

Luxury Galapagos Cruise on the M/S Alta



Highlights

The Galapagos Islands are home to some of the most bizarre and beautiful creatures on the planet, from blue-footed boobies to the unique marine iguana. Discover the isles and their inhabitants on this luxury cruise aboard the M/S Alta, one of the few true sailing ships in the region!

Like flotsam detached from some ancient wreck, the Galapagos Islands appear lost and lifeless, adrift in the eastern Pacific. Straddling the Equator 1000km off the coast of Ecuador, the volcanic archipelago rises from the waves like a jagged, reptilian crest, a lacerated lava-scape of barren brilliance. From the scattered mangroves, through the arid cactus lowlands to the lush cloud forests of the upper regions, these young islands embody life in its infancy. Flora and fauna of unparalleled diversity confound modern visitors just as they did Charles Darwin some 175 years ago. It was here, observing the specific variation between islands, that the naturalist refined his theory of evolution. The species that inspired him – the finches, tortoises and marine iguanas – remain to this day (along with sharks, rays and near-tame sea lions!), a timeless testament to nature's genius.

With her engines off and the wind in her sails, the 46-metre Alta could be the HMS Beagle, the 10-gun brig-sloop that brought the young Darwin to this lonely lost world. Combining period elegance and state of the art facilities, this luxury yacht is one of the most charming vessels in the region; as she carves her way through the coastal waters, sails dancing in the breeze, the Golden Age of naval exploration is never far from one's mind! This week-long cruise promises a scintillating introduction to the archipelago, its flora, fauna and history. Each day you'll visit a different island, where guided hikes give you the chance to meet the animals and enjoy some spectacular views. There's also the option of daily snorkelling sessions – the Galapagos Marine Reserve is one of the world's largest – as well as side trips 'round the bays and mangroves in kayaks – perfect for spotting native penguins at play! Then, after a hard day's exploration, it's back onboard to watch the sunset from the comfort of the sundeck bar!

Is it for me?

This is a seriously special tour, as unique and spectacular as the islands' many endemics! Landlubbers aside, it's difficult to think of anyone who wouldn't enjoy a luxury cruise in this most stunning of settings. There's a range of activities on offer, from kayaking and snorkelling to star-gazing and movie nights for the kids, and plenty of space on board to relax in private, so there's no risk of cabin fever! Needless to say, an exclusive Pacific cruise doesn't come cheap, and many people would rather backpack for six months than live like a star for a week. But if it's time, not money, that's the scarce resource, then this Galapagos tour comes highly recommended.

Accommodation

The accommodation and food on this tour are truly world-class! All cabins are en suite, spacious and lovingly decorated, with climate controls, safe-boxes and ample storage space. Public areas include a large lounge and bar equipped with stereo and TV/video system, a sun deck and inside and al fresco dining areas! Speaking of dining, this cruise promises some spectacular culinary experiences. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are prepared by expertly trained chefs and served buffet-style either inside or on deck. All ingredients are fresh and locally sourced, so expect excellent seafood and organic meats, not to mention a terrific variety of tropical fruits and vegetables and some of South America's finest wines and coffees!

Prices from

3,041 GBP (8 day) per person

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Itinerary

Day 1: Saturday

Morning: Arrival to San Cristobal Island

Afternoon: San Cristobal: Playa Ochoa and Kicker Rock

Day 2: Sunday

Morning: Tower (Genovesa) Island: Prince Phillip's Steps

Afternoon: Tower: Darwin Bay

Day 3: Monday

Morning: Fernandina (Narborough) Island: Punta Espinosa

Afternoon: Isabela (Albemarle) Island: Tagus Cove

Day 4: Tuesday

Morning: Isabela (Albemarle) Island: Urbina Bay

Afternoon: Isabela (Albemarle) Island: Punta Vicente Roca

Day 5: Wednesday

Morning: Bartolome (Bartholomew) Island: Pinnacle Rock & Overlook

Afternoon: Santa Cruz (Indefatigable) Island: Black Turtle Cove

Day 6: Thursday

Morning: Santa Cruz (Indefatigable) Island: Highlands

Afternoon: Santa Cruz Island: Charles Darwin Research Station

Day 7: Friday

Morning: Hood (Española) Island: Punta Suarez

Afternoon: Hood (Española) Island: Gardner Bay

Day 8: Saturday

Early Morning: San Cristobal: Interpretation Centre

Late Morning: Depart for Mainland Ecuador

Details

Getting there

Air: San Cristobal Airport (flights from Quito or Guayaquil)

Price includes

Accommodation, meals, non-alcoholic drinks, service, snorkelling gear, wetsuits

Price details

Charter: USD 65,000;

Fit:

Cabins 1-2 USD 4,650 p.p.

Cabins 3-8 USD 4,450 p.p.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

8 days

Comfort level

Refined (boutique or luxury accommodation and food)

Experience required

Not relevant