

The Galápagos Islands

December 4th – 13th, 2010



Led by
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TOTAL COST: \$ 4,195.00
 (All-inclusive except for int'l air)
 ESTIMATED INT'L AIR: \$300-\$500

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Interpretation Center, where we will summarize our recent experience in Galápagos natural history to gain a more complete understanding of the natural and human history of the Islands. Afterwards, we head to the airport for our flight back to the mainland. Upon arrival in Guayaquil, we transfer to our hotel and enjoy our farewell dinner.

MONDAY: Transfer to Guayaquil airport for our flights back to Miami.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

COST IS BASED ON a minimum group of 8 passengers. Cost is further based on today's (March 2010's) cost quotations and although unlikely, is subject to change according to changes in air fare, hotel rates, fluctuations in international monetary exchange rates, group size and circumstances beyond our control. COST INCLUDES: Local air travel in Ecuador, all cruise expenses, all hotel accommodations in double rooms, all meals, transfers, national park fees, and taxes. COST DOES NOT INCLUDE: Round-trip international airfare to Guayaquil, Ecuador, items not specifically covered in the itinerary, passport fees, airport departure taxes, travel insurance, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, bottled water, laundry, telephone calls, cables, or any other expenses of a personal nature. Cost does not include tips to guides or boat crew. CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS: Full refunds will be made up to 90 days prior to departure, upon receipt of written cancellation. After that date, refunds will be based on moneys recovered by the tour operator subject to the rules and regulations of the hotel and airlines involved. No refunds can be made for any services not used for less than two days or for occasional sightseeing or meals not taken. Refunds will be made solely on residual values received from purveyors of services. Trip cancellation insurance will be made available to you which will cover you should you have to cancel due to medical or family emergency within the 90 days cancellation period. It is recommended that short term accident and sickness insurance be purchased by each person. RESERVATIONS AND FINAL PAYMENT A deposit of \$750 per person is necessary as soon as possible in order to confirm booking. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure, as will be indicated on your receipt for deposit.

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numerous land bird and butterfly photo opportunities in the tall forest here, with many species of Darwin's Finches found right around the station. After lunch, we travel by bus to the highlands. The scenery gradually changes as we wind our way through all seven vegetation zones found in Galápagos. Here, we will find Giant Galápagos Tortoises foraging on grasses and aggregating around the ephemeral ponds in the wild. We visit Los Gemelos, Spanish for "The Twins," which is a pair of large pit craters where we will look for the bright red male Vermilion Flycatcher and the tool-using Woodpecker Finch. We will also make a stop at "the tunnels," where we can walk through the largest lava tubes found in Galápagos. Afterwards, we will take a stroll through the town of Puerto Ayora where you may buy souvenirs, mail postcards, or kick back at an internet cafe in the social heart of the Islands.

SATURDAY: This morning, we will go ashore at Gardner Bay, **ESPANOLA**. We will walk along seemingly endless stretches of sandy beach where you'll find large colonies of Sea Lions and curious Hood Mockingbirds. There is no trail to follow, so this is a chance to explore! You may find a Galápagos Hawk, a colony of Darwin's Finches, shorebirds, herons, or a Hood Mockingbird. You may also choose to swim with Sea Lions from the beach and peer into underwater caves covered with invertebrates. This afternoon, we disembark at Punta Suarez, **ESPANOLA**, where we will witness the highest percentage of endemic species in Galápagos. Sea Lions audibly welcome us as we land on their beach, curious little Hood Mockingbirds peck at our shoelaces and colorful Hood Lava Lizards run about. Here is our chance to see the Waved Albatross, found only on Espanola, perform their wild mating ritual. Colonies of Blue-Footed Boobies engage in "sky-pointing" to show off for potential mates and Nazca Boobies busily care for their young. Stunning Swallow-Tailed Gulls, the only nocturnal gulls in the world, pose for us while Red-Billed Tropicbirds take shelter under the cliffs. We will also have a chance to observe a unique sub-species of Marine Iguana identified with bold strokes of red and green markings. This is the scene most people envision when they decide to visit the Galápagos and is a glorious finale to your Galápagos voyage.

SUNDAY: This morning, we drop anchor in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, **SAN CRISTOBAL**. We visit the



INTRODUCTION

This alluringly unique archipelago was first made famous by Charles Darwin when he featured these islands in two of his books, *Voyage of the Beagle* (1839) and especially *The Origin of Species by Natural Selection* in 1859. Darwin explored this island chain and used his discoveries to revolutionize how scientists think of life.

This sense of adventure is now open to all exploration-minded travelers, as the Galápagos remains a world of both everyday discovery and breathtaking mystery. With the aid of 2 Galápagos naturalists and Florida Museum staff, you will have the opportunity of a lifetime to discover the natural history of this one-of-a-kind chain of islands. Not only is this an area of unrivaled biological diversity, but the sheer numbers of animals around you is astonishing. We will have a chance to see giant Galápagos Tortoises, Marine and Land Iguanas, Sea Lions, Blue-footed Boobies and much, much more. There is also an unmatched diversity of sea life which we will have the opportunity to marvel at through glass bottom tandem kayaks and snorkeling gear. We look forward to having you on our expedition to the Galápagos Islands!

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

SATURDAY: Fly into Guayaquil, Ecuador, from the U.S. and transfer to our hotel for the night.

SUNDAY: Transfer to Guayaquil Airport for our jet flight to the airstrip on San Cristobal Island in the Galápagos. Upon arrival at **SAN CRISTOBAL** Island, our crew is waiting at the airstrip to take us to our anchored yacht. After the welcome briefing and safety drill, we set sail for Playa Ochoa, where we have a chance to test our snorkeling equipment while swimming with a small colony of Sea Lions. Behind the beach, there is a tidal lagoon where birds can be spotted, including the rare Chatham Mockingbird. At sunset, we cruise around Kicker Rock, a vertical tuff cone formation that abruptly juts up almost 500 feet out of the ocean. On the cliffs, we find Blue-footed Boobies, Masked or Nazca Boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds. From the yacht's upper deck, we may also spot manta rays leaping into the air and whales surfacing.



MONDAY: We will spend the entire day on **TOWER (Genovesa)**, considered to be one of the most spectacular Islands in Galápagos for bird species. Red-footed Boobies nest here in Palo Santo trees and Nazca Boobies nest near the trail. In an open lava field, we may find Storm Petrels in large numbers and perhaps the elusive Short-Eared Owl. After lunch, sea kayaks are available to paddle along the shoreline, where you may find the beautiful Red-Billed Tropicbird usually seen in crevices. A fantastic snorkeling opportunity is also offered along the inner rim of the volcanic crater. We then land on Darwin Bay, a coral sand beach where Swallow-Tailed and Lava Gulls gather near the tide pools. Here we will enter a forest of low mangroves, Opuntia Cactus and Palo Santo trees where colonies of Great Frigatebirds nest. The males inflate their red-throated pouches to attract females as they fly overhead. The trail leads through a rich inter-tidal zone where we find a wide diversity of animal life. This is now an opportune time to swim with Sea Lions on the beach.

TUESDAY: Today we will visit northern **SANTA CRUZ**, at Las Bachas, which is the Spanish translation for “barg-es.” There is a long stretch of a soft white-sand beach and interior lagoons where we find the Greater Flamingo. There is also a wonderful chance to snorkel here from the beach. Remnants of the U.S. presence from World War II – a floating pier - are found here. This afternoon, we disembark on **NORTH SEYMOUR**, a small island created by geological uplift. After a dry landing, we follow a trail that leads us to Blue-footed Boobies and the endemic Land Iguanas. Here we will visit the largest colony of Magnificent Frigatebirds found in Galápagos. As we stroll along the beach, body-surfing Sea Lions will entertain us and provide another great photo opportunity!

WEDNESDAY: Located on the western Island of **ISABELA**, today we visit Tagus Cove. On our walk, we will discover a salt-water lagoon, a scenic overlook with a spectacular view of the ocean, lava fields, and many volcanic formations. Here we have the chance to explore the cove in Zodiaks and sea kayaks to find Galápagos Penguins, Boobies, Pelicans, and other seabirds. After lunch, we will cross the Bolivar Channel while looking for Whales and Dolphins riding the bow wave. We then disembark at Punta Espinoza, **FERNANDINA**, the youngest and most pristine island found in Galápagos. Hundreds of Marine Iguanas, the largest colony in Galápagos, bask in the sun along the rugged shoreline. We may see Sea Lion harems with resident bulls carefully guarding their territory. Flightless Cormorants build their nest on the point and Galápagos Hawks fly overhead. Recent lava flows formed by an active volcano stretch their way around the coast. A snorkel here provides opportunities to see Green Sea Turtles feeding on algae covering the rocks just a foot or two from the surface.



THURSDAY: This morning, we will stroll along the shore at Puerto Egas, **SANTIAGO** looking for octopus, starfish, and other sea life in the tide pools and at low tide, we may see Marine Iguanas as they feed on exposed green algae. This is an excellent place to spot Great Blue Herons, Lava Herons, American Oystercatchers and Yellow-Crowned Night Herons and Darwin's Finches. Our walk ends at the grottos, which are deep pools of clear water where we will encounter Galápagos Fur Seals. Before returning to the yacht, there is a spectacular snorkeling opportunity with loads of tropical fish, sea turtles and more. On **BARTOLOME** after lunch, it seems like we are walking on the moon, as this young island is inhospitable to most plants and animals. You will have the option to climb up stairs leading to the summit of a once active volcano and along the way, we will marvel at lava bombs, splatter cones and cinder cones. From the top, we can gaze out across the island for a panoramic view of the island and "Pinnacle Rock," an eroded tuff cone. Down below, crystal clear water is an invitation to snorkel with schools of tropical fish and Galápagos Penguins. On the other side of the Island, we may encounter Yellow Warblers, nesting Sea Turtles either onshore or offshore, swimming with White-Tipped Sharks.

FRIDAY: Friday at southern **SANTA CRUZ** is feeding day for the tortoises at the Charles Darwin Research Station. Scientists from all over the globe work at this station and conduct biological research from anatomy to zoology. We also visit the Van Straelen Hall where there are exhibits and a short video presentation. There are