

# Exclusive Ecuador

A World Journeys Educational. 14 days departing 26 Oct 2014

World Journeys in conjunction with LATAM Airline Group are hosting an educational to the wonderful and diverse country of Ecuador. Experience and expand your knowledge on one of the most amazing countries in South America.

## Itinerary

### October 2014

ⓑ ⓐ ⓓ 🍳 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Sun 26 Auckland - Santiago - Quito

Depart Auckland and after crossing the International Dateline and transiting Santiago, arrive in Quito. On arrival our group will be met and transferred to the exquisite *Casa Gangotena* Hotel in the heart of old Quito.

Located in the UNESCO World Heritage city of Quito, whose history dates to the Incas, this boutique hotel has 33 rooms and suites. Its place in the popular Plaza San Francisco puts guests just steps away from the gilt Jesuit church of *La Compañía de Jesús*, the most beautiful in all the Americas. The three-story Renaissance-inspired structure, originally built as a home in 1534, combines neoclassical elements with modern custom-

made furniture, and its rooftop terrace offers wrap-around views of Quito's Old Town.

The menu celebrates Ecuadorian cooking from the Andes and the Coast, reflecting the country's rich and diverse ingredients. Soups are a particular favourite, changing daily and according to season, served from traditional clay terrines. All good *Quiteños*



love to enjoy a good cup of coffee and snacks in the afternoon, so the hotel offers an Ecuadorian-style “high tea” – either in the patio or on the terrace.

### **Mon 27 Quito**

Today we enjoy a full day sightseeing tour of Quito starting with a walking tour of the largest and best-restored historical centre of any national capital city in the Americas. As you walk and enjoy the wonderful atmosphere of this city, the guide takes you to meet artisans, shopkeepers, hat makers and sweet confectioners before you explore the San Francisco Market. Here learn all about the fruit and vegetables produced in Ecuador and some culinary traditions of the country.

Then head downhill along cobbled streets with typical balconies overflowing with geraniums, stopping to visit artisans and chocolatiers - enjoy a snack and taste the finest chocolate in the world. It is then on to perhaps the most beautiful church in Latin America, the *Jesuit La Compania* with its stunning gold-leaf interior, before walking a short distance back to explore the Franciscan Monastery situated close to the *Casa Gangotena* where you will enjoy a lunch of Ecuadorian specialties.

In the afternoon, we cross the street to the excellent *Casa del Alabado* Archaeological Museum.

It houses a fantastic collection of treasures dating back some 5,000 years, arrayed beautifully within a restored 17th-century colonial mansion. Then travel by bus to a panoramic viewpoint to admire the location of Quito situated in a narrow valley towered over by active volcanoes. The evening is free but there are many excellent restaurants in the neighbourhood of the hotel. © ℓ

### **Tue 28 Quito - Mashpi Lodge**

Departure is at 7.30am from Quito on a transfer to the lodge. Cross the equatorial line at Latitude 0, climb over a pass and from here it's downhill towards the rain forest jungle. After about two-and-a-half hours arrive at the entrance to the Mashpi Rainforest Biodiversity Reserve, which extends over the surrounding 1,300 hectares (3,212 acres) – a haven for wildlife and biodiversity. Here stop at the Hummingbird Viewpoint to learn more about these irreplaceable birds before boarding electric buggies for another 6km arriving around noon at the lodge.

Here you are welcomed with a refreshing drink and check in to your rooms. Lunch is served soon after, followed by a short time to relax. After lunch the activities begin and will depend on factors such as group size, physical abilities of the guest and weather conditions.

Mashpi Lodge sits at an altitude of 900m within the 1,300 hectare Mashpi Biodiversity

Reserve, part of the Ecuadorian rain/cloud forest. This area is considered one of the most important global biodiversity "hot spots".

The lodge brings together first-rate service and the natural and cultural wonders of the Ecuadorian rain forest.

Discerning and environmentally-aware visitors will explore the remote Private Rain Forest Reserve – accessible only to guests – without sacrificing comfort or style. Mashpi Lodge features impeccable service and the utmost in accommodations, facilities and dining. It is built to the high standards necessary to qualify as one of the prestigious "Luxury Camps and Lodges of the World."

The forest ecosystem of Mashpi hosts hundreds of bird species, possibly thousands of orchid species, tens of thousands of insect species, as well as monkeys, peccaries and even puma. Enter this realm, and your eye will soon spot vibrant wings such as the electric-blue Morpho butterfly, or the other-worldly amphibians including the beautiful glass frog. The rivers and rivulets, waterfalls and hilly terrain of the reserve makes a perfect habitat for dozens of species of amphibians, new and rare individuals being discovered all the time.



During your stay you will enjoy an array of experiences all the time being hosted by expert local naturalist guides. There will be walks along the forest trails with explanations of the birds, monkeys, butterflies, plants and insects you will encounter. There is a spectacular observation tower and the Canopy Gondola, along with a sky-bike that you ride through the canopy of the trees. Night walks, lectures, bird licks and other experiences will fill your time in this wonderful award winning lodge. © ℒ ©

### **Wed 29 Mashpi Lodge**

For those who want to enjoy the beauty and magic of dawn in the forest (which is when most birds are active and calling), there are early morning activities organised before your sumptuous breakfast. Following breakfast, head out on your morning exploration. Return for lunch and some time to relax before enjoying an afternoon amid nature before dinner followed by night walks and sleep. © ℒ ©

### **Thu 30 Mashpi Lodge – Tulipe – Quito**

Enjoy early breakfast, followed by a shorter morning activity and check out. There's then time to relax at the lodge, watch a video presentation or bird watch from the terraces. A substantial snack is served at 10.30am before you leave the hotel at 11am. About an hour away, visit the intriguing pre-Inca archaeological site of *Tulipe* (from

the Yumbo Civilization). After exploring the site drive eastwards, winding into the Andes towards Quito, arriving back around 4.00pm. Overnight accommodation this evening will be in a Club Room at the Hilton Colon Hotel.  
ⓑ + snack

### **Fri 31 Quito**

This morning we transfer to the Quito Airport and depart at 10.35am on LAN Ecuador bound for San Cristobal in the Galapagos Islands . Here you will be met by a ship representative and transferred to join the Yacht *La Pinta*.

### **Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal or Chatham Island)**

Begin your discovery of the Galápagos archipelago in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. This small attractive port is the provincial capital of the Galapagos Islands (population 4,000), along a crescent-shaped bay. Here, visit the San Cristobal Interpretation Centre, to understand more about the natural history of the Galápagos, with a great emphasis on human history and conservation. After the visit, transfer to the pier to board the luxury yacht, *La Pinta* where you will be welcomed with an introductory briefing, followed by lunch.

### **Cerro Colorado Tortoise Centre / Tijeretas (San Cristobal Island)**

After lunch, we land back at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. Depending on the



weather, we drive 40 minutes to the island's southern shore to Cerro Colorado where we visit the breeding centre of the highly-endangered giant tortoises in the midst of a deciduous forest. Otherwise we visit Cerro Tijeretas where we can encounter the two species of frigate birds nesting in the same colony.

Back on board, head to the bar saloon for a cocktail offered by the Captain and learn about the expedition plan for the next day, followed by dinner. ③ ④ ⑤

## November 2014

### Sat 1 Galapagos Islands

Punta Pitt (San Cristobal Island)/ Cerro Brujo (San Cristobal Island)

We land at the eastern tip of San Cristobal Island this morning. The trail that ascends from the beach provides spectacular views of the shoreline; we can observe frigates, plus a colony of bachelor sea lions. After the walk, if conditions are favourable, there is a chance to swim from the beach and snorkel by an islet.

#### **Cerro Brujo (San Cristobal Island)**

In the afternoon following lunch on board, a dinghy ride along the shores of tuff-stone layers takes us to Cerro Brujo's expansive, white coralline beach, great for walking,



with rewarding bird watching with good views of seabirds and shore birds. Also, look out for Galápagos sea lions. These are the same shores that Charles Darwin walked upon, back in September 1835. ③ ④ ⑤

### Sun 2 Galapagos Islands

#### **Punta Suarez/Gardner Bay (Espanola Island)**

Our morning outing at Punta Suarez provides an exciting walk on lava/boulder terrain to visit its unique sea bird colonies, including boobies, swallow-tail gulls, and the famous "blow hole". Also, look for red-green-black marine iguanas. Many regard this site as the best in the Islands. Back on board for lunch.

#### **Gardner Bay (Espanola Island)**

In the afternoon, we set down at this beautiful, white coral beach for a short walk to observe the sea lions, mockingbirds, finches or enjoy the beach. There is great snorkeling in this area, or else there's time to kayak or ride the glass-bottom boat. ③ ④ ⑤

### Mon 3 Galapagos Islands – Finch Bay Hotel

Disembarking in the morning, we visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and the 'rearing in captivity' programme for the giant tortoises. Here we witness the efforts and results of all the field work done in the name of science.



After the visit here we transfer to the wonderful Finch Bay Hotel which offers the ideal land based experience for guests visiting the Galapagos Islands.

The award-winning Finch Bay Eco Hotel lies just steps from the beach in a secluded location, across the bay from Puerto Ayora on the island of Santa Cruz. Guests cherish the hotel's privacy, natural surroundings, swimming pool, fine dining and superb service.

The balance of the day will be at leisure to perhaps enjoy the wonderful pool at the hotel or go off to explore the areas around the hotel. ③ ④ ⑤

#### **Tue 4 Finch Bay Hotel**

We will enjoy an excursion today to the nearby Tortuga (Turtle) Bay. This afternoon there is time to have a look around the nearby town of Puerto Ayora, a short water-taxi ride away. ③

#### **Wed 5 Finch Bay Hotel - Guayaquil**

Sadly we leave this enchanting place and transfer some 42 km across Santa Cruz Island to the airport at Baltra. Here we join LAN Ecuador and fly to Guayaquil arriving late afternoon. On arrival we will take a short sightseeing tour of the city, Ecuador's largest and the most important economically. Overnight accommodation will be at the Hilton Colon Hotel. ③

#### **Thu 6 Guayaquil – Santiago - Auckland**

Fly to Santiago and after a transit stop there continue on to Auckland. ③

#### **Sat 8 Arrive Auckland**

Arrive Auckland 4.30am. Arrangements conclude.

# La Pinta and the Galapagos Experience

Galapagos explorers can now enjoy an expedition adventure with comfort and safety aboard the 48-guest yacht *La Pinta*. She commenced operation in March 2008 operating 7-night voyages. Yacht *La Pinta* offers a relaxed yet lavish expedition atmosphere, with plush outside cabins; the highest standards of service; international cuisine plus celebrated Ecuadorian dishes, and all the amenities that make the Galapagos Expedition a trip of a lifetime.

[www.yachtlapinta.com](http://www.yachtlapinta.com)

*La Pinta* guests will cover all aspects of the Galapagos: discovery, adventure, environmental interpretation, aquatic activities, relaxation, superb service and great dining. English-speaking Naturalist Guides enhance their interpretative skills with the use of state-of-the-art-expedition equipment. Staff embrace a spirit of adventure, while at the same time ensuring your comfort and safety. The food on board is excellent and the stateroom cabins amongst the most comfortable and spacious to be found on any vessel in the Galapagos. © ① ②



## The Crew

Multilingual Naturalist Guides, licensed by the Galapagos National Park, lead explorers through the wonders of the Galapagos National Park. Their schooling, years of experience and passion for nature and conservation help guests understand the pace and tone of wilderness. Naturalists are the leaders of expeditions; their expertise matches their contagious enthusiasm, whether discussing geology or bird watching, snorkeling or stargazing, evolution or sports.

The Galápagos Islands (from the word *galápagos*, which means "saddle" - after the shells of the saddle-backed Galápagos tortoises) are an archipelago of volcanic islands situated around the equator, 965km west of continental Ecuador in the Pacific Ocean. The Galápagos archipelago is a province of Ecuador and the islands are all part of Ecuador's national park system. They are famed for their vast number of endemic species and the studies by Charles Darwin during the voyage of the Beagle that contributed to the inception of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection.

## The Experience

The natural habitat for a number of noteworthy species including Galápagos Iguana, Giant Tortoise and Green Turtle, Flightless Cormorant, Great Frigate bird, Blue-footed Booby and Waved Albatross – the archipelago is a treasured ecological reserve not only of Ecuador, but also the world. In 1959 the Ecuadorian government declared 97.5% of the archipelago's land area a national park, with the exception of areas that were already colonised.

The Charles Darwin Foundation was founded to ensure the conservation of unique ecosystems and promote scientific studies. Conservation work then began with the establishment of the Charles Darwin Research Station on Santa Cruz Island in 1964 where staff focused on the eradication of introduced species and the protection of native species. In 1986 the surrounding 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean was declared a marine reserve (second only in size to Australia's Great Barrier Reef) and shortly afterwards the archipelago became a whale sanctuary as well. The islands are today a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.

Enjoy the wonders of nature in abundance as you sail to a number of the islands during the following week, stopping to observe the incredible array of wildlife that surrounds you. You generally enjoy two shore excursions each day – one in the morning and one in the afternoon – each are between 2 and 3 hours in duration. You go ashore in small groups (generally no more than 10) each accompanied by an expert English speaking guide.

***Please note: A Galápagos Islands National Park Fee of US\$100 must be paid in cash on arrival.***

Enjoy the wonders of nature in abundance as you sail to a number of the islands during the next few days, stopping to observe the incredible array of wildlife that surrounds you.



# The Galapagos Islands

