

Adventure Aquarium presents:

Exploring the Galápagos Islands

with veterinarian *Dr. Don Stremme* – June 30 – July 11, 2009



Charles Darwin set off on a voyage in 1831 that would change not only his own life, but change the world as well. What he saw on an isolated group of islands out in the Pacific began an intellectual voyage that would span 20 years and would culminate the then revolutionary theory that living things are shaped by the world around them. Your journey to these remote islands will be no less exciting than Charles Darwin's more than one hundred and fifty years ago. After a visit to Quito on the mainland of Ecuador, you will spend a week living on a boat traveling from island to island to see animals such as the Galápagos tortoise, marine iguanas, sea lions, nesting pelicans, flocks of flamingos, red-footed, blue-footed and masked boobies, storm petrels, swallow-tailed and lava gulls, frigate birds, waved albatrosses, and the Galápagos penguins. You will be snorkeling almost every day and are likely to interact with sea lions and also likely to see beautiful fish and incredible sea life including hammerhead sharks, Galápagos white-tipped sharks, sea turtles, and manta rays during this 12 day trip to the Galápagos Islands of Ecuador.

Itinerary Highlights

- Discover the magical **biodiversity** and **biogeography** of this world famous chain of islands
- Walk in **Darwin's footsteps** and explore the sites that inspired his legendary **theory of evolution**
- Learn about **conservation** initiatives and **research** programs at the **Charles Darwin Research Station**
- Get up close and personal with **sea lions, penguins, Galápagos tortoises, and marine iguanas**
- Watch the **Blue-footed Boobies** in their mating dance
- Observe and discuss the **effects of development** on the islands
- Enjoy **hiking** on the islands and **stargazing** aboard Tip Top II
- **Snorkel** with **sea lions** and other marine wildlife
- Enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore **one of the world's most inspiring ecosystems** and get a **one year membership** to **Adventure Aquarium**, while doing it!

Land Cost: \$3899

Please note: This price is based on a minimum of 14 participants. International air is additional to the price.

To register please visit

www.holbrooktravel.com/AdventureAquarium



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Day 1 Quito

Hotel Sheraton Quito

Upon arrival in Quito you will be met and escorted to your hotel. No meals are included.

Day 2 Quito

Hotel Sheraton Quito

After breakfast this morning enjoy a full day excursion to Otavalo market and experience the highlands of Ecuador. You will visit the charming town of Calderon, well known for its hand-made bread dough figures, explore the famous Otavalo Indian market with its wonderful textiles, ceramics, and crafts and pause in Peguche, where wool tapestries are made, and visit a center noted for its woodcarvings. Lunch will be at a local hacienda. Time-permitting, you will also visit Cotacachi, famous for its handmade leather designs. On the way back to Quito, in the late afternoon, you will stop at the original equatorial monument. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 3 Quito

Hotel Sheraton Quito

After breakfast, you will travel by bus to Cotopaxi national park for a full day excursion. Cotopaxi volcano, at 6,005 meters, is the highest active volcano in the world, and the centerpiece of this park. If you are lucky, you may spot an Andean condor, one of the largest birds in the world, with a wing span of over six feet. You will enjoy lunch at Hacienda San Agustin de Callo. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 4 Galápagos

M/ Y Tip Top

This morning you will be escorted to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos Islands. Upon arrival you will be met by your naturalist guide and transferred Santa Cruz island via Ithaca Channel. Upon arrival you will visit the highlands of Santa Cruz in search of the giant tortoises who roam the wild here. Also visit Los Gemoles, the twin lava tunnels during your excursion. After lunch at the highlands, you will transfer to Puerto Ayora, where you will visit a local school for a presentation. *Please note that there is a 44-pound weight limit on the internal flights. Please pack accordingly.* Meals included: **BLD**

Day 5 Galápagos

M/ Y Tip Top

This morning enjoy a visit to Rabida Island. Rabida is one of the most volcanically varied islands in the chain. Marine iguanas and sea lions are often observed resting in the shade of the caves nearby. The island also offers perhaps the only opportunity to see pelicans nesting up close. It is additionally home to one of the best lagoons for viewing flamingoes. This afternoon enjoy an excursion to Bartolome, which is one of the youngest islands in the archipelago. It displays a fantastic landscape of lava formations. You will also visit the Pinnacle Rock, which is one of the best-known landmarks in the archipelago. Near the base of this tall, eroded pinnacle you can see multi-colored fish and penguins. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 6 Galápagos

M/ Y Tip Top

Today you will visit Genovesa Island, which is considered to be one of the most spectacular islands in Galapagos for bird species. In the morning excursion to Prince Philip's Steps, where red-footed boobies nest in palo santo trees and masked boobies nest near the trail. The storm petrels can be found in large numbers in an open lava field. After lunch, cruise along the shoreline looking for the red-billed tropic bird usually seen in a crevice. Later on land on Darwin Bay, a coral sand beach where swallow-tailed and lava gulls gather near the tide pools. Enter a forest of optuntia cactus and mangroves where colonies of great frigate birds nest. The trail leads through a rich inter tidal zone where you will find a wide diversity of animal life. Swim from the beach with sea lions. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 7 Galápagos

M/ Y Tip Top

This morning visit Bachas beach at Santa Cruz island. After breakfast visit North Seymour, a low and flat island located slightly to the north of Baltra. It was formed as a result of the uplift of a submarine lava formation. The whole island is covered with low, bushy vegetation. The largest colony of magnificent frigate birds is found here, as well as a large population of blue-footed boobies when nesting conditions are right. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 8 Galápagos

M/ Y Tip Top

In the morning visit Plazas Island, which has one of the largest populations of land iguanas in the Galapagos and also a large colony of sea lions. In the afternoon visit to Santa Fe Island, which has one of the best locations for swimming with sea lions and is also a great place to catch a glimpse of the Galápagos white-tipped shark and sea turtles. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 9 Galápagos

M/ Y Tip Top

This morning begin your exploration of Española Island with an excursion to Gardner Bay located on the eastern shore of the island. Here you will have the opportunity to hike along the white sand beach littered with sea lions. You will notice the curious Galapagos mockingbirds here as well as brown pelicans. The bay is an excellent choice for swimming or snorkeling in the clear turquoise waters. This afternoon visit Punta Suarez, famous for its varied colonies of sea birds including large colonies of blue footed boobies, masked boobies, waved albatrosses, and swallow tailed gulls. Also present marine iguanas. Also catch a glimpse of the famous blowhole found here along the jagged cliffs. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 10 Galápagos

M/ Y Tip Top

Today enjoy and exploration of Floreana island, famous for the pirates post office, where you can leave mail and pick up any destined for your home town, no postage necessary! Next visit the devil's crown, a sunken crater where red-billed tropicbirds and blue-footed boobies brood. This is a beautiful place to snorkel in the clear waters to discover the diverse marine life found here, particularly the colorful starfish that litter the oceans floor. Next visit cormorant bay where a dense mangrove-belt behind the beach distinguishes the quiet lagoon. Here expect to see flamingoes, bahama pintail ducks, black-necked still and whimbrels. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 11 Guayaquil

Grand Hotel Guayaquil

This morning disembark at Puerto Ayora on the island of Santa Cruz and visit the important Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about the conservation of the islands. Afterwards transfer to Baltra Island by bus and ferry and transfer to the airport for your flight to Guayaquil. Enjoy lunch during your flight. This afternoon enjoy guided tour of the Malecon and Santa Ana Hill. Afterwards enjoy farewell dinner at the hotel. Meals included: **BLD**

Day 12 Farewell!

Transfer to airport for your departure flight back home.

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