

Galapagos Islands: Preserving Nature's Wonders™

Live alongside exotic marine life in one of the last untouched places on earth.



Highlights

- Volunteer to restore the habitat of native Galapagos wildlife
- Live in a world where animals have no fear of humans
- Snorkel with sea lions and multi-colored exotic fish
- Zip line through the treetops of a forest
- Straddle the northern and southern hemispheres at the actual Equator line
- Kayak around untouched islands and see animals up close
- Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station
- Meet Lonesome George, the rarest tortoise in the world
- Wander the cobblestone streets of colonial Quito



Galapagos: Preserving Nature's Wonders™

The Galapagos Islands, located off the coast of Ecuador, are so unique that UNESCO has designated it a World Heritage Site. These 19 islands have been called a "living museum and showcase of evolution". While the archipelago has been the center of attention from conservationists around the world, it is under constant pressure from environmental threats.

Come and experience one of the most pristine natural environments where conservationists are working to protect this unique ecosystem. Besides volunteering you will also have the opportunity to hike lava fields, snorkel with seals and explore islands, volcanoes and reefs.

Community Service

Of the 9 days you spend on the Galapagos Islands, 5 of those days will consist of community service. The other four days in the Galapagos will not include community service; they will focus on exploring the islands and learning about the biology and geology of the archipelago.

The native wildlife of the islands is in danger because the animals' natural habitat is under attack by invasive plants, litter, and foreign species. Students work to restore the habitat the natural habitat of the animals so that they can reproduce and grow. Our projects are in partnership with tortoise breeding centers on the islands of San Cristobal and Isabella.



Learning

Throughout the program, you will be in a "living classroom." We will learn about issues related to the challenges of balancing the needs of humans with the imperative for biological protection and preservation. You will also witness first-hand the diversity of species that led Darwin to formulate his thinking on natural selection and adaptation. The entire journey will shed light into the history of these islands, human interaction and habitation, and the struggle to conserve the wildlife and fauna of this area.

Excursions

This journey through the Galapagos Islands will prove to be the experience of a lifetime. Not simply because of the rich and varied diversity of animals that will you see or their staggering numbers, but because of their sublime indifference to you while observing them. Giant tortoises – including the legendary Lonesome George, the last of his species on earth – roam freely. Blue-footed boobies perch on rocks. The skies are filled with wheeling, courting, red-throated frigate birds. The lava rocks are piled high with motionless marine iguanas. A mind-boggling array of creatures lives in a paradise of crystal blue waters, white beaches and cool mangrove stands. Students will hike up to a volcano, and explore the second largest crater in the entire world. We will swim through lagoons, snorkel through reefs and see varied wildlife that you have only read about.

Lodging

At the start and end of our journey, we will stay at a local hotel in Quito. While in the Galapagos Islands our Home Base is a small hotel run out of the home of a local family. It is similar to a bed & breakfast; our students will share a room with one roommate, and each room has a private bathroom. Students and staff eat meals with the local family. The family will share their home, culture and personal experiences of living on the islands with us.

14-day Program

June 17 – June 30, 2012
July 3 – July 16, 2012
July 19 – August 1, 2012
August 4 – August 17, 2012

Duration: 14 days

Location: Quito & Galapagos

Tuition: \$3,495

Domestic flight supplement: \$430

Service hours: 30

In the Galapagos, the first seven nights on either Isabela or San Cristobal island (during the first three program sessions we will stay on Isabela, the last three sessions stay on San Cristobal) and on all sessions, the last two nights in the Galapagos, we stay on Santa Cruz island.

Tuition

Tuition includes all in-country expenses including lodging, meals, transportation, all activities and entrance fees, community service materials, all excursions, backup medical insurance, and experienced program leaders.

The **\$430 domestic flight supplement** covers roundtrip airfare from Quito to the Galapagos Islands and also includes \$110 of taxes, fees and permits paid upon arrival to the Galapagos airport.

Tuition does not include the following: international airfare to Quito, snorkeling gear, souvenirs, snacks, laundry, internet access, phone calls, medical expenses or the \$41 airport tax to leave Ecuador.

Program Schedule

Disclaimer: Actual order of activities will vary by program session. The day by day itinerary detailed below is typical for what you can expect to experience, but not set in stone as work and activities vary depending upon the needs of our local community partners, various celebrations and customs, as well as the weather. This itinerary is designed to give you an example of what a day to day schedule would look like and provides a clear idea of the program experience. It may be changed during the summer as staff see fit and on the ground circumstances and opportunities change our course. Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands will challenge you as students are expected to work hard on their conservation projects and really be present for all that we do. You will get hot, dirty and bug bitten along the way, but your contribution to the island life, community and to each other will positively impact everyone involved.

Day 1: Upon arrival in the airport in Quito you will be met by our staff and taken to a hotel where you and the rest of the group will spend the night. As most flights from the United States arrive in Quito late at night, most students will call home, eat and go to bed.



Day 2: We'll start the day with some teambuilding activities to get to know each other better. We will then stop at Mitad del Mundo, a monument built exactly where the Equator line passes through Ecuador. You'll have a chance to literally straddle both the northern and southern hemisphere! After lunch, we will explore the colonial section of Quito to see the architecture that the city is famous for including its breathtaking cathedrals and grand plazas. We'll go to sleep early in anticipation of our early morning flight to the Galapagos Islands.

Days 3: After a very early breakfast we travel to the airport to catch the first flight to the Galapagos Islands and then begin our onward journey across three islands until we reach Isabela Island. On arrival to the Galapagos the group will travel across Baltra Island in order to reach Santa Cruz Island to get to the small town of Puerto Ayora. From Puerto Ayora, we'll take another boat out to either San Cristobal (or Isabela Island as the session is in reverse). Both are less populated islands where we'll work with tortoise breeding centers.

Day 4: Our first morning of community service will be dedicated to restoring the habitat of the Galapagos tortoises. Depending on what the breeding centers need us to do, we might be removing invasive species, clearing out brush from water sources or helping clean up the actual living quarters of the tortoises. After community service, we'll head out on boats to snorkel get up close to friendly sharks, playful sea lions, giant sea turtle and rainbow colored fish.

Day 5: Depending on the weather and local conditions, we'll spend the morning either snorkeling to see hammer sharks or we'll hike up an inactive volcano. Along the way, we'll learn about the biology and geology of the area. In the afternoon we will continue our community service restoring tortoise habitat, followed by dinner and team building activities.

Day 6: After community service in the morning, we'll head out to the beaches to look for elusive flamingos or sea lions. Afterwards, we'll visit with the breeding center to learn more about the conservation efforts of the giant tortoises. In the evening we'll have a chance to do laundry and use the internet to contact friends and family.

Day 7: After breakfast we head to the harbor to catch a boat to find some good snorkeling with seal turtles, exotic fish, sea lions, and rays. Our group will enjoy lunch in town as we discuss the diverse marine life we were able to explore that morning. In the afternoon we will continue our community service.

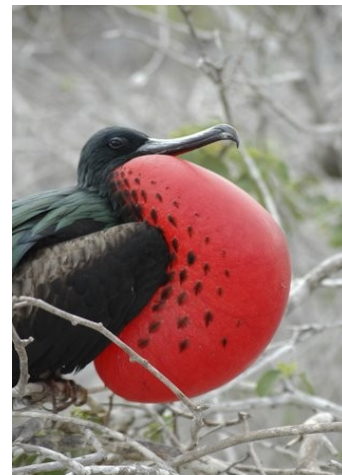
Day 8: In the morning we will wrap up our community service projects at the rehabilitation center and say our goodbyes to the animals and our new friends. After community service we will have a free afternoon at the beach to unwind and reflect on what we've learned during the community service portion of the program.



Day 9: We will take off early this morning and head to the island of Santa Cruz where we will meet our new family and settle in to their small hotel. After lunch, we will take a short hike to Tortuga Bay where we will find the magnificent blue-footed booby!

Day 10: Today we will explore the Island and trek up a local river to witness up close the wildlife. We will meet with a local biologist who will detail what we are experiencing on his new island.

Day 11: Today we'll explore Garrapatera Beach where we'll kayak around the edge of the island and with any luck we'll find a group of flamingos. We'll have a barbecue lunch on the back on the beach. Afterwards, we'll visit the Charles Darwin Center to meet Lonesome George, the last known remaining giant Pinta Island tortoise in the world.



Day 12: After breakfast we'll start the journey back to the airport: bus across Santa Cruz, ferry over to Baltra Island and then a short bus ride to the airport. Once back in Quito we will check into our hostel, and in the night we will go together to La Mariscal, a bustling cultural center where you can pick up souvenirs, sample Ecuadorian cuisine, and catch glimpses of historical sites. Students will dine together in a local café.

Day 13: On your last full day in South America, we'll share one more adrenaline-pumping activity as we zipline through the tree tops of a forest and soak up the amazing views. We'll have a barbecue lunch there and then begin our journey back to Quito for our farewell banquet.

Day 14: After an early breakfast our driver will pick us up and we will head to the airport for departing flights. Don't forget the \$41 airport tax fee upon departure.

About Global Leadership Adventures

Global Leadership Adventures, established in 2004, is the premier international community service-learning program for high school students. Students come back transformed.

GLA is unique because of its focus on leadership development and first-hand learning about global issues. Students learn first hand from social pioneers around the world who are creating positive social change in their communities.

Students are taught to use their heart, as well as their head, to become agents of positive change across borders.

GLA has been featured in:

The New York Times

seventeen

BALTIMORE TIMES ONLINE

The Boston Globe

