

**Galapagos Islands**

**Special Flight Information**

Current as of August 2009

We're happy to have you join us in one of the most magical dive destinations in the world! Please read through this sheet carefully, as it contains important information to help make your vacation go as smoothly as possible.

When going to the Galapagos Islands, it's necessary to fly to one of two cities in mainland Ecuador first (Quito or Guayaquil) and spend at least one night prior to your charter's departure. Because our vessel boards passengers on Mondays and leaves the islands where the airports in Galapagos are located shortly thereafter, we **strongly recommend that you plan to arrive on Saturday** in Ecuador for your Monday morning flight to Galapagos. This will help ensure that travel delays reaching Ecuador do not cause you to miss your trip (it is not uncommon for flights to be unable to land on time in Quito due to the mountain weather). In almost all cases, you will also need a night's stay after your charter ends prior to flying home.

Both Quito and Guayaquil have advantages. If you plan to spend more than one night on either end of your trip and/or would like to tour a bit of Ecuador, scenic Quito is the best choice. The flights to the Galapagos originate in Quito, make a stop to pick up passengers in Guayaquil, then go on to the Islands and do the reverse on the way back, so scheduling your international flights in and out of Guayaquil means two fewer flight legs and consequently a slightly less expensive ticket. We strongly recommend that you not schedule any flight departing either Quito or Guayaquil on the last day of the charter. The flight from Galapagos is often delayed and you may miss your outbound flight even if it's not scheduled until that evening. International flights from Ecuador recommend a check-in of a minimum of 3 hours before the flight due to possible delays in departure tax payments and immigration. The departure tax from Quito is currently \$40.80, and from Guayaquil \$27.16.

There are two airlines that offer daily flights to the Galapagos Islands, TAME and Aerogal. We use primarily

TAME airlines for the flights to Galapagos. Galasam, our partners in Ecuador, have built up a good relationship with both Ecuadorian airlines and have gained many benefits from this relationship. TAME flights go to both Baltra and San Cristobal. This means that should National Parks request an itinerary change we can easily accommodate flight changes for our guests. The relationship with TAME also provides additional advantages. When a group checks in together the overweight luggage charges are often lessened and sometimes are waived. TAME airlines strictly enforce the overweight luggage charges noted below. Your advance payment for these tickets guarantees your space on the flights, but the seats are held in bulk by the land agents in Ecuador and the actual tickets are not issued until a week before the charter's departure. The price and flight schedules, which are not in the control of Explorer Ventures, can change at any time. If there is a price increase after you've paid in full, the remaining balance will be collected on board.

If you have tours prior to your charter that are scheduled through Galasam, the tour guide will give you your airline tickets. If not, the tickets will be delivered to your hotel, so it's very important that we have your hotel information well before your departure. We would strongly encourage you to arrange the Galapagos portion of the flights through Explorer Ventures. This allows us to make any necessary changes if needed. Should you choose to book your own airfare to/from Galapagos please use Aerogal. This allows us to change airline tickets if unforeseeable circumstances arise.

Please plan to be at the airport in Quito or Guayaquil a minimum of two hours before your flight's scheduled departure. Please note that before we check for your flight to Galapagos, you need to pay INGALA \$10 for your tourist card and scan your bags to check for anything that may harm the ecosystem in Galapagos. Upon your arrival in Galapagos, you will have to pay the \$100.00 national park fee. These amounts must be paid in cash (US dollars).

Flights depart Quito and Guayaquil early morning and return late afternoon.

**Checked Baggage weight limits:** Each passenger is allowed one checked bag of 20 kilograms (approx. 44 lbs.) and one carry-on bag up to 8 kilograms (approx. 17 lbs.). Each additional kilogram from Quito and Guayaquil is \$1.75.

**Galasam (our partners in Ecuador) phone:** Jaime Pinchevsky 011.593.9703.1382 or Edwin Sierra 011.593.9843.0679

**Hotel Rio Amazonas (Quito):** 011.593.2255.6666 contact Mr. Rodrigo

**Hotel Unipark (Guayaquil) phone:** 011.593.4232.9869 contact Mrs. Maria del Pilar Estrella