

# Galapagos Archipelago

## MAJESTIC 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](http://www.explorerventures.com)

### THE VESSEL

- 16 guests
- 8 air-conditioned rooms with private bath & showers
- 110 V outlets in bath & near bed

The *M/V Majestic Explorer* comfortably accommodates 16 passengers in 8 air-conditioned rooms, all of which have private bathroom facilities. Six of the eight cabins have twin beds and all cabins can be converted to queen beds for couples. All cabins have dressers, a closet and windows to maximize the view of the Pacific Ocean and Galapagos Archipelago. Cabins are on the main and lower decks. The air-conditioned salon on the main deck includes dining tables, TV, VCR, CD/DVD, video library and lounge area. Sunning/viewing areas, ample seating and a hot tub are located on the top level.

The dive deck is equipped with individual gear bins, camera table, recharging station, air and nitrox filling stations, tank racks and a separate fresh water rinse tank for underwater camera equipment. Diving operations are conducted from two large pangas (tenders), easily boarded from the dive deck. The *Majestic Explorer* is also equipped with a satellite telephone for outgoing calls worldwide.

### DIVING CONDITIONS

- Water temps in summer average 65°F, 70°F in winter

The weather in the Galapagos has water temperatures ranging from 65-75°F from December through May and 60-70°F June through November. Water temperatures are at the higher end of the scale in both Darwin and Wolf. Air temperatures range from 75°F or higher in the rainy season (December-May) to the mid 60s during the dry season (June-November), with nearly constant sea breezes. Currents can range from 1 to 5 knots at the sites we visit, and visibility is generally between 30 and 80 feet. Most divers are comfortable with a 7 mm wetsuit June through November with a hooded vest and gloves and a minimum 5 mm wetsuit December through May. Gloves and hood are strongly recommended. Your dives will be done from the pangas with an easy backward roll into the water. After you dive, your tank will be lifted back into the panga and you will board via its stern ladders.

### MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

- Under the age of 15 must dive with parent/guardian

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most scuba certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-olds to a maximum depth of 40 feet. Explorer Ventures Fleet therefore allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:


1. All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian, unless undergoing active training with an instructor. For this reason, a minimum age of 15 for divers is strongly suggested.
2. This itinerary offers no diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet; diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-olds are not available on this itinerary.
3. A parent/legal guardian will be required to sign the liability release on behalf of a child under the age of 18.

### SAFETY STANDARDS

- Dive insurance is required

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. All divers must be experienced divers (we recommend that you have more than 100 logged dives) and have logged at least one dive within the 6 months prior to boarding the vessel. Dives are very often at an advanced level. Currents can be very strong and often divers are required to swim against them.
3. All dives are guided by an instructor/naturalist guide.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. All divers must have a submersible console. In addition, a timepiece must be worn by at least one diver in a buddy system. Dive computers are strongly recommended.
6. Decompression and solo diving is not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 130 feet.
7. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
8. All divers must carry a DiveAlert, a surface signaling device, and an electronic beacon while diving (all available on board).
9. 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 not be used aboard Explorer Ventures Fleet vessels.

10. Please note that flash photography is not permitted while taking photos of wildlife. Professional photography and videos recorded for commercial purposes must be authorized by the Galapagos National Park Directorate.

## WHAT TO BRING

- **Soft luggage for easy storage**
- **Very casual attire**
- **All linens, soaps and shampoo are supplied**
- **Hairdryers are not available on board**
- **Note luggage weight restrictions**

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. Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Sunscreen, sunglasses, a visor, raincoat, lightweight sweater or jacket, long-sleeved shirt, backpack, tevas and a hat are recommended.

Please remember that the Galapagos Islands straddle the Equator and the sun can be very strong at times. In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency towards seasickness, come prepared with motion sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. If you have favorite CDs or DVDs, feel free to bring them.

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

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

There is a limit on checked-in luggage for flights to and from Quito and/or Guayaquil to the Galapagos of one bag up to 50 pounds (23 kilos). An additional fee of up to US\$2.00\* per 2.2 pounds (1 kilo) to and from Quito will be charged for luggage over the limit and US\$2.00\* per 2.2 pounds (1 kilo) to and from Guayaquil. In addition, passengers are allowed a carry-on bag weighing no more than 17.6 pounds (8 kilos) and a personal item. This additional fee must be paid in cash at flight time.

*\*These prices could change at anytime. Groups and individuals that book hotel and transfers through Explorer Ventures will be assisted by a representative at the airport for check-in and are less likely to be charged additional fees.*

## EQUIPMENT LIST

- **Bring your application/liability forms**
- **Certification card**
- **Rental equipment is available on board (please indicate need on application)**
- **DAN or other dive accident insurance card**

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

- Certification card
- Diving log book (strongly encouraged)
- Mask \*
- Snorkel \*
- Fins \*
- Booties \*
- Buoyancy Control Device (required) \*
- Regulator w/alternate air source, submersible pressure and depth gauges (required)\*
- Underwater time piece (required)
- Dive computer \*
- Wetsuit – 3 mm to 5 mm \*
- Hooded vest
- Gloves
- Dive light
- Tank Marker Lights (required for night dives)
- Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Safety flag
- DiveAlert air horn for regulator

*\* Available for rent on board*

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.

## DIVE INSURANCE

- **Dive insurance is REQUIRED!**

Due to the nature of this trip and the very remote nature of the destination, all divers are required to have dive accident insurance when diving from the *Majestic Explorer*, and to note the policy number on their application form. See our website for further information and options on dive and travel insurance.



## ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

- **Passport required**
- **Transfers within Galapagos are included**  
**If delayed contact 011.593.99703.1382**  
**or 011.593.99529.7471**
- **Tourist Card and Galapagos National Park fee requires cash**
- **Note flight schedules**

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.

Transfers within the Galapagos are included in your package for same-day arrivals, and you will be met at the airport in Galapagos by one of our guides. If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to Ecuador or the Galapagos on schedule, please contact Galasam, our Ecuadorian partner, at 011.593.99703.1382 or 011.593.99529.7471 and notify them of your updated arrival time should you have that information, and where you may be reached in the meantime. The vessel will leave port on Saturday at approximately 2:00 pm.

The vessel arrives at its final destination port on Saturday morning. The Friday evening meal is on island and 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 upon departing Ecuador. The earliest time a guest can reliably expect to connect to another flight is 5 pm on the last Saturday of the trip from Guayaquil or 7 pm from Quito. Ticket holders are required to check in a minimum of 3 hours prior to flight time for all international departures, even when connecting from an Aerogal or Tame flight. If you are booking your own domestic flights, the *Majestic Explorer* departs from Baltra (GPS), not San Cristobal (SCY). Passengers flying into San Cristobal must arrange their own transportation to Baltra.

## SAMPLE ITINERARIES

*Please note that these itineraries are examples only, and will change depending on local regulation, weather and logistics at the Captain's discretion. At this time, each week in the itinerary includes the same islands. The order of the islands, however, is dictated by the National Parks Foundation and may change.*

Days aboard the *Majestic Explorer* generally involve a 6:30am dive followed by breakfast, a dive at 10:30am, lunch at 12:00pm, and afternoon dives at 2:00 pm and 4:30pm (On days with long transits between islands, the number of dives will be reduced to 2-3 dives - see itinerary). Dinner is served at approximately 7:00 pm. Under current National Parks guidelines, night dives and land visits are strictly regulated. The *Majestic Explorer* must follow the schedule of islands and land tours as noted below.

**Saturday:** Baltra (1 Check Out Dive at Punta Carrion)

Guests fly to the Galapagos Islands from Mainland Ecuador, arriving in the late morning. The dive guides will meet the guests at the airport and escort them to the *Majestic Explorer*. Guests will board the vessel, have lunch and listen to the briefings. After the briefings, the guests will do a check out dive at Punta Carrion. After dinner the vessel will depart to the next scheduled destination.

**Sunday:** Baltra North (2 Dives)

6:30 and 9:30 dives

Sightings include rays and schools of fish.

Afternoon North Seymour land visit. Walk the path around North Seymour Island to see the large colonies of Blue Footed Boobies and Frigate Birds. Sighting of Sea Lions and Marine Iguanas are also common.

Depart for Wolf Island. (long transit)

**Monday:** Wolf Island (4 Dives)

6:30, 10:30, 2:00 and 4:30 dives. Possible night dive.

Sightings often include hammerheads, whale sharks (in season), eagle rays, sea lions, Galapagos sharks and silky sharks.

**Tuesday:** Darwin Island (4 Dives)

6:30, 10:30, 2:00 and 4:30 dives

Sightings often include hammerheads, whale sharks (in season) eagle rays, Galapagos sharks and silky sharks.

Transit to Wolf Island.

**Wednesday:** Wolf Island (3-4 Dives)

6:30, 10:30, 2:00 and 4:30 dives

Sightings often include hammerheads, whale sharks (in season), eagle rays, Galapagos sharks and silky sharks.

Transit to Cabo Douglas (12 hours)

**Thursday:** Cabo Douglas (2 Dives)

Sightings include marine iguanas

Transit to Punta Vincente Roca

**Punta Vincente Roca** (1-2 Dives)

Sightings often include mola mola, turtles, macro life

Transit to Cousins Rock (10 hours)

**Friday:** Cousins Rock (2 Dives)

6:30 and 9:30 dives

This is a great macro diving with an excellent chance of seeing sea horses, sea lions and eagle rays. Lunch will be served while transiting to Santa Cruz (3 hours). Travel by bus to the Santa Cruz Highlands to visit the giant tortoises in their natural habitat. Transfer to the town of Puerto Ayora. Dinner on your own in Puerto Ayora. Return to the *Majestic Explorer* at 8:30pm.

**Saturday:** Baltra

Depart the vessel by 9 am. Transfer to the airport.

## MEALS

- Please list on the application form any dietary needs you have.

Aboard the *Majestic Explorer*, lunch and evening meals usually consist of salad, potatoes, rice, chicken, beef, pork and fish. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, pancakes, 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 that it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat or soy products, fresh fruit, fish, and other items common elsewhere. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk or seriously compromise your enjoyment of your holiday.

## CURRENCY

- US dollars are widely accepted

The US 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.

## ONBOARD CHARGES

- Major credit cards are accepted on board

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 onboard bill. These include retail items (shirts, scuba accessories, etc.), scuba instruction, rentals, nitrox and crew gratuities.

The bill may be paid at the end of the trip using cash, Visa or MasterCard, American Express. Traveler's checks and personal checks are not accepted on board, and we are unable to advance cash on credit card charges. Gratuities and onboard charges are best paid in cash. This avoids any additional Ecuadorian taxes and service fees. Credit cards are subject to the 14% VAT plus 5% in bank fees. Bills will be settled onboard on Friday morning. ATM machines are available in Quito, Guayaquil, Puerto Ayora and San Cristobal.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Vital messages may be passed to guest by calling the operations office at 1.800.322.3577
- Internet access is not available aboard

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

## CREW GRATUITIES

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

## PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus between-dive snacks
- 2-4 dives daily – total of 18-19 dives weekly
- Use of tanks, weights and belts
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
- Airport transfers on day of charter

## PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- Airport transfers on non charter days
- Transfers from hotels to vessel
- Hotel accommodations
- Flights to/from Galapagos
- Last evening meal
- Rental, instruction, nitrox and retail charges
- Crew gratuities
- Trip cancellation & dive accident insurance
- Galapagos National Park Fees
- TCT tourist card
- Enviromental Fuel Use Surcharge
- Chamber Support Fee

*All prices are subject to change.  
Please call us if you have any questions.*

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**Have a wonderful trip aboard the *Majestic Explorer*!**

## Explorer Ventures

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