



BIRDING MAN

ADVENTURES

Galápagos: The Enchanted Isles

Ecuador

September 30th – October 7th, 2025 or

September 30th – October 10th, 2025



The Santa Cruz Giant Tortoise can be spotted in several reserves in the highlands of Santa Cruz island.



Trip Summary

I had the great fortune of spending two years in Ecuador as a Peace Corps volunteer from 2008-2010. During my time there, I fell in love with its people, culture, and landscapes. Ecuador is a country of astounding biological and cultural diversity, encompassing an area smaller than the state of Colorado yet harboring more species of birds than the entirety of North America. For nature lovers like me, Ecuador is little different from a dream, brimming with exotic orchids, bizarre jungle plants, windswept *páramo* (Andean grasslands), 14 different vibrant indigenous nationalities, and crystal-clear waters of the Galápagos Islands. In terms of birdlife, Ecuador is home to 1659 confirmed species of birds, ranking 5th in the world in bird species richness. Every time you turn around or move to a different altitude, there are new ecosystems to explore and new birds to find!

This carefully crafted trip will immerse you in the breathtaking beauty and the unique biodiversity of both the western and eastern islands. Highlights include observing endemics like the Galápagos Penguin and Flightless Cormorant along the shores of Isabela Island and watching the mating rituals of Waved Albatross on Española Island. You'll also encounter and learn about the evolution of Darwin's finches, giant tortoises, and marine iguanas all while traversing pristine landscapes of volcanic craters, lush mangroves, and white sandy beaches. Expert naturalist guides and comfortable accommodation aboard our eco-friendly vessel ensure an unforgettable journey into this living laboratory of evolution.

This tour is a hybrid approach to exploring the Galápagos Islands, part sea-based and part land-based. It is a cost-effective way to explore many of the islands and see the great majority of its endemic birds and other wildlife. Our trip will be led by some of the most talented nationally certified naturalist guides imaginable. We will stay in full-service accommodations complete with a wide array of amenities and easy access to world-class birding. Safety is of utmost importance and has been fully considered for all parts of this tour. Birding Man Adventures is committed to making your experience in Ecuador one you will remember fondly for the rest of your life. Not only can you add dozens of endemic species to your life list, but you can do so in a way that leaves a positive mark on local communities while helping to preserve Ecuador's threatened ecosystems.

We look forward to showing you the best Ecuador has to offer!

Itinerary in Brief

Day	Activities	Food	Lodging
1	Arrival to Quito Transfer to Puembo Birding Garden	D	Puembo Birding Garden
2	Flight Isla Baltra Santa Cruz Highlands Transfer to Galaxy Yacht	BLD	Galaxy Yacht
3	Tintoreras Islets (Isabela) Wetlands (Isabela) Interpretation Center (Isabela)	BLD	Galaxy Yacht
4	Moreno Point (Isabela) Mangle Point (Fernandina)	BLD	Galaxy Yacht
5	Espinoza Point (Fernandina) Tagus Cove (Isabela)	BLD	Galaxy Yacht
6	Port Egas (Santiago) Chinese Hat	BLD	Galaxy Yacht
7	Black Turtle Cove (Santa Cruz) Transfer to Baltra Island Flight to San Cristobal (or Quito)* Free afternoon and evening	B	Hotel Cactus or Quito hotel
8	Day trip at sea (or international flight home) Point Suarez (Española) Playa Gardner (Española) Return to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal)	BLD	Hotel Cactus
9	Day trip at sea Kicker Rock (San Cristobal) Punta Pitt (San Cristobal) Return to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal)	BLD	Hotel Cactus
10	Flight to Quito Free afternoon in Quito Group dinner at hotel in Quito	BLD	Puembo Birding Garden
11	Breakfast at hotel Transfer to airport Departure	B	None

*Text in orange indicates abbreviated itinerary



Destinations for the proposed 11-day itinerary showing days represented by different colors. One day and night will be spent in Quito before the flight to Baltra and one day and night will be spent in Quito on the way back from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno



Your guide will greet you at the airport in Quito, Ecuador

Itinerary

Day 1: Home | Quito, Ecuador

- Arrival to Quito Mariscal International Airport
- Transfer to San Jose del Puembo Hotel
- Relax at hotel with optional birding in the area
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Western Emerald*
 - *Scrub Tanager*
 - *Blue and Yellow Tanager*
 - *Croaking Ground Dove*
 - *Vermillion Flycatcher*
- Welcome Dinner at hotel
- Overview of Trip

Lodging: [San Jose del Puembo Hotel](#)

Meals included: D



The Woodpecker Finch regularly uses a thorn or twig to tease insects out of bark, a unique foraging behavior. It can be found in the cloud forests of the Santa Cruz highlands.

Day 2: Quito | Baltra Island | Santa Cruz Highlands | Galaxy Yacht

- Flight to Baltra Island (2 hours, 40 minutes)
- Baltra Island
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Galápagos Dove**
 - *Small Ground-Finch**
 - *Medium Ground-Finch**
 - *Small Tree-Finch**
 - *Brown Noddy*
 - *Blue-footed Booby*
 - *Magnificent Frigatebird*
 - **Target Reptiles:**
 - *Baltra Land Iguana**
- Transfer to Santa Cruz Highlands (1 hour)
 - El Chato Giant Tortoise Preserve
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Large Ground-Finch**
 - *Medium Ground-Finch**
 - *Small Ground-Finch**
 - *Large Tree-Finch**

- *Small Tree-Finch**
 - *Woodpecker Finch**
 - *Green Warbler-Finch**
 - *Vegetarian Finch**
 - *Galápagos Rail**
 - *Paint-billed Crake*
 - *Galápagos Flycatcher**
 - *Galápagos Mockingbird**
- Transfer to Puerto Ayora where we will board the Galaxy Yacht
 - Target Birds:
 - *Common Cactus-Finch**
 - *Brown Pelican*
 - *Yellow-crowned Night Heron*
 - *Yellow Warbler*
 - *Smooth-billed Ani*

Lodging: [Galaxy Yacht](#)

Meals included: B, L, D



Brown Noddy can be seen while crossing the Itabaca Canal between Baltra and Santa Cruz



Walking around El Chato Tortoise Reserve, you are likely to see endemics like Large Ground-Finch (upper left), Galápagos Flycatcher (upper right), and Santa Cruz Galápagos Giant Tortoise (lower center)

Day 3: Tintoreras (Isabela) | Wetlands | Interpretation Center

- Tintoreras Islets
 - Renowned for its underwater biodiversity and shallow, clear water

- **Target Birds:**

- *Blue-footed Booby*
 - *Galápagos Penguin**
 - *Ruddy Turnstone*
 - *American Oystercatcher*
 - *Lava Gull**
 - *Whimbrel*
 - *Elliot's Storm Petrel*
 - *Striated Heron*

- **Target Marine Life:**

- *Whitetip Reef Shark*
 - *Green Sea Turtle*
 - *Galápagos Sea Lion*
 - *Marine Iguana*
 - *Tropical fish*
 - *Spotted Eagle Ray*
 - *Manta Ray*



Blue-footed Boobies near Tintoreras

- Wetlands
 - Explore the mangroves, saline lagoons, and beaches of Isabela Island.

- **Target Birds:**

- *White-cheeked Pintail**
 - *Black-necked Stilt*
 - *American Flamingo*
 - *Common Cactus-Finch*
 - *Great Frigatebird*
 - *Common Gallinule*
 - *Wandering Tattler*
 - *Brujo Flycatcher*

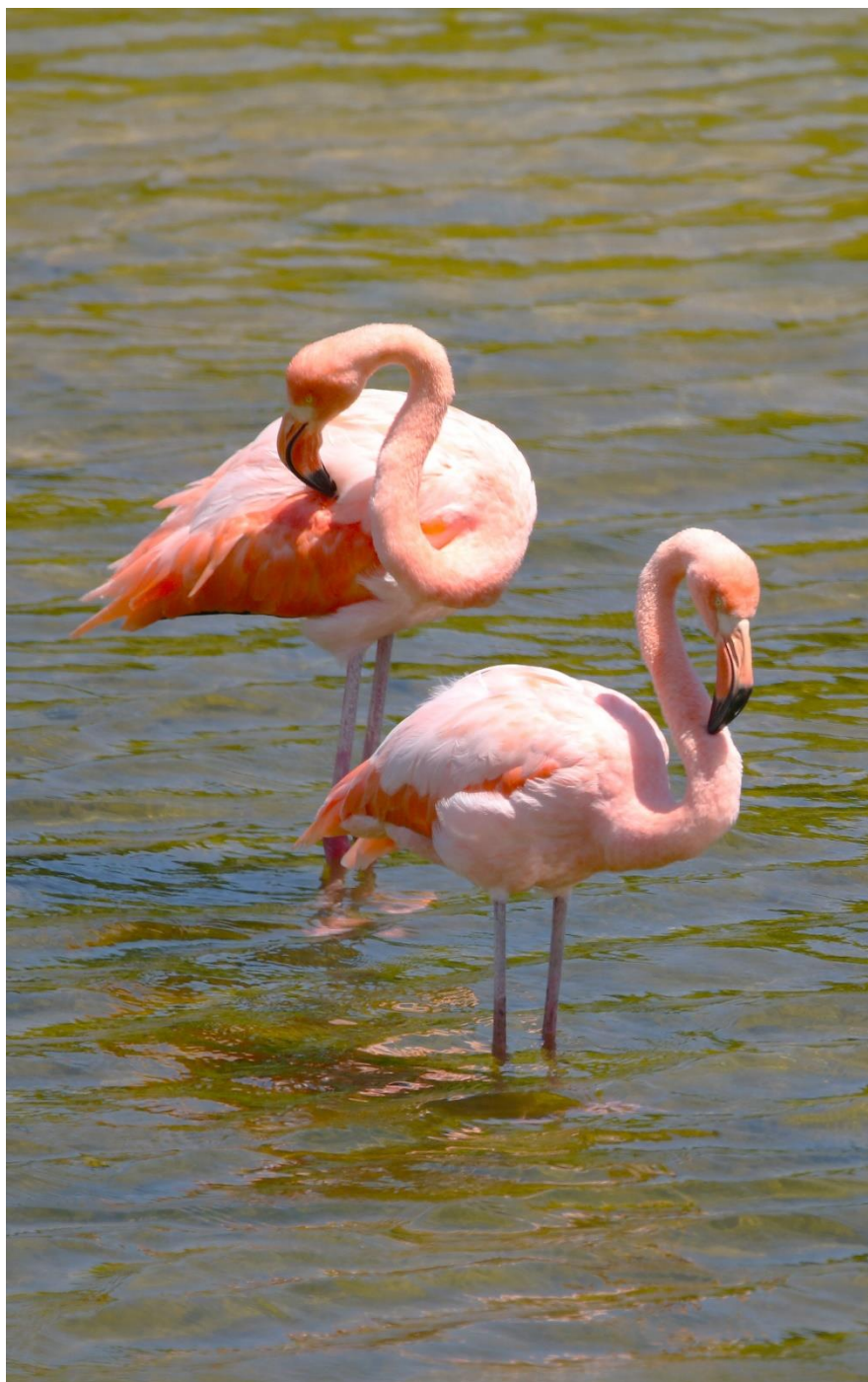


The endemic White-cheeked Pintail

- Isabela Island Interpretation Center
 - Discover the natural and human history of the islands, their conservation, and the ongoing efforts to protect this World Heritage Site.

Lodging: [Galaxy Yacht](#)

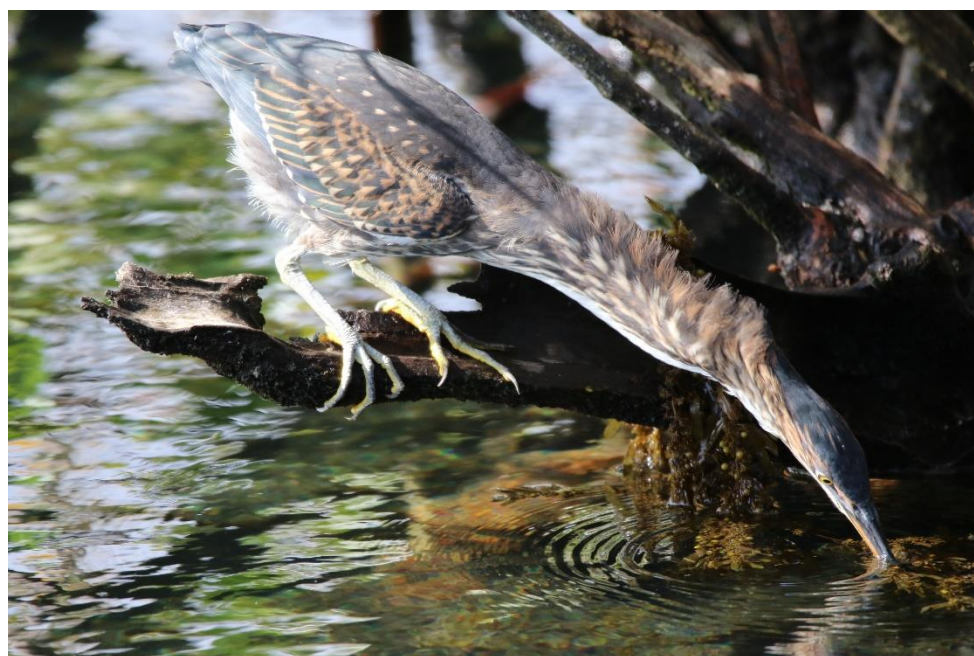
Meals included: B, L, D



American Flamingos are commonly seen at the lagoons behind the town of Puerto Villamil on Isabela Island. We hope to find a variety of wetland birds here



A look at the Galaxy Yacht, our first class vessel



A Striated Heron goes fishing

Day 4: Moreno Point (Isabela) | Mangle Point (Fernandina)

- Moreno Point (Isabela)
 - A vast tableau of lava fields that unfold into a tapestry of life. Backed by brackish lagoons, we will find many wetlands and shorebirds here. We will also enjoy a snorkeling experience here for a closer look at green sea turtles, flightless cormorants, and an array of fish species. If we're lucky, we may even spot an elusive seahorse in the seaweed.
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Galápagos Penguin**
 - *Flightless Cormorant**
 - *Galápagos Martin**
 - *Galápagos Hawk**
 - *Galápagos Shearwater**
 - *Ruddy Turnstone*
 - *American Oystercatcher*
 - *Wandering Tattler*
- Transfer to Mangle Point (Fernandina)
 - This location offers a spectacular mangrove ecosystem surrounded by clear water.
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel*
 - *Band-rumped Storm-Petrel*
 - *Elliot's Storm-Petrel*
 - *Red-necked Phalarope*
 - *Nazca Booby*



Lodging: [Galaxy Yacht](#)
 Meals included: B, L, D



Watch marine iguanas forage for algae under the water as you snorkel on the surface above them. Espinoza Point is ideal for this due to its abundance of seaweed here.

Day 5: Punta Espinoza (Fernandina) | Tagus Cove (Isabela)

- Punta Espinoza
 - Wake up to a surreal volcanic landscape at the base of one of the island's most active volcanoes. Hundreds of marine iguanas greet you upon your arrival. Flightless cormorants are easily seen here.

- **Target Birds:**

- *Flightless Cormorant**
 - *Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch**
 - *Galápagos Hawk**
 - *Galápagos Mockingbird**
 - *Galápagos Shearwater**
 - *Galápagos Penguin**

- Tagus Cove
 - Hike through dense palo santo forests and marvel at Darwin Lake. Snorkel in a cove where penguins feed on anchovies

- **Target Birds:**

- *Galápagos Petrel*
 - *Galápagos Martin*



Notice the incredible azure eye of the somewhat drab-colored Flightless Cormorant

Lodging: [Galaxy Yacht](#)

Meals included: B, L, D



Not everyone gets lucky enough to snorkel with a penguin, but Tagus Cove is probably the best chance you'll ever get

Day 6: Egas Port (Santiago) | China Hat (Santiago)

- Egas Port
 - Hike to the “grottos,” home to a colony of Galápagos Fur Seals. Enjoy views of shorebirds along and marine iguanas along the way. We will have a snorkeling experience here that may include reef sharks and playful Galápagos sea lions.
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Galápagos Dove**
 - *Nazca Booby**
 - *Galápagos Flycatcher**
 - *Galápagos Mockingbird**
- Chinese Hat
 - This idyllic islet is framed by turquoise waters, coral sand beaches, and dark lava rocks. It is also an unexpected haven for penguins. We will snorkel here in the crystal-clear water and get good looks at tropical fish, reef sharks, and possibly penguins.

Lodging: [Galaxy Yacht](#)

Meals included: B, L, D



You just may have to navigate sunbathing sea lions along the trails of Chinese Hat

Day 7: Black Turtle Cove (Santa Cruz) | Baltra Island | Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal)

- Black Turtle Cove
 - We'll cruise among serene mangrove forests and tranquil water channels. This mangrove ecosystem is a significant breeding ground for green sea turtles and various species of sharks
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Blue-footed Booby*
 - *Striated Heron*
 - *Galápagos Shearwater**
 - *Swallow-tailed Gull (near endemic)*
- Return to Baltra Island
- Flight to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal) **or Quito**
- Afternoon free and **independent lunch and dinner** in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno

Lodging: [Hotel Cactus](#) **or hotel in Quito**

Meals included: B



Watch the elaborate mating dance of Waved Albatross near Punta Suarez on Española Island

Day 8: Day trip to Española Island

- Early departure from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (or departure from Quito to home)
- Punta Suarez
 - One of the highlights of any visit to the Galápagos Islands, Punta Suarez features nearly 25,000 – 30,000 breeding Waved Albatross, nearly the entire world population of the adult birds.
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Waved Albatross**
 - *Española Mockingbird**
 - *Red-billed Tropicbird*
 - *Swallow-tailed Gull*
 - *Galápagos Petrel**
 - *Galápagos Hawk**
 - *Española Ground-Finch**
 - *Gray Warbler-Finch**
- Playa Gardner
 - A beautiful white-sand beach usually filled with sunbathing Galápagos sea lions
 - Relax on the beach here and go for a swim. While sitting on the beach, see if an Española mockingbird doesn't land on your head.

- Return to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno

Lodging: [Hotel Cactus](#)

Meals included: B, L, D



Beach buddies at Playa Gardner

Day 9: Day trip to San Cristobal Sites

- Early departure from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno
- Kicker Rock
 - A tuff cone formed when boiling lava encountered a cold ocean, this rocky island is home to a variety of marine life. We will snorkel here and hope to find manta rays, sea turtles, sharks, sea lions, and colorful tropical fish.
 - **Target Birds:**
 - *Blue-footed Booby*
 - *Nazca Booby*
 - *Magnificent Frigatebird*
 - *Great Frigatebird*

- Punta Pitt
 - This is the only place in the Galápagos where you can see all three species of boobies nesting together. Both species of frigatebirds are here along with several different kinds of storm petrels.

- **Target Birds:**

- *Red-footed Booby*
 - *San Cristobal Mockingbird**
 - *Great Frigatebird*
 - *Red-billed Tropicbird*



Adult breeding Red-footed Boobies have a bill of pastel pink, blue, and violet

Lodging: [Hotel Cactus](#)
Meals included: B, L, D

Day 10: Flight to Quito | Check into Hotel | Free Time in Quito

- Morning flight to Quito
- Transfer to hotel
- **Independent lunch**
- Free time in Quito
 - Explore the historic center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (optional)
 - Take the teleférico to the páramo ecosystem (optional)
 - **Target Birds:**
 - Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle
 - Carunculated Caracara
 - Tawny Antpitta
 - Undulated Antpitta
 - White-throated Tyrannulet
 - Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant
 - Cinereous Conebill
 - Stout-billed Cinclodes
 - Grass Wren
 - Masked Flowerpiercer
 - Plumbeous Sierra Finch
 - Ash-breasted Sierra Finch
 - Plain-colored Seed eater

- Return to hotel for final group dinner
- Summary of Trip and Celebration

Lodging: [San Jose de Puembo Hotel](#)

Meals included: B, D



Birding Man Adventures founder and Chief Guide Ryan Dibala at the El Chato Tortoise Preserve on Santa Cruz Island



Price per person:

\$5,550, single supplement \$2,000

\$4,250, single supplement \$1,850 (abbreviated itinerary)

Includes:

- ✓ Flight to Galápagos to and from Quito
- ✓ \$200 National Park entrance fee
- ✓ \$25 transfer fee
- ✓ Professional naturalist guides
- ✓ 6-day live-a-board yacht
- ✓ Equipment (snorkel and fins, wetsuit, stand up paddleboard)
- ✓ Hotels
- ✓ Meals (except for lunch and dinner on Day 7 and lunch on Day 10)
- ✓ Water and snacks throughout the trip
- ✓ 24-hour assistance in case of emergency

Does not include:

- × International Flight
- × Medical insurance
- × Travel insurance
- × Evacuation costs
- × Tips for guides and crew (usually amounting to \$300 per person)
- × Alcoholic beverages
- × Personal expenses (souvenirs, massages, etc.)
- × Activities and food not included on the itinerary
- × Optional tips to local drivers and guides
- × Laundry and other items of personal nature

Please note that this itinerary cannot be 100% guaranteed, as it is only a rough guide and can be changed due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.



What You Need to Know

Tour Pace:

This tour is designed for beginning-to-intermediate birders and photographers. We consider the difficulty level to be moderate, with a combination of easy hiking and snorkeling excursions. Expect early morning starts, but we will allow time for rest and relaxation during the afternoon.

Transportation:

Flight to and from the islands. You will be picked up in a 20-passenger coaster bus that will take you to the Santa Cruz Highlands and Puerto Ayora. Here you will board the first-class [Galaxy Yacht](#). After 6-days at sea, you will return to the airport on Baltra Island where you will fly to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal). Here, we will take taxis to our hotel. We will use day trip boats from the port over the next two days and return to the airport in taxis.

Lodging:

First-class Yacht and 3-star hotels.

ATM Machines and Payment Methods:

The most convenient place to withdraw money (Ecuador's official currency is US dollars) is at the airport in Quito. Sometimes, there can be issues with ATMs in smaller towns. However, there are ATMs at the Baltra airport, Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz) and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal).

Climate:

Being on the equator, many would expect the Galápagos Islands to have a tropical climate, but more is at play here than just latitude. The islands have two distinct seasons (hot and cool) largely dictated by ocean currents. The hot season occurs between December and June, when it also tends to rain more, resulting in lush profusions of plant growth. The cool season occurs between June and December, a period where there is little rain and cooler temperatures. The cool Humboldt current interacts with warm southeastern trade winds to form a temperature inversion above the mountains on the biggest islands, creating a mist known as garúa. During this season, the seas can be rougher and the water is cooler.



If you are prone to seasickness, ask your doctor about taking Dimenhydrinate (dramamine). Hired boats will supply us with wetsuits and snorkeling gear.

Safety:

Ecuador is generally a safe country to visit. However, it has recently received bad press due to increased gang-related activity near Guayaquil and several coastal cities. The US Department of State currently designates Ecuador as Level 2: Exercise increased caution. We have been actively communicating with Ecuadorian residents and friends currently living in Ecuador are confident that the areas we will visit on this trip remain safe. We continue to be vigilant regarding safety, as it is our utmost priority, and if at any point in time safety conditions change and we deem them to be unsafe in the areas we will travel to, we will cancel the trip immediately. Please read our cancellation policy below and on our [Terms and Conditions](#) page.

Laundry:

Laundry services are available in Quito and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal).

Internet:

Wi-Fi is available in Quito, on the Galaxy Yacht, and at the hotel in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal). You might consider purchasing a SIM card at Quito airport on the day of your arrival if your phone service does not have an international plan. Your guide will meet you at the airport and can help you with this.

Meals:

Meals will consist mostly of Ecuadorian traditional cuisine and vegetarian options will be available. There will be two nights where you will be free to get meals on your own. Please inform of us of any dietary preferences or restrictions in advance.

Travel Insurance:

We do not provide travel (or medical) insurance. We strongly advise that you purchase a travel insurance package. Please read our **cancellation policy** below and on our [Terms and Conditions Page](#).



READY TO BOOK THIS TOUR?

Registration and Payment Information:

Registration and all payments, including initial deposit, should be made through our trip portal on [We Travel](#). We do accept credit cards for an additional 2.9% fee, but you may also pay by bank transfer or check. We request a \$1,500 initial deposit upon registration. **Full payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure.**

CANCELLATIONS: If we cancel a tour due to low attendance, severe weather, COVID-19, or other unforeseen event, participants may either move their payments to another trip of their choice or receive a full refund. If you cancel your spot on a tour that we intend to operate more than 90 days from departure, you will be eligible for a full refund. If cancelled within 90 days of departure, no refund will be given UNLESS we are able to fill your spot(s) with another participant(s). In that situation, \$250 will be withheld for administrative purposes, but the remainder of your payment will be refunded. We highly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or a family member prior to or during a trip.