

CNH TOURS GUIDE

Bringing Children to the Galápagos Islands

Heather Blenkiron – Co-owner, CNH Tours

My husband and I moved to Galapagos 3 weeks after getting married. Our first child was born in Ecuador and spent the first nearly 3 years of his life growing up in Galapagos. He went on a cruise twice - once while still in utero - and a 2nd time at 9 months of age.

The Galápagos Islands offer a stimulating and friendly environment for children. With easy access to the sea, welcoming locals, and fearless (and harmless) wildlife, the archipelago can be an extraordinary experience for young visitors. However, careful planning is essential, as suitability varies depending on the child's age and level of maturity.

I've assembled the following recommendations based on my personal experience and on my experience as long time Galapagos travel advisor, helping all kinds of family groups planning their Galapagos family adventure.



Land vs. Cruise with Children

The eternal question! While we unreservedly recommend a cruise over a land-based visit to expose yourself to the most of what Galapagos has to offer, if you're bringing a child along, things can be complicated. A child who has learned to walk, but who has not yet learned some self-discipline and respect for rules and those around him/her can be difficult to bring on a cruise. We generally recommend not bringing children between the ages of about 1 to 7 on a cruise. If that's your situation we recommend a land-based visit or, better yet, waiting until your child / children are old enough to behave and to enjoy snorkeling and also retain lifelong memories of their trip.



Considerations by Age Group

Infants (5–12 months)

Infants who are not yet mobile can often be brought along on a Galápagos cruise without difficulty. They can be carried in baby backpacks during guided walks and may enjoy beach playtime with proper supervision. Their limited mobility makes them easier to manage in the shipboard environment. Be very careful in regard to sun exposure / heat stroke. One parent may need to stay on board with the child for some activities (snorkeling, kayaking etc...).

Toddlers (1–6 years)

Once children become mobile, cruise ships may present safety challenges. The ship's movement can lead to falls and injuries, and the constant need for supervision may make the experience stressful for parents. Misbehaving or crying children will likely not be appreciated by others on your ship - don't forget, this is their trip of a lifetime as well. For these reasons, cruises are generally not recommended for children in this age group.

Young Children (7–11 years)

Children who have developed a sense of personal responsibility can begin to adapt well to the structure of a Galápagos cruise. At this age, they are more likely to understand and respect guidelines such as staying on designated trails, avoiding disturbance to wildlife, and cooperating with the group and guide. Practicing snorkeling and swimming beforehand is encouraged, as marine experiences form a major part of a Galápagos trip. Children aged 7 or 8 and up often demonstrate the discipline necessary to be positive participants. Additionally, children under 12 may be eligible for discounted pricing on cruises.



Teenagers (12 and up)

Reactions to travel opportunities can vary widely among teenagers. Some kids may roll their eyes when given the option of a cruise in Galapagos – but once they are there, they pretty much overwhelmingly have a fantastic time. Still - families should assess whether the teen is likely to engage positively with the Galápagos experience before booking. Again, be sure your kids are comfortable in the water, with a mask and snorkel. Practice / take lessons ahead of time if necessary.

Family Cruises

Some ships offer designated “family cruises,” particularly during school holiday periods such as Christmas, Easter, and the summer months (July/August). These cruises are recommended for families, as they often include other children onboard, creating opportunities for peer interaction and shared experiences. Guides may offer child-focused programming or activities to enrich the experience.



General Advice

Regardless of age, all children should be protected from sun exposure, which is particularly strong near the equator. Parents should also be aware that some cruise operators have minimum age requirements or other restrictions concerning children. It is important to confirm such policies when booking.

11 Good Reasons: Need more insights? See our article: [11 Good Reasons for Going on a Family Cruise in Galapagos.](#)

You'll have a family trip of a lifetime!

Warmest regards,

Heather Blenkiron

Co-owner, CNH Tours