

# Frequently Asked Questions

## A Journey through the Galápagos

### Trip Preparation and Travel Documents

#### **What is the nature of expedition travel and will my itinerary change from what was advertised?**

Expedition travel in the Galápagos is dynamic and subject to rare but possible changes due to wildlife protection measures or volcanic eruptions, with the latter offering a unique spectacle from the ocean. Although your itinerary may be adjusted without prior notice, we consider this flexibility an advantage, offering unparalleled opportunities for discovery. Each day is filled with the promise of new encounters, from diverse bird colonies and rafts of sea lions to a rich array of marine life and the awe-inspiring expanse of lava fields, evoking the profound essence of nature's beginnings. Should any changes occur to the advertised itinerary, please rest assured that safety remains our paramount concern, alongside the preservation of the delicate ecosystems we visit. Our seasoned team is committed to providing alternative routes and excursions that ensure the utmost safety and optimal experience for our guests, crew, vessel, and the local environment.

#### **What are the luggage and carry-on regulations and restrictions for this expedition?**

Be sure to pack only what you actually require, as weight restrictions apply on flights, and stowage space aboard the ship is limited. Ensure your full details are attached to all pieces of luggage. As luggage and carry-on regulations vary from airline to airline, we recommend contacting your chosen airline for up-to-date carry-on guidelines and checked luggage allowances. Due to space limitations on the flights between mainland Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands, all carry-on luggage must be able to fit under your seat. Also, carry-on luggage may be weighed; it may not exceed 12 pounds (per person). Your camera is not included in this restriction. We strongly recommend weighing your bags prior to departure to avoid disappointment and confusion at check-in. Please be aware of FAA restrictions surrounding hazardous or unlawful items and check with any connecting carriers to determine their regulations.

Note: All carry-on bags must fit under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. Carry-on bag dimensions are a max of 9"x 16"x 20" (23cm x 41cm x 51 cm). Also, please be aware of the rules surrounding hazardous or unlawful items, as they will be removed at security and not returned. Some of the following items cannot be on your person or in carry-on luggage: any knives, cutting or puncturing instruments (i.e. pocketknives, box cutters, metal scissors, metal nail files), corkscrews, aerosol spray cans (i.e. hair spray, deodorant, insect repellent), butane fuel (i.e. curling iron refills),

explosives, or lighter fluid. Please refer to the city's guide for regulations on animal products. Copies of the city's guide will be available on board.

### **What will the weather be like?**

Average temperatures in Quito, Ecuador are a high of 19°C (66°F) or more, with nightly lows hitting 10°C (50°F). Average temperatures in the Galápagos Islands can range from 22°C (72°F) at night to 30°C (86°F) and above during the day, with the water temperature in the mid-twenties (Celsius) / seventies (Fahrenheit). Due to the islands' location on the Equator, the climate is tempered by the Humboldt Current, so you do not experience extreme heat.

### **What is the dress code and what should I pack?**

During the day, informal outfits are entirely suitable. For dinner and evening programs, we recommend casual attire. Please, no bathing suits or bare feet in the dining room at any time. Also, guests are kindly requested not to enter the public areas or cabins with wet or dirty shoes. For a suggested packing list, please see your Adventurer Package.

### **What should I be considering with regards to travel insurance?**

Adventure Canada travels to remote destinations where emergency medical treatment may be difficult to access. Emergency medical and evacuation insurance to the minimum value of \$500,000 USD PER PERSON IS MANDATORY for participation in all Adventure Canada expeditions. This may not cover the full cost of a medical emergency. Any additional expenses are the responsibility of the passenger.

Adventure Canada strongly advises all passengers to obtain travel insurance as loss of deposits and cancellation terms and conditions come into effect upon receipt of a confirmed booking. Adventure Canada recommends that travel insurance be in place no later than 120 days prior to departure. If you require assistance in obtaining further insurance information, please contact Adventure Canada or your travel agent.

### **Do I require a passport to travel? What about a visa?**

A valid passport is required for travel to Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands. If you are a U.S. or Canadian citizen, you will need a passport that is valid for six months from the date of completion of your trip. It is always a good idea to make a photocopy of your airline tickets and of the pages of your passport that have the number, your photograph, and other pertinent information. Keep the copies separate from the originals.

Visas are NOT required for Canadian and U.S. citizens. If you are not a Canadian or U.S. citizen, please contact the Ecuadorian consulate or embassy nearest you for visa requirements to enter Ecuador. If a visa is required, you are responsible for obtaining it.

## Health and Safety

### **What medical considerations should I be making?**

Adventure Canada expeditions travel to remote areas of the world where medical care is either unavailable or not up to modern standards. Adventure Canada will request your medical details prior to your trip. If you have any health concerns, we strongly recommend a pre-voyage appointment with your health care professional. Adventure Canada programs are designed for active participation and require travellers to transfer from ship to Zodiac and walk up and down one flight of stairs unaided, at a minimum. Dental care is also recommended before travel and guests are advised not to travel with temporary fillings, caps, or unfinished root canals. It is the travellers' responsibility to know the entry requirements of the nations they are visiting.

### **What should I do about my prescription medication while on the expedition?**

Please make sure you bring an adequate supply of prescribed medication for the trip until your return home. It is recommended to bring at least one week's additional medication in the event of a delay. IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REPLACE OR REFILL PRESCRIPTIONS DURING THE EXPEDITION. PLEASE TAKE ADEQUATE CARE TO ENSURE THE SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF YOUR MEDICATION. It is vital that your prescription medicines travel with you in your carry-on luggage and not in your checked bag. You must have a doctor's note or proof of requirement in order to carry needles for medical reasons in your carry-on baggage. If you have special requirements surrounding your medications while on board, please inform Adventure Canada as soon as possible.

### **What medical services are available on board?**

There is a doctor on board who provides services free of charge, at any time, and who will gladly assist you, if required. A Health Status form will be handed to you at the beginning of the cruise. Please fill it out as promptly as possible and turn it in at Reception. Our doctor will join in some of the walks to provide extra assistance, if needed. If at any point during the trip you require the services from our medical facility, please don't hesitate to contact the hotel manager for an appointment.

### **What if I am prone to motion sickness?**

If you're prone to motion sickness, consult your physician for remedies. Consider bringing medications, wristbands, or patches. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, excessive liquids, and confined spaces. Fresh air and plain foods can help. Be cautious with medications as they may cause drowsiness. Taking them before symptoms appear is most effective. Consult your physician for more guidance.

### **What are the on-board safety protocols?**

Prior to weighing anchor (as ships don't dock in the Galápagos), we'll conduct a mandatory boat drill exercise briefing before departure from the harbour. Our on-board team will provide comprehensive

explanations of the safety procedures, including emergency protocols such as man overboard procedures and guest safety guidelines for shore excursions. Feel free to ask any questions during this briefing; your safety and comfort are our top priorities.

## **On Board – General**

### **Is there a gym on board?**

Yes, there is an exercise room available on board. It features an air-conditioned indoor gym with glass panels and is open twenty-four hours a day. Equipment includes a bike, elliptical machine, and treadmill.

### **Is there a hot tub on board?**

For a relaxing experience, you can unwind in the hot tub situated on the Sun Deck. Safety instructions are provided, and the hot tub is available from 06h00 to 20h00 daily, with additional access available upon request after dinner.

### **Is there a library on board?**

The Natural History Library is located on the Sun Deck, right next to the Observation Lounge and Bar. Please check with the expedition leader for books to read during the voyage. After reading, guests are kindly requested to return the books to the library. Here, you will also find a TV Screen (NTSC system), where interesting documentaries, movies, etc., are available.

### **Is there a gift shop on board?**

The boutique is located next to Reception. Opening hours will be posted on the bulletin board. All purchases are added to your shipboard account.

### **Is there internet or calling available on board?**

Internet-enabled computers, Wi-Fi internet, and a satellite telephone are available on board. During the welcome briefing, you will receive information about these services. Connections are low-bandwidth and occasionally intermittent. Charges for phone calls will be added to your shipboard account.

**Can I mail a letter while on board?**

Mailing postcards is possible in Galápagos (Santa Cruz Island and Baltra Island). The Ecuadorian postal service on the mainland, however, will be faster. We are not responsible for postal delays incurred by the local postal system.

**What is the currency on board?**

The official currency in Ecuador is the U.S. Dollar. The shipboard charge account system is used for all purchases such as gift shop items, alcoholic beverages, and phone.

**What is the tipping policy aboard the ship?**

The tipping policy aboard the ship is flexible, as tipping is a personal choice. If you choose to leave a gratuity, you can enclose cash and deposit it in the gratuity box provided at the end of the voyage. Additionally, shipboard expenses and gratuities can be charged to American Express, Visa, or Mastercard. However, please note that personal or traveller's cheques cannot be accepted. For guidance, suggested gratuities are as follows: \$15 USD per guest per day for the crew, \$10 USD per guest per day for guides, and \$15 USD per guest per cruise for the barman.

**Are there taxes on board?**

Because La Pinta is an Ecuadorian-registered ship operating in Ecuadorian waters, it is subject to Ecuadorian tax laws. All purchases in the Gift Shop as well as bar charges are subject to the 12% VAT or Impuesto Valor Agregado in Spanish (Value Added Tax). Additionally, the law requires a 10% Service Charge on purchases of all beverages (this is not the bartender's tip).

**Is smoking allowed on board?**

For the consideration of non-smoking guests, please note that all indoor areas, including cabins, dining room, and reception lounge, have been designated as non-smoking areas. Smoking is therefore allowed exclusively in designated areas on the outside decks. Thank you for respecting our smoking policy. Please refrain from smoking on shore and in Zodiacs. Please do not throw your cigarettes overboard, as it is a violation of international maritime pollution laws, and they can easily be blown back onto the ship. There are ashtrays placed in specific exterior deck areas.

## **On Board – Accommodation and Dietary**

**What are the cabin features?**

La Pinta boasts twenty-four comfortable cabins, each convertible from twin to queen sizes, with four connecting cabins for added convenience. All cabins feature full private facilities, including permanent hot and cold water, ample closet space, a safe box, hairdryer, telephone, and desk.

Additionally, each cabin is equipped with a central control panel for room temperature, a public announcements system, an individual MP3 sound system, and adjustable volume and reading lights. Fully carpeted and air-conditioned throughout, our cabins ensure a comfortable stay for all guests.

**What is the cabin air conditioning like?**

Air temperature can be regulated in each cabin from the A/C control located above your bed.

**What plug and socket types are used aboard the ship?**

The ship provides electrical outlets with both 110V and 220V compatibility.

**What amenities are offered in the cabins?**

In the cabins, you'll find biodegradable products for personal hygiene provided in the bathroom. To minimize plastic waste, we don't supply other packaged amenities, but you can request additional items such as a bathing cap, electrical converters and adapters, pillows, sewing kit, and clothes hangers from Reception, free of charge. Each cabin is equipped with a safe located within the closet for your convenience. Additionally, a variety of cabin towels will be provided. For visits that include snorkeling, swimming, and sunbathing, beach towels will be available at the Reception area before disembarking.

**What is the food like on board?**

The Le Cordon Bleu-certified gastronomic director has carefully designed the buffets and menus on board all La Pinta. These are inspired by both local and international flavours. Varied meals comprised of all the food groups will be served throughout the day. This also includes fresh produce, fruits, and proteins that are acquired from the best providers available.

**What is the dining room like?**

Open seating applies for all meals, with tables unassigned. Meal hours may vary depending on each day's program. They will be announced and posted daily on the digital bulletin boards. Guests are kindly requested to observe the established meal hours. There is just one seating service.

**How are meals served?**

Breakfast and lunch are served buffet style, while dinner is served directly at your table by our waiters. Our meals always feature vegetarian options. Coffee, tea, snacks, and cookies are always available in the library, next to the bar. If you have any special requirements regarding meals, please contact the hotel manager.

**I have special dietary requirements. Can they be met?**

When requested in advance, most special dietary requirements can be arranged. Multi-guided ships tend to have a larger kitchen staff than single-guided ships as a result of which they are more likely to be able to accommodate special requests.

**Can I drink the water on board?**

Yes, you can drink the water on board. We are self-supplied with water and equipped with two reverse osmosis desalination plants, ensuring we produce sufficient potable water for ample daily consumption. In your cabin, you'll find reusable bottles provided, along with refilling stations conveniently located throughout the yacht.

**What is the bar like on board?**

The ship's bar is open from 11h00 onwards. Alcoholic drinks, including those ordered in the dining room, are charged to each guest's shipboard account. Soft drinks are included in your cruise program.

## **On Board – Experience**

**What are landings like?**

The shores of the islands and the access to visiting sites can have rocky surfaces or beaches. Landings may be dry or wet. Dry landings are easily performed, as we find a flat rocky surface for proper docking with Zodiacs, or sometimes a real pier as a landing place. When a beach is the only way of accessing a visitor site, we must perform a wet landing. These are also quite simple, since you just remove your shoes and socks, proceed to the front of the boat, and while swinging your legs out, you gently wet yourself no higher than knee level. Afterwards, dry your feet, put your shoes on, and you're ready to go. Since you will leave your towel at the beach, please remember to bring it back on board. From time to time, we may find rougher swells than the usual ones, and so the wet landing may require extra caution. At any landing, however, follow the instructions of the staff in charge.

**Will I need to wear a life jacket?**

Yes, Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs), also known as buoyancy aids, are provided on board and are necessary for various activities:

- For snorkeling and kayaking, appropriate PFDs will be provided.
- During panga (Zodiac) rides, it's mandatory to wear a life jacket at all times.



- Additionally, life jackets will be used during the boat drill exercise, and you can find them inside the closet in your cabin.

### **How will I know what we are doing each day?**

Every evening before dinner, our team of naturalist guides will present a rewarding multimedia talk to further explain details of the next day's outings and activities. The official program will be also posted on the digital bulletin boards.

### **How do snorkeling activities work?**

Snorkeling activities are encouraged for physically capable guests whenever we are in suitable areas. However, guests with physical limitations that may restrict their ability to snorkel are encouraged to explore the marine world through alternative means offered on our voyage, such as on a glass-bottom boat.

Our snorkeling operations prioritize three main concerns:

1. Safety
2. Sensitivity to the natural environment
3. Education and inspiration

To ensure these priorities are met, we always provide qualified staff for supervision, informative briefings, and environmental interpretation. Additionally, masks, snorkels, and wetsuits are available on the ship, along with supportive safety equipment such as flotation devices.

### **What are the guidelines for snorkeling?**

Anyone who wishes to participate in snorkeling must attend the water activities briefing and fill out a release form, which will be handed out after the briefing. The completed release form must be returned to the expedition leader or any naturalist prior to snorkeling. No one shall be permitted to snorkel unless this requirement has been met.

Guests are advised to bring their own supply of water, sunscreen, a hat, and a shirt to warm up after snorkelling. Once at the site, the life jackets may be removed. Inexperienced snorkelers are encouraged to wear the inflatable buoyancy aids, which will be provided after the briefing. We kindly ask snorkelers to rinse off their equipment upon arrival to the ship.

### **What equipment is provided for snorkeling?**

We will issue masks, snorkel, wetsuits, and fins as requested by our guests. Snorkeling with a buoyancy aid is encouraged and recommended for the inexperienced.



## Wildlife and Photography

### **What wildlife will I see?**

Please refer to the Regional Guide – Wildlife located in the Trip Resources section of your Adventurer Package.

### **Will I need binoculars? What kind of binoculars is best for Galápagos wildlife viewing?**

Your naturalist guides always have a pair of binoculars that they will pass around when there is something interesting to see. Do feel free to bring your own if you are really into wildlife viewing.

### **Are there any restrictions on photographing or filming the islands?**

Flash photography is not permitted when taking photos of wildlife. Professional photography and videos recorded for commercial purposes must be authorized by the Galápagos National Park. Drones can only be used with a special permit.

## Emergency Contact Information

In remote expedition areas, reliable communication may be limited. Please provide the following contact details to your friends and family before the trip.

- In emergencies, they can reach the Metropolitan Touring Quito Operations office at (593)-9-9972-2942 (open 24/7), which can relay messages to the ship.
- For non-emergency inquiries, friends and family can contact Adventure Canada at 1-800-363-7566 / 1-905-271-4000 during office hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST.