

# Darwin's Eden

8 days | Starts/Ends: Quito



*Travel to the islands that gave birth to Darwin's theory of evolution with this classic tour of Quito and the Galápagos. Snorkel in marine-rich waters, hike through fragrant forests, trek across barren fields of hard lava and keep those binoculars to hand for the staggering array of wildlife waiting to greet you.*

Baroness Cove for superb views and Cormorant Point for flamingo-spotting

## What's Included

- 3 nights STANDARD accommodation in Quito. Upgrading to SUPERIOR or DELUXE accommodation options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- 4 nights aboard the M/V Santa Cruz II on a full board basis - main deck twin cabin (upgrades available on request) - Cruising the Western Galapagos Islands
- 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 4 dinners
- All airport transfers
- Services of local English-speaking specialist guide in Quito
- Services of professional English-speaking naturalist guides in the Galápagos
- Entrance fees to sites visited in Quito
- Tour of Quito on a private basis
- All relevant transfers and transportation
- All touring and excursions in Galapagos on a shared basis

## What's Not Included

- Entrance Fees: USD\$120pp Galapagos park fee & transit card, paid in USD
- International & Domestic flights and visas
- Laundry, drinks and items of a personal nature
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Quito

¡Bienvenidos a Ecuador! Upon arrival you will be met at the international airport and take a scheduled transfer to your hotel in Quito where the rest of the day is free. **Overnight - Quito**

### Day 2 : Quito and the Centre of the World

This morning visit downtown Quito and its architectural treasures on a private city tour. Quito's UNESCO-listed colonial quarter is one of the largest and best-preserved in South America. Your stroll takes you through Independence Plaza, past the Cathedral and the Presidential Palace, and on to the temple of La Compañía de Jesús with its dazzling gilded interior and the impressive façade of the Monastery of San Francisco. Touring continues with the Equatorial Monument that marks the exact point of the Middle of the World. With a latitude of 0°, you can stand with a foot in each hemisphere and collect a certificate for having crossed the Equator. Next visit the Ethnographic Museum to learn about the different Native American groups living in Ecuador. Lunch is served at a local restaurant. **Overnight - Quito (B)**

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Quito and the Centre of the World – touring of the UNESCO-listed colonial city and a visit to the Equatorial Monument
- The Galápagos – a cruise along the western islands
- Punta Vicente Roca – dramatic geology and flightless cormorant nesting spots
- Punta Espinoza – walking across the barren wilderness of dark lava
- Isabela Island – Tagus Cove and Urbina Bay for hiking, swimming and snorkelling opportunities
- Santa Cruz Island – the famous Charles Darwin Research Station
- Floreana Island – Post Office Bay for a unique way of mailing postcards,

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## Day 3 : Galapagos Islands



Quito – Galápagos. Early this morning a scheduled transfer will take you to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos. Arriving on Baltra Island transfer to the dock to board the M/V Santa Cruz II for an introductory briefing and lunch. Set sail for the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, disembark for an exciting walk through the amazing landscape surrounding Dragon Hill. Passing lagoons which are frequented various birds, ducks and flamingos, continue inland for stunning views of the bay and across to western islands of the Galapagos, en route you may encounter land iguanas with their vibrant yellow faces.

**Overnight - Galapagos Islands (B, L, D)**

## Day 4 : Punta Vicente Roca and Espinoza

Enjoy a coastal exploration of Isabela Island (Punta Vicente Rosa) on board a panga, a small watercraft, while the naturalist guide explains the dramatic geology of the area with remains of lava flows and tuff stone layers. The island is also the nesting place for flightless cormorants and groups of sea lions, Galápagos fur seals and penguins also gather on the shores. Depending on the weather conditions it may be possible to do a bit of snorkelling along the cliffs of partly-sunken Ecuador Volcano, near the northern tip of the island.

After lunch back on board continue to Punta Espinoza, the youngest island of the archipelago. A mile-long walk across dark lava will introduce you to the remarkable barrenness of the island and the surprising amount of native wildlife including sally light-foot crabs and hawks. **Overnight - Galapagos Islands (B, L, D)**

## Day 5 : Santa Cruz Island

This morning visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, the headquarters of scientific investigation, conservation and the National Park administration in the Galápagos. Meet the giant tortoise residents and visit the impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest, home to many land birds. Lunch is enjoyed in the cooler highlands of the island.

The afternoon brings with it several different options for land and water based activities. Trek along trails amid miconia forest, mountain bike down to Garrapatero Beach, sea kayak or visit an organic coffee plantation. There's also the option to spend the day SCUBA diving, at an additional cost.

**Overnight - Galapagos Islands (B, L, D)**

## Day 6 : Floreana Island



Be part of a unique Galápagos tradition with a morning visit to Post Office Bay. For over two centuries a rum barrel has been used by sailors to send mail – sailors would leave their envelopes in the barrel for ships returning to their home ports to hand-deliver on arrival. This tradition continues to this day so bring your postcards with you!

Explore the north shore of Floreana Island along narrow channels with a short walk to Baroness's Lookout for amazing views of the island and a history lesson on the island's first settlers. Enjoy a spot of swimming or snorkelling off a sandy beach before lunch. Continue snorkelling around the volcanic Champion Islet or stay dry aboard a glass-bottom boat. Later we land on the olivine-crystal beach at Cormorant Point. An easy walk brings you to a brackish water lagoon where greater flamingos, pintail ducks, common stilts and herons gather. Further

on you come to a white-sand beach where sea turtles emerge at night to nest between December and May. Enjoy a farewell cocktail and dinner back on board. **Overnight - Galapagos Islands (B, L, D)**

## Day 7 : Back to the Continent



This morning disembark back at Baltra Island for your flight back to Quito. On arrival you will take a scheduled transfer to your hotel where the rest of the day is free for you to enjoy at leisure or head out to La Mariscal for last-minute souvenir shopping. **Overnight - Quito (B)**

## Day 8 : Quito

Sadly today tour arrangements conclude after breakfast and hotel check out with a scheduled transfer to the airport for your onward international journey.(B)

### PRICES / DATES INFO

Prices shown are 'per person' based on a travelling party of at least 2 adults in twin/double occupancy. The 'Single supplement' applies for single travellers who require their own room and needs to be added to the per person price. Please note that discounts will apply if there are more 4 or more people in your travelling party, since fixed costs like transportation and guiding are shared across the group.

### PRICES / DATES 2021

| Date   | Twin Share | Single    |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| 26 Feb | USD 6,195  | USD 7,145 |

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