

Q: We've been hearing a lot about ecotourism, where visitors to certain nature sites learn all about species preservation and pollution prevention. On our next trip we'd like to make it ecotourist. What do you suggestion?

A: Good idea. Ecotourism promotes travel that is sensitive to the world's very fragile ecosystem. Trips could include instructions and experience in one or more of the following important subjects: human habitat, animal life, rivers, oceans, forests, deserts, the North and South Poles and other critical subjects.



We suggest you check with your local or online travel agency to consider the many ecotourism vacations offered in the U.S. and throughout the world. For example, the Galapagos Islands, discovered by English Captain Cook in 1683, and later made famous by explorer Charles Darwin nearly two centuries ago. Tours of the islands offer a great variety of how some species and environments are flourishing, although under siege from worldwide pollution and other dangers.

Just a short boat ride from Ecuador's coast in South America, the islands are an almost-untouched treasure of animal and plant life. Some cruise ships also take passengers on excursions to the islands.

Tourists can stroll free among the palms, cacti, mangroves and many other pristine areas, and can see animals that are all but extinct in other parts of the world. Local government rules prevent touching or picking up the animals and birds. There is little fear of humans, so close-up video and photography can be great fun and offer a lifetime of memories.

Among the species on the Galapagos Islands are rare penguins, cormorants, albatross, iguanas, lizards, turtles and sea lions. In the nearby Pacific Ocean waters are sharks, dolphins and whales. For more information, go to [www.galapaguide.com](http://www.galapaguide.com).