Abercrombie & Kent



EXPLORE THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

Discover the earthly paradise where the wildlife that inspired Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution still flies, waddles and crawls freely.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries, Small Ship Cruising, Cruises

Latin America, Ecuador & Galápagos Islands

10 days Call for a quote pp

Private

Journey Overview

Discover the earthy mecca where the wildlife that inspired Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution still flies, waddles and crawls freely. Get face-to-face with species found nowhere else on Earth. Simply choose your vessel or lodge with A&K, and let nature take care of the rest.

Cruises from 4 days to 14 days are available. Please contact our Journey Designers to find out more.

Wildlife & Activities

Fernandina Island
On the youngest and most volcanically active island, see the largest colony of marine iguanas in the archipelago in addition to a big sea lion colony and flightless cormorants.

Bartolomé Island
Climb the stairs to the summit of the extinct volcano for sweeping views of James Bay and Santiago Island. Cool off with swimming and snorkelling amongst Galápagos penguins, marine turtles and tropical fish.

Española Island
Witness the peculiar and lengthy mating dance of the waved albatross in their almostexclusive breeding ground. Spy the blue-footed booby, lava lizards, iguanas, and mockingbirds. And stroll along the impossibly-white sandy beach at Gardner Bay.

Floreana (Santa Maria Island)
Discover a colourful history of prolonged volcanic activity and visit the site of Ecuador's oldest mailing system.

Genovesa Island
Count a mind-boggling range of sea birds such as boobies, magnificent frigatebirds, swallow-tailed gulls and storm petrels. In the water, sea lions, fur seals and hammerhead sharks roam.

Isabela Island
The largest island formed by five volcanoes, Isabela is home to 70% of the archipelago's wildlife. Get up close to Galápagos tortoises, flightless cormorants, flamingos, mangrove finches and Galápagos penguins, which breed here almost exclusively.

Rabida Island

Float over undersea worlds in this excellent snorkelling spot. Look up for some of the area's rarest bird species, including nine varieties of finches, large-billed flycatchers, Galápagos hawks and brown pelicans.

North Seymour Island
Prickly pear cactus and Palo Santo trees are highlights in this arid wilderness. See great frigatebirds, swallow-tailed gulls, bluefooted boobies, Galápagos sea lions and iguanas.

Santa Cruz Island
Explore Puerto Ayora, the largest city in the Galápagos. Lose yourself in the Charles Darwin Research Station, where there's also a giant tortoise-breeding programme. Encounter Darwin's finches – possible the most famous birds in the archipelago – as well as giant tortoises, Galápagos mockingbirds, vermillion flycatchers and herons.

Santa Fe Island
Snorkel with the Galápagos sea lion in the calm waters of Barrington Bay. Spot the endemic Santa Fe land iguana, as well as finches and Galápagos hawks.

South Plaza Island
Meander amongst the resilient endemic flora and the prickly pear cactus, a surprising source of sustenance for giant tortoises and land iguanas. Red-billed tropicbirds, swallowtailed gulls, Galápagos land iguanas, sea lions, brown pelicans and finches are prolific here.

Santiago Island
Step onto the black sandy beach at Puerto Egas and walk along century-old lava flow at Sullivan Bay. Get up close to Galápagos fur seals, sea lions and marine iguanas, while spy hawks, finches and mockingbirds overhead.

San Cristobal Island
With the only permanent fresh water lagoon in the Galápagos, this island is home to Galápagos sea lions, Darwin's finches, marine iguanas, lava lizards and giant tortoises.



Itinerary

The following is a suggested itinerary only. Galápagos ship itineraries are controlled by the park authorities and vary depending on vessel and departure date. Please contact our Journey Designers to tailor-design a journey specific to your requirements.

Day 1: Quito

Touchdown in Quito, the city of eternal spring, nestled in the heart of the Andes mountains. Receive your A&K welcome and enjoy a private transfer to your boutique accommodation in the historic centre.

Day 2: Quito

Delve deeper into Ecuador’s captivating capital and learn first-hand how it earned its status as one of the first UNESCO World Heritage sites. Meander through colonial streets and cobblestone plazas amongst flowering balconies and intricate woodcarvings. Linger in the San Francisco Church, the bustling Independence Plaza and La Compañía, where seven tonnes of gilded shimmering walls will take your breath away. In the afternoon head North to the equator, the Mitad del Mundo. Experience placing a foot in both hemispheres and discover the rich history and traditions of Ecuador's indigenous communities at the Ethnographic Museum.

Day 3: Cruising the Galápagos

When you land at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (SCY) on San Cristobal Island, our guides will be there to greet you and escort you to your yacht by bus and Zodiac. Once you’ve boarded, you’ll have a welcome briefing and a short safety drill. As the yacht sets sail, climb to the top deck and enjoy a drink from our sun deck bar to get ready for a circumnavigation at sunset around “Kicker Rock”, which the British thought looked like a boot.

Named “Leon Dormido” in Spanish (Sleeping Lion), it is a geological formation; an off-shore tuff volcanic cone with it highest point reaching about 140 metres. An array of birds nest and rest on this rock while sea lions bask under the sun on the rock’s flatter side . As we interpret things differently depending on the language we speak, we have given two names to the rock. An elegant multi-course dinner, prepared by our accomplished chefs and accompanied by wine, will be served, and you’ll set sail for Genovesa Island.

Day 4: Cruising the Galápagos

In the morning, land at Prince Philip's Steps. Genovesa (Tower) Island is one of the most spectacular places in Galápagos for birdwatching because of its diversity of species. Throughout the day, you'll want to have your camera ready. Your guides will point out red-footed boobies nesting in palo santo trees, Nazca boobies nesting near the trail, and storm petrels gathering in large numbers in an open lava field. With luck, you may even get to see the elusive short-eared owl. After a BBQ lunch on the yacht's sun deck and a demonstration on how to make Ecuadorian ceviche, you'll have the option to explore the cliffs up close, either by kayak or stand-up paddleboard, or on a deep-water snorkelling excursion from the Zodiac. Look for the red-billed tropic bird hiding in the crevices of the rock.

Later in the afternoon, you'll land at Darwin Bay, a gorgeous coral sand beach. Here, you'll see both swallow-tailed gulls and lava gulls gathered near the tide pools. A forest of Opuntia cactus and mangroves provide shelter for Great frigate birds. Males looking to attract a mate inflate a red pouch on their chests. Round out the afternoon by relaxing on the beach, or choose to swim with friendly, playful sea lions in these warmer northern waters. When you return to the yacht, you'll have a short briefing followed by a delicious dinner. If the night is clear, take a stroll on the deck and enjoy the sky full of bright stars.

Day 5: Cruising the Galápagos

This morning you'll visit Las Bachas, (Spanish for barges) on the northern side of Santa Cruz. Dozens of bright pink flamingos feed on the interior lagoons, and a long white sand beach is a beautiful site for a stroll. Before returning to the yacht for lunch, you'll have time to snorkel from the beach.

In the afternoon, when you step ashore on Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill), you'll have a magnificent panoramic view of the bay and island landscape. You may see flamingos in the brackish lagoon, along with a variety of plants, including opuntia cactus, Palo Santo and Muyuyo trees (Cordia letea). As you walk the trail, look for Darwin's finches, Galápagos flycatchers, yellow warblers, and Audubon shearwaters. The guides will also pause to point out birds such as stilts, pintail ducks and sandpipers. Scan the path for yellow Land iguanas, strikingly different from their marine cousins, resting in the sun. These iguanas, which are endemic to the Galápagos, were once part of the Station's breeding program. After walking the trail, you'll return to the yacht for a briefing and dinner.

Day 6: Cruising the Galápagos

Begin your morning with a Zodiac ride at Punta Vicente Roca. Your skilled driver will navigate you through the wave-sculpted caves and bring you up close to the tuff walls covered in colourful Sally light-foot crabs. Don’t miss the opportunity to snorkel here, with penguins diving playfully in the water or grooming themselves on rock formations. Look for sea turtles poking their heads above water before swimming gracefully beneath the surface. After lunch, take a seat on the sun deck to enjoy the scenery as we sail through the Bolivar Channel. In addition to the dramatic scenery, you might get to see whales riding the bow wave or dolphins jumping in graceful arcs. You may even spot the Mola-Mola, an odd-looking giant sun fish with triangular fins on the top and bottom and a short, stubbly tail fin. In the afternoon, you’ll disembark at Urbina Bay on Isabela Island and see some surprising evidence of volcanic activity.

Four files of coastal seabed were exposed due to a dramatic uplift during an eruption in 1954, and some of the remaining coral skeletons still stand several feet high. A diverse collection of animal species await on the island as well, including Galápagos land iguanas, marine iguanas, Darwin’s finches, brown pelicans, flightless cormorants, and the occasional giant Galápagos tortoise. When you’re finished exploring, you’ll return to the vessel for your nightly briefing and dinner. After dessert, step outside and observe the pale glow of the Milky Way. As we cross the Equator, you may get a visit from King Neptune himself! Guests of all ages will enjoy this fun filled evening and maritime ritual, our crew dress as pirates and guest participation is optional.

Day 7: Cruising the Galápagos

This morning you're in for another geological wonder. Stop at Punta Espinoza on Fernandina, the youngest and most pristine Island in Galápagos, formed by active volcanoes that stretch around the coast. With no introduced animals on this island, you can observe the ecosystem at its most pristine. Sea lion harems lie on the beach, with resident bulls carefully guarding their territory and keeping a lookout for sharks that threaten the colony's pups. Hundreds of marine iguanas, forming the largest colony in Galapagos, warm themselves along the rugged shoreline, blending in with the dark rocks. Out on the point, your guide will show you the nests of flightless cormorants, which stay close to shore since they lost their ability to fly. You'll have an opportunity to snorkel here, in the company of the large sea turtles that frequent the area. Return to the yacht for a BBQ lunch served on the sundeck where you'll have a prime view for whale watching.

Your guide will offer an enrichment lecture about Charles Darwin and his Theory of Evolution as well as social/environmental projects that benefit the Galápagos. After lunch, you'll get to see some of the human history of the Galapagos when you go ashore on Tagus Cove. This was a favourite stopping point for pirates and whalers for centuries, and sections of the rocky cliffs are covered in graffiti from as far back as the 1800s. Hike at a faster pace to a saltwater lagoon and scenic overview, and take in the ocean, lava fields, and volcanic formations. You may choose to explore the shoreline of the secluded cove by kayak or paddleboard. There are many animals to see, including Galápagos penguins, boobies, pelicans and other seabirds.

Tonight, as we sail toward the geographic centre of the archipelago, we'll cross the equator for the third and final time.

Day 8: Cruising the Galápagos

This morning, you'll disembark on the dark red beach of Rabida (Jervis) Island. This small island is considered the geographic centre of the Galápagos because its volcanic rocks are the most diversified in the archipelago. A short trail will lead you to a saltwater lagoon filled with greater flamingos. Along the way, look for marine iguanas, mockingbirds and yellow warblers. You may also see Darwin's finches. Over a dozen species of finches live on the islands and observing them contributed to Charles Darwin's ideas that formed the basis for his theory of evolution. If you choose to snorkel this morning, you may be able to see a colony of sea lions or rays. Several species of rays live on the Galápagos, but golden rays and spotted eagle rays are the most common.

Stop at Puerto Egas on Santiago (James) Island, where you'll stroll along the shoreline looking for octopus, starfish and other sea life caught in the tide pools. Watch out for great blue herons, lava herons, American oystercatchers and yellow-crowned night herons. At low tide, catch a glimpse of marine iguanas as they feed on exposed green algae. During mating season, green and red algae give the usually black marine iguanas beautiful coloration. The walk ends at the grottos, deep pools of clear water where you'll encounter fur sea lions once on the verge of extinction. Before returning to the yacht, take the opportunity to snorkel from the beach. As you sail after lunch, take a seat on deck to view the dramatic landscape and dolphins that are often spotted here. Guests on the Origin have a Zodiac excursion at Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) through a series of peaceful coves and inlets surrounded by mangroves whose large roots rise out of the water. View pairs of mating sea turtles (Sept to Feb), white-tipped reef sharks and golden cow-nosed rays. We return to the vessel for the Captain's Farewell cocktail with the crew, and dinner as well as a special presentation by your guides.

Day 9: Cruising the Galápagos

When you wake up this morning, your yacht will be one of dozens of boats anchored in the lively harbor of Academy Bay. You'll disembark at Puerto Ayora, Sta Cruz Island, the social heart of the Galápagos, with a population of 24,000 residents. This morning, we visit the breeding centre Centro de Crianza Fausto Llerena and Charles Darwin Research Station where we learn about ongoing conservation efforts from exhibits set up along the wooden trail. You'll see hatchlings and miniature tortoises that will be repatriated by the National Park when grown. The newest exhibit honours Lonesome George, the last surviving tortoise from Pinta Island that tragically died of natural causes. With his species now extinct, Lonesome George has become a worldwide icon, emphasizing the importance of efforts to preserve and protect endangered wildlife. A more hopeful story is Diego, a saddleback tortoise whose species was reduced to 14 individuals before he was transported from the San Diego Zoo and who has since fathered hundreds of descendants. Afterwards, you'll learn about the history of the settlers of this Island on a guided tour through the back streets of Puerto Ayora. Stroll through town to shop for handmade souvenirs, Ecuadorian chocolate ice cream or coffee grown in Galápagos.

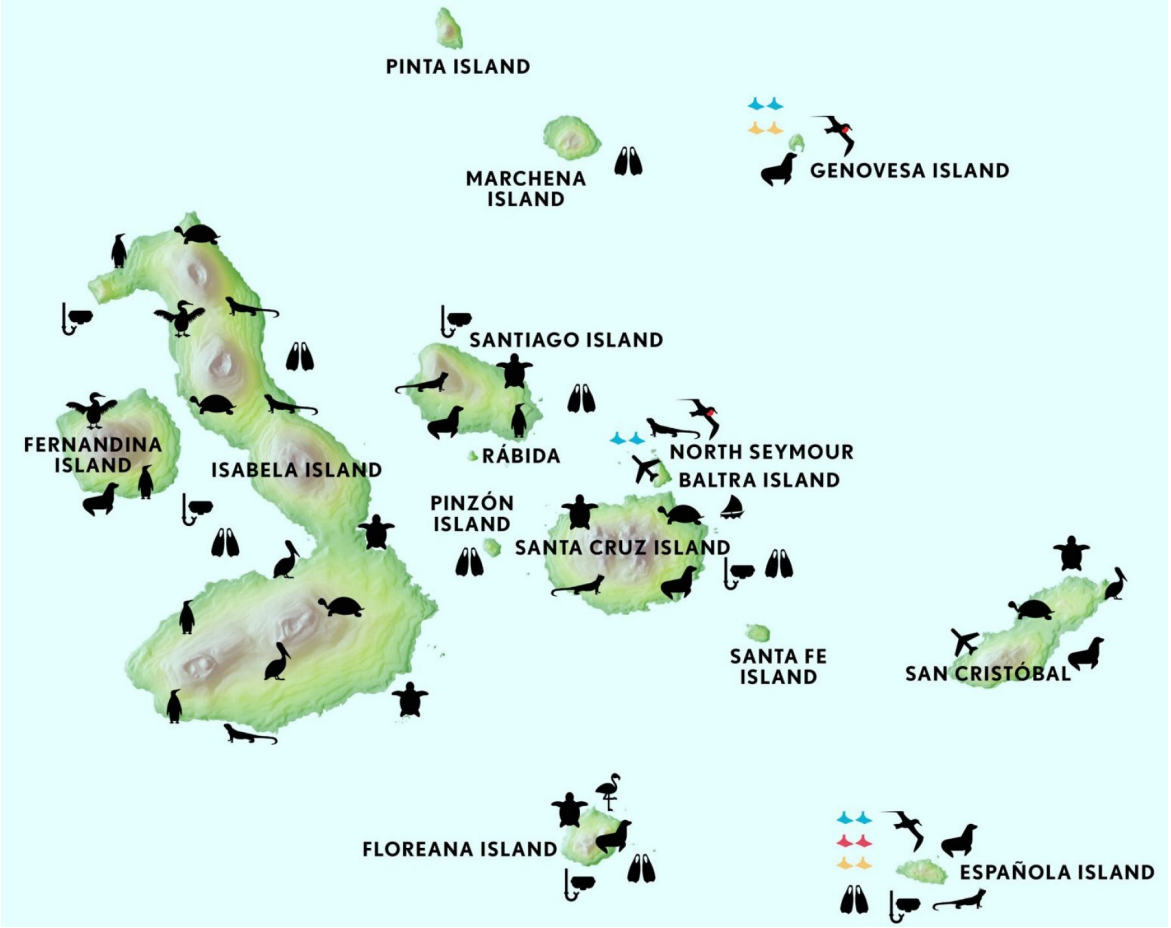
Return to the yacht for lunch and later board a bus for a short ride to a lava tunnel, a hollow formation created when lava on the earth's surface cools and hardens while molten lava continues to flow in the middle. Your next stop will be Los Gemelos (The Twins), a pair of large, deep craters with vibrant plant life at higher elevation. Next stop is at a privately-owned hacienda, where giant tortoises roam freely – some weighing over 225 kilos – in their natural habitat, feeding or resting in shallow pools. Return to the yacht for dinner or, if you wish, remain ashore on your own at a local restaurant. Your guides or concierge will be glad to provide a recommendation. Zodiac shuttles from the yachts to the main dock will be offered throughout the evening for your convenience.

Day 10: Cruising the Galápagos

On your last morning in the Galápagos we disembark after breakfast. As a perfect way to sum up the trip, you'll visit the Interpretation Centre on San Cristobal to discover more about the human history of the Galápagos Islands. There's also a paved trail where you can enjoy a brief walk or take a bus ride to town for any last-minute photos or shopping.

Transfer to the Airport for flights back to mainland Ecuador.

Map


PINTA ISLAND
MARCHENA ISLAND
GENOVESA ISLAND
SANTIAGO ISLAND
FERNANDINA ISLAND
ISABELA ISLAND
RÁBIDA
NORTH SEYMOUR
BALTRA ISLAND
PINZÓN ISLAND
SANTA CRUZ ISLAND
SANTA FE ISLAND
SAN CRISTÓBAL
FLOREANA ISLAND
ESPAÑOLA ISLAND

Accommodation

Origin, Galápagos Islands



Origin operates two eight-day itineraries which take clients through the magical archipelago of the Galápagos Islands. Your expert naturalist guides will reveal the most wildlife-abundant islands, where a hike up the beach or over the volcanic foothills is sure to take you up close to some of the rarest creatures in the world. Explore the rocky coasts by kayak, stand-up paddle board or glass-bottom boat. This is also one of the best snorkelling destinations in the world, where the most unique marine creatures in the ocean reign supreme.

All cabins boast panoramic windows, perfect for wildlife watching, as well as private bathrooms. When you’re back from your day’s expedition, this vessel is full of tranquil spaces. Sit back on the spacious sun deck, perhaps a sparkling wine in hand, and watch out for the rare birdlife known to tail ships. There’s also a Jacuzzi, wet bar and a barbecue area where you can swap stories with your fellow travellers as you soak up the warm sun.

Origin showcases a modern design, complete with local artwork, boasting sophisticated atmospheres throughout. The range of great facilities includes a library, fitness centre and an open bar. When it comes to mealtimes, the luxury only increases. Enjoy expertly prepared international and Ecuadorian favourites, with great care paid to dietary requirements and allergies.

Why we like it

- The spacious cabins all features panoramic windows for wildlife watching
- With three lounges, a library and sun deck, there are a range of relaxing spaces on board
- Enjoy land and water-based excursions to the most exciting sights of the Galápagos
- Knowledgeable guides lead you deep into the habitats of the many rare creatures found here
- Relais & Châteaux
- **Our top tip:** the spacious sundeck is the perfect setting to experience golden sunsets and spectacular sightings of marine wildlife

Theory, Galápagos Islands



Enjoy a Relais and Chateaux experience at sea when you board *Theory* to sail the seas around the awe-inspiring Galápagos. This is the gold standard of accommodation and indeed service for these waters. Discover the wonderful world of this archipelago in expert hands as there are two naturalists on board (looking after no more than 10 guests each) who can explain both the area's history as well as its abundant and unique wildlife.

Named after Charles Darwin's *Theory of Evolution*, the vessel's commitment to the environment is front and foremost in every expedition. Solar panels provide power, plastic use is constantly evaluated, and carbon emissions are offset. This helps ensure the pristine status of the islands.

The stateroom accommodation is furnished to a high standard with all amenities and there are some interconnecting cabins which are ideal for families travelling together.

Eating on board is an experience all on its own. Every evening, a four-course dinner of Ecuadorian and international fare is served so be sure to save some space after your afternoon tea of pastries and snacks. Sit back and relax after dinner in the open bar and lounge for cocktails and a wide array of drinks, discussing everything you've seen with fellow travellers.

There's even a boutique, fitness centre and library so however you want to unwind when you are not on land, *Theory* has a multitude of options.

Why we like it

- Large range of amenities including full-time concierge, fitness centre and a sundeck with loungers and daybeds

- Capacity of only 20 guests
- Minimalist chic design, inspired by the calming nature of the Galápagos Islands
- Each room features large, three-panel panoramic windows
- Locally inspired Ecuadorian cuisine served on board

Evolve, Galápagos Islands



Cruise in style on board *Evolve*, the newest ship to circumnavigate the remarkable Galápagos Islands. Be one of the first to stay in one of the luxury cabins on this exceptional Relais & Châteaux ship.

Discover more about the unique wildlife of this Ecuadorian archipelago in expert hands as there are two naturalists on board (looking after no more than 10 guests each) who can explain both the area's history as well as its abundant and unique wildlife.

Each of the 10 spacious cabins connect you to every port of call via panoramic views from every corner of the room. After a day exploring enjoy catching up with fellow travellers and the captain, in the relaxing lounge.

Evolve, named after the scientific works of naturalist Charles Darwin who based his theory of evolution while visiting the islands, has sustainable features to reduce fossil fuel consumption by more than 30 per cent. Find out more about Darwin from a book within the ship's cosy library.

For the more active among you the fitness centre is well equipped with a treadmill, elliptical, free weights, and yoga mats. After a workout or excursion, you can relax in the Jacuzzi on with a sundowner on the spacious sundeck in a hammock as the waves lap the side of this spectacular ship which is one of only three to be members of prestigious Relais & Châteaux.

Why we like it

- Be among the first to sail on *Evolve* as this is a new ship whose maiden voyage is January 2023
- *Evolve* is part of a fleet of three ships which are the only members of Relais &

Châteaux

- Enjoy the luxury of space as only 20 passengers sail on this luxury mega-yacht
- Most favourable naturalist-to-passenger ratio with just 10 guests per guide
- Full time concierge, fitness centre, Jacuzzi, and locally inspired cuisine
- **Top tip:** Take to this marine-rich waters and make the most of inclusions with snorkel equipment, stand up paddle boards, sea kayaks

Abercrombie & Kent

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