

Galapagos Master

Trip information

Embarkation: San Cristóbal

Disembarkation: San Cristóbal

Arrival Airport: San Cristóbal Airport (SCY)

Departure Airport: San Cristóbal Airport (SCY)

Flights, Hotels, Transfers and Excursions

Travelling within Ecuador and the Galapagos can be made exceptionally easy when you book with Master Liveboards. We offer a range of domestic flights with preferential rates, personal check in and arrival service and transfers. We also offer hotels and excursions that can be arranged before and/or after your trip.

Advice on Your International Flights

We suggest you book your international flight to arrive into and out of Mariscal Sucre International Airport, Quito (UIO) in Ecuador (though you can use Guayaquil International Airport if it is more convenient) and that you arrive in Ecuador 1 day before cruise departure so you are well rested before the start of the cruise. There are domestic flights to San Cristobal from both Quito and Guayaquil. Disembarkation at the end of the cruise will be just before 10am. If you are not staying in the Galapagos or Ecuador for additional nights after your cruise, please book your international flights to allow plenty of time for the domestic arrival and international check in.

Advice on Your Domestic Flights

Master Liveboards has preferential pricing and a seating allowance for all guests boarding Galapagos Master in San Cristobal with Avianca. Flights operate from both Quito and Guayaquil and we recommend that you authorise us to hold your seat when confirming your cruise in order to take advantage of our fixed preferential pricing and service.

We will invoice you for the flight; however, you will not need to pay the balance of the flights until you pay the final balance of your cruise. Please note that tickets are issued by the airline no earlier than 21 days in advance of the flight. Passengers who purchase their Avianca tickets and transfers through Master Liveboards will receive priority pricing as well as assistance with check in. A representative of WWDAS will assist guests at the departing airport to ensure there are no issues with fees or problems with over baggage.

A mandatory \$20 USD for the Ingala Transfer Card fee has to be paid by all domestic passengers at the airport in Guayaquil or Quito, depending on where your San Cristobal flight departs. For your convenience we will include this fee on your flight invoice and pay it on your behalf. Please contact our reservations team, or your booking agent, for details on current flight pricing.

Please be advised that if you choose to book your domestic tickets through other avenues, you will be required to pay the \$20 USD Ingala Transfer Card fee in cash at the airport in Guayaquil or Quito, prior to check-in. Upon arrival at the airport in San Cristobal, the \$100 USD Galapagos National Park Tax must be paid in cash.

Optional Galapagos Package

After a night in Quito, transfer to the airport and board the designated flight to San Cristobal. On arrival you will be met by a Master Liveboards representative who will transfer you to Galapagos Master. After the cruise you will be transferred to San Cristobal Airport for your flight back to Quito where you will stay overnight before transferring to Mariscal Sucre International Airport for your international flight home. The offer can be tailored to your needs and includes:

- 2 night's hotel in Quito (either side of your cruise)
- Return flights to San Cristobal
- All Transfers

Excursions

Quito-Guayaquil-Quito Devil's Nose Adventure

The journey from Quito to Guayaquil (or vice versa) is one of the most spectacular train journeys in the world, which re-opened in June 2013 after years of renovations.

Dating back to the late 19th century, the line runs from Quito, high in the Andes, all the way to lowland Guayaquil on the Pacific coast, and connecting the Valley of the Volcanoes with the infamous Nariz del Diablo (Devil's Nose) - one of the steepest stretches of railway in the world.

The trains themselves offer a luxury travel experience, with dining cars, a lounge with large windows, as well as open carriages for passengers to experience the landscape to the full. The trip along the entire length of the line takes four days/three nights, with time for excursions en-route and accommodation included. There are also shorter options available; there is the opportunity to join in for only selected parts of the line if your time is limited.

These are just some of the many domestic travel options to choose from when you book with Master Liveboards. Prices for these add-ons vary dependent on the time of booking.

Insurance

Master Liveboards strongly recommend that all guests carry full travel and cancellation insurance as we cannot be held liable for delays which occur during the cruise, nor any delays or cancellations of the flights, accommodation, tours and transfers we organise on your behalf. Master Liveboards works in partnership with DiveAssure and can offer you a selection of competitively priced dive and travel insurance policies, including short term and multiple trip policies. These policies can also be purchased with a 'LiveboardRider' that covers you in the event of missing your cruise departure due to missed connection, lost diving days due to a number of reasons (including accident to another passenger) requiring the boat to abort diving, mechanical breakdown, air supply failure, changes or cancellations due to weather and more.

General Information

Visa and Passports

The Galapagos Islands are a province of Ecuador. Passport holders of most Western and Asian countries will be issued with a visa on arrival into Ecuador that allows for stays of up to 90 days, however, we always advise our guests to check for updates and changes at www.ecuador.org. Please make sure that your passport has validity of at least 6 months, beyond the period you intend to stay in Ecuador. If you are travelling with medication, please ensure to bring your physician's prescription with you.

Time Zone

The local time at the mainland of Ecuador is 5 hours behind UTC (GMT), whereas the Galapagos is 1 extra hour behind: -6 to UTC (GMT).

Money Matters

The local currency in Ecuador is the US Dollar (USD). Larger hotels, resorts, shops and restaurants will usually accept Visa and MasterCard, though smaller ones do not. Please note that in some cases you may be asked to pay a service charge for credit card handling. This can range from 4 –10%.

Airport Terminal Fee

Passengers travelling within and outside Ecuador are generally not required to pay additional airport terminal fees or departure tax, with costs normally included within your flight ticket. There are periodic postings on forums however, where tickets bought from online agents do not include the taxes, so please check with your agent/airline if it is not clear on your ticket.

Health

There are two hospitals in The Galapagos Islands, though services are limited and the facilities are by no means sophisticated. We advise all guests to ensure that general vaccinations such as for diphtheria, polio and tetanus are up to date prior to travel whilst vaccinations are recommended for hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid.

If you have been in a country affected by yellow fever within six days of arriving in Ecuador, you will need an International Certificate of Vaccination for yellow fever to be allowed entry into the country. Please make sure you use insect repellent and cover exposed skin to prevent any insect borne diseases.

We recommend that travellers follow normal precautions with food in order to prevent stomach upsets and be sure to drink either boiled or bottled water only whilst on land. On board Galapagos Master we produce our own purified water and recommend the use of electrolyte powders daily to ensure adequate hydration.

Language and Religion

The primary language spoken in Galapagos is Spanish though on the mainland the indigenous language, Quechua, is also widely spoken. The population is 80% catholic with half of the

remainder protestant and the final 10% mostly atheist or agnostic, though there is a resurgence of native belief systems that revere Pacha Mama (Mother Earth) and emphasise the harmonious coexistence with nature.

Climate and Weather

The Galapagos Islands straddle the equator though they are affected by trade winds and the Humboldt Current which means the year is roughly divided into two seasons; 'warm' and 'dry'. The warm season is quite tropical with almost daily rain showers and cloudier skies. It generally begins in December and can extend through to May/June. The dry season, which runs from May/June to November, has cooler temperatures with local rain showers generally confined to the highlands of the larger islands. Daytime temperatures range from an average of 21°C (70°F) during the dry season, up to 23°C (75°F) in the warm season, whilst evenings are marginally cooler and can drop to just 15°C (59°F).

Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

Water temperature ranges from 21-30°C (70-86°F) between December and May, however, will drop to an average of 16-24°C (60-75°F) between June and November when the Humboldt Current comes from the south.

Thermoclines can be expected and divers are advised to bring suitable thermal protection. Please bring gloves and reef hook for support in strong currents. For guests who feel the cold easily, especially with repeated diving, we recommend to bring an extra vest/hood/shorty for use with your regular protection. In short, bring what you feel most comfortable in! Guests are reminded that 7mm long exposure suits are available for rental on board and may be used in conjunction with your own exposure equipment. You can also purchase hoods, reef hooks and gloves onboard if required.

Life on Board

Food and Drink

All Master Liveboards vessels provide guests with a choice of International and Asian cuisine, served buffet style in the outdoor dining area. We cater to special dietary requirements; please inform our reservations team prior to your trip to ensure we have plenty of dishes to suit your needs. A range of carbonated soft drinks, fruit juices, black, green and herbal teas are commonly available as well as instant and fresh brewed coffee. A selection of fresh fruit is

readily available, as well as some “naughty” treats should you feel hunger in between meal times. Guests may also select beer, wine, or spirits from our cocktail bar for an additional fee.

Clothing and Footwear

Dress on board our vessels is very casual and most guests feel comfortable in little more than swim wear, shorts and t-shirts. A sweater is advised for cooler nights, particularly after multiple dives. All Master Liveboards vessels are equipped with laundry facilities and our housekeeper is more than happy to launder your clothes during the trip. A nominal fee of 1.00 USD is charged per item irrespective of size/weight.

We do request that guests respect the wishes of others by donning clothing for meal times. Most guests prefer bare feet on board the vessels; however island visits may require sturdy sandals or cross-trainers.

Electricity

On board our vessel we have both 220V and 110V US style sockets. There are universal adapters available however we do advise guests to bring their own to ensure you have the amount necessary.

Smoking

Smoking on board is permitted in designated outdoor areas.

Safety on Board

Emergency Management & Equipment

All Master Liveboards crew members undergo rigorous training in emergency management procedures. A thorough boat briefing will be provided by your Cruise Director at the start of your trip during which all guests will be requested to participate in a life jacket drill. Further practice scenarios may be performed during your cruise to assist our crew in keeping their skills sharp. Each vessel is equipped with modern safety features such as automated life rafts, EPIRB, satellite communication and emergency pumps.

First Aid

Master Liveboards vessels are equipped with a fully stocked medical first aid kit for treating minor injuries and ailments as well as for assisting trained medical professionals in remote locations. Each yacht has a full complement of medical grade oxygen which can be administered to divers through DAN kits or unit specific attachments. You will also find on board an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which has been proven to greatly increase the survival rate in the eventuality of cardiac fibrillation.

Our dive teams are all qualified emergency responders. Should you feel unwell at any point during your cruise, please seek the advice of your cruise director who will be able to assist you.

Staying Connected

We regret that we are unable to provide an internet service on board Master Liveboards vessels. Many of our trips are in remote locations and internet service is intermittent at best. Most cell or mobile phones which have 'roaming' will function during your cruise, however service signal strength can be very weak and some areas of your cruise may not be covered at all. The cost of calls made is determined by your service provider.

We do have satellite phone communication which can be used by guests in the event of an emergency. Our out of office contact numbers can be found below, should your family need to contact you during the cruise, however this number is reserved for emergencies only.

Payments on Board

Hyperbaric Chamber Fee

There is a \$35 USD Hyperbaric fee to be paid on-board Galapagos Master for all guests on cruises.

Optional Extras

Master Liveboards offer a range of services to make your stay on board even more enjoyable. We offer land excursions throughout your cruise free of charge and the following services are also available for an additional fee:

- Nitrox
- Beer

- Wine (750ml bottle)
- Selection of Spirits and Cocktails
- Dive equipment rental
- Master Liveboards Merchandise

All prices on board are given in USD; however, we also accept payment in Euro, GBP, and AUD.

Please note that we cannot currently accept credit card payments on Galapagos Master. In addition to hyperbaric chamber fees, guests are advised to bring sufficient USD (or equivalent currency) for any optional extras and tips.

Tipping

At Master Liveboards we believe that tipping is a matter of personal choice. Should you feel that your crew has made your holiday extra special then a tip is always appreciated. Crew and guides are dedicated to ensuring your safety and enjoyment throughout your time in Galapagos, and work extremely hard night and day to do so.

If you would like to show your thanks for all their hard work, then you can leave a tip in the envelope provided. Please hand this directly to the Captain. Please note that all gratuities are divided equally between the eleven members of crew including the guides. If you are unsure how much to tip, other liveboards in Galapagos typically propose a figure around 10% of the cost of your cruise, or USD \$60-\$70/day in our case.

Please note that tips can only be accepted in cash.

Diving Information

Guests' Level of Diving

Master Liveboards welcomes everyone from non-divers to seasoned divers. However, diving in the Galapagos can be challenging, even for the experienced diver, and as such we highly recommend our guests have training beyond beginner level and a minimum experience of 50 dives, preferably in similar conditions. If our dive crew feels that you do not have the relevant skills or experience to dive the more challenging sites safely, then they may stipulate that you sit out some dives. Your cruise director will be able to advise you whilst on board however if you have concerns regarding the conditions of the destination you wish to visit then please contact your agent or the Master Liveboards reservations team.

Scuba Equipment

Since some of the domestic airline carriers in the regions we operate have strict check-in luggage limits, all Master Liveboards vessels provide rental equipment, including:

- Aqua Lung Wave BCD –not weight-integrated
- Aqua Lung Calypso Regulator -complete with alternate air source and depth/pressure gauge console
- Wetsuits – 7mm full wetsuit
- Mask
- Fins - full foot or open heel and boots depending on destination
- Underwater torch/flash light
- SMB
- Dive computer*

* Please note that the use of a dive computer and an SMB (surface marker buoy) is compulsory on our vessels. For your safety, Master Liveboards asks all guests to always dive within the limits of their dive computer and to make a safety stop at the end of each dive.

12 litre aluminium tanks (12 litre steel and 15 litre aluminium or steel tanks by special request and depending on availability), weight belts and weights are provided free of charge.

Underwater Photography and Videography

Master Liveboards vessels offer specialised features for underwater photographers and videographers. These include:

- Indoor and outdoor work stations for the preparation and maintenance of cameras
- Individual storage drawers for cameras and peripheral items
- Large rinsing tanks with fresh water changed frequently
- Our crews are thoroughly trained in the handling of delicate camera equipment and will bring your cameras to/from the tenders for you.

Diving Health

Flying after Diving

Current studies show that you should wait at least 24 hours after multiple repetitive dives before you fly. Please bear this in mind before you book your onward international or domestic flights.

Diving Insurance

Diving insurance is mandatory aboard all Master Liveaboards vessels, irrespective of destination. Your insurance must cover all of your scuba diving and snorkeling activities, including the costs for recompression chamber treatment and emergency air evacuation. Whilst many general travel insurance companies will cover scuba diving activities they often fall short on recompression treatment or evacuation. Master Liveaboards strongly recommends purchasing diving-specific insurance and is working with DiveAssure to offer policies that cover everything our guests need. You can find more details at the following link on our website: www.masterliveaboards.com/insurance.html

Master Liveaboards can offer short-term diving insurance coverage (1-4 weeks) though we advise that requests must be made to our reservations team at least 1 week prior to your cruise departure date to ensure adequate time for arrangements.

Diving Emergencies

In the unlikely event a dive accident occurs there is a Hyperbaric Chamber in Puerto Ayora on the island of Santa Cruz. They operate a 24 hour emergency service with Physicians, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's), Chamber Operators, and Patient Attendants. All are trained by accredited international associations in hyperbaric medicine. The Clinic has the latest technology and operates under rigorous international regulations and safety standards. We strongly urge that all guests dive well within recognised limits, follow Dive Guides' advice and of course purchase specific dive insurance before their trips.

If you are experiencing flight, transfer or accommodation related problems please do not call the above numbers, please call our travel representative directly. Likewise, if your call is not travel related then be sure to use the above numbers: