

Craig
travel

ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS

BOOK BY MAY 29, 2026
SAVE \$500 PP



SMALL GROUP

OCT 15 - 30, 2026 | 16 DAYS | 38 MEALS

JOURNEY LEADER: SUSANNE COLLINS

Blue-footed boobies can be spotted in the Galapagos

This is a journey to the middle of the world, from the snow-capped Andes of Ecuador to the pristine, wildlife-rich shores of the Galapagos Islands. We invite you to cruise this remote archipelago and experience firsthand the natural world that inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Yet, the magic of Ecuador extends far beyond its coast. Our expedition also traces the spine of the Andes, exploring the UNESCO heritage of colonial Quito and Cuenca, the rugged beauty of its national parks, and the vibrant culture of its local towns. Finally, we ascend into the cloud forest for a stay at the exclusive Mashpi Lodge, ending our journey deep within one of the most biodiverse rainforests on the planet.



SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE LIMITED TO 22 TRAVELLERS

OCT 15, Thursday CANADA / QUITO, ECUADOR
Travellers from across Canada gather in Toronto for our flights to Quito. Nestled on the slopes of the Pichincha volcano, the capital was founded in the 16th century on the ruins of an Inca city. Standing at an altitude of 2,850 metres, it offers an imposing setting for the start of our journey. On arrival, we are welcomed by our local guide and transferred to our hotel. **JW Marriott Quito** (3 nights)

OCT 16, Friday QUITO
Established in 1534, Quito has one of the best-preserved historic centres in Spanish America, a UNESCO site that we explore in depth today. We dive into local life at a market, browsing stalls piled with exotic fruits. Next, we connect with the country's artistic soul at the Guayasamín Museum. We then ascend to El Panecillo, once a pre-Incan sun temple and now the site of the towering Virgin of Quito. We marvel at the Church of the Society of Jesus, a baroque masterpiece regarded as Latin America's most impressive for its ornate gold-leaf interior. Our tour also brings us to Independence Square and the San Francisco Plaza, built atop an ancient indigenous market. At the Casa del Alabado Museum, we view pre-Columbian artifacts to learn about the spiritual practices of Ecuador's ancestors. Tonight, we gather for our welcome dinner. **BD**

OCT 17, Saturday OTAVALO MARKET
We travel north into the Andean highlands to discover why Ecuador's equatorial light and altitude create the perfect environment for growing roses. At a hacienda, we admire many of the rose varieties grown on-site. We will continue to the lively Otavalo Market, a trading hub since the 16th century that offers a rich array of indigenous textiles and crafts. For lunch, we step into history at Hacienda Pinsaqui. Built in 1790 as a wool weaving workshop, this heritage property famously hosted Simon Bolivar as he prepared for the Battle of Ibarra. Our day concludes in the nearby village of Peguche, where we witness traditional weaving on Andean looms, crafted without electricity or chemicals, and learn about Andean instruments. **BL**

OCT 18, Sunday COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK / CUENCA
Leaving the capital behind, we travel south along the spectacular Avenue of the Volcanoes to the landscapes of Cotopaxi National Park. Dominated by the perfect snow-

Inclusive Features

- Return economy group airfare from Canada to Quito with Copa Airlines, plus domestic flights within Ecuador
- First-class accommodation as indicated or similar, including the famous Mashpi Lodge
- 4-night fully inclusive cruise on Yacht Isabela II
- 38 meals as shown in the itinerary (B - 15 breakfasts, L - 12 lunches, D - 11 dinners)
- Services of your journey leader, national and local guides
- All gratuities, taxes and fees for included services
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare

Highlights

- Discover the UNESCO treasures of colonial Quito, Cuenca, and the ancient Ingapirca Ruins
- Cruise the Galapagos for 4 nights aboard the Yacht Isabela II, viewing iconic wildlife in its natural habitat
- Immerse yourself in the cloud forest with a 2-night stay at the exclusive Mashpi Lodge
- Experience Andean culture at the vibrant Otavalo Market, a historic hacienda and local artisan shops
- Hike dramatic landscapes at the Cotopaxi Volcano and the glacial lakes of El Cajas National Park
- Stand at the "Middle of the World" and explore the equator's history at the Intiñan and Tulipe Museums
- Savour local cuisine with unique dining experiences at a trout farm and on the edge of a volcanic crater

Journey Leader

Susanne Collins is a lifelong traveller, eager to share new destinations and cultures with fellow explorers. Splitting her time between Muskoka and adventures around the world, she now pursues her passion for travel full-time since retiring from the financial services industry. Her journeys have taken her to six continents, each offering unforgettable experiences and memories. With her curiosity, warmth, and wealth of travel experience, Susanne creates tours that are both inspiring and memorable. Join her and discover the world in a way that will stay with you long after the journey ends.



capped cone of the Cotopaxi Volcano, this reserve offers a dramatic backdrop for our day. We immerse ourselves in the paramo ecosystem on a walk around the lake at the volcano's base, keeping a lookout for Andean foxes, caracaras, and the majestic condor. After a home-style lunch with incredible mountain views, we drive to the airport for our short evening flight to the colonial city of Cuenca. **Four Points by Sheraton Cuenca** (3 nights) BLD

OCT 19, Monday CUENCA

Our tour of Cuenca begins at the Homero Ortega Hat Museum, where we discover the true Ecuadorian origins of the famous Panama hat. We then walk the cobblestone streets of the historic centre, visiting the vibrant Flower Market and the leafy Parque Calderon, the Old Cathedral and the massive blue-domed Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. After a relaxing lunch at a local favourite, we stroll along the Tomebamba River to admire the greenery of the El Barranco neighbourhood. Our afternoon continues at the Turi Lookout for a panoramic view of the city's red-tiled roofs, followed by a visit to the gallery of renowned ceramicist Eduardo Vega. The day concludes with a dinner celebrating fresh, seasonal ingredients. BLD

OCT 20, Tuesday EL CAJAS NATIONAL PARK

Just 40 minutes from Cuenca, we leave the colonial streets behind to enter the beautiful landscape of El Cajas National Park. This protected sanctuary for more than 40 species of mammals and over 150 species of birds is a stunning mosaic of glacial lakes, moorlands, and ancient polylepis forests. After a rewarding hike and a delicious lunch at a nearby restaurant, we return to Cuenca, where you can enjoy the evening at your leisure. BL

OCT 21, Wednesday CUENCA / GUAYAQUIL

Today, we travel to the fascinating archaeological site of Ingapirca. The Inca constructed their temples directly upon the foundations of an earlier Cañari settlement. We explore the impressive Temple of the Sun, an unusual elliptical structure constructed from precisely cut andesite stone, as well as the workshops, terraces, and even a section of the famous Inca Trail. After a local lunch, we continue our drive down from the Andes to the bustling port city of Guayaquil. **Hilton Colon Guayaquil** (1 night) BLD

OCT 22, Thursday GUAYAQUIL / GALAPAGOS

The day we have been waiting for is here. A short flight takes us to Galapagos, a sanctuary of evolution located 1,000 kilometres from the coast. Upon landing at Baltra and ferrying across the Itabaca Channel, a scenic drive through Santa Cruz brings us to a local restaurant for lunch. We then head to the Charles Darwin Research Station and Giant Tortoise Breeding Center, the scientific heart of the archipelago, to witness the critical conservation work saving these gentle giants. Afterward, stroll the lively waterfront of Puerto Ayora before we embark on our vessel to toast the start of our cruise with the Captain's welcome cocktail and dinner. **Yacht Isabela II** (4 nights) BLD

OCT 23, Friday BARTOLOME & SANTIAGO ISLAND

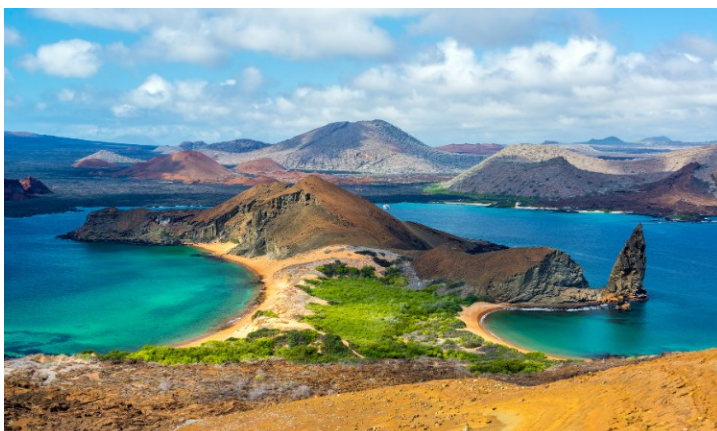
Bartolome Island is the archipelago's most photographed area. A climb up a wooden staircase rewards us with a stunning panorama of volcanic cones. After the trek, we set off on a panga ride around the majestic Pinnacle Rock in search of Galapagos penguins. In the afternoon, we land at Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island to witness the island's geological birth. The otherworldly lava fields contrast beautifully with the pristine white coral sand beach where we enjoy a refreshing swim. BLD



San Francisco Plaza: A colonial treasure in the heart of historic Quito



The snow-capped cone of Cotopaxi Volcano



The golden beaches of Bartolome Island



The islands' most famous resident, the giant Galapagos tortoise

OCT 24, Saturday SANTA CRUZ & SANTIAGO ISLAND

Back on Santa Cruz Island, we explore Dragon Hill, named for the iconic land iguanas that roam its rocky slopes. Our trail winds past a brackish lagoon often teeming with American flamingos, leading to panoramic views of the western archipelago. After a chance to snorkel with green turtles, sharks, and rays, we navigate to Buccaneer Cove on Santiago Island. Once a refuge for explorers stocking supplies, this dramatic coastline now offers sanctuary to sea lions and marine birds. We admire striking rock formations like "Elephant Rock" and "The Bishop" before exploring by snorkel, panga, or glass-bottom boat. BLD

OCT 25, Sunday ISABELA & FERNANDINA ISLAND

The nutrient-rich waters of Punta Vicente Roca are best explored by panga, allowing us to observe Galapagos fur seals, nesting Nazca boobies, and penguins from the water. Snorkellers may also see green sea turtles beneath the cliffs. Then, we visit Fernandina, the archipelago's youngest and most pristine island. At Punta Espinoza, set against a backdrop of active volcanoes, we see colonies of marine iguanas and the unique flightless cormorant. BLD

OCT 26, Monday GALAPAGOS / QUITO

We disembark this morning for our return flight to the mainland. Upon arrival in Quito, we transfer to our hotel for an evening at leisure. **JW Marriott Quito** (1 night) B

OCT 27, Tuesday QUITO / MASHPI LODGE

Today we depart for the lush northwest, entering a 2,800-hectare sanctuary that protects a rare transition zone between cloud forest and rainforest. Upon arrival at the award-winning Mashpi Lodge, we discover a unique approach to exploration where there is no set schedule; instead, expert naturalists curate our activities based on our interests. We might begin with a walk through the forest as darkness falls. A hidden ecosystem stirs to life on our nocturnal exploration, offering the chance to spot glass frogs, snakes, and tarantulas in their natural habitat.

Mashpi Lodge (2 nights) BLD

OCT 28, Wednesday MASHPI LODGE

We spend a full day immersed in this rich ecosystem, home to pumas, kinkajous, and over 500 species of birds. A highlight for many is the "Dragonfly" aerial tram, an open-air gondola that glides silently through the canopy, offering a rare chance to see life in the treetops. For a more active perspective, you might climb the observation tower to spot toucans, woodpeckers, barbets, and tanagers. Those seeking tranquillity can hike to the refreshing waters of the Copal Waterfall, head to the Hummingbird Garden, or visit the Life Center, a lounge raised into the canopy. BLD

OCT 29, Thursday MASHPI LODGE / QUITO

We bid farewell to the cloud forest this morning and begin our return to Quito. Our first stop is the Tulipe Site Museum, where we explore the history of the ancient Yumbo people. We then ascend to the Pululahua volcanic crater for a lunch with spectacular views of the reserve below. Before reaching the capital, we visit the Intifian Museum to stand on the equatorial line and test the unique physics of the middle of the world. Upon arrival in Quito, there is time to freshen up before we gather for a farewell dinner together. **JW Marriott Quito** (1 night) BLD

OCT 30, Friday QUITO / CANADA

Our once-in-a-lifetime journey draws to a close as we catch our flight to our homes across Canada. B

CT Rating 4/5 - Very Challenging: Although close to the equator, high altitudes in the highlands and cooling currents in the Galapagos create pleasant, cooler temperatures, as well as hot days. As we reach elevations up to 13,000 feet, altitude sickness is possible. Terrain in volcanic areas is often rocky and uneven, making sturdy hiking shoes essential. During the cruise, we use small boats for transfers and will experience several wet landings. Because of these conditions, it is vital that all members be fully mobile and in good physical health. Please note that cruise activities may vary based on weather or ocean conditions to ensure safety and the best possible experience.

 **Book by May 29, 2026**
and save \$500 per person 

Tour & Cruise Cost in Canadian Dollars Per Person

Land & Cruise Only* (join/leave at Quito hotel).....	\$15,395
Toronto	\$16,755
Ottawa / Montreal	\$16,945
Halifax / Winnipeg.....	\$17,145
Regina / Saskatoon / St. John's	\$17,245
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver.....	\$17,145
Victoria.....	\$17,245
Single supplement (land only)	On Request

*Land & cruise only rate is based on joining and leaving the group at the JW Marriott Quito in Quito, and it includes all internal flights. International airfares from other gateways are available on request. Airfares and air carriers are subject to change and will be confirmed prior to final payment. Refer to inclusive features for details.

Singles are very limited. Land-only single supplement (if sharing on cruise) is subject to availability and on request.

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy (hotels & cruise) and a minimum of 16 participants travelling. Rates are based on taxes, surcharges, and exchange rates effective January 2026 and are subject to change. Group to be escorted with a minimum of 16 travellers.

Insurance is NOT INCLUDED but is highly recommended. Premiums are calculated based on the individual's age, destination (country), trip length, and trip booking window – please contact our staff to receive a quote. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information and terms and conditions.

Deposit is \$2,000 per person

Final payment is due on June 17, 2026

To reserve your spot on this tour, book online through our website or submit an enrollment form with your deposit to:

1092 Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto, ON M4P 2M6
416-484-0926 • 1-800-387-8890
tours@craigtravel.com • craigtravel.com



A Proud Canadian
Family Business
Since 1969

