

Christmas in South America:

Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands

An Eight Day Wildlife and Natural History Tour
With a Four Night Cruise and Cultural Tours throughout Quito



December 20 – 27, 2006

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<i>Tour at a Glance</i>			
ITINERARY	ACCOMMODATIONS	MEALS	MEALS
Dec 20 arrive Quito	Swissotel		
Dec 21 Quito / Galapagos Islands	M/V Galapagos Legend		B,L,D
Dec 22 Galapagos Islands	M/V Galapagos Legend		B,L,D
Dec 23 Galapagos Islands	M/V Galapagos Legend		B,L,D
Dec 24 Galapagos Islands	M/V Galapagos Legend		B,L,D
Dec 25 Galapagos Islands / Quito	Swissotel		B
Dec 26 Quito	Swissotel		B,L
Dec 27 depart Quito			

Tour Includes:

- Round-trip domestic airfare Quito/Baltra Island
- Superior outside cabin accommodations on M/V Galapagos Legend while cruising in the Galapagos
- Naturalist guide while cruising on the M/V Galapagos Legend in the Galapagos Islands
- Three nights in Quito at the Swissotel
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Ground transportation as per the itinerary
- Two daily excursions to the islands, conducted by naturalist, English speaking guides
- 5-Day / 4-Night Cruise on board the M/V Galapagos Legend, with all meals and excursions included
- Full day visit of the Otavalo Market
- Pre-departure information including reading lists and country information
- Ker & Downey backpack, passport wallet and bag tags

Tour Does Not Include:

Personal items (telephone calls, laundry, etc.); Galapagos Island National Park tax - \$100 per person, Snorkeling gear and wet suits (rent directly on board); alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks; airport departure taxes, (Ecuador Departure fee of \$31.60 per person); international departure tax (currently \$25 USD per person); tips to driver/guides, meet & greet staff and hotel staff; excess baggage fees levied by airlines; passport and visas; personal travel insurance; snorkeling equipment and wet suit rental costs

LAND and Intra-South America AIR:

\$2,777.00 per person, sharing

* Prices are subject to exchange rate fluctuations and only guaranteed when paid in full

* Prices subject to change pending agreement to contract and terms & conditions

* Due to Galapagos National Park regulations and weather conditions, please note that the cruise itinerary is subject to change.

Itinerary

Dec 20

Quito

Arrive in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador in the evening. Situated high in the Andes Mountains, Quito is located just twenty-two miles south of the equator and was designated a world cultural heritage site by UNESCO.

Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your accommodations at Swissôtel in Quito. It is a luxury hotel conveniently located in the commercial and residential area within easy access of Quito Old Town just a 15-minute drive from the Quito Airport.

Overnight at Swissôtel

Dec 21

Quito / Baltra Island / Bartolomé Island

Today you will transfer to the domestic airport for a flight that will take you over 500 miles of the Pacific Ocean to the remote Galapagos Islands. Upon arrival, you will be met by the captain and crew of your ship and enjoy welcome drinks and lunch.

Cruise to Bartolomé Island and disembark via a dry landing. Arriving on this island, passengers will see volcanic formations including lava bombs, spatter, and cinder cones. After a hike to the summit visitors will enjoy an impressive view of the surrounding islands, including the eroded tuff cone of Pinnacle Rock. During the hike to the summit, travelers will often see large colonies of marine iguanas, lava lizards, tiquilla, bushes, and various cacti.

Visitors will also enjoy a chance to cool off while snorkeling. Here it is possible to see the Galapagos penguins, sea turtles, and white tipped sharks from a safe distance.

Return to the ship and continue cruising. The Galapagos Legend is a 110 passenger expedition ship that blends in the fascinating

landscapes of the Islands with the ambience of comfort and safety of a cruise liner. You will be able to bathe under the sun at the sky deck by the pool. Socialize with other passengers as you enjoy an exotic cocktail from the Fisherman's Bar. Broad observation decks allow you to spot dolphins and whales as you smoothly navigate the rich Galapagos waters.

Enjoy the added comfort of extra space in fully carpeted luxurious cabins, all with ocean views, wardrobes, and private facilities offering hot and cold water, safe deposit boxes and other amenities.

The al fresco dining areas will allow for those romantic meals under the sun or the moon and stars. For those moments of relaxation in company of your fellow explorers, there is a spacious passenger lounge with picture windows. In the evenings this is the stage for live shows with folkloric music, the Neptune party to celebrate the crossing of the equator or those tropical dance lessons you always wanted to take. You can enjoy the creations of the chef in the Dining room, or a broad variety of international dishes with an Ecuadorian flavor. For those midnight cravings there is a 24 hour room service. If you have a scientific interest there is a well sorted library with books and videos with in depth information on the Islands.

For our youngest passengers there is a kids' corner equipped with soft padding and stuffed animals just across from the video games room. There is also a boutique with souvenirs and everything you forgot to bring as well as an on board clinic with a 24 hour doctor on duty.

Overnight at M/V Galapagos Legend (B,L,D)

Dec 22

Urbina Bay (Isabela) / Fernandina (Espinosa Point)

Continue cruising until you reach Isabela Island. After a wet landing, passengers will go towards the fossil beach and then to the coral area. On the way and depending of the season it will be possible to observe many endemic organisms such as: giant

tortoises, land iguanas and flightless cormorants. After the walk we will have time for snorkeling.

After a dry landing at Espinosa Point, passengers will see the biggest marine iguanas mingling with sally-light foot crabs. They will also enjoy the flightless cormorants nesting sites, the Galapagos penguins, Galapagos hawks, and sea lions.

Among the flora and volcanic formations observers will note brachycereus cactus, and two kinds of lava formations “pa-hoe-hoe” lava and “AA.” Numerous mangrove beds extend into the sea, depicting a healthy and thriving eco-system.

Overnight onboard M/V Galapagos Legend (B,L,D)

Dec 23

Santiago (Espumilla beach) / Santiago (Egas Port)

Wet landing on the beach. Walk behind the mangroves to observe a seasonal lagoon where some flamingos could be found feeding. It is possible to observe land birds of all kinds: Bahamas ducks, Galapagos hawk, finches, flycatchers. In this beach you can swim and snorkel in search of octopuses, sea horses, star fish and other sea life. This experience begins from the beach getting into deeper places.

Visit the dark sand beach at Egas Port during a wet landing. Most of the landscape is tuff-stone layers and lava flows, the surrounding area is good for spotting and observing hunting herons, great blue herons, lava herons, oyster catchers, and the yellow crowned night heron.

Passengers enjoy the sight of marine iguanas grazing upon algae beds at low tide sharing space with red sally light-foot crabs. There is a colony of fur-seal swimming in deep pools of cool water called “grottos”. In this beach you can swim and snorkel in search of octopuses, sea horses, star fish and other sea life.

Overnight onboard M/V Galapagos Legend (B,L,D)

Dec 24

Santa Cruz (Charles Darwin Station)/ Santa Cruz (Highlands)

Travelers will have the chance to investigate the Charles Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora, staffed with international scientists conducting biological research and conservation projects. Here you can also admire giant tortoises that are part of the breeding program.

Travelers can also admire the impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest and many land birds. The visit to the station takes around 40 minutes. After this visit, passengers will have some free time to walk around town and shop for souvenirs.

One of the options is to cross the highlands of Santa Cruz. Passengers will visit Cerro Chato. In this visit, you'll be able to observe the famous giant tortoises that gave the name to these islands. Additionally, travelers can literally get into the Galapagos by walking in the dormant lava tubes.

Overnight onboard M/V Galapagos Legend (B,L,D)

Dec 25 Santa Cruz (Bachas Beach)/Quito

Travelers will disembark via a wet landing at Bachas Beach, which is located at the north coastline of Santa Cruz Island. Here you will be encountered by different sea birds, marine iguanas, sea turtles, and passengers would have the opportunity to swim and snorkel in this white sand beach.

Return to the Galapagos Legend, check out and transfer to the airport. Board a return flight to Quito through Guayaquil. At the airport you will be met and transferred to the Swissotel for an overnight stay.

Spend the evening sharing the exciting memories of the Galapagos Islands.

Overnight at the Swissotel (B)

Dec 26 Quito

Visit Otavalo one of the most famous and colorful Indian markets, situated along splendid landscapes of the northern Ecuadorian

Andes. This market is considered to be the largest in South America where one can admire their fascinating textiles with figurines from ancient times, together with authentic festivities from the Andean world.

Spend the rest of the day at your leisure.

Overnight at Swissotel (B,L)

Dec 27

Quito

Transfer to the Quito airport in the early morning for your return flight.

~ End of Ker & Downey Arrangements ~