



ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE IN THE GALÁPAGOS

AUGUST 2023 - 3 CREDITS



This course will introduce the unique environments and the culture of the Galápagos Islands and Ecuador while integrating ecological topics including biodiversity, adaptation and evolution, biogeography, endemism, and conservation biology. Students will learn about the history and geology of the islands, explore diverse ecosystems in both marine and terrestrial environments, and will see wildlife species including giant tortoises, sea turtles, marine iguanas, frigatebird, sea lions, whales, Galapagos penguins, Darwin's finches, sharks, and many more. Students will also learn about human impacts on the islands resulting from climate change, invasive species, and tourism. The itinerary includes visits to Quito, Isabela Island, Santa Cruz Island, San Cristobal Island, and the Mindo Cloud Forest. Activities include hiking, snorkeling, a volcano walk, and a visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station to meet with scientists and environmental educators. Students should plan to meet an hour every other Monday at 5 PM during the spring 2023 semester as part of the course. This will help maximize students' experience while traveling and prepare them for their trip. The entire course will be worth 3 credits (spring meetings and August trip). Cost estimate: \$5500-6000 – Includes round-trip airfare from Indianapolis, hotels, transportation (includes busses, ferry, and boat travel between the islands), EF Tour guide, local National Park guides, entrance fees to national park, some meals.

INSTRUCTORS

Dr. Liz Flaherty | eflaher@purdue.edu

Dr. Kristen Bellisario | kbellisa@purdue.edu

Megan Gunn | mlgunn@purdue.edu

APPLY
NOW





College Study Tours

Environment & Culture in the Galápagos

Day 1: Fly to Ecuador Meet your Tour Director at the airport

Arrive in Quito: Touch down in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Depending on your arrival time, you may have free time to settle in and explore the city on your own.

Enjoy dinner: If arriving before 8pm, you'll join your group for dinner.

Day 2: Quito

Take a tour of Quito: Carved into a narrow plateau high above the Andean valleys, Ecuador's capital is overshadowed by soaring peaks and the looming Pichincha Volcano. On your sightseeing tour, explore the wellpreserved colonial quarter of Quito, where wrought-iron balconies and majestic stone pillars grace its 300-year-old plazas, churches, and palaces. The area was declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations in 1978. Stroll amid the shady palm trees and colorful gardens of Independence Plaza, and admire the stunning Government Palace, and visit the charming Santo Domingo Monastery.

Take and excursion to the Equatorial Line: Stand exactly on the equator, the namesake of Ecuador.

Visit the Intinan Museum: At the Intinan Museum, a guide will conduct several experiments to demonstrate what happens at the midpoint of the planet. If you've ever wanted to stand in both hemispheres at once, this is your chance.

Enjoy dinner: Join your group for a dinner this evening.

Day 3: Quito | Baltra Island | Santa Cruz Island

Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station: Operated by the Charles Darwin Foundation, the research station is home to a team of more than a hundred scientists, educators, volunteers, research students, and support staff from all over the world. Observe how they conduct scientific research and promote environmental education.

Fly to Baltra Island: Fly from Quito to Baltra Island, arriving in the ecological paradise of the Galápagos Islands. In 1959, the archipelago was declared a national park in order to protect its unique flora and fauna, including giant tortoises (from which the islands took their name), iguanas, penguins, cormorants, and Darwin's 13 species of finches.

Santa Cruz Island: Stop in the highlands of Santa Cruz. Observe the unique and diverse vegetation zones of the area. The area is also excellent for observing wild tortoises, some of which have been known to live longer than 150 years.

Visit the Twin Craters and the Lava Tunnels: Explore two exciting volcanic landscapes, caused either by volcanic uprising or by hot molten lava flowing away from a volcano; walking on what was once molted rock.

Lunch and dinner: Lunch and dinner are included this day.

Day 4: Santa Cruz Island | Isabela Island

Travel by boat to Isabela Island: Head to Isabela Island, the largest island of the Galápagos and home to the charming and peaceful Puerto Villamil fishing village.

Experience Isabela Island: Feel the magic of the Galápagos as you participate in activities on Isabela Island. Visit a pink flamingo habitat, see penguins, sea lions, iguanas, and whitetip reef sharks as you snorkel in the Pacific Ocean, and explore Puerto Villamil beach.

Visit the Tintorerías Lava Islet: Explore the formation of its landmass over one million years ago in a merger of six shield volcanoes—all of which are still active today—on a volcano walk.

Take a boat tour: Explore the island on a boat tour like no other.

Lunch and dinner: Lunch and dinner are included this day.

Day 5: Isabela Island | Santa Cruz Island

Travel by boat to Santa Cruz Island: Head to Santa Cruz Island, home to many sea turtles and marine iguanas.

Snorkeling: Go snorkeling in Las Grietas and enjoy free time on the beach.

Lunch and dinner: Lunch and dinner are included this day.

Day 6: Santa Cruz Island | San Cristóbal Island

Travel by boat to San Cristóbal Island: San Cristóbal Island is one of the most dramatic lunar-like landscapes in the archipelago.

Experience San Cristóbal: Here you'll enjoy a hike up Tijeretas Hill, visit the San Cristobal Interpretation Center, go snorkeling at La Lobería Beach, and explore La Lobería—a piece of coast famously named for the large number of sea lions resting on the rocks and sand of its shoreline.

Lunch and dinner: Lunch and dinner are included this day.

Day 7: San Cristóbal | Quito

Enjoy morning activities in San Cristóbal: Choose between a walk to Punta Carola, where you'll discover frigate birds, Galápagos sea lions, and blue-footed boobies, or a shopping excursion.

Fly to Quito: Transfer to the San Cristóbal airport and board your flight for Quito, where you'll spend the night.

Enjoy dinner: Gather with your group to reflect on today's activities over dinner.

Day 8: Quito

Excursion to Mindo Cloud Forest: Nestled on the slopes of the Pichincha Volcano near the southern edge of the Choco-Andean Corridor, Mindo is home to more than 300 different species of tropical birds and nearly 400 types of orchids. Keep an eye out for Chestnut-Mandibled Toucans or Club-Winged Manakins, which flourish in the lush forest's moist, cool conditions.

Lunch and dinner: Lunch and dinner are included this day.

Day 9: Return home