

# Ecuador & The Galapagos



## **Climate:**

The Andes Mountains divide the country into three main physical regions: the Costa (coastal region), the Sierra (highland region), and the Oriente (eastern region, also called the Amazon region). Because Ecuador lies on the Equator, most of the country, except in the Sierra, experiences humid tropical climates. Temperatures vary only slightly among the seasons; much wider differences occur between day and night. Average daytime high temperatures range from 84° to 91° F (29° to 33° C), while nighttime lows fall to between 68° and 75° F (20° to 24° C). As elevation increases, temperatures drop fairly predictably at a rate of about 9° to 11° F (5° to 6° C) for every 3,300 feet.

The Galapagos consist of 13 major islands (ranging in area from 5.4 to 1,771 square miles), 6 smaller islands, and scores of islets and rocks lying athwart the Equator 600 miles (1,000 km) west of the mainland of Ecuador. The climate of the Galapagos Islands is characterized by low rainfall and low humidity. Air and water temperatures are warmest between Dec and March.

**Currency:** The local currency is the US Dollar. Dollars that are written on or have frayed, torn edges are usually not accepted. Before departure, call your bank to determine locations of ATMs in the cities and towns throughout your itinerary, and be sure and ask if the ATM will have instructions in English. Nearly all should. MasterCard is widely accepted while Visa and American Express are occasionally. However, many shops will charge you a fee for using a credit card. You can avoid these fees by bringing more cash and using that for your purchases.

**Visas:** For U.S. and Canadian citizens, a valid passport is needed for entry into all South American countries. However, it is NOT necessary to obtain a visa BEFORE entering any South American countries except Brazil.

**Departure Tax:** \$40.80 (\$25 from Guayaquil) on international flights, as well as some smaller fees for domestic flights. **There is a \$100pp Galapagos National Park fee which must be paid in US dollars only or pre-paid if possible.**

**Galapagos flights:** Please note there is a 20kg (~50 lbs) weight limit for luggage on flights to/from the Galapagos. You can always store luggage in Quito. The departure tax from Guayaquil is \$25.

**Immunizations:** Recommendations change frequently, so you must check directly with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a traveler's clinic or other medical authority.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/Travel/destinationList.aspx#P>

**Tipping Guideline:** Drivers - \$5-\$8 pp per day  
Mainland guides - \$10-\$20 pp per day  
For trekking trips: Cooks - \$4 pp per day  
Porters and other trekking staff - \$3 pp per day  
**Galapagos cruises:** \$20-25 pp per day - split between ship naturalist and crew



**Budget:** You will need to analyze your spending habits and decide how much extra money to bring for alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, gratuities, souvenirs, and laundry. For a ten day trip, budget at least \$200 \$300pp for additional expenses. A rule of thumb: take half the clothing and twice the money you thought you would need!

**Dialing Code:** 593

**Time Zone:** GMT/UTC -5 **TIME ZONE:** Ecuador is in the Eastern time zone (GMT-5 in the mainland). Daylight savings time is not observed. Galapagos is one hour behind mainland Ecuador. On board, we observe mainland Ecuador time.

**Electricity:** 120V, 60Hz. Ecuador runs on the same voltage system as the USA, so no adapters' necessary.

**Additional Country Information:** More country specific information can be found on our website. Go to the Travel Center page (<http://www.mythsandmountains.com/2000/travel/center.cfm>) and then scroll down to the bottom of the page. There you will find links to various websites from the CIA Factbook to travel films.

### **Specifically Galapagos:**

**Smoking policy:** Smoking is prohibited in enclosed areas aboard the vessels and on the Islands. Smoking is only allowed on the outside decks in designated areas.

**Drinking water:** Water bottles are provided upon arrival and you can refill them from the water jug on the boat. Drinking water is provided during meal times. We do not recommend you drink water from the tap in your cabin.

**Motion sickness:** Due to strong currents, there will be moderate movement of the vessel while navigating. Most passengers are not affected. However, if you are prone to seasickness, we strongly urge you bring some type of medication to prevent motion sickness.

**Physical limitations:** Passengers able to walk a few hours a day unassisted will be able to fully enjoy Galapagos. Some of the excursions require more physical activity than others involving short steep climbs or long walks in hot weather. However, most excursions require moderate activity and the walks are at a leisurely pace. Entering and exiting the *pangas* (local word for dinghies) require that you need to be reasonably fit and sure footed. If you are concerned about your ability to do any particular day hike, please consult with the naturalist beforehand. In order to enjoy your trip to its fullest potential, it is a good idea to do some exercise before your trip, such as walking, swimming or bicycling.

**Island visits:** The vessels anchor offshore at two visitor sites or Islands per day. Passengers are ferried to the landing point in zodiac style inflatable landing craft (locally called "PANGAS"). The landings are either wet (where one must step into water anywhere from your ankles to your knees and wade to shore) or dry (where one steps from the panga directly to the volcanic rock). Your guide and panga driver will assist you with a steady hand. On the Islands, one follows marked trails set by the National Park walking at a leisurely pace together with your guide. You will spend 3-4 hours at each site allowing plenty of time to explore and photograph the wildlife.

**National Park rules:** The National Park establishes and maintains nature trails and interpretive signs. Signs posted on board our vessels list the National Park Rules & Regulations. During the orientation, your guide will go over the Galapagos National Park rules which you are required to follow. Visitors cannot legally go anywhere in the designated National Park area without being escorted by a licensed guide. Rules are enforced by naturalist guides and park officials and are as follows:

- 1 Please do not disturb or remove any native plant, rock or animal on land or in the water.
- 2 Be careful not to transport any live material or sand to the islands.
- 3 Do not take any food or drink except water to the uninhabited islands.
- 4 Please do not touch, pet or feed the animals. Approaching them too closely or taking flash photography will disturb them.
- 5 Please do not startle or chase any animal from its nesting place.

- 6 Please do not leave any trash on the Islands or throw any litter overboard.
- 7 Please follow the marked trails at all times and do not walk out of their limits.
- 8 Please stay with your naturalist guide who must accompany all groups on the trails.
- 9 Please do not buy souvenirs of objects made from native Galapagos products (except for wood) especially black coral, sea lion teeth and shells of the Galapagos tortoises.
- 10 Do not smoke on the islands.

Please help us to preserve these Islands for future generations.  
 Leave only footprints and take home only memories.

**MONTHLY TEMPERATURES in the Galapagos:**

	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
AVG SEA TEMP:	74	76	76	76	74	74	72	66	68	70	72	74
AVG RAINFALL (In inches)	1	1	2	1.5	.75	.25	.50	.25	.50	.25	.50	.50

## Spanish 101:

please - por favor  
thank you - gracias  
hello - hola  
goodbye - adios  
see you later - hasta luego  
yes - si  
no - no  
I'm sorry - lo siento  
excuse me - perdón  
I don't understand - no entiendo  
Do you speak English? - habla inglés?  
I don't speak Spanish - no hablo español  
Good afternoon - Buenas tardes  
Good night - Buenas noches  
How much is? - Cuanto es?  
Good - bueno  
bad - malo  
car - coche  
postcard - postal  
map - mapa  
menu - la carta  
bill - la cuenta  
waiter/waitress - camarero/camarera  
tomorrow - mañana  
yesterday - ayer  
today - hoy  
I need - necesito  
breakfast - desayuno  
lunch - almuerzo  
dinner - cena  
Airport - aeropuerto  
departure - salida  
arrival - llegada  
petrol - gasolina  
chemist - farmacia  
Doctor - medico

aceite de oliva - olive oil  
ajillo/ajo - garlic  
arroz - rice  
atún - tuna  
champiñones - mushrooms  
gambas - prawns  
ensalada - salad  
a la plancha - grilled  
pollo - chicken  
helado - ice cream  
al horno - baked  
huevo - egg  
jamón - ham  
mariscos - seafood  
pan - bread  
papas - potatoes  
pavo - turkey  
pescado - fish  
pimiento - pepper  
queso - cheese  
sal - salt  
salchicha - sausage  
sopa - soup  
tortilla - spanish omelette  
tostada - toast  
agua - water  
agua sin gas - still water  
agua con gas - fizzy water  
bebida - drink  
botella - bottle  
café con leche - coffe with milk  
cortado - espresso with milk  
café solo - black coffee  
cerveza - beer  
hielo - ice  
leche - milk  
té - tea  
vino - wine  
zumo - fruit juice  
zumo de naranja - orange juice

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See the Longitude Books website: <http://www.longitudebooks.com/> for more book ideas.

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# INSPECTION AND QUARANTINE FOR THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (SICGAL)

The native animals and plants of Galapagos are highly vulnerable to pests and diseases. Because of this, the introduction of an exotic organism may put the economy, human health and biodiversity of the Galapagos Islands at risk.

If you are planning to travel to the Galapagos Islands you should expect that a SICGAL quarantine inspector will check your luggage at the airport in Quito or Guayaquil, as well on your arrival to Galapagos. You must declare any kind of organic product in your possession; fruit, vegetables, plants, food or animal products of any type. The inspector will inform you if they are permitted in Galapagos or not. You should also make sure that shoes and clothes are free of soil and seeds.

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE PROCEDURES COULD RESULT IN CONFISCATION OF PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED ITEMS, FINES, AND IMPRISONMENT OF UP TO THREE MONTHS.**



## Food Products:

Fresh and perishable food products such as fruit and meat are restricted or prohibited. In some cases official documents are required to allow their entry. These types of products must be declared and inspected. Please do not enter Galapagos with perishable products from outside Ecuador as they are prohibited.



## Animal Products:

Animal products or those derived from animal sources may be prohibited or restricted as they could be carriers of numerous kinds of pests and diseases.



## Vegetable Products:

Articles manufactured from vegetable products could be carriers of transferable seeds, viruses, insects and fungi. In all cases an inspection is required to determine the risk level.



## Plants and Fresh Flowers:

Plants and fresh flowers are absolutely prohibited. Only seeds that are authorized and certified may be brought in.



## Live Animals:

Live animals may not be brought into the Galapagos Islands.



## Advice for Inter-Island Trips:

When traveling between islands do not take food, plants or animals. Make sure to clean your shoes and clothes of all soil and seeds before visiting new sites and islands.

**For more information about SICGAL and the list of products which are permitted and not permitted, please visit our website:  
[www.sesa-sicgal.org](http://www.sesa-sicgal.org)  
or [www.visit-galapagos.org](http://www.visit-galapagos.org)**

## Galapagos National Park Rules

Please respect and protect these fragile islands! Myths and Mountains strives to follow the tenets of responsible tourism throughout the world, and we encourage our travelers to read and understand these guidelines before they arrive in the Galapagos Islands.

1. No plant, animal, or remains of such (including shells, bones, and pieces of wood), or other natural objects should be removed or disturbed. This is illegal and can harm the ecological balance of the islands.
2. Be careful not to transport any live material to the islands, or from island to island. Check your clothing for seeds or insects before each landing and departure. Each island has its own unique fauna and flora, and introduced species can quickly destroy these ecosystems.
3. Do not take any food to the uninhabited islands. The orange seed you drop may become a tree.
4. Do not touch or handle the animals. They may become distrustful and lose their remarkable fearlessness if they are approached by human invaders.
5. Do not feed the animals. It can be dangerous to you, and in the long run, it would destroy the animals' social structure and breeding habits. You came here to see a completely natural situation. Please do not interfere with it.
6. Do not startle or chase any animal from its resting or nesting spot. Be especially careful among the breeding seabird colonies. An exposed booby chick can die within minutes or be scooped up by a hungry frigatebird.
7. Stay within the areas designated as visiting sites. Watch for trails and areas marked by the white wooden stakes. This way you can experience the islands with as little impact as possible.
8. Do not leave any litter on the islands, or throw any off your boat. Carry along a bag of some sort if you're going to have any disposables, such as film wrappers or kleenex. Litter is not only ugly; more importantly, it can cause serious physical harm to the animals. Sea turtles, for example, will eat plastics thrown overboard, then die when it blocks their digestive tract.
9. Do not deface the rocks. No graffiti - this is not the New York subway.
10. Do not buy souvenirs or objects made of plants or animals from the islands. If anyone offers you any, please advise the Galapagos National Park Service, your naturalist guide, and Myths and Mountains.
11. Do not visit the islands unless accompanied by a licensed National Park guide. Follow his or her instructions at all times.
12. Restrict your visits to officially approved areas. There are certain areas where the public is permitted, and others where access is restricted or prohibited. Your guide and captain know which areas you are allowed to visit. Don't try to get them to take you somewhere you're not supposed to be.
13. Show your conservationist attitude. Explain these rules to others, and help to enforce them. Notify the Galapagos Park Service if you see any damage being done. You could be a decisive factor in the islands' preservation.