

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS ARE OPEN AGAIN AND ATTRACTING VISITORS



The impressive and unique flora and fauna of the Galapagos Islands attract thousands of travelers each year. But the coronavirus has brought tourism to a standstill on the islands belonging to Ecuador. After a long wait, however, the country is finally sending positive news to the world.

Both Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands have been open to foreign guests since 1 July. Ecuador is not on the list of states and areas with an increased risk of infection of the Federal Office of Public Health. The National Emergency Operations Committee (EOC) has approved the islands for commercial air travel. **In addition, hotels, the national park, restaurants, and ferries are resuming operations, if this has not already happened.** Many of the small expedition cruises will take place again from August.

Nevertheless, there are some restrictions for arriving guests in order not to fall under the two-week quarantine obligation:

- Presentation of a negative COVID-19 PCR test (valid for 96 hours)
- Registration of the full itinerary for the islands through a local tour operator with the Ministry of Tourism
- Galapagos transit control card (online registration up to 24 hours before departure)
- Digital boarding pass
- Health and temperature control at the airport

A negative COVID 19 test is also required for entry into mainland Ecuador and is valid for seven days. All major national parks, museums and the entire tourist infrastructure will be open during the month of July. The international airport Mariscal Sucre in Quito has been open again since June 1st.

Airlines such as United Airlines, American Airlines, Air Europa, Iberia and KLM already offer several weekly flights to the Latin American country. Domestic flights have been operating daily since June to major domestic cities such as Cuenca, Guayaquil, Coca, Esmeraldas and Loja with the airlines Avianca Ecuador and Latam Ecuador. Guayaquil airport will open for international flights on July 9th.

In order to protect guests and employees of the tourist businesses from infection with the coronavirus, **the EOC has worked with the ministries and suppliers to draw up a series of hygiene protocols and is currently monitoring the nationwide implementation and training on all measures.** Many firms have already been certified.

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