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## Galapagos Island Teaching Volunteers

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



**Trip Name:** Galapagos Island Teaching Volunteers    **Trip Code:** EGTV    **Duration:**

### Trip Highlights

- Pass on your invaluable English language skills to keen island youngsters
- Improve your Spanish in one of the primary tourist destinations in South America
- Be inspired! Follow in Charles Darwin's footsteps
- Come face-to-face with the Galapagos Giant Tortoise
- Explore a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its diverse marine and wildlife
- Return flights from Quito to Galapagos Islands included



### Overview

Go to the Galapagos and travel to one of the most diverse wildlife and marine hotspots on the planet.

Being able to speak good English is crucial to the younger generation on the Galapagos Islands. Tourism is such an important source of income that your English skills will help youngsters gain the invaluable language skills they need to get into that industry. Teachers can be scarce in the more remote parts so you'll help to fill that void.

### Destination Info

As one of the primary tourist destinations in South America, the Galapagos Islands (official name: Archipiélago de Colón) are a group of volcanic islands in the Pacific Ocean, west of Ecuador. Famed for contributing to the basis of Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution, the islands are a UNESCO World Heritage site and tourists flock there every year to experience the amazingly diverse wildlife.

There are 18 main islands that make up the Galapagos. You will have the opportunity to visit the main town on Santa Cruz whilst based on Isabela.

## Itinerary



On arrival into Quito you will be met at the airport and taken to a hostel or volunteer apartment in the city for a two-night stay. Here you will have your orientation. On day 3 you will catch an internal flight to Baltra airport on Santa Cruz and on arrival, be taken to your island accommodation.



All volunteers must have some knowledge of Spanish before starting their volunteer work, not only to get the most out of the project, but also to be able to integrate with the locals. If you do not already speak Spanish, we strongly recommended that you take our language course prior to the start of the programme. These are available for 2 or 4 weeks and are easily combined with the project. Please speak to one of our travel advisors for further information.

As many children on the island don't regularly attend school, they need to be taught basic Spanish, Mathematics, and English. Classes are prepared by the volunteers in relation to the children's ability.

You will teach English to children between the ages of 7 and 11 years old. This will usually take place in the mornings from around 7am until 1pm, giving you afternoons free to explore the area. You are not restricted to the teaching role and can become involved in other areas as and when required e.g. sports instruction, arts and crafts etc. If you have a particular skill you would like to incorporate into the project, let staff know and they can help you put it to good use. If you play a musical instrument, feel free to bring it along, as music always brings delight to the children.

# Galapagos Island Teaching Volunteers

You can be really flexible in how you teach and we recommend that you bring fun teaching materials with you like board and card games, books and writing materials.



Here is how a typical day in the life of a volunteer might take shape. Please note that your itinerary may differ from this, depending on the projects needs. Please use this itinerary as an example only.

- 6.45am - 7am:** Breakfast at the hostel.
- 7.30am - 1pm:** Work at the school.
- 1.15pm - 2.30pm:** Lunch at a local restaurant.
- 2.30pm onwards:** Free time to enjoy Santa Cruz.
- 6.30pm - 7.30pm:** Dinner at the hostel.
- 7.30pm onwards:** Enjoy island nightlife.

**Please note:** Itineraries and activities are subject to change.

## Accommodation

On Sunday and Monday night you will be staying at a hostel or volunteer apartment in Quito before your arrival into Santa Cruz.

During your volunteer work on Isabela you will be staying in a hostel, with double or triple rooms. Single rooms may be available.

## Programme Services and Facilities

Your accommodation is in Santa Cruz. There is a good range of shops on the island for any additional food and supplies that you might want. There are several bars and restaurants to visit in the evenings.

## Internet

Internet facilities are easily accessible to you and will generally cost you about \$2.50 per hour.

## Telephone

You will find public phones in most towns and larger villages. You will be able to purchase phone cards for these in small shops and kiosks; make sure that any you buy are suitable for international calls.

Your mobile phone may or may not work in the Galapagos, depending on your network, and if it does, please be aware that in many areas you may not always get a signal. It may be worth taking your phone with you (this needs to be 850mhz compatible) and buying a pay-as-you-go SIM card when you arrive at a cost of around \$8, or getting a Real Gap SIM before you depart, to enable you to call and text cheaply. Before you depart, please ensure that your mobile is set up with international roaming and unlocked, so you may use a pay-as-you-go SIM while you are away.

The international dialling code for Ecuador is +593. To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap dial +44 1892 516164.

## Laundry

You will be able to have your laundry done whilst on the island, which will cost you around \$1.50 for 1kg.

## Meals

During your time in Quito food is not included but you will be able to eat out cheaply in local restaurants.

While volunteering on Santa Cruz breakfast and dinner is included. Dinner will generally be soup, a main dish and a drink. For lunch you can try some of the traditional delicacies at one of the nearby restaurants. Don't forget to let us know if you have any special dietary requirements!

## What's Included

- Return flights from Quito to Galapagos Islands
- Shared volunteer accommodation on Santa Cruz
- Two meals a day
- Detailed orientation
- 24-hour emergency assistance
- Arrival airport transfer



## What's Not Included

- International Flights
- Return transfers from the Islands back to the hostel in Quito
- Travel Insurance
- National Park entrance fee and tourist card to enter the Galapagos (US\$110)
- Lunches
- Soft drinks, beer, wine, spirits
- Return airport transfer to Quito (budget \$35 USD)



## Is This Trip For You?

You may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. However, you will still have the full support of your in-country team and those at the project. If you are looking for a group volunteering experience we have plenty of options for you to consider.

### Reality Check

All volunteers must have some knowledge of Spanish before starting their volunteer work, not only to get the most out of the project, but also to get around and integrate more easily with the local people. If you do not already speak Spanish, it is strongly recommended you take our language course prior to the start of the programme. These are available for 2 or 4 weeks and are easily combined with the project. Please speak to one of our travel advisors for further information.

## What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore you may not need all of the listed items on your travels. In addition it is worth noting that you can buy lots of these items in Ecuador and at a very cheap price and there will be opportunities for you to shop in local markets and towns.

### Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- Cash for airport departure tax
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)
- Guidebook on country - recommended Lonely Planet or Footprints

### General

- Camera / Film / Batteries
- Notebook and pen / diary
- Torch / Extra Batteries
- Sunglasses
- Pocket-knife (comes in handy for general use)
- Water bottle - at least one litre
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- A 3-Season Sleeping bag (especially useful when on weekend excursions)
- Mosquito Net (if required)

# Galapagos Island Teaching Volunteers

- Personal enjoyment - books, cards, music, to enjoy with your fellow volunteers etc
- Personal hygiene items (deodorant, soap, shampoo, toothbrush etc)
- Spanish dictionary, verb book etc

## Clothing

- Clothing appropriate for teaching
- Hat
- Comfortable walking shoes
- A pair of thick socks for walking
- Sandals (for outside of school hours)
- Waterproof Jacket
- Fleece/pullover (for cool evenings)
- Long trousers
- Warmer clothing for winter
- Swimwear
- Towel

## Medical Kit

- Personal Hygiene Kit (eg. Anti-histamines, anti-diarrhoea tablets, headache tablets)
- Personal Toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito and insect repellent

## Minimum Age

Minimum 18 years. Maximum decided on potential participants' health.

## Minimum Numbers

There are no minimum numbers on the trip.

Please note: you may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us

## Flights

Your flight to Ecuador should arrive at Quito Airport on your programme start date, and your return flight should be arranged for your programme end date.

To book your flights, please contact your travel advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

**Please note:** If you are flying to Ecuador via the USA you will need to obtain Travel Authorisation by registering online through the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) no later than 72 hours before departure. This is compulsory and will cost USD\$14 to register. To register, please visit: [www.esta.cbp.dhs.gov](http://www.esta.cbp.dhs.gov)

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your Online account, or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

## FAQs

- 1. Is it easy to travel to the other islands and how long does it take?**  
Our volunteers are usually now placed at the school on Santa Cruz so it is easy to organise weekend trips from there. A boat to Isabella island takes about 3 and half hours and costs approx US\$30.
- 2. Is there an ATM on island?**  
Yes on Santa Cruz, but not Isabella
- 3. Will I be shadowing a teacher or leading a class?**  
Usually you will shadow a teacher but it can be possible to lead a class if you have the skills and ability to do so. The schools need a lot of help with English teaching.
- 4. What age are the children that I will be teaching?**  
You will be helping the teachers at a primary school.

## Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

## Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

## Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

## Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.



# Galapagos Island Teaching Volunteers

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

## Money Matters

### Ecuador

In Ecuador the currency is the US Dollar (USD; symbol \$), which is divided into 100 Centavos (the same value as the US Cent). The coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 Cents and 1 Dollar. Notes come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Dollars.

Though the denominations and values are the same as the US Dollar, Ecuadorian coins do differ in appearance and bear the images of famous Ecuadorians rather than US presidents. Make sure you change your bills at banks where you can as loose change can be hard to come by when you're out and about.

Credit cards are accepted in larger towns and cities (only MasterCard is accepted on the Galapagos) and ATMs are available almost everywhere. Bancos del Pacifico and Bancos del Pichincha have MasterCard/Cirrus ATMs. Bancos de Guayaquil and Bancos La Provisora have Visa/Plus ATMs.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant \$4.29  
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) \$1.00  
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.85  
Water (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.51

### Galapagos

In Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands the currency is the US Dollar (USD; symbol \$), which is divided into 100 Centavos (the same value as the US Cent). The coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 Cents and 1 Dollar. Notes come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Dollars.

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## Passports and Visas

### Ecuador

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.



# Galapagos Island Teaching Volunteers

For stays of up to 90 days, citizens of most European countries, the USA, Australia and New Zealand are not required to hold a visa.

For all other nationalities and queries on longer stays or for the most up to date information on passports and the Reciprocity Fee, please consult your nearest Ecuador Embassy or High Commission.

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## **Cultural Considerations**

### **Ecuador**

#### **Greetings**

Pleasantries are taken seriously in Ecuador, despite the fact that greetings are usually informal. It is polite to always say "Buenos Días" upon entering a building or when meeting somebody, and to say "con permiso" when leaving or passing someone. You should address people in the polite "usted" form and show additional respect for older people. If you know the person then it is customary to shake hands or kiss in greetings. Any kind of conversation is usually preceded by small talk, and being able to speak at least basic Spanish will go a long way with the locals and demonstrate your keenness to fit in.

#### **Gestures**

Many gestures are used in Ecuador. A common one is the lifting of the chin to indicate "up the street" when giving directions, and the lowering of the chin to indicate "down the street" - useful for any traveller to know! Body language is considered an integral part of speech in Ecuador, so it is a common and often fundamental part of everyday speech, which can sometimes be hard for foreigners to understand. It is important to remember that as a general rule, Ecuadorians tend to be much more physical than other cultures and greetings generally involve a lot of body contact.

#### **Saying "no"**

A Latino always wants to help you and it's considered impolite to say 'no' or 'I don't know'. Whatever you ask, always expect to get an answer, even if it is not correct. The best thing to do is to ask three different people the same question and if you always get the same answer it's probably right!

## Taboos

Latinos are not used to discussing 'sensitive' subjects with strangers (a stranger is anyone who is not family or they haven't known for ten years). Although nosiness is common, certain subjects are taboo, for example: abortion, casual sex, social politics, etc. Listen first to get used to the norms.

## Social Hierarchy

The family is hugely important to Ecuadorians. Elderly people often live with the youngest son and his wife, and it is common for three generations of families to be living together under the same roof. It is a way to increase the household income and to help one another. Can you imagine living with all of your relatives every day? As you would expect, older people are treated with great respect.

Women are traditionally responsible for bringing up the children, although this has begun to change in recent years. However, men are still very proud of their machismo and view whistling at women as a compliment. Ladies, take it in your stride. You may be subjected to catcalls and the best way to deal with these is simply to ignore them! Dress more formally than you would normally or even wear a wedding ring and talk about your husband.

## Religion

In Ecuador the predominant religion is Roman Catholic. The Indigenous population blends Catholicism with its traditional beliefs.

## Clothing

It is important to remember, especially for female travellers, that the kinds of clothes you feel comfortable wearing in your own country may not be an acceptable form of dress in Latin America. Short skirts for example, will invite unwanted attention. Just use your common sense and adapt your style in accordance with your surroundings. In Quito for example, and at the project, you should avoid wearing shorts, flip-flops, tank tops, and so on. Cover up for your own safety, and in respect of the local culture and customs.

On the Galapagos Islands you can expect to dress as you would for the beach e.g. flip-flops, shorts etc. - however even this should be more conservative beachwear. Avoid really short shorts and tops.

With the warm climate and humidity, we advise that you pack a selection of lightweight layerable clothing. As the evenings can get quite cool, a jumper or jacket is advisable. Always bear in mind the activities you will be doing when you are packing.

## Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in Ecuador and readily available. However, please respect other people. Smoking is not permissible in volunteer apartments or the host families' homes. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact upon any volunteer work you undertake. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated.

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into Ecuador. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, Ecuador has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including "soft" drugs like marijuana, are ILLEGAL. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst

travelling – it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the project.

## Tipping

A 10% tip is customary at restaurants and hotels and is usually included in the bill. Tips are not necessary (but always welcome) in small restaurants or for taxis. Hairdressers expect 20%, and a couple of dollars is normal for airport/railway porters.

## Galapagos

### Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

### Safety

#### Ecuador

Although Ecuador is safer than other countries in the region, there have been reports of increased problems as a side effect to drug trafficking in Colombia. The majority of Ecuador is safe to a traveller who uses common sense. Pickpocketing is common in crowded places. Armed robbery is still unusual, but parts of Guayaquil have a reputation for being dangerous.

Here is a list of general precautions:

- Don't walk around alone after dark
- Don't carry valuables
- If your luggage is ever searched by the police make sure you are present
- Make sure your luggage is locked when travelling by bus or aeroplane. Don't leave unlocked valuables in your hotel room.
- Always carry your passport or a copy of it with you because sometimes the police make passport checks
- Avoid taking night buses through the Guayas province unless you have to. Armed robberies occur a couple of times every year.
- In Quito, don't walk up the series of steps and paths to the Virgin (the Pancillo), since assaults are common. Take a cab and don't take any valuables.

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

USA: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

Australia: [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)

## ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

## Galapagos

### Language Guide

#### Ecuador

Spanish is the official language of Ecuador. Quechua, Jivaro and other indigenous languages are also spoken.

Here are some choice Spanish words/phrases. We also suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

Hello - *Hola!*

Good day - *Buenas dias!*

How are you? - *Como estas?* ('*Como estas usted?*' if you need to be extra formal!)

Goodbye - *Adios*

Please - *Por favour*

Thank you - *Gracias*

I don't understand - *No entiendo*

I don't speak Spanish - *No hablo espanol*

Sorry/excuse me - *Lo siento*

Where is...? - *Donde esta...?*

The bill please - *La cuenta por favour*

## Galapagos

### Food & Drink

#### Ecuador

Lunch (almuerzo) is the big meal of the day. Rice and potatoes are common staples of the diet throughout the country. Local food is usually not spiced, but it's popular to add aji (red pepper sauce) to make it hot. If going to the coast, try some of the interesting coconut dishes.

You should not drink tap water (including ice) unless it's boiled or bottled. Remember, most fruit juices are made with unboiled water. Be careful around dairy products and milk. Hamburger meat is not always safe. Make sure that uncooked vegetables are cleaned with purified water or peeled. Be careful with seafood and avoid undercooked meat. Remember, it's always better to be safe than sorry.

Typical dishes:

Cuy - Whole roasted guinea pig

Locro - A soup of stewed potatoes and cheese topped with avocados

Cacho - A croissant-like pastry

Lechón - Whole roasted pig (also called chancho)

Ceviche - Fish, shrimp, clams or mussels marinated in lemon with popcorn and roasted corn or sliced onions

Humitas - Sweet corn tamales (often served for breakfast with coffee)

Patacones - Fried plantain slices served with fish and rice

Seco Stew - Chicken, beef, lamb or goat served with rice

Yaguarlocro - Potato soup with blood sausage

Llapingachos - Fried mashed potato and cheese pancakes

Remember to let us know before you depart if you have any special dietary requirements.

## Drinks

The usual soft drinks as well as local soft drinks and fruit juices are available everywhere (make sure you get jugo puro (pure juice) and not con agua (with water) as the water used is not usually boiled). You will only be able to find decent coffee in the better restaurants. Alcohol-wise the local beers are Club, Pilsener and Malta, which are all good. The local wine, on the other hand, should be avoided; they are often made from bananas! For a less expensive option, go for Chilean, Argentinean or Peruvian wines (rather than European), if it is your tipples of choice. Rum and the local firewater, aguardiente (sugar cane alcohol), are popular and cheap.

## Galapagos

### Public Holidays

#### Ecuador

To view a list of the public holidays for Vietnam, please see the link below:

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays/ecuador/](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/ecuador/)

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. Many schools, government offices, stores and banks are closed on National Holidays. Please note that there may be slight date variations for some of the holidays each year and that the list is not exhaustive. The Ecuadorian Government have been known to introduce new bank holidays or commemorative days at short notice.

Banks are open from 9am to 1.30pm. Shops are open until 7pm (12pm on Saturdays), but close for lunch from 1pm-3pm.

## Galapagos

### Weather

#### Ecuador

Ecuador's climate varies from region to region and can be unpredictable!

# Galapagos Island Teaching Volunteers

Highlands: Rainy season - October to May (heaviest rain in April) with a mini-dry season around Christmas. Dry season - June to October. Quito and Cuenca have spring-like, pleasant temperatures all year round, averaging 15°C-24°C during the day, and 4°C-10°C at night and early in the morning.

Galapagos and Coast: Hot and rainy season is December to May. It doesn't rain all the time but do expect heavy downpours that can cause havoc with communications. Temperatures average around 31°C but it often gets hotter.

The Oriente: Relatively tropical and rain is pretty much a year round constant but temperatures remain high meaning that any time of year is perfect for a visit!

## **Galapagos**

The Galapagos and the coast are much hotter than mainland Ecuador with an average of 31°C and the rainy season falling between December and May, bringing even more humid weather. Oriente's climate is relatively tropical and rain is pretty much a year round constant but temperatures remain high meaning that any time of year is perfect for a visit!

## **Time** **Ecuador**

Ecuador is five hours behind GMT and the Galapagos is an hour behind mainland Ecuador.

## **Galapagos**

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## **Electricity** **Ecuador**

In Ecuador the electric system is 127 Volts and frequency 60 Hertz. If your device does not accept this voltage you will need an adapter.

Outlets in Ecuador generally accept 1 type of plug:



Flat blade plug

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## Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as we make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

## Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

**Phone:** 1-800-985-4852

**Email:** [info@realgap.com](mailto:info@realgap.com)

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