GALAPAGOSISLANDS.CRUISES · FREE GUIDE

The Galapagos Charter Planner

Everything a group needs to plan a private yacht charter in the Galapagos: boat sizes, timeline, brief checklist, cost structure and the questions to ask.

By local experts who have traveled the islands more than 40 times. We are not a travel agency or a cruise operator: we inform, compare and help you plan. Questions: hola@galapagosislands.cruises

1. What a Galapagos charter is

A private charter means your group books the whole boat: the cabins, the crew and a licensed naturalist guide, on one of the routes the vessel holds park permits for. You decide the pace within each day; the park decides which sites a boat may visit and when.

> **Bareboat charters are not allowed in Galapagos.** Every boat sails with a professional crew and a naturalist guide, by park rules.

2. Match the boat to your group

Group size	Boat type	Shore groups (16 per guide)	Notes
Up to 16	Motor yacht or catamaran	1	The classic private charter
17–20	20-guest yachts and catamarans	2	Few boats; book early
21–48	Small expedition ships	2–3	Corporate, reunions, schools
49–100	Expedition ships	Up to 7	Very few options

Our records list 20 catamarans and 45 motor yachts for up to 20 guests. Catamarans give wide decks and less roll at anchor; motor yachts feel classic and are often quicker between islands.

3. Timeline

When	What to do
12–18 months out	Holiday weeks and large groups: brief and hold dates
9–12 months	School summer and popular months: shortlist and confirm
6–9 months	Other months: compare boats and routes
90–60 days	Typical final payment window (your contract decides)
2 weeks	Final guest list, diets, wetsuit sizes
1 night before	Arrive in Quito or Guayaquil

4. Your charter brief

The more complete the brief, the better the shortlist.

☐ Dates and how flexible they are

☐ Number of adults and children, with ages

☐ Cabin needs (connecting, twins, singles)

☐ Boat preference, if any

☐ Interests: snorkeling, hiking, diving, photography, birding

☐ Mobility, medical or diet notes

☐ Budget range (optional)

5. What makes up the cost

Charters are priced for the whole boat and route. On top of the charter rate, plan for:

- Galapagos National Park entry fee and Transit Control Card (TCT), per guest
- Flights to mainland Ecuador and on to Baltra or San Cristóbal
- Mainland hotel nights
- Gratuities for crew and guide (each vessel publishes a guideline)
- Extras such as drinks, wetsuits or diving

Galapagos National Park entry fee US$200 per foreign adult and US$100 per child under 12, plus the US$20 Transit Control Card (TCT), at the time of writing; the government can change them, so confirm before you travel.

6. Questions to ask before you sign

☐ Which routes does the boat hold permits for on our dates?

☐ How many cabins of each type, and which connect?

☐ Is the guide cabin separate from guest capacity?

☐ What is included and what is not?

☐ What are the deposit, payment and cancellation terms?

☐ What safety equipment and medical support are on board?

☐ Is there a minimum age for children?

7. Families and multi-generation groups

- Choose midship, lower-deck cabins for anyone sensitive to motion
- Ask for shorter hikes and extra snorkel time for young kids
- Calm months (February–May) suit first-timers
- Check the minimum age policy for each boat

8. Next step

Send your brief to **hola@galapagosislands.cruises** or use the online brief builder at https://galapagosislands.cruises/galapagos-tools/charter-brief-builder/. We reply with a shortlist and honest trade-offs.

Reference guide only. Fees, routes and vessel details change; confirm before you book. © 2026 galapagosislands.cruises · hola@galapagosislands.cruises · https://galapagosislands.cruises