

Cultural Galapagos Trip 2010

Cultural Adventures LLC: Tours for the Young-at-Heart

10 nights - \$2795 - Dates: Feb 17 - 27; April 28 - May 8;
July 21 - July 31

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. The tour is land-based providing a comfortable hotel each evening after a day of exploring the islands, viewing the incredible animals and birds, sailing, snorkeling and swimming. All our multi-lingual guides are Ecuadorian and have extensive knowledge about the history, culture, flora & fauna of Ecuador. When you take a Cultural Adventures trip, you are supporting local farmers and fishermen, along with other local people who provide information and services.

Included: All hotels, flight from mainland Ecuador to the Galapagos, land and sea transportation, tours, snorkeling and kayaking equipment, airport transfer, guides & 23 meals **Not included:** International flight to Ecuador and the \$100 Galapagos Park fee

Itinerary:

Day One - Arrive in Quito - Arrive in the capital city Quito, sometimes referred to as the cultural capital of the Americas and check in at the Hotel Quito. You will be met at the airport and driven to our hotel. Hotel Quito

Day Two -Mitad del Mundo - You 'll have the morning **to relax and adjust to the altitude** - This afternoon we'll take a trip to the Mitad del Mundo or Middle of the Earth where you'll be able to stand on both sides of the equator. The day will end with an Andean welcome dinner so you can get acquainted with the other guests on the tour. Hotel Quito (B, D)

Day Three - Quito City Tour - Tour Quito, a cosmopolitan and historic capital city, located in the majestic Andes Mountains. Experience the educational, cultural, and political center of Ecuador with a knowledgeable and friendly guide. Hotel Quito (B, L)

Day Four - Loberia Beach, San Cristobal Island, Galapagos - Morning flight to the Galapagos Islands. Upon arrival 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 also 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! The day ends with dinner at the harbor. Hotel Casa Blanca (B, L, D)

Day Five - Frigate Hill & Interpretation Center, San Cristobal Island, Galapagos - We'll start with an optional hike up Frigate Hill to enjoy a magnificent harbor view. Next we'll visit the Interpretation Center to learn about the history, biology, and geology of the islands. After a relaxing lunch we'll take a dinghy tour of the bay to observe harbor activities, look for sea turtles and watch sea lions climb on the fishermen's boats. You might then decide to swim, snorkel, kayak or just relax before enjoying dinner with the group. Hotel Casa Blanca (B, L, D)

Day Six - San Cristobal Island Highlands, Galapagos - Today we'll explore the San Cristobal highlands beginning with a visit to the Cerro Colorado land tortoise-rearing center where we'll learn about the conservation plans of the National Park Service and see large land turtles resting under the trees. We'll explore El Junco Lake, the only permanent, fresh water lake in the Galapagos. Walking around the caldera of the lake, you'll enjoy a lovely panoramic view of the green highlands against the deep blue color of the sea. After a picnic lunch we'll visit a coffee plantation and savor a delicious cup of Galapagos coffee. Back at the hotel you'll have your choice of beach and water activities. Or you just might want to explore the town. Hotel Casa Blanca (B, L)

Day Seven- Lobos Island & Kicker Rock, San Cristobal Island, Galapagos - All aboard as we cruise to Lobos Island and Kicker Rock to enjoy the colonies of sea lions, floating sea turtles and sea birds. Lunch will be served onboard. Swim, snorkel or roll up your pants as you explore Wizard Hill, the best beach of the Galapagos. As local musicians perform, we'll enjoy a Galapagos lobster dinner. Hotel Casa Blanca (B, L, D)

Day Eight - Highlands & Lava Tunnels, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos - We take a motor launch to Santa Cruz Island and you'll have a chance to unpack before lunch. After lunch at the harbor we'll visit the Santa Cruz Highlands to walk through lava tunnels and among giant land tortoises. Dinner with the group at a local restaurant ends the day. Mainao Inn (B, L, D)

Day Nine- Darwin Station & Boat trip, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos - We'll start the day with a visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station where research focuses on how to preserve the islands. Then it's all aboard for an all day boat trip to observe land iguanas, marine turtles and sea bird colonies. You'll have an opportunity to snorkel and swim in a beautiful lagoon. Lunch will be served on board. On our return to land, we might be fortunate enough to see hundreds of blue-footed boobys fishing for dinner. The evening is free for you to explore the town of Puerto Ayora. Mainao Inn (B, L)

Day Ten- Tortuga Bay, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos - We'll walk along a path through a cactus forest to Tortuga Bay and enjoy a beautiful, white sand beach with iguanas, pelicans, and flamingos. You can observe the animals and relax on the beach or snorkel for a final time. After lunch we'll take a glass-bottom boat and explore some of the small inlets to observe the birds and animals close up for a final time. Tonight there will be a farewell dinner and special folk dance program at a private restaurant in the highlands. Mainao Inn (B, D)

Day Eleven - Flight to mainland Ecuador - This is the end of the tour. (B)

- Optional two-day trip to Otavalo market & the Andes following the Feb & April trips
- Optional five-day trip to Cuenca, World Cultural Heritage site, after the July trip

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