

WILDLIFE WALKING TOUR

Galápagos

Island-Based Wildlife Exploration

CLASSIC JOURNEYS
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



“

*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

|

TRAVEL + LEISURE

“Best Wildlife Encounter” - AFAR magazine

AFAR magazine named our Galápagos trip the “Best Wildlife Encounter” in the world. Blue-footed boobies do their slap-happy dance for you. Galápagos penguins dart under your sea kayak. A pod of sea turtles performs their graceful ballet around you. Baby sea lions paddle up for a better look. The giant land tortoises? They’re close enough to touch. If you go wild for wildlife, you’ve found it. Join our island-based adventure to skip the cramped confines of a cruise ship and get up close to the creatures you came to see. Naturalist guides lead you to extraordinary wildlife experiences, minus the flocks of tourists. Enjoy getting to walk, kayak, snorkel – and sip on a poolside cocktail at your waterfront boutique hotel. We proudly follow ‘Leave No Trace’ environmental standards and support more than 50 local residents.

Why the Galápagos with Classic Journeys is *Afar Magazine's Best Wildlife Encounter*

Experience why *Afar* magazine says that exploring the Galápagos with Classic Journeys gives you the best wildlife encounter. Immerse yourself in the islands' natural wonders through walking, paddling, and snorkeling with remarkable wildlife. You get exceptional access to diverse birds, animals, and marine life beyond the coastline. Meticulously designed explorations ensure your comfort and safety while maximizing authentic wildlife encounters inland and offshore.

1. The Best Guides: Naturalists, Botanists, and Local Experts

Classic Journeys guides are true Galápagos ambassadors - naturalists, botanists, former fishermen, and descendants of earliest settlers. Some even trace their lineage to the visionary enacting the first 1800s species preservation laws. Their profound connection transcends facts to connecting you to the islands' essence. Our naturalists intimately grasp ecosystems, flora, fauna, geological forces, sharing evolutionary insights and highlighting vital conservation.

2. The Smallest Groups = The Most Authentic Wildlife Encounters

With an average of just 10 guests per tour (never more than 18) and an exceptional 1:5 guest-to-guide ratio (maximum 1:8), our curated walks, kayaking excursions, and snorkeling sessions ensure you experience the Galápagos' wildlife undisturbed. Enjoy unforgettable personal encounters - snorkeling alongside playful sea lions, observing blue-footed boobies' mating rituals, and walking with giant tortoises - free from the disruptions of large crowds.

3. Our Boutique Hotels are the Ideal Luxury Base Camp

Our waterfront boutique hotels offer full amenities and ensuite luxury, providing you access to remote trails, secluded watering holes, and pristine coves that are just not reachable by the crowds. Witness wildlife undisturbed, like hiking to giant tortoise watering holes and along ancient lava flows. Unlike cruises, enjoy 24/7 access to explore islands' flora and fauna at your own pace - linger at beaches with sea lions for sunset or rise early with the iguanas and penguins. Then recharge at your boutique retreat before the next day's adventures.

4. Eat Like (and With) the Locals

Our Galápagos adventures bring you closer to the islands' residents, allowing you to learn from them, dine with them, and experience their warm hospitality firsthand. Imagine savoring an authentic lunch at a private hacienda, where a local family welcomes you into their home and shares stories of their culinary heritage passed down through generations. On another day, join a local chef to learn their favorite ceviche recipe.

5. Locals Only Footpaths to Wildlife

With our local naturalist guides, you'll traverse hidden trails to secluded coves and pristine beaches, witnessing undisturbed wildlife. Guides share generational stories and traditions, offering a glimpse into the Galápagos' rich cultural tapestry. Daily, they'll lead you on cinematic walking paths - tracing volcanic rims to lava fields, through wooded glens to tortoise watering holes, and along coastal trails to swim with Galapagos penguins - designed for you to enjoy incredible species encounters in their natural habitats.

6. Top Quality Gear for Top Quality Experiences

At Classic Journeys, our decades of kayaking and snorkeling experience has taught us the importance of top-notch equipment for immersive, comfortable adventures. We provide the best kayaks, paddles, and life jackets designed for stable, maneuverable gliding across turquoise waters. Our high-quality snorkeling gear - masks, snorkels, flippers, wetsuits - ensures effortless up-close encounters with iconic marine life. And our gear valet service ensures your properly fitted equipment awaits you on arrival, maximizing your adventure time.

7. Kayaking Expertise and Support = More Access to Wildlife

With Classic Journeys, you'll never paddle alone. Our kayaking adventures, led by experienced naturalist and kayaking guides with dedicated boat support, allow you to tailor your exertion level - paddle as much or little as you like. Our guides help you move seamlessly between kayaks and support boat, conserving your energy. And, as you paddle alongside seabirds and turtles, our naturalist guides enrich your experience with invaluable insights into the Galápagos' ecosystems, remarkable wildlife behaviors, and habitats.

8. Regenerative Travel: Sustaining Local Communities

At Classic Journeys, true sustainability means supporting local communities through our regenerative travel philosophy. Our person-to-person approach puts currency directly into the pockets of Galápagos residents - partnering with families

sharing culinary traditions, artisans, guides, and small businesses relying on responsible tourism. We've even helped fishermen to re-career to become snorkeling and kayaking guides. This sustains livelihoods while protecting the environment and providing you authentic experiences.

9. Protecting the Habitat

Through our membership in the International Galápagos Tour Operators Association (IGTOA), Classic Journeys actively supports initiatives that protect the islands' delicate ecosystems and incredible biodiversity. Our commitment to responsible tourism is woven into our approach - from itinerary design to local community partnerships. We meticulously plan adventures minimizing environmental impact, adhering to "Leave No Trace" principles and ensuring our presence doesn't disrupt the remarkable flora and fauna's natural habitats.

10. Island Hopping = Wildlife Spotting

A hallmark of our Galápagos adventures is our privately chartered boats, allowing us to follow wildlife movements and adapt itineraries for optimal encounters, even when we're moving between islands. Imagine adjusting course to follow whale migrations, sea lion feeding grounds, or booby nesting sites - ensuring you witness nature's greatest spectacles. And when flying between islands, your guides transform transits into aerial flightseeing adventures, pointing out unfolding landscapes and spotting birds, animals, and marine life from above.

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

What's Included

- All breakfasts, 4 lunches and 3 dinner
- All activities in the itinerary, including gear for snorkeling and kayaking
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip
- Award-winning ocean-front boutique hotels that provide you unlimited access to the wildlife you came to experience

Above & Beyond Benefits

→ INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

→ PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

Terrain

Easy to moderate on good trails and coastal paths.

CLASSIC JOURNEYS ITINERARIES MAY BE SUBJECT TO SLIGHT CHANGES, HOTEL SUBSTITUTIONS, AND OTHER MODIFICATIONS.

DAY 1 »

Quito - Gateway to the Enchanted Isles

Your extraordinary Galapagos odyssey begins in Quito, a captivating tapestry of pre-Columbian ruins, Spanish colonial grandeur, and vibrant indigenous culture. Wander the cobblestone streets of La Ronda, where traditional music and dance echo through the centuries-old neighborhood. Indulge in culinary delights like *empanadas* and *locro de papa*, savoring the rich flavors that have delighted Ecuadorians for generations. Or just relax at your hotel in preparation for the explorations of the islands that begin tomorrow.

MEALS: NA

OVERNIGHT: QUITO

DAY 2 »

Santa Cruz Island - Immersion in Nature's Grandeur

After fueling up for adventure, you'll take flight to the enchanted Galapagos Islands, to begin your immersion in nature's grandeur on Santa Cruz Island. A scenic footpath overlooks Academy Bay to the renowned Charles Darwin Research Center. Your expert team of guides use this as terrific opportunity to share with you their passion and knowledge of the incredible species that have called these islands home for millennia, including the giant Galapagos tortoise and Darwin's beloved finches.

Then, it's time to take to the waters as you kayak through the lava channel walls of Divine Bay, aptly named for its crystal-clear, tranquil waters. Keep your eyes peeled for stingrays, blue-footed boobies, lava gulls, and herons as you paddle alongside these remarkable creatures in their natural habitat. After docking, walk a beach-side footpath, perhaps pausing for a refreshing dip in a picturesque swimming hole before arriving at your boutique waterfront hotel, your well-appointed basecamp for the adventures ahead.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: SANTA CRUZ

DAY 3 »

Santa Fe Island - A Wildlife Immersion Like No Other

From Santa Cruz, your cinematic view stretches to Santa Fe, the oldest and most pristine of the Galapagos islands at four million years old. This remarkable isle is home to endemic species found nowhere else on Earth, including the Santa Fe land iguana and groves of *Opuntia* cactus that resemble prickly, paddle-shaped trees.

Join your naturalist guide for a day of snorkeling, beachside barbecues, and unforgettable

wildlife encounters. Immerse yourself in a world where sea lions bask on the shores, sea turtles glide gracefully beneath the surface, and Galapagos hawks and Nazca boobies soar overhead. This is a true wildlife immersion, offering countless opportunities to interact with the incredible biodiversity that has made the Galapagos famous worldwide.

In the afternoon, your captain navigates the boat to the secluded Playa Escondida, a beautiful and isolated beach accessible only by water. Here, your guides will lead you on a naturalist walk to spot blue-footed boobies, Sally Lightfoot crabs, and more. Then, plunge back into the turquoise waters to snorkel alongside spotted eagle rays, golden rays, sea turtles, and even the elusive white-tipped shark that calls this pristine area home.

Regenerative Travel: Witnessing the Galápagos Through the Eyes of a Local

One of the most remarkable aspects of exploring with Classic Journeys is our commitment to regenerative travel, where we collaborate with local families to ensure you experience the authentic heart of the Galápagos. Today, you'll have the privilege of venturing into these waters under the expert guidance of our captain, a former fisherman whose generational knowledge runs as deep as the currents themselves. As he navigates the boat through secluded coves and channels, he'll unveil the islands' hidden wonders - from the elusive octopus camouflaged among the rocks to the kaleidoscope of marine life that flourishes in these nutrient-rich waters. And should you encounter any wildlife in distress, like the two sea turtles a previous Classic Journeys group freed from illegal fishing lines, you'll have a front-row seat to witness the profound impact of regenerative travel. It's one of those signal moments in life where you realize you're not just a visitor - you're a guardian, playing an active role in preserving this extraordinary archipelago for generations to come. (Just ask, and we'll share the heartwarming video!)

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: SANTA CRUZ

DAY 4 »

Santa Cruz Highlands - Walking Among Giants

This morning, you'll have the remarkable opportunity to walk among some of the oldest inhabitants of the Galapagos - the giant tortoises. These ancient creatures can grow up to 500 pounds and live for an astonishing 175 years or more. Follow your guides along a scenic woodland trail to a peaceful watering hole, the natural habitat of these gentle giants, in a way that is truly 'only with Classic Journeys.'

While cruise ship passengers are limited to crowded coastal sites, you'll venture deep into the highlands, where it's just you and a couple of dozen tortoises in their undisturbed environment.

With no fences or barriers separating you from these amazing creatures, your naturalist guides ensure you get close enough to hear their gentle breaths and the sound of them chomping on grass – a close encounter like no other.

After this unforgettable experience, you'll visit the family-owned plantation of our friend Adrianno. Here, you'll spend time with the family, learning about their organic, sustainable operation and tasting the delicious coffee, sugar cane, and fruit grown on the property in the same rich volcanic soil that's also favored by the animals.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: SANTA CRUZ

DAY 5 »

Isabela Island - Unveiling Nature's Wonders

This morning, you'll transfer to Isabela, the largest and youngest of the Galapagos Islands at just one million years old. Straddling the equator, this remarkable isle offers no shortage of wildlife sightings from the moment you arrive. In the afternoon, you'll experience two incredible ways to get up close and personal with the amazing creatures that call Isabela home.

First, enjoy a scenic, naturalist-guided walk along the mangroves and wetlands, home to spectacular pink flamingos, iguanas the color of the black lava rocks, and an incredible variety of migratory birds. Then, it's time to search for wildlife beneath the surface as you walk to a quiet cove and snorkel in the turquoise waters. Here, you'll have the unforgettable chance to swim alongside playful sea lions, graceful green sea turtles, and curious marine iguanas. Relax in the pristine bay of Concha y Perla, keeping your eyes peeled for blue-footed boobies perched in the trees along the shores, and watch in awe as they hover over the sea and dive for fish.

As the evening approaches and cruise passengers zodiac back to their ships, you'll be walking back to your beachside boutique hotel, your sanctuary on the shores of this remarkable island.

Island Hopping = Wildlife Spotting

A hallmark of our Galápagos adventures is our privately chartered boats, allowing us to follow wildlife movements and adapt itineraries for optimal encounters, even when we're moving between islands. Imagine adjusting course to follow whale migrations, sea lion feeding grounds, or booby nesting sites – ensuring you witness nature's greatest spectacles.

MEALS: B

OVERNIGHT: ISABELA

DAY 6 »

Volcan Sierra Negra - Walking on Mars

The Galapagos Islands are among the most volcanically active spots on Earth, and Isabela was formed by the merger of six massive volcanoes. Today, you'll experience this volcanic terrain firsthand as you get an up-close look at how millennia of eruptions and lava flows have shaped the unique Galapagos habitat.

Your morning walk along the rim of the 500,000-year-old Volcan Sierra Negra will be an experience you'll never forget. From this vantage point, you'll be treated to one of the most spectacular views in the islands, gazing into the six-mile-wide crater – one of the largest active calderas on the planet. With its orange, red, and yellow lava formations and puffing fumaroles, your guides will show you how this otherworldly landscape is more akin to walking on Mars than Earth.

Despite the volcanic origins, the island is surprisingly lush at this altitude, with verdant ferns, papaya trees, and angel's trumpets (with blossoms a foot long or more) lining the trail. Darwin's finches, hawks, flycatchers, and many other birds provide a natural soundtrack to your otherworldly hike. After refueling over a leisurely lunch at our friends' private hacienda, you'll have time in the late afternoon to relax by the beach with the local colony of sea lions or stroll through the laid-back beach town, soaking up the authentic island life.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: ISABELA

DAY 7 »

Isabela Island - In the Footsteps of Darwin

This morning, you'll follow in the footsteps of Charles Darwin himself as you explore Isabela Island, the legendary naturalist's final stop in the Galapagos before he set sail for Tahiti aboard the HMS Beagle in 1835. It was here that Darwin collected many of the species that would later form the foundation of his groundbreaking research on evolution.

Your day begins with a stroll to the dock, where your snorkeling gear – masks, snorkels, flippers, and wetsuits – awaits, perfectly fitted and ready for adventure. Alongside your expert naturalist guide, you'll board a panga (a comfortable flat-bottom fishing boat) and set course for Las Tintoreras, a cluster of small islets that are home to one of the few Galapagos penguin colonies in the world.

As you approach, you'll quickly discover that these curious creatures are unafraid of human visitors, making them nearly foolproof subjects for your camera lens. Observe them lounging on

the lava rocks, soaking up the equatorial sun, or grab your snorkeling gear and waterproof camera to witness these remarkable birds diving and swimming in the crystal-clear waters of the lagoon – a genuinely incredible experience. The lagoon is a haven for an array of marine life, from graceful green sea turtles and vividly colored reef fish to the fearsome-looking yet utterly harmless marine iguanas that bask on the rocks, their prehistoric forms adding to the sense of having stepped back in time.

In the afternoon, join your guides on a trail that showcases the Galapagos' incredible diversity of landscapes and wildlife. Your path winds past white sand beaches, wetlands teeming with pink flamingos, otherworldly lava formations, and mangrove forests where giant land tortoises roam. Just as Darwin did nearly two centuries ago, you'll have the opportunity to witness the iconic blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, iguanas, and the famous finches that helped inspire his theory of evolution.

Cap off this adventurous day with a hands-on culinary experience, learning the art of ceviche-making. This beloved island dish, made with freshly caught fish, is a favorite among Galapagueños, and you'll have the chance to slice, marinate, and balance the flavors and textures like a true islander before savoring your creation during dinner.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: ISABELA

DAY 8 »

Quito - Homeward Bound

After an unforgettable journey through the Galapagos Islands, you'll make your way first to Baltra Island and then to the mainland. No doubt, you'll carry memories of nature's unparalleled splendor in the world's best wildlife experience.

Island Hopping = Wildlife Spotting

When flying between islands, your guides transform transits into aerial flightseeing adventures, pointing out unfolding landscapes and spotting birds, animals, and marine life from above.

MEALS: B

Tour Hotels



[Wyndham Quito Airport](#)

Surrounded by mountains, this hotel is adjacent to Quito airport and is furnished with a minimalist contemporary style.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



[Angermeyer Waterfront Inn](#)

Built of native lava rock and driftwood, this first-class hotel is situated right on the waterfront. Guests enjoy peace and total privacy, plus a perfect chance to experience what the owners call the true 'Galápagos spirit'.

NIGHTS: 3 nights



[Iguana Crossing](#)

The ocean laps at this beautiful eco-friendly hotel, with beach access out front and a National Park nearby. Enjoy staying in their comfortable rooms with modern amenities and swimming in their outdoor pool or roof-deck jacuzzi.

NIGHTS: 3 nights

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Wyndham Quito Airport Hotel**
START CITY: **Quito**

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **Baltra Airport**
END CITY: **Baltra Island - Santa Cruz**
END TIME: **1:15 PM**