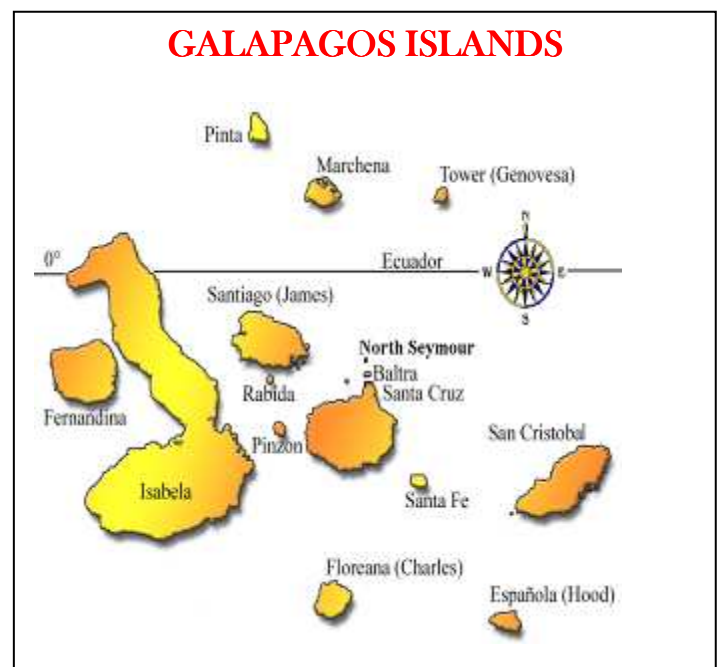


ECUADOR & THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS **A Fully Escorted Tour** **11 – 29 Jan 2011**

With optional add-on to Machu Picchu, Peru

Snow capped volcanoes, green valleys, clear blue lakes and the Amazon Rain forest makes Ecuador a country of astounding variety and beauty. The impressive colonial city of Quito, complemented by quaint Indian villages, farmlands and historic haciendas complete the colourful picture. Add to this a seven day cruise in a privately chartered yacht in the Galapagos Islands and you have all the ingredients of an unforgettable holiday experience. The excursion into the Amazon, the largest tropical rain forest in the world is for the adventurous spirit in all of us.



Located on the equator, Ecuador is the smallest of the Andean countries, but provides the best that South America can offer. Our tour includes the beautiful capital city of Quito, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, founded by the Spanish Conquistadores in 1534, an excursion into the Amazon Jungle, the largest tropical rain forest in the world and a visit to northern Ecuador, a picturesque land of lakes, mountains and terraced farmlands, home to the industrious and enterprising Otavalo Indians, who sell their high quality products at the famous outdoor market, piled high with tapestries, sweaters, Indian jewellery, handicrafts and the original panama hat. We visit the Antisana Ecological Reserve, where llamas graze and the Andean Condor soars above.

*The 7 night cruise aboard the privately chartered yacht **TIP TOP IV** will introduce you to the Galapagos Islands, located 1000 kilometres to the west in the Pacific Ocean and a haven for unique and fearless wildlife. Here you can swim and snorkel with sea lions, float eye-to-eye with a penguin, walk in a moonscape along ancient lava trails, stand next to a blue footed booby feeding its young and watch a giant tortoise lumbering through the grasslands. Darwin visited the islands in 1835 and based his theory of evolution on his observations.*

The tour will be fully escorted by Louise and James Pannell who have been taking groups to Ecuador for the past fifteen years. Their knowledge of the country and experience as tour directors will ensure a memorable holiday.

If you have a spirit of adventure and a keen interest in learning about new aspects of nature, please join us on what will be an unforgettable historic and eco-tourism experience.

This is an exclusive tour with a maximum of 14 participants.

ITINERARY

Day 1 - Tuesday 11 January

QUITO

Dinner

Arrive Quito, the capital of Ecuador, nestled between two snow-capped peaks in a geographic setting that few cities can match. You will be met at the airport and transferred to the **PATIO ANDALUZ**, a luxurious colonial boutique hotel in the heart of the city's historical centre. www.hotelpatioandaluz.com

Welcome drink in the hotel's private pub this evening to meet your fellow travellers before dinner at a colourful local restaurant.



Day 2 - Wednesday 12 January

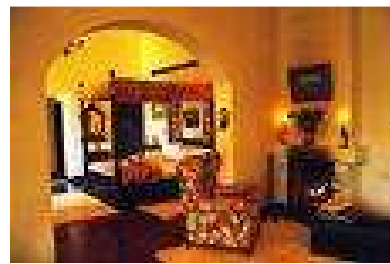
QUITO - OTAVALO

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we set off to discover the Imbabura Province with its beautiful landscapes, handicrafts, Indian culture, colonial haciendas and great gastronomy. First stop is Calderon, a small town where bread dough figurines are made in many shapes and sizes. Travel through the valleys of Cayambe, with dairy farms and rose plantations. Lunch stop at La Mirage, an exquisite 200 year old hacienda set in manicured gardens, home to peacocks and humming birds.

In the afternoon visit San Antonio de Ibarra, an Indian town famous for its exquisite woodcarvings

Dinner and overnight for the next two nights at the **HACIENDA PINSAQUI**, one of Ecuador's oldest colonial haciendas. www.haciendapinsaqui.com



Day 3 - Thursday 13 January

OTAVALO

Breakfast, Dinner

Today we visit the market of Otavalo, piled high with ponchos, woollen goods, tapestries, the original "Panama" hat, Indian jewellery and handicrafts. Free for lunch which you can eat at one of several restaurants in the market square. Afternoon visit to Peguche, where beautiful textiles are still woven on shuttle looms. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.



Day 4 - Friday 14 January

OTAVALO - QUITO

Breakfast, Lunch

This morning we visit Cuicocha Lake, where we take a walk, followed by a visit to town of Cuicocha, an entire town dedicated to the manufacture of fine leather products.

On the way back to Quito we stop for lunch at La Compania, a farm producing roses for the export market.

The order of visits during the 3 day excursion to Otavalo may vary – depending on weather conditions.

Return to Quito for overnight at the **PATIO ANDALUZ**. Free for dinner to dine at one of the nearby restaurants.

Day 5 - Saturday 15 January

QUITO - AMAZONIA

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today is the start of our Amazon Adventure in the Yasuni National Park, situated in the largest tract of undisturbed rainforest in Ecuador.

Departing from Quito, a 30 minute flight takes us over the eastern Andes mountain range to Coca (Puerto Francisco de Orellana).

After landing (about mid morning) and airport procedures, take a 5 min transfer in a local chiva (bus) from airport to the town where we embark on a comfortable covered motor boat journey. Travel along the Napo river for about 2 ½ hours enjoying a lunch box in route. Birdwatchers will enjoy this trip, as several species, including herons, kingfishers and others can be spotted along the banks. On arrival at the entry dock of the National Park, disembark for a restroom stop before taking a 1 ½ hours tranquil dugout canoe ride, surrounded by trees overhead, through a narrow creek that connects the river to the lake and the lodge. Good possibilities of sightings of various monkey species as well as birds such as toucans, parrots and macaws. Late afternoon arrival at the award winning luxury eco-lodge **NAPO WILDLIFE CENTER LODGE** in its beautiful setting on *Añangu Lake*. Spend three nights here. www.napowildlifecenter.com

Printable bird & mammal lists available on the website.

After dinner optional cayman (alligator) observation canoe trip around the lake and to enjoy the nocturnal sounds of nature.



Day 6 - Sunday 16 January

AMAZONIA

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Early wake up to visit the best and most easily accessible parrot clay lick in Ecuador, about 1 hour away from the lodge. Guests arrive just before parrot activity starts between 7:30 to 8:30. A total of 11 species of parrots, parakeets and macaws can be seen. Later, hike along forest trail to visit the Quichua community of *Añangu* and share time with a family in their daily activities. Return to the creek and hike through a Terra Firme Forest for about 30 minutes to arrive at the second parrot clay lick where we may find different species of parrots and perhaps macaws.

Visits to the clay licks are dependent on weather conditions, but are usually successful.

Box lunch at the parrot clay lick observatory.

Late afternoon arrival back at the lodge.



Day 7 - Monday 17 January

AMAZONIA

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After early breakfast, depart from the lodge to the canopy tower. This 36m high canopy tower, constructed by tree platform specialists to the highest safety standards, is a spectacular way to experience the life above the forest floor. This is the second tower at the Napo Wildlife Center (the first is attached to the dining hall and offers great views of the lake). The canopy tower is located about 20 minutes from the lodge deep within the terra firme forest. As you ascend the 12-story tower, you pass through different levels of the forest and emerge on top of a huge Ceiba tree, where you cross onto a wooden platform built into the tree, to experience the view formerly reserved only for the birds.

Flocks of colourful tanagers pass right through the canopy of the tree, blue-and yellow Macaws fly past, in nearby trees Spider Monkeys search for fruit, two species of large toucans call in the early mornings and afternoons, and the life of the forest canopy opens before you. Birds that are virtually impossible to see from the forest floor far below are suddenly right beside you, oblivious to your presence. The canopy tower opens a whole new world to guests of the Napo Wildlife Center.

Return to the lodge for lunch.

Afternoon hike along primary forest to discover the forest interior, looking for lizards, colorful manakins or the unique and endemic Golden mantled tamarin monkeys. After the hike, explore the lake and creeks by dugout canoe with the possibility of running into a Giant otter family along the way.

Itinerary at Napo Wildlife Center subject to change due to weather conditions and particular interest of guests.

Day 8 - Tuesday 18 January

AMAZONIA - QUITO

Breakfast, Lunch

Early departure for a last canoe excursion back to the Napo river, where the creek may reveal new sights of giant otters, Monk Saki monkeys or rare birds. Return to Coca by motorized canoe. Flight back to Quito, after an amazing 3 days deep in the Amazon Rainforest.

Overnight at the **PATIO ANDALUZ** for the next three nights. Free for dinner.

Day 9 - Wednesday 19 January

QUITO - Scenic City Tour, Equatorial Monument

Breakfast, Lunch

Morning scenic tour of Quito's colonial quarter, a treasury of art and architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our morning walk starts from our hotel on Independence Plaza, flanked by the Cathedral, the Presidential Palace, the Municipal Building and the Archbishop's Palace. Visit the temple of La Compania de Jesus, with its awesome gilded interior and the Monastery of San Francisco, one of the great religious buildings of the New World. Its Baroque interior is influenced by Moorish style, with the winged Virgin of Quito as its main altar.

After lunch at the excellent El Crater Restaurant, we continue to the Equatorial Monument, on latitude 0°, where you can stand with a foot in each hemisphere. We also visit the Ethnographic Museum inside the monument.

Return to your hotel.

Late afternoon transfer to attend a performance of the Jacchigua Ballet, a group of 60 exceptional dancers and musicians who stage a colourful show of traditional dances and songs of Ecuador.

Free for dinner tonight.



Day 10 - Thursday 20 January

QUITO - Antisana Volcano

Breakfast, Lunch

This is a spectacular day trip out of Quito to the volcano Antisana, the fourth in altitude in Ecuador, covered with glaciers and snow, and the surrounding Ecological Reserve.

After about an hour's drive of 60 kilometres (37 miles) southeast from Quito the spectacular scenery back 11,000 years, jagged rocky peaks and a vast sweep of paramo vegetation above the tree line.

The first stop is to view the impressive lava flow at Antisanilla, and the next one to admire an incredibly huge wall of cliffs across a narrow canyon, a breeding ground for condors which are seen quite regularly, usually soaring above the peaks, some distance away.



Up on the paramo at about 3,650 mts. (12,000 ft.) elevation, stops are made to walk around and observe the beautiful but small paramo flowers hugging the ground among the lichens and paramo straw: yellow composites, gentians, red Indian paintbrush, orchids and chuquiraguas. Around the many paramo lakes and ponds you can observe the glacial moraines and a diversity of birds such as the highly endangered Black-faced Ibis, Cinereous Conebills, Andean Teal, Andean Lapwings, many Carunculated Caracaras, Black Wing Doves, and the Siskin. Large trout inhabit the montane lakes, from where part of Quito's water supply originates.

After lunch, drive back to Quito through breathtaking scenery.

Day 11 - Friday 21 January

QUITO - GALAPAGOS - Baltra, North Seymour Island

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Transfer to the airport for the flight to Baltra for the start of your 7 night Galapagos Islands adventure.

There is no place on earth like the Galapagos Islands. 1,000 kms (600 miles) from the mainland, this series of islands, created by roaring volcanoes and titanic geothermic upheavals, decades after Charles Darwin's visit, have not lost their ability to inspire and the magic persists.

Late morning arrival in Baltra where you will be met by your naturalist guide.

Take a short bus ride to the pier, where we board the First Class steel hulled luxury motor yacht **TIP TOP IV**, your home for the next seven nights.



Please note that cruise itinerary is subject to possible change. Weather, instructions from the Galapagos National Park, or operational matters may cause the captain to change the times or nature of the visits.

As the crew weigh anchor, you will be greeted with your first orientation and offered a light lunch.



We navigate to North Seymour, which has some of the largest sea bird colonies in the Galapagos Islands. It has a very large population of blue footed boobies and the Galapagos' largest colony of magnificent frigate birds. The male's large red pouch makes for quite a spectacle. The first half of the trail is sandy, but the second half is rocky and you will need good walking shoes. You will also be able to observe marine iguanas and sea lions. During all walks, your guide will be explaining details and giving information about the birds and animals. There will be daily opportunities for swimming and snorkelling.

In the evening, we have an orientation about the Galapagos Islands in general: their origin and evolution.

Welcome cocktail with the entire crew, followed by dinner.

Wet & Dry Landings

The majority of islands in the Galapagos are uninhabited. They have no structures of any kind, including docks for landings. Yachts will typically anchor offshore and then passengers will take smaller motorized zodiacs (pangas) to reach the islands. On a dry landing, the panga will motor next to a cement or natural rock outcrop and passengers can step out of the panga directly onto the dry land. On a wet landing, the panga will approach a sandy beach and passengers will step out of the panga into ankle deep (or possibly knee deep) water and walk to shore. As all yachts will have both wet and dry landings in the course of an itinerary, it is important that passengers bring shoes/sandals that they don't mind getting wet. It's a good idea to bring a towel (from the yacht or your own) along for wet landings so that you can dry your feet and change into socks and hiking shoes.



Wet Landing



Dry Landing

Day 12 - Saturday 22 January

GALAPAGOS - Genovesa (Tower Island): Darwin Bay / Prince Phillip's Steps

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Genovesa is one of the most spectacular islands in the Galapagos. After breakfast, we make a dry landing on Bahia Darwin to walk and observe colonies of birds, including colonies of different types of boobies, great frigate birds and swallow tailed gulls. Here you can swim and snorkel with sea lions and perhaps spot hammerhead sharks.

After lunch we take a dingy (panga) ride along the shore line before making a dry landing on Barranco (Prince Phillip's Steps), where we take a walk to find storm petrels, pairs of swallow tailed gulls, the famous red footed boobies nesting in palo santo trees and, if we're lucky, the elusive short-eared owl, as well as many other species, with thousands of storm petrels flying overhead, all along the lava fields.

Dinner on the Yacht, followed by our orientation briefing and information about conservation efforts being made to protect the Islands.



Day 13 - Sunday 23 January

GALAPAGOS - Santiago (James Island): Puerto Egas / Mina de Sal / Buccaneer Cove

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we visit a site with some of the best tidal pools in the Galapagos. Puerto Egas is a black sand beach to the west of James Bay where we will find amongst other wildlife, a marine iguana colony, endangered fur seals, lava lizards, Darwin's finch, American black oyster catchers, vermilion flycatchers and the endemic Galapagos hawk. This may be the only opportunity to swim with fur seals, once hunted to the verge of extinction for their pelts.

Just north of this site is El Crater, a saltwater lagoon, which between 1928 and 1930 was exploited for the mining of salt during the summer dry season. Fortunately the experiment failed, due to the low price of salt and the project was abandoned, but some of their infrastructure was left behind.

Few boats stop at Buccaneer Cove, a former favourite landing place for pirates and whalers, where hundreds of seabirds can be seen nesting on the beautiful rock cliffs.

Day 14 - Monday 24 January

GALAPAGOS - Isabela (Albemarle): Punta Vicente Roca, Fernandina: Punta Espinosa

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

During the night we have travelled to Isabela, largest of the islands, shaped like a sea horse, located at the western edge of the archipelago.

We take an early morning panga ride at Punta Vicente Roca, located at the mouth of the "sea horse's head" on northern part of the island, where we may see whales and dolphins.



We continue to sail to arrive at Fernandina, the youngest island in the Galapagos – approximately 700,000 old. It is also the most volcanically active, as eruptions occur every few years, changing the landscape and life on the island. The last eruption was in 1995. After lunch on board we make a dry landing to visit the colonies of marine iguanas and cormorants. We continue to the mangroves and the lava beds of Punta Espinosa, a nesting site for the flightless cormorant and one of the only places to see this rare bird.

Return to the yacht for dinner and our nightly orientation.

Day 15 - Tuesday 25 January

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

GALAPAGOS - Isabela (Albemarle): Urbina Bay / Tagus Cove / Elizabeth Bay

After breakfast we make a wet landing in Urbina Bay to observe giant tortoises and land iguanas, later followed by a dry landing on Caleta Tagus to walk to the top of the volcano where there is an impressive view of the bay and the lava formations that emanate from the Darwin Volcano.

After lunch we take a panga ride in Elizabeth Bay where we will have an opportunity to see penguins, cormorants, blue footed boobies and land iguanas. A ride through a mangrove ecosystem may allow us to encounter sea turtles, rays, and marine birds.

Return to the Yacht for dinner and our nightly orientation.

Day 16 - Wednesday 26 January

GALAPAGOS - Isabela: Tintoretas / Humedales / Muro de Lagrima / Centro de Crianza / Volcan Sierra Negra

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

A panga ride takes us of the islet Las Tintoretas, located south of Puerto Villamil, a town of 2,000 inhabitants. The small bay of calm turquoise waters, where we can see sea turtles, rays, etc., is connected to a crevice of crystal clear water, where we can see how reef sharks swim alongside other small fish and sea lions.

The visitor site "Wetlands" is a complex of trails leading to sites with spectacular scenery.

We visit the Tortoise Breeding Centre of Isabela where populations from different areas have been reproduced in captivity.



At Volcan Chico you can admire the beautiful landscape and lava formations produced by the most recent eruptions. Common to the area around Volcan Sierra Negra are Galapagos hawks, short eared owls, finches and flycatchers.

After an exciting day of visits, return to the yacht for dinner and orientation.

Day 17 - Thursday 27 January

GALAPAGOS - Floreana: Post Office Bay / Punta Cormorant

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



This morning we visit Post Office Bay, on the island of Floreana, where we find the wooden barrel, used by whalers, yachtsmen and tourists as a post office.

Return to the yacht for lunch.

In the afternoon, at Punta Cormorant, we land on a green olivine sand beach, where we may observe green turtles on the beach and sting rays in the shallow water. We take a short walk to the Flamingo Lagoon where we can see flamingos sifting the sediment of the salty water in a constant search for food.

Our dinghies take us to Devil's Crown, a snorkeling paradise with its crystal clear waters.

Return to the yacht for dinner, followed by our last nightly orientation, which will be about the intriguing historical figures of the Islands.

Day 18 - Friday 28 January

GALAPAGOS - Santa Cruz: Charles Darwin Station, Baltra - QUITO

Breakfast, Dinner

We sail overnight to Santa Cruz, second largest and most populated of all the islands with 10,000 inhabitants. After breakfast we disembark at the pier of the National Park, for a visit to the Charles Darwin Station and its interpretive centre, to learn more about the giant tortoise breeding and repatriation programme and the eradication of introduced species. You will be able to walk amongst the giant tortoises. This station is home to Lonesome George, the only Pinta Island giant tortoise remaining on the planet. After his death, this species will be extinct.

After this visit we transfer to Baltra Airport to board our flight back to the mainland.

On arrival in Quito, transfer to the **PATIO ANDALUZ**, where we spend the last night of the tour.

After enjoying a farewell drink together, we depart to the Belle Epoque Restaurant for our farewell dinner.

Day 19 - Saturday 29 January

QUITO

Breakfast

Individual transfers to the airport for departure on international flights.

PRICE FOR 10 - 14 PASSENGERS

USD 6,695.00 per person in sharing accommodation **USD 1,995.00** Single Supplement
(in twin/double lower deck cabin aboard the *TIP TOP IV*)

PRICE FOR 7 – 9 PASSENGERS

USD 7,150.00 per person in sharing accommodation **USD 1,995.00** Single Supplement
(in twin/double lower deck cabin aboard the *TIP TOP IV*)

Plus cost of flights included in itinerary **USD 546.00** per person

Cost of domestic flights subject to change without notice

SUPPLEMENT FOR UPPER DECK CABIN ABOARD THE TIP TOP IV

USD 240.00 per person sharing **USD480** per single

Included in Price

12 nights accommodation on Mainland with private facilities as per itinerary

All activities and entrances during 3 day Otavalo excursion

All excursions and activities at Napo Wildlife Center

7 nights Galapagos Islands cruise aboard the first class motor yacht *TIP TOP IV*

All shore excursions and activities during Galapagos cruise

Snorkeling equipment and kayaks

Full breakfast daily, 14 Dinners & 15 Lunches as per itinerary

Individual airport/hotel/airport transfers on arrival & departure in Quito

Surface transport in Quito & the Highlands in air conditioned coach

Sightseeing & entrances as per itinerary

Entrance fee to Antisana Reserve

Porterage at hotels & airports for luggage handling

Services of Pannell's Tours tour director throughout the tour

Services of local English speaking guides on all excursions

Services of experienced naturalist guides in the Amazon and Galapagos

Gratuities for drivers, guides, naturalist guides

Flights Included in Itinerary

Quito/Coca/Quito

Quito/Galapagos/Quito

Not Included

International flights

Meals not included in itinerary

Galapagos National Parks Conservation Fee of USD100 (payable in cash on arrival in Galapagos)

Galapagos Transit Card USD10.00 (payable in cash on arrival in Galapagos)

Airport Departure Tax of USD40.80 (payable in cash at airport on departure from Ecuador)

Insurance

Gratuities for yacht crew and staff at Napo Wildlife Center

Items of a personal nature such as drinks, telephone calls, & laundry

DETAILS OF ADD-ON PACKAGE TO MACHU PICCHU, PERU, AVAILABLE ON REQUEST