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Sunspots
HOLIDAYS

ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS



Escorted tour May 9-22, 2014

LAND & SEA





Land...

Ecuador & Galapagos, the Story of Land & Sea.

Ecuador is one of the world's most remarkable destinations. Nestled between Peru and Colombia, it contains an amazing variety of landscapes within its borders. There is the Andes for the mountaineer, rainforests for the jungle explorer, miles of Pacific coastline for the beach lover, the colonial cities for the historian and the amazing wildlife museum of the Galapagos Islands for the friend of all living creatures. You'll be equally amazed by the sparkling gold interior of Quito's baroque churches and the unique eye-catching colors of arts and crafts at the indigenous markets. The real treasures of this country, however, are the truly friendly and hospitable people.

Day 1 – May 9th: DEPARTURE FROM TORONTO, ARRIVAL IN QUITO

Group check in at Toronto Pearson Airport to board American Airlines flight to **Quito** (via Miami) departing at 10:15. Evening arrival in Quito at 18:00. Transfer to the hotel. Welcome drink, dinner. *Overnight at Anahi Hotel. (- / - / Dinner)*

Day 2 – May 10th: QUITO CITY TOUR AND EQUATOR MONUMENT (Mitad del Mundo)

Our journey begins with a visit to the capital of Ecuador. **Quito**, one of the oldest cities in South America, is also one of the few cities that has preserved numerous monuments and artistic treasures of the Spanish colonial period. The colonial centre of the city was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978. We will begin the tour with a walk through the narrow streets to visit some of America's oldest and most beautiful churches such as **El Sagrario** and **La Compañía** and the famous plazas of **Santo Domingo**, **La Merced** and **San Francisco**. We will continue to "**El Panecillo**" hill, to meet the winged virgin and enjoy a fascinating view of Quito. Then we will stop for lunch at the restaurant El Tianguéz. In the afternoon we will drive to the famous **Equator Monument "Middle of the World"** and visit the **Museo del Sitio IntiNan**. This beautiful solar museum has exhibits of different indigenous cultures and their traditional way of life.

Overnight at Anahi Hotel. (Breakfast / Lunch / -)

Day 3 – May 11th: INDIGENOUS MARKET - QUILOTOA CRATER LAKE

We will exit Quito and head south, towards the Cotopaxi province. Our first stop will be the indigenous market of **Pujili or Saquisilí**, a show of aromas and colors. We will continue through the **Ecuadorian Andes**, to the picturesque **Crater Lake Quilotoa**. From the crater rim it's possible to walk down to the turquoise lake shores, a hike worth taking. No need to worry about the way back, because there are horses and mules to help with the ascend. We will have a box lunch to help recover our strength while enjoying the beauty of this crater lagoon. After this visit we will drive to **Cotopaxi**. *Overnight at Hacienda La Cienega. (Breakfast / Box Lunch / Dinner)*

Day 4 – May 12th: COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK - ROSE PLANTATION – BAÑOS

This morning we will drive to the **Cotopaxi National Park** for a short hike at the feet of the snow-capped colossus and discover its diverse flora and fauna. Afterwards we will ascend to the **José Rivas refuge**, which leads to the edge of the impressive **Glaciers**. Later we will visit one of the many rose plantations that have made Ecuadorian roses famous all over the world. We will also have lunch at the plantation, called "**Nevaldo Roses**", before continuing to **Baños**, the lively pilgrimage town with its famous thermal springs and its beautiful cathedral. *Overnight at Spa Hotel Luna Runtun (Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner)*

Day 5 – May 13th: EXCURSION TO PAILON DEL DIABLO - BAÑOS – RIOBAMBA

In the town of **Baños**, we start the day's adventure with "The route of the waterfalls", running along the **Pastaza River Gorge**. The highlight of this route is located by **Río Verde**, where we will have a short walk through the cloud forest to reach the thundering waterfall known as "**Pailon del Diablo**" (Devil's cauldron). In the afternoon, our tour continues to the highest volcano in Ecuador, **Chimborazo**, where we will be greeted by a desert like landscape and herds of shy vicuñas. From here it is possible to walk to the **Edward Whymper shelter** that offers a great view of the surrounding area. *Overnight at Hacienda Abraspungo (Breakfast / - / Dinner)*





Day 6 – May 14th: DEVIL'S NOSE TRAIN RIDE - INGAPIRCA - CUENCA

We will depart early in the morning through pictures landscapes and small villages to reach **Alausí's train station**, where we will hop on board one of the most famous train rides in the world. The **'Devils Nose'** as it is known, is an unforgettable train ride down an almost sheer rock-face; the train makes switchbacks all the way down the cliff and then back up again. After this, we will enjoy a lunch box on our way to the next highlight: **Ingapirca archaeological complex**, the largest Inca site in Ecuador. In the late afternoon we will continue to Cuenca for the night. Dinner at the charming restaurant "Villa Rosa". *Overnight at Hotel Santa Lucia (Breakfast / Box Lunch / Dinner)*

Day 7 – May 15th: CITY TOUR IN CUENCA'S COLONIAL CENTER - GUAYAQUIL

After breakfast we will start our tour of the beautiful colonial city of **Cuenca**, declared World Cultural Heritage Site by the UNESCO in 1999. The promenade along the **Rio Tomebamba**, the imposing new cathedral and the daily flower market are just a few of the city's highlights. Here we will also visit a workshop and museum of the famous Panama hat, the finest braided hats of the world. We will have lunch at "El Maiz" restaurant specialized in fusion cuisine. The afternoon is left free for you to explore this charming and historical city on your own. *Overnight at Hotel Hampton Inn (Breakfast / Lunch / -)*

Day 8 – May 16th: GUAYAQUIL - GALAPAGOS - CHARLES DARWIN RESEARCH STATION

Transfer to **Guayaquil** Airport for group check in to board Lan Ecuador flight to **Galapagos** departing at 10:45.

After the flight, our guides will be waiting for us in **Baltra** Airport, to take us to **Puerto Ayora**. When we arrive to Ninfa Hotel, we will have a welcome lunch. In the afternoon, we will visit the **Charles Darwin research station**, which is the breeding center of giants Galapagos tortoises, and the **interpretation center Van Stranler**. Afterwards we will visit a handicraft market.

Overnight at Hotel Ninfa (Breakfast / Lunch / -)

Day 9 – May 17th: GALAPAGOS - ISABELA ISLAND

After breakfast we will board a yacht to go to **Isabela Island**. Upon arrival in **Puerto Villamil**, we will visit the **Giant Galapagos Tortoises Breeding Center**. Here we can observe and learn about the endangered giant tortoises. After that, visit the **flamingo lagoon** and have a moment to enjoy the beautiful **beach of Isabela**. Then we will go to the port to have lunch in a local restaurant. After lunch we will board a small boat to visit the **Galapagos sharks channel**, also a colony of marine iguanas and a penguin colony. Here we can snorkel in the area for observation of tropical fish, sea turtles and sharks. Snorkeling equipment not included, available for rent.

Overnight at Hotel Ninfa (Breakfast / Lunch / -)

Day 10 – May 18th: GALAPAGOS - FLOREANA ISLAND

After breakfast, we will board a yacht to **Academy Bay**, where we can enjoy its turquoise water and see the many ships that arrive and depart from Santa Cruz. Continue to **Floreana Island** to observe a small colony of marine iguanas. We will take a bus to the highlands, to visit the **"Galapagueras"**, to see turtles in semi-natural state and visit **"Las Cuevas"**, natural refuges where the first natives of this island lived. After that, we will sail to **"Luz del día"**, to observe a small family of Galapagos penguins (occasional). In the afternoon, we will have lunch at a local restaurant. Then we will take a bay tour with the chance to see penguins, tropical birds, masked boobies, blue-footed boobies and frigate birds. After that we will stop at **The Lobería**, for snorkeling in the company of sea lions, sea turtles and tropical fish. In the afternoon we return to **Santa Cruz Island** for some leisure time. Snorkeling equipment not included, available for rent.

Overnight at Hotel Ninfa (Breakfast / Lunch / -)

Day 11 – May 19th: GALAPAGOS - SANTA FE ISLAND

After breakfast, we will board a yacht to **Santa Fe Island**. From its huge precipices we can observe a forest of giant endemic cacti, colonies of sea birds including pelicans, boobies and gulls in a calm turquoise bay, habited by a large number of sea lions. This is an ideal place to snorkel, swim with stingrays & tropical fish and occasionally observe sea turtles. We will return to the hotel for lunch. The rest of the afternoon is free. Snorkeling equipment not included, available for rent.

Overnight at Hotel Ninfa (Breakfast / Lunch / -)



Day 12 – May 20th: GALAPAGOS - GUAYAQUIL - TWIN CRATERS - AIRPORT

After breakfast, we will take a bus or taxi back to the airport, on the way we will make a final stop to visit the **Twin Craters**. Group check in at **Baltra** Airport to board Lan Ecuador flight to **Guayaquil** departing at 12:30. Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel. Overnight at Hotel Hampton Inn (Breakfast / - / -)

Day 13 – May 21st: GUAYAQUIL - EL CAJAS PARK - GUAYAQUIL

After breakfast we will head west to **El Cajas National Park**, a reserve with an astounding variety of plant and animal life, in addition to 240 lagoons. We will drive far above sea level, to reach the most western watershed between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. After this we'll be back to **Guayaquil**, for a city tour. We will start the walking tour from **Parque Bolivar** on to the **Plaza de Administración**, the **Moorish Clock Tower** and finally the "**Malecón2000**" and the artist district of **Las Peñas**, with its spectacular panoramic view of the lazy **Guayas River** and its green mangrove belt. Free time for dinner, then transfer to **Guayaquil** Airport for group check in for American Airlines flight (via Miami) to Toronto departing at 23:55. (Breakfast / Box Lunch / -)

Arrival in Toronto at 13:55 on May 22nd, 2014.

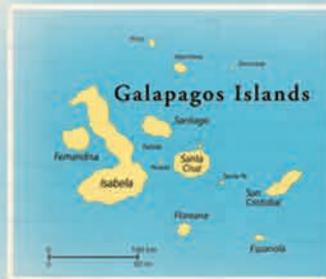
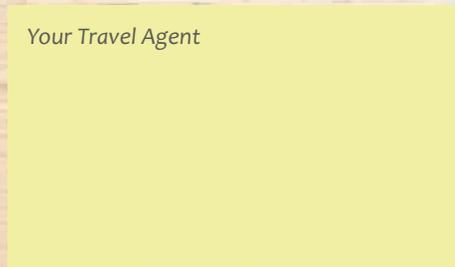
*** Itinerary is subject to change without prior warning depending on seasonal changes, weather conditions, and adjustments in policies set by the Galapagos National Park, or other unforeseen circumstances that may arise ***

Included:

- International airfare Toronto - Quito / Guayaquil - Toronto
- Internal airfare Guayaquil - Galapagos - Guayaquil
- All transfers and private transportation
- 8 nights in double room with breakfast
- Meals as detailed above (all lunches in Galapagos)
- English speaking naturalist guides
- Visits and excursions described in the program
- All land and sea transportation within the Galapagos during the program
- Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee, Isabela Dock Fee
- Migratory Control Card

Not included:

- Soft and alcoholic beverages
- Meals not described on the program
- Other services not described on the program
- Tips and personal expenses



Tour Price: \$4845.00 CAD (including taxes & fees)
Single Supplement: \$750.00 CAD

- Prices are quoted per person based on DBL/TWN occupancy and are subject to availability at the time of booking.
- Taxes & surcharges are subject to reconfirmation at the time of final payment.
- Deposit: \$250.00 CAD non-refundable.
- Other canadian gateways are available upon, rates may vary.
- Travel insurance is not included, however trip cancellation and out of country medical insurance is strongly recommended. Inquire for rates.

Photos by Andando Tours and Fotolia

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