

Galapagos Islands Adventure

Trip Code: GMA

Version: GMA Galapagos Islands Adventure



WILDLIFE



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Island hopping on Baltra, Santa Cruz, Floreana and Isabela
- Walk amongst blue-footed boobies and swim beside turtles
- Nights on shore in cosy small local hotels and guesthouses
- Many opportunities for walks along the sandy beaches and snorkelling in the turquoise seas
- Kayaking in the Tortuga Bay as well as the Tintoreras islets and visit two galapagos giant tortoise

breeding centres

AT A GLANCE

- 8 days on four Galapagos Islands
- Wildlife viewing
- Swimming and snorkelling
- Kayaking and an easy bike ride
- Boat trips
- Walks
- Sleeping in hotels and guesthouses
- Max altitude 2850 metres (Quito)
- Join at Quito

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 9 Breakfasts
- 2 Dinners
- 7 nights Hotel
- 2 nights Guesthouse

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

The Galapagos is world famous for its incredible wildlife and, on our Galapagos Islands Adventure, we ensure that we are actively immersed in the essence of these diverse islands. We are shore based, in cosy small hotels and guesthouses, allowing us to experience the beaches and wildlife in the early mornings and evenings when the main tourists have disappeared on their boats. We visit four islands during our time on the Galapagos: Baltra, Santa Cruz, Floreana and Isabela.

Our guide will take us to the best places for some snorkelling where we will be mesmerised by the underwater world in the shallows close to the white sandy beaches. We may see schools of colourful fish, playful sea lions, turtles, giant manta rays and much much more. On land the clumsy looking blue-footed boobies walk around at our feet, and the red and black frigate bird, pelicans and albatross fly in the blue skies above.

We visit the breeding centres for the Galapagos giant tortoise on Santa Cruz at the Charles Darwin Research Station and Isabela Islands. Our guide is a fountain of knowledge and we will come home enriched with an understanding of the conservation, species and how life for the people of the Galapagos works. We have speed boat transfers between the islands, a walk to the volcanic crater of Sierra Negra, kayaking between the mangroves looking for marine iguanas, an easy downhill bike ride, snorkelling aplenty and evenings at the beach-side bar or restaurant enjoying this environment and making some truly unique memories.

Why not combine this holiday to the Galapagos with the [Inca Trail and Machu Picchu?](#)

Is this holiday for you?

Sleeping in simple hotels and guesthouses is perfect for those of us who suffer from sea-sickness. It also gives more space in the rooms (as boat cabins are notoriously small). We try to pack in lots of activities to make the most of our time here. You should be comfortable in the water for the snorkelling. Buoyancy

aids are available for snorkelling if you prefer.

The 2hr kayak session is designed for beginners and is about enjoying the wildlife and the experience. The walks are between 30mins - 2 hrs and just a sturdy trainer or walking shoe is required. The downhill biking is around 1 hour (12km) on a semi-paved road and is not physically demanding. The transfers between islands are done by speedboat (2-3hrs) and can be rough, so anti sea-sickness tablets are advised for these transfers if you are susceptible.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Quito.

On arrival into Quito, your holiday begins with the overnight night in the hotel. Depending on your arrival time you will be able to enjoy some of this city with its well-preserved colonial district. Located at 2850m above sea level this Ecuadorian capital experiences a year round spring-like climate. The city is flanked by mountains and snow-capped volcanoes including Pichincha (4784m). We overnight at the group hotel in Quito.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Fly to the Galapagos and visit the highlands of Santa Cruz Island.

We depart Quito on the 2hr flight to Baltra, Galapagos Islands. We then transfer to the neighbouring island of Santa Cruz. We start with a visit to the highlands area of Santa Cruz. Here we find the perfect environment for seeing the giant Galapagos tortoise in its natural habitat surrounded by unique flora. It's likely that we'll see the Galapagos finch and many of the other numerous bird species found on the Galapagos. We will also pass lava tunnels, as well as some of the stunning panoramic views of the other islands. It's a short distance back to our hotel in Puerto Ayora. There are several restaurants close to the waterfront in this small town which we can choose from to have dinner.

Meals: B



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 3

Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, afternoon kayaking and snorkelling in Tortuga Bay.

Today we visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and Fausto Llerena Breeding Centre at Puerto Ayora. Since 1964 work has here has focused on conservation, restoration and sustainable development

projects for the archipelago - it is a great place to start our journey in the Galapagos. Here, at the breeding centre we can see the famous Galapagos Giant Tortoise. They can live up to two hundred years, but had been near extinction in the 1800's due human hunting and rats. They are released into the wild when they are 3-5 years old.

In the afternoon we make the short journey to Tortuga Bay. Our kayaking trip is suitable for beginners and gives us a memorizing eye-level view of the wildlife on these tranquil and turquoise waters. It's likely that we'll get some good sightings of the endemic blue-footed boobies, pelicans and other seabirds. As we gently paddle through the mangrove forest and lava cliffs we will see marine life through the shallows and the seals on the beaches. Donning our snorkel and mask we enter the magical underwater world. Colourful schools of yellowtail surgeons, king angelfish, parrotfish are some of the fish we'll see. With some luck we'll also encounter turtles, marine iguanas, the docile whitetip reef shark, or an inquisitive seal coming to say hello. The experience is quiet incredible and very accessible for everyone (less confidence swimmers can wear buoyancy aids and have the same experience).

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 4

Free morning on Santa Cruz Island. Afternoon transfer to Floreana Island for snorkelling and evening meal in community run restaurant.

This morning is free to relax or enjoy a further excursions on Santa Cruz. There is a lovely 30min walk from Puerto Ayora along a walkway to Tortuga Beach. This white sandy beach shows off iguanas and sea lions. Further along we come to a second bay in which we can have a swim or snorkel. There is also a fish market here which is really interesting to visit and gives us an insight to island life.

We then take a speed boat (can be choppy) to Floreana Island. Along the way we keep our eyes open for dolphins and the magnificent albatross. The Black Beach on Floreana is our destination for some snorkelling. This volcanic beach is interesting and offers some good snorkelling directly off the sand.

Whilst on Floreana we stay in a social enterprise guesthouse, funding and empowering residents of the island in tourism and conservation, we enjoy an evening meal prepared by the same community enterprise. Most tourists are in boats that pass-by this hamlet so benefits are not invested back into the local people.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Guesthouse

DAY 5**Swimming and snorkelling on La Loberia and the seldom-visited Floreana highlands.**

From our accommodation we walk along the coast to the bay and small beach at La Loberia. The shrubs are low here and short walk is very pleasant. We can look back to Black Beach from the end. We might be surprised by seeing a Galapagos penguin amongst the sea lions and sea turtles. We might see some more blue-footed boobies, always looking so clumsy on land, but very agile in the water. At La Loberia we can swim and snorkel. The currents and water can be rough here, so it is only suitable for the confident swimmer. We then head up to the seldom-visited highlands of Floreana. Our expert guides share tales of pirates, whalers, seal hunters and buccaneers who once lived here.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Guesthouse

DAY 6**Boat to Isabela Island; Walk to the crater on Sierra Negra volcano, downhill bike ride.**

A speedboat ride takes us to Isabel, the third island of our visit to this unique archipelago. The 2-3 hr boat ride whisks over the waves with frigate birds flying alongside and the occasional curious marine mammal making an appearance.

Isabela is the largest of the Galapagos Islands and has a long history of pirates and whalers sheltering here in many of the bays and coves. We start with a drive around the island before we stretch our legs with a hike (1-2hrs) on volcano Sierra Negra to its crater. This is the world's second-largest volcanic crater and is impressive. Our guide will explain the varying eco-systems as we go up the trail through to the crater rim. The panoramic views tell us stories of the landscape and waters surrounding the area. We transfer half way done the mountain to a lodge for lunch. We are then issued with our bikes and cycle the rest of the way down to the coast. It's not a demanded ride as we take the semi-paved road downhill for 12km with beautiful views of the ocean and surrounding countryside.

We overnight in the small town of Puerto Villamil. We have dinner and a drink out in one of the beach cafes, restaurants or bars - one pizzeria aptly named the 'Booby Trap'!

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 7

Isabel Island - Kayak and snorkelling around Tintoreras to see boobies, frigatebirds and seal lions.

Today we kayak around Tintoreras. With its rocky islets and shallow channels Tintoreras gives way to numerous interesting species and we might get close up views of a diving blue footed booby, frigatebirds, whitetip reef sharks and a graceful manta ray. The rare Galapagos penguin is found in this area, so we might get a surprise with one of these funny birds. We then jump in and swim and snorkel amongst this magical wildlife.

Our day ends with an optional surfing lesson on the nearby beach, or we can enjoy a fresh juice, cold beer or cocktail at one of the beach bars.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 8

Free day on Isabela Island for snorkelling, surfing, walking, relaxing. Boat transfer to Santa Cruz Island.

We enjoy a lovely free day on Isabela Island. There are many activities you can do if you wish. You may opt for a surf lesson, or maybe a SUP (Stand-Up Paddle board) session. We can walk through the mangroves with iguanas before reaching a lovely lagoon called Concha de Perla where the snorkelling is good. Lunch can be taken in one of the many cafes or restaurants dotted about the sea front or in town. In the afternoon we transfer by boat (3hrs) back to Santa Cruz Island and the town of Puerto Ayora where we started our adventure a week ago. Here we visit the Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre before having some time to do some souvenir shopping before a drink and dinner in a beach front restaurant.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 9

Transfer to Baltra Island and fly back to Quito.

We transfer over the island of Santa Cruz and then take the small ferry across to Baltra Island for the return flight to Quito. Upon arrival in Quito, we transfer to the hotel for one last night in the town.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 10

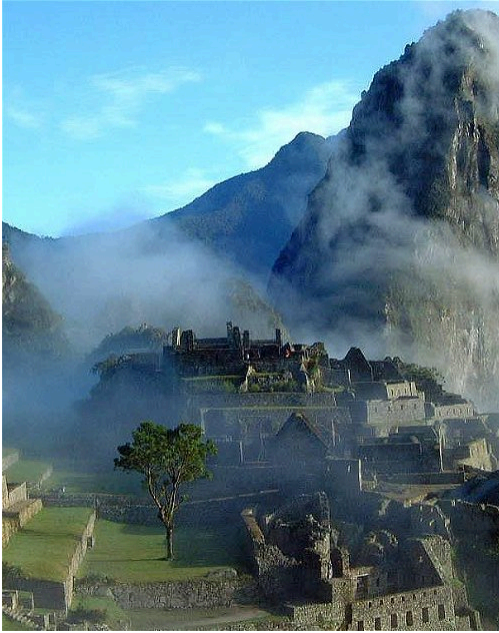
Depart Quito.

Your holiday ends after breakfast. There are many means to transfer to the airport, the airport bus being a good option. Your guide will assist you with any arrangements.

Meals: **B**

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Machu Picchu and Cusco Extension

The ruins of Machu Picchu, rediscovered in 1911, after 500 years under dense vegetation, are one of the man-made wonders of the world. This itinerary also includes time for sightseeing in and around this former Inca capital of Cusco, which is renowned for the wealth of its Inca stonework and for its extravagant Spanish Colonial architecture. We then take the scenic train to Machu Picchu for a full day guided sightseeing tour of this incredible Inca city before returning to Cusco for a final evening.

4 days from
US\$880 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- Return flights from Quito to the Galapagos
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned unless specified as 'optional'

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- \$100 Galapagos National Park fee (\$200 from 1 Aug 2024) payable in cash on arrival at the airport on Galapagos
- \$20 Transit Control Card (payable in cash on departure from Quito Airport to the islands)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Quito.

Transfers to and from Quito Airport are not included. They take approximately one hour.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

9 breakfasts, 5 lunches and 2 dinners are included.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. You should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

When in the Galapagos you there are many fabulous seafood dishes, or just simply very fresh grilled fish. They are also good at cooking with lentils and beans, and many dishes are served with fried green plantains. A variety of meat dishes are available as well. Additionally in the restaurants in the small towns a variety of standard (tourist) foods will be available – such as pizzas, burgers etc. You will also find plenty of ice cream, fresh fruit juices and cocktails available for your holiday indulgences!

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

For the 2 nights in Quito you will stay in a centrally located hotel. We have 3 nights in a small hotel in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz island. On the small island of Florena Island we stay for 2 nights at a social enterprise community guesthouse. Cooking the meals is rotated around the community so that everyone feels the benefit of you staying here. Finally we have 2 nights at a simple hotel in Puerto Villamil on Isabela Island.

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

Internal flights

The return domestic flight from Quito Airport to Baltra Island on the Galapagos is included.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best holiday possible. They will provide information on the places you visit, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to the local people. They will also have a broad general knowledge of the Galapagos, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects.

Park Fees & Permits

The Ecuadorian government currently levies a Galapagos Islands Park entry fee of \$100 USD per person (increasing to \$200 from 1 Aug 2024). This is payable at the airport upon arrival in the park. It is not included in the cost of the tour, and must be paid in CASH. This fee funds Park maintenance and supervision in Galapagos, as well as ecological study, conservation and infrastructure development in Ecuador's other National Parks. Entry fees and the funds they generate for the National Park System are among measures taken by the Ecuadorian government to protect its natural heritage.

Spending Money

You will need \$100 in cash (\$200 from 1 Aug 2024) for the Galapagos park fees + \$20 Transit Control Cards fee in cash on departure from Quito Airport to the Galapagos. Additionally to these essentials, approximately £350-400 per person (or equivalent in US dollars) should be allowed for tips, soft drinks, snacks, non-included meals and miscellaneous expenses. Alcoholic drinks, souvenirs, and optional activities are additional so you may wish to budget for these.

You should take your money in USD dollars to change into local currency. There will be the opportunity to change money at the airport and during the holiday. You will also be able to get currency from bank ATMs. Please be advised that slightly torn notes, notes that have been heavily marked or are faded may be difficult to exchange. It is best to bring notes in fairly good condition, in denominations lower than 100 USD. Credit cards are useful and it is a good idea to carry one in case of emergency.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY COSTS:

Please note that these prices are correct at time of writing, but are subject to change without warning. All prices are in USD. Optional activities taken outside the KE holiday are at your own risk.

- Surfing Lesson on Isabela Island 2h-2h30m. 45-55 USD per person

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is expected, although not compulsory, and is an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your holiday. As a guideline a per traveller tip of USD 100-150 per week for your guide is suggested. Further smaller tips for local boat staff, hotel staff and guides on the excursions such as the kayaking should be accounted for as well.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday.

For the domestic flights to the Galapagos you are allowed a maximum of one piece of luggage per person weighing a maximum of 23 kg, plus one carry-on piece weighing a maximum of 10 kg.

For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

A good size daypack is also essential. If you don't wish to take all of your luggage with you to Galapagos, please ensure you have an extra bag you can leave behind at hotel storage and pickup on your return.

Please note that Galapagos is a protected National Park so your luggage will be checked before arrival and departure to and from the islands. Don't bring any food, seeds or other organic material that could affect the delicate ecosystem of the islands.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

Group Members

We sell this holiday in conjunction with our local operator, this enables us to gather sufficient numbers of like-minded travellers to get the holiday up and running. For this holiday the minimum age is 12 yrs (anyone under 18 must be travelling with a parent or guardian. The parent or guardian must be at least 21).

The holiday will be conducted in English. Generally on these trips there will be a mix of nationalities but it is not possible to guarantee this.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH THE USA

You will require an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any US-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is USD\$21 and you should apply for it at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>. With the ESTA complete, the majority of British Citizen passport holders can enter the US under the Visa Waiver Programme, VWP. You will be required to have a passport with an integrated chip. Note that if you have travelled to Cuba, Iran, Syria or North Korea since March 2011* you will have to apply for a visa rather than the Visa Waiver Programme (* a full and up to date list of countries can be found on the US government website [here](#).)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH CANADA

All citizens (except for USA citizens) will require an eTA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any Canada-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is CAD\$7 and you should apply for it at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp>

Visa Ecuador

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Currency

The unit of currency in Ecuador is US Dollars.

Climate

Located on the Equator, the Galapagos climate is tempered by the Humboldt Current, so you do not experience extreme heat found elsewhere at this latitude. The warmest weather is December to June, when temperatures range from 22-33°C, and the water temperature is in the mid 20s. From July to November, temperatures are cooler and range from 18-24°C, when average water temperature rarely reach 21°C.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

YOU SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- Walking shoes or trainers
- Sandals teva or shoes that are comfortable when wet for kayaking
- Lightweight trousers / shorts / skirt
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Socks & Underwear
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack 25-30 litres
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles (approx 2 litre per person) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Washbag and toiletries - preferable biodegradable
- Antibacterial handwash
- Swimwear
- Small swim towel (poncho-style or sarong for changing on the beach are useful)
- Torch and batteries
- Binoculars
- Plug adapter
- Insect repellent

- Basic First Aid Kit. Including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Camera with extra memory cards and batteries
- Rash vest
- Snorkelling gear - although this is provided you may wish to take your own)
- Flip-flops
- A small drybag - for keeping your camera and essentials dry
- Motion sickness tablets
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

NOTE:

All specialist equipment required for the activities on this holiday are provided.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Quito. Airport transfers are not included.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Quito. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the morning arriving late afternoon. Return flights will depart from Quito in the evening on the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK the following morning.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

Perfect for those who still wish to be active during the day on their holidays - with walks, snorkelling, kayaking, an easy bike ride, and boat transfers between the islands. Sleeping on land in hotels and guesthouses allows us to have more space, evenings on the beach with a drink, and reduces sea-sickness! Great to combine as a holiday to Machu Picchu and the Galapagos. Call us to speak to a member of staff who has done this itinerary.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 18/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change