



# Ecuador & The Galápagos

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## A&K Ecuador office

A&K Ecuador was established in Quito in September 2004, meaning your clients will be looked after, beginning to end, by A&K staff.

## Guardian Angels

For that unique high-end personal service, we have A&K Guardian Angels, a local expert who will look after every little detail. They accompany your clients, opening doors that no-one else can and ensuring an unrivalled travel experience.

## 24-hour contact

We have 20 full-time employees, as well as numerous seasonal staff across the country. This allows us to handle larger groups and monthly fluctuations and we're able to offer 24-hour phone and email contact, for every client travelling to Ecuador, for assistance at any time of the day or night.

# Why book with A&K

## Group travel

The team is well equipped to handle the largest of operations, such as congresses, incentives and cruise operations, but we are also small enough to offer a specialised, tailor-made and personal service without losing sight of the finer details.





CITIES

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# Quito

Once the northern capital of the Inca Empire and the centre for European expansion, Quito offers travellers a diverse mix of cultures and lays claim of being the first UNESCO World Heritage site.

The A&K way:

- Go behind the scenes to watch ice cream being made by local heladería. Learn their special technique, refined over generations.
- Take a tour of Oswaldo Viteri, colonial art collection. Meet one of Ecuador's finest artists and the studio where he creates every new wonder.
- Party like a local on board a traditional 'Chivas'. Tour the city, meet the locals and discover a great component of the quaint Ecuadorian culture.



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# Cuenca

A World Heritage Site, Cuenca is also the birthplace of fine jewellery and the famous Panama hat. However, one thing that makes this city so special is its fantastic location, allowing visitors to explore artistic, cultural and natural wonders with atmospheric accommodation in colonial architecture.

The A&K way:

- Visit the home of Homero Ortega, the legendary Panama hat (toquilla) maker and learn the process of how they're made
- Ideally located close to Ingapirca, visit the site of the most important and inspirational Inca ruins in all of Ecuador
- Head out the city to El Cajas wetland, a fantasy world where you will discover the bright-green mountains, paper-like-bark trees and mirrored lagoons



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COAST

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# COAST

The Ecuadorian Coastal Region, divided into five provinces, is a place that you can't miss if you are looking for a combination of sun, sand and sea.

The A&K way:

- Manabi and Guayas provinces, home to beautiful beaches, important and historic cities and spectacular food
- Wonder Guayaquil, located on the banks of the Guayas River. Ecuador's main harbour is where old meets new
- Head north of Puerto Cayo for deserted beaches and the opportunity to go oyster hunting and experience your own oyster picnic



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AMAZONIA

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# AMAZONIA

The most biodiverse place on the planet. The Ecuadorian Amazon Region combines a great variety of flora and fauna, as well as ethnic tribes that have inhabited the place for centuries.

The A&K way:

- Experience the jungle from a different perspective on board [Anakonda](#). Discover the true Amazon in luxurious surroundings.
- Go inside the Amazonian rainforest and meet the Añangu Kichwa community, learn about its history and ethics
- 900 metres above sea level, deep within the Mashpi Biodiversity Reserve, spot over 500 species of bird, monkey, peccarie, amphibians (including glass frogs) and even puma



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# HIGHLANDS & LOWLANDS

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# HIGHLANDS

North of Quito lies blue skies, lagoons, mountains and rich indigenous cultures.

The A&K way:

- Go trekking, horse-back riding and climbing among the iconic mountains that compose this unparalleled Andean view
- Stay in dream-like haciendas surrounded by rose gardens and fantasy views
- An unmissable stop is Otavalo's Saturday market. Here you will find the most important and celebrated market in the Andes, a true authentic vivid slice of Andean culture to experience



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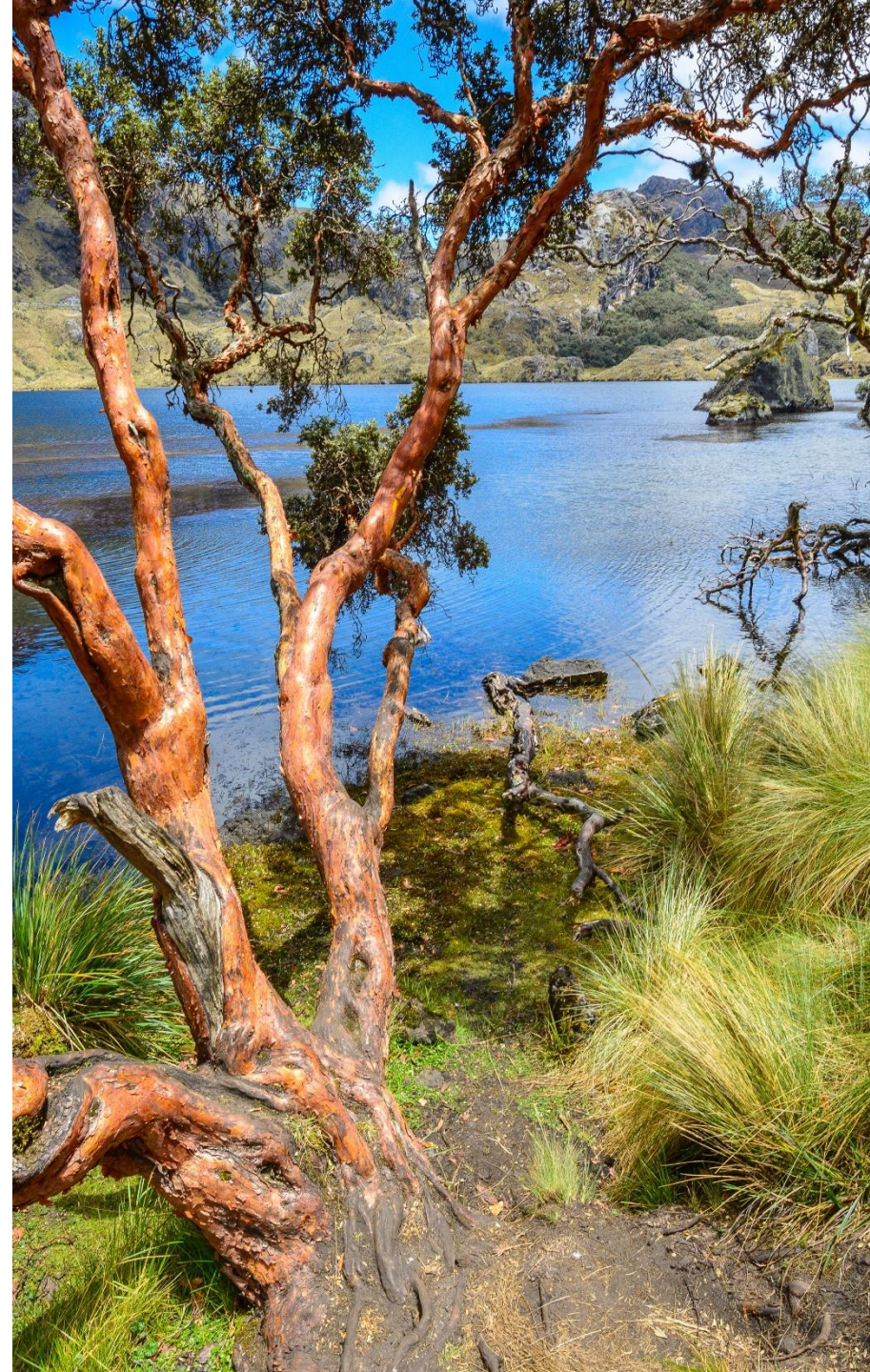


# LOWLANDS

Just a short trip south from the civilised city of Quito, you will find yourself on the Avenue of the Volcanoes. A tour of Cotopaxi National Park will bring you back to Ecuador's wild side.

The A&K way:

- Here you'll find Andean wolf, puma, bear and condor. The picturesque terrain also offers bird-watchers plenty of opportunity
- A trekker's dream, Cotopaxi National Park is flanked by numerous mountains, offering the adventurous some rewarding treks and climbs
- Natural hot springs dotted around are ideal for soothing weary, pot-hike limbs







GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

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# GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

## Ocean Spray

Catamaran:

- Built in 2012
- 9 cabins | 16 guests capacity
- Private balconies
- Solarium with Jacuzzi
- Sundeck
- Indoor and outdoor dining
- Outdoor bar

## Origin

Catamaran:

- Panoramic windows in each cabin
- 10 cabins | 20 guests capacity
- Crew of 14 including concierge
- Jacuzzi, wet bar and BBQ
- On board fitness centre
- Eight night itinerary

## Santa Cruz II

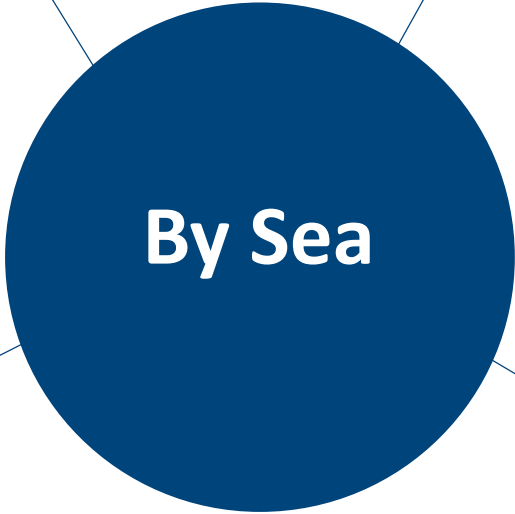
Expedition vessel:

- Exceptional guides
- 50 cabins, sleeping a maximum of 90 guests
- 5 decks
- Choose between four, five or nine night itineraries

## Integrity

Yacht:

- One of the biggest Owner Suites in the Galápagos at 350 sq. ft
- 9 cabins | 16 guests capacity
- State of the art stabilisers for a smooth cruise
- Seven night cruises with departures on Saturdays



# GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

## Galápagos Safari Lodge

Santa Cruz

- Luxury tented camp emulates the African safari tradition
- Borders Santa Cruz National Park
- 9 tents constructed on wooden platforms with en suite bathrooms
- Central lodge with panoramic views

## Finch Bay Hotel

Santa Cruz

- Situated on the beach of Puerto Ayora
- 15 minute walk to the Charles Darwin Research station
- Excursions on board Sea Lion yacht

**By Land**

## Pikaia Lodge

Santa Cruz:

- All the benefits of boat-based exploring from a central base
- Expeditions on board luxurious 100ft cruise yacht
- Nestled on top of an extinct volcano
- 14 rooms and suites with panoramic windows, complete with private terraces
- Infinity pool

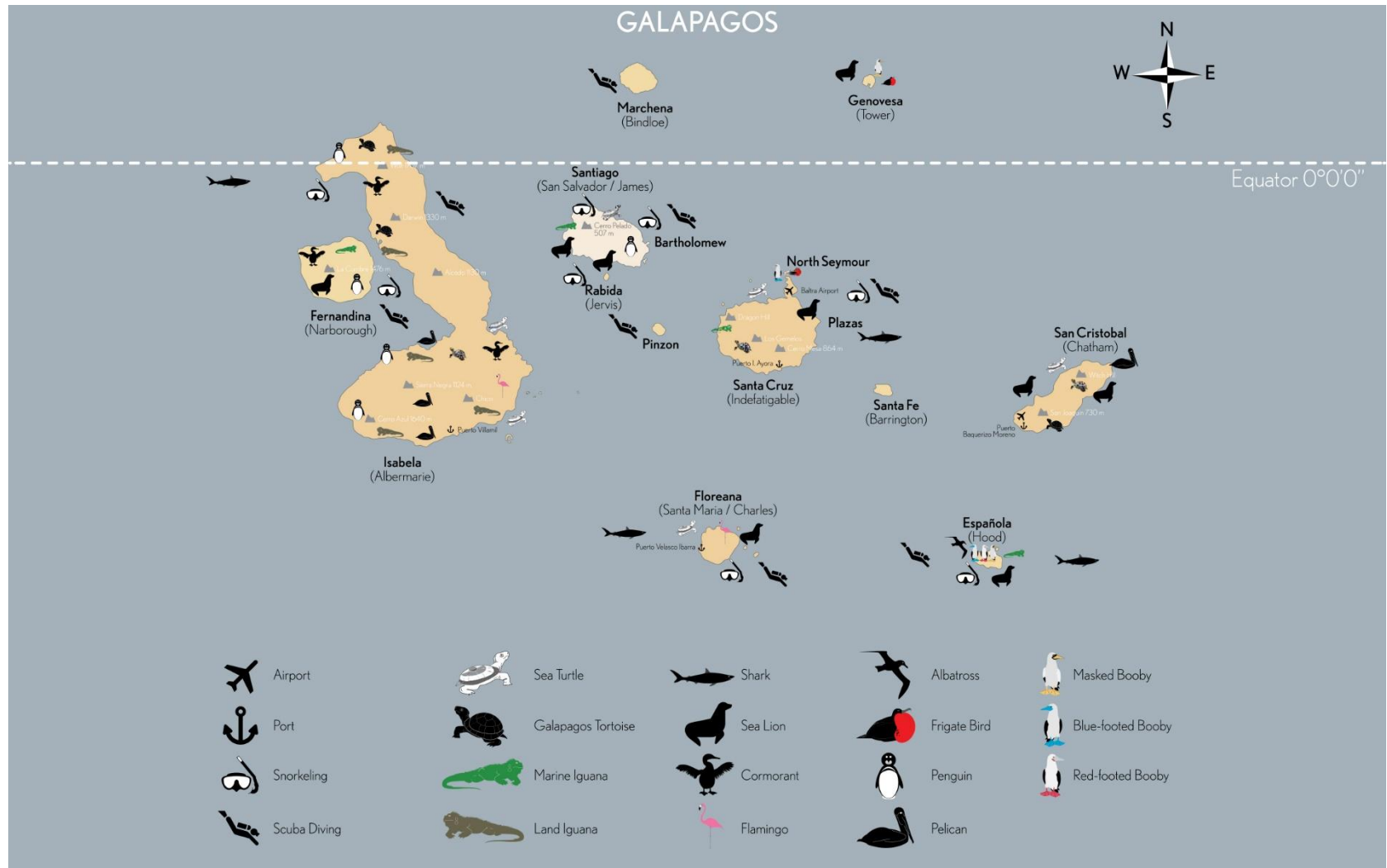
## Red Mangrove

Santa Cruz:

- Close to colourful town of Puerto Ayora
- Surrounded by mangrove forest offering a unique ecosystem
- View wildlife from newly renovated deck
- 17 suites and bedrooms



# GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS – What to see where & when



# Your year round destination

## Your guide to a year in Galapagos

### JANUARY

- In Española, adult marine iguanas become brightly colored for their mating period.
- Green sea turtles arrive at beaches for nesting.
- Ideal time for snorkeling and diving, as temperature rises and stay warm until June.

### FEBRUARY

- In Floreana Island, flamingos start nesting while Bahama pintail birds start breeding season.
- Nesting season of the Galapagos dove reaches its peak.
- Water temperature reaches 25°C (77°F) and will remain constant until April.

### MARCH

- Beginning of the Summer marks the arrival of the waved albatross to Española.
- The western islands offer excellent snorkeling.
- Sporadic tropical rains, intense sun and hot climate.

### APRIL

- Arrival of waved albatrosses to Española. Their amazing courtship begins.
- Eggs laid by green sea turtles and land iguanas begin to hatch.
- Although the rains have ended, the islands remain green.
- Definitely one of the best months to visit the Galapagos.
- Good visibility in the water for snorkelers.

### MAY

- North Seymour's blue-footed boobies begin their courtship.
- Sea turtles are still hatching on Gardner Bay, Punta Cormorant and Puerto Egas.
- The waved albatross on Española start laying their eggs.
- Most of the marine iguanas' eggs hatch, on Santa Cruz.

### JUNE

- Beginning of the colder season and waters start picking up in surge and wave action.
- Groups of humpback whales often reach the Galapagos during their migration.
- Giant tortoises in Santa Cruz migrate from the highlands to the lowlands in search of nesting places.

### JULY

- Sea birds become active, especially the Blue footed boobies on Española.
- Flightless cormorants perform courtship rituals and nesting activities on Fernandina.
- Lava lizards initiate mating rituals until November.
- Whales and dolphins are more likely to be observed off the western coast of Isabela.

### AUGUST

- Giant tortoises return to the highlands of Santa Cruz.
- Sea lion pupping season (births) begins.
- Waters are choppy and currents at the strongest levels.

### SEPTEMBER

- Swimmers and snorkelers can find continual penguin activity underwater on Bartolome.
- Sea lions are very active.
- Females have reached mating season causing males to bark and fight. Western and central islands are the most active in this respect.

### OCTOBER

- Fur Sea lions begin their mating period.
- Blue footed boobies raise chicks all over Española and Punta Vicente Roca.
- Morning fog can be expected in most locations, except on the western islands where most days have a misty start that soon fades away.
- Sunrises in the west can be beautiful after the mist covers only certain locations of the western volcanoes.

### NOVEMBER

- Sea lion pupping continues. The adults are sexually active on the east of the archipelago.
- Seas are calm. South east trade winds have decreased strength.
- Generally great weather due to transition between one season and the next.
- Sea lion pups play aqua-aerobics next to snorkelers.
- Most pups here are curious enough to nibble at fins of snorkelers.

### DECEMBER

- Hatching of giant tortoise's eggs begins and lasts until April.
- Sea turtles display their mating behavior.
- The islands go green again due to the beginning of the rainy season.





SAMPLE ITINERARIES

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# Sample itineraries

*All A&K tailor-made itineraries can be adapted to your clients' requests.*

## **Highlights of Ecuador: 11 nights from £3,295pp**

Explore the best of Ecuador, from its UNESCO-protected capital city to the extraordinary Galápagos Islands. This is the perfect itinerary for those looking to dip into a little of everything

## **Rainforest, Amazon & Galápagos holiday – 13 nights from £7,610pp**

Experience extraordinary biodiversity and fascinating local traditions. Accompanied by an A&K guide, guests will explore the Amazon basin and learn of its unique wildlife before exploring the Galápagos by both land and sea

## **Small Group – Galápagos Wildlife Adventure: 9 nights from £7,945pp**

Departure dates: 10, 24 January; 7 March; 30 May, 5, 19 September; 3, 17, 31 October; 12 December

Don't forget our extensive Small Group Journey portfolio. Begin with three days in Guayaquil, followed by a seven night Galápagos tour on board La Pinta with twice-daily excursions as well as nature walks, snorkelling and kayaking





## Adam Fogg

TRAVEL CONSULTANT

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### Adam's Top Tip

*"I have been lucky enough to visit over 50 countries and the Galápagos Islands is my number one destination! You can snorkel with turtles or share the beach with sea-lions! The wildlife is phenomenal. I recommend a cruise to explore more of the islands. Plus add on an adventure to the Amazon or a volcano hike in Ecuador.*

*My top tip - enjoy a night before or after you experience the Galápagos Islands in Hotel Del Parque, the first luxury boutique hotel in Guayaquil. A restored 19th century property nestled in an oasis in the city."*



## Melissa Hookway

SENIOR TRAVEL SPECIALIST

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### Melissa's Top Tip

*"My best Galápagos tip is to tell your clients to avoid wearing or carrying anything yellow when they go ashore as the native flower species are either white or yellow, and yellow attracts more in the way of insects.*

*If your clients also want to include the Ecuadorian Amazon during their travels, it is always best to do this before any Galápagos visit. In the Amazon clients will need to look hard to see wildlife in the jungle whereas in the Galápagos they will sometimes need to be careful not to trip over it! Galápagos is a tough act to follow!"*





Thank you

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