins on the islands is about 2,000, most of which live on this western portion of Isabela; others are scattered further south.

DAY 6 | Apr. 19, 2020 | Galapagos (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we visit Espinosa Point (Fernandina Island). From Espinosa Point, we will have a wide view of Isabela Island across the Bolivar Channel, an area that boasts some of the highest diversity of endemic sea fauna in the Galapagos. Here, the largest, most primitive-looking marine iguanas are found mingling with sea lions and sally lightfoot crabs. Fernandina displays a wonderful opportunity to encounter flightless cormorants at their nesting sites, Galapagos penguins and the “King” of predators on the islands, the Galapagos hawk. Pa-hoe-hoe and AA lava formations cover the majority of Fernandina terrain. Vegetation is scarce inland, with very few cacti and mangrove on the shoreline.

In the afternoon we visit Vicente Roca Point (Isabela Island), which offers great deep-water snorkeling at one of the richest marine havens on Earth, the Bolivar Channel. Accessible by water, we take a dinghy ride along the coast to observe a great diversity of sea and coastal birds. The upwelling of cold water currents in this part of the

Galapagos gives rise to an abundance of marine life, a perfect place for snorkeling.

DAY 7 | Apr. 20, 2020 | Galapagos - Quito (B)

After breakfast we visit the Highlands Tortoise Reserve (Santa Cruz Island). In the mountains of Galapagos admire different kind of birds, such as tree and ground finches, vermilion flycatchers, paint-billed crakes, yellow warblers, and cattle egrets (usually standing on the tortoises’ shells).

The journey to the reserve offers great opportunities to see the contrasts that the island offers in reference to the variety of ecosystems. The road goes from the coast through the agricultural zone and straight up to the dense humid forests. Often, Galapagos giant tortoises are also seen on the way, wandering through pastures in the paddocks. This spot is a birdwatchers’ haven, since almost every land bird present on the island lives or migrates here.

Later we disembark and transfer to Baltra airport for our flight to Quito.

Upon arrival in Quito, we are met and transferred to our hotel. The remainder of the day is at our own leisure.

Overnight at Dann Carlton Hotel (1 night)

DAY 8 | Apr. 21, 2020 | Quito - Toronto (B)

Breakfast at hotel and check out, then we depart for the airport for our flight home.



RESPONSIBILITY

Merit Travel Group Inc. doing business as Merit Travel, acts solely as agents for the Travel Service Suppliers such as hoteliers, airlines, ground service operators, bus operators, etc. who are providing their facilities as described in this brochure. We do our best to select such suppliers but exercise no control over them and cannot be held responsible for the failure of these suppliers to carry out any obligations. Any and all bookings made with these suppliers by us, for you, are subject to the terms and conditions of each and every such supplier. Supplier liability may also be limited by law, tariffs, or conditions set forth in their documentation, tickets, etc.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, Merit and its directors, officers, employees, affiliates, successors, assigns, agents and other representatives are not responsible for any and all claims for losses, damages (whether direct, indirect, special, punitive, or other consequential damages, lost profits or opportunities) delays, illness, injuries, inconvenience, loss of enjoyment, or anxiety (whether based in contract, tort, negligence, strict liability or otherwise, and even if Merit and the Travel Service Suppliers have been advised of the possibility of damages to such party or any other party) arising from:

- a. Fault or negligence or omissions on the part of the said travel service suppliers;
- b. Illness, theft, strikes, mechanical problems, quarantine, governmental intervention, weather conditions, acts of hostility or violence, and any other grounds beyond our control;
- c. Your failure to obtain passport, visas, other travel documents or inoculations
- d. Your failure to advise us the name of the traveller exactly as it appears on the passport;
- e. Your failure to report on time at an airport or ground transfer facility;
- f. Material damages, theft or other mysterious disappearances of your goods;
- g. Personal injuries or death;
- h. Force Majeure - an event(s) beyond our, or our supplier(s), reasonable control including, but not limited to, acts of God, strikes, lockout or other labour disputes or disruptions, wars, blockades, insurrections, riots, earthquakes, weather conditions, floods or acts of restraints imposed by governmental authorities.

PRICING

All prices are per person in Canadian dollars unless otherwise noted. GST, HST and provincial taxes are applicable on tours as noted.

INCREASE IN TOUR COSTS

Merit reserves the right to increase tour prices in the event of an increase in government and airport authority imposed taxes and fees, fuel and currency surcharges, supplier price increases, or any other cost increase. If the increase is greater than 7% of the tour cost, the client may cancel the booking within seven days of notification and obtain a full refund.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

A deposit of \$750 per person is required at the time of booking. Full and final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

Please note, some of our suppliers may require additional deposit or full payments at time of booking, pending seasonality. You will be advised of additional requirements at time of booking.

LIABILITY

Merit cannot assume responsibility for any costs incurred for any travel arrangements purchased separately from the Merit tour. Merit's responsibility shall extend only to the provisions of advice as to industry-standard or supplier recommended connections and check-in times. Provided Merit supplies such advice, they shall not be responsible for missed connections or departures, regardless of the cause.

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN (INSURANCE)

Trip cancellation and interruption insurance, medical and hospital insurance, baggage insurance, and various additional insurances are available and

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. If you choose not to purchase insurance, you are required to sign an Insurance Waiver Form. Note that if you choose not to purchase insurance, you are fully liable for any and all penalties imposed as stated under Cancellation Policy on this page. Please speak to your representative at the time of making reservations about insurance.

REFUNDS

The nature of travel involves risks and unpredictable weather and thus Merit cannot assure any departure or arrival times at any point of an itinerary. Your right to receive a refund is limited. There will be no discounts or monies refunded for any missed or unused services. Merit reserves the right to cancel the tour for any reason. Should this occur, a full refund will be made to the traveller.

CANCELLATION POLICY

While Merit will do its utmost to minimize any penalties charged, there are irrecoverable costs associated with your tour. The following penalties will be considered the costs incurred with cancellation:

- a. 90 days or more prior to departure: Loss of total deposit.
- b. 89 – 60 days prior to departure: Loss of 50% of total tour cost.
- c. 59 days or less prior to departure: Loss of 100% of total tour cost.

Cancellation penalties for some tours will vary and there may be additional penalties associated with the airfare. If so, these policies will be noted separately at time of booking and will prevail.

TOUR CHANGES

We reserve the right to substitute itineraries, hotels, airlines or vessels due to conditions beyond our control. In such cases we will do everything possible to ensure the locations visited, the excursions taken and the hotels offered are similar to the ones originally planned. Any change to itineraries will not result in eligibility for a refund.

REVISION FEE

Changes to your tour reservation might not be possible. Should you request a change and we are able to accommodate it, you will be subject to any charges imposed by the airline or tour suppliers. In addition, we reserve the right to charge a \$50 revision fee for any change made after the deposit is paid. A change in name or departure date may constitute a cancellation, and the corresponding penalties may apply.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION

All passengers travelling internationally must travel with a passport. Many countries require the passport to be valid for 6 months beyond the traveller's return date. Visas may be required for some destinations. It is the passenger's responsibility to obtain at the passenger's expense, all documentation required by all relevant authorities. In the event that the passenger does not possess the correct documentation, the air carrier has the right to refuse passage.

DESCRIPTION

Every effort has been made to describe and produce the travel services and photographs as accurately as possible in the printed tour description. However we reserve the right to correct errors and we will make all reasonable efforts to inform you should any significant changes occur.

Please note that the living standards and local conditions during your tour may be different from what you are accustomed to at home.

CONSENT

Your retention of tickets, reservations or bookings after issuance shall constitute your consent to the above terms.

If you encounter any concerns during your tour, please inform your local travel service provider. If the matter cannot be resolved, please inform Merit Travel in writing upon your return.