

GALAPAGOS: From 1st July, Red Carpet Treatment for Vaccinated Travellers

It's official. From 1st July, anyone who is fully vaccinated can enter the Galapagos islands without any other COVID testing.

PUERTO AYORA, GALAPAGOS,
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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Starting on 1 July, travellers to the iconic Galapagos Islands will be spared the logistical headache, the discomfort and the price of having to undertake one, and possibly even 2 PCR tests. Until then, on arrival in Galapagos, they will still need to show evidence of a negative PCR test no older than 96 hours (4 days) prior to arrival.



The 14 passenger Samba is a typical mid-range expedition ship in Galapagos.

As vaccines are rolled out, and as more and more people are fully vaccinated, this will make things a lot easier for travellers. “The 4 day window was too tight for many to take the PCR test at home, before their international departure, and make it to Galapagos”, says Heather Blenkiron, owner of [CNH Tours](#) – a Galapagos travel company based in Ottawa, and also the TripAdvisor Destination Expert for Galapagos.

“

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*Heather Blenkiron,
TripAdvisor Destination Expert
for Galapagos*

The Galapagos Islands are the jewels in the crown of global wildlife destinations. Well-conserved, visitors on small ship expedition cruises there can expect to swim with sea lions, penguins, sea turtles and even sharks, sometimes on the same outing. “The islands are the last place on Earth where reptiles dominate the landscape – just like in Jurassic Park” says Blenkiron. In pre-COVID times, 75,000 people a year

booked a cruise there.

“Many of my guests had to take a PCR test at home before their flight to Ecuador, and once on

the Ecuadorian mainland, take yet another test for their flight to Galapagos. That's a real turnoff for a lot of people" Blenkiron explains. She indicated that a lot of people were holding back on their Galapagos travel plans until travel logistics became less onerous.

The Government of Ecuador only recently allowed proof of full vaccination, at least 14 days earlier, as sufficient for entry into the country's mainland. However, in Galapagos, the requirement for a negative PCR test was maintained. This difference irked the residents of Galapagos, whose adult population was fully vaccinated in an April-May campaign. "Tourism was completely dead after COVID hit last year" says Fernando Ortiz, a long time naturalist guide and Galapagos resident. "Things have picked up a bit, but I estimate that we're only at 10-15% of what we had before COVID".

Confidence in Galapagos travel was further bolstered earlier this week when the US State Department reduced its travel advisory to Ecuador from the maximum Level 4 (do not travel) to a less alarming Level 3 (reconsider travel).

"I'm getting an increasing amount of inquiries – mostly from Americans who have been vaccinated and are eager to travel. Bookings are starting to go up. I suspect that once this news gets out a bit more, things will ramp up quickly" says Blenkiron.

CNH Tours has been helping people plan their Galapagos trip of a lifetime since 1999. Their two front line staff lived and worked in Galapagos for a collective 16 years and they travel back regularly. A 9 night package, including 2 nights in Quito and 7 nights aboard a decent, 16 passenger ship, and domestic flights starts at about US\$5,000 / person, from Quito.



Galapagos marine iguana - where reptiles continue to dominate



Volcanic eruptions: A rare but unforgettable Galapagos scene

Heather Blenkiron
CNH Tours
+1 613-612-6269
[email us here](#)

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