

## 16. GALAPAGOS

### 17. Passport, documents, and checklist:

- ✓ You must bring the original passport
- ✓ TCT Card for USD 20
- ✓ USD 200 in cash for National Park entrance (if not prepaid)
- ✓ Returning flight: printed or saved an E-Ticket on your phone
- ✓ **Galápagos Biosafety Sworn Declaration Form QR code:** either printed or saved on your mobile phone. Registration must be submitted up to 72 hours before your flight <https://siabg.abgalapagos.gob.ec/declaraciones/nueva> Please, take care to correctly fill in the date you will enter the Galapagos.
- ✓ Voucher and confirmations of your bookings, printed or as e-documents on your phone
- ✓ Insurance documents (it's not mandatory, but recommended to have insurance).
- ! Be at the airport at least 2 ½ hours before the scheduled flight departure!

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### Money in the Galápagos:

The official currency in Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands is the US dollar.

You will need USD 200 in cash for the National Park entrance fee, as well as for additional expenses on board (e.g., drinks, wetsuit rental, tips for the crew and guide). Many souvenir shops in Puerto Ayora and at the airport accept credit cards. Cabins are equipped with small lockers for cash and valuables.

ATMs are available in the Galápagos in a few inhabited locations (but having enough cash is still important).

★ On smaller vessels, credit card payments are not possible; this option is available only on higher-category ships.

### Tipping

Gratuities are always voluntary and at the discretion of each visitor. However, in Galapagos, they form part of the local tourism culture.

### Indicative guidelines for Galápagos cruises: Ecuador:

- Galápagos National Park guide: USD 15–20 per person per day (more if you like and more on luxury ships)
- Yacht/ship crew (mid-range ship): from USD 25-30 per guest per day (will be split among all crew members)
- ★ It is customary to be collected at the end of the cruise in envelopes designated for the guide and for the crew.
- ★ Values may be adjusted upward for exceptional service or on higher-category vessels. If it was outstanding, of course, it's OK to give more.

### Insurance for the Galápagos:

Same as on the mainland, personal travel insurance is required. Never travel without a comprehensive one. Please ensure that your policy covers medical emergencies, accidents, trip cancellation, delays, hospital stays, repatriation, and baggage.

### Baggage included on flights to the Galápagos:

1 checked bag up to 23 kg plus 1 piece of carry-on/hand luggage (max. 8–10 kg) when booked through us; otherwise, according to the conditions of your ticket. Interinsular flights have lower limits.

### Communication in the Galápagos:

Due to the geographic location of the islands, there is generally no continuous mobile phone or internet connection during the cruise.

Most larger ships offer internet access via Starlink satellite, although it may be unstable or overloaded. It is best to inform family and friends in advance that you may be offline for some days.

★ Tip: eSIMs such as [Airolo](#), [Holafly](#), [Nomad](#), or similar are extremely practical for having internet throughout your trip.

### In the water:

If you are accustomed to using your own snorkel mask, you are welcome to bring it with you. Otherwise, ships provide masks, snorkels, and fins (included or available for rent, depending on the tour).

Depending on the season, the water can be pleasantly warm or quite cold. Wetsuits are loaned on board or available for rent at an additional cost.

! Recommendation: If you arrive only one or two days before your Galápagos trip, pack one set of emergency clothing and a swimsuit in your carry-on/hand luggage.

★ A lightweight, long-sleeved shirt, optionally with UV protection, provides additional sun protection.

## 18. What to pack for the Galápagos, also as a printable PDF

Because shopping choices on the islands are limited, good preparation ahead of time is essential for a smooth trip. Don't worry! The checklist below will set you up comfortably, and you can also download it as a free printable PDF. If you will also explore Quito and the Andes, or the Amazon, remember to bring clothing suited to those different climates.

**Luggage:**

Best kept practical and lightweight!

- Suitcase, duffel bag, or backpack
- Daypack, preferably light, comfortable, and waterproof
- Smart organizers: packing cubes for easy sorting and quick access, and/or vacuum travel bags
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**Clothing:**

- Lightweight and quick-dry trekking trousers, leggings
- Comfortable shorts (ideally with side pockets), summer dress
- T-shirts, lightweight and quick-dry blouses or shirts, quick-drying sportswear, tops
- A light sweater, hoodie, or fleece (especially for the dry, cool season (May/June to December)
- Lightweight waterproof jacket and/or
- Light rain cape/poncho; ideal, lighter if it is too warm for a rain jacket, and protects the backpack and camera bag at the same time (especially for the warm and wet season from January-May)
- Lightweight pajama, sufficient underwear, and socks
- Swimsuits (at least 2)
- Optional/recommended for higher category cruise: a smart casual shirt, blouse, or summer dress for evening dinners
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- ★ Long-sleeved swim shirt (rash guard) for additional sun protection or to use under wetsuits

**Shoes:**

- For excursions, good sports shoes are fine if you feel comfortable for light trekking and rougher terrain
- Optional: lightweight hiking shoes
- For beach outings or walks on trails: comfortable trekking sandals (e.g., Teva, Keen, etc.)
- On board: lightweight, non-slip slippers or flip-flops
- Optional: flip-flops for the beach
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**Personal toiletries:**

- Toiletry bag, preferably water-resistant and ideally suitable for hanging
- Shampoo, soap, conditioner (solid versions are ideal as they do not leak). Most yachts provide it as bathroom amenities
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss
- Cotton swabs, nail care set, tweezers
- For men: razor
- Hairbrush, comb, hair ties/clips
- Makeup (small quantities, only the essentials). Tip: compressed disposable wipes for makeup removal
- Facial hydration cream
- For women: sufficient menstrual hygiene products. Changes in altitude and climate can affect your cycle.
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- ★ Shower and bath towels: provided in most bathrooms. Tip: Pack a small microfiber towel. Same for hair dryer.

**Excellent and enough sun protection:**

**UV radiation is extremely high, even on overcast days!**

- Sunglasses
- Head covering (!)
- Sunscreen and lip balm (!) with a high sun protection factor, after-sun care, lotion for sunburn relief
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★ A lightweight, long-sleeved shirt, ideally with UV protection, provides additional sun protection.

**Personal travel medical kit:**

An adequate supply of any prescription medication you take and, if applicable, a copy of the doctor's prescription

Vaccination record

Remedies for sore throat

Medication for headaches, pain, fever, and colds

Treatment for diarrhea and constipation

Medicines for nausea and motion sickness

Wound-healing ointment, pain-relief cream or gel, ointment for sunburn

Disinfectant, plasters and bandages, blister plasters, Steri-Strips for cuts and wounds

If prescribed by your doctor: broad-spectrum antibiotics and, especially for ladies, medication for bladder infections

Insect repellent and treatments for insect bites and itching (especially rainy season, January-May)

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! Regular prescription medication must always be carried in your carry-on/hand luggage!

! Disposable mask(s): always keep one in your carry-on/hand luggage to use when poor air quality on flights, coughing, or flu-like symptoms (your own or within the group).

**Photography:**

Camera with waterproof protection

Plenty of memory cards and spare batteries (you will take many more photos than usual! Very much!)

Chargers and adapters (110 V, US flat plugs), lens cleaning products

Optional: underwater camera/GoPro — a recommended extra for snorkelers and divers

Recommended: binoculars

Drones: prohibited in the Galápagos and in national parks on the mainland

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! Flash photography is strictly prohibited on the island.

! Please respect the mandatory distances of 2 meters from the camera to the wildlife.

! A special permit from the National Park authorities is required for commercial photography.

**Miscellaneous:**

Personal travel medical kit and any regular medication

Remedies for seasickness: tablets, vitamin C, ginger, special patches, etc.

Insect repellent (especially between February and June)

Book, diary, writing materials

Bags for dirty laundry, wet items, or waterproof protection

Optional: small gifts or sweets from your home country for the crew

Spare glasses or contact lenses, cleaning products

Optional: small bag or bit of detergent for occasional hand washing; washing some clothes helps packing lighter

Good idea, especially for hot seasons: mineral or electrolyte tablets

Optional: Your own snorkel mask

Water bottle

Optional: Wildlife guide

Optional: Foldable walking sticks

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**What you normally do not need to bring if you have booked cruises or tours:**

× Wetsuit and snorkel equipment (except your own mask)

- × Shower and bath towels, hair dryer
- × Jewelry and other urban life valuables

### 19. Galápagos – FAQs

(\*) *subject to change at any time without prior notification*

- ? **Does sunscreen need to be reef-safe?** Not mandatory, but strongly recommended.
- ? **Do I need to pay the National Park fee in cash?** YES, USD 200, ideally in cash.
- ? **Credit card payments:** Possible on larger ships.
- ? **May I bring my own alcohol on board?** Generally allowed. Corkage fees from USD 10 to 25 and more per bottle (\*).
- ? **Are drones allowed?** No, neither in the Galápagos National Park nor in nature reserves and national parks in Ecuador.
- ? **Are there luggage limits on board?** None, but regulations apply to flights.
- ? **Electricity on board:** 24/7, 110 V, US sockets in all cabins, and, mostly, also USB sockets.
- ? **What does *wet landings* mean?** Usually, only your feet get wet; don't forget waterproof bags for electronics.
- ? **Food restrictions: Are vegetarian, gluten-free, or other dietary requirements/allergies possible on board?** Yes, it's possible (except kosher). Must be indicated on the registration form.
- ? **Are there prohibited items I may not bring to the Galápagos?** Yes, to protect the fragile Galápagos ecosystem, the list of prohibited items is long, but here's a short resume for tourists (\*):
  - × Fresh fruit, vegetables, plants, seeds, or organic material that may contain insects or microorganisms
  - × Live animals or animal products (meat, dairy, eggs), **coffee**
  - × Non-native species or biological materials
  - × Single-use plastics (straws, Styrofoam, etc.); no problem with zipper bags like Ziploc, etc.
  - × Drones (unless authorized by the Galapagos National Park)
- ★ Chocolate, processed and packaged snacks, and cookies are allowed.
- ★ All luggage is inspected before every Galápagos flight by the Biosecurity Agency (SICGAL) to prevent illegal trade and ensure quarantine control.

### 20. Hospitality forward:

- ♥ We kindly ask you to take care when using sunscreen, after-sun products, hair dye, insect repellent, and other toiletries containing pigments, waxes, or oils, as these may permanently stain fabrics and are tough to wash out, as well as facial products with benzoyl peroxide (for acne), which can bleach textiles.
- ♥ Snorkeling equipment, fins, and wetsuits, as well as all other items borrowed during your experience, are provided for your comfort and should be handled with care and respect.

Did we forget something, or have you experienced hacks to share? Please, tell us!

For any questions or for personal advice, we are always happy to assist you.

With kind regards,

**Cometa Travel**