



Jacque Whitt & Vidal Jaquehua [info@adiosadventuretravel.com](mailto:info@adiosadventuretravel.com)  
757-714-6649 (US) +011 51 98 476 2877 (Peru)

## Galápagos & Ecuador Pre-Departure Travel and Packing Information

Note: Local Time Zone in the Galapagos is GMT-6 (one hour behind mainland Ecuador)

**Information contained in this document is vital to your trip. Please read all information carefully and let us know if you have any questions. You may want to print this and carry it with you.**

### This document contains important information regarding:

Additional Expenses  
Travel Insurance Recommendations  
Airport Check-In Procedures  
Airport Transfers  
Luggage Weight Limitations  
Luggage Storage  
Ban on Plastic in the Galapagos Islands  
Medical Attention & Availability  
Travel Insurance  
Hotels  
Pick-Up Times for Tours & Inter-Island Flights (Air Taxi)  
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Packing Checklist

### Additional Expenses - We recommend that you carry \$130 cash on hand for the following expenses.

It is necessary to have this cash in hand before departing airport in Quito or Guayaquil for your flight to the Galápagos Islands.

- \$20 per person - Galápagos Visitors Card** (purchased at the airport in UIO or GYE)  
*This card must be presented for both legs of round-trip flights*
- \$100 per person - Galápagos National Park Fee** (paid upon arrival in the islands)  
*Have cash in USD in hand upon arrival.*
- \$5-10 per person - Isabela Island Entrance Fee** (paid upon arrival to Isabela Island)  
*Have cash in USD in hand upon arrival.*
- \$0.50-1 per person - Water Taxis/Baltra Airport bus (2-3 rides per person)**  
*Have cash/coins in USD in hand upon arrival.*

### Travel Insurance Requirements

→ The government has been considering requiring tourists to provide proof of travel insurance that also covers health/medical incidents abroad. But at this time it is not confirmed.

→ We strongly recommend all travelers purchase travel insurance covering material losses, accidents, delays, air ambulance services, and life loss. Adios Adventure Travel & its representatives and partners **do not include travel insurance** with the programs (either on the Galápagos Islands or on the mainland). The programs offered by Adios Adventure Travel do not include coverage for unplanned out of pocket expenses.

→ You are free to choose any provider including, but not limited to:

- **World Nomads Adios Adventure Travel Insurance:** <http://www.worldnomads.com/travel-insurance/#axzz2qllikAZa>

- InsureMyTrip.com - good place to compare policies online
- Your health insurance provider may offer services during travel. Call your provider to find out what your options are.

## Airport Check-In Procedures

We book flights for our groups as a courtesy and to ensure continuity of the trip. We are not responsible for any changes made by airlines. Although we have not had any reports of problems with people who choose to check-in at the counter, we provide your confirmation codes in case you do want to check-in online in advance. All hotels have free wifi. If you have trouble connecting, you can ask your hotel staff for assistance in checking in. Before you depart for your trip, we provide you with the contact numbers to reach our in-country team. If you have any concerns about checking in online for your domestic flight and need advice, let them know before you travel.

**\*\*Arrive at the airport at least 2 hours prior to your scheduled departure, earlier if your group has more than 4.**

### **Before you check-in for your flights to the islands, you must complete 2 steps:**

In GYE, the counters are located in the center of the line of airline check-in counters.

In UIO, the counters are located just to the right as you enter the doors of the National flights section of the airport.

#### **1 - Migration Control/Transit (Galapagos Visitor) Card**

**“Consejo de Gobierno del Régimen Especial de Galápagos”** - Visit this counter to get the migration control card (Visitor Card under Additional Expenses) - also called “Tarjeta de Control de Tránsito”. *Show the card for both legs of round trip flight*

#### **2 - INGALA - Visit this counter to get luggage x-rayed.**

**Note:** Your group can split up and complete both tasks simultaneously. One person or group can take **all passports and \$20 per person** and get visitor cards while another person or group takes the luggage/backpacks to be x-rayed.

Once both steps are completed, go to check-in for your flight.

**Also Note:** You may not bring fresh fruits or seeds to Galapagos.

## **Check-In Counter / Luggage X-Ray Entrance in Quito**



## Airport Transfers

→ When you arrive in Quito or Guayaquil, you will take the shuttle to your hotel. If your flight is delayed, go to the airport Information desk and ask them to call the hotel to send the shuttle. Hotel shuttles may run continuously in south america. Wyndham hotel shuttle in Quito runs every 30 minutes.

→ The night before your departing flight (to Galapagos or international flights), arrange the shuttle ride with your hotel's front desk.

## **Luggage Weight Limitations - Inter-Island Flights (only applies to people visiting San Cristobal Island)**

→ Flights between Ecuador mainland and the islands are commercial flights. The weight limit for checked bags is 50lbs/23kg, and the limit for carry-on bags is 17lbs/8kg.

→ **Please note that we always recommend arriving 2 days prior to any scheduled departure (Galapagos or Riverboat) to allow time for luggage delays. If luggage is delayed and you depart the next day, you will likely not receive it in time.**

→ Inter-island flights use a small air taxi and have a weight limit of 25 lbs/11.5 K per person for 1 checked bag and carry-on combined. If your luggage is overweight, you may be charged \$2 USD per pound, and the airline reserves the right to send luggage on a later flight.

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### **Ban on Plastic in the Galapagos**

→ There is currently a ban on plastic in effect (single-use plastics like bags, straws, styrofoam, & bottles).

→ Bring a reusable water bottle and refill it at the hotel.

→ Pack extra bags for dirty clothes, shoes, etc. For souvenirs, it is better to carry a small backpack or cloth bag.

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### **Luggage Storage**

→ If you are booked at a hotel in Quito or Guayaquil, you can store your luggage at the hotel while you are in the Galápagos. When you return to Guayaquil or Quito, take a taxi for approximately \$2 to the hotel to collect your luggage and return to the airport. Please allow 1 additional hour layover before your connecting flight.

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### **Medical Attention & Availability**

→ Given the remote location of the Galápagos Islands, medical and health services are very basic and severely limited. Access to even basic medical care may be at least 48 hours away. Serious injury or illness must be treated on the Ecuadorian mainland. Regulations to preserve the environmental integrity of the islands and local permissions required to permit aircraft to land in Baltra or San Cristobal may delay air ambulance flights, even in the case of serious medical emergencies.

→ We recommend that you drink and brush your teeth with bottled water only or bring your own device to purify water from the sink in your hotel. Avoid beverages with ice.

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### **Hotels**

→ There are few luxury hotels on the islands. All hotels are at least partially locally owned and operated. All hotels endeavor to provide hot water, breakfast buffet, fans, limited air conditioning, and assistance when needed.

→ Hotels offer breakfast. However, if your tour pick-up is too early, the hotel may provide a boxed breakfast. If breakfast is missed at the hotel prior to departure, it may be necessary for you to purchase breakfast at your own expense upon arrival at your destination. When possible, the hotel at your destination may provide breakfast to you, but it is not guaranteed.

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### **Pick-Up Times for Tours & Inter-Island Flights (Air Taxi)**

→ Pick up times for tours are confirmed locally the night before each tour. Note that there can be delays (10-15 minutes) as the bus goes to many hotels. Your patience is appreciated.

→ Departure times for inter-island flights will be confirmed the day before the flight.

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### **Island Boat Transfers**

→ Speedboat transfers between Santa Cruz, Isabela Island, and San Cristobal take about 2-2.5 hours. When checking in for the boat transfer, your luggage will be searched and locked with a zip tie that will be removed upon arrival at the next island.

→ Take a water bottle, hat, and sunscreen from your backpack to be available during the ride.

→ Although there is a toilet on board, it is best to go before you board.

→ Take oral seasickness medication at least 30-45 minutes before the ride (or as indicated by the instructions).

→ Before you take the inter-island speedboats, they will check your luggage for plants and seeds, and check that your shoes are not sandy. Please wash the sand or dirt off of your shoes the night before to avoid delays.

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### **Humboldt Season**

→ The Humboldt Season begins in June and ends in December.

→ During the Humboldt Season, seas are rough. We recommend you buy seasickness patches or pills to use before you board the boats, especially if you are prone to seasickness. It is better to sit in the back, although you may get wet.

→ The Humboldt Current can also bring cold waters. You may need a wetsuit for snorkeling. It will be windy, and nights can be chilly.

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### **Snorkeling Tours**

→ On your first day you arrive, your local escort will give you instructions about getting your snorkeling equipment

- Take a waterproof bag or Ziploc bag for small items you want to keep dry.
- Items left on the boat may get very wet while you're snorkeling and other snorkelers are entering and exiting the boats.
- You may take towels from your hotel to use on the boat. Or bring a sarong or travel towel of your own.

## Cash and Banks

- ATMs and banks are located in Santa Cruz and San Cristobal islands, however, seldom work properly.
- Isabela Island has **NO** cash machines or banks.
- We highly recommend bringing cash in small denominations from the mainland.
- Few restaurants accept credit or debit cards. We recommend you ask them before you are seated.

## Communications & Phones

- Although WiFi may be offered, it is subject to interruptions and this is beyond the control of anyone.
- Even if you have international texting and cell phone service, you may or may not get texts and messages.
- Guides have local phone service, but it is subject to the same gaps and interruptions.
- *Expect to be "off the grid."*

## Guide Service & Recommended Gratuities

- Pick-up times for group tours are estimates, and you may have to wait 10-15 minutes for the bus to reach your hotel. Please be patient, and do not panic if the bus is late. It will be there soon!
- There are 3 kinds of guide service:
  - Transferistas** - Local guides who will manage your logistics and escort between activities
  - Naturalist Guides** - Guides who accompany groups into the National Park
  - Specialist Guides** - Guides trained for specific activities like snorkeling or scuba

Tipping in the Galapagos is not expected. Feel free to tip for excellent service, but do not feel obligated to tip anyone. They do not look at tipping in the Galapagos like we do in the US. They are being paid for their services, so they do not expect payment beyond that. If you'd like to tip, the following table contains recommendations for gratuities, but please note that these tips are suggestions only and should be adjusted based on your level of satisfaction.

Tipping Guide - can be paid in USD.		
Who	What You're Paying For	Galápagos & Ecuador
<b>Guide</b>	Cultural Expertise, Experience, Knowledge, Time, Personal Assistance	<b>0-5 hrs:</b> \$10 pp/day   <b>5+ hrs:</b> \$15 pp/day
<b>Tour Driver</b>	Time, Knowledge, Fuel, Vehicle Maintenance	<b>0-5 hrs:</b> \$5 pp/day   <b>5+ hrs:</b> \$10 pp/day
<b>Airport Transfers</b>	Time, Fuel, Vehicle Maintenance	<b>Within City:</b> \$7pp   <b>Out of City:</b> \$10pp
<b>Cruise Tours</b>	Cultural Expertise, Experience, Knowledge, Time, Personal Assistance	<b>Naturalist Guide:</b> \$10-15 pp/day <b>Crew:</b> \$12-15 pp/day (Payable at end of cruise.)
<b>Hotel Porters</b>	Personal Assistance	\$1-2 per piece of luggage
<b>When dining, it is important to check your bill for gratuity. Some restaurants will include 10% gratuity automatically. Tipping for meals is the same as in the United States - 10-20% depending on level of service received. If you find that 10% has already been included, we suggest adding 10%. If it has not been included, consider adding 15%.</b>		

*Note: Guide Service in the Galápagos is different from the guide service in Peru. For travelers who are visiting both Machu Picchu and the Galápagos, you may enjoy the benefit of having the same guide with you for all activities in Cusco, Sacred Valley, and Machu Picchu. However, in the Galápagos, your guide will change from island to island, and each activity will be supervised by a specialist guide. The language skills of local guides in the Galápagos are generally less developed than those in Peru. The Ecuadorian government has established the rules for hiring guides. Accomplished guides tend to go to the mainland for jobs. We can hire these guys to go with you, but we are also required to hire a local guide. The travel expenses for the mainland guides combined with the cost of hiring local guides increases the cost of travel significantly.*

## Traveling with Children

- Please note the following safety precautions available for children on day boat trips:

Boats departing **San Cristobal** will offer child-sized life jackets, short masks that cover the nose and eyes, fin sizes US 9-13 and 14-18 (sizes vary by brand, so it may be better to bring your own fins), short wetsuit rentals,

and a life preserver ring for children to hold on to while in the water.

Boats for **Tintoreras and Tunnels** on the other 2 islands do have masks (short face), fins, wetsuit, and life jackets for children. They also have floating rings. Of course, you can buy and bring your own. It's hard to know if everything will fit perfectly - even for adults it can be a challenge. In any case, things are available for rent in the islands. Average around \$5-\$7 USD per item. Adult wetsuits (shorty) around \$10 USD pp.