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# GALAPAGOS UNCOVERED - 8 DAYS



## COUNTRIES VISITED: ECUADOR

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Snorkelling with sea turtles, rays, penguins and sea lions
- Kayaking
- Tintoreras & Lava tunnels
- Charles Darwin research station
- Encounters with wild giant tortoises.

### INCLUDES

- 3-star hotels on the Galapagos Islands
- All transport and transfers per the itinerary
- Roundtrip Domestic flights between Quito and Galapagos Islands
- Day 1 Airport Transfer from central location
- Services of Naturalist Local Guide whilst in Galapagos
- Snorkelling Gear (masks, fins & life vest)
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

### EXCLUDES

- International flights (available on request)
- Accommodation in Quito
- Quito airport transfers on days 1 & 7
- Visa fees
- INGALA transit card: USD 20 p/p
- Galapagos National Park fee USD 200 p/p
- Wetsuit Hire USD 20 p/p
- USD $10 pier-use fee at Puerto Villamil
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tipping
- Any other items not mentioned above

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

### ARRIVAL & ACCOMMODATION

On the Galapagos Islands, we use comfortable 3-star properties. Please see the accommodation tab for details of the hotels most commonly used on this tour (specific hotels are subject to change).

Hotel accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms. All couples will stay in a private double room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

### PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING

On the morning of day 1, a transfer from a central location will be provided to Quito Airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. We will have given you your flight times and details in advance. You may also join a pre-departure meeting the previous evening (normally at 6pm) - to ensure you are fully prepared for your time in the Galapagos, we strongly recommend joining this meeting. Details will be provided before you arrive.

Locations for both the pre-departure meeting and airport transfer will be provided prior to departure.

### POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION AND AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Post-trip accommodation can be requested and booked by the Oasis Office before your trip commences, please email southamerica@oasisoverland.co.uk. Post-tour services can be arranged with your tour guide, however we recommend booking any required services prior to departure to avoid disappointment.

#### FLIGHT INFORMATION

On Day 1 of your trip you will be picked up from a central location by our local representative and transferred to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos. We will have given you your pickup location and flight times and details in advance.

You may also join a pre-departure meeting the previous evening (normally at 6pm). Details will be provided before you arrive. It is strongly recommended that you attend this meeting.

Departing flights: we recommend booking your departure flight for at least 1 day after arriving back into Quito.

There are many online flight search engines such as **www.skyscanner.net** or **www.ebookers.co.uk** flights can also be booked direct with airline websites or through travel agencies. Please inform us of your flight details through your online account, as airport transfers can be arranged for various trips.

**One way ticket:** If you intend to travel on a one way ticket to meet up with one of our trips, without possessing an onward flight ticket - we recommend that you have a copy of your payment confirmation/receipt (that you will be sent at time of your balance payment) available at immigration to assist easy entry.

#### PASSPORTS

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips.

If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require.

#### VISAS

### Passports:

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER the date your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips. If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip. It is your responsibility to ensure you have a valid passport.

**Visas:**
Many nationalities (including UK, European, Australian, New Zealand, South Africa, USA) can travel to Ecuador visa free for stays of up to 90 days in each 12 month period. Other nationalities should check with their local consulate or embassy.

**Galapagos Islands:**
Please refer to the section with our tour notes titled 'Galapagos fees & permits' to ensure you are fully prepared for your time in the Galapagos.

**Passports:**
Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER the date your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips. If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip. It is your responsibility to ensure you have a valid passport.

**Visas:**
Many nationalities (including UK, European, Australian, New Zealand, South Africa, USA) can travel to Ecuador visa free for stays of up to 90 days in each 12 month period. Other nationalities should check with their local consulate or embassy.

**Galapagos Island Fees:**
When visiting the Galapagos Islands, you should be aware of additional fees and permits which are required, please find details below:

**INGALA Transit Card - USD 20 per person (cash only):**
In essence, this is simply a fee to obtain authorization to visit the Galápagos Islands.
You pay a small fee of 20 USD in cash at the INGALA booth at the airport in Quito or Guayaquil to receive a "Transit Control Card" (TCC or TCT in Spanish). This card tracks your entry and exit from the islands, helping to protect the delicate ecosystem from unauthorized immigration.
Introduced in 2012, this system is a requirement for all non-resident visitors. If you're taking a cruise, you can often pre-book this card through the cruise line, and a representative will meet you at the airport with it.
Remember to keep your Transit Control Card safe throughout your trip, as you'll need to present it upon departure.

**Galapagos National Park Fee - USD 200 per person (cash only):**
To visit the Galápagos Islands, all tourists must pay an entrance fee, which varies depending on age and nationality. Most foreign adults pay $200, while children pay $100. Visitors from certain South American countries enjoy reduced rates (these are updated rates which came into force on 1st August 2024).

While the fee may seem high, it's crucial to remember that these funds directly support the conservation of the islands' unique biodiversity. The Galápagos National Park, along with other agencies, uses these resources to protect the delicate ecosystems, improve local services, and

ensure the sustainability of this natural wonder.

The entrance fee contributes to a wide range of initiatives, from safeguarding marine life to supporting education and healthcare in local communities. By paying this fee, you're not only gaining access to an unforgettable experience but also actively participating in preserving the Galápagos Islands for future generations.

## Ecuador

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Ecuador.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

Travellers **must** have physical proof of health care Insurance whilst travelling through Ecuador. You may be asked to provide this at Immigration at the land border or at the airport on arrival - a printed copy of your travel Insurance should suffice.

### VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH

It is possible that you may require some vaccinations for your trip, depending on the areas that you are visiting. As we are not medically trained, we are unable to give detailed advice on vaccination requirements. We have worked closely with Nomad Travel Clinics for many years and they offer Oasis travellers a 10% discount on vaccinations, anti- malarial drugs, first aid items, clothing and equipment, just enter discount code OASIS1000 at www.nomadtravel.co.uk. Alternatively you can check out the fit for travel website for more travel health information or consult a reputable travel clinic or your GP for information and advice. We suggest that you allow at least 8 weeks to get all your vaccinations.

Health - To join our trips you should be in good general health. Your medical insurance company must be told if you have any pre-existing medical condition / allergy or if you are on any regular medication, otherwise you may not be covered under your policies for these. Our crew will need to know of any medication or conditions you may have. For general health advice log onto www.nathnac.org/travel/

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a compulsory requirement that you have adequate travel insurance before you join any Oasis Trip & at the very least are insured for all necessary medical & repatriation costs incurred.

You will be asked to provide the following details in **My Oasis Account** if you have not already done so: travel insurance name, insurance policy number & insurance emergency telephone number. You will also be required to give a copy of your policy with this information to your Tour Leader on arrival with confirmation that the policy duration is sufficient to cover you for the entire duration of your trip. It is also wise to leave a copy of your insurance policy with a friend or relative for safe keeping.

We believe that your safety and holiday enjoyment are very important. It is a mistake to think that "it will never happen to me". It is also very important that you are covered for all the activities that you may wish to undertake while on our trip. It is extremely important that you check the full extent of your cover related to 24 hour Medical Emergency Assistance. In the event of you needing medical treatment you want to know that you have the best cover available to you. Your policy should include adequate Medical Emergency and Repatriation cover as well as Cancellation, Baggage and Personal Liability cover. You need to be aware of EXACTLY what activities your policy covers you for. Please note that skiing is not usually covered in most insurance policies.

We offer tailor made Overland Adventure Travel Insurance that covers most of the adventure and sporting activities on our trips.

For further information on the insurance we offer, the activities covered and costs, check out the **Travel Insurance** section of our website. You can purchase our insurance by logging into My Oasis Account and click 'Buy Insurance' or through the following **link**.

## MONEY, BUDGETS AND LP

### Spending Money

From past trips and travellers feedback £20 to £30 per day per person, should cover costs such as meals not included, soft drinks and beers, email & communications, souvenirs and other general spending. Personal spending habits & budgets differ greatly from person to person. Budget on optional activities separately (see optional excursions page).

### Changing money

Change your money only at banks, hotels, airports or forex bureaus. It is illegal to change money on the street, as these people will normally be opportunistic thieves or undercover police. Your crew will advise you where & when you can change money & with what means. It is also a good idea to have a small CASH emergency fund, to allow for the unexpected.

### Credit & Debit Cards

Many businesses in the Galapagos Islands don't accept credit or debit cards, therefore we don't recommend relying on these types of cards whilst travelling on our tours here. In larger towns some

stores may accept this form of payment

### Pre-Paid Travel Currency Cards

These cards are similar to normal Credit and Debit cards but they can be pre loaded with cash before you travel with a set amount allowing you to withdraw this cash using the card at normal ATMs. It is a more secure way to access cash on your trip and easier to use than travellers cheques, but again do not rely on these as your sole means of funds on a trip - (please refer to the ATM section). Several banks and companies now offer these cards, but be sure to look into the rates for withdrawing cash when making your decision.

### ATMs

These are available in larger towns in the Galapagos, however we recommend bringing on enough cash to avoid needing these. We discourage you from relying on your ATM card as a primary source of funds in case it is lost/stolen/swallowed, or the machine isn't working. Besides memorising your PIN, it is also important to be aware of your daily withdrawal limit and bank withdrawal costs.

### Tipping

Whilst the amount you tip should ultimately be determined upon your satisfaction of the service you've received whilst on tour, we are often asked for advice on this. For the team involved in operating your tour on the ground (from drivers to guides), we would recommend budgetting approximately 20 USD per person per day for tips, though it is at your discretion if you wish to tip more or less than this.

#### WHAT TO TAKE

| **Equipment** | **Toiletries - Most available to buy on trip** |
|---|---|
| • **Sleeping Bag - recommended for trips departing Nov-April**<br>• **Sleep Sheet**<br>• **Small day-pack or small bag to carry daily items**<br>• **Soft rucksack, holdall or suitcase**<br>• **Water bottle - for personal use - we recommend Water-to-Go (see below Responsible Travel)** | • Soap, shampoo, toothbrush/paste, antibacterial hand wash, lip balm & moisturiser<br>• Sun block 35 + after sun, hat & sun glasses<br>• Tampons (can buy in most places)<br>• Contraception |
| **Clothes** | **Personal Effects** |

| | |
|---|---|
| • **One pair of trainers or boots**<br>• **Sandals/flip flops/jandals/thongs**<br>• **Underwear/socks**<br>• **T shirts/shirts**<br>• **Shorts/swimwear**<br>• **Jeans/trousers/jog pants/leggings**<br>• **Skirt or dress**<br>• **Sweat shirt/jumper**<br>• **Jacket/fleece & waterproof jacket** | • Camera with protective case, spare batteries, film/memory card<br>• Torch and spare batteries (head torch is best)<br>• Travel adaptor plug/charger (for cameras and mobile phone batteries)<br>• Money belt<br>• Personal stereo - iPod/MP3 etc<br>• Towel and/or sarong |
| **Recommended Medical Kit List** | |
| • **Antiseptic ointment/Antihistamine cream & tablets**<br>• **Nurofen or equivalent pain-killer**<br>• **Eye-drops/bath**<br>• **Anti-diarrhoea treatment**<br>• **A couple of bandages (elasticated & triangular)**<br>• **Medication for personal allergies/asthma etc** | • Insect repellent containing Deet<br>• Re-hydration sachets/vitamin tablets<br>• Assorted plasters<br>• Some suitable antibiotics as recommended by your doctor for infected cuts or to treat severe dysentery<br>• We advise you to bring a small personal medical kit for general everyday use, as well as any personal over-the-counter medicines that you may wish to keep with you. Our guides are familiar with the nearest pharmacies, doctors and hospitals throughout the trip if you need to seek medical attention. It will be your own responsibility to carry your medical kit on included excursions and optional activities as some local operators may not have medical kits to hand. |

| **Equipment** | **Toiletries - Most available to buy on trip** |
|---|---|
| • **Small day-pack or small bag to carry daily items**<br>• **Soft rucksack, holdall or suitcase**<br>• **Water bottle - for personal use - we recommend Water-to-Go (see below Responsible Travel)** | • Soap, shampoo, toothbrush/paste, antibacterial hand wash, lip balm & moisturiser<br>• Sun block 35 + after sun, hat & sun glasses<br>• Tampons (can buy in most places)<br>• Contraception |
| **Clothes** | **Personal Effects** |
| • **One pair of trainers or boots**<br>• **Sandals/flip flops/jandals/thongs**<br>• **Underwear/socks**<br>• **T shirts/shirts**<br>• **Shorts/swimwear**<br>• **Jeans/trousers/jog pants/leggings**<br>• **Skirt or dress**<br>• **Sweat shirt/jumper**<br>• **Jacket/fleece & waterproof jacket** | • Camera with protective case, spare batteries, film/memory card<br>• Torch and spare batteries (head torch is best)<br>• Travel adaptor plug/charger (for cameras and mobile phone batteries)<br>• Money belt<br>• Personal stereo - iPod/MP3 etc<br>• Towel and/or sarong |
| **Recommended Medical Kit List** | |

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**PHOTOGRAPHY AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT**

**Cameras (incl. Digital & Video Cameras)** - An easy to use 'point and press' will get you some good photos. For memorable shots, it may be worthwhile investing in an SLR camera, but be sure to get some practice in before the trip! Most towns and cities have internet cafes where you can download onto CD/internet sites - but don't rely on it.

**Photography** - Be aware of your surroundings when taking photographs and filming. Some locations will be sensitive or have local laws banning photography. For example it is usually forbidden to use cameras at borders or around government buildings, military installations, bridges and airports or to take photos of local officials. If you do take photos or film where it is not permitted you may find yourself being questioned by irate officials who may decide to confiscate your camera or instruct you to delete all the images/footage on your device. If in doubt ask for permission, or if there is no-one to ask use some common sense.

**Drones** - As the use of drones becomes more common, countries throughout the world are gradually updating their laws and restrictions on usage. The specific regulations will vary from one country to another, so do check the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice for the latest information. As with cameras, use your common sense if you do use a drone and avoid operation in sensitive areas. If you plan to bring a drone on your trip with us please contact us first to ensure there will be a suitable place to store it while on your trip.

**Electrical charging & power supply** - It may be difficult to find a power source for charging at times, so a spare battery is a must. Log onto www.whatplug.net for information regarding the different electrical plugs and voltage used in each country.

**CONTACTING HOME**

The internet and WiFi are available in many towns / cities you will visit. Do bear in mind that the connections can be unreliable and will not always be as fast as you are used to at home. If a lot of people try to use the internet at the same time the speed will be slower still, especially if trying to make Skype calls or upload photos / videos. During periods of the trip where we are wild camping, internet will be less common.

Some travellers choose to take an unlocked mobile phone with them and buy local SIM cards in each country, allowing them to use mobile data. If you particularly want or need regular internet access this may be a good option. Telephone calls can be expensive usually £1 to £5 for a three minute call.

Online Diaries - A great variety of free "travel blogs" are now available online, they are a good way of keeping relatives and friend up to date with what you are doing and a good place to upload photos, collecting messages as well as keeping a record for yourself.

#### RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

### Before you go

- Remove unnecessary packaging before you go - waste disposal facilities are often stretched or non existent in the places we visit. To avoid unnecessary pollution of local water supplies take environmentally friendly toiletries with you.
- Why not invest in a wind-up or solar-powered torch or media player before you travel or at least rechargeable batteries.
- Learn some of the local language and read up on the local history/culture before you go. You'll get so much more out of your trip.
- Why not pack some pens/pencils exercise books in your rucksack and they can be donated to a local school or project while you're away. You can also purchase these items cheaply, locally which will help local businesses.
- Take a sturdy water bottle with you from home that you can re-use throughout your trip. We carry large quantities of purified water with us on our Expedition vehicles and it is much better for the environment if you drink this, rather than purchase bottled water along the way. (It also saves you money).
- Water-to-Go: Oasis Overland have partnered with Water-to-Go to help reduce the number of plastic water bottles consumed during a trip. Water-to-Go is a filtration system that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants including viruses, bacteria, chemicals and heavy metals from any non-salt water source. Click here and enter the code OASIS15 to purchase your **Water-to-Go** products at 15% discount. Water-to-Go will then donate a further 15% to Oasis Overland Charity projects.

### While you're travelling

From experience gained in running trips, we have developed our own practical and manageable environmental policy which all of our crew practice on the trips we operate, and they will share this information with you at the start of your trip. We welcome your input on this, plus any new ideas you may have, to improve our existing procedures. As a guide here's a few tips to bear in mind.

- Don't waste water. It is a scarce resource in many of the places our trips visit. On all our Ultimate and Overland Expeditions we carry large quantities of purified water with us. We encourage you to

refill your own water bottles from this supply, rather than purchase bottled water along the way- much more environmentally friendly and saves you money.

- Never buy endangered species or endangered habitat products. Apart from the fact of it being illegal it also encourages the trade to continue.
- Look after and preserve the areas we visit. Be careful about stepping on coral reefs or trekking on undesignated tracks.
- Buy locally made crafts and products helping to support the local economy.
- Don't feel when bargaining that you have to get the cheapest price possible just for the sake of it. Pay what the item is worth to you & don't worry about what someone else has paid.
- Try the local food and drinks - this will help to support local farmers and food sellers. Sitting in a local cafe is also a great way to meet local people.
- Dispose of litter appropriately on your trip. This includes cigarette butts. Not only does litter look unsightly it can be lethal to wildlife.
- Where any toilet facilities exist, however unsavoury they might seem to you, they should be used. Where they do not, always bury your waste and make sure it is never near (at least 30m) a water source.
- When game viewing do not encourage your guides to get too close to the wildlife so that their natural behaviour is impeded.
- Respect local customs, traditions and beliefs of the people in the different regions that you travel through.
- Do not take photos of people, ritual events or special places unless you have asked first. Dress appropriately according to local codes and show respect around religious festivals.
- Recycling is almost non-existent in many of the areas and countries we visit - we do the best we can with limited resources & space on our vehicles.
- For books dedicated to travelling more responsibly & ethically see: **www.tourismconcern.org.uk**

**Community Projects** - Oasis are active in raising awareness and providing support to a number of projects and local schools where we believe we can make a positive difference. More information on the **projects we support**.

#### SECURITY

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) offer country-specific advice, regarding not only security but also entry regulations, local laws and customs and health. We strongly recommend all travellers visit the FCO website, or the equivalent in their home country, to familiarise themselves with local conditions and issues in the countries they plan to visit before committing to a trip with us. You can view their website here.

If you have any questions at all about the safety or security of your trip, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to discuss your trip in more detail.

Oasis does not take responsibility for clients' personal items and we advise you to not take items of value that are not essential for the journey.

#### TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a compulsory requirement that you have adequate travel insurance before you join any Oasis Trip, and  at the very least are insured for all necessary medical & repatriation costs incurred if you need them.

You will be asked to provide the following details on the Traveller Information Form that you send in to us after making your booking. If you have not already done so: travel insurance name, insurance policy number & insurance emergency telephone number. You will also be required to give a copy of your policy with this information to your Tour Leader on arrival with confirmation that the policy duration is sufficient to cover you for the entire duration of your trip.  It is also wise to leave a copy of your insurance policy with a friend or relative for safe keeping.

We believe that your safety and holiday enjoyment are very important. It is a mistake to think that "it will never happen to me". It is also very important that you are covered for all the activities that you may wish to undertake while on our trip. It is extremely important that you check the full extent of your cover related to 24 hour Medical Emergency Assistance. In the event of you needing medical treatment you want to know that you have the best cover available to you. Your policy should include adequate Medical Emergency and Repatriation cover as well as Cancellation, Baggage and Personal Liability cover. You need to be aware of EXACTLY what activities your policy covers you for. Please note that skiing is not usually covered in most insurance policies.

We offer tailor made Overland Adventure Travel Insurance that covers most of the adventure and sporting activities on our trips.

For further information on the insurance we offer, the activities covered and costs, check out the **Travel Insurance** section of our website. UK residents can purchase the insurance we recommend directly through Campbell Irvine.

#### RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

### Before you go

- Remove unnecessary packaging before you go - waste disposal facilities are often stretched or non existent in the places we visit. To avoid unnecessary pollution of local water supplies take environmentally friendly toiletries with you.
- Why not invest in a wind-up or solar-powered torch or media player before you travel or at least rechargeable batteries.

- Learn some of the local language and read up on the local history/culture before you go. You'll get so much more out of your trip.
- Why not pack some pens/pencils exercise books in your rucksack and they can be donated to a local school or project while you're away. You can also purchase these items cheaply, locally which will help local businesses.
- Take a sturdy water bottle with you from home that you can re-use throughout your trip. We carry large quantities of purified water with us on our Expedition vehicles and it is much better for the environment if you drink this, rather than purchase bottled water along the way. (It also saves you money).
- **Water-to-Go**: Oasis Overland have partnered with Water-to-Go to help reduce the number of plastic water bottles consumed during a trip. Water-to-Go is a filtration system that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants including viruses, bacteria, chemicals and heavy metals from any non-salt water source. **Click here** and enter the code OASIS25 to purchase your Water-to-Go products at 25% discount.

### While you're travelling

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- Don't waste water. It is a scarce resource in many of the places our trips visit. On all our Ultimate and Overland Expeditions we carry large quantities of purified water with us. We encourage you to refill your own water bottles from this supply, rather than purchase bottled water along the way- much more environmentally friendly and saves you money!
- Never buy endangered species or endangered habitat products. Apart from the fact of it being illegal it also encourages the trade to continue.
- Look after and preserve the areas we visit. Be careful about stepping on coral reefs or trekking on undesignated tracks.
- Buy locally made crafts and products helping to support the local economy.
- Don't feel when bargaining that you have to get the cheapest price possible just for the sake of it. Pay what the item is worth to you & don't worry about what someone else has paid.
- Try the local food and drinks - this will help to support local farmers and food sellers. Sitting in a local cafe is also a great way to meet local people.
- Dispose of litter appropriately on your trip. This includes cigarette butts. Not only does litter look unsightly it can be lethal to wildlife.
- Where any toilet facilities exist, however unsavoury they might seem to you, they should be used. Where they do not, always bury your waste and make sure it is never near, (at least 30m) a water source.

- When game viewing do not encourage your guides to get too close to the wildlife so that their natural behaviour is impeded.
- Respect local customs, traditions and beliefs of the people in the different regions that you travel through.
- Do not take photos of people, ritual events or special places unless you have asked first. Dress appropriately according to local codes and show respect around religious festivals.
- Recycling is almost non-existent in many of the areas and countries we visit - we do the best we can with limited resources & space on our vehicles.
- For books dedicated to travelling more responsibly & ethically see: **www.tourismconcern.org.uk**

#### POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION AND AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Post-trip accommodation can be arranged with your tour leader during the trip or directly with the hotel on arrival. The return airport transfer can be arranged through your hotel / hostel and is not included, it is at your own expense. We regret these services cannot be arranged via the Oasis office before departure.

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Post-trip accommodation can be arranged with your tour leader during the trip or directly with the hotel on arrival. The return airport transfer can be arranged through your hotel / hostel and is not included, it is at your own expense. We regret these services cannot be arranged via the Oasis office before departure.

The exception to this is for Rio accommodation over the New Year & Carnival periods, please contact **southamerica@oasisoverland.co.uk** when you make your booking for further information.

#### FLIGHT INFORMATION

You need to arrive at your departure city at least the day before your trip begins. Return flights must be booked for at least the day AFTER the trip is due to end. You may wish to allow some extra time to explore your arrival and departure cities.

There are many online flight search engines such as **www.skyscanner.net** or **www.ebookers.co.uk** **,** flights can also be booked direct with airline websites or through travel agencies. Please inform us of your flight details through your online account, as airport transfers can be arranged for various trips.

**One way ticket:** If you intend to travel on a one way ticket to meet up with one of our trips, without possessing an onward flight ticket - we recommend that you have a copy of your payment confirmation/receipt (that you will be sent at time of your balance payment) available at immigration to

assist easy entry.

**Departure Taxes**: Please check with your Travel Agent or Airline if your flight ticket already includes a departure tax payment out of the country. If it does not - please budget for approx US$30 to $70 USD - to be paid in US$ only.

#### PASSPORTS

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips.

If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require.

Please bring 2 photocopies of your passport details to give to your tour leader.

As a guideline, you will need at least 1 blank page per country in your passport, (for the 31 weeks Trans South America, you should allow at least 13 blank pages).

**Inca Trail Trek** – you will need to provide your passport details to apply for your Inca trail trekking permit, please enter these correctly on your booking form. If you are intending on renewing your passport then please let us know at the point of booking. In order to trek you will need to be in possession of both your passport and your permit – and the passport details have to match otherwise the permit issuing authorities will not let you trek.

#### VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH

You may require vaccinations for your trip, depending on the areas that you are visiting. As we are not medically trained, we are unable to give detailed advice on vaccination requirements, so please use the information below as a guide only. You should consult a reputable travel clinic or your GP for information and advice. We have worked closely with **Nomad Travel Clinics** for many years and they offer Oasis travellers a **10% discount** on vaccinations, anti- malarial drugs, first aid items, clothing and equipment, just enter discount code OASIS1000 at www.nomadtravel.co.uk. Alternatively you can check out the Fit For Travel website for more travel health information. We suggest that you allow at least 8 weeks to get all your vaccinations.

**Covid-19** - requirements for the countries you will visit have been changing and things are getting easier nearly everywhere now with many countries removing the requirement for vaccination certificates and PCR tests before entry. In principle however, it is going to be much more straightforward, and cheaper for you, if you are fully vaccinated against Covid-19. That includes having had any booster doses if your vaccine timings mean you could have had one. There are still a few countries along the way which won't let people in if you are not fully vaccinated or provide a negative PCR test (Bolivia and Suriname for example). **It is safest to assume that to complete the**

**trip you will need to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.**

**Yellow Fever** - being vaccinated against Yellow Fever and having a valid certificate and a photocopy is deemed compulsory in some countries we visit, especially at certain borders and are needed if you are entering from an infected country.

**Rabies** - vaccinations are regularly advised for many countries that we travel through.

**Malaria** - in some of the areas we visit there is a risk of contracting Malaria. You must be aware that whatever malaria prophylactics you are taking, they only offer partial protection. They must be coupled with your own physical efforts against being bitten - which is the best prevention. Malaria-carrying mosquitoes come out at sunset so from this time you should wear long sleeves and trousers. Exposed skin, especially ankles, should have insect repellent containing 'Deet' applied to them. Your crew will advise on where the worst affected areas are on the trip. There are a number of malaria prophylactics available and requirements change. You may wish to take a sample of whichever prophylactic you choose, a few weeks before you leave. This way you may determine early on if you have any adverse reactions so you can change the regimen if necessary. Please consult a reputable travel clinic or GP for advice. You can also find more information at www.nomadtravel.co.uk or www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

Medical advice should be taken particularly if you are visiting the jungle in either Ecuador or Peru, the Brazilian Pantanal or Iguazu Falls in either Argentina or Brazil as part of your trip.

**Altitude sickness** - this is caused by thin air (due to lack of oxygen) and can affect anyone arriving at high altitude (above 3000mtrs). The symptoms are headaches, dizziness, shortage of breath and possibly nausea. Arriving at a high altitude destination a few days early will help you acclimatise and avoid this. Make sure you do not over exert yourself, rest for a few hours, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, large meals and drink plenty of water.

As we are travelling mostly by land (as opposed to flying into a high altitude location) we should acclimatise gradually and so avoid 'soroche', mountain sickness.

**Dengue** - unlike the malaria mosquito, which bites at night, the dengue carrying mosquito bites during the day. Some areas we travel to do have occasional outbreaks and it is therefore advised that you take care not to be bitten during the day as well as at night. There is no vaccine available.

**Health** - to join our trips you should be in good general health. Your travel insurance company must be told if you have any pre-existing medical condition or allergy or if you are on any regular medication, otherwise you may not be covered under your policies for these. Our crew will need to know of any medication or conditions you may have.

#### MONEY, BUDGETS AND LP

### Local Payment (LP)

LP is part of your overall trip payment and is the most cost effective and practical way to get hard currency to South America to pay for a variety of your day to day local costs (i.e. all meals prepared by the group, campsite/hostel/hotel fees, gas, and certain activities listed on the trip page) which cannot be pre-paid from the UK. It is a guaranteed amount, set before your trip departs, and unlike 'group kitty' systems we will not ask you to contribute more once the trip is underway.

**Please note:** Your LP is payable to your Tour Leader on the morning of departure in US$ Dollars CASH ONLY. Please make sure that all your notes are in good condition. Old, torn or marked notes are often refused by the banks and we will therefore be unable to accept them either. Larger denomination notes are preferable for your Local payment. In many countries, $10 and $5 notes are simply not accepted and are best avoided.  Please make sure that $US Dollars are dated 2013 or later and do not have a serial number starting with CB.

Please remember that you will need to pre-order US$ cash for your LP before you leave home as your LP is payable all at once at the start of your trip and you cannot pay in local currency using ATMs due to the withdrawal limits in place and their unreliability. In addition, ATM transaction fees can seriously add to your travelling expenses.

**How to bring your currency?**

Past Oasis travellers have fed back that they have felt, as a general rule it is best to bring your money in a combination of cash US dollars, pre-paid travel currency cards and debit/credit cards.

**Make sure that all your notes are in good condition. Old, torn or marked notes are often refused by the banks and shops. Please ensure your notes are dated 2013 onwards** and do not have a serial number starting with CB.  It can be difficult using US$100 bills in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia so if possible, bring US$50 bills for these countries. Some travellers worry about carrying so much cash with them, however all Oasis Overland trucks are equipped with an onboard safe for the security of your money and passport. Please also remember that Visas, where required, need to be paid for in US dollars cash only.

**Spending Money**

*We are currently updating our Optional Excursion costs so please be aware that some costs may have increased or there may be activities that are no longer available or have changed.  In addition, please bear in mind recent global price increases and fluctuations in currency exchange rates.  As such we would suggest budgeting at the higher end of our spending money suggestions below. Personal spending money can vary so much between travellers but we hope this helps you to plan. We always recommend having a contingency fund and it's always worth having a bit extra as a buffer for those 'must buy' purchases you may find en route!*

From past trips and traveller feedback US$150 to US$200 per week should cover costs such as some meals out, soft drinks and beers, email & communications, souvenirs and other general spending. Personal spending habits & budgets differ greatly from person to person. Budget on visa costs and optional activities separately (see visa section above & optional excursions page) & allow

extra for your Local Payment contribution. There is often a departure tax payable in the airport, so allow up to US$50 for this.

For trips starting / ending before Carnival: During the Carnival week both tourists and locals flock to Rio, meaning that many resources are stretched. This includes access to cash via banks and cash machines, as the banks frequently close for the whole ten day carnival period. Many of the machines run out of cash early on in the celebrations (often by day 2), and once the machines are empty they are not restocked until after the carnival celebrations have finished.  Money exchanges can also be difficult to access during this time, or will only provide a very poor rate. From past experience we know that the exchange rate weakens in the run up to Carnival, so all in all (if possible) it would be best for you to get some Brazilian Real's in advance. When working out how many you need, bear in mind any time you will be spending in Brazil before Carnival in Rio.

If your trip goes to **French Guiana, Suriname and Guyana** please note that the general cost of living in these countries is much higher than elsewhere in South America, and you can expect the price of meals, drinks, souvenirs and excursions to accordingly cost more. For these countries we suggest you budget around US$300 a week for extra expenses.

**Changing money**

Change your money only at banks, hotels, airports or forex bureaus. It is illegal to change money on the street, as these people will normally be opportunistic thieves or undercover police. Your crew will advise you where & when you can change money & with what means. It is also a good idea to have a small CASH emergency fund, to allow for the unexpected.

**Credit & Debit Cards**

If you are intending using your credit or debit card, we suggest taking more than one card with you as you may find that your card is not accepted in the first ATM you try. For credit and debit cards Visa is best. Mastercard and American Express are generally not accepted throughout South America. We recommend that you inform your bank that you will be using your card abroad to avoid it being blocked.

**Pre-Paid Travel Currency Cards**

These cards are similar to normal Credit and Debit cards but they can be pre loaded with cash before you travel with a set amount allowing you to withdraw this cash using the card at normal ATMs. It is a more secure way to access cash on your trip, but again do not rely on these as your sole means of funds on a trip - (please refer to the ATM section). Several banks and companies now offer these cards, but be sure to look into the rates for withdrawing cash when making your decision. When using these cards abroad you will use them to withdraw the local currency from an ATM and not the currency that you loaded onto the card.

**ATMs**

These are available in most major cities along our route and allow you to withdraw local currency only. We discourage you from relying on your ATM card as a primary source of funds in case it is lost/stolen/swallowed, or the machine isn't working. In some destinations we probably won't even see a bank or ATM for days on end.  Even where do find them, they cannot always be relied upon - things change, and ATMs don't always work! Besides memorising your PIN, it is also important to be aware of your daily withdrawal limit and bank withdrawal costs.

**Tipping**

Tipping in South America is customary and often expected, and local attitudes towards tipping are different to what we are used to in the West. It is often more than a reward for services well done but as wages are extremely low, it is an accepted means of supplementing an income. As a general rule, tipping around 10% of the total bill in restaurants is a good guide, and the same amounts usually apply for activities and excursions.

Because it can be difficult to know what to tip, and as it has such importance in some areas both economically and culturally, there may be times and activities for which your crew will make it clear what level of tipping is 'customary/expected'. They may also be quite enthusiastic or assertive in encouraging you to take account of these suggestions. This is motivated by the knowledge of how important tipping can be, and the offence or confusion that can be caused when local people are tipped poorly. In the end, tipping remains at the discretion of the individual, but our crew will continue to advise on normal rates, and we would ask you to carefully consider the economic or personal impact of being seen to 'under tip'. We know that many who travel with us are on a tight budget, but ask you to remember that those we work with locally may also face financial hardship, and also work very hard to try to give you unrivalled service/experiences.

As a very rough guide, we would suggest that you budget for an amount equal to 10% of the local payment for your trip, plus 10% of the cost of any of the listed optional excursions that you wish to do. The amounts you end up tipping may vary from a rigid 10%, but hopefully this will help you budget in general.

On the Inca Trail, your crew will advise you what the expected tipping amounts are before the trek. It may seem unusual to be asked to tip before receiving a service, but the tips are a crucial part of the income for the guides, cooks and porters, and it is important that this gets shared out equally and fairly between them, so you can expect your Oasis Tour Leader to take an active role in ensuring it is done in the correct manner. The tips are usually spread out by the Tour Leader and then given to the travellers to hand out on the last day of the trek.

In the past we have been asked by travellers about tipping your Oasis Crew. If you choose to do this, it would be budgeted separately from the above. Our guys work very hard at making your trip a great travel experience. Working overseas can often be challenging and they are pretty much on call for you 24 hours a day, so it's appreciated as a thank you for hard work and good service, but of course not mandatory. Our suggestion is to budget around US$1, per person, per day.

## CLIMATE

You will experience a varying degree of climatic changes at any time of year, from freezing temperatures (down to as cold as minus -15°C) in the Andes, to scorching heat in the desert and heavy downpours in the jungle (up to as hot and humid as 47°C and 90% humidity).

The rains in the Andes usually occur between November and April. This means downpours once or twice a day with the rest of the day usually warm and sunny, although there will also be times where it may not rain at all for a week or so. April to October is the dry season with clear views of the mountains. It is hot during the day but extremely cold at night with temperatures often well below zero. You will be spending a lot of time at altitude where nights can be very cold at any time of year.

The deserts in Peru can also be cold during the night but can be very hot during the day particularly between October and May. The Amazon Jungle is very hot with high humidity plus regular downpours of rain usually year-round. **View South American Climate Chart**

If you are travelling on a trip that goes through Patagonia in July – September, please be aware it will get very cold at times with temperatures well below zero, and you can expect snowfall. Please be prepared for cold conditions, with thermal clothing and the correct sleeping bag.

## WHAT TO TAKE

The less you take the less you have to pack, wash & lug home & you can always pick up extras along the way. Most people make the mistake of bringing too much gear. Clothes washing or laundry facilities will be available at least once a week. You will be travelling in the heat & camping in the cold, so bring clothes for all climates; rough stuff is best. Pack according to season: allowing for extremes in temperature (from the constant baking heat in the dry season to the cold and occasional frost overnight in some areas) Make sure that you bring your gear in a traditional soft sided 70 - 90L rucksack or holdall - suitcases are not suitable. **Remember baggage is limited to 20kg per person plus one day bag.**

| **Equipment** | **Toiletries - Most available to buy on trip** |
|---|---|
| • **Sleeping Bag - 3 to 4 season bag, depending on season, & sleep sheet**<br>• **Foam sleeping mat or thermarest & repair kit**<br>• **Small day-pack or small bag to carry daily items**<br>• **Soft rucksack or holdall (NOT rigid suitcase)**<br>• **Water bottle - for personal use - we recommend Water-to-Go (see below Responsible Travel)** | • Soap, shampoo, toothbrush/paste, antibacterial hand wash, lip balm & moisturiser<br>• Sun block 35 + after sun, hat & sun glasses<br>• Tampons (can buy in most places)<br>• Contraception |
| **Clothes** | **Personal Effects** |

| | |
|---|---|
| • **One pair of trainers or boots**<br>• **Sandals/flip flops/jandals/thongs**<br>• **Underwear/socks**<br>• **T shirts/shirts**<br>• **Shorts/swimwear**<br>• **Jeans/trousers/jog pants/leggings**<br>• **Skirt or dress**<br>• **Sweat shirt/jumper**<br>• **Jacket/fleece & waterproof jacket** | • Camera with protective case, spare batteries, film/memory card<br>• Torch & spare batteries (head torch is best)<br>• Travel adaptor plug/charger (for cameras & mobile phone batteries)<br>• Money belt<br>• Personal stereo - there is a stereo on the truck with iPod/MP3 adaptors<br>• Towel &/or sarong |

| **Recommended Medical Kit List** | |
|---|---|
| • **Antiseptic ointment/Antihistamine cream & tablets**<br>• **Nurofen or equivalent pain-killer**<br>• **Eye-drops/bath**<br>• **Anti-diarrhoea treatment**<br>• **A couple of bandages (elasticated & triangular)**<br>• **Medication for personal allergies/asthma etc**<br>• **Insect repellent containing Deet** | • Re-hydration sachets/vitamin tablets<br>• Assorted plasters<br>• 1 Course of malaria treatment<br>• Some suitable antibiotics as recommended by your doctor for infected cuts or to treat severe dysentery<br>• Malaria Tablets - see Vaccinations & Health section |

Please note that **in the winter months** (June - September) it can be very cold, especially at altitude, so we recommend that you bring extra layers of be prepared to purchase some when you are in Peru, Bolivia & Patagonia.

Even though our trucks are equipped with a comprehensive medical kit, we advise you to bring a small personal medical kit as our truck kit is not for general everyday use. It will also be your responsibility to carry your kit on included excursions and optional activities as some local operators may not have medical kits to hand.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT**

**Cameras (incl. Digital & Video Cameras) -** An easy to use 'point and shoot' will get you some good photos. For memorable shots, it may be worthwhile investing in an SLR camera, but be sure to get some practice in before the trip! Most towns and cities have internet cafes where you can download onto CD/internet sites - but don't rely on it. Internet speeds can be slow for uploading photos to social media or the Cloud.

**Photography -** Be aware of your surroundings when taking photographs and filming. Some locations will be sensitive or have local laws banning photography. For example it is usually forbidden to use cameras at borders or around government buildings, military installations, bridges and airports or to take photos of local officials. If you do take photos or film where it is not permitted you may find

yourself being questioned by irate officials who may decide to confiscate your camera or instruct you to delete all the images/footage on your device. If in doubt ask for permission, or if there is no-one to ask use some common sense.

**Drones -** As the use of drones becomes more common, countries throughout the world are gradually updating their laws and restrictions on usage. The specific regulations will vary from one country to another, so do check the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice for the latest information. As with cameras, use your common sense if you do use a drone and avoid operation in sensitive areas. If you plan to bring a drone on your trip with us please contact us first to ensure there will be a suitable place to store it while on your trip.

**Electrical charging & power supply -** It may be difficult to find a power source for charging at times, so a spare battery is a must.

Consider a 12V in-car charger (our vehicles are equipped with a couple of 12 volt cigarette lighter charger sockets - truck trips only) or bring along your 230V mains charger and travel adaptor plug for use at some of the hotels, hostels and campsites we stay at.

NOTE: 12V - 230V inverters cannot be used on our vehicles because of the power drain they cause.

Log onto**www.whatplug.net**for information regarding the different electrical plugs and voltage used in each country.

#### CONTACTING HOME

The internet and WiFi are readily available in almost every town and city you will visit; most hotels and hostels will have free WiFi as will many bars and cafes. Do bear in mind that the connections can be unreliable and will not always be as fast as you are used to at home. If a lot of people try to use the internet at the same time the speed will be slower still, especially if trying to make Skype calls or upload photos/videos. During periods of the trip where we are camping, internet will be less common.

Some travellers choose to take an unlocked mobile phone with them and buy local SIM cards in each country, allowing them to use mobile data. If you particularly want or need regular internet access this may be a good option. Telephone calls can be expensive usually £1 to £5 for a three minute call.

**Online Diaries** - A great variety of free "travel blogs" are now available online, they are a good way of keeping relatives and friend up to date with what you are doing and a good place to upload photos, collecting messages as well as keeping a record for yourself.

#### SECURITY

All major cities have their share of petty crime (just like our cities) and sensible precautions need to be taken. Wearing expensive looking jewellery or watches and carrying cameras will draw

unnecessary attention to you. Leave valuables such as passports and excess money in your hotel safe or truck safe (we recommend carrying a copy of your passport details page at all times). You may find a simple money belt is more discreet than a bag. Always be aware of your surroundings and when approached by people you do not know, use your common sense. At night in cities it's best to use a taxi, rather than walking around the streets, single women in particular need to be careful and we would suggest that it is safer to be in a group.

On board the truck - each vehicle is fitted with a hidden, lockable safe to be used for money, passports and important documents. Group members will be responsible for the safe and Oasis Overland cannot accept any liability for clients' personal or monetary contents kept in the safe or on board the truck. We advise you to not take items of value that are not essential for the journey. In certain areas a roster may be drawn up for the group to share the task of keeping watch over the truck.

FCDO Advice - the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) offer country-specific advice, regarding not only security but also entry regulations, local laws and customs and health. We strongly recommend all travellers visit the FCDO website, or the equivalent in their home country, to familiarise themselves with local conditions and potential issues in the countries they plan to visit before committing to a trip with us. You can view their website here.

As an adventure tour operator, some of our trips will travel to areas that are rarely-visited and occasionally attract negative publicity. We are not in the business of taking our travellers or indeed staff to regions that we consider dangerous and the safety of all who travel with us is always our main priority, but as a discerning customer we understand you will want to be aware of any risks before travelling. We liaise with the FCDO on specific regions or areas as necessary, as well as monitoring open media outlets and political risk resources and speaking to our contacts on the ground.

In some rare cases, our trips may have to travel through areas against which the FCDO either ‘advise against all but essential travel’ or ‘advise against all travel’. When our trips travel through these areas we will carry out all due diligence and notify you in advance. This advice can change without notice. In these instances you will need to ensure you have full and comprehensive travel insurance that includes cover for these areas – some policies will exclude them. We are able to provide additional cover, if required, at additional cost. It may also be required that you read and sign a short information sheet confirming you have been advised of the risks and agree to travel contrary to the FCDO advice.

If you have any questions at all about the safety or security of your trip, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to discuss your trip in more detail.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

## The Inca Trail and Machu Picchu

We do not include the cost of trekking to Machu Picchu in our Overland trips that visit Peru. Instead, we offer several different options, depending on whether you want to trek or take things more easily and just see Machu Picchu.

**Machu Picchu by train**
If you do not want to do a multi-day hike, then you can stay behind in Cusco for a couple of extra free days, and then take an option to visit Machu Picchu by train. We transfer you by road and train to the town of Aguas Calientes where you spend the night in a hotel. The next morning you then head up to Machu Picchu and enjoy a 2 hour guided tour followed by free time to explore the site. You then return back to Cusco by train and road again, this time joining together with people from the group who have taken the trekking option. Prices are based on a minimum of 2 people taking this option, and a single room supplement applies for any solo travellers staying in the hotel in Aguas Calientes.

**Trekking**
We offer 3 routes - **Classic, Salkantay and Lares** - (subject to season and availability), all accompanied by knowledgeable guides and porters.

Our first choice trek is the Classic trail. As availability is limited we will move quickly after booking to obtain you a permit where possible. It is VERY important to note that as soon as we purchase your permit it is non-transferable, and non-refundable. Your permit will be linked to your passport details, so please make sure you enter these correctly at the time of booking. If you are intending renewing your passport then please let us know at the point of booking. In order to trek you will need to be in possession of both your passport and your permit – and the passport details have to match otherwise the permit issuing authorities will not let you trek. If you need any further clarification then please contact us.

When the Classic trail is not available, we will arrange the Lares trail at no extra charge (subject to minimum 3 people). If you wish to trek either the Lares or Salkantay by choice, you must let us know at the time of booking. An additional fee may be payable, but we will discuss this with you. All of the treks visit Machu Picchu for the day.

For more information about the treks including maps please click below for the three routes and treks:
**Classic Lares Salkantay**

**Tipping on the Inca Trail** - Before you start your trek, your Oasis Tour Leader will advise you and other travellers of the suggested tipping amount for the guides, porters and cooks on the trek (this applies to the Classic, Lares and Salkantay treks). Tipping is a vital part of the income for the staff who work on the treks, and it is expected. It is not compulsory, but if you choose not to tip it will be viewed suspiciously and negatively by the local staff and as such we respectfully ask all our travellers trekking to pay the requested amount. We are advised by the local operators what the suggested tipping amount is for each trek, and you will be asked to contribute, before the trek departs. It is usually around US$50 per person, which is then shared out amongst the guides, porters and cooks.

**Porters** - Personal porters are available who can carry a **maximum of 6kgs** of your equipment whilst on the Classic Inca trail. Please let your tour leader know if you would like to add one of these (price

approx. US$90 per person). At the briefing the Guide would provide you with a duffle bag to pack your equipment into which will be available at camp each night. Your sleeping bag is not included in this weight limit.

**Huayna Picchu** - Some people like to climb the nearby summit of Huayna Picchu during their time at Machu Picchu. One of the main reasons for doing this would be for the view from the top of it over Machu Picchu. Because of its increasing popularity the local authorities have introduced a permit system to control numbers and collect funds from those wanting to do this. Permits can sell out a long time in advance, and you therefore need to request us to purchase you a permit urgently if you want to do this. You can request this by clicking the Huayna Picchu 'add-on' through your account. There are 400 permits available per day currently. Once requested your tickets cannot be refunded or exchanged, as it is arranged with your specific name and passport details.

The ascent of Huayna Picchu is very steep in places and it can take about an hour to the top. It will be your responsibility to be at the entrance point at the right time, and should you be late then you will unfortunately forfeit your opportunity to go up. The climb is done on the same day that you are visiting the ruins at Machu Picchu, so reduces your time wandering around the ruins. Please bear in mind that to get up and down can take around three hours, and is very steep in places. It is not really for those who are unfit, or scared of heights. The path is pretty deteriorated in places so some light scrambling is required.

## W-Trek, Torres del Paine

Explore South America’s finest national park. This 6 Day / 5 night option will take you on trails to the mighty granite pillars of Los Torres, through the imposing French Valley and magnificent Grey’s Glacier. Hike through emerald forests, to magnificent glaciers, along alpine rivers and lakes, with picturesque mountain vistas while in this area of unparalleled beauty.

The **W Trek** is a challenging hike with some tricky terrain and steep ascents and descents. You do not need to be a specialist or experienced hiker to complete the trek, but you do need to be in moderate to good health with a decent level of fitness. The Active **W Trek** is a popular, camping style multi-day adventure program.

Spaces to hike the **W Trek** are limited and issued on a first-come-first-served basis and subject to availability at all times, so if you want to join this trek it is recommended you add this at the time of your booking. If we are unable to confirm your space you will be refunded in full, including your deposit.

### What’s Included:

- Accommodation for 5 nights - 2 nights Puerto Natales (twin share), 3 nights in park (2 camping, 1 dorm)
- Transfer from Puerto Natales to Torres del Paine National Park (1.45 hours drive)
- Park entrance fee
- Catamaran ticket from Paine Grande to Pudeto, bus ticket from Pudeto to Puerto Natales

- Tents
- Guide on first day of trekking to the base of the towers
- Trekking poles for the first day of trekking if required
- Meals as listed

**What‘s Not Included:**

- Meals not listed
- Tips

***Itinerary:*** *Please note the itinerary is subject to alteration and the stated walking times are approximate. Weather in the park can be changeable and affect hiking, and everyone walks at their own pace.*

**Day 1:** This evening you will meet fellow trekkers for a welcome dinner, followed by a briefing for your 'W Trek'.

**Accommodation:** Puerto Natales (twin room - shared bathrooms)

**Meals Included:** Dinner

**Day 2:** This morning nice and early you will meet the group and travel to Torres del Paine National Park. Torres del Paine was given its name from the three striking granite towers, formed above a glacial lake. The trek today is with a guide and you will be making your way to the base of these towers. Once you reach the lookout of the ‘Base of Torres del Paine’ you can enjoy the view of Torre Sur (2,850m), Torre Central (2,800m), Torre Norte (2,600m) and Cerro Nido de Cóndor. The trek today is approximately 19kms and should take about 8 hours.

**Accommodation:** Refugio Torre Central or Refugio Torre Norte (Dorm bed)

**Meals Included:** Breakfast, Boxed Lunch, Dinner

**Day 3:** Today the trail follows alongside the turquoise waters of Lake Nordenskjöld. We then make our way to Los Cuernos (The Horns), an outcropping of granite peaks which stand at over 2000 metres high, before continuing through to Domos Frances. The views from Los Cuernos are considered by many to be the most memorable in the whole park, perched on a hillside with the famous towers above with views across one of the park’s stunning light blue lakes. The trek today is approximately 14.6kms and should take about 6.5 hours.

**Accommodation:** Camping at Francés

**Meals Included:** Breakfast, Boxed Lunch and Dinner

**Day 4:** Making our way through 'The French Valley' we will pass through Mirador Británico, the lookout point generally thought to be one of the most overwhelming spots on the whole Circuit, where you can take in Paine Grande, Cerro Hoja, Cerro Máscara, Cerro Catedral, Cerro Aleta de Tiburón,

Cuerno Norte and other magnificent peaks. We return back the same way and continue to the Pehoe sector, reaching our evening destination Paine Grande. The trek today is approximately 20.3kms and should take about 9 hours.

**Accommodation:** Camping at Paine Grande

**Meals Included:** Breakfast, Boxed Lunch and Dinner

**Day 5:** Our final day of trekking will take us on the trail through the western side of the Paine Massif, stopping off at various viewpoints to take in Grey Lake and the Mountain views, as we continue north to the impressive natural ice formations of Grey's Glacier. The return is the same way back to Paine Grande where you will take a catamaran across Lake Pehoé to Pudeto. You will then board the bus back to Puerto Natales arriving in the evening. It is time to put your heels up and celebrate your huge sense of achievement having conquered one of the world’s great hiking routes with a cold beer and Pizza. The trek today is approximately 22kms and should take about 8 hours.

**Accommodation:** Puerto Natales (twin room - shared bathrooms)

**Meals Included:** Breakfast, Boxed Lunch, Dinner

**Day 6:** After your breakfast (included) you will then continue with your Oasis Overland Adventure.

**Please Note:** The above itinerary and stated accommodation is subject to change without notice and may be altered due to local operating conditions. In the event of any changes due to circumstances beyond our control, while we will do our utmost to minimise the impact on the planned itinerary, we will not be held responsible for any costs incurred.

**Deposit:** £400 per person. (Once requested your permit cannot be refunded or exchanged).

**Just add this on to your trip when booking!**

**New Years or Carnival in Rio**

**New Years Eve in Rio -** If you are on a trip that coincides with New Years Eve in Rio you can fly into Rio about 4 days before your trip starts or allow a few days after your trip finishes, to experience and join in the celebrations on Copacabana beach on the last night of the Year.

**Carnival in Rio -** If you are on a trip coinciding with 'Carnival' you should allow a few days before your trip starts or finishes, if you want to experience this spectacular event, so book your flights accordingly. Most carnival events are from the Friday through to the Tuesday before/after the trip starts/finishes. We offer Rio accommodation packages that cover Carnival as well as a separate add-on which includes a ticket to the Samba School parade at the Sambadrome, normally on the Sunday evening.

To reserve pre/post tour accommodation for either events, please contact the Oasis office.

View **more information about Carnival** and what you can do.

## Extensions from Quito to the Galapagos Islands

If your overland expedition isn't enough of an adventure, why not consider extending your trip to the Galapagos Islands, where we offer a selection of tours, varying in length and activity level:

- **5 Day - Galapagos Essentials** - Our lead-in product, ideal for those looking to experience the natural beauty of the Galapagos without being too active. This tour visits the Islands of Santa Cruz and San Cristobel.
- **5 Day - Best of the Galapagos** - For those looking for an activity based trip to the Galapagos, our Best of the Galapagos tour has a more active itinerary, including a hike on the Sierra Negra Volcano. This tour visits the Islands of Isabela and Santa Cruz.
- **8 Day - Galapagos Uncovered** - For passengers with more time available, our Galapagos Uncovered tour is a great option, this tour includes a good mix of activities and includes visits to three islands; San Cristobel, Isabela and Santa Cruz.

### VISAS

The information below is to be used only as a guide and may change without prior notice. It is advisable to contact the relevant embassy in plenty of time before the trip departs to check the current visa requirements. It is **your responsibility** to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require**.**

Visas obtained at borders and embassies during the trip must be paid for in **USD CASH ONLY**, as stipulated by the relevant immigration officials. Evisas will require payment online by credit or debit card.

On arrival to countries in South America, you will be given an 'Immigration card'. It is important that you keep this with your passport during your entire stay in the particular country as it is needed for departure. Failure to produce this immigration slip can result in a fine.

**Transiting via the USA -** Travellers who are flying to South America via the US will require either a US visa or for certain nationalities an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) to take advantage of the visa waiver programme. These can be processed and paid for here.

If you have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia or Yemen since March 2011 you will not qualify for the ESTA and must apply for a visa.

It is very important you establish your ESTA eligibility and have the correct documentation before departing, as if you do not have the right authorisation upon checking in at the airport you may not be permitted to travel.

| Country | British | Australian | New Zealand | USA | Canadian |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Colombia** | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Ecuador** | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Peru** | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Bolivia** | No | No | No | US$160 | No |
| **Chile** | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Argentina** | No | Free | No | No | No |
| **Uruguay** | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Paraguay** | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Brazil** | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| **French Guiana** | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Suriname** | US$58 | US$58 | US$58 | US$58 | US$58 |
| **Guyana** | No | No | No | No | No |

For more information on other nationalities & visas checkout **www.projectvisa.com**

## Peru

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Peru.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

**Inca Trek** – you will need to provide your passport details to apply for your Inca trekking permit, please enter these correctly on your booking form. If you are intending on renewing your passport

then please let us know at the point of booking. In order to trek you will need to be in possession of both your passport and your permit – and the passport details have to match otherwise the permit issuing authorities will not let you trek.

## Argentina

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Argentina.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

## Bolivia

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Bolivia.

**American passport holders** will require a visa to enter Bolivia, you can purchase these upon arrival for approximately US$160. You will need 2 passport-sized photographs (3cm x 4cm), a colour photocopy of the passport information page, a copy of your yellow fever certificate, paper copy of your trip booking confirmation and your most recent 3 months bank statements.

You can apply for your visa in advance if you wish but please check how long it is valid for you to enter Bolivia. Valid for entry is different for the length of stay allowed. For example, if your visa is valid for entry for 30 days from the date of issue and you're starting your trip in Cartagena, your visa will expire before reaching Bolivia.

Travellers joining one of our **Regional Explorers in Peru and Bolivia** may wish to obtain this visa in advance.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

## Brazil

Passport Holders from UK, most EU countries and New Zealand do not require a visa to enter Brazil.

Australia, US and Canada passport holders require an e-visa in advance: https://brazil.vfsevisa.com/. Visas are usually only valid for entry for 3 months from date of issue so you should not apply more than 3 months before you enter Brazil. We will send you information to help you make your application closer to the time.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

## Chile

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, New Zealand, USA and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Chile.

From 17 September 2025, Australian passport holders no longer need to obtain a visa for stays of up to 90 days.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

**Colombia**

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Colombia.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

**Ecuador**

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Ecuador.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

Travellers **must** have physical proof of health care Insurance whilst travelling through Ecuador. You may be asked to provide this at Immigration at the land border or at the airport on arrival - a printed copy of your travel Insurance should suffice.  You will also need a Yellow Fever vaccination certificate if coming from Colombia or Peru - see the Vaccinations and Health section below.

**French Guiana**

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada will not require a visa to enter French Guiana.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

**Guyana**

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada will not require a visa to enter Guyana.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

**Suriname**

Most nationalities are visa free and only need to register and pay an Entry Fee online via the VFS website.  Check here for a list of nationalities that must apply for an E-Visa instead.

The Entry Fee process is outsourced to an agency called VFS Global. They are the official partner of a number of diplomatic missions and a specialist Suriname visa application agency.  There is no expiry date on your Entry Fee certificate but VFS advise that it is valid for entry for 90 days.  This means you must not complete the process more than 90 days before we are due to arrive in Suriname. We will send you details to help you apply, closer to this time.

During the process you will need to upload a copy of your passport – please ensure this is the passport you will be travelling to Suriname on. If you will already be travelling when you do this, we suggest that you have a digital copy to take with you, as it may be easier for you to do this before you leave home than once you're on the trip.
See https://suriname.vfsevisa.com/suriname/assets/docs/passport-bio-page.pdf for examples of how your scanned passport should look.

The Entry Fee costs US$50 + US$8 processing fee, payable online.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

### LIFE ON THE ROAD

You will be travelling within a group size ranging from 2-12 people, so come with an open mind and ready to make new friends! You will be accompanied on your adventure with an experienced Local English speaking guide. They are knowledgeable and passionate about the Galapagos Islands.

### Accommodation & Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. On our trips to the Galapagos Islands, we include the cost of a roundtrip flight between Quito and the Galapagos Islands. Whilst travelling between the Islands of the Galapagos, we'll make use of local ferries and speedboats.

We use good quality 3-star properties whilst in the Galapagos. Please see the accommodation tab for details of the hotels most commonly used on this tour (specific hotels are subject to change).  Hotel accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms. All couples will stay in a private double room. Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

Please note that some of our trips in the Galapagos include inter-island flights. Where these flights are included in the itinerary the included luggage allowance on this flight is 25 lbs. (20 lbs. for check-in baggage and 5 pounds for carry-on baggage equals 25 pounds total). Extra baggage USD 2.00 per extra pound - it can be paid directly to the airline at check-in.

## Vegetarians / Vegans / Coeliac / Gluten & Lactose intolerance

Our Tour Leaders will always do their best to cater for any dietary requirement or intolerance whenever possible. However we don't cater for fussy eaters. It must be remembered that the variety of dishes available may not be the same as available to meat eaters. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet or because of an allergy or would miss from home, it would be best to bring these with you. Remember that when eating out in local restaurants & hotels sometimes being vegetarian or food allergies / intolerances are still not widely known about or understood by many local people. i.e. Vegetarians or Vegans will often be offered fish or chicken in error. Most large towns and cities, or areas used to tourists, will often have more choice but please be aware that it will probably not be as varied as you are used to when eating out at home.

## Galapagos

When visiting the Galapagos Islands, you should be aware of additional fees and permits which are required, please find details below:

**INGALA Transit Card - USD 20 per person (cash only):**
In essence, this is simply a fee to obtain authorization to visit the Galápagos Islands.
You pay a small fee of 20 USD in cash at the INGALA booth at the airport in Quito or Guayaquil to receive a "Transit Control Card" (TCC or TCT in Spanish). This card tracks your entry and exit from the islands, helping to protect the delicate ecosystem from unauthorized immigration.
Introduced in 2012, this system is a requirement for all non-resident visitors. If you're taking a cruise, you can often pre-book this card through the cruise line, and a representative will meet you at the airport with it.
Remember to keep your Transit Control Card safe throughout your trip, as you'll need to present it upon departure.

**Galapagos National Park Fee - USD 200 per person (cash only):**
To visit the Galápagos Islands, all tourists must pay an entrance fee, which varies depending on age and nationality. Most foreign adults pay $200, while children pay $100. Visitors from certain South American countries enjoy reduced rates (these are updated rates which came into force on 1st August 2024).

While the fee may seem high, it's crucial to remember that these funds directly support the conservation of the islands' unique biodiversity. The Galápagos National Park, along with other agencies, uses these resources to protect the delicate ecosystems, improve local services, and ensure the sustainability of this natural wonder.

The entrance fee contributes to a wide range of initiatives, from safeguarding marine life to supporting education and healthcare in local communities. By paying this fee, you're not only gaining access to an unforgettable experience but also actively participating in preserving the Galápagos Islands for future generations.

The Oasis truck will be your new home giving you a comfortable, secure base with which to experience your trip. As part of the adventure you will be expected to have an active involvement in the day to day running of the trip, be part of the group and get stuck in and help with various tasks, whether it's cooking meals over open fires, pitching your tent or keeping the truck clean & tidy.

**Itinerary**

Because Oasis Overland do not operate normal 'package holidays' the itineraries given cannot be guaranteed to run exactly as outlined. However, it is rare that we have to make major changes and in the event that we do this will be discussed with you either before or during the trip. It is important to bear in mind that should it not be possible to enter a certain country due to safety concerns, visa problems or political turmoil etc, and it becomes necessary to fly over a country in order to continue a trip, that all costs for flights will be borne by you and not Oasis. Should it not be possible for an Oasis trip to begin from a scheduled starting city due to border closures, civil unrest etc, Oasis will make all reasonable efforts to begin the trip from an alternative location. However, all additional costs that you may incur in travelling to the alternative location will be paid by you or your insurance company and not Oasis.

**Seatbelts**

All Oasis Overland trucks are fitted with seat belts. For your own safety and security we recommend that travellers wear these at all times whilst the vehicle is moving.

**Accommodation**

**Camping** - Oasis provides tents for those nights you will be camping. Tents are shared (between two people of the same sex from your group unless you are a couple). We spend some nights bush or desert camping, and on some occasions it is necessary to camp at overnight services, which are basic but equipped with showers and other facilities; the rest of the time in campsites. Facilities and standards at campsites vary, some are well equipped and managed and some are very basic. At bush camps you will be living off the truck, so there will be no showers or en-suite facilities! At certain campsites there is the opportunity to upgrade to a private room at your own expense if you are missing your bed.

**Simple Hotels/Hostels** - At some locations we will stay at small locally owned hostels/hotels. These are usually basic places, and often the accommodation will be mixed sex dormitory style. Upgrades may be available on arrival, but cannot be reliably pre- booked. Please be aware that the quality of accommodation can vary quite a lot from area to area and sometimes in a small hotel the standard of rooms can vary even from one room to the next - so there needs to be a level of understanding within the group that your Oasis Crew does not often have power over room allocation or services provided by various hotels and it is unavoidable that they have to rely on the local staff. Please note if you choose to participate on an overnight optional activity, then you will not receive reimbursement for any accommodation or meals that you are missing out on with the rest of the group.

**During the day**

As a guide, driving days normally start at about 8am and finish at about 5pm, with stops for lunch and buying food, seeing local sights etc. We won't be driving every day, although there are times when we will drive for two, but we will then stop for a few days and you will have free time to explore, meet local people, do some optional activities or just relax and do your own thing. Expect to sometimes get dusty & dishevelled during the day and although you will be able to shower most nights (except at bush camps), not all camps will have hot showers.

**Meals & cook groups**

When 'on the road' or camping, we usually cook using gas or over open fires in a rota system and you can expect to cook in a group of two or three people approximately once every ten days depending on the number of people on trip and whereabouts you are. Your cook group will have to decide on what to cook, utilise stocks from the truck stores and locally obtain ingredients from markets, shops etc. and rustle up a meal. But don't worry if you're not a Gordon Ramsay, as the rest of the group and the Tour Leader usually lend a helping hand. Here is an idea of what to expect at meal times:

**Breakfasts:** Usually simple - we help ourselves to cereal, toast, hot drinks and on occasion we will splurge with a cooked breakfast.

**Lunch:** Cold and usually quick. The cook group will put out bread, tinned supplies and maybe make a salad.

**Dinner:** Cooks come into their own in the evening, and will always attempt to cook up some delights.

When staying in hotels in towns or cities we do not include meals. This is your chance to go out and explore and try local cuisine in local restaurants.

**Vegetarians / Vegans / Coeliacs / Gluten & Lactose intolerance -** Our Tour Leaders will always do their best to cater for any dietary requirement or intolerance whenever possible. However we do not cater for fussy eaters. It must be remembered that the variety of dishes available to Vegetarians may not be the same as available to meat eaters. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet or because of an allergy or would miss from home, it would be best to bring these with you, as these cannot be purchased with normal Local Payment funds due to the high cost of these specialised and often imported foods.

Remember that when eating out in local restaurants & hotels that vegetarianism or food allergies / intolerance's, are still not widely known about or understood by many local people. i.e Vegetarians or Vegans will often be offered fish or chicken in error. Most large towns and cities, or areas used to tourists, will often have more choice but please be aware that it will probably not be as varied as you are used to when eating out at home.

**In the evenings**

When at a bushcamp or campsite, you and your tent buddy will put up the tent, and then lend a hand with getting out the tables, stools, firewood and water containers. The fire grates need to be taken

out, the fire lit and someone can fill the kettle and make hot drinks while the cook group prepares the evening meal. Then just sit back, chill and enjoy the rest of your evening!

**Oasis Crew**

We usually have two Crew whose duties are extensive and quite demanding, with challenges ranging from driving and maintaining the expedition vehicle to a high standard, to organising visas and border crossings, arranging accommodation, pre-booking some excursions and guides, helping with shopping and cooking as well as finding the best deals, socialising and making sure everything runs as smoothly as possible. Whilst our Crew are usually experienced and knowledgeable, they are not tour guides as such. Our trips pass through many countries and our Tour Leaders cannot be expected to have detailed knowledge of each countries history, flora and fauna and archaeological sites. Even so - they will be more than willing to pass on any interesting and useful information that they have acquired whilst on the road. A rewarding way to gain a better insight into the wildlife, cultural and historical diversity of the countries we travel through is by reading guide books as well as talking to the local people and using local guides.

Adventure travel can be unpredictable and occasionally our Crew may have to amend the itinerary to take into account changing local circumstances or because of a delay at a border or because of circumstances outside our control. This can all lead to additional work and commitment for our Crew who will do all they can to minimise any disruption to the trip. While our Crew are essentially on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week, it has to be remembered that no one is actually expected to work these hours, so at Oasis we are realistic that within a trip there will be times when our Crew need 'down time' and a chance to relax and 'let their hair down' as well. They are only human!

## TRIP ITINERARY

### Fly to San Cristobel Island. Afternoon wildlife viewing and snorkelling

Today, our adventure begins as we journey to the Galapagos Islands, the breathtaking archipelago that inspired Charles Darwin's groundbreaking theory of evolution. After a scenic morning flight from Quito to San Cristóbal Island, we'll settle into our hotel in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno and receive a briefing on the exciting days ahead. (please note that this flight normally makes a touch down Guayaquil, though no change of aircraft is required).

This afternoon, we'll explore "La Loberia," a haven for Galapagos sea lions. Witness playful pups frolicking amidst the waves and adults basking on the sandy shore. Keep an eye out for yellow warblers, frigate birds, and diverse species of Darwin finches that call this beach home. As we venture further, we might encounter the unique marine iguanas, found only in the Galapagos. And of course, no visit to La Loberia is complete without a refreshing swim and snorkeling session in the crystal-clear waters.

Overnight: San Cristobel Island hotel

### Snorkelling at Kicker Rock and Cerro Brujo

Today, we embark on a thrilling speedboat adventure to Kicker Rock, an iconic geological formation aptly nicknamed the Sleeping Lion (Leon Dormido) for its striking resemblance. Situated off the coast of San Cristóbal, this eroded lava cone presents two towering rock faces rising dramatically from the ocean, forming a narrow channel navigable only by small vessels. As we approach, we'll be greeted by a mesmerizing aerial display of tropicbirds, frigate birds, and boobies, who frequent this Galapagos Islands natural monument.

Beneath the surface, a vibrant underwater world awaits. The crystalline waters teem with a kaleidoscope of tropical fish, including the aptly named rainbow fish, and a variety of sharks, such as hammerheads, reef sharks, and white tips.

In the afternoon, we'll venture to Cerro Brujo, a lively island brimming with playful sea lions eager to welcome us. This enchanting locale not only offers fantastic snorkeling opportunities but also the chance to observe the iconic blue-footed and Nazca boobies.

*(Breakfast, Lunch)*

Overnight: San Cristobel Island hotel

**Exploring Isabela Island including Tortoise breeding centre**

This morning, a short flight transports us to Isabela Island, the largest and most volcanically active island in the Galapagos archipelago. Formed by six shield volcanoes, five of which remain active, Isabela boasts one of the most dynamic volcanic landscapes on Earth.

In the afternoon, we'll delve into the island's remarkable ecosystem, encountering a diverse array of wildlife. We'll be captivated by the sight of flamingos and marine iguanas basking in saltwater lagoons, explore pristine white sand beaches, and wander through lush mangrove forests. This area teems with birdlife, from American oystercatchers and herons to flamingos, finches, and numerous shorebirds. Of course, we'll also encounter the ubiquitous sea lions and marine iguanas that call Isabela home.

A highlight of our day is the Tortoise Breeding Centre, where we'll witness the fascinating life cycle of giant tortoises, from tiny eggs to hatchlings, juveniles, and sub-adults. We'll also visit the Wall of Tears, a poignant reminder of the island's past as a penal colony. This imposing lava rock wall stands as a testament to the isolation and hardships endured by prisoners forced to build it in the 1950s.

As evening descends, we'll gather on the beach of Puerto Villamil to savor a spectacular sunset, a fitting end to a day filled with wonder and exploration.

*(Breakfast)*

Overnight: Isabela Island hotel

**Snorkelling in Tintoreras**

Today's adventure takes us to the Tintoreras Islet, a short distance from Puerto Villamil and a haven for diverse wildlife. Prepare for an unforgettable snorkeling experience in the islet's crystal-clear turquoise waters, where you'll encounter white-tipped reef sharks, Galapagos penguins, marine turtles, and playful sea lions.

Following our underwater exploration, we'll embark on a leisurely stroll along the islet's beaches, framed by lush mangroves. Tintoreras Islet is a unique nesting site for marine iguanas, offering us a rare opportunity to witness their breeding grounds.

*(Breakfast, Lunch)*

Overnight: Santa Cruz Island hotel

**Exploring and snorkelling at the Lava tunnels**

Today, we embark on an unforgettable journey to explore the mesmerizing lava formations sculpted by recent volcanic eruptions along the seashore. This enchanting location has even been featured in BBC and National Geographic documentaries! Prepare to be awestruck by a labyrinth of lava arches within the crashing waves, where crystal-clear waters teem with an abundance of marine life. Here, we'll encounter graceful sea turtles, majestic eagle rays, playful sea lions, a kaleidoscope of fish, white-tipped reef sharks, and countless other underwater wonders.

Witness the incredible sight of sea turtles navigating their own "highway" through the lava tunnels known as "Los Tuneles," as they journey from the mangroves to the open sea. This extraordinary site offers an unparalleled snorkeling experience, allowing us to swim alongside these magnificent creatures and even encounter the inquisitive Galapagos penguin.

Following our underwater adventure, you'll have the option to further explore the underwater world at "Concha de Perla" or simply unwind on the pristine white-sand beaches of Isabela Island.

*(Breakfast, Lunch)*

Overnight: Isabela Island hotel

**Santa Cruz and Acadamy Bay exploration**

Today, we'll journey to Santa Cruz for a captivating half-day tour of Academy Bay. Be sure to pack your essentials, and don't worry about snorkel gear – we'll provide it free of charge for those who wish to explore the underwater world.

Our boat will take us to Academy Bay, a vibrant underwater paradise teeming with exotic fish and marine life. Here, you'll have the unique opportunity to swim and snorkel alongside playful sea lions, known for their curiosity and underwater acrobatics. Keep an eye out for the iconic blue-footed boobies as they grace the skies above.

Next, we'll ascend to a nearby viewpoint, where, with a bit of luck, we might spot white-tipped reef sharks patrolling the depths below. Our adventure continues with a scenic walk along Playa de los Perros, a haven for sunbathing sea iguanas. The stark contrast of giant cacti against the deep red rocks and turquoise waters creates a photographer's paradise.

*(Breakfast)*

Overnight: Santa Cruz Island hotel

### Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station

This morning, we visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, a hub of scientific discovery and conservation efforts in the Galapagos Islands. Here, we'll delve deeper into the unique endemic species we've encountered in their natural habitats, learning about their behaviors, adaptations, and ecological significance. We'll gain valuable insights into the challenges facing these vulnerable species and the innovative strategies being implemented to protect them. The station's dedicated researchers and conservationists will share their expertise and passion, offering us a comprehensive understanding of the delicate balance of this extraordinary ecosystem and the ongoing efforts to ensure its preservation for generations to come.

*(Breakfast)*

Overnight: Santa Cruz Island hotel

### Free time before flying back to Quito

Take advantage of a leisurely morning before we return to Baltra Airport for your flight back to mainland Ecuador. (please note that this flight normally makes a touch down Guayaquil, though no change of aircraft is required). Your tour will come to an end upon arrival in Quito.

*(Breakfast)*

Overnight: N/A

## OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

Optional Excursions are paid for on the day and organised during your trip, so you can decide whilst travelling which activity you may want to do. Prices listed are only a guide and may be dependant on fluctuating exchange rates and minimum numbers. Please see below for more details.

### ECUADOR

| Title | From Price |
| --- | --- |

We feel that having optional excursions gives a greater degree of flexibility and independence to our group members; independence to decide how much your spending budget can afford; flexibility to decide when and what time of day or with whom to visit a particular site, rather than for example, with the whole group at a pre-ordained time.

You pay for the optional excursions to the local operator, ensuring the money stays with that operator in the local community and this ensures as well, that you are paying the true price for any optional excursions you want to do. This also applies to accommodation costs before and after the trip. Please note that the prices of optional excursions quoted are approximate as local prices can and do change. Please see the relevant trip page for the Optional excursions you can do on that trip and a list of prices.

***Notes downloaded on:*** *05-11-2026*