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Dallas / Ft. Worth  
Texas

## **Trip Preparation Information**

**Galapagos Eco Explorer I**

**August 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> 2008**

### **THE VESSEL**

The **M/V Galapagos Eco Explorer I** comfortably accommodates 16 passengers in 9 double staterooms, all of which have private bathroom facilities, queen-size or side by side twin beds and sliding glass doors to maximize the view of the Pacific Ocean and Galapagos Archipelago. All cabins are on the main and upper decks. The air-conditioned salon on the main deck includes dining tables, TV, VCR, CD/DVD, video library and lounge area. An open-air salon is located on the upper deck, and sunning/viewing areas are located on the top level and forward on the upper deck. The dive deck is equipped with a bathroom, individual gear lockers, camera table with low pressure air hose, recharging station, air and nitrox filling stations, tank racks, and a separate fresh water rinse for both scuba and underwater camera equipment. Diving operations are conducted from two large pangas (tenders), easily boarded from the dive deck. The Galapagos Eco Explorer I is also equipped with a satellite telephone for outgoing calls worldwide.

### **DIVING FROM THE VESSEL**

The weather in the Galapagos has water temperatures ranging from 70 – 85 degrees F from December through May and 60 – 75 (F) June through November. Water temperatures are slightly warmer in both Darwin and Wolf. Air temperatures range from or higher in the rainy season (December-May) to the low 90's during the dry season (June – November), with nearly constant sea breezes. Currents can range from 1 to 5 knots at the sites we visit, and visibility is generally between 30 and 80 feet. Most divers are comfortable with a 7mm wetsuit June - November and up to a 5 mm wetsuit December - May. Gloves and hood are recommended.

Your dives will be done from the pangas with an easy backward roll in to the water. After your dive, your tank will be lifted back in to the panga and you will board via its stern ladders.

## **SAFETY STANDARDS**

To ensure your safety, we require the following of all divers:

1. All divers must be certified as scuba divers by an internationally recognized accrediting organization.
2. All divers must be experienced divers and have logged at least one dive within the 6 months prior to boarding the vessel.
3. All dives are guided by an instructor/naturalist guide.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. All divers must have a submersible con-sole and a computer.
6. On night dives, a cyalume light stick or marker beacon must be worn by each diver.
7. Decompression diving is not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 130' (110' on nitrox).
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits. Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Sun screens, sun-glasses, a visor, raincoat, lightweight sweater or jacket, backpack, tevas and a hat are recommended. Please remember that the Galapagos Islands straddle the Equator and the sun can be very strong at times. In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency towards seasickness, come prepared with motion sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. If you have favorite CD's or DVD's, feel free to bring them.

All linens (including sheets, comforters, bath towels, hand towels, dive towels, and wash cloths) are provided on board.

If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, a swimsuit, change of clothes, medications and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these few items with you will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable.

## **EQUIPMENT LIST**

The vessel provides tanks, weights, and weight belts for your use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need.

**Please indicate on your application form what equipment you will require.**

Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Certification Card
- Diving Log Book
- Mask \*
- Snorkel \*
- Fins \*

- Booties
  - Buoyancy Control Device (required) \*
  - Regulator w/alternate air source \*
  - Submersible pressure and depth gauges (required) \*
  - Dive light \*
  - Dive computer \*
  - Wet suit – 5 mm to 7 mm \*
  - Hooded 5 mm vest
  - Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Available for rent on board or at [Dive Into Scuba](#)

## ARRIVAL

Passports are required! If in doubt about visas, contact the Ecuadorian Consulate for specific requirements from your country.

We will arrive in Quito, on mainland Ecuador, at least one and preferably two days prior to your flight to the Galapagos Islands, to insure luggage is with you or to make up for any travel delays. Transfers within the Galapagos are included in your package, and you will be met at the airport by our tour operator. If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to the Explorer on schedule, please contact Galasam, our Ecuadorian partner, at 01199748964 and notify them of your updated arrival time should you have that information, and where you may be reached in the meantime.

**The Galapagos Eco Explorer I will leave port on Monday at approximately 1:00pm.**

## SAMPLE ITINERARIES

Days aboard the Explorer generally involve a 6:30 am dive followed by breakfast from 7 am to 8 am (cold breakfasts are available for late risers), dives at 9:30, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm and a possible night dive. Lunch is served at 12:30 pm, and dinner at 7:00pm. Optional island nature tours and hikes will be offered during the week on board, at all islands except Darwin and Wolf (where land access is not allowed).

**Please note that these itineraries are examples only**, and will change depending on weather and logistics at the Captain's discretion.

### ***ISLA SAN CRISTOBAL DEPARTURES***

If meeting the vessel in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, Galapagos Islands, a guide will meet you upon exiting the baggage claim area for transfer to the vessel.

#### **Monday: San Cristobal and Isla Lobos**

Guests fly to the Galapagos Islands from Mainland Ecuador, arriving in the late morning.

Guests are met at the airport and taken to the Explorer. Boarding the vessel after 1:00pm, guests will depart for a short crossing to Isla Lobos for check out dives and a land visit. Lunch will be served during the crossing and dinner will be served after the check out dives, with an optional trip in to town after dinner. The vessel will make a 4 hour midnight departure to Isla Seymour.

### **Tuesday: North Seymour Island**

6:30, 9:30 and 11:30 dives; optional 1 – 2 hour island tour available on Tuesday instead of the 11:30 dive. Sightings will include blue-footed boobies, sea lions, frigates, marine and land iguanas, and lava gulls. Optional night dive after dinner. The vessel will travel overnight (15 hours) to Wolf Island.

### **Wednesday: Wolf Island**

6:30, 9:30 and 11:30 and 2:30 dives. Sightings often include hammerheads sharks, eagle rays, Galapagos sharks, silky sharks, and occasional whale sharks. Optional night dive after dinner. The vessel will travel 2 ½ hours to Darwin.

### **Thursday: Darwin Island**

6:30, 9:30, 11:30 and 3:00 dives. Sightings are often similar to those experienced at Wolf Island. Optional night dive after dinner. Night spent at mooring.

### **Friday: Darwin Island**

6:30, 9:30, 11:30 and 3:00 dives. Sightings often include hammerheads, whale sharks, eagle rays, Galapagos sharks, and silky sharks. Optional night dive available. Overnight transit south to Cabo Marshall.

### **Saturday: Sabela Island, Cabo Marshall**

6:30, 9:30, 11:30 and 3:00 dives. Sightings include manta rays, turtles, hammerheads, Mola Mola Sunfish. Optional night dive. Evening or overnight transit to Cousin's Rock (6 hours).

### **Sunday: Cousin's Rock**

6:30 and 9:30 dives. Lunch and then Bartolome Isle hike; snorkeling with the Galapagos penguins and sea lions. The vessel will travel back to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno with dinner and farewell party on board.

### **Monday: Puerto Baquerizo Moreno**

Breakfast; depart the vessel by 8am optional tortoises trip and shopping in town. Transfer back to the airport for flight back to Quito or Guayaquil.

## **MEALS**

Aboard the Galapagos Eco Explorer I, evening meals usually consist of lots of fresh vegetables, rice, pasta, chicken, beef, turkey, pork, and fish. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, bacon, pancakes, French toast, muffins, danish and fresh fruits. Lunches vary from soup and sandwiches, burgers, pasta, assorted salads, and quiche. Baked breads, cookies and brownies are offered between dives.

**If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate so on your application form.** Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings and foods are often unavailable in the islands, and that it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat or soy products, fresh fruit, fish, and other items common elsewhere. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk or seriously compromise your enjoyment of your holiday.

## **CURRENCY**

The U.S. dollar is the official currency of Ecuador; therefore, it is not necessary to purchase currency before arriving. Most major credit cards are accepted widely when shopping ashore.

## **DEPARTURE**

The Galapagos Eco Explorer I arrives at its final destination port on Sunday afternoon and passengers spend Sunday night and have Monday breakfast on board. There will be sufficient time to catch a flight out on Monday. There is a departure tax, payable in cash, of US\$25 upon leaving on a flight from either Quito or Guayaquil.

## **ON BOARD CHARGES**

Though all meals, beverages, transportation between islands, and much more has been taken care of with your trip payment, there are additional items which you may charge to your on board bill. These include retail items (shirts, scuba accessories, etc.), incoming and outgoing telephone calls, photographic and scuba instruction, film processing, rentals, and crew gratuities.

The bill may be paid at the end of the trip using cash, Discover, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Diner's Club; traveler's checks are not accepted. Diner's Club is preferred. Personal checks are not accepted on board, and we are unable to exchange credit card charges for cash.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

You can be reached aboard the Galapagos Eco Explorer I from North America via satellite telephone; please check your booking information for the correct telephone numbers. Outgoing calls may also be made. Please be aware that a charge is assessed for both incoming and outgoing calls.

## **CREW GRATUITIES**

Crew gratuities are not included in your package. The crew works very hard, 7 days a week and up to 12 weeks at a stretch, providing the best possible service for our guests. The industry standard for crew gratuities on dive trips (if of course you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 10% and 15% of the package price per passenger. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

**PACKAGES INCLUDE:**

7 nights/8 days aboard vessel  
3 meals daily, plus between-dive snacks  
4 - 5 dives daily  
Use of tanks, weights and belts  
All alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages  
Port and Immigration Fees

**PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE:**

Hotel accommodations  
Flights to/from Galapagos  
Rental, instruction, nitrox and retail charges  
Crew gratuities  
Trip Cancellation Insurance  
Quito/Guayaquil departure taxes (US\$25)  
National Marine Park Fees (\$100 per person, payable only in cash on arrival)  
Temporary Fuel Surcharge, if applicable