

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

Trip Information

- **Arrival airport: San Cristóbal Airport (SCY)**
- **Departure airport: San Cristóbal Airport (SCY)**

Flights and Transfers

The liveboard price includes transfer between San Cristobal Airport or local hotels and MV Galapagos Master on the day of embarkation and disembarkation.

If you are staying in San Cristobal Island before your liveboard, please inform us of your hotel name. On the day of embarkation, our staff will meet you at your hotel to pick up your luggage in the morning and they will inform you about the arrangements for the transfer to the boat.

We offer a range of domestic flights with preferential rates, personal check in and arrival service and transfers. We can also book hotels and excursions in the Galapagos Islands or on the mainland for before and/or after your trip.

Advice on International Flights

We suggest that you book international flights to arrive into and out of Quito, Mariscal Sucre International Airport (UIO) in Ecuador, although you can use Guayaquil International Airport if it is more convenient, and that you arrive in Ecuador one day before the liveboard departure so that you are well rested before the start of the cruise.

If you are not staying in Galapagos or Ecuador for additional nights after disembarkation, please book an evening departure for your international flight to allow plenty of time for the domestic arrival and international check in.

Visa and Passports

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.

A mandatory 20 USD fee for the Ingala Transit Control Card has to be paid by all domestic passengers at Guayaquil or Quito Airports, depending on where you board your flight to San Cristobal.

Upon arrival at the airport in San Cristobal, a 100 USD Galapagos National Park Tax must be paid in cash.

Advice on Domestic Flights

Domestic flights to San Cristobal operate from both Quito and Guayaquil.

Master Liveboards have a reserved seating allowance and preferential pricing on Avianca flights which fit with embarkation and disembarkation times for all guests boarding Galapagos Master in San Cristobal. We recommend that you authorise us to hold your seat when confirming your liveboard booking in order to take advantage of our fixed preferential pricing and service.

For your convenience we include the Ingala Transit Control Card fee in your flight price and pay it on your behalf.

Guests booking their domestic flights through us also benefit from an increased checked luggage allowance of 30kg, airport assistance, and priority check-in.

Please contact our reservations team, or your booking agent, for details on current flight pricing. We can also book other flights into the islands if you wish to extend your stay, please enquire for details via dive@masterliveboards.com.

Please note that tickets are issued by the airline no earlier than 21 days in advance of the flight.

Please be advised that, if you choose to book your domestic tickets through other avenues, you will be required to pay for the Ingala Transit Control Card in cash at the airport in Guayaquil or Quito, prior to check-in.

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.

Insurance

Insurance which covers scuba diving is mandatory aboard all of our vessels. All guests are also required to carry full travel and cancellation insurance, in accordance with our [Terms and Conditions](#). We cannot be held liable for delays occurring during the cruise, nor any delays or cancellations of flights, accommodations or tours and transfers that we organise on your behalf.

Your insurance must cover all of your scuba diving and snorkelling activities, including the costs for recompression chamber treatment and emergency air evacuation. We therefore

strongly recommend purchasing diving-specific insurance to cover any diving related eventuality.

We act as a referrer for DiveAssure who offer dive and travel insurance policies, including short term and multiple trip policies. Their comprehensive 'Dive & Travel Plus' plan has been specifically developed for diving liveaboard holidays and covers expenses in the event of missing your liveaboard departure due to flight delays or missed connections, and also provides cover for lost diving days if for any reason the boat is required to abort the cruise; for instance, due to a guest injury, mechanical breakdown of the ship, air supply failure, inclement weather conditions, etc.

Please consult our webpage for details and direct link to DiveAssure's booking portal: www.masterliveboards.com/insurance.

Diving Information

Diving in the Galapagos can be challenging, even for experienced divers. There are often tough conditions and strong currents at certain dive sites which make the diving unsuitable for entry level divers or those who have not dived in similar conditions before.

Guests' Level of Diving

It is mandatory for guests wishing to participate in scuba diving aboard Galapagos Master to have a minimum of PADI Advanced Open Water certification, or equivalent, with at least 50 logged dives, and to show their certification card(s) and record of logged dives when they are onboard.

If our dive crew feels that you do not have the relevant skills or experience to dive the more challenging sites safely, they may stipulate that you sit out some dives.

Any guests who do not meet the minimum mandatory certification and experience requirements, or who the crew feel have insufficient experience in certain conditions, may be denied participation in some or all dives during the liveaboard.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the diving conditions please contact our reservations team directly.

Fit to Dive

All divers are responsible for ensuring that they are fit to dive, and are required to complete a medical statement upon arrival in resort. Guests who have any symptoms that could be restrictive to diving will need to obtain a doctor's note clearing them to dive, prior to arriving in resort.

If you are unable to complete the statement as directed, or provide a current doctor's certificate (less 1 year old) clearing you to dive, you accept that you may not be able to take part in certain aspects of the holiday you have booked with us.

The medical statement can be found on our website at www.masterliveboards.com/forms.

Diving Safety

Use of a dive computer and safety sausage (SMB) is compulsory on Galapagos Master.

Guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and must stay within the limits of their certification, follow dive computer guidelines and make a safety stop at the end of each dive.

Flying after Diving

Current studies indicate that you should wait at least 24 hours after multiple days with repetitive diving before flying. Please keep this in mind when you book your onward international or domestic flights.

Diving Emergencies

In the unlikely event that a dive accident occurs while diving in Galapagos, 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 personnel 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 have dive specific insurance which covers emergency evacuation, recompression chamber and medical treatment costs.

As per our [Terms & Conditions](#) adequate dive insurance and travel insurance are mandatory.

Water Temperature and Exposure Suits

Water temperature ranges from 21° - 30°C (70° - 86°F) between December and May, but 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 throughout and divers are advised to bring suitable thermal protection for the cooler temperatures. Guests who feel the cold easily, especially with repeated diving, are advised to bring an extra vest/hood/shorty for use with your regular protection. Please bring gloves for support in strong currents.

Diving Equipment

We have 5mm and 7mm long exposure suits available to rent on board Galapagos Master which can be used in conjunction with your own exposure equipment.

All rental equipment is subject to availability and must be pre-ordered as it is not stored on the boat. Please let us know of your rental equipment requirements when confirming your liveaboard booking.

Rental costs can be viewed under 'Extras' on the Galapagos Master page of our website: www.masterliveboards.com/boats/galapagos-master.

A 12 litre tank, SMB, weight belt and weights are provided free of charge.

We have a limited number of 15 litre aluminium tanks which are available at an additional cost by special request only, and must be pre-booked.

General Information

Advanced Passenger Information (API)

There are certain details that we require for the airlines and our own administrative purposes prior to travel. Guests are required to submit the required information via our secure online portal at www.masterliveboards.com/portal.

Forms

It is a requirement for all guests to complete the following forms prior to or upon arrival in resort - medical statement, liability releases, and safe standard practice statement, which can be found at www.masterliveboards.com/forms.

To save some time, and to ensure you have no pre-existing conditions that could affect your diving, you can download the forms from the above link, fill in, and bring them along. By completing and signing the forms, you are confirming that you have read, understood, and agree to the conditions outlined in the forms

If you are unable to complete the forms as instructed, you accept that you may not be able to take part in certain aspects of the holiday you have booked with us.

Time Zone

The local time on the mainland of Ecuador is 5 hours behind UTC/ GMT; Galapagos is an extra hour behind: UTC/ GMT -6hrs

Money Matters

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

Language and Religion

The primary language spoken in Galapagos is Spanish; on the mainland the indigenous language, Quechua, is also widely spoken.

The population is 80% catholic with the remainder being 10% protestant and 10% mostly atheist or agnostic. There is a resurgence of native belief systems that revere Pacha Mama (Mother Earth) and emphasise the harmonious coexistence with nature

All Dive and Safety briefings on Galapagos will generally be in English, although the crew also speak Spanish. If you do not speak or understand either language, please let us know.

Health

There are two hospitals in the Galapagos Islands, although services are limited and the facilities are unsophisticated.

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.

Vaccinations

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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have had all of the required vaccinations for the countries you are visiting. Please contact your health adviser, pharmacy, or nearest travel clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for the latest advice if you are unsure which vaccinations you need.

Climate and Weather

The Galapagos Islands straddle the equator and 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).

Life on Board

The main features of the vessel can be seen here:
www.masterliveboards.com/boats/galapagos-master

Galapagos Master crew generally speaks English and Spanish. If you do not speak or understand either of these languages, please let us know.

Accessibility

Due to the layout of the boat, Galapagos Master may provide challenges, or be unsuitable for guests with limited mobility, and is not suitable for wheelchairs. Please contact us for further details if you have any concerns.

Accommodation

Maximum capacity on Galapagos Master is 16 guests in 8 double occupancy cabins. Single occupancy may be available on request, and is subject to a supplemental charge.

Cabin Facilities

All cabins have individually controllable air-conditioning and private en-suite bathrooms with centrally heated hot water. Other facilities include towels, bathrobes, and lockable safety boxes.

Food and Drink

Meals are provided on a full board basis including a light breakfast, full breakfast, lunch and dinner served buffet style in the indoor dining area. A complimentary range of carbonated soft drinks, fruit juices and teas are available at all times as well as instant and fresh brewed coffee, snacks and fresh fruit. Please note that due to plastics restrictions in place in the Galapagos, diet sodas can be very difficult to source.

Guests may also select beer, wine, or spirits from our cocktail bar for an additional charge.

We offer a choice of International and locally inspired cuisine and can cater to special dietary requirements with advance notice. Should you have any specific dietary needs, allergies, or special requests, please advise your sales consultant at the time of confirming your liveaboard trip to ensure we are able to make provisions for your needs.

Please note: It can be very difficult to find low-fat or soya products that are common elsewhere. While we always do our best to accommodate dietary requests, we do require advance notice. Please consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk or seriously compromise your enjoyment of your holiday.

Clothing and Footwear

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

We 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

Galapagos Master has both 220V and 110V US style power outlets. There are a limited number of universal adapters available for guests to use, although we do advise guests bring their own to ensure you have the amount necessary.

Staying connected

We regret that we are unable to provide an internet service on board Galapagos Master. Many of the sites visited during the Galapagos Master liveaboard are very remote and internet

service is intermittent at best. Most cell or mobile phones which have 'roaming' will function periodically during your cruise. However, service signal strength can be very weak, and some areas may have no signal at. The cost of calls made is determined by your service provider.

We 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.

Smoking

Smoking on board is permitted in designated outdoor areas.

Underwater Photography and Videography

Galapagos Master offers 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.

Environmental considerations

We kindly ask our guests to consider the following to help with our mission to reduce our environmental impact in the Galapagos Islands.

Batteries

While some batteries may be available to purchase on board, please bring extras if your personal dive equipment may require a unique size, or need a lot of replacement batteries during your trip. We kindly request that you take spent batteries home so that they can be recycled or disposed of properly. Alternatively, consider using rechargeable batteries as there are plenty of sockets to plug in a charger on board.

Water Bottles

We are dedicated to becoming single use plastic free across all of our fleets. Plastic straws and stirrers have been banned on all of our boats and we do not provide single use plastic bottles on board.

If you own a sports bottle, we simply ask that you bring it with you, or you can purchase one on board. If you don't have one and you don't want to purchase one, we have plenty of cups on board which you can use to ensure you remain well hydrated.

Plastic bags and wrappers

We do not provide plastic bags for purchases made on board, although reusable canvas bags are available for sale. Please help use minimise plastic waste by removing plastic wrappers

and packaging from items before travelling. If you bring plastic bags with you, please reuse them, and take them home.

Toiletries & Sunscreens

We kindly ask that guests consider the type of products which they are bringing with them and, where possible, to bring environmentally friendly toiletries and reef-safe sunscreens for use on board, and to take partially or unused products home with them.

Payments on Board

On board extras and payments

Additional charges on board for items such as laundry, alcoholic drinks, and Galapagos Master merchandise as well as equipment which has not been paid for in advance can be paid in cash only.

Additional costs for equipment rental and Nitrox can be viewed under 'Extra' on the Galapagos Master page of our website:

www.masterliveboards.com/boats/galapagos-master.

All prices on board are quoted in USD and payment is preferred in USD, although we can also accept Euro, GBP, and AUD. However, due to very poor bank exchange rates in the Galapagos, we strongly suggest that you bring sufficient USD cash with you for any extra payments and crew tips on board.

Please note that we are unable to accept any card payments on Galapagos Master.

Tipping

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, 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 dive 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.

Tips can only be accepted in cash.

Safety on Board

Emergency Management & Equipment

Galapagos Master 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. The vessel is equipped with modern safety features such as automated life rafts, EPIRB, satellite communication and emergency pumps.

First Aid

Galapagos Master is 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. There is 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 team 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.

Extending your holiday

Travelling within Ecuador and the Galapagos can be made exceptionally easy when you book with Master Liveaboards. As well as a range of domestic flights, we can also offer hotels, excursions and tour packages, which can be arranged for before and/or after your trip.

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 Galapagos Master representative who will transfer you to the boat. 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. Prices for these and other add-ons vary depending on the time of booking. Please contact our reservations team at dive@masterliveboards.com or ask your agent for more information and other possibilities.

FAQs

If there are any questions that have not been answered, please visit our website at www.masterliveboards.com/faq/ or e-mail dive@masterliveboards.com and our team will be happy to assist you.

Contact Information

Thailand Office - Master Liveboards

10/512 Moo 3,
Tambon Vichit,
Muang Phuket 83000,
Thailand

Open Monday - Friday 08:30 - 18:30 and Saturday 09:00 - 17:00 ICT (UTC+7)

Web: www.masterliveboards.com

Email: dive@masterliveboards.com

Thailand Office: +66 (0) 76 367 444

UK number: +44 (0) 208 099 2230

USA (Toll Free): +1 866 258 6398

WhatsApp: +66 (0) 93 574 4529

Galapagos - Emergency only

Galapagos Master Operations Mobile (Juan Carlos): +593 99 342 4409

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

Galapagos Master Travel Manager: +593 984630496

What to Bring

The following is a check list of items that you should ensure to bring with you for your trip aboard a Master Liveboards vessel.

Passport

6 month validity & at least 2 empty pages for visa stickers and stamps

Travel Documents

Flight tickets - International & Domestic; hotel booking; excursions

Cash & Credit Card for emergencies

Recommended amount (additional to park & port fees): 250 - 500 USD
Airport Departure Tax in local currency

Diving Certification & Logbook

Including Nitrox Card if certified & intending to use Nitrox

Travel and Diving Insurance Documents

To include emergency medical evacuation

Essential Diving Items

Dive computer with full battery

Toiletries & Medications

Including sunscreen & insect repellent
Inform booking team of medical conditions

Essential Clothing Items

Swimwear, hat and lightweight jacket

Guests are strongly advised to carry essential items in hand luggage in case of lost or delayed luggage through International or Domestic Flights.