

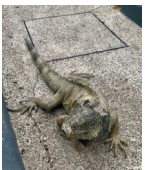
ECUADOR– GALAPAGOS Nov: 2024



Well, this certainly was an experience. I went here on a tour and to be honest, I would do the whole experience a bit differently. I would want to see more of the wildlife and do more snorkeling. That of course is dependent on the time of year one goes and cost of everything else. Ecuador is a developing country filled with volcanos and a mountainous landscape. We flew into Quito– the capital. It has old colonial charm with Spanish influence. It's clean and the people seem humble and friendly. The main attraction in the city this time of year was the majestic naivety scene complete with sound, rain clouds, movements and historical accuracy of biblical times. Very intricate and indeed a work of pride. There are definitely some upscale signs of progress in the restaurants and shopping of the city but...to me, the reason to go to Ecuador is for the GALAPAGOS. The first layover on our tour was in the Amazon forest– our cabins were cute huts with thatched roofs but little electricity or running water. After settling in, we did a late walking tour and ventured into the forest. It was like being in a sauna for two hours– wet, humid with lots of bugs and things that bite. There were also a lot of “be careful” moments which gave us the spooky night tour experience. The next day, we did see monkeys. Lot's of action and noise atop those trees. Okay I appreciate the awesome contribution that the rain forest gives to our planet but.... as my husband used to say...we can read about it in a book.



Next stop was San Christobal Island. The sealions are taking over everything. Yes, is the name of keeping things as natural as possible, the sealions are everywhere. They are basking in the sun at the beaches, on the sidewalks, the rocks, the steps, and even on top of the benches. It's a complicated relationship between nature and humans as tourism grows. Now I cannot complain. Just seeing the BLUE footed boobie– up close and actually sitting on an egg– was worth the whole vacation! It really was exciting to see so much of nature so close and totally free of fear. Iguanas are everywhere, I actually dared to pet one. These are very prehistoric lizards draped on tree branches or any sunshine spot for the warmth of the day. There are many, many different kinds of birds. They too have their desired spots and stay motionless as if posing for a photo opportunity.



One of my favorite tours was to the natural Giant Tortoise Reserve where we saw a lot of these unique and endangered reptiles. They were a very protected super large area giving them lots of room to roam and even play in the nearby pools of water. And I must say, they were active! I had a friend who did a tour here with National Geographic and she said.....she never saw this place. They only saw tortoises from afar while on some walking tours. I loved these gentle giants! It was fantastic to see them so close.



We had several opportunities to snorkel. Luckily I had my wet suit....the water is cold. There wasn't much to see with the places chosen for us. But I hear tell, it was fantastic on Kick Rock Island. Also there is where we could have seen the RED footed boobie. From the pictures they look even more odd. It almost seems like they are a wooden fake all painted with red, white and blue. It might be worth going again just for the promise of going to the other islands. All in all, Ecuador is a fascinating place of contrasts and complications. It offers the world it's discovery of evolution and continues to teach us the inevitability of constant change.