FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE GALAPAGOS: THE YACHTS, HOW TO CHOOSE A YACHT, + WEATHER, ETC.

WHY BOOK GALAPAGOS WITH ANDEAN TREKS?

We're specialized in South America only (Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia,) and have been in business since 1980. We have our stellar reputation to keep, but we also have the passion, knowledge, and experience in the field.

Since 1983 we've been sending people to these enchanting islands (individuals and families; school and college groups; special-interest groups.) Now as before, the Galapagos continue to enthrall our passengers.

We work directly with a variety of boat companies, and are familiar with most of the yachts in Galapagos. We've seen many of them first-hand, cruised on several, and visit the islands regularly to update our information. The yachts listed on our website are those we consider to be the best, those that we use regularly and that meet our standards of safety, quality and reliability.

Throughout our years of experience, we've seen many Galapagos yachts come and go.

- We have special relationships with a large variety of Galapagos yachts
- We know the companies and yachts that are trustworthy, and those that are not.
- We're in touch with the pulse of what's happening in Galapagos, which is ever-changing in every way. We share that information with you openly and honestly.
- We have hand-selected our list of yachts which we use all the time. Trust us to find the yacht that meets your personal needs, with unbiased recommendations.
- Our rates are reasonable and fair, the same as the actual published rates (with very few exceptions,) and we don't "pad" the rates by including international airfare or hotels. You'll be amazed at the high price of some Galapagos cruise package rates!
- We can book land and hotels for you of course, but to keep prices down, we quote them separately.

It may seem easy to book a yacht directly on line, but you must be careful! You might not get the truth about the little things, nor would you know that yacht's track record. You most likely won't get all your questions answered. And mainly, if you don't know what to ask, you may end up being disappointed.

We're here to answer your questions, to allay any fears. If we don't have the answer, we will get it for you. We take the worry and time away from you. Leave it to us, the experts, to do that work for you. That's what we do day in, day out!

Call us, or delve deeper into our website!

HOW TO FIND THE YACHT THAT'S BEST FOR YOU

Start by using our Website search tool (under Galapagos, "find your yacht")

First, think about these 4 main criteria: **Price range**, **Number of passengers** (or yacht size), **Length of cruise** (number of days) and **Type of cruise** (family-designated, nature, active, or diving cruises.) You can also search by yacht name.

If you want to **scroll through** all yachts, leave all the criteria empty, to "any", and select "search."

Refine your search by clicking on as many of the listed criteria as you like.

Yacht Price Range: divided into 3 categories, based on the typical 8-day/7-night cruise, per person. Ranges listed are

- **$2550 and under**
- **$2460 - $3560**
- **$3570 and up**

Number of passengers: divided into 3 groups: Small, Medium and Large. Yachts range in size and the maximum number of passengers it can take.

- **Small yachts** take from **12-20 passengers**, and range in size from 66 feet to 140 feet in length. Most yachts fit into this category.
- **Medium yachts** take from **32 - 50 passengers**, and range in size from 166 – 237 feet long.
- **Large yachts** take: **90 to 100 passengers**, ranging in length from 238 – 300 feet.

Cruise Length (**number of days)**:

- **8-Days/7 Nights** – we strongly recommend the 8-day cruise, the classic cruise length.
- **Shorter cruises**. Both **5-Day/4-Night** and **4-Day/3-Night** cruises are offered on some, not all, yachts. If you don't have that much time, choose this option, preferably the 5-day cruise. Keep in mind that you will have only a half day, if that, on Day 1 and the last day of your cruise. Half of those days are spent flying to/from the islands.

Family-designated cruises: some yachts offer "family" cruises on special dates throughout the year, usually falling on typical school holiday times: December, February, March and certain summer departures. These specially designed cruises attract families with children, from 6 year olds to grandparents, for a variety of reasons:

- Discounted rates for children and sometimes for teens
- Other families on board means your children or grandchildren can meet other children
- Special activities and games for children keep them busy, interested and stimulated

- Child-friendly guides provide an easy way for kids to understand and appreciate what they're seeing
- Child-friendly meals and snacks (special meals & snacks for children)
- Parents have some time on their own if desired

MORE ABOUT THE YACHTS

Choices are many and there is much variety between the yachts. You will need to consider the following major themes:

Size of yacht (from 8 – 100 passengers)

Small: yachts from 8 to 22 passengers, 66 feet to 140 feet in length. Most yachts fit into this category.

Medium: 32 - 48 passengers, 166 – 237 feet long. There are several in this category: The Eclipse, The Coral 1, The Isabela II, La Pinta, The Evolution, The Grace

Large: 90 - 100 passengers, 238 – 300 feet long. There are 3 in this category: The Galapagos Explorer, the Santa Cruz, and The Galapagos Legend.

The size of the yacht does not necessarily determine the class or comfort level. Boats of similar size are found across most or all classes and price categories. In general, the higher price yachts have better guides, itineraries and amenities.

Decide whether you like the intimacy and coziness of a small yacht, or if you prefer more space to roam. For families with children, we recommend the larger ships since there is more space, a variety of common areas, larger cabins, adjoining rooms, triples & quads.

There are pros and cons to each size. On **smaller yachts:**

-You can anchor closer to the beaches and require fewer and shorter panga (dinghy or Zodiac) disembarkments.

-There's a sense of intimacy, a family feel shared with the other passengers and the crew

-Small yachts are excellent for small group and family charters.

-You feel more motion in wavy seas

-Common/social areas are fewer and smaller

-Fewer amenities

-Most smaller yachts don't go fast enough or cannot travel to the farther islands

Most **medium to large ships**

-Have a doctor or infirmary on board. Smaller boats would have a medical kit and someone trained in CPR.

-You hear less engine noise

-More stable; you feel less motion from the waves

-Amenities usually include a library, VCR, wireless, boutique, work-out machines, many decks for different viewing vantage points, on-board activities, hot-tub, swimming pool, the best guides.

-Disembarkments may take a little longer

-Dining room is fuller

Whatever size yacht, naturalist groups can be no larger than 16 passengers per one naturalist guide.

Style/Class/Comfort of yacht: from small, simple, basic with few amenities to large, spacious, deluxe yachts. Sailing yachts, motor cruisers or catamarans.

Most yachts are motor-cruisers, but there are several sailing yachts and some catamarans. Sailing yachts also range in size and class, from small 8-passenger sailboats to large 3-masted schooners. However, these are not sailing or barefoot cruises. Most of the time auxiliary motor power is used in order to adhere to the schedule, but occasionally, when the wind is right, it may be possible to cruise under sail for brief periods. Or, sails may be hoisted occasionally for the ambience. Generally the cabins and common areas in sailing yachts are smaller than in motor-cruisers, and deck space is more limited due to the masts and sailing gear.

Length of cruise: choose from 4, 5, or 8 day cruises. We don't recommend 4-day cruises, they're just too short. As soon as you get there and get into the rhythm, it's time to turn back. You end up having only two full days, with days 1 & 4 getting there and back, and it's a long distance from the mainland.

Price: from $2000 per person for an 8-day cruise to $5650

Some of the most expensive yachts are considered "Deluxe" due to their larger size, lots of amenities, style and comfort. Yachts below this level also offer cleanliness and comfort, but are smaller, fairly plain, with fewer frills. It's really important to understand these differences and to appreciate that the emphasis of a Galapagos cruise is on the nature and wildlife experience rather than the boat experience.

Most of the smaller yachts in the low to mid price category have a simple decor with fewer amenities. All of these yachts have some form of air conditioning. The quality is less robust than in more expensive and larger yachts. Cabins are small with private toilet/showers with hot water. Most have bunk beds with single or double lowers and single uppers. Very good value. Less experienced guides. Most all these yachts offer shorter cruises of 4 & 5 days as well as 8 days.

The yachts in the most expensive category tend to be the best yachts in Galapagos. There is the widest range of sizes and styles. Most of the mid-size and large ships fall into this category, and there are quite a few. But there are also some 16-20 passenger yachts. These boats all have the best operating air conditioning, reliable hot water, the best guides and food, tasteful decor, more space and comfort, and the best guides in Galapagos. Many yachts offer a choice of cabin sizes and prices, deck levels and styles. Some yachts offer suites, quads, triple and single cabins. The large ships have a doctor on board and small infirmary, small gift shop, wireless access, small gym, jacuzzi, conference room, wet suits and good quality snorkel equipment for rental or for free.

OTHER FEES In addition to the cost of the cruise itself, there are other fees. As of this writing, July, 2009, additional fees are as follows:

- **Galapagos Park Fee:** $100
- **Galapagos INGALA Tourist Card:** $10
- **Fuel Surcharge:** currently range from $125 - $306 for an 8-day cruise(pertains to most yachts except the smallest ones;) these vary from yacht to yacht
- **Round-trip airfare:** from Quito or Guayaquil, ranges from $340 from Guayaquil, Low Season, to $425 from Quito, High Season.

Most yachts offer children's discounts for children ages 7-11 of 25% to 50%; the airlines for flights to/from Galapagos offer a 50% discount on children's airfare (under age 12.).

HOW IS A GALAPAGOS CRUISE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER TYPES OF CRUISES?

A Galapagos cruise is very different from "cruising" as you may understand it. This is not like a Caribbean cruise or cruise line ship where life is centered on the boat, where the cruise is focused on the activities and amenities these boats offer; where your accommodations, comfort and ship style are of the utmost importance.

A Galapagos cruise is more aptly named a "naturalist cruise or expedition." The purpose is to view and appreciate the spectacular wildlife of these vibrant islands. The yachts themselves take on a much less important role. Even the word yacht takes on a different connotation in the Galapagos. While most of the expensive and "luxurious" Galapagos yachts are beautifully appointed with dark or teak wood and pleasant décor, and are roomier than other classes of Galapagos yacht, they should not be compared to a major cruise-line ship. Few yachts (except the larger yachts) offer "activities," apart from evening slide presentations of your next day's island visits; the largest vessels have a pool or hot tub and a small boutique.

FAMILY CRUISES

While all yachts welcome families and children on board, some yachts offer designated "family" cruises that include special activities geared to children, with special guides, special child-oriented meals, games, etc. These usually take place during popular school vacation times: Christmas, March, April, and June-August. Another advantage of family departures is having other children besides your own on board.

Whichever yacht you choose, rest-assured that you will have a wonderful experience cruising the Galapagos Islands.

Please bear in mind *that Galapagos boats are operating back-to-back cruises in an archipelago almost 1,000 km out in the Pacific Ocean. When mechanical systems break, the crew may not be able to fix things immediately. They do an able job under adverse conditions. Occasionally it can happen that the yacht you have booked will be substituted for another one of similar size and class, or upgraded. This would only happen with the passengers' safety in mind. Your comprehension and flexibility is appreciated.*

WHEN TO GO

The Galapagos are wonderful at any time of year. You can visit the Galapagos year-round, but there are seasonal differences, with two seasons. Since the islands straddle the Equator,

one might think that the islands would be hot and humid. But the tropical climate is regulated by the cold Humboldt Current and the warm El Niño Current. The islands are volcanic and actually quite dry (most are desert-like), receiving less than an inch of rain most months of the year (January through March receive 1 to 2 inches.)

The hot season is from **November/December to May** when it is usually warm and humid, with average temperature in the 80's and a range from low 70s to high 80s. There can be brief showers, but generally it's clear and sunny. From January to April, the average sea temperature is around 75°.

June to October is named the "Garua" or misty season, with temperatures averaging in the 70s, and ranging from low-60s to high 70s. There can be cool winds and occasionally light misty drizzle in the mornings, but still dry. The seas can be somewhat rougher during this season. Sea temperature ranges from 66-74°. If you plan on doing a lot of snorkeling, a wetsuit is recommended (a "shortie" is all that's needed.) Many yachts have them available on board for a rental fee; or you may wish to pack a light wet suit

However, since weather patterns have been changing recently, these seasons are not so distinct. Plan to dress in layers. Throughout the year, the sun is very strong and intense, even through clouds and rain! So be sure to bring lots of sunscreen.

TEMPERATURE CHART for Galapagos; monthly air temperatures minimum & maximum) Average monthly sea temperatures, and average monthly rainfall.

Months	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
Max air temp	84	86	88	86	82	78	76	74	76	77	78	80
Min air	70	74	7 4	72	72	68	66	64	62	64	66	68
Avg sea temp	74	76	76	76	74	74	72	66	68	70	72	74
Avg rain	1″	1″	2″	1.5″	.75″	.25″	.50″	.25″	.50″	.25″	.50″	.50″

A TYPICAL DAY

Usually you have two island excursions of about 3-4 hours long: one in the early morning, and one in the afternoon. Your guide gives a briefing the night before on the next day's program so you'll know how to pack for the next day and what type of shoes to wear.

Breakfast is served around 6:30/7AM, and the morning shore excursion follows at 8AM. There is usually time for relaxing on the beach and swimming before you return to the yacht for lunch. You have 2-3 hours at lunchtime as the yacht travels to a new destination. Afternoon excursion follows the morning pattern, usually departing around 2:00. Evening entertainment consists of dinner and discussions, or slide shows with the guide. Some people retire early, others stay up to socialize or read. Each small boat has a refrigerator where cold beer and soft drinks are kept; larger yachts and the cruise ships have adequate bar service most times of the day and night.

ITINERARY

Each yacht has its own cruise itinerary which is determined by the Galapagos Park Dept. While you may receive a published itinerary prior to your departure, itineraries are always subject to change.

On rare occasions, due to unforeseen circumstances the boat planned for your departure may go out of service. In such cases we attempt to substitute a boat of equal or better quality. While we work only with trusted boat owners who have proven their reliability, certainly with cruising, anything can happen at any time.

Most 8-day itineraries cruise to both the southern and northern islands. All yachts stop at the Charles Darwin Research Station. Some go to Isabela Island in the West end, and some get to Tower Island, farther north. Only certain yachts which travel faster can reach these farther islands.

Below is a typical 8-day cruise itinerary (our website shows itineraries for each specific yacht:)

Day 1	**Morning:**	Flight to Baltra Island, Galapagos
	Afternoon:	Santa Cruz Island - Las Bachas Beach
Day 2	**Morning:**	Santiago Island - Puerto Egas
	Afternoon:	Bartolomé Island
Day 3	**Morning:**	Santa Cruz Island - Cerro Dragón
	Afternoon:	Rábida Island
Day 4	**Morning:**	Isabela Island - Tagus Cove
	Afternoon:	Isabela Island - Elizabeth Bay
Day 5	**Morning:**	Fernandina Island - Punta Espinoza
	Afternoon:	Isabela Island - Punta Vicente Roca
Day 6	**Morning:**	Santa Cruz Island - Puerto Ayora
	Afternoon:	Santa Cruz Island - Highlands
Day 7	**Morning:**	Española Island - Gardner Bay
	Afternoon:	Española Island - Punta Suárez
Day 8	**Morning:**	Santa Cruz Island - Black Turtle Cove
	Afternoon:	Departure from Baltra

WHEN TO BOOK

Galapagos cruises book up far in advance. Popular dates can fill up one to two years in advance, while lower season dates may have availability several months in advance. We cannot stress enough to book your cruise as early as possible. It's hard to plan so far in advance, but if you wait until the last minute, chances are there will not be space available on any yacht, no less finding the yacht you prefer. It's always helpful if you have some flexibility in your dates. Each yacht cruises on different days of the week.

CHARTERS

All yachts are available for charter. This is an excellent way to have your own private yacht with friends and/or family. Make sure you contact us well in advance!

DIVING

Recently, the Galapagos Parks Department has curtailed most diving activity in Galapagos. Currently there are only a few yachts that are allowed to offer diving. There is only one that offers an all-dive cruise. A couple of others offer 3 dives during a naturalist cruise. Other options are to stay at a hotel on Santa Cruz Island where you can take dive day cruises. Only experienced divers are recommended to dive in Galapagos due to very heavy currents and cold water.

DONATING / GALAPAGOS CONSERVANCY / IGTOA

Andean Treks Inc is a proud member of IGTOA, a nonprofit association of travel companies, conservation organizations, and other groups that are dedicated to the complete and lasting protection of the Galapagos.

IGTOA's mission is to preserve the Galapagos Islands as a unique and priceless world heritage that will provide enjoyment, education, adventure and inspiration to present and future generations of travelers.

We have joined with IGTOA and other of its members in a new initiative to raise funds by asking for an optional donation of $50 from each of our travelers to the Galapagos. We believe that the travel industry and those who visit the Galapagos must meet the great challenge of preserving this priceless park. Without our help the future of the Galapagos Islands is not secure. Galapagos National Park fees are not enough and do not support critical scientific, conservation, and education work.

With your donation you'll receive a year's membership in the Galapagos Conservancy*, one of a worldwide network of Friends of Galapagos organizations (www.galapagos.org.) They will send you updates, newsletters, and special offers. For more information on IGTOA, please visit their website www.igtoa.org

*__Galapagos Conservancy__

Formerly known as the Charles Darwin Foundation, Inc. (CDF), the Galapagos Conservancy (GC) advocates for the lasting protection of the Galapagos Islands through programs of constituency building, education and fundraising in North America. GC raises more than $2 million annually to fund the conservation work of the Charles Darwin Foundation and the Galapagos National Park Service, and supports local actors in Galapagos that work in partnership with the CDF and the GNPS. GC manages $4.5 million in endowed funds to support conservation in Galapagos.