

QUASAR

**4** CRITICAL MISTAKES  
**TO AVOID**  
WHEN PLANNING YOUR  
GALAPAGOS TRIP-OF-LIFETIME

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AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR ANYONE VISITING  
DARWIN'S ARCHIPELAGO.



Simply put, Galapagos is a one-of-a-kind destination. There's no other place on earth where you can safely get up close to and interact with wild animals in their natural habitats. Our returning Galapagos Guests send us rewarding comments like these:

“

“For the first time in my life I was a guest in the animal kingdom”

*Bill Morgan*

“

“I honestly thought that if I had to go home after my first full day, that our investment was worth the experience—that is how amazing my first day was, and each day after.”

*Heidi Gigler*



We understand that making the right Galapagos travel choices can seem daunting, with considerations like:

- What's the difference between a hotel-based tour versus cruising on a liveaboard vessel?
- How long should my trip be?
- How do I avoid crowds?
- What kind of Galapagos ship will maximize my experience?
- And many more...

However, simply showing up in the Galapagos won't guarantee the epic wildlife encounters Quasar guests rave about, like being surrounded by hundreds of leaping dolphins, snorkeling with a herd of sea turtles or flock of penguins, delighting at blue-footed-boobies performing their comical dance, or tracking giant tortoises in the wild.

You have to tip the odds in your favor if you want to capture the magic of Galapagos, which is why it's so important to avoid the common mistakes travelers make in the planning stages of your adventure... before you place a deposit.

Over the course of 35 years guiding Galapagos National Park expeditions, Quasar has developed the "perfect recipe" for memorable adventures. It's a reason we were named the best small ship cruise company in the world by *Travel+Leisure* three years in a row. To share our passion for Galapagos, we would like to offer you the following tips to help you avoid common pitfalls in planning your trip-of-a-lifetime.

## MISTAKE I

# Make sure your access to Galapagos National Park is not limited by a hotel-based vacation.



**3%**

Area outside the National Park where the hotels are



**97%**

Area inside the National Park where the landing sites are

Over **97%** of the Galapagos archipelago is a national park, completely off limits to human establishments. Only **3%** of the islands are human-inhabited, where hotels can be built. Therefore, the only way to access the majority of the visitor sites is on a cruise throughout the entire archipelago.

If you are considering a hotel-based visit, one major problem you'll face is how to access the national park. There are roughly 70 terrestrial and 70 marine visitor sites throughout the national park where travelers are permitted to go ashore or go snorkeling to see animals up-close. Only a handful of these landing sites are accessible from the hotels by day boat, usually at additional cost.





Galapagos hotels compete for spaces on day boats that take visitors to landing sites each day. If you are lucky enough to get a seat, each morning starts with having to take a power boat ride to the landing site. Landing site rides can be 2.5 hours each way.

While many travelers think they can avoid getting seasick by staying in a hotel, unfortunately this is not the case. Day boats tend to be small and less seaworthy than liveaboards, and you are more likely to get seasick on them while navigating.

The only way to access the vast majority of landing sites is on a liveaboard vessel that takes you on a voyage through islands. In contrast to day boats, live-aboard yachts travel by night while you are asleep and anchor in calm

waters at your first landing site before you wake up. With immediate shore access, you will have the opportunity to visit two different sites per day for up to 2.5 hours each, along with snorkeling, kayaking and panga/zodiac rides.

When you see a hotel package that seems too good to be true, it's likely because you will average less than half the amount of time in the national park as you would traveling via liveaboard vessel... not to mention the hidden expense of day tours. Hotels give you access to the port towns, which can be fun, but they are not the reason the Galapagos is a premier destination.

When it's finally time for your Galapagos trip, the last thing you want is for your experience to be

limited and your national park access restricted. Hotel stays are best suited for those who want to do some diving or who want to have some downtime either before or after their cruise. They are also better suited for families with toddlers too young to travel aboard most vessels. But, the reality is that overall, liveaboard vessels have the edge when it comes to exploring the islands. Think of a yacht safari as an exclusive floating adventure lodge, complete with off-the-beaten-path adventure activities, rare wildlife encounters, personalized itineraries, and access to the authentic, uninhabited side of the islands.

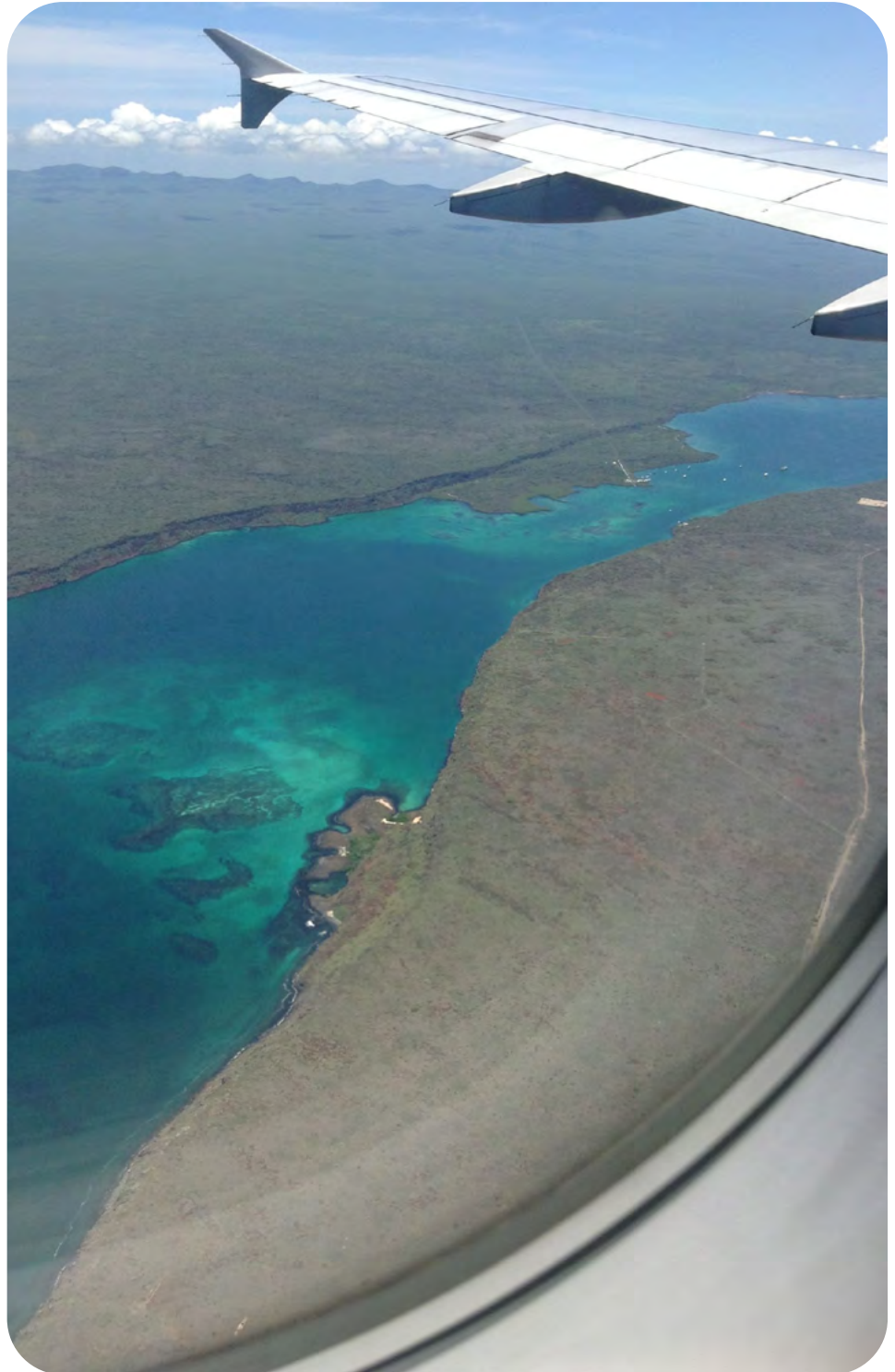
## MISTAKE 2

Allow enough time to collect deeper, more meaningful experiences.

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One of the greatest mistakes people make when planning their Galapagos trip is not budgeting enough time to savor the region's immense, breathtaking landscape, diverse wildlife population, and bountiful outdoor adventures. For most of us, it's both a long way to go and a sizable investment to get to the Galapagos, so it's important to make the experience worth it.

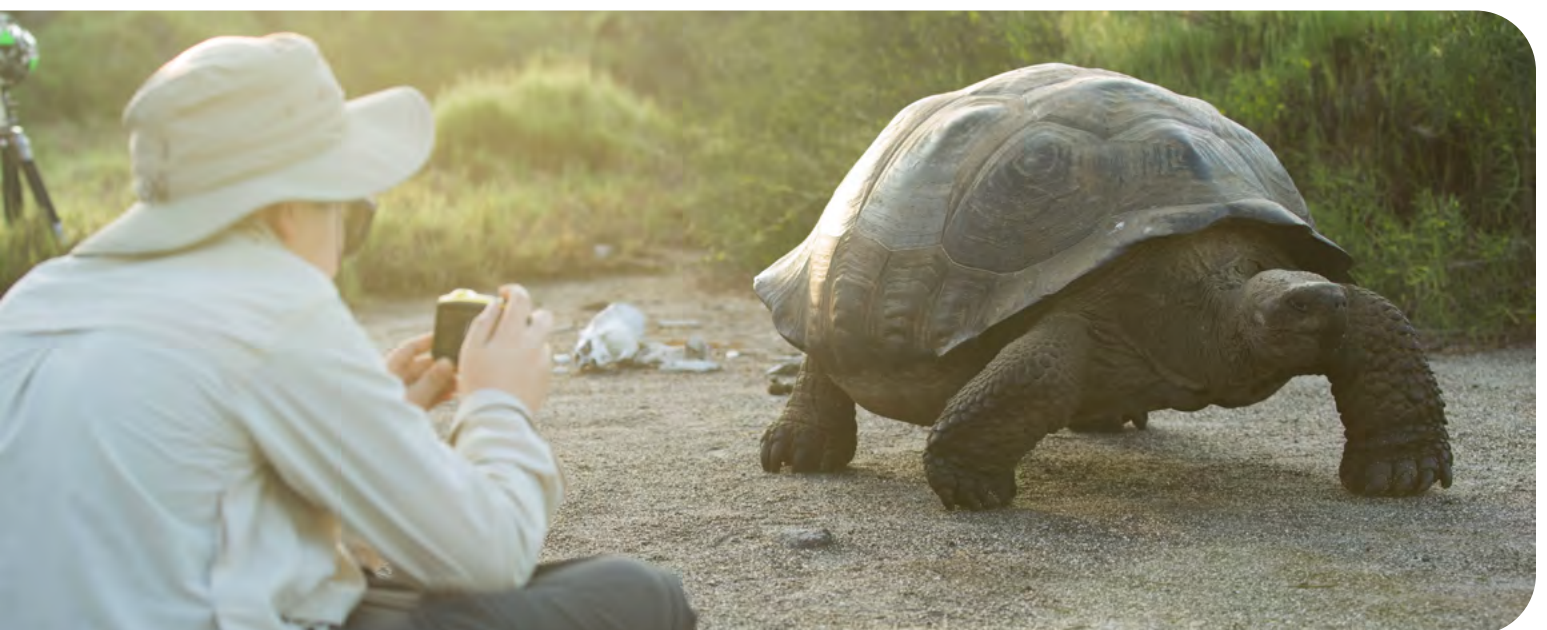
Both the first day you arrive in the Galapagos and the day you return to the mainland are mostly spent traveling. So, for example, if you plan to spend 4 days in the Galapagos, you are really spending 2 visiting the islands. We jokingly call 4-day visits "airport tours." Right about the time you are starting to relax and realize just how many amazing experiences await throughout the archipelago, you have to catch your flight back home.





REMEMBER THAT THE GALAPAGOS ISN'T ABOUT THE PORT TOWNS OR AIRPORTS, IT'S ALL ABOUT RARE FAUNA AND FLORA THROUGHOUT THE NATIONAL PARK.

Our 3 decades operating in the Galapagos have taught us that an 8 day / 7 night cruise is just right to maximize amazing animal encounters, experience the islands from both land and sea, and balance your trip between optimal activity and relaxation.



### MISTAKE 3

Opt for small-group travel to experience Galapagos as a pristine wilderness, not a crowded beach.



Avoid this....

#### DON'T BRING A CROWD ALONG WITH YOU

There are many limitations to consider when traveling with larger groups in the Galapagos.

The Galapagos is unique in that it's a true marine wilderness. The national park has implemented more and more initiatives over time to keep it that way. With an aim to lighten the environmental impact of tourism on landing sites, the Galapagos National Park now requires vessels to wait 14 days before returning to the same site. This has had the positive effect of dispersing vessels evenly throughout the archipelago, ensuring that fewer vessels visit the same landing sites at the same time.

As a result, your Galapagos will be quite intimate... unless you bring a crowd along with you by traveling on a cruise ship carrying 50 to 100 passengers. There are many limitations to consider with larger travel groups in Galapagos.

Galapagos landing sites have single file nature trails. Travelers who prefer more intimate experiences should ask themselves: do I really want to wait at the back of a line to see blue footed boobies doing their mating dance, or go snorkeling with 50 to 100 other tourists?

In favor of this....



#### SMALLER TOUR GROUPS

Maximize your connection to the environment and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Basic tasks also take much longer in larger groups, such as waiting for meals, putting on wetsuits, and lining up to board dinghies / zodiacs. Some cruise ships don't carry enough dinghies for all their passengers, which means you may have to wait for a dinghy to return from the landing site to get you. Extra time spent on logistics results in less time exploring and getting close to wildlife.

Suffice it to say, small ships maximize your connection to the environment and wildlife viewing opportunities. With much smaller tour groups, flexible itineraires, and dedicated naturalist guides, yacht safaris allow you to experience Galapagos away from the crowds.



#### MISTAKE 4

## Opt for a Safari-Style Yacht Adventure instead of the ordinary Galapagos cruise.

Why would Quasar, named the best small-ship cruise company in the world 3 years in a row by *Travel+Leisure*, advise you not to go on a Galapagos cruise? The answer is that many of our passengers tell us they don't typically like cruises, but they love our adventures. So, what's the difference between an ordinary Galapagos cruise and the yacht safari experience Quasar offers?

First, let's look at ordinary cruises. In the cruise business, more is better: more passengers equal more revenues. It's no exaggeration to say that some cruise ships come close to doubling the population of the places they visit when passengers disembark. The only reason there aren't larger cruise ships in the

Galapagos is that the national park set a limit of 100 passengers per vessel—and it's now limiting the number of those vessels as well.

The problem with cruise ships is that most of their features have nothing to do with your experience of the Galapagos, and they often work against your aim of experiencing outstanding animal encounters. Many large cruise ship companies make the experience more about the boat than the destination. In the Galapagos National Park, your experience is really not about the boat. That is why we say, "The boat has to be about the Galapagos." The question is, what is the Galapagos experience all about? The Galapagos provides the opportunity for one of the best

wildlife safaris in the world. It just so happens that to gain access to rare wildlife in their natural habitats, you need to travel by sea. This is why we approach our adventures like a floating safari.

Now, let's look at Quasar's safari-style luxury yacht adventures. When we began operating 35 years ago, passengers coming to the Galapagos cared about one thing: wildlife. For our adventurous travelers, that goal remains true. Early on, Quasar chose to focus on helping Guests become immersed in the natural world, while offering high-quality yachts, cultural cuisine, familial service, expert guides, and a friendly crew to complement the adventure. Our safari-style approach is our means to that end.

## Luxury yachts are ideally suited to the Galapagos safari-style concept for these reasons:

### Optimal Ship Design

- Quasar's agile adventure yachts carry fewer passengers to remote landing sites, allowing you to become immersed in the rare wildlife encounters and majestic landscapes that give Galapagos its "trip of a lifetime" reputation. By offering one-of-a-kind luxury yachts ideally suited to the Galapagos, we maximize your connection to the environment and wildlife viewing opportunities.
- In Galapagos, a balcony restricts your view, because it keeps you confined. How? Cruise ships designed with a tiny balcony for each cabin usually means deck space is sacrificed. Quasar's yachts are designed to feature a main deck that allows you to walk all the way around the perimeter. This layout not only provides unrestricted access to

the surrounding habitat, but is ideal for whale, dolphin and wildlife watching, landscape photography, and star gazing.

- By providing a large amount of outdoor spaces under shade, rather than putting you behind smoked glass as many Galapagos vessels do, you get to relax and enjoy the archipelago's inviting climate. Why would you want to spend your holiday behind smoked glass when it's perfect weather?

### Small Groups

- Just as you wouldn't want to head out into the Serengeti on a bus carrying 100 passengers to see a lion, you don't want to visit a Galapagos landing site with that size of a crowd. We keep our

numbers down to deliver a small group experience aboard ample sized yachts—without sacrificing on cabin space.

- Smaller groups translate into less time on logistics, and more time on activities like hiking, snorkeling, and sea kayaking. This increases the odds of seeing amazing animals in their habitat.
- Small groups and more nimble yachts also mean more flexibility. When we see a pod of dolphins not only do we follow, we often jump in with them! That wouldn't be possible on a cruise ship with 50 to 100 passengers.



## Top Guides

Another pivotal aspect of your trip is the experience level of your Galapagos National Park Guides. The best guides not only have degrees in environmental sciences, but they are also top-notch educators and conservationists.

The most practiced, renowned naturalists are locals with a special passion for their home. They are on a first-name basis with all the rare animals you meet, and they are friendly hosts who love to show you their homeland. The encounters

they help you experience can elevate your understanding of the physical world and leave you feeling not only entertained, but also educated. High-level guides go the extra mile to fulfill the high hopes you have for Darwin-like wildlife, snorkeling, and hiking experiences.

The counter point is a guide who speaks poor English, doesn't know their stuff and is lost when it comes to understanding what it means to be a consummate host. Don't

be fooled by the quantity of guides over quality of guides either, as you will surely find yourself competing with your fellow passengers to be in the group with "the good naturalist."

**Hint:** The best guides in the Galapagos work on the best yachts because they can. Ask for our guide reviews.



## Conclusion

Your Galapagos experience should be about enjoying the national park to its fullest, and getting as close to the archipelago's friendly creatures as often as possible—both on land and at sea. On the trip of lifetime, you will become immersed in the local culture, vibrant scenery, and rare natural habitats.

The best expedition organizations carefully craft itineraries to enhance your adventure, while offering exceptional service and local knowledge—and they tend to be just as unique as Galapagos itself.

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[quasarex.com](http://quasarex.com)

Forbes

Condé Nast  
Traveler

FORTUNE

QUASAR  
AS SEEN ON

Sotheby's

The  
Telegraph

TRAVEL+  
LEISURE



Making lifetime memories shouldn't be overwhelming.

### Who We Are

Quasar Expeditions is a family-owned and operated travel company, specializing in high-end Galapagos cruises. Having served over 75,000 happy travelers, we pride ourselves on offering immersive, authentic adventures that create lifetime memories.

### What We Offer


We offer high-end expeditions that take the guesswork out of adventure travel. All the planning details are taken care of, and our itineraries are designed with 34 years of local experience. You'll enjoy peace of mind knowing that you've booked the trip of a lifetime with Quasar.

Contact a travel advisor for a complimentary consultation at [quasarex.com](https://quasarex.com).



# Claim Your Complimentary Consultation

AND DISCOVER HOW YOU CAN ENJOY THE MOST  
UNBELIEVABLE ADVENTURE OF YOUR LIFE



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**THERE'S NO CATCH.** Your complimentary consultation does not commit you to cruise with Quasar. The worst outcome is that you get a detailed consultation for free to help you plan your trip of a lifetime.

**Important:** Before you claim your free trip planning session, please know that Quasar's Galapagos experiences are not for everyone. Our expeditions are for Guests who value adventure travel, not tourism. They are for travelers seeking authentic connections with culture, wildlife, and the environment. A complimentary consultation with one of our Galapagos experts can help you navigate plans for your perfect

getaway, even if it's not with Quasar.

To reiterate, it's up to you to determine how you want to experience Galapagos. We are only here to provide our expertise so you can plan your most memorable trip yet.

## **YOU DESERVE A CRUISE LINE AS UNIQUE AS YOU ARE**

Our cruises cater to a diverse group of travelers. Many have been all over the world and can't wait to scratch the Galapagos off their bucket lists. Others have only been on a few cruises, but have been dreaming of a small-scale,

luxurious Galapagos getaway for years. The free consultation won't just save you time and provide you expert insights for planning your trip, but you can expect to learn:

- Ways to guarantee a luxurious Galapagos cruise
- How to avoid ending up with inexperienced guides that will ruin an adventure
- The type of yacht you should never book
- The truth about amenities—high-end is possible
- How to never waste money on a Galapagos cruise (now, or in the future)

**CLAIM YOUR FREE  
CONSULTATION NOW**

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