



EXEMPLARY

Galapagos – Humboldt Explorer Trip Preparation Information

Below is valuable information which will help make your dive trip more enjoyable.
If there are questions not covered below, please contact Explorer Ventures Liveaboard Fleet.
Photographs and vessel layouts are available online at www.explorerventures.com

THE VESSEL

The *Humboldt Explorer* comfortably accommodates 16 passengers in 8 air-conditioned rooms, all of which have private bath and shower facilities. Most cabins can be arranged to provide two twin beds or one large bed depending on guest needs. All cabins have flat screen televisions and windows. Cabins are located on the main and lower decks. The air-conditioned salon on the main deck includes dining tables, TV, multimedia center, video library and lounge area.

A partially covered sundeck with jacuzzi and ample seating areas is located on the top level. The dive deck is equipped with individual gear bins, large camera table, recharging station, air and nitrox filling stations, tank racks, and a separate freshwater rinse tank for underwater camera equipment. Diving operations are conducted from two large pangas (tenders), easily boarded from the dive deck.

Cell phone service is available when in proximity to Santa Cruz Island if your phone is so equipped. The vessel's location does determine the reliability of access to these services. A satellite phone is available for emergency use.

DIVING CONDITIONS

Galapagos is famous for huge schools of hammerheads, but there is more to Galapagos than just its schooling sharks. You will be diving in a protected and healthy marine environment with an abundance of rare species including Galapagos sharks, whale sharks, mantas, mobulas, eagle rays, stingrays, penguins, orcas, dolphins, mola mola, marine iguanas, turtles, sea lions, butterflyfish, tuna, and pufferfish among many others.

Galapagos has two seasons. High season is regarded as July to November when the Humboldt current is at its maximum force, bringing upwellings of nutrients from the cold depths. This is your best opportunity to dive with whale sharks in Darwin and Wolf. In these months, the water is cooler, visibility is lower, currents can be stronger and the seas can be rough at times. The air temperature is cooler and evenings can be fresh. The chances of seeing whale sharks are slim during the low season months of December through June. Other popular species, such as the scalloped hammerheads and large schools of fish are present year-round however, making the "low" season desirable if whale sharks are not on your must-see list. Temperatures are warmer and visibility is generally better.

Galapagos is a cold-water destination. Regular temperatures in Darwin and Wolf are 21-24°C (70-78°F) but can be warmer in the early months of the year. Thermoclines can dip to 13°C (54°F) in the Western Islands of Punta Vicente Roca and Cabo Douglas, which stay cooler year-round.

DIVING LOGISTICS

All dives aboard the *Humboldt Explorer* are offered at scheduled times, up to 4 times daily (weather & itinerary permitting). Schedules must comply with Galapagos National Park rules, allow for adequate surface intervals and enable the vessel to travel to different locations. Please note that Galapagos regulations limit the maximum depth for all dives to 130 feet (30 meters). All dives are done from pangas (zodiacs).

MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most SCUBA certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-old to a maximum depth of 40 feet (12 meters). Children 12-14 years old are restricted to 70 feet (21 meters). Explorer Ventures Fleet therefore allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:

- All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian, unless undergoing active training with an instructor. Minors must be accompanied onboard by a guardian at all times.
- This itinerary offers no diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet; **diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-old are not available on this itinerary, and 12-14-year-old will not be able to dive all sites.** For this reason, a minimum age of 15 for divers is strongly suggested.
- A parent/legal guardian will be required to sign the liability release on behalf of a child under the age of 18.
- There are special requirements for minors traveling aboard any of the vessels. Please contact us for full details.

SAFETY STANDARDS

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

1. All divers must be certified as open water scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization.
2. Due to the advanced nature of diving conditions in the Galapagos, divers should have extensive experience with currents, rough seas, and diving in thicker wetsuits. We strongly recommend a minimum of 60-100 logged dives in varied conditions. Anyone without adequate experience may not be able to make all offered dives, depending on conditions.

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3. All dives are guided by an instructor/naturalist guide and due to Galapagos National Park regulations all divers must dive with the guide at all times.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. All divers must have a submersible console. In addition, a timepiece must be worn by at least one diver in a buddy team. Dive computers are required.
6. Decompression and solo diving are not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 130' (110' on nitrox).
7. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
8. All divers must present proof of dive accident insurance per Galapagos National Park regulations.
9. All divers must also carry a DiveAlert, a surface signaling device, and an electronic beacon while diving (all available on board). Guests are responsible for all items they borrow from the vessel.
10. Please note that due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, neither rebreathers nor diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) may be used aboard Explorer Ventures Fleet vessels.
11. Please note that flash photography is not permitted while taking photos of wildlife on land. Professional photography and videos recorded for commercial purposes must be authorized by the Galapagos National Park Directorate. Drones are not permitted in the Galapagos.

DIVE EQUIPMENT LIST

The vessel provides tanks, weights, and weight belts for your use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need. Please indicate on your application form what equipment you will require. Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Certification Cards
- Diving Log Book (strongly encouraged)
- Mask *
- Snorkel
- Fins/Booties*
- Buoyancy Control Device (required) *
- Regulator w/alternate air source, submersible pressure and depth gauges (required)*
- Dive computer (required) *
- Dive light
- Wet suit – 5 mm to 7 mm *
- Hooded vest or hood
- Gloves
- Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Safety flag*
- DiveAlert air horn for regulator*
- Nautilus lifeline *

* Available for rent on board. Please check our [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#). Please also note that hooded vests and hoods are not available onboard.

Most of our guests bring their own complete set of dive gear. This is the ideal situation, however, due to weight limits or additional travel plans some of our guests choose to rent gear. We strongly recommend that you bring your own mask, gloves, booties, fins, hood or hooded vest and computer. A personal wetsuit is also a good idea if you have space. Diving in Galapagos can be challenging, and it is important that you are comfortable. Gloves are suggested as the rocks can be sharp and can damage the hands.

NITROX

Nitrox is available for an additional charge, as long as the diver is Nitrox certified. Please read our [Nitrox](#) page for more information.

MEALS

Aboard the *Humboldt Explorer*, lunch and evening meals usually consist of salad, potatoes, rice, chicken, beef, pork, and fish. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, cereal, toast and fresh fruit. If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate so on your application form. Please note that specific brands of soft drinks, dressings and foods are often unavailable in the islands, and it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat or soy products and other items common elsewhere. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own items if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk or seriously compromise the enjoyment of your holiday.

WHAT TO BRING

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits, though at sea the winds can be cold and jackets are often necessary. Sunglasses, a visor/hat, raincoat, lightweight sweater or jacket, long sleeved shirt, backpack, tevas (or similar) are recommended. Soft luggage is also recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Guests traveling through Quito who are interested in day tours may wish to bring some items of clothing for slightly cooler temperatures and good walking shoes.

Please remember that the Galapagos Islands straddle the Equator, and the sun can be very strong at times. For this reason, please make sure you have sufficient strength environmentally friendly sunscreen.

Please remember to bring:

- Any hand-signed PDF forms (only if not completed online)
- A doctor's medical clearance for diving, if required.

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In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency towards seasickness, come prepared with motion sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. If you have favorite music or movies, feel free to bring them. All linens (including sheets, comforters, bath towels, hand towels, dive towels, and wash cloths) are provided on board.

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

There is a checked luggage limit of one bag up to 50 pounds (23 kilos) for flights between Quito and/or Guayaquil and the Galapagos. An additional fee of up to \$65* will be charged for the second bag or overweight luggage. In addition, passengers are allowed a carry-on bag weighing no more than 17.6 pounds (8 kilos) and a personal item. All additional luggage fees must be paid in cash at flight time. (**Prices could change at any time.*) Groups and individuals that book hotel and transfers with Explorer Ventures will be assisted by a representative at the airport for check-in and are less likely to be charged additional fees.

WHAT IS THE CURRENCY?

The U.S. dollar is the official currency of Ecuador; therefore, it is not necessary to purchase currency before arriving. Most major credit cards are accepted widely when shopping ashore, however, additional fees are charged in Ecuador for the use of credit cards (6 %). US Dollar bills not larger than \$20 are preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS

Outgoing calls may be made from the vessel via satellite phone. Please be aware that a charge is assessed for both incoming and outgoing calls.

- Vital messages may be passed to guests by calling the booking office at 1-800-322-3577
- Free Wifi with satellite internet connection is available onboard.

The local agent for *Humboldt Explorer* can be reached from North America via phone or WhatsApp at +593-95872-0537 and will be able to contact the vessel. Cellular phone calls are available when in proximity to some of the islands. Cellular phone cards are available for purchase at the airport. The connections are based on 3G network and the vessel's location does determine the reliability of access to the network.

ONBOARD CHARGES

Though all meals, most beverages, transportation between islands, and much more has been taken care of with your trip payment, there are additional items which you may charge to your on-board bill. These include retail items (shirts, etc.), scuba instruction, rentals, nitrox, premium alcoholic beverages, and crew gratuities.

- Chamber Support Fee: \$35 per person
- Upon entry to the Galapagos Islands: Per person cash payments of \$200 Galapagos National Park fee and \$20 Tourist Card.
- Fuel tax: [Please check our current Onboard Charges.](#)

Bills will be settled onboard on Friday morning. Accumulated charges may be paid using cash, Visa, or MasterCard. American Express, travelers checks and personal checks are not accepted on board, and we are unable to advance cash on credit card charges. (Travelers checks are not accepted in Ecuador nor can they easily be changed into cash.) Credit cards are subject to 6% in bank fees. These charges can be avoided by using cash for onboard charges. US Dollar bills not larger than \$20 are preferred onboard, in all businesses and local banks. ATM machines are available in Quito, Guayaquil and Puerto Ayora. Crew gratuity must be paid in cash.

CREW GRATUITY

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

ARRIVAL

First a note about having a current Passport: Passports with a minimum of 6 months remaining before the expiration date are required for all arriving foreign nationals. If in doubt about visas, contact the Ecuadorian Consulate for specific requirements from your country.

[Click here to check important information about domestic flights from Mainland Ecuador to the Galapagos islands.](#)

Transfers between airport (Baltra/GPS) and vessel for same day arrivals & departures are included. If you are arriving early and staying on Santa Cruz Island or arriving from another island, please meet the Humboldt Explorer representative at the airport arrivals area at 11:30am. Departure from the Baltra airport to Humboldt Explorer is at 12 noon. Please note you must arrive at or before 1130 am in Baltra airport. If you decide to take a later flight, there will be a charge of \$150 per reservation to contract a guide to meet you at the airport and take you to meet the boat. It is not possible to go on your own.

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If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to Ecuador or the Galapagos on schedule, please contact our USA booking office at 1-800-322-3577, or our local Manager at +593-95872-0537 (Mobile Phone & WhatsApp). Notify them of your updated arrival time and where you may be reached in the meantime. The vessel will leave the harbor on Monday at 12noon. Retrieving lost luggage after the vessel departs on charter is impossible. It can be retrieved when the vessel returns to port at the end of the charter.

The vessel arrives at its final destination port on Sunday, around 1:00pm. The Sunday evening meal is on the island (Puerto Ayora) and is not included in the price of the trip. Transportation is organized and included for transfer to the airport. The departure tax from Quito and Guayaquil is now included in international flight prices.

Please note: Flight times, prices and the Galapagos airport of arrival are all subject to change with little or no notification, and flights often run late. We strongly encourage our guests to plan on arriving at least one and preferably two days prior to your flight to the Galapagos Islands, to ensure that your luggage is with you or to make up for any travel delays. We also recommend that guests plan on an extra night in Quito or Guayaquil before departing Ecuador. Guests must allow a minimum of four hours between arrival time in Quito or Guayaquil and an international flight. Ticket holders are required to check-in a minimum of three hours prior to flight time for all international and domestic departures.

RECOMMENDED HOTELS

Quito Hotels:

- [Hotel Mercure Alameda Quito](#)
- [Hacienda Jimenita](#)
- [Wyndham Quito Airport](#)

Guayaquil Hotels:

- [Wyndham Guayaquil](#)
- [Hotel Macaw](#)

Santa Cruz Hotels:

- [Galapagos Suites Hotel](#)
- [Hotel Pelican Bay](#)
- [Ikala Galapagos Hotel](#)

MORE INFOS ON TRAVELING TO ECUADOR

- Visit the [United States State Dept. Passport Services](#) - Need to get a passport or update your old passport before your next international dive trip? Forget about standing in line. At this site, you can download an application, get a list of passport office locations and find out what you need to get a passport.
- Visit the [U.S. Department of State travel information](#).
- For current health recommendations, please see [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#).

WEATHER

For current weather conditions in the Galapagos visit [Weather in the Galapagos Islands](#) - Provided by Weather Underground.

For detailed specifics on the two main seasons in the Galapagos (The Hot Season, and The Cold Season) visit our PDF on the [Galapagos Seasons](#).

PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus between-dive snacks
- 2-4 dives daily – total of 18-19 dives – 2 land tours.
- Use of tanks, weights, and belts
- Wine, beer, welcome cocktail and soft drinks
- Same day roundtrip airport transfers (from/to vessel only)

PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- Hotel accommodations & Flights to/from Galapagos
- Rental, instruction, nitrox and retail charges
- Crew gratuities
- Trip cancellation & dive accident insurance
- Last evening dinner in town & alcoholic beverages (other than wine and beer)
- Hyperbaric chamber fee
- [Current Onboard Charges](#)

Have a wonderful trip onboard Humboldt



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