

Galapagos Islands and Ecuador  
On A Budget

November 15 - 24, 2007

An escorted tour to the islands made famous by Charles Darwin. The Galapagos Islands provide a natural museum of flora and fauna found nowhere else on earth, where sea lions, iguanas, and sea birds watch in innocent wonder as you walk by. Cruise the islands on the first-class vessel MV Santa Cruz Ship, built specifically for viewing these islands. In the capital city of Quito and the mountain town of Otavalo, experience the colorful and varied cultures of the people of Ecuador and the scenic beauty of the High Andes Mountains.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Galapagos National Park, including the Galapagos Islands, Old City of Quito

People to People Experiences: Meet the people of Ecuador in their private homes as you enjoy sharing a specially prepared lunch over informative and friendly conversation.

Sample Lectures: The People of Ecuador, plus daily evening lectures on board the Santa Cruz.

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Many of TravelLeads clients have encouraged us to develop some less expensive Learning Vacations to meet the needs of more budget conscious travelers. We are, therefore, pleased to introduce Budget Learning Vacations for many of our destinations. These are in addition to our regular excellent value Learning Vacations. All of these Budget Learning Vacations will have the special learning features of our regular Learning Vacation programs:

The same experienced and outstanding escorts and local guides that we have used over the years for our regular programs.

Special lectures and field experiences conducted by our in-country resource people.

Contact with local people and their lifestyles through specially arranged small group luncheons or dinners.

Small groups to help facilitate greater interaction between the participants and our escorts, guides, and resource people.

The major difference in the programs will be the use of more modest accommodations and meal arrangements for the Budget Learning Vacations, and we will also require a minimum of 15 paying participants for these programs. The maximum number of participants will still remain at 20. In some instances we have reduced the number of days for the program to achieve a savings for budget minded travelers.

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Day 1 - November 15th - Thursday

USA / Quito, Ecuador

Depart from the USA on regularly scheduled flight. Evening arrival at Quito airport and transfer to your hotel located in the heart of Quito's modern sector, an area famous for its cosmopolitan air.

Hotel Dann Carlton

Day 2 - November 16th - Friday (B, L)

Quito

Tour the 450-year-old capital of Ecuador. You will explore the historical colonial center of Quito whose buildings date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here you will see the impressive Church/Monastery of St. Augustine; La Compania Church with its famous ornate facade and glittering golden altars; and the San Francisco Church, one of the first great religious buildings in the New World. A special lunch will be arranged with Ecuadorian families in their homes in Quito. Dr. Diego Quiroga, an anthropologist from the University of San Francisco de Quito, plans a lecture on "The People of Ecuador" in the evening.

Hotel Dann Carlton

## Day 3 - November 17th - Saturday (B, L)

### Quito - Otavalo

This excursion goes north, to the land of the Otavaleños and South America's most famous Indian fair. Early departure from Quito towards Calderón, a small village that keeps the tradition of making colorful dough figurines of Indian dolls, llamas, flowers and even great Christmas ornaments. Guests can observe how each figure is molded by hand, with dough of different colors carefully put together; then it is baked and varnished. Continue on the Panamerican Highway through dramatic mountain scenery to the textile market of Otavalo, where guests will enjoy visiting the many stalls full of ponchos, scarves, blankets, wall hangings, woven belts (fajas), hats, handbags and much more. Here Otavaleños barter in silence, in marked contrast to the raucous noise of other markets; take your time to negotiate the best bargains. Then, proceed to Peguche, an Indian village very near Otavalo that is home to the artisans who do the weaving in their homes; guests can learn about their culture and beliefs. Lunch is at one of the charming country inns or haciendas of the area.

Hotel Dann Carlton

"All was fabulous; the guides, the gentle Ecuadorian people, the colorful attire, the hacienda and rose farm visits, our home visit to an artist, the accommodations, especially La Mirage which was a treat for every sense, the sea lions up close and personal, the giant tortoises, flightless cormorant, blue footed boobies and dolphin escorts to one of the islands. I never felt closer to nature..."

Galapagos - E. Friedman, NY

## Day 4 - November 18th - Sunday (B, L)

### Quito - Cotopaxi

The adventure starts in Quito with a bus ride to the station of Tambillo, where the "Chiva Express", a colorful one coach train, like a bus on tracks, is ready to depart. A highlight of the trip is to 'ride the roof' with a panoramic view of the stunning Andean region of Ecuador. You will leisurely enjoy the ever-changing scenery as the "Chiva Express" advances along the ancient tracks. A snack is served at the Station of Machachi. Disembark at El Boliche and continue by bus to the Cotopaxi National Park. Surrounding Cotopaxi Volcano, this is an ecological sanctuary of 36,000 hectares (88,920 acres), especially attractive for nature lovers, with the treeless vegetation of the Andean moorlands or paramo. From the entrance to the park it's up a dirt road for approximately one hour. Upon arrival to the park there is an introductory briefing about the habitat of the Andean paramo or moorlands, its flora and fauna in the small Interpretation Center. Continue on to Limpiopungo Lagoon to observe a variety of birds and occasionally wild horses. On clear days, the Cotopaxi Volcano is an awesome backdrop. A short walk around the lagoon allows the observation of the Andean flora. Enjoy lunch at a restaurant of the area and return to Quito by bus in the afternoon.

Dress in layers (T-shirt, blouse, sweater, coat). Take a warm coat, gloves and rain protection. Sun protection (SPF 40). Hat or cap. Good walking shoes. Altitude: from 9,800 to 12,120 feet. Average Temperature: Day 50° to 77° F. Night 43° to 50° F.

Hotel Dann Carlton

## Day 5 - November 19th - Monday (B, L)

### Quito / Baltra Island / Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) (Santa Cruz Island)

Arrival by plane to Baltra Island and immediate transfer by bus (5 minutes) to the dock to board the MV SANTA CRUZ. Cabin assignment and introductory welcome talk. Later, lunch, and ship's boat drill. The north shore of Santa Cruz hosts Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill). A dinghy ride among mangrove-lined islets allows the observation of the dramatic landscape and coastline, an area of amazing past volcanic activity. While exploring the nearby waters, various types of birds can be seen, such as boobies, frigates, pelicans. Quite commonly, the black lava will reveal the presence of marine iguanas. The navigation in shallow turquoise colored water gives the chance to see marine turtles, rays and sharks. Dry landing and a walk that includes a brackish water lagoon frequented by greater flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks and a variety of shore / lagoon birds. Further along the trail, we head to Dragon Hill, which offers a beautiful view of the bay and the western area of the archipelago. This area is a natural nesting site of a fairly large number of land iguanas, which is constantly monitored and assisted by the Charles Darwin Research Station. The arid-zone vegetation can be a rewarding location for birdwatching, where Darwin's finches, Galápagos mockingbirds, the endemic Galápagos flycatcher, and yellow warblers are regular sightings. Tonight, our ECO Moment will let us understand more about the islands, and our expedition plan will reveal the interesting sites of the day ahead.

## Day 6 - November 20th - Tuesday (B, L, D)

### Bartolomé Island / Puerto Egas (Santiago (James) Island)

Disembark at Bartolomé Island (dry landing) for a hike to the summit. Great way to start the day. This is a steep climb aided by a wooden staircase; the view from the top is worth the effort. Panga ride around colossal Pinnacle Rock, time to enjoy the beach (wet landing) and snorkeling. Chance to snorkel next to Galápagos Penguins. There is also the possibility to ride on the glass bottom boat for great views of the underwater world. Lunch on board. Afternoon outing at Puerto Egas (wet landing). This is a great location to see particularly shore birds, while land birds can be observed a little more inland. The pitch black shores are great places for watching sea birds and their foraging duties. The trail brings us to a colony of the endemic Galápagos fur-sea lions. At low tide, marine iguanas graze upon emerald green algae beds. Outstanding snorkeling and swimming from the beach before the walk. ECO Moment and briefing. Weather permitting, stargazing on deck.  
MV Santa Cruz Ship

Day 7 - November 21st - Wednesday (B, L, D)

Rabida Island (Jervis) /

Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz Island)

Disembark at Rabida Island (wet landing) on a red-colored beach, due to the unusually high content of iron in the volcanic material. A gratifying stroll along the beach of this small island (1.9 sq. mi.) allows the observation of a large colony of sea lions, marine iguanas, mockingbirds, yellow warblers and several species of Darwin's Finches. Very close to the beach, hidden behind a strip of green saltbush, is a salt pond where Greater Flamingos can be seen; these spectacular birds feed exclusively on the brine shrimp found in this saline pond. From June to November a large colony of pelicans nest in the surroundings. This is a great place to snorkel from the beach, both for beginners as well as for experienced snorkelers, due to the unique combination of underwater species and submarine landscapes. During navigation to our next island, we will keep our eyes open for dolphins. Afternoon disembarkation (dry landing) to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and the rearing in captivity program for the giant tortoises. Here we witness the efforts and results of all the field work done in the name of science. Impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest and many land birds can be also seen. Then, a stroll along the main street of Puerto Ayora will allow you to see how Galapagueños live in this magical paradise. Good opportunity to contact friends and family from an Internet Cafe or browse in the many handcraft shops. Return aboard the MV SANTA CRUZ for tonight's ECO Moment, and expedition plan for next day's adventure.  
MV Santa Cruz Ship

"The trip was so wonderful. The excitement of the markets. the romance of LaMirage. the amazement of the Galapagos. the awe of Machu Picchu. Combine all that with the wonderful people we met in all the places we went- the native peoples, the guides and our fellow travelers, made a very memorable journey for us. Thanks TravelLearn!!!"

Galapagos - P. & B. Mergen, MI

Day 8 - November 22nd - Thursday (B, L, D)

Highlands of Santa Cruz Island /

North Seymour Island

A morning bus ride will take guests to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island for a special breakfast at a selected property. Then, guests have the opportunity to view the islands' most famous reptile: the giant tortoises in their wild habitat. What a privilege to see an endangered species roving in this lush environment! The vegetation of the area includes the Scalesia Forest (an endemic giant daisy tree) and birds such as the vermilion flycatcher, will delight everyone with its scarlet feathers against an emerald green forest. Look for Darwin's finches (most of them from the tree-finch group), particularly the famous Woodpecker Finch. Back on board the MV SANTA CRUZ. Today's afternoon starts with a dry landing for a view of the coast and the interior of North Seymour Island, one of the few uplifted islands in Galápagos Archipelago. The trail leads guests to explore colonies of blue footed boobies, Magnificent frigate birds, and swallow-tail gulls. The sandy shore teems with Galápagos sea lions and marine iguanas. Vegetation is made up of cacti, Palo Santo trees and Salt Bushes, and here is where land iguanas may be observed. ECO Moment, and expedition plan for tomorrow's outings.  
MV Santa Cruz Ship

Day 9 - November 23rd - Friday (B, L)

Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristóbal (Chatham) Island)

Disembark at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. This small attractive port is the provincial capital of the Galápagos Islands (population 4,000), along a crescent-shaped bay. It was this very same island that Charles Darwin first visited, back in September 1835. Visit the San Cristóbal Interpretation Center, located in a natural

setting, where it allows visitors to obtain information that will help them understand more the natural history of the Galápagos, with a great emphasis on human history and conservation. Afterwards, you can stroll through Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, where souvenir shops and Internet cafés welcome world travelers who are willing to catch up with the world, and share the many wonders witnessed, before heading back to the mainland. Transfer to the airport to take the flight back to the continent.

Hampton Inn Guayaquil

Day 10 - November 24th - Saturday (B)

Guayaquil / USA

Fly back to Guayaquil and then to your departure to the USA.

#### OPTIONAL EXTENSION

MACHU PICCHU, PERU

Day 10 - November 24th - Saturday (B)

Guayaquil / Lima, Peru

Transfer to the airport for your departure to the Lima, Peru. Transfer with assistance to the hotel upon your arrival in Lima, Peru.

Casa Andina Lima Hotel

Day 11 - November 25th - Sunday (B)

Lima / Cuzco

Buffet breakfast at your hotel and transfer to the airport for your flight to Cuzco. Transfer with assistance to the Hotel Libertador. Afternoon tour of the colonial Cuzco, including the Plaza del Regocijo, Plaza del Armaas, the Cathedral, Santo Domingo Monastery and the old town with its very narrow streets. Drive out of the city to visit the archeological Inca remains of Tambomachay, Kenko, Puca Pucara and the impressive great stone fortress of Sacsayhuaman, overlooking Cuzco.

Casa Andina Cuzco Hotel

Day 12 - November 26th - Monday (B, L, D)

Cuzco / Machu Picchu

Buffet breakfast at your hotel and early morning departure by train through the Urubamba Valley to the foot of Machu Picchu. Travel by van up the serpentine road 2,000 feet to the famous ruins. Lunch and afternoon walking tour of this fascinating "Lost City of the Incas".

Hatchay Tower Hotel

Day 13 - November 27th - Tuesday (B)

Machu Picchu / Cuzco

Buffet breakfast at your hotel. The gates to the ruins open at sunrise and this is an excellent time to view the ruins in near solitude. Free time. Afternoon train back to Cuzco.

Casa Andina Cuzco Hotel

Day 14 - November 28th - Wednesday (B, L)

Cuzco / Lima

Buffet breakfast at your hotel and transfer to the airport for the flight to Lima. City tour of Lima visiting the 17th century San Francisco Monastery and its unique cloisters, stroll to Plaza del Armas to see the Government Palace and the Cathedral, and continue on to visit the Casa Aliaga, America's best preserved colonial mansion. The drive through the residential districts of San Isidro and Miraflores and enjoy a spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean. Visit the renowned Gold Museum to admire the priceless Pre-Columbian gold artifacts.

Casa Andina Lima Hotel

Day 15 - November 29th - Thursday (B)

Lima / USA

Buffet breakfast at your hotel and transfer with assistance to the airport for your departure to the United States.

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#### PROGRAM FEATURES

Accommodations and full American breakfast and a special luncheon in Quito. Meals as indicated in the itinerary.

# TravelLearn®

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All specially arranged lecture/seminars and field experiences as indicated in the itinerary. All air and land transfers with assistance. Fees, service charges, and taxes normally added to your hotel bills.

Accommodations aboard the MV Santa Cruz including all meals, shore excursions led by the ship's naturalist-guides, and lectures, briefings, and film/slide presentations on board. MAIN DECK Twin Cabins with two lower berths. Upgrade to an UPPER Deck cabin for \$100 per person.

Not included are the Galapagos National Park tax (\$100) and the Quito International Departure tax (\$38). Both are subject to change without notice.

## PROGRAM PRICE

\$2,795 per person double occupancy Land Only - Plus Airfare

(does not include international airfare, giving you the flexibility to use frequent flyer miles or search the internet for the best airfares available.)

\$1,695 single-room supplement (limited availability) The single cabin on the ship will Main Deck.

## EXTENSION PRICE

\$1,195 per person double occupancy

(based on a minimum of 4 participants)

\$295 single-room supplement

(single room availability is limited)

Airport departure taxes are not included and subject to change without notice. Participants purchasing their own international air ticket to Ecuador are responsible for purchasing their round trip air to Lima, Peru. All inner Peru flights are included in the extension price.

B - Breakfast

L - Lunch

D - Dinner Drinks are not included.

Monthly Weather in degrees Fahrenheit

Average rainfall in inches

Quito, Ecuador

Month J F M A M J J A S O N D

Average High 66 66 66 66 66 67 67 67 68 67 67 66

Average Low 50 50 50 50 51 51 49 49 49 49 50

Average rain 4.5 5.1 6 6.9 4.9 1.9 .8 1 3.1 5 4.3 4.1

Galapagos Islands

Month J F M A M J J A S O N D

Average High 82 85 87 85 82 79 76 76 76 77 78 80

Average Low 73 74 73 73 72 66 68 66 67 67 69 69

Water Temps 76 77 76 77 76 74 72 71 71 72 73 74