

## **ECOVENTURA PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION for Eric, Flamingo & Letty**

Entry requirements: A valid passport, with at least six months remaining before expiration, is required to enter Ecuador. Visas are not currently required for visitors for up to 90 days, however it is the passenger's responsibility to check with their Ecuadorian consulate prior to traveling to determine if a visa is necessary.

International Flights to Ecuador: Flights to Ecuador are currently serviced by American Airlines (Miami), United (Houston), DELTA (Atlanta), LAN (Miami and JFK), LACSA/TACA (San Jose), COPA (Panama), IBERIA (Madrid) and KLM (Amsterdam). All international tickets have the airport departure taxes included in the cost of the ticket. Local customs authorities allow two suitcases with a total combined weight of 60 kilos per person. A fee of \$200.00 is charged for a third suitcase and \$400.00 for a fourth suitcase, excluding carry-on bags

Immunizations: No inoculations are currently required for visitors to Ecuador and Galapagos. Please do check with your local health office at least two weeks prior to your departure for an update.

Time Zone: Ecuador is in the Eastern Time Zone (GMT-5). Daylight savings time is not observed. Galapagos is one hour behind mainland Ecuador. On board, mainland Ecuador time is observed.

Local Currency: US Dollar is the monetary unit. Be sure to bring small bills (\$1, \$5, \$10 are best).

Language spoken: English is spoken aboard the vessels by guides and Captains. All crew speak Spanish.

Electricity: 110/AC 60 cycle (plugs are same as in the USA)

Passenger information form: All passengers must complete and send this form no later than 60 days prior to departure. It includes information such as passport name, passport number, expiration, nationality and date of birth, International flight schedule, itinerary and hotel contact in Ecuador. It also includes you specify an emergency contact, medical conditions, food allergies or any special dietary requests.

Included in your Cruise rate: cabin accommodation on board, all meals and snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, filtered water, house wine and local beer with dinner, welcome and farewell Captains parties, guided shore excursions, use of snorkeling equipment, wet suits and kayaks, transfers between the airport and dock in Galapagos (Sundays only).

Not Included in your cruise rate: Airfare to Galapagos, Galapagos entrance fee (park tax), Transit card (TCT), gratuities for guides and crew, alcoholic beverages and purchases from the boutique.

Gratuities to guides & crew: Aboard our yachts, gratuities are not included. We prefer that our guests reward our crew based on their performance. Tipping is a personal matter and passengers are encouraged to tip an amount they find appropriate. For those passengers who inquire, we suggest they follow our guidelines of \$200.00 per person. Gratuities are divided among all crew members including guides.

Galapagos entrance fee or "park tax": The Islands are part of the Ecuador National Park system and the entrance fee is \$100.00 per person. Children age 11 and younger get a reduced rate of \$50.00. The fee is divided up among various entities including the GNPS, Marine Reserve, agriculture, municipalities, INEFAN and INGALA.

Transit card fee: All visitors to Galapagos are required to purchase a "Tarjeta de Control de Transito" or TCT card for \$20.00. This card allows INGALA, the institution that controls migration to the islands to better regulate the flow of all arrivals and departure to Galapagos. Ecoventura will register all passengers in advance provided the fee is pre-paid and we receive the passenger information form.

The park tax and TCT fees are not included in the cruise rate. However, these fees are added to your cruise invoice and prepaid by Ecoventura for your convenience provided that you arrive on Sunday to Galapagos (SCY) on the

Avianca flight or you decline to prepay. For those who decline to prepay or do not arrive on Sunday with Avianca, you will need to pre-register on line and pay the fee at the airport.

Flights to Galapagos (San Cristobal): Flights to Galapagos for Ecoventura's passengers are serviced by AVIANCA Airlines from Quito and Guayaquil. Flight reservations for confirmed passengers are made automatically by Ecoventura through our allotment of seats on Sundays to/from San Cristobal (SCY). Passengers who purchase their tickets through Ecoventura for the AVIANCA flights will receive assistance with the check in procedure and can choose to pre-pay the park tax and transit card. A representative from Ecoventura accompanies our passengers on this flight. The airline allows one checked suitcase (maximum 44 lbs.) and one carry-on bag per passenger. AVIANCA Airlines is required to spray inside the aircraft with a special process once doors are closed and is preparing for take-off. This is considered common procedure for flights bound to fragile island eco-systems that are susceptible to prevent any invasive species or virus being accidentally transported to the islands.

Flight check in procedure: On the day of departure, please be at the airport in Quito or Guayaquil two hours prior to departure for check-in. A card will be left at your hotel the evening prior with the exact check in time. You must first have your bags inspected by SICGAL as required to travel to Galapagos. Next, look for the Ecoventura representative at the AVIANCA Airline ticket counter to collect your boarding pass, transit card (if prepaid) and get assistance with check in. Do not stand in line to pay the TCT card if you have already prepaid. Upon arrival in Galapagos, you may be selected to be fingerprinted to complete the process of the migration control. Next you will form a line to process passengers for the Park entrance fee. Do inform the park representative that you are traveling with Ecoventura if you have prepaid the fee. They will have a list of prepaid passengers. Once through, our guides will be waiting for you with signs. You do not need to claim your bags, our crew will collect all baggage and deliver them to your cabin. Passengers who choose to travel to Galapagos earlier or choose to purchase tickets on another carrier will not be provided with the same services.

Transportation contract: All passengers will receive a cruise ticket at the airport in Guayaquil or Quito upon check in for the flight to Galapagos. The cruise ticket contains the terms and conditions of the transportation contract. In order to review the terms before you leave home, you can view this on the company web site.

Travel Insurance: We recommend guests purchase a comprehensive travel insurance policy to protect you and your investment before and during your trip. Travel insurance is available through a link on our web site to [www.WorldNomads.com](http://www.WorldNomads.com) for passengers on the Eric, Flamingo & Letty.

Flight misconnection: We recommend that all passengers traveling to Galapagos consider two nights in mainland Ecuador prior to their cruise to allow for potential flight delays and misconnection. This is particularly important for passengers traveling over winter holidays when flights tend to be overbooked and/or delayed caused by poor weather conditions

Physical limitations: The majority of Ecoventura passengers are healthy, active and reasonably fit. 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 or on uneven rocky trails. However, most excursions require moderate activity and the walks are at a leisurely pace. Entering and exiting the Zodiacs require that you need to be sure footed. If you are concerned about your ability to do any particular day hike, please consult with the naturalist before disembarkation. 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. Please see your doctor for a check-up before traveling to Ecuador. Any medical condition or physical disability that may require special attention or treatment must be advised to Ecoventura at the time of booking.

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.

Medical facilities on board: The yachts carry first aid kits and medical supplies. The Captain and guides are trained in basic First Aid procedures. All yachts have radio contact with the mainland for any medical emergencies.

Communication: Most telecommunication providers have signal in Galapagos and passengers can use their smart phones that are activated for international calling on days when the yachts are in close range to port. The yachts do not offer WiFi service.

Smoking policy: Smoking is prohibited in enclosed areas aboard the vessels and on the Islands. Smoking is only allowed on the outside deck in a designated smoking area.

Drinking water: Bottled water is provided in your cabin and is free of charge. Filtered drinking water is provided during meal times. We suggest you do not drink water from the tap in your cabin. Water bottles can be refilled from the water container located in the bar area.

Special Occasions: You may order a bottle of wine (\$30) or birthday cake (\$20) to be served at dinnertime or a fruit basket (\$10) for your cabin. It is prohibited to bring flowers to Galapagos. Please advise us at least 30 days prior to departure.

Purchases on board: Every passenger has an open tab at the bar and boutique, which are paid the last day of the cruise. We accept cash (US Dollars), Master Card or VISA credit cards only

Island visits/ Activities: Passengers will be assigned by Ecoventura to any of the three identical sister yachts Eric, Flamingo or Letty at the company's discretion. 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. 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 Zodiac 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. In addition to the guided land excursions, we offer deep water snorkeling, beach swim/snorkel, kayaking and zodiac (dingy) rides. Ecoventura is not currently offering any optional scuba diving until further notice.

Yacht & Itinerary Stipulations – Ecoventura reserves the right at its sole option and discretion and that of the Captain of the vessel or National Park impact studies without liability for damages or refund of any kind to deviate from the vessel's advertised or ordinary itinerary for any reason including mechanical failure. Ecoventura will not be held responsible for any refund whatsoever for changes to the printed or scheduled itinerary.

Snorkeling equipment: There are many opportunities to snorkel during the cruise, sometimes twice a day from the beach and in deep water. Masks, fins and snorkels in average sizes are available on board free of charge for use during the cruise. If you anticipate taking advantage of all snorkeling opportunities you may prefer to bring your own mask and snorkel for a proper fit.

Wet suits: Full 3mm wet suits are available for passengers to use during the cruise at no additional charge on a first come first serve basis. Wet suits are most popular from June to November when water temperatures are between 65 and 72 degrees.

Reserve a Wet suit: Passengers who would like to reserve a wet suit prior to the cruise may do so for a charge of \$25.00 for the week. The fee will be charged to onboard account and paid at the end of the cruise. Reserved wet suits will be removed from the inventory and set aside for your exclusive use during the cruise. In order to reserve a wet suit, we need to know your approximate size (size selection may vary by yacht): Men: S, M, MT, L, XL, XXL, XXXL / Women: S, M, MT, L, XL / Children: S, M, L

Sea Kayaks: Each yacht carries two tandem and one single sea kayaks. They are available at designated sites during the cruise at no charge on a first come first serve basis.

**PACKING LIST** – Dress is casual and comfortable, and informality is basic to all activities. We recommend you pack in a collapsible, soft-sided suitcase. Checked bags should be securely locked for your security. We recommend that you leave all valuables at home. The yachts do not have safety boxes and cabins lock from the inside only.

- Small backpack or knapsack
- Walking shoes or lightweight hikers (Keens), socks
- Sport sandals with a Velcro strap (Tevas)
- Boat shoes or flip flops to wear on board
- Comfortable lightweight pants
- Shorts or nylon zip-off pants that convert to shorts
- Short sleeve t-shirts, long sleeve t-shirts
- (2) bathing suits, sunscreen, lip balm SPF 30+
- Wide brimmed hat, bandana, Sunglasses with UV filter and a strap
- Light weight wind breaker
- Sweat shirt or fleece vest or light weight jacket (July to Nov only)
- Camera equipment in a water proof bag
- Binoculars
- Underwater camera
- Personal medication, Sea sickness medication
- Ear plugs
- Small flashlight
- Water bottle - non-polycarbonate plastic (or BPA free) that can be refilled from our containers of purified water made from our reserve osmosis water makers.
- Toiletries - we ask that you bring only biodegradable sunscreens and lotions if possible.
- Ecoventura supplies you with biodegradable soap, shampoo and conditioner.
- Although provided, you may want to bring your own snorkeling equipment (mask and snorkel)
- Beach towels and hair dryers are provided and therefore it is not necessary that you bring these

**Weather condition** – The Galapagos have a surprisingly cool, sub-tropical climate. The larger islands with volcanic peaks have a variety of climatic zones. The coastal areas are arid and covered with plants adapted to desert conditions. The highland areas receive moisture almost all year round, which support lush vegetation. Temperatures are determined almost entirely by ocean currents, which are influenced by the trade winds. There are two seasons, both of which have some precipitation. Galapagos gets an average of ten inches of rain per year, it is never considered "rainy". During the months of December to May, the cooling currents subside, temperatures rise and the climate is warm and sunny with occasional showers. In June, the trend begins toward cooler temperatures with moderate breezes, which continue through November. This period is referred to as the "garua" (pronounced gah-ru-ah) season, which means mist in Spanish.

**MONTHLY 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
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

## Ecoventura & our commitment to Preserving Galapagos

Ecoventura is dedicated to preserve the ecological integrity of the Islands for both its scientific value and economic benefit. Through various projects started in 1999; maintaining the ecological certification, SmartVoyager, preserving the environment through carbon offsets, installing alternative energy sources and establishing the Galapagos Marine Biodiversity Fund (GMBF) to benefit marine conservation and environmental education, Ecoventura has been recognized as a leader in sustainable tourism in the Galapagos.

### SmartVoyager – ecological certification

Ecoventura has maintained the certification of Smart Voyager since 2000, a voluntary environmental program developed by the Rainforest Alliance and *Corporacion y Desarrollo* from Ecuador. This program has awarded tour boats with the distinction of Smart Voyager who comply with requirements to treat lightly on the area's fragile ecosystem. In order to comply, Ecoventura yachts produce their own fresh water through reverse osmosis desalination units, and use only four stroke outboard engines on the Zodiacs. Four stroke engines are more ecological because they are 70% quieter than two-stroke engines, emit virtually no fumes and consumer 50% less fuel. Tour boats must use only lead-free or TBT-free paint. The cooling elements used in refrigeration and air conditioning systems are free of R-12 gas that could potentially escape and add to the green-house effect. Treatment of black and gray wastewater is done through purified ozone and is disposed of 12 miles from the coast as required by MARPOL. Water from the bilge is discharged 12 miles from the coast after it first goes through an eduction system that mixes bilge water 50 times to one. Only biodegradable soaps and detergents are used. No varnish is applied to the exterior walkways. Only yellow exterior lights can be used so they do not attract insects. The standards also require an improved quality of life including sanitary living conditions, medical insurance and advanced training for all crew members.

### Alternative energy & reducing our footprint

Ecoventura became the first operation in the Galapagos in 2006 to completely offset carbon emissions from the company's four yachts, offices and operations (including business travel) through the purchase of carbon credits administered by *NativeEnergy*. In addition, the company has reduced carbon emissions 10% through various methods. In 2008, Ecoventura installed 40 solar panels and two wind generators to the M/Y ERIC, thereby operating the first hybrid yacht in the Galapagos. Almost 17% of the energy used to run the on board generators will be powered by alternative renewable energy.

### Galapagos Marine Biodiversity Fund (GMBF)

In 2006, Established a fund administered by the World Wildlife Fund ([www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)) in support of the Galapagos National Park and other NGO programs called the Galapagos Marine Biodiversity Fund. The fund had helped support projects that target environmental education and marine conservation by strengthening the local communities' ability to manage natural resources; such as scholarships for local students to study for two years at a University, micro-enterprise businesses for families of fishermen to provide an alternate source of income and control illegal fishing activities through a permanent floating station and refit of patrol boats.

### How you can help Ecoventura benefit the local population

Ecoventura has pledged to sponsor the cost of 12 scholarships for one course/ module for local students age 16-17 from the islands of Isabela, San Cristobal and Santa Cruz to study conservation and ecology-related issues. The program is under the auspices of Ecology Project International, a non-profit NGO that has benefited over 600 Galapagos students since 2003. Students spend 50 hours in the field directly involved in conservation actions concerning invasive species and the health and release of turtles into the wild. Galapagos cruise. A \$400 donation makes the course possible for one student. Ecoventura passengers can make donations at the EPI web site: [www.ecologyproject.org/donate](http://www.ecologyproject.org/donate).

Ecoventura has helped to support various initiatives that benefit the local population living in the town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreano, San Cristobal. With a population of 5600, San Cristobal has the second largest population in the Islands. Through the foundation "Gotitas de Esperanza" (drops of hope), Ecoventura has pledged to sponsor

the salaries for teachers and Physical Therapists who work at the Alejandro Alvear School on San Cristobal Island. Ecoventura has teamed up with **Pack for a Purpose**, [www.packforapurpose.org](http://www.packforapurpose.org), a charitable organization, By packing up to 5 lbs (2.27 kgs) of supplies suggested on the web site, you can make a big impact. The program is voluntary and available to Ecoventura passengers who would like the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the children who live in Galapagos by bringing needed items with you to Galapagos. Ecoventura will collect and deliver supplies to the students at the Alejandro Alvear School.

### **Help us recycle and conserve energy during your cruise.**

Ecoventura has implemented a waste management system and garbage-recycling program on all vessels. Please use the garbage receptacles placed on all decks with separate containers for plastics, paper, glass and organic waste. Organic waste is compacted and discharged according to International regulations and National Park requirements. Inorganic solid waste is classified into paper, glass and plastic and turned into the local municipal waste service and recycling center. Better yet - try to bring any packaging back with you to dispose of in the mainland. Signs are posted in your cabins to remind you to reduce, reuse and recycle. You will find two types of towels in your cabin. The green towels are to be used for the island visits and snorkeling. The white towels are to be used in your cabin only. Our policy is to change your towels daily. However, to conserve energy, only the towels that you place on the floor will be changed.

### **Follow the National park rules & regulations**

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. During the cruise, listen to your naturalist guide and follow all the National park rules; they 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 from one Island to the next.
- 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.

### Suggested Reading

There are many wonderful field guides and inspiring photographic books on Galapagos available at bookstores or on line. A complete list can be found on our web site:

[http://www.ecoventura.com/trip\\_details/suggested\\_reading.aspx](http://www.ecoventura.com/trip_details/suggested_reading.aspx)

Longitude Books offers a section on Galapagos books 1-800-342-2164 or [www.longitudebooks.com](http://www.longitudebooks.com)

### New & noteworthy

Galapagos, Preserving Darwin's Legacy, by Tui de Roy, 2009

Galapagos, Both sides of the Coin, by Pete Oxford & Graham Watkins, 2009

Darwin in Galapagos, Footsteps to a New World, by Greg Estes & Thalia Grant, 2009

Galapagos, Exploring Darwin's Tapestry, by John Hess, 2009

Galapagos at the Crossroads; Pirates, Biologists, Tourists and Creationists Battle for Darwin's Cradle of Evolution, by Carol Ann Bassett, 2009

### Best Field guides

Galapagos, A Natural History Guide, by Michael Jackson

A Traveler's Guide to the Galapagos Islands, by Barry Boyce

Galapagos Wildlife, by David Horwell & Pete Oxford, Brandt Publication

Galapagos, Reef Fish Identification Guide, by Paul Human

### Lightweight and easy to pack

Galapagos, Smithsonian Natural History Series, by JC Kricher,

The Enchanted Isles, by Herman Melville, paperback

Galapagos, A Novel, by Kurt Vonnegut, paperback

The Voyage of the Beagle, by Charles Darwin, in paperback

On Natural Selection, Charles Darwin, Penguin Books

Galapagos, World's End, by William Beebe

### Insightful reading

On the Origin of Species, The Illustrated Edition, by Charles Darwin & David Quammen

The Beak of the Finch, by Jonathan Weiner (Pulitzer Prize-winning book)

The Reluctant Mr Darwin, by David Quammen,

Charles Darwin, The Concise story of an extraordinary man, by Tim Berra

### Movies:

Galapagos Affair: Satan came to Eden (2013) murder mystery documentary

Galapagos 3D with David Attenborough (SKY) (2013) nature documentary series

Creation (2010) starring Paul Bettany as Charles Darwin, Jennifer Connelly as Emma

Master & Commander, The Far Side of the World (2008) starring Russell Crowe, Paul Bettany

Galapagos, The Islands that Changed the World (2007) Tilda Swinton

Galapagos (IMAX) (2002) follow marine biologist Carole Baldwin to the ocean floor

### Relevant Links:

Galapagos National Park Service: [www.galapagospark.org](http://www.galapagospark.org)

Galapagos Conservancy [www.galapagos.org](http://www.galapagos.org)

Galapagos Conservation Trust [www.gct.org](http://www.gct.org)

WildAid [www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

World Wildlife Fund [www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org)

International Galapagos Tour Operators Association [www.igtoa.org](http://www.igtoa.org)

Ecoventura recommends these restaurants in Quito

Area: La Floresta (Le Parc):

Noe Sushi Bar - Isabel La Catolica 1245 Tel 322-7378, great place for sushi  
Astrid & Gaston - Avenida Coruna N32-302 y Av Gonzalez Suarez Tel: 250-6621, Peruvian  
Bistro Chez Jerome – Whympers 2096 y Coruna, lovely French restaurant  
La Choza - 12 de Octubre N24-551 y Cordero, Tel: 223-0839, Traditional Ecuadorian specialties  
Pavarotti - Av 12 de Octubre 1955 y Cordero Tel: 256-6668, Italian cuisine  
Mare Nostroum - Foch y Tamayo (corner) Tel: 252-8686, excellent seafood restaurant, fancy  
Barlovento – Av 12 de Octubre N27-09 Orellana Tel 222-3751  
Segundo Muelle – Av Isabel La Catolica N24-883 y Gangotena Tel 222-6548  
Lemmon Grass – Isabel La Catolica N24-845 y Av La Coruna Tel 223-6076  
PIMS -Isabel la Catolica 925 y Luis Cordero, Tel: 222-1827, good choice for families

Area: Mariscal (Mercure Alameda, Hostal de la Rabida)

Rincon de Francia - Roca 779 y 9 de octubre Tel: 255-4668, French w/ cozy atmosphere  
Rincon La Ronda - Belo Horizonte E8-45 y Almagro, Tel: 254-0459, Ecuadorian with music  
Hasta la Vuelta Senor – La Nina E6-13 y La Rabida, typical Ecuadorian  
Spaghetti, Metro Cafe, Crepes & Waffles – all near La Rabida & Orellana

Area: Historial Center of Quito (Patio Andaluz, Mansion de Angel)

Theatrum Restaurant & Wine Bar - Calle Manabi entre Guayaquil y Flores, Tel: 257-1011  
Mea Culpa - Chile y Venezuela, Tel: 295-1190 or 295-0392, great views and menu  
PIMS, Ichimbia Tel 322-8410 or PIMS Panecillo (Melchor Mymerich) Tel 317-2595

Ecoventura recommends these restaurants in Guayaquil:

Le Gourmet (international) or La Fondue (Swiss) located in the Hotel Oro Verde  
Caracol Azul, 9 de Octubre 1918 y Los Rios, Tel 228-0461 or 228-0361  
Resaca, Aroma de Cafe or Santay – located on the Malecon 2000  
Lo Nuestro - Victor Emilio Estrada 903 e Higueras Tel: 238 -6398, Urdesa  
Riviera – VE Estrada 707 y Ficus, Italian, Tel 288-3790,  
Mi Tierra – Las Terrazas via Samborondon, Ecuadorian food, Tel 0483-7759,