



Cultural Adventures Tours for the Young-at-Heart

Explore Galapagos Escorted Trip Nov 2 - Nov 14, 2016

Cultural Adventures tours offer you the opportunity to learn about a **fascinating culture** as part of a **small group**. You'll enjoy **select experiences** away from the usual tourist sights during a visit that combines **soft adventure with maximum comfort**. Not only will you experience **two diverse ecosystems** of Ecuador you will meet local people and learn about the culture. When you take a *Cultural Adventures* trip you are supporting local people who provide information and services.

- *Tour colonial and modern Quito
- *Spend a day in the Andes
- *Stay at boutique hotels on three Galapagos Islands
- *Proximity to exotic wildlife---sea lions, iguanas, giant tortoises, boobies, and more
- *Travel with an escort who will provide valuable information and travel tips before the trip and see that your needs are met during the trip
- *Group size is limited to 10 or less travelers

Highlights:

- Visit Middle of the Earth and the Crafts Market in Otavalo in the Andes
- Snorkel at Kicker Rock on San Cristobal Isle
- Walk among giant land tortoises on Santa Cruz Isle
- Enjoy the antics of the Galapagos penguins on Isla Isabela

Trip Fee: \$3595 per double occupancy; Single supplement \$390

Included: All hotels, local land & sea transportation including flight from mainland Ecuador to the Galapagos Islands, tours, snorkeling & kayaking equipment, airport transfers, escort, guides, and 29 meals.

Not Included: International flight to Ecuador and the \$125 Galapagos Park fee & tax.

Itinerary:

Day One – Nov 2 – Arrive in Quito - Arrive on your own in the capital city Quito, sometimes referred to as the cultural capital of the Americas. You will be met at the airport and driven to our hotel. Hotel Barnard or equivalent

Day Two – Nov 3– Quito City Tour – Today you'll have an introduction to Quito, a cosmopolitan and historic capital city, located in the majestic Andes Mountains. We'll start with a breath-taking view of Quito and then explore Quito's colonial quarter, the largest and best preserved in South America and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Lunch will be in a charming restaurant in the historic area. (B, L)

Day Three – Nov 4– Otavalo - We'll take a private van and drive north through amazing Andean landscapes to Otavalo with its famous indigenous market featuring an amazing array of textiles and crafts. On the way we'll stop at the Mitad Del Mundo and stand on both sides of the equator. After lunch at a typical restaurant we'll visit crafts market in Otavalo. We'll then fly to Guayaquil and spend the night. (B, L) Grand Hotel or equivalent

Day Four – Nov 5 – Loberia Beach, San Cristobal Island, Galapagos - After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for our flight to the Galapagos. Upon arrival at San Cristobal Island we'll take a seashore expedition to Loberia Beach to view the marine iguanas that blend so well with the black, pitted lava coast. You'll observe many sea birds, such as frigates and boobies, as they fight against the wind. And you'll have your first opportunity to snorkel with the sea lions and sea turtles! As local musicians perform, we'll end the day with dinner at the harbor. Hotel Casa Blanca or equivalent (B, L, D)

Day Five – Nov 6 – Lobos Island & Kicker Rock, San Cristobal - All aboard as we cruise to Lobos Island and Kicker Rock to enjoy the colonies of sea lions, floating sea turtles and sea birds. A highlight of the day will be an opportunity to snorkel through the channel at Kicker Rock and, if we're lucky, to view a variety of sea life. Next stop is Puerto Grande, the best beach of the Galapagos where you can swim, view the marine iguanas and seabirds, or just relax on the sand. (B, L)

Day Six – Nov 7 – Frigate Hill, San Cristobal – We'll start the day with a walk up Frigate Hill to enjoy a magnificent harbor view. Next is a visit the Interpretation Center to learn about the human history, biology, and geology of the islands. You can snorkel below Frigate Hill before lunch. This afternoon we'll take a glass bottom boat ride before dinner together. (B, L, D)

Day Seven – Nov 8 – Darwin Center, Santa Cruz – We'll start the day by taking a morning ferry to Santa Cruz. After lunch we'll visit the famous Charles Darwin Research Center. Dinner will be together at the harbor. (B, L, D) Hotel Mainao or equivalent

Day Eight – Nov 9 – South Plaza Island - Full day boat trip to South Plaza Island and Carrion Point. South Plaza is one of the best islands from which to observe the brilliant green-yellow-orange Galapagos land iguanas. Plaza is also a bird-watcher's paradise. From the cliff you'll see nesting swallow-tailed gulls, masked boobies, blue-footed boobies, red-billed tropicbirds, and frigate birds. You'll have an opportunity to snorkel at Carrion Point before returning to port. (B, L)

Day Nine – Nov 10 - Highlands, Santa Cruz – Today we visit the highlands to walk among giant tortoises and explore the lava tunnels. Lunch will be at a farm in the highlands. Before dinner we'll take a harbor tour to observe the birds and animals close up. (B, L, D)

Day Ten – Nov 11-- Isla Isabela – We'll take an early morning boat to beautiful Isla Isabela. Once you've unpacked, you can relax on the beach before lunch. This afternoon we'll explore the wetlands. You can also swim or snorkel before we have dinner together. El Sol or equivalent (B, L, D)

Day Eleven – Nov 12 -Tintoreras (Shark Island), Isla Isabela – The day starts with a dinghy tour to Tintoreras Inlet to see Galapagos penguins, the second smallest in the world, observe white tip sharks, marine iguanas, sea lions and nesting boobies. There will be time to take photos of the thousands of marine iguanas warming themselves in the sun. You'll also have an opportunity to snorkel. The afternoon is free for you to explore on your own, swim, rent a bike or just relax on the beach before we have dinner together. El Sol or equivalent (B, D)

Day Twelve – Nov 13 – Sierra Negra Volcano, Isla Isabela – Today those who want a challenge can hike to Sierra Negra Volcano for a fantastic view of the huge caldera. This group will hike for about 6 miles (9 km) on a moderate-gradual uphill trail before enjoying lunch at the top. Those interested in a less strenuous morning will visit the Isabela Tortoise Rearing Center and then walk to the Wall of Tears. Everyone will have a final opportunity to swim or snorkel before dinner. El Sol (B, L, D)

Day Thirteen – Nov 14 - Flight to Mainland Ecuador - Today we return to the mainland of Ecuador. We'll take a motor launch from Isabela to Santa Cruz and catch the flight back to the mainland. The tour ends when we reach the Quito airport in the late afternoon. (B)

This is an active adventure. Participants must be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 2 - 4 consecutive hours of moderate physical activity everyday. (Volcano hike-high physical activity) Daily itinerary may be changed due to regulations of the Galapagos National Park.

Participant's Background Information:

- * US citizens do not need a visa to visit Ecuador.
- * The currency of Ecuador is the US dollar so there is no need to change money.
- * No immunizations are required for this trip.
- * Basic travel insurance with medical evacuation coverage is mandatory – insurance to cover trip cancellation is highly recommended.
- * Deposit of \$750 will reserve your spot. Payment of the balance is due by August 15, 2016. Refunds, less \$75, will be returned upon written request until August 15, 2016. After this date, no refunds of any type will be made. Save \$100 by paying for the trip by June 1, 2016

If you are ready for a unique adventure, send in your deposit of \$750 now to reserve your place. Write deposit checks to Cultural Adventures and mail to: Cultural Adventures, 129 Cranberry Lane, Centerville, MA 02632.

For more information go to www.culturaladventures.info or call Connie Champlin at 317-908-1220 if you have questions.
