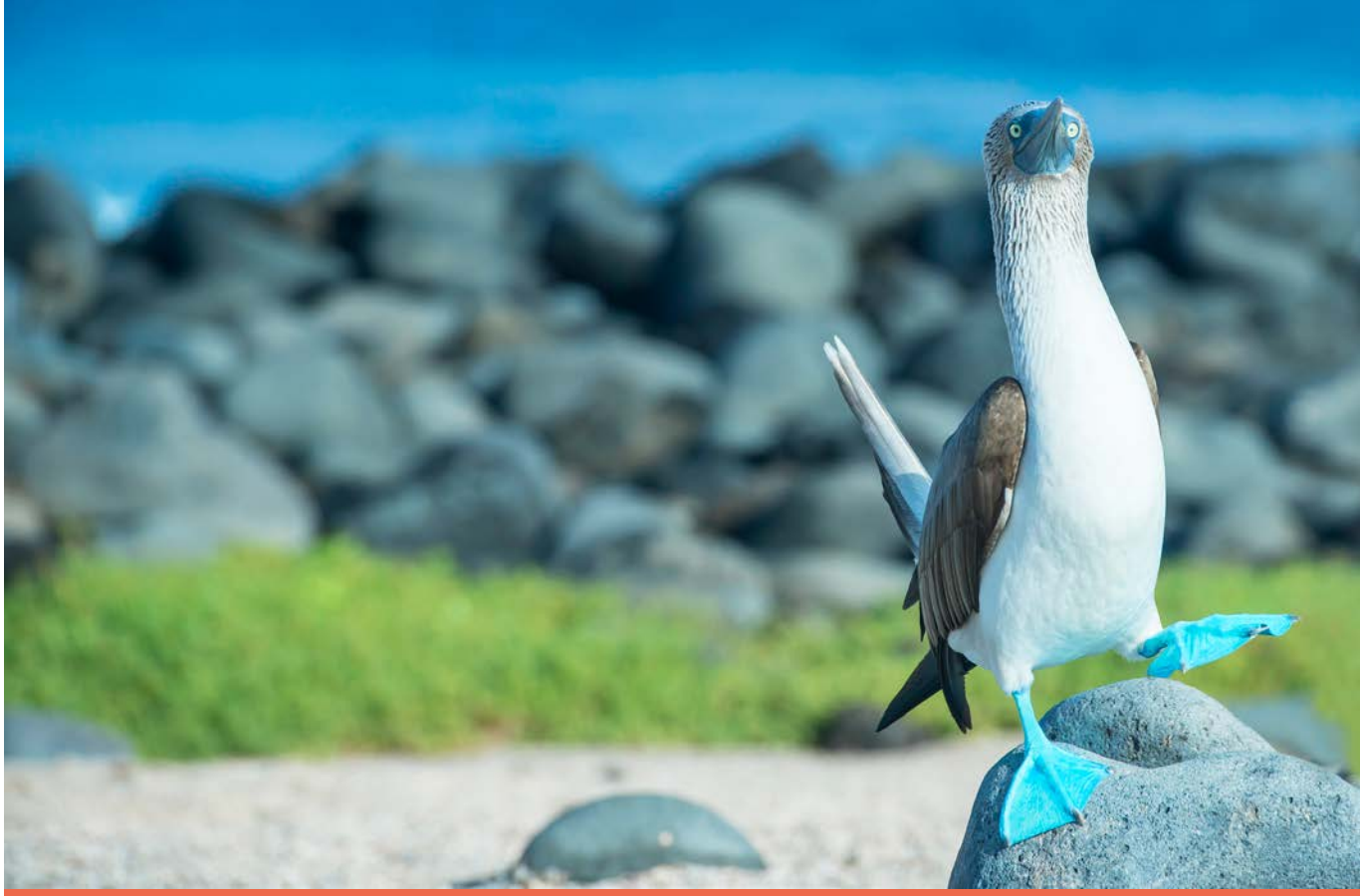


A blue-footed booby performing for a potential mate in the Galápagos

Medical and Dental Tour to Ecuador and the Galápagos by private yacht

17 November – 1 December 2027

With Amazon Lodge Pre-Tour Extension

12 November – 1 December 2027

'This may have been my best holiday ever!'

Bill and Jeanette McGorrigan, Ecuador and the Galápagos, May 2025

CATO
Council of Australian Tour Operators
ACCREDITED

JON BAINES TOURS

Level 3
MODERATE



Cotopaxi Volcano

Ecuador is a land of enormous cultural and natural diversity. Its cultural legacy encompasses the descendants of Spanish conquistadores and many distinct Indigenous communities. It also boasts extraordinary bio-diversity, with the jewel in its crown being the Galápagos Islands.

This remote island group encompasses cool lava landscapes, cactus forests, lush green highlands, turquoise coves and perfect white sand beaches, and is the only place in the world where it is possible to swim with penguins and tropical parrot fish at the same time.

This tour encapsulates the great variety to be found within this compact country. Experience colonial Quito, the exquisite cloud forests of Mindo, the high country thermal springs at Papallacta in the Andes and the incomparable Galápagos islands on a first-class yacht.

There is the option to journey into the Amazon before the tour and stay at Sacha Lodge, an eco-lodge that blends seamlessly into its forest surroundings. Watch giant otters duck, dive and call to each other as you eat breakfast; spot caimans gliding under the walkway as you head back to your room; hear monkeys chattering outside your balcony; or see giant sloths hanging out on trees by the cabins.

Jon Baines has been running regular tours to Ecuador and the Galápagos since 1995.
The tour is limited to 14 participants.

THIS TOUR IS CLASSED AS:

Level 3 | Moderate

Regular walking at destinations, extended standing and /or increased travel distances. Good fitness is required.

Tour Leaders



Paul and **Karen Johnson** are experienced and popular medico-dental tour leaders. Karen and Paul previously travelled on a JBT tour to Ecuador and the Galápagos.

Paul Johnson qualified in dentistry in Leeds in 1979 and medicine in Cambridge in 1984. He was appointed consultant in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Royal Surrey County Hospital. He lectures widely on maxillofacial and facial plastic surgery. In private practice he specialises in oral surgery, implantology and facial cosmetic surgery. Paul is experienced at leading dental tours for Jon Baines Tours.

Karen obtained a first class degree in Medical Sciences at Jesus College, Cambridge, and worked widely as a GP before making the decision to retrain as a barrister at the College of Law in Guildford and London. She was a tenant in Guildford Chambers before developing her practice in clinical negligence, inquests and in her main area of expertise, regulatory law. She appeared frequently before the NMC and also appeared before the GMC. Now retired, Karen enjoys travelling, golf, skiing and spending time with family.



The fruit market at Otavalo

Itinerary 12 November – 1 December 2027

B = Breakfast L = Lunch D = Dinner



With Amazon Lodge Pre-Tour Extension
12 November – 1 December 2027

Day 1: Quito (Fri 12, Nov)

Am: Arrive and transfer to the Wyndham Hotel at Quito Airport.

Day 2: Quito/Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Sat, 13 Nov) B L D

Am: Transfer for flight to Coca.

Pm: Transfer by river to Sacha Lodge.

Eve: Nocturnal guided tour.

Day 3: Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Sun, 14 Nov) B L D

Am: Take dugout canoes past bromeliads and palm trees, looking for wildlife such as the pygmy marmoset, the ocelot and puma.

Pm: Trek through pristine forest, with 150-foot kapok trees and roots forming huge buttresses. Look out for the crest owl and howler monkeys.

Eve: Optional night walk.

Day 4: Sacha Lodge, Amazon (Mon, 15 Nov) B L D

Am: Motorised canoe along Napo River to visit the traditional Yasuní community. See the parrot disco on the clay lick.

Pm: Take the treetop canopy walk.

Eve: Optional night canoe trip to see caimans.

Day 5: Sacha Lodge/Quito (Tue, 16 Nov) B

Am: Transfer to Quito and the Sheraton Hotel and join the main tour the next day.

Main tour itinerary:
17 November – 1 December 2027

3 nights Quito – 3 nights Mindo Cloud Forest – 3 nights Papallacta – 4 nights Galápagos Islands – 1 night Quito

Day 1: Quito (Wed, 17 Nov) D

Pm: Arrive in Quito, a beautiful city containing superbly preserved colonial architecture, and transfer to the Sheraton Hotel.

Day 2: Quito (Thur, 18 Nov) B D

Am: Guided walking tour of Quito through the palm-shaded Plaza de la Independencia, the church of La Compania de Jesus and Monasterio de San Francisco, one of the oldest churches on the American continent.

Pm: Visit the Carlos Andrade Marín Hospital (HCAM), one of the most important public hospitals in Quito, providing a wide range of medical and dental facilities. Visit the Chocolate Factory.

Eve: Welcome dinner at a modern Ecuadorian restaurant.

Day 3: Quito (Fri, 19 Nov) B D

Am: Drive into the valley of Guayllabamba and up into the Andean highlands to visit Otavalo and its famous market.

Pm: Return via Peguche, known for its textile and handicraft workshops, and visit a yachak, or shaman, and learn of ancestral medicine with a talk and a Q&A session, followed by a group cleansing.

Day 4: Quito/Mindo (Sat, 20 Nov) B L D

Am: Drive to El Mitad del Mundo - the 'Middle of the World' – and straddle the equatorial line. Drive up to the rim of the biggest volcanic crater in South America, the extinct Pululahua Volcano



Pm: Lunch by the crater with spectacular views. Continue to Mindo cloud forest.

Day 5: Mindo (Sun, 21 Nov) B D

Am: The cloud forests are a unique ecosystem fed by the misty clouds sitting on the slopes of the Andes. Rise early the following morning to watch an incredible variety of birdlife, including hundreds of species of jewelled hummingbirds. Visit the Mariposario Mindo Butterfly Farm.

Pm: Visit the waterfall at Pahuma Reserve.

Day 6: Mindo (Mon, 22 Nov) B D

Am: Visit a local polyclinic and learn about community medical and dental care.

Pm: At leisure. Options to go ziplining through the cloud forest, take part in chocolate therapy, further explore the cloud forest or relax at the Lodge.

Day 7: Mindo/Papallacta (Tue, 23 Nov) B D

Am: Rise early to spot the early bird activity in Mindo. After breakfast drive into the paramo and montane forest of the high Andes, rich in unusual flora and fauna such as the Polylepis tree – one of the oddest and rarest trees on the planet.

Pm: Continue to the thermal area of Papallacta, hot springs bubble up next to the Papallacta River. Check into Termas de Papallactas thermal resort, where the waters reputedly have healing properties.

Day 8: Papallacta (Wed, 24 Nov) B D

Am: Visit the Antisana Ecological Reserve, located at the feet of the 5705 metre volcano, Mount Antisana. Explore the dramatic altiplano landscape with its backdrop of snowcapped mountains, and look out for local species of birds, including the Andean condor.

Day 9: Papallacta (Thur, 25 Nov) B D

Am: Clinical lectures or at leisure.

Pm: At leisure. Options to trek or relax in the natural hot springs.

Day 10: Papallacta/San Cristobal Island, Galápagos (Fri, 26 Nov) B L D

Am: Your next stop is Ecuador's ecological wonderland – the Galápagos Islands. Fly to San Cristobal Island and board the MY Solaris private yacht for a 4-night cruise.

Pm: Tour the Interpretation Centre and see giant tortoises. Cruise to Kicker Rock, a

nesting site for many sea birds. Optional snorkelling. Cruise onto Cero Brujo to walk on a white sand beach, and observe sea lions, brown pelicans, marine iguanas and blue footed boobies. Options for swimming, snorkelling or kayaking.

Day 11: Española Island (Sat, 27 Nov) B L D

Am: Wet landing at white-sand Gardener Bay, home to sea lions, three species of Darwin's finches, Española mockingbirds, green sea turtles, colourful tropical fish. Walk along the beach to see sea lions with the opportunity to snorkel. Take a panga ride around Osborn Inlet and the islets of Gardner to see sea lions, corals and colourful fish.

Pm: Land at Punta Suarez and see marine birds, like the nesting waved albatross.

Day 12: Floreana Island (Sun, 28 Nov) B L D

Am: Visit Cormorant Point to see Galápagos flamingos and many other birds. Continue to Champion Islet to see to see marine turtles, sea lions and many fish. Options for swimming and snorkelling.

Pm: Visit the historic site of Post Office Bay, where you can still post a postcard in the historic post barrel, and see the ruins of the house of Baroness Eloisa von Wagner. Visit the Devil's Crown, a submerged volcano with excellent snorkelling.

Day 13: Santiago Island: Sullivan Bay and Bartolome (Mon, 29 Nov) B L D

Am: Visit Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island, which features a dramatic lava field. Option to snorkel in the calm bay.

Pm: Visit Bartolome Island for spectacular views and its lava cones. See lava lizards, sea lions, penguins, herons, finches.

Day 14: Santa Cruz/Quito (Tue, 30 Nov) B D

Am: Visit Black Turtle Cove, a mangrove estuary on Santa Cruz Island. Naturally protected, the cove is home to some truly remarkable species of animals and plants.

Pm: Flight back to Quito and transfer to the Sheraton Hotel. Farewell dinner.

Day 15: Quito (Wed, 1 Dec) B

Am: Depart hotel after breakfast.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.



A masked flowerpiercer, Mindo



The Balsa, Sacha Lodge

Amazon Extension at Sacha Lodge

The Sacha Lodge team will meet you in Coca and guide you to the lodge, which blends seamlessly into its forest surroundings. You could see giant otters duck, dive and call to each other as you eat breakfast; caimans glide under the walkway as you head back to your room; hear monkeys chattering outside your balcony; or see giant sloths hanging out on trees by the cabins.

A typical day at Sacha begins at sunrise or earlier, taking advantage of the cool morning hours when the rainforest's animals are most active. Each day you will return to the lodge after the morning activity for lunch. Relax until the afternoon excursion between 3pm and 4:30pm, which often continues into the evening when the nocturnal insect and frog chorus begins. Days at Sacha Lodge do not end with the fading of the light, or even with dinner. Night walks and canoe trips, with the aid of flashlights, often reveal creatures seldom seen during daylight.

Between excursions, you are at leisure to enjoy the lodge, lounging on sun chairs on the Balsa with a book or cooling off in the Lake Pool.

* Please note: activities are subject to weather, though Forest Walks, the Kapok Tower and Canopy Walk are the keystones of the Sacha Lodge experience.





Inside a room at Sacha Lodge (top);
A toucan in the Amazon (above)



Solaris at sea

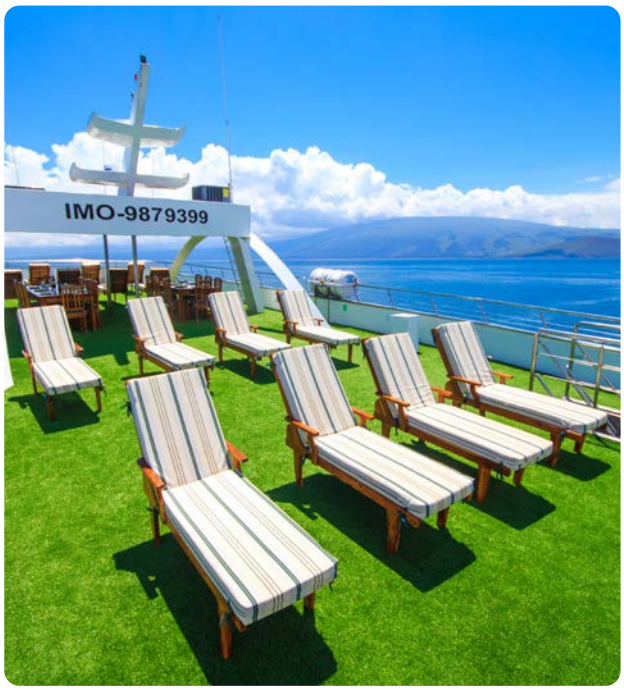
Galápagos Yacht – Solaris

This first class motor yacht is on private charter for this tour. Built in 2019, Solaris accommodates just 16 passengers in 10 cabins with private facilities. This spacious and comfortable yacht has large and bright cabins on the main and upper deck with panoramic sea view windows and is both stable and stylish. Facilities include lovely open deck areas with lounge chairs and shade, an indoor dining room and bar and comfortable lounge area. There are eight experienced crew members and a bilingual naturalist guide.



A turtle swimming with fish in Galápagos





Sun deck dining area (top); sun deck (above)

Facts on the Galápagos Islands

- The first recorded visitors to the Islands were the Spanish. Bishop Tomás de Berlanga arrived in 1535 and nicknamed the giant tortoises he saw 'Galápagos', after a popular type of saddle.
- The Spanish also called them 'the Enchanted Isles' as treacherous currents and swirling mists caused sailors to frequently lose sight of islands right in front of them.
- The Galápagos Islands were home to the only surviving giant Pinta tortoise, 'Lonesome George,' who sadly died in June 2012.
- The convergence of three major oceanic currents brings an incredible mix of marine life to Galápagos.
- The endemic Galápagos marine iguana is the only lizard to swim in the ocean.
- Darwin's research in Galápagos led to his theory of The Origin of Species.
- In 1978 UNESCO designated Galápagos as the first World Heritage site.
- Due to the early presence of both Spanish and English inhabitants in Galápagos, the Islands now have both Spanish and English names.
- The Galápagos penguin is the only to be found in the northern hemisphere and to breed in the tropics.
- A Galápagos tortoise can weigh up to 595lb (270kg) with a carapace length of 4ft (1.2m) and outlive most humans.
- The Galápagos Islands are home to the world's largest cormorant and the only one unable to fly.
- Galápagos has one of the world's rarest ecosystems in which the herbivores at the top of the food chain are reptiles.
- Galápagos swallow-tailed gulls are the only gulls in the world to feed at night.
- The scolopendra centipede is an 11-inch (28-cm) long carnivorous centipede. It's not unusual for it to devour whole lava lizards or baby rats.

Galápagos weather in November

There is nowhere else in the world like the Galápagos Islands, where each island and season is distinct with its own landscapes, flora and fauna. November is generally a good time to visit, offering a blend of pleasant, mostly dry weather and wildlife viewing opportunities.

November can be the best of both seasons, as currents begin the transition from cool to warm. Temperatures are rising, ranging from 68-81°F (20-27°C), and animals are active. While the water remains cool (68-75°F or 20-24°C), visibility for snorkeling and diving is still excellent.

Sea lion pups are now old enough to play without their mothers being overly concerned. It is the breeding season for brown noddies and nesting season for band rumped storm petrels, with a higher chance of seeing whale sharks in the far northwest of the islands. November is particularly good for observing blue-footed boobies, being their breeding and nesting season. Mating season for green turtles commences and you can expect to see Galápagos penguins, flightless cormorants, and various seabirds.



Pelicans and Pinnacle Rock



The pool at Las Terrazas de Dana Boutique Lodge Spa, Mindo

Hotels

Sheraton Quito Hotel (Quito)
This modern 5-star hotel is a typical Sheraton venue – stylish and very comfortable with excellent amenities and location. Sheraton Quito Hotel is strategically located in front of Quicentro shopping center and features a restaurant and spa with panoramic views of the city.

Las Terrazas de Dana Boutique Lodge Spa (Mindo)
This beautiful eco-lodge offers sensitively designed and spacious rooms with floor-to-celing windows looking out onto pristine rainforest. The food is excellent, prepared by their top-rated chef, and the rooms are both comfortable and stylish.

Termas de Papallacta Resort (Papallacta)
Termas de Papallacta is perched in a high Andean valley, surrounded by green mountains. The spa resort offers relaxing natural thermal baths, spa treatments, and an excellent restaurant.

Sacha Lodge (Amazon extension)
Each cabin, built of traditional materials with high thatched roof and private shaded terrace with hammock, blends into the lush surroundings. The cabins provide a spacious private bathroom with flushing toilet and hot shower, some with floor-to-ceiling windows for an immersive jungle experience. All cabins are screened against insects and contain ceiling fans above two comfortable double beds. There is the lovely 'Balsa', a covered al fresco lakeside lounge, as well as a bar, restaurant and shop.

Wyndham Hotel (Quito, Amazon extension)
If taking the pre-tour extension, there is one night in Quito before taking an onward flight to the Amazon. Using an airport hotel saves time with less traveling to and from the city.



Termas de Papallacta Resort



An Otavalan woman in traditional dress

Sacha Lodge extension

The extension cost is $3,998 per person sharing

The extension cost with a room to yourself is $5,312

The cost includes:

- Three nights' accommodation in twin bedded rooms with private facilities in a first-class jungle lodge, one night in an airport hotel on arrival, and one night in a 5-star hotel in Quito on departure from the Amazon
- All meals at Sacha Lodge, breakfast in Quito
- Soft drinks with meals
- A full programme of activities as per the itinerary
- Experienced English-speaking guides
- Return flights from Quito into the Amazon
- All transportation services including bus transfers and boat trips

The cost excludes: International flights and airport transfers, personal extras such as laundry etc, all optional excursions, tours and visits, travel insurance, tips on pre-tour extension.

The cost of the tour is $15,980 per person sharing a room

The cost of the tour with a room to yourself* is $17,216

The cost includes:

- Comprehensive pre-departure information
- The services of two tour leader, Paul and Karen Johnson

In Ecuador the cost includes:

- Ten nights' accommodation in twin bedded rooms with private facilities in a five-star hotel, a cloud forest lodge and an Andean thermal spa resort
- Breakfasts daily and lunches and dinners as per the itinerary
- Drinks with meals (soft drinks, water, tea and coffee – depending on hotel)
- A full programme of sightseeing, walks and talks as per the itinerary, admission fees and tips
- Services of experienced English speaking guide (Xavier Salazar) and driver throughout Ecuador
- All transportation services including internal flights and tips

In the Galápagos Islands the cost includes:

- Four nights' accommodation aboard the Solaris motor yacht in twin or double bedded cabins with private facilities
- All meals on board
- Visits to Islands with English-speaking naturalist guides
- Galápagos National Park tax, dock fee and tips
- Wifi, kayaks, and snorkelling equipment

The cost excludes: International flights and airport transfers, personal extras such as laundry etc, all optional excursions, tours and visits, travel insurance, wetsuit hire on Galápagos (please contact us to reserve wetsuits).

* Four single cabins on the Galapagos yacht

'All the local guides were great and passionate about their country.'

Dr Ofra Fried, Ecuador and the Galápagos, May 2025

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. We also ensure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to.

From the sublime to the humble, we provide a variety of experiences in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun!

An ATOL and AFPS logo guarantee that your money is safe. Tours not covered by ATOL are covered by AFPS.

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Jon Baines Tours (London)
Hyde Park House, 5 Manfred Road, London, SW15 2RS
Tel: +44 (0) 207 223 9485 / 5618

Jon Baines Tours (Melbourne)
PO Box 68, South Brunswick, Victoria 3055
Tel: +61 (0) 3 9343 6367

Email: info@jonbainestours.com
www.jonbainestours.com









A condor in the Andes (top); Colourful colonial buildings in Quito; A Galápagos giant tortoise; A marine iguana and blue-footed boobies, Galápagos (above)

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