

THE ENCHANTED ISLES
YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE ON PREPARING
FOR YOUR GALÁPAGOS SAFARI

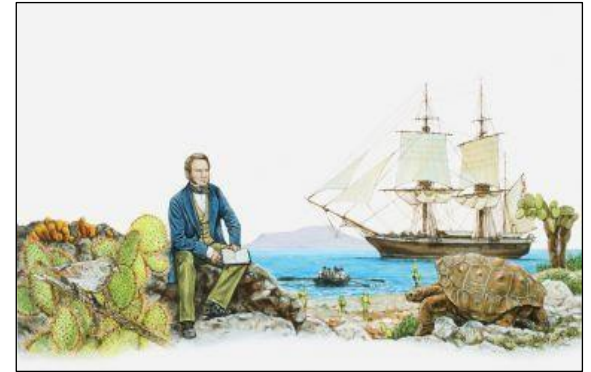


PREPARED FOR
Charles Kerwood



On September 15, 1835, Charles Darwin— the 26-year-old naturalist on the HMS Beagle— landed on Chatham Island (now known as San Cristóbal Island) in the chain of islands known as the Galápagos. Over the next 35 days, he recorded his observations as he visited various islands in the archipelago. Twenty-four years later, Darwin published his landmark book “On the Origin of Species” and the world’s view of the natural world has never been the same.

You now have an opportunity to travel in Darwin’s footsteps, visiting several of the islands of the Galápagos and making your own observations of its fascinating wildlife. During your island adventures, you will experience an astounding variety of unique landscapes and wildlife encounters.



Wildlife wanders freely and almost fearlessly in the Galápagos. This remote island group, with its dramatic and desolate beauty, is home to some of the most unique species in the world. Many of which are found only here— such as the Galápagos tortoise, marine and land iguanas, the flightless cormorant and, of course, Darwin’s famous finches. Darwin noted that different species appeared to have been adapted to fit different niches on the individual islands, eventually giving rise to his concept of natural selection.

You may glimpse a magnificent male frigatebird in courtship, his bright-red breast puffed up in a dazzling display, or the spectacular dive of a blue-footed booby fishing close to shore, or the graceful, waved albatross— so comical and clumsy when taking flight. It’s all here, in the Galápagos— a treasure-trove of natural history, awaiting your discovery.

Shore excursions on Galápagos Island tours include hiking ancient lava fields where you will encounter prehistoric-looking reptiles— such as the iconic giant Galápagos Tortoise as well as endemic land and marine iguanas. Discover the courtship dance of the blue-footed boobies and the graceful water ballet of the Galápagos penguins. Explore beaches of black, red, and green sand leading to the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

We offer a variety of active explorations depending on which islands are visited. Go on a nature walk and marvel at brightly colored lava lizards. Slip into a sea kayak and discover hidden tide pools; mangrove forests; beaches of red, green, and black sand; and the hardened lava fields smeared onto the edges of the shores. Swim back and forth across the equator with sea lions that perform an underwater ballet. Go birding in search of the Nazca booby. Or put on a mask to snorkel and explore the delicate balance of life underwater, watching schools of graceful spotted eagle rays gliding beneath you.

Exploring the undersea is a major part of the Galápagos experience where cold and warm waters intermingle and where fur sea lions, sea turtles, dolphins, whales, and tame reef sharks thrive. Each night, our naturalists conduct a briefing before dinner. Throughout your journey, your guides can take the time to explore any topic that interests you personally.

From the moment you meet our representatives in Guayaquil, you are in the hands of one of the most experienced and recognized teams in Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands. We have found the team at Tropic Ecuador to be consistently dedicated to making sure you safely enjoy every aspect of your Galápagos safari. They are committed to your needs and interests through exceptional personal service and attention to detail.

Your journey is sure to be enhanced by our professional, licensed Galápagos guides, who are fluent in English, and whose knowledge and determination to show you everything you wish to see is matched only by their dedication to your safety and comfort.



SECTION ONE: Before Departure

Your Galápagos pre-departure guide is divided into two sections. Please read Section One: Before Departure now. It contains important information that you will need before you leave.

Section Two: On Safari contains details and reference materials that will help you during your safari. Please make sure you review it before your departure and contact us if you have any questions. In keeping with the principles of responsible travel, we provide this safari guide in this digital format, rather than printing it.

CHECKLIST: Before departure

- ☐ **Please read this entire guide before your departure.** It contains important information to help you prepare for your Galápagos adventure. We recommend you bring this guide with you.
- ☐ **Get a passport or check your passport.** If you already have one, make sure it will remain valid for at least six months **after** the date of your return from Ecuador. If it doesn't, please get a new passport now. **Ecuador will not allow you to enter if your passport expires within six months of your return to the United States.**
- ☐ **Make sure you have at least one blank page in your passport for visas, entries and departures.** Ecuador requires this for your entry and departure stamps. Blank amendment/endorsement pages cannot be used for entry and departure stamps. **Ecuador will not allow you to enter if you do not meet this requirement.**
- ☐ **Travel visa.** Ecuador does **not** require citizens of the United States to obtain a travel visa for entry.
- ☐ **Please talk with your doctor and/or a medical professional at an international travel clinic about recommended health precautions.** This guide provides you with important information on the various precautions you may choose to take, but it is ultimately up to you to consult with your own medical professionals to determine your personal precautionary health measures.
- ☐ **Arrange for transportation to and from your home town.** International Flights to Ecuador (not included): Flights to Ecuador from the USA are currently offered by American Airlines (Miami), United (Houston), DELTA (Atlanta) and LAN (Miami and JFK). All international tickets have the airport departure taxes included in the cost of the ticket. Each airline has its own guidelines for luggage weight. **However, you are limited to 44 lbs. of luggage on the flights between the mainland and the Galápagos Islands** (flights included).
- ☐ International air transportation is available but not included in the safari price. Safari Professionals does not make international flight arrangements.
- ☐ Please note that your flight from the Ecuadorean mainland to the Islands will take place early in the morning . **You must arrive in time for an early morning departure, in order to board your flight to the Islands.**
- ☐ We book our personal flights through an independent air travel professional, Cathy King. We have found that Cathy takes the mystery and hassle out of international flights. Cathy may be contacted at 888-850-9254 or at adventuretrips@hotmail.com. Please send us a copy of your flight confirmation as soon as you receive it.

DOCUMENTS - PASSPORT

Please visit the U.S. State Department's website for complete information: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

- ☐ Please make sure your passport will remain valid for at least **six months after the date of your return. Your airline may have been instructed to not let you board your flight if this requirement is not met.**
- ☐ If you have changed your name (are newly married, for instance) be sure that we have your name as it appears on your passport. Your arrangements in Ecuador must be made using your passport name.
- ☐ If you have a passport that has expired within the last 15 years, or one that will not remain valid for at least six months after the date of your return from Ecuador, you will need to renew it. Renewal requires a renewal application, two passport photos, your latest passport, and payment of the renewal fee.
- ☐ If you are getting a U.S. passport for the first time, or if your old one expired more than 15 years ago, you will need to provide proof of citizenship, proof of identity and two 2"x2" photos.

For complete details, please visit this website: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html

- ☐ Please check to determine if you have at least one blank page for the entry/exit stamps you will receive. Endorsement pages cannot be counted as visa pages. If you do not have a blank page, you'll need to obtain a new passport. **Ecuador may not admit you if you do not have at least one blank page in your passport.**
- ☐ You may use a professional passport/visa service to assist you with any passport-related transaction. An additional fee will be charged by the passport/visa service.

Passport agencies of the U.S. Department of State are located in Washington D.C., Boston, Chicago, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Aurora CO, and Norwalk CT. There are over 7,000 locations which accept passport applications throughout the U.S. Please visit this website to locate one near you: <http://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>

If you require expedited service, we strongly recommend you use a professional passport/visa service. If you apply for expedited service directly to the State Department, be sure to specify your departure date on your application. This is very important—passports are processed by the State Department in the order of departure date. Application forms that arrive by overnight services do not receive expedited treatment. The State Department charges an additional fee to expedite the processing of your passport.

Loss or theft of a valid passport is a serious matter and should be reported in writing immediately to Passport Services, Department of State, Washington, D.C., or to the nearest passport agency. If you are abroad, it should be reported to the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy. We strongly suggest you make a photocopy of your passport and carry the photocopy with you, separate from your passport. In case of loss, this will help expedite the paperwork for obtaining a new one. In addition, we require that you provide Safari Professionals with a copy of the photo page of your passport, so we may book your hotel and transportation reservations in Ecuador.

If you experience any problem in obtaining a passport, please call us, and we'll assist you.

WHAT TO TAKE

DOCUMENTS

Before your departure, we will provide you with additional information that will help you on safari. Take this safari guide and other information with you. **DO NOT put any important documents in the luggage that you check through.** Keep these items with you at all times in your carry-on luggage. And don't forget your passport!

LUGGAGE AND PACKING

Most people have a tendency to take too much clothing and gear on their Galápagos adventure. If you are traveling on a yacht, please note that laundry facilities are not available on board. If you're traveling in winter, it's admittedly more difficult to pack as you may need warm clothing for the journey to and from your hometown. You may be able to store unwanted clothing and luggage at your hotel while you are traveling between the islands.

While international airlines have varying weight allowances for your luggage, **you are limited to just one piece of checked luggage with a maximum weight of 44 lbs. on the flights between the mainland and the Galápagos Islands.** It is important to keep your luggage within these guidelines or you may have to pay additional baggage fees.

One of our travelers taught us an easy way to check the weight of our bags using a household scale, which may not be accurate at weights below 50 lbs. Simply weigh yourself and then weigh yourself holding the bag. The difference between the two is the weight of the bag.

Keep one carry-on bag in your possession at all times with important items such as medications, tickets, passport, etc. The dimensions of your carry-on bag should not exceed 21.5 inches long, 13.5 inches wide and 9 inches high. Please check with the U.S. Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) regarding current restrictions for the allowable contents of carry-on luggage. Please check out their website below: <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/all>.

Some international airlines now restrict carry-on luggage to one piece and may not allow an extra carry-on piece such as a purse or computer case. Please check with your international airline to determine their carry-on allowance.

Pack light and plan on taking only one medium-sized soft-sided suitcase or duffel bag and one carry-on while traveling in the Galápagos Islands. If possible, plan on using your carry-on bag as your equipment bag during your shore excursions. Many of our travelers use day packs for this purpose, eliminating the need for a separate carry-on bag.

We strongly recommend you consider securing your checked baggage with locks approved by the U.S. Transportation Safety Administration (TSA). These locks provide security but allow the TSA to open your baggage if it is chosen for inspection, without destroying your locks. TSA approved locks can be purchased just about anywhere padlocks or travel items are sold.

Additional details are available at this TSA website: <https://www.tsa.gov/blog/2014/02/18/tsa-travel-tips-tuesday-tsa-recognized-locks>. The yacht does not have safe deposit boxes and the cabins lock from the inside only.

Please use the large, easy-to-spot yellow luggage tags provided by Safari Professionals. When our safari travelers use the same tags, it makes it easier for those helping you to identify the pieces belonging to you. We recommend you place a copy of your itinerary inside your checked luggage in the unlikely event that your baggage does not arrive at your destination. You may also wish to attach an additional tag to your checked luggage that includes your flight schedule. If your bags go astray, this information will help the airline to forward your bags.

CLOTHING

Once again, travel light. Casual summer clothing is appropriate for your Galápagos adventure. The Islands have a surprisingly cool, sub-tropical climate. During your Galápagos adventure, you can expect temperatures on the Islands to range roughly from 64 to 77°. The sea temperature averages 73°.

The larger islands with volcanic peaks have a variety of climatic zones. The coastal areas are arid and covered with plants adapted to desert conditions. The highland areas receive moisture almost all year, supporting lush vegetation. Temperatures are determined almost entirely by ocean currents, which are influenced by the trade winds. The Galápagos Islands get an average of ten inches of rain per year - it is never considered “rainy”.

There are two seasons, both of which have some precipitation. During the months of December to May, the cooling currents subside, temperatures rise, and the climate is warm and sunny with occasional showers. In June, the trend begins toward cooler temperatures with moderate breezes, which continue through November. This period is referred to as the “garua” (pronounced gah-ru-ah) season, which means mist in Spanish.

During the day, wear pants, jeans, shorts, or a lightweight skirt and lightweight cotton or cotton blend top, preferably khaki, tan, or another neutral color, so as not to startle those animals and birds which have color vision. Bring a light-weight wind breaker, sweater, fleece top, or summer jacket for the early mornings and evenings. Please **DO NOT** bring camouflage clothing. Pack a bathing suit or two for swimming and snorkeling. Laundry service is not available on board.

Here are some websites that feature adventure travel clothing, as well as other travel items: <http://www.tilley.com>

In addition to clothing, they have great hats.

<http://www.magellans.com> A great source of travel clothing. <http://www.orvis.com>

Classic sporting clothing and accessories.

<http://www.cabelas.com> Their “Serengeti” clothing is a good bargain.

<http://www.travelsmith.com> Another source for travel needs.

<http://www.sunprecautions.com> A great resource for those sensitive to the sun.

FOOTWEAR

Comfort is the key. Any good walking shoes are sufficient on your shore excursions but, for some travelers, the extra support provided by high top hiking shoes is beneficial. Water shoes, boat shoes, or flip flops are useful for wet landings. Women should wear low-heeled shoes rather than high heels, as the ground is uneven, and it is easy to turn an ankle.

HEADGEAR

We strongly recommend a wide brimmed soft cloth hat for protection from the equatorial sun. It can be folded and put in a pocket or bag and is less likely to blow off than a stiffer-brimmed hat.

SNORKELING EQUIPMENT

If you wish to snorkel, you may wish to bring your own snorkeling equipment. Wet suits are also provided but there is no guarantee that your size will be available.

CAMERAS

Virtually everyone who wishes to take photographs now uses a digital camera. Today's digital devices are available in a bewildering variety and their capabilities change rapidly. Therefore, we do not include any recommendations regarding digital devices. However, we do suggest that a zoom feature is handy for framing your photo and the longer focal length will bring your subjects closer to you. And, if you plan on snorkeling, consider bringing an underwater camera or a waterproof housing for your digital device.

We strongly recommend that you carry your camera in a waterproof dry bag or large size heavy-duty Zip-lock type bag during your landings. You will be able to charge your camera batteries on board the yacht, which is equipped with the standard USA 110AC/60 cycle plugs. There is no need for an electrical adapter on the yachts or in the mainland hotel.

Most digital cameras store their image files in various formats of storage cards. While the storage capacity of these cards has grown significantly, you may also wish to consider bringing at least one extra card.

If you purchase new digital equipment for your safari, please test it to make sure it is functioning properly. And **be sure to bring extra batteries**, even if your equipment uses rechargeable batteries. Batteries can run out of power while you are on a shore excursion and a spare will ensure that you won't miss a great photo opportunity!

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

As stated above, the electrical system in Ecuador is the same system we use in the USA. If your equipment has a three-prong, grounded plug, be sure to bring a converter that will allow it to fit in a two-prong, ungrounded plug. There's no need to bring a hair drier. They are provided on the yacht.

MISCELLANEOUS

- “Ziploc” style plastic bags are handy for a number of uses, not the least of which is to protect your camera equipment during your landings on the islands. Many of our travelers organize and pack their clothing in bags of various sizes to reduce space and make it easy to find everything. Squeezing the air out of each bag by rolling it as it is closed can save significant space in your luggage, possibly reducing the size of the bag you need. There are also plastic bags that are specifically made for packing clothes and have a built-in valve that makes expelling the air easy. The “Space Bag” is the original brand. Similar products can often be found where travel items are sold.

Hefty sells a “Jumbo” 2.5 gallon “Ziploc” bag we use for protecting cameras and other electronic equipment. They are also very useful for keeping dirty laundry separate.

Be sure that you do not leave any plastic bag on the Islands.

- Everyone who goes on a Galápagos adventure should have his or her own pair of binoculars. If you don't already have some, the purchase of a good pair of binoculars is a wise investment. Binoculars are an essential tool for being able to see birds and smaller animals and to watch the behaviors of animals at a distance.

Choosing the right binoculars can seem a confusing challenge. Most of our travelers have found binoculars ranging in size from 7 x 35 to 10 x 50 useful. Anything more powerful is likely to reduce your field of vision and exaggerate any movement. The first figure of the binoculars' rating indicates the magnification power of the lenses. A value of 7 brings the image of the item you are looking at 7 times closer. The second figure, such as 35, specifies the diameter of the objective lens in millimeters, which affects the amount of light entering the binoculars. There are other factors that affect the image you may see but they are beyond the scope of this guide.

We recommend you try several types of binoculars to find the one that is right for you. The staffs of photographic and sporting goods stores are generally very knowledgeable and can help you choose. Many of the smaller binoculars provide a good trade-off between their physical size and their effectiveness.



CHECKLISTS: ITEMS TO TAKE

CLOTHING:

- ☐ Light weight cotton or cotton blend clothing in neutral colors
- ☐ 2 or 3 short sleeve shirts
- ☐ 1 or 2 long sleeved shirts for sun protection— most travelers find a total of 3 or 4 shirts to be enough ☐ 2 or 3 pairs of pants, shorts or pants that convert to shorts
- ☐ Belt
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Lightweight windbreaker/sweater/sweatshirt
- ☐ Underwear and socks
- ☐ 2 swimsuits
- ☐ Wide brimmed hat— remember, you will be on the equator
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes or light-weight hiking boots
- ☐ Flip-flops, water shoes or boat shoes

MISCELLANEOUS:

- ☐ Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, shaving cream, razors, deodorant, comb, tampons, etc.) ☐
- ☐ Small flashlight
- ☐ Extra batteries for the flashlight and other items using batteries
- ☐ Hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes
- ☐ Facial tissues
- ☐ Ear plugs
- ☐ Non-polycarbonate plastic (or BPA free) water bottle
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Sunscreen and lip balm (A minimum SPF of 30 is recommended)
- ☐ Security pouch for carrying your passport and money
- ☐ Sunglasses and a strap are very helpful during shore excursions
- ☐ Daypack for your island excursions
- ☐ Medications for motion sickness, diarrhea, colds, sunburn and upset stomach
- ☐ Basic first-aid kit (band-aids, antiseptic ointment, aspirin, etc.)

- ☐ Small notebook or journal and pens
- ☐ Sewing kit, safety pins, rubber bands, small roll of duct tape ☐
- Ziploc style bags
- ☐ Watch and/or travel clock
- ☐ Your favorite snacks that are not subject to heat damage (nuts, hard candies, mints, granola bars, etc.) ☐
- Sports drink tablets for quickly replenishing trace elements (available at sporting goods stores)
- ☐ This safari guide
- ☐ TSA approved luggage locks
- ☐ Paperback books or other reading materials. Travelers often trade books during their travels.

IN YOUR CARRY-ON LUGGAGE OR ON YOUR PERSON:

- ☐ Passport, airline tickets/confirmations, frequent flyer card
- ☐ Credit/debit card, cash
- ☐ Medications— prescription and over-the counter
- ☐ Written copy of your prescriptions with the generic names of the medication (Keep this separate from your medications)
- ☐ Spare pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses if you wear them. If you wear contacts, be sure to bring along a pair of glasses. Eye drops.
- ☐ A copy of your eyeglass prescription in case you lose or break your glasses
- ☐ Camera or digital device, digital storage cards, extra batteries, lens cleaning items
- ☐ Photocopy of passport info page & visa(s) (Keep this separate from your passport)
- ☐ Something to read during your flights

MONEY, CURRENCY & CREDIT CARDS

Ecuador's official currency is the US dollar. You will have an account on the yacht for your purchases of alcoholic beverages and purchases from the on-board boutique. US dollars, Master Card, and Visa cards are accepted. American Express and Discover cards are **not** accepted.

TIPPING

Tips can be a significant portion of income for the crew of the yacht. Tipping is always optional but, if you feel you have received excellent service, please consider tipping. Tipping is a personal matter and passengers are encouraged to tip an amount they find appropriate. For those passengers who inquire, we suggest they follow our guideline of \$30 per passenger per day. Gratuities are divided by the Captain among all crew members, including the naturalist-guides, although you may privately tip anyone who provides you with exceptional service.

GENERAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Before you leave for any vacation— especially one to an international destination, we recommend that you consult your physician and a professional travel clinic. Make the doctor's appointment **no less than eight weeks before your departure**. If you haven't had a physical examination recently, you should get one. Discuss your itinerary and describe your planned activities with your doctor if you have any questions about your fitness.

Travelers to the Galápagos Islands tend to be healthy, active, and reasonably fit. Travelers able to walk a few hours a day unassisted will be able to fully enjoy the Galápagos. Some of the excursions require more physical activity than others, involving short steep climbs or long walks in hot weather or on uneven rocky trails. However, most excursions require moderate activity and the walks are at a leisurely pace. Entering and exiting the Zodiacs (shore excursion boats) require that you need to be sure-footed. If you are concerned about your ability to do any particular day hike, please consult with the naturalist before disembarkation. In order to enjoy your trip to its fullest potential, it is a good idea to do some exercise before your trip, such as walking, swimming, or bicycling.

If you have any medical condition that requires special care or medications, please let us know.

If your doctor agrees, it is a good idea to bring along some general medicines as well. A broad-spectrum antibiotic is advisable. Some antibiotics (like tetracycline) can cause hypersensitivity to the sun, however. Diarrhea medicine is also advisable as is an allergy medication for itches or rashes.

Be sure to bring enough of the prescription medicines that you are currently taking. When you pack, make certain that you have them with you in your carry-on luggage, not in the luggage you'll check through. And don't take just enough in your carry-on luggage for the flight, assuming that you will retrieve the rest when you get to your final destination. Occasionally, checked luggage is delayed, and you could find yourself without medication. Carry a written copy of the prescriptions for any such medication you need, including its generic name.

If you have any special condition or allergy that might possibly require attention overseas, have your physician write a letter describing the nature of the condition and the treatment, then send a copy to us and carry the letter with you. If you should happen to need medical care away from home, your temporary physician will be able to treat you more efficiently and effectively.

DENTAL CHECK-UP

It's a good idea to see your dentist a few weeks before departure. A broken or lost filling can be very aggravating while traveling. You might also consider taking along one of the commercially available dental emergency kits. Such kits allow you to replace lost fillings, cement crowns or caps, and alleviate toothaches. Ask your dentist or pharmacist for a recommendation.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

Any additional expenses resulting from medical conditions or emergencies are your responsibility. Please review the details of your travel insurance coverage and check with your insurance agent to make sure that you are adequately covered while traveling overseas.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS FOR THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS & ECUADOR

There are certain health precautions that you should take for your visit. It is beyond the scope of this publication to advise you of precisely what you need, as requirements change and vary amongst individuals. It is up to each traveler to consult his or her physician and/or a professional international travel clinic to get specific advice.

You will be traveling in a part of the world where medical care is not well developed. You will often be far from any medical facility or doctor. It could take many hours to get help. Although emergency medical evacuation service is available in Ecuador, it may not be possible to contact them immediately. The yacht carries basic first aid supplies, but the crew of the yacht cannot be relied upon for any but the most basic first aid. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offer detailed recommendations for traveling in Ecuador. We recommend you review their website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/ecuador>.

MALARIA

To quote the CDC, malaria is “Not present in the cities of Guayaquil and Quito or the Galápagos Islands.”

OTHER HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Your risk from other diseases is not great, but it is still wise to take some precautions. Ask your physician about protection against tetanus/diphtheria, hepatitis A & B, rabies, and typhoid.

The presence of HIV in Ecuador does not usually present a problem for travelers, unless for some reason an injection or transfusion is needed. Transfusions of blood are not common, and the major hospitals have a supply of screened plasma. But, if you are particularly concerned, you may want to discuss your options with your physician.

EYEGLASSES AND CONTACT LENSES

If you wear eyeglasses, take an extra pair along on the trip. If you wear contact lenses, you may want to take an extra pair of contacts and a backup pair of regular glasses. A copy of your eyeglass prescription will make it easy to replace your glasses, if necessary. Also, contact lens wearers should bring plenty of re-wetting and saline solution.

CHECKLIST: HEALTH

- ☐ Consult your physician and/or a professional travel clinic no later than eight weeks before your departure.
- ☐ Plan ahead and get any inoculations well before your departure.
- ☐ Let Safari Professionals know of any medical problems you may have and carry a letter from your physician with relevant information.

- ☐ Hand-carry your prescription medicines and bring written copies of all your prescriptions in case you need to replace any while you are on your Galápagos safari.
- ☐ Take some personal medications for infection, motion sickness, headache, upset stomach, allergies, and diarrhea. Get advice and prescriptions from your doctor.
- ☐ Take out additional medical travel insurance, if your insurance advisor recommends it, after reviewing your own policy and the travel insurance provided.

SAFETY & GENERAL RISKS OF TRAVEL

We make every effort to assure you a safe, healthy, and rewarding journey. Any travel, however, involves some risk. Whether you make your own arrangements or go with a group, the new and wonderful things that travel offers can be a potential source of danger. Although we believe such risks can be greatly minimized and will not pose a serious threat to you, no one is able to guarantee you the same level of safety or health that you might enjoy at home. Standards of health and safety vary widely around the world, and we have little control over local conditions or practices.

TRAVEL ADVISORY

From time to time, the U.S. State Department issues travel warnings regarding travel to and within various countries, as they deem appropriate. You may review their travel warnings at their website <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us to discuss them.

TRAVELING TO AND FROM YOUR HOME

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Safari Professionals does not make international flight arrangements. We book our personal and business flights through an independent air travel professional, Cathy King. We have found that Cathy takes the mystery and hassle out of even the most complex international flight itineraries. Cathy may be contacted at (888)850-9254 or at adventuretrips@hotmail.com. Safari Professionals does not receive any compensation from Cathy— she's simply the best air travel professional we have ever met!

Please note that flights from the Ecuadorean mainland to the Galápagos Islands take place in the morning. **You must arrive no later than the previous day in order to board your morning flight to the Islands.**

Once you have confirmed your international flights arrangements, please provide us with a copy of your flight confirmation so we may pass this information on to our team in Ecuador. We'd like to make sure your transfer from the airport to the hotel is confirmed!

If you have given the airline your seating preference, please be aware the airlines do not always follow through with requested seat assignments. You may need to contact the airline directly to insure you obtain the seat you wish.

Some of our travelers choose to arrive in Ecuador a day or earlier than called for in your itinerary, in order to prevent a delayed or cancelled flight from causing you to arrive in Ecuador after the planned start of your Galápagos Islands safari. Should this happen, we will make arrangements for you to catch up with the group. However, you may incur additional costs if you are unable to start your safari on the day designated in your itinerary. Traveling early is the best way to insure this does not happen.

We will be happy to make all the arrangements for your early arrival and will confirm the price before finalizing them. We can also make arrangements for you to see some of the local attractions, if you wish.

Domestic flights within the United States may be delayed or cancelled, as well. If you have to fly to an international gateway airport, we suggest you book the earliest flight on the day of your departure or consider flying a day earlier and spending the night at an airport hotel.

DEPARTURE

Please arrive at your airport check-in counter early enough to allow all the necessary check-in and inspection procedures. Most airlines recommend arriving two to three hours before your international flight's departure time. Please check with your airline to confirm their recommendation.

RETURNING HOME

If you will be flying to your hometown upon your return, make sure that you allow at least 2 1/2 to 3 hours between your international and domestic flights, so that you have time to get your bags, go through customs, transfer between terminals, and check in.

When you return to the United States, you will have to proceed through immigration, retrieve your baggage, and go through customs. If you have nothing to declare, simply go through one of the green lines. Then look for an interline check-in counter before leaving the area. You can take your bags to this counter and have them transferred to your next flight. You don't have to carry them with you to another terminal. Once you leave the customs hall, you can't get back in— so do this before you leave the area.

We recommend you review the U.S. Customs Service's guidelines before you depart. <https://www.cbp.gov/travel>.

SECTION TWO: On Safari

You don't have to digest this all at once, but we do ask that you read it through carefully at least one time before you leave on your safari. Please use this as a reference during your journey. Included are descriptions of situations that you will probably never experience and procedures that you will never need to use, but that are important to know about just the same.

VALUABLES

One of the recurrent problems of travel is losing items or having belongings stolen. Most people simply are not used to a nomadic way of life and don't keep track of their personal possessions very well while on the move. Remember also that travelers are usually quite conspicuous, and thieves thrive on carelessness.

Here are some important points to keep in mind wherever you travel, especially in cities:

- ☐ Avoid wearing flashy items like jewelry and fancy clothes in public. It's best to leave your jewelry at home. Most thefts are of the "grab and run" variety.
- ☐ You may be particularly vulnerable while standing in lines, in baggage-claim areas, and in crowded public places where pickpockets lurk.
- ☐ Men should **not** carry a wallet in pant pockets. Women should **not** carry bags with any flaps facing away from them. Instead, you *should* carry a money belt or waist pack under a shirt or jacket or bags with flaps facing towards you. Remember to hold onto bags tightly in crowded places or leave your purse at home.
- ☐ Do not talk to strangers on the street. Don't listen to any plea for help or any other line that you may be given. Con artists of all sorts abound, so just ignore them and continue on your way. They have very convincing stories and are unbelievably good. If someone persists, go into a shop or other public place and ask the manager for assistance.
- ☐ Always keep all of your important items in a safe place. It's best to spread valuables in different places rather than in one bag or pocket. It's best to keep your passport on your person at all times. Keep your carry-on bag with you at all times while you are traveling. Don't leave money, travelers checks, or credit/debit cards in your hotel room unless there is a safe in the room. Don't leave your purse or camera bag unattended.

LOST LUGGAGE

It is a sad but true aspect of air travel that bags get delayed, misplaced, and even lost. It doesn't happen often, but it does happen, and there is not much that we can do about it. The hopeful note is that the odds of it happening to you are thousands to one. But if it does happen, please don't let it spoil your adventure.

Fortunately, delayed bags are more common than lost bags. If necessary, our team in Ecuador will help you purchase whatever you may need.

To take advantage of your baggage delay and loss insurance, keep your receipts for reimbursement.

Your travel insurance company may help locate your luggage if the airlines cannot identify its location. To help your luggage find you, be sure include your flight itinerary inside the luggage tag we provide. We also recommend placing your home address and a copy of your complete itinerary inside your bag to help the airlines get your bag to you.

TRAVEL FATIGUE

According to an old expression, getting there is half the fun. A lengthy flight, however, can be downright exhausting. The sheer fatigue of air travel can precondition you for problems when you arrive unless you take steps to ease its potential effects.

Air travel experts and experienced travelers have techniques for combating travel fatigue. Some things you should do to reduce travel fatigue:

- ☐ Travel fatigue is caused primarily by lack of sleep. Complete your travel preparations early and get plenty of rest the day before you leave.
- ☐ Avoid alcohol during the flight but be sure to drink plenty of other liquids. According to some experts, dehydration is the most debilitating part of air travel. Drinking at least eight ounces of fluid every hour is recommended.
- ☐ Eat lightly during the flight.
- ☐ Exercise. Although the cabin crew may disapprove if you jog around the plane, you can get up and stretch and walk about. There are also simple exercises that will relax your muscles and circulate your blood. Roll your feet, rotate your head, or contract and relax your leg muscles. Do some deep breathing. And if you're not the shy type, raise your knees to your chest and swing your arms over your head. This may result in some quizzical looks from passengers around you, but you'll be better off for it.
- ☐ Stretch out if there are some unoccupied seats. Take off or loosen your shoes.
- ☐ Use earplugs and an eye mask if you wish to sleep during your flight. You may ask your flight attendant to let you rest when they offer meal services.

JET LAG

When you travel across time zones, your circadian rhythms (or body clock) are thrown off schedule. Fortunately, Ecuador lies within the same time zone as the central USA. For most travelers from the USA, the time zone changes will have a minimal effect.

DIGESTIVE DISORDERS

Stomach and intestinal upsets are common complaints wherever people travel. They range from mild discomfort to diarrhea and vomiting. The vast majority are harmless and quickly pass.

Some digestive upset is probably inevitable for many. Your body clock's readjustment and exposure to new flora and minerals in the water cause part of it. Overindulgence, a richer than usual diet, and changed eating and drinking habits are responsible for much of it, as well. According to one study, the biggest cause of traveler's upset stomach is overindulgence in rich foods and alcohol, not bacteria in the water supply. Depending on the destination, of course, there may be health hazards from drinking the local water or eating certain foods.

FOOD & WATER IN ECUADOR

Good sanitation, fresh foods, and good food preparation techniques keep health problems minimal while traveling within the Galápagos Islands. At the places we stay and eat, there is no need to avoid seafood, dairy products, or other foods. As a precaution, some travelers still avoid raw vegetables and salads.

However, if you venture out from your hotel on the mainland, it is recommended that you do **not** eat "street foods" and eat only cooked foods that are still hot at local restaurants.

Drink only bottled or treated drinking water throughout your Galápagos adventure. Bottled or treated water is also served at meals and is used for making ice cubes on the yacht. **Do not drink any other water at any time during your safari.** Always use bottled water for brushing your teeth and rinsing your mouth.

TRAVELER'S DIARRHEA

Traveler's diarrhea is a common malady throughout the world. When it occurs, there are basically two things you can do: stop it with medications or let it run its course. There are a number of drugs that can usually stop it. Some physicians argue, however, that diarrhea is nature's way of ridding the system of harmful toxins and shouldn't be stopped prematurely. You should consult your physician on whether as well as under what conditions you should take diarrhea medicine.

DEHYDRATION

During your flight be sure to drink plenty of liquids and avoid alcohol. After you arrive, continue to drink lots of liquids, especially during your shore excursions. If you aren't careful, you can quickly become dehydrated. You will need to drink more liquids in an equatorial climate than you do at home.

If you feel you have become dehydrated, powdered Gatorade or sports drink tablets (available at sporting goods stores) mixed with bottled water may quickly help you feel refreshed. We never travel without some.

RESPIRATORY AILMENTS

Traveling increases the risk of contracting sniffles, throat infections, and other ailments, such as maladies. There's not much to be done except to take something along for the symptoms.

For the comfort of others, smoking is not permitted in the enclosed sections of the yacht.

SUN

Do not underestimate the effects of the equatorial sun. It feels good, but its effects quickly accumulate. Sunburn and sun poisoning can result, and both can cause real discomfort and illness.

Wear a wide-brimmed hat and use sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 whenever you are exposed to the direct rays of the sun. Consider wearing a long-sleeved shirt to prevent sunburn on your arms. You can always roll the sleeves up if you get too warm. Blue Lizard sunscreen was recommended by our dermatologist. Here is their website: <http://www.bluelizard.net/>.

SWIMMING & SNORKLING

Do not swim or snorkel anywhere other than where your naturalist suggests. Swimming pools at hotels and lodges are generally regarded as safe, although, we recommend avoiding ingesting any of the pool water. Never swim in a pond, lake, or river.

MOTION SICKNESS

For travelers prone to motion sickness, various methods of travel may cause significant discomfort. Due to strong currents, there will be moderate movement of the vessel while navigating.

If you are subject to motion sickness, please review CDC's information about the prevention and treatment of motion sickness at this website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/chapter-2/motion-sickness.htm>.

Your doctor or travel clinic may be able to provide you with advice and/or medications for motion sickness. Some of our travelers have found relief using pressure bands or devices that mildly stimulate the inside of their wrists. However, their effectiveness has not been proven in clinical studies.

Others swear by the use of ginger. Some studies have shown that ginger can be effective. We suggest that you test any prevention or treatment option before departing on your safari.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

The yacht maintains radio contact with the mainland for medical emergencies. Many travelers purchase travel insurance, which, amongst other coverages, provides for emergency medical evacuation and treatment outside of the USA.

Should you become seriously ill or injured, it may be necessary for you to leave the tour and may mean hospitalization or taking an early flight home. We recommend you consider purchasing travel insurance to cover any such medical emergencies.

Medical emergencies are extremely rare, but rest assured that, in such emergency cases, Safari Professionals will provide assistance to help you obtain treatment and transport back home. Be advised, however, that medical treatment and evacuation may mean that you'll have extra expenses. Please consult with your insurance professional to determine if your health coverage is adequate for your situation.

SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited in enclosed areas aboard the vessels and on the Islands. Smoking is only allowed on the yacht on the outside deck in a designated smoking area.

POST-TRAVEL HEALTH

Some diseases may not manifest themselves immediately. If you become ill after returning home, tell your doctor where you have traveled. Most people who acquire viral, bacterial, or parasitic infections abroad become ill within six weeks after returning home.

SAFETY & ACCIDENTS

The places we visit are generally safe. As in large cities throughout the world, tourists in Ecuador can be easily spotted by those who may wish to take advantage of them. **Do not leave your guide or group.** If you wish to leave the group, ask your guide to accompany you. Do not stop to talk with strangers. It's also advisable to not wear jewelry in public or display other valuable items that are liable to attract attention. Keep your wallet and passport safe from pickpockets.

While it is true that most accidents occur in the home, where we spend most of our time, traveling away from home can certainly increase your risk of accidents. When traveling, you are in new, unfamiliar territory. And you are often distracted, enthusiastic, or tired enough to make mistakes and forget the little hazards around you. Take care and keep these tips in mind:

- ☐ Be careful when entering and leaving the yacht and the Zodiac. The landings are either wet (where one must step into water anywhere from your ankles to your knees and wade to shore) or dry (where one steps from the Zodiac directly onto the volcanic rock). Your guide and Zodiac driver will assist you with a steady hand.
- ☐ Walk carefully on board the yacht. The yacht moves with the ocean and the deck may be wet. Never run on the yacht.
- ☐ Watch your footing when walking on rough ground where there may be rocks or holes.
- ☐ Never leave the marked path while walking on the Islands.
- ☐ Never feed any wildlife.

- ☐ When swimming and snorkeling, do not stray from your group. Be sure to stay within sight of your guide.
- ☐ Don't approach any wildlife on foot without your guide.

COMMUNICATIONS

Most telecommunication providers have signals in the Galápagos Islands and passengers can use their smart phones that are activated for international calling on days when the yachts are in close range of a port. The yacht does not offer Wi-Fi or mobile phone service.

You will receive a contact information sheet prior to your departure that we suggest you share with your family and friends. It will contain the various direct phone numbers they may use if they need to contact you while you are on safari. If they need to contact you, we recommend they call the direct numbers in Ecuador. Even with the latest technology, it can take several hours for messages to be transmitted through Safari Professionals while you are traveling.

GALÁPAGOS NATIONAL PARK RULES

The National Park establishes and maintains nature trails and interpretive signs. Signs posted on board the yacht list the National Park Rules & Regulations. During the orientation, your guide will go over the Galápagos National Park rules, which you are required to follow. Visitors cannot legally go anywhere in the designated National Park area without being escorted by a licensed guide. During the cruise, listen to your naturalist guide and follow all the National Park rules.

1. Please do not disturb or remove any native plant, rock, or animal on land or in the water.
2. Be careful not to transport any live material or sand from one island to the next.
3. Do not take any food or drink, except water, to the uninhabited islands.
4. Please do not touch, pet, or feed the animals. Approaching them too closely or taking flash photography will disturb them.
5. Please do not startle or chase any animal from its nesting place.
6. Please do not leave any trash on the islands or throw any litter overboard.
7. Please follow the marked trails at all times and do not walk out of their limits.
8. Please stay with your naturalist guide, who must accompany all groups on the trails.
9. Please do not buy souvenirs or objects made from native Galápagos products (except for wood) especially black coral, sea lion teeth and shells of the Galápagos tortoises.
10. Do not smoke on the islands.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL ADVICE

Every effort has been made to ensure your comfort and well-being, but there will be times when you may experience discomfort and annoyance. Small discomforts can become magnified when traveling, especially after a long flight. Please remember that patience and a sense of humor often serve as the most effective responses.

Safari Professionals prides itself on a quiet and gentle approach to wildlife viewing. Follow your guides' directions, as you travel across the islands. Take time to stop, listen, and observe. Patience is truly a virtue in the Galápagos, giving our travelers some rare and rewarding experiences. By patiently sitting quietly, you will also be able to take in other sights, sounds, and smells that will add to your lasting memories of these enchanting islands.

The pace of your journey is not rushed, but the days may be full and active. Please remember that shore excursions, swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, and other activities are all optional. Do not feel obliged to go along with the group on a particular activity if you would rather stay and just enjoy the view. In short, adjust to your own pace. If you get tired, please slow down. And remember to stay hydrated.

Take advantage of the quiet time between shore excursions. Many of our travelers have kept a journal of their adventures. It is also a good time to simply observe the world around you. You may not have noticed the variety of colorful birds or the sea creatures around the yacht. Catch up on that reading you've been looking forward to. Bring a sketch book and capture your own personal vision of the sights around you. When appropriate, spend a few minutes listening to a member of the crew tell you about his family. Take this quiet time back with you as part of your memories of your Galápagos Islands adventure!

SUGGESTED READING LIST

This list and its descriptions reflect our opinions on some of the best books about the Galápagos Islands and its wildlife. It is by no means a complete list of our favorites.

FIELD GUIDES:

Boyce, Barry, *A Traveler's Guide to the Galápagos Islands*, Hunter Pub Inc. (2004)

Constant, Pierre, *Galápagos: A Natural History Guide*, Odyssey Illustrated Guides, Airphoto International Ltd. (2006)

Fitter, Julian, *Wildlife of the Galápagos: Second Edition*, Princeton University Press (2016)

Hess, John, *The Galápagos: Exploring Darwin's Tapestry* (2009)

Horwell, David & Oxford, Pete, *Galápagos Wildlife*, Bradt Travel Guides (2011)

Jackson, Michael, *Galápagos, A Natural History Guide*, University of Calgary Press (1985)

Humann, Paul, & DeLoach, Ned, *Reef Fish Identification: Galápagos*, New World Publications (2003)

Lynch, Wayne, *Galapagos: A Traveler's Introduction*, Firefly Books; Illustrated edition (2018)

MISCELLANEOUS:

Bassett, Carol Ann , *Galápagos at the Crossroads; Pirates, Biologists, Tourists and Creationists Battle for Darwin's Cradle of Evolution* (2009)

Beebe, William, *Galápagos World's End*, Dover Publications (1988)

Berra, Tim, *Charles Darwin, The Concise story of an extraordinary man*, Johns Hopkins University Press (2008) Darwin, Charles, *The Voyage of the Beagle*, Beagle Press (2013)

Grant, K. Thalia & Estes, Greg, *Darwin in Galápagos: Footsteps to a New World*, Princeton University Press (2000)

Kricher, John, *Galápagos: A Natural History*, Princeton University Press (2006)

Melville, Herman, *In the Galápagos Islands with Herman Melville, the Encantadas or Enchanted Isles*, Cleanan Press, Inc. (2011)

Quammen, David, *The Reluctant Mr. Darwin: An Intimate Portrait of Charles Darwin and the Making of His Theory of Evolution*, W. W. Norton & Company; Reprint edition (2007)

Weiner, Jonathan, *The Beak of the Finch*, Vintage; Reprint edition (1995)

