



# Ecuador & the Islands of the Galápagos

Natural Selection in the Enchanted Isles

July 11 to 23, 2024

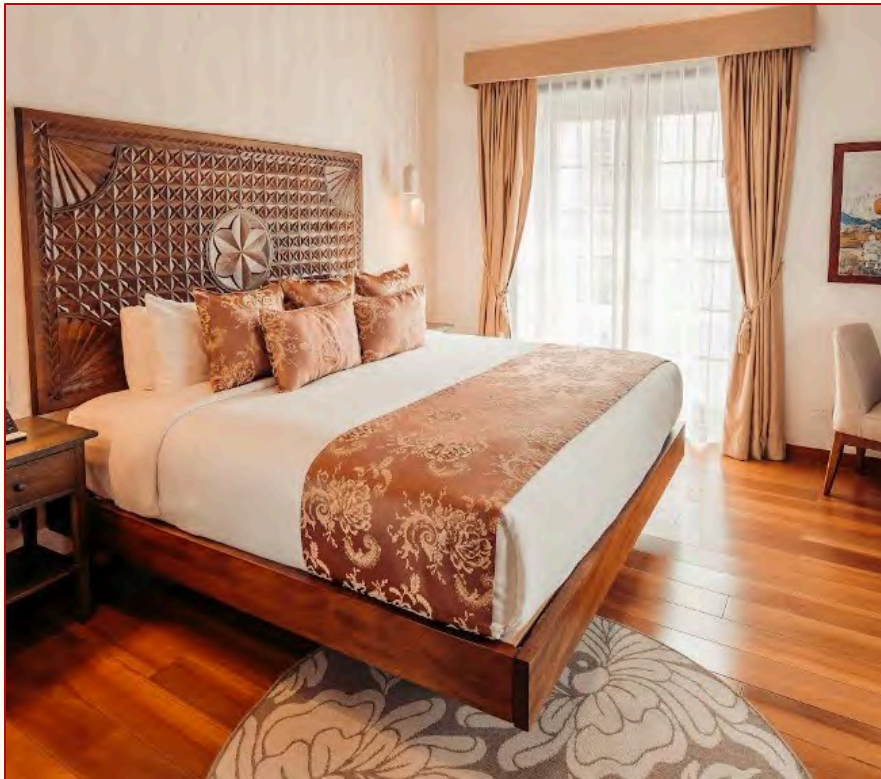


Begin your journey when you arrive in Quito, Ecuador in the evening.  
Quito is a city with more than 400 years of history.



# Stay at Mama Cuchara for 3 nights.

Hotel Mama Cuchara is an eco-friendly boutique hotel located in Quito Historic Center, near El Ejido Park. This hotel indulges the keen traveler with a private collection of art complemented by rotating exhibits of various Ecuadorian artists. Bedrooms feature premium bedding, 40-inch flat-screen televisions, bathrooms include showers, bathrobes, and complimentary toiletries. La Plaza Restaurant is located at the heart of Hotel Mama Cuchara and offers a gourmet interpretation of homemade Ecuadorian dishes. Guests can pamper themselves by indulging in the onsite spa services. Wi-Fi is available in public areas.







# Next day, tour Quito's Colonial Quarter, the largest and best preserved in South America, A World Heritage Site.

Your stroll starts at the Independence Plaza, flanked by the Cathedral, the Presidential Palace, the Municipal Palace and the Archbishop's Palace.



The Cathedral



The Plaza



Monastery of San Francisco



Monastery of San Francisco

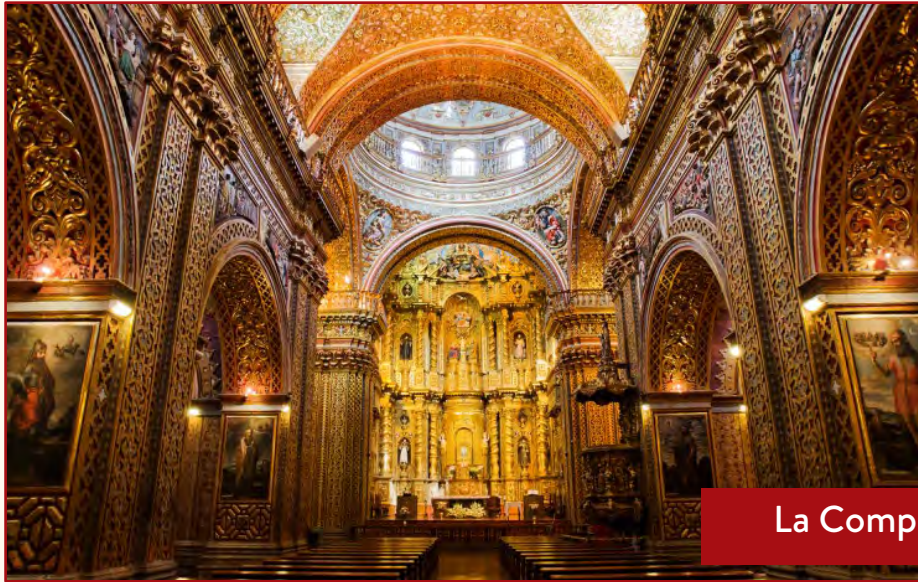


Independence Plaza





View over 400 years of history. You will see sublime colonial flavor in the architectural masterpieces such as private buildings and mansions, the cloisters and churches, museums, and public buildings.



La Compañía de Jesús





Enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore on your own.



Early next morning, you will depart for South America's most famous Indian fair, the Otavalo Market, centered around 'Poncho Plaza'. Experience this during Market Day.



# Drive across the colorful valleys of Guayllabamba and Cayambe

The breathtaking setting offers great photo opportunities and after two hours of traveling through the riveting Andean countryside, you will arrive at the province of Imbabura, known as the Ecuadorian Land of Lakes.





While at Otavalo, you will visit the Vegetable Market. Ecuador's rich culinary culture invites you to get up close and personal with the hundreds of ingredients and products that form the basis for some of its most traditional dishes.



# Shopping at Otavalo Market

You will have about an hour to shop, and your guide will be at your side for any negotiations and clarifications. This is where you can hone your bargaining skills.





# An Andean lunch

After your visit to the Otavalo Market, you will enjoy an authentic Andean lunch at a local hacienda, followed by a stopover in Cotacachi – the center of Ecuador’s leather industry and the best place to purchase inexpensive leather goods.



Your journey continues to the Galapagos Islands with your flight to Baltra, where you will be met by your naturalist guide and taken for a short bus ride to the pier to board the vessel.



The Galapagos Islands National Park conserves more than 3,000 square miles of surface land including 13 major islands and 6 smaller islands. The park is surrounded by the Galapagos Marine Reserve which protects 50,000 square miles of ocean and one of the largest and most bio-diverse in the world.

# The Galapagos Islands



- Named by Spanish explorers for the giant tortoises they found there, the archipelago is comprised of 20 islands, 42 islets and more than 250 rocks.
- 4.2 million years ago, shifting tectonic plates spewing super-heated rock from the Earth's mantle, thrust up the first island of an archipelago that would come to be known as the Galápagos.
- Tectonic and volcanic activity continues and while younger islands are on the rise, the oldest islands are gradually sinking back into the sea.





M/Y Coral I





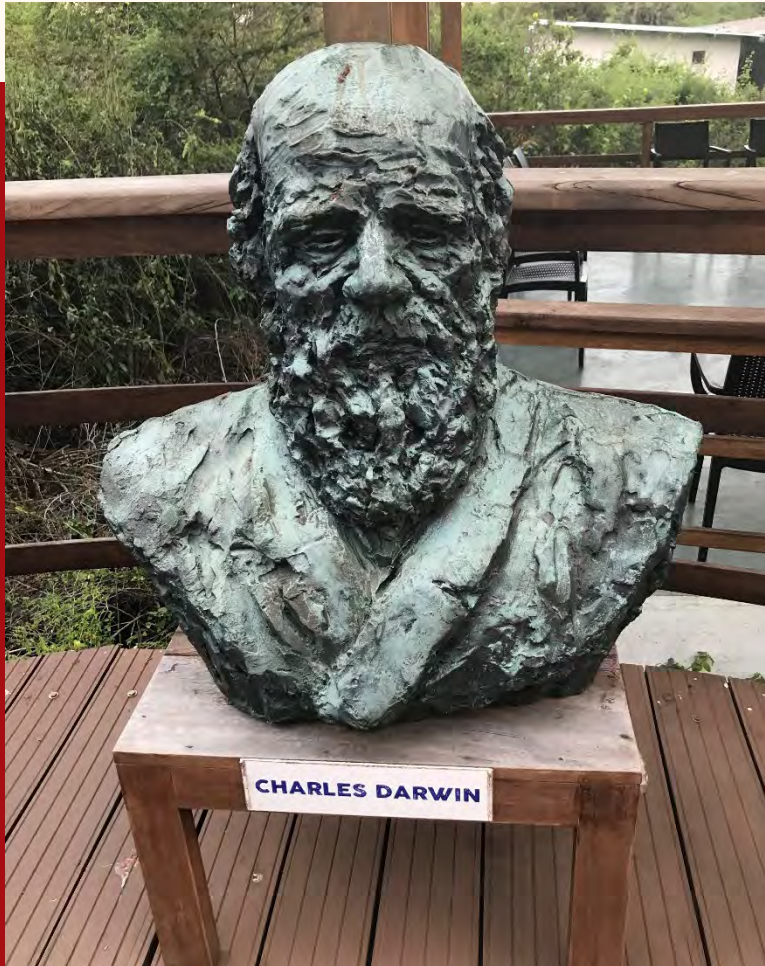
M/Y Coral II



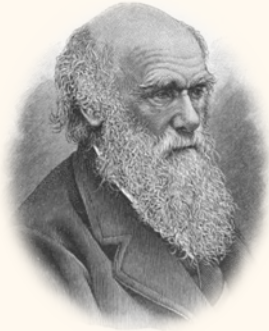


# Aboard your vessel head to Santa Cruz Island

After the welcome briefing and safety drill, set sail for Santa Cruz Island where you enjoy a dry landing in Puerto Ayora and visit the Charles Darwin Station.



# A guided tour of the Charles Darwin Research Station



Darwin's finches are a group of about fifteen species of passerine birds and form the foundation of Charles Darwin's theory of divergent evolution.





Here, the giant tortoise breeding program takes place as part of the world's efforts to preserve the fragile Galapagos environment.





It is also where the famous Lonesome George lived for decades.



# Welcome Dinner

Return to the ship where you will have a briefing on the next day's activities followed by a welcome cocktail and dinner with the captain.





# Genovesa Island

Genovesa, where you spend an entire day. In the morning, you will traverse Prince Phillip's Steps.



Nazca Boobies



Galapagos Dove





Red-footed Booby



Swallow-tailed Gull on nest



Here you can view a colony of Red-footed Boobies roosting in mangrove trees. At the end of the trail, you are on the side of the cliff with a majestic view of the bay as well as the sea birds flying back and forth in front of you.



# Darwin's Bay

In the afternoon take a short panga ride to Darwin Bay, a trail which goes past tide pools where Swallow-tailed and Lava Gulls are seen. You then enter a forest of salt bush where colonies of Great Frigatebirds are nesting. To attract a mate, males flap their wings and inflate a red-balloon-like sack in their throats. You will also have the opportunity to swim and snorkel here.





# Rabida Island

Due to the unusually high content of iron in the volcano that created the beach, Rabida Island is known as “Red Beach”.

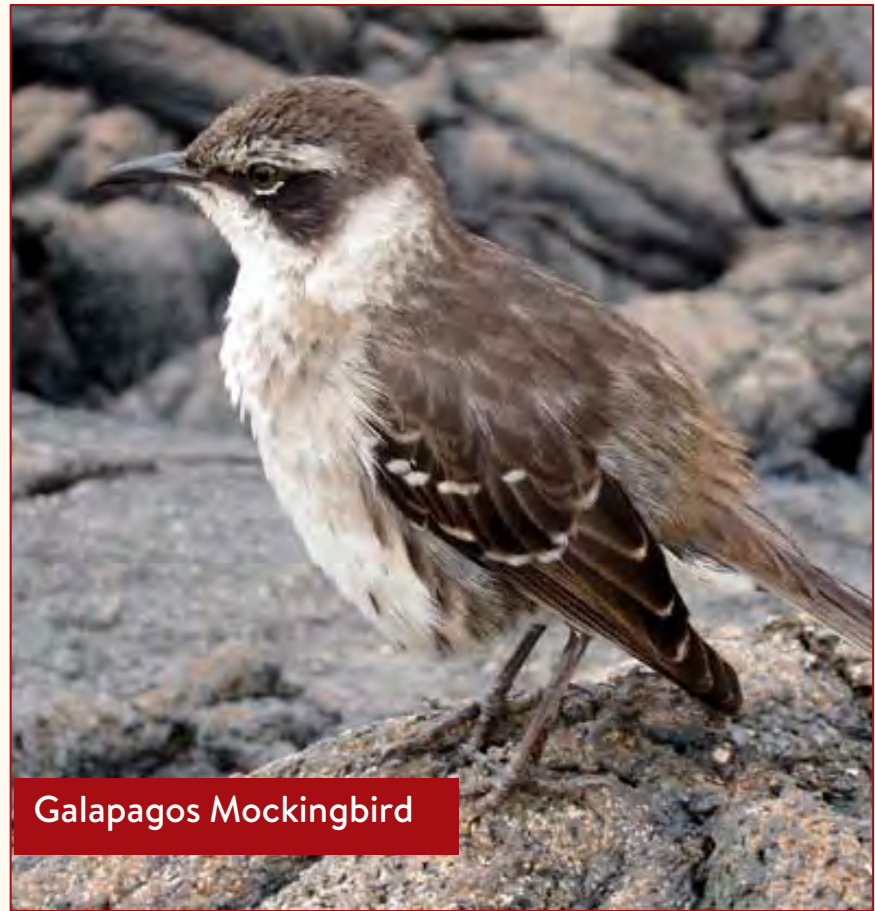




Sea lion laying on the red beach



Galapagos Mockingbird



Marine Iguana



A gratifying stroll along the beach of this small island allows the observation of a large colony of sea lions, marine iguanas, mockingbirds, Yellow Warblers, and several species of Darwin's finches.



Pelicans



Yellow Warblers



Sea lion



After lunch visit Bartolome, a small, rugged island off the eastern shore of Santiago where it seems like you are walking on the moon.



Embark on a 30-minute climb to a summit of a once-active volcano for a panoramic view which includes the guardian point of Pinnacle Rock, the worn-away remnant of a cone composed of spewed ashy particles.





Down below, the water is crystal clear, and you can swim and snorkel with schools of fish after your hike.



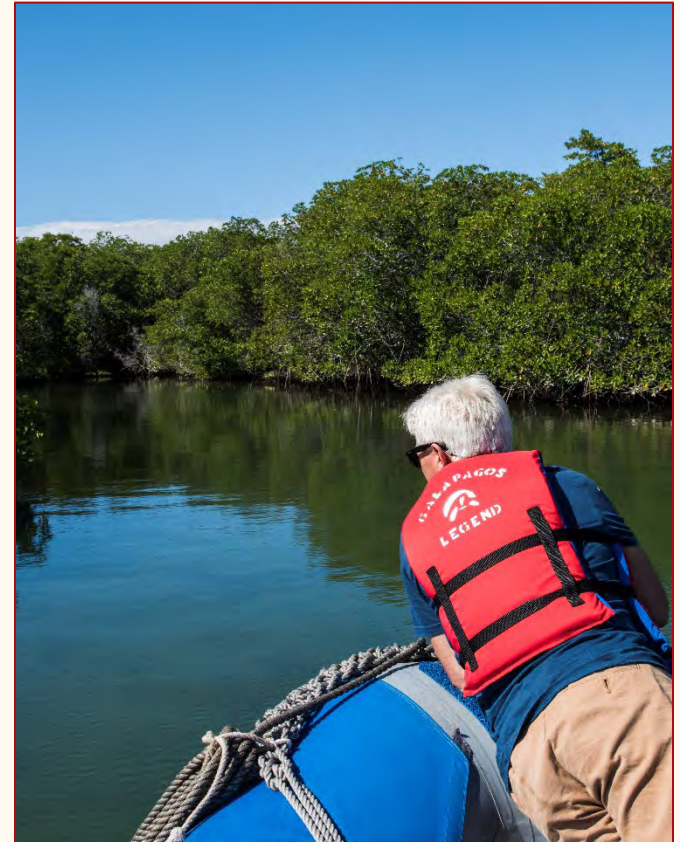


You will have time to enjoy snorkeling and swimming from the beach with the endemic Galapagos Penguins that frequent this cove.



# Black Turtle Cove

Head to Black Turtle Cove, a shallow red mangrove lagoon, located on the northern coast of Santa Cruz Island, visited only by panga. Here you can see Blue-footed Boobies, Brown Pelicans, and even a 6-foot black-tipped reef shark.

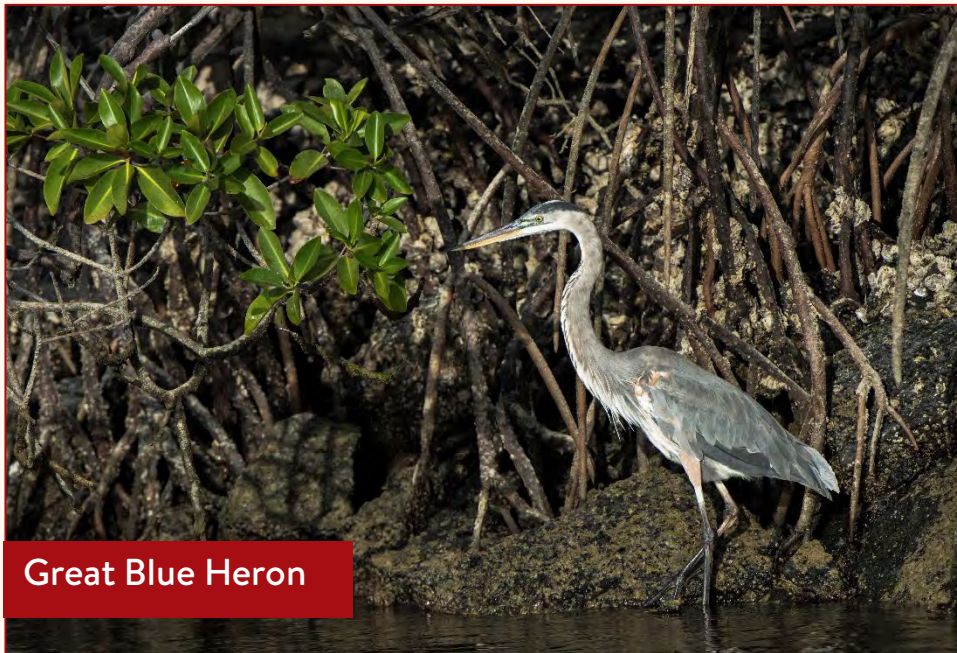




Sea Turtle



A school of Golden Ray



Great Blue Heron

Black Turtle Cove is known for being a nursery for many sharks as well as the best place in the Galapagos to find the Golden (Mustard) Ray. It is also a great location to observe mating sea turtles, and that is why the entire site takes its name for the black sea turtles that mate in these calm waters.



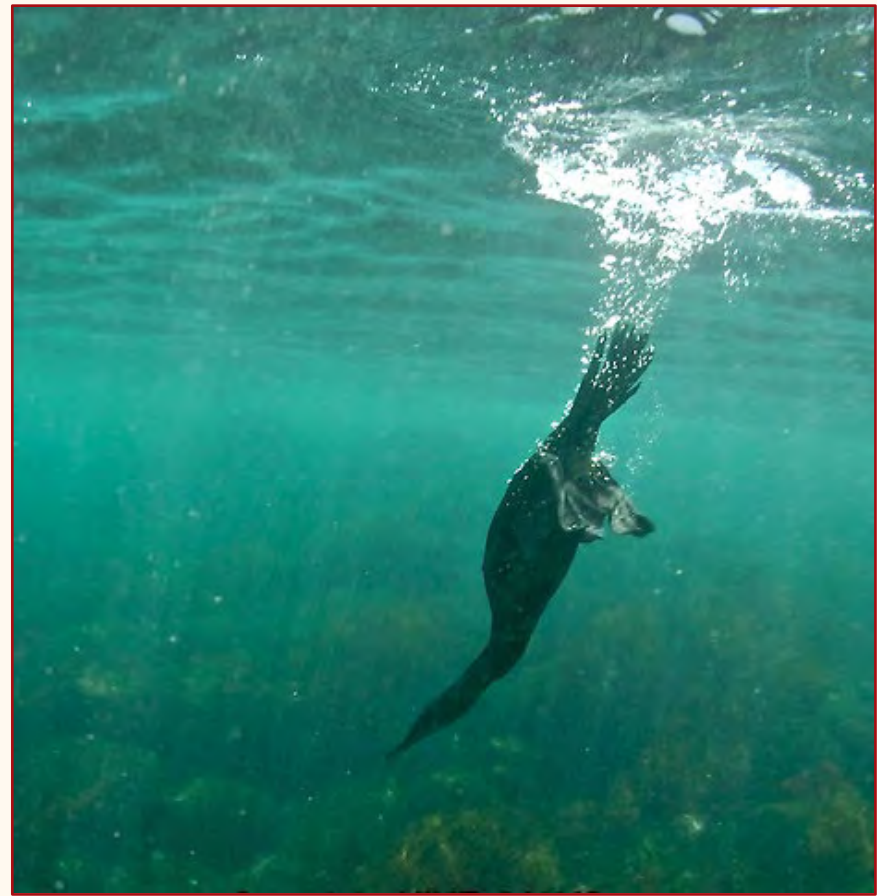
An afternoon bus ride brings you to the highlands and visit giant tortoises on a private farm.



# Isabela Island

Head to Punta Vicente Roca on Isabela Island. Since there is no landing site at this location, the coastal exploration is by inflatable boat.





This is the nesting place for Flightless Cormorants, the only existing marine birds in the world other than penguins that have adapted from flying to diving.





Punta Vicente Cave



Blue-footed Booby



Brown Noddy



Depending on the conditions of the ocean, enjoy a snorkeling outing.



In the afternoon, disembark onto the rugged shoreline of Fernandina Island – the youngest & most pristine landscape of the chain.



The largest colony of marine iguanas reside here.





Hundreds of marine iguanas bask in the sun along this rugged shoreline.



Along with sea lion harems guarded tenaciously by resident bulls.

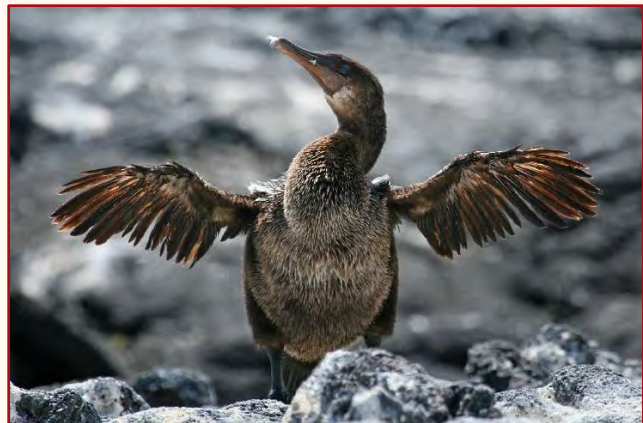








Galapagos Hawks patrol the rocky coastline.



The Flightless Cormorant nest on the rocky points.



# Isabela Island

Next morning, disembark at Urbina Bay (wet landing), located at the foot of volcanoes Alcedo and Darwin, western Isabela Island, the result of an uplifting of the ocean in 1954.





Home to land iguanas, giant tortoises and ...



... Darwin's finches.



A very colorful Galápagos land iguana.



After lunch disembark at Tagus Cove, hike Darwin Lake and see extraordinary views of six volcanoes that flowed together to form Isabela, the largest island of Galapagos.



Enjoy a cruise to see rays, turtles, and sea lions, and possibly enjoy a swim or snorkel here from the pangas.



On a trail leading to the western tip of the island, you'll pass the only nesting site in the Galapagos of the Waved Albatross; these enormous birds are adorned with a wingspan of 6 feet.



They nest here from April to December and represent the majority of the world's population of this species.



# Santiago Island

Following a wet landing, stroll along the shoreline along at Puerto Egas, Santiago (James) looking for octopus, starfish and other sea life caught in the small pools as the tide goes out.



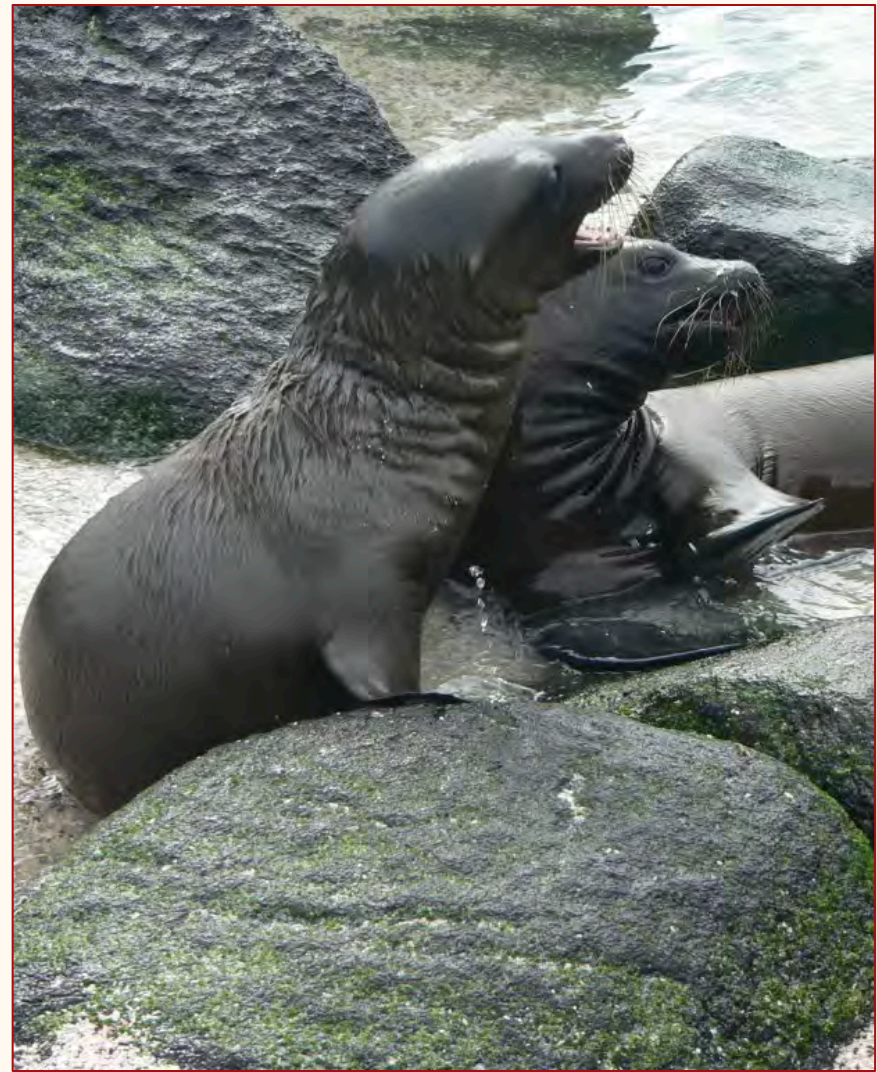
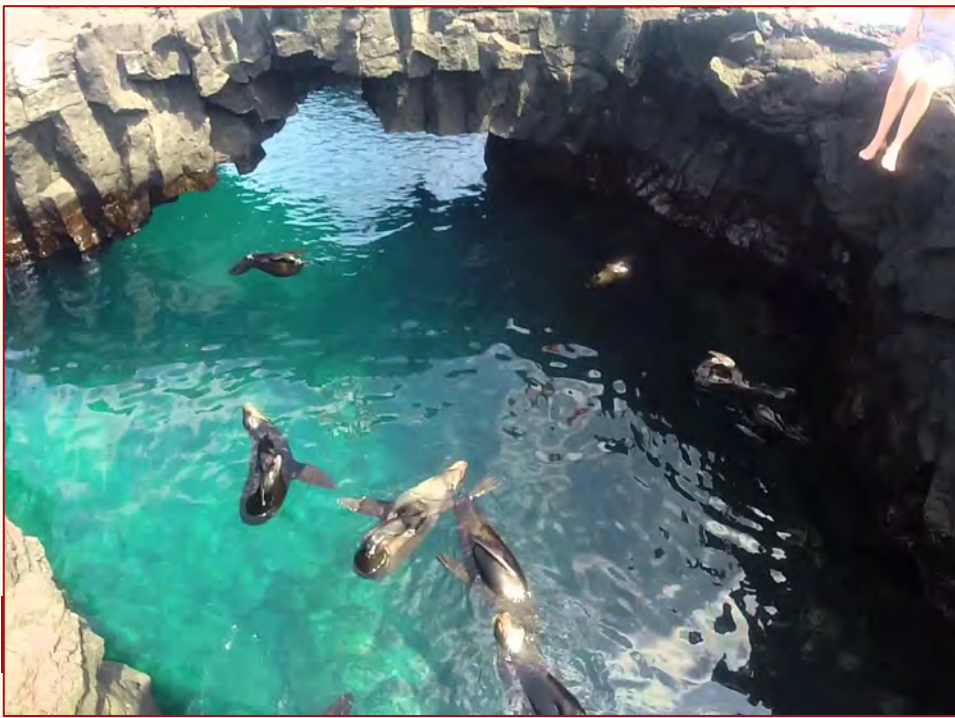


Yellow-crowned  
Night Heron



Great Blue Heron



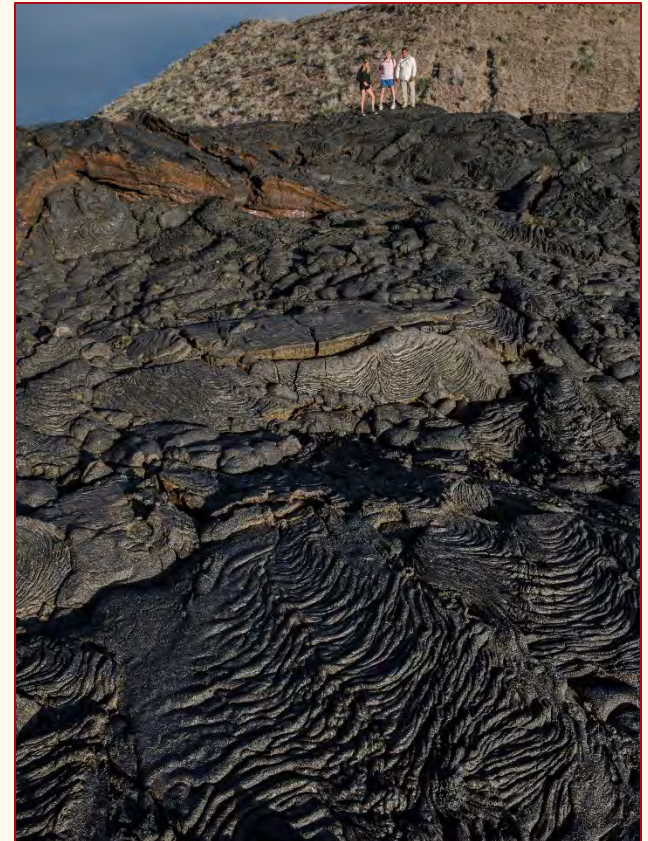


Arrive at fur seal grottos where you can swim with fur seals who were once thought to be on the verge of extinction.



# Sullivan Bay - Santiago Island

After lunch, board the panga for the short ride to the landing site at Sullivan Bay on the east coast of Santiago. Wet landing on a white coral sand beach, and then walk over lava that flowed here less than 100 years ago. This is the perfect place to see and feel the volcanic origin of Galápagos. The last major eruption on Santiago was probably in the early 1900's.





# Bachas Beach on Santa Cruz Island

Your final stop before you depart is a visit to Bachas Beaches – two small beaches where you can observe flamingos, black-necked stilts and whimbrels.



Flamingos



Black-necked stilts



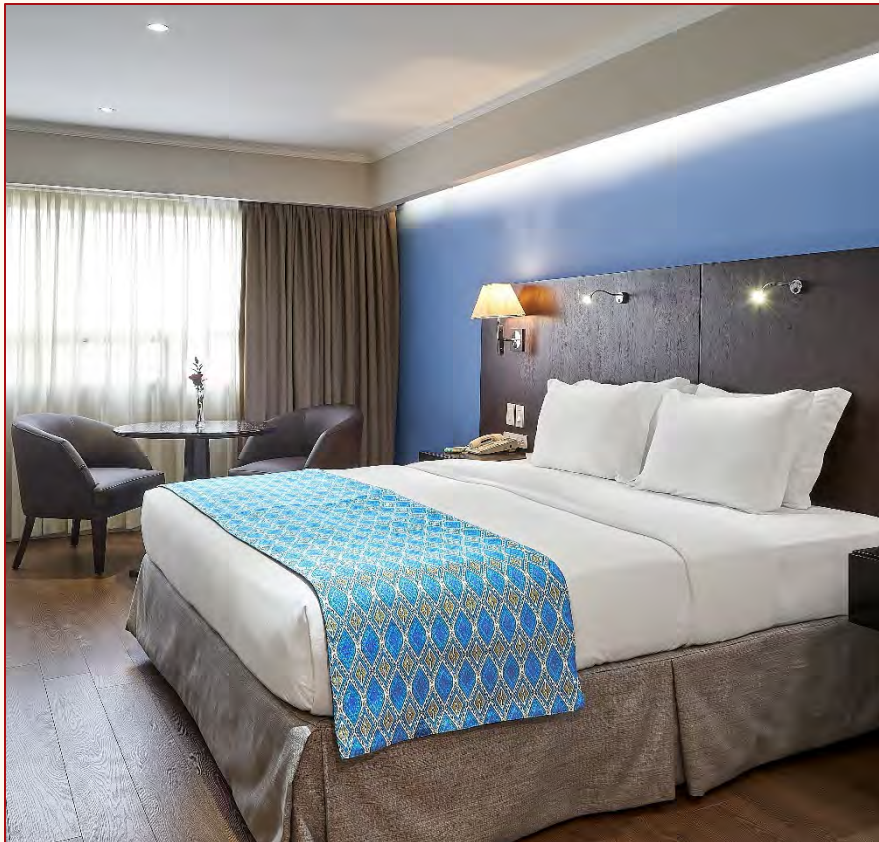
Whimbrel



# Return home

Transfer to Balta airport and fly to Guayaquil, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel for the night- Oro Verde Guayaquil.

Next morning, transfer to the airport for your return flight home. Whenever you look back on this experience just know that you're in good company - the Galapagos Islands have touched the hearts and imaginations of Lord Byron, Charles Darwin, and countless others like yourself.





**RESERVATION FORM:** BIRMINGHAM ZOO ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS ISLANDS 245AZ0714BIRMINGHAM

Enclosed is my deposit for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (52,000 per person) to hold \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) on the Exclusive Adventure to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands with Birmingham Zoo departing July 14, 2024. Cost is \$8,995 per person, double occupancy, land only.

Final payment due date is **April 10, 2024**

Please make check payable to CLASSIC ESCAPES and mail to 191 W Poplar Street, Floral Park, NY 11001 **OR**  
Charge deposit to:  MasterCard  Visa  American Express  Discover  
(Credit Card Authorization form needs to be completed and returned to Classic Escapes via mail or fax to 718-204-4726)

1) NAME (As appears on passport):  Mr.  Mrs.  Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth (M/D/Y) \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Passport No. \_\_\_\_\_ Green Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

2) NAME (As appears on passport):  Mr.  Mrs.  Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth (M/D/Y) \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Passport No. \_\_\_\_\_ Green Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONES: HOME: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICE: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of your passport must accompany this form to confirm your reservation. Upon receipt of your signed reservation form, passport copy, and deposit we will, subject to availability, reserve your spot on the tour. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after the return of your trip and have six consecutive blank pages in the visa section.

- I certify that I have not recently been treated for, nor am I aware of any physical or other condition or liability that would create a hazard to myself or the other members of this tour.
- The two of us above are sharing a room and, where possible, would like a room with:  ONE  TWO Beds (Make one selection only)
- I am sharing with \_\_\_\_\_ (form sent separately)
- I need assistance in securing a roommate. I understand if the Birmingham Zoo or the tour operator cannot locate one for me by final payment date, I agree to pay the additional single supplement amount listed on the Journey at a Glance page.  
I prefer to share with:  Smoker  Non-smoker.

CLASSIC ESCAPES CAN ASSIST WITH INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS FROM ANY US CITY.  
PLEASE CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

All rates quoted are based on tariffs and the value of foreign currencies in relation to the U.S. dollar in effect as of September 16, 2022 and are subject to change. Cancellation penalties apply as outlined in Conditions of Travel. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU OBTAIN TRAVEL INSURANCE. RESERVATIONS ARE ACCEPTED SUBJECT TO OUR CONDITIONS AND WILL BE CONFIRMED ONLY IF ACCOMPANIED BY COMPLETED FORM SIGNED BY THE TOUR PARTICIPANT(S).

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASSIC ESCAPES INC.  
191 W Poplar Street, Floral Park, NY 11001  
Tel: 800-627-1244 Or 718-260-5000  
Fax: 718-204-4726  
Email: info@classicescapes.com

## How to sign up for this trip

- Submit your reservation form found at the end of the itinerary.
- Submit a copy of the data page of your passport.
- Include either a completed credit card authorization form, or a check for the deposit.
- Bear in mind space is limited and we suggest you make your reservations early to avoid disappointment.





# Your Adventure Cost

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<b>Cost: Per Person,</b> Based on Double Occupancy	<b>Main Program</b> Based on 14 travelers
Land, Cruise & Internal Air	\$8,995 per person
Single Room Supplement*	\$4,995 per person, additional
International Air	The cost of your program does not include international airfare. If you require assistance, please contact Classic Escapes at 718-280-5002 and we will happily provide air quotes to you.



## Any more questions?

If you have questions after today, feel free to contact your Journey Manager, Lori Ellefsen at 718-280-5021, or email her at [Lorie@classicescapes.com](mailto:Lorie@classicescapes.com).



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