

Ecuador

Guayaquil and Galapagos Islands



Santa Ana - Guayaquil



Guayaquil, Ecuador

Airports: MPMG (Panama) to SEGU (Guayaquil)

Distance: 700 NM

Handler: Edwin

Fuel: World Fuel

Date: 8th January 2020

Customs and immigration clearance was very easy and casual there is always someone who has enough English to understand us. We stay at the Wyndham hotel which is on the broad walk of the Rio Guayas river which is very polluted having waste from industry and effluent human waste flowing into it. The colour of the water is like a boiling pot of green muck, reminiscent of a Simpson's episode of 3 eyed fish. A simple Google search will show the risk of touching this water, containing cholera, hepatitis, typhoid. To swim in the water on a good day will give you vomiting diarrhea, stomach cramps also severe skin reactions! The worst water samples had 100 times more faecal matter than the legal limit. I'm not sure why there is a "legal limit" and it's difficult to think that anything would survive in that water however we did see 2 fishing boats hand line fishing in front of the hotel. Needless to say I didn't eat fish that night.

All the worst aside we visited a very nice park that was full of iguanas and turtles. We walked through the main part of the city but were very conscious of surroundings as it is not considered to be safe, at night we didn't go out very far, everything was very close to the hotel that was on the Malecon, Las Penas and Santa Ana was all a short walk on the Malecon boardwalk gated off and very safe. There were many good restaurants a theme park and an interesting arthropodal museum with many old statues, dolls and pottery. Nothing was in English but we used google translate and could get the basic picture of the history. A cool respite to the heat and a nice afternoon. We were really just passing our time until our flight to Balta, Galapagos.

Galapagos – Balta Island – Santa Cruz

Commercial Flights leave from many places in Ecuador they stop in Guayaquil to pick up more passengers so the flights are very full. It was not possible to fly the Jet into Balta 600nm (1200km) due to there being no fuel available for general aviation. Upon landing you clear immigration which is a little strange as the flight was considered to be domestic, you



Giant Turtle

must pay \$100USDpp to enter, this is a fee for protection and environment this was on top of a departure tax at Guayaquil of \$20/person. Another \$10 for the bus to the ferry to take you to main Island Puerto Ayora. Bags are scanned again coming in.

We get to the main island from a very short ferry ride with the luggage piled on top of the boat, a bit of a messy operation. Flagging and negotiating a

taxi to take us all the way across to the other side of the Island where the main town is and our accommodation.

We ask to stop along the way to view over an old volcano pit now filled with tropical vegetation and many sounds of bird life around us. There is another negotiation done with the driver and we are taken to a Giant Turtle sanctuary with ancient lava caves.



Black lava rocks - white beach

The drive to the main town is about 30/40mins and we then need to go on another ferry/small boat to get to our resort - every ferry ride is \$1/person and this is the main method of transport at the port.

Our resort is Palo Santo, built 4years ago a medium luxury resort next door to the most luxurious resort of Finches Bay. We are given the best suite which is 78sm one of the largest in Galapagos, the staff are very friendly, restaurant on site is excellent, pool and surroundings are every bit as beautiful as the Finches. The resort is well positioned next to a very good beach and a short walk to an amazing grotto that you can swim and snorkel



Grotto

with fish, locals and many tourists. The short walk there is through old lava rock and pink salt lakes that are being harvested for the famous salted Galapagos fish.

Tortuga Bay is a short boat ride or a few Km walk, to swim with iguana and sharks, lay around on the beach with the iguanas that have no fear of human.



Frigat Bird



Blue footed Boobies

There are many choices for cruising to the various islands to see unique species, we booked the Sea Lion to Seymour Island which is a luxury day cruise with guided walks and free snorkelling time, fully catered lunch and all equipment supplied. Seeing the unique birds of Seymour Island and visiting the Island where the Green Turtle lay their eggs.



Iguana - Seymour Island

We also booked the Wind rose another luxury yacht which went to Isla Santa Fe and Plaza South.

We are told that the Isla Isabela is the most interesting but to do a 2 hour boat ride there and some were saying 4 hours to return in rough sea that everyone was vomiting, was too much, next time we will consider a cruise ship that will do all the Islands or short flights between each Island would be another option.



Vegetation on Santa Fe



Baby Frigat Bird



Kiosk Street open restaurants

Great places we went to eat:

Los Kioskos an entire street with outdoor coal fire BBQ and fresh fish and seafood that you walk along and choose the fish you want.

Our Hotel/Resort – Palo Santo – great food, excellent breakfast.