

Cruise & Tour presents
GALAPAGOS EXPLORER

plus Quito & The Ecuadorian Highlands
March 8 – 17, 2011 ♦ *Escorted by Dennis & Peggy Crull*



DAY 1 – TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH – USA /QUITO*

Surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes but only 14 miles from the Equator. Quito is a beautiful city with a spring-like climate all year round. Although an important city in Inca and pre-Inca times, its original buildings have been erased and today it is divided between the colonial architecture and sculpture of its Spanish conquest days and the clean lines of its modern section. This combination of superb well-preserved colonial churches and convents and shining glass and sleek contemporary architecture makes Quito one of the most beautiful cities in the whole of Latin America. Quito is the capital of Ecuador and it has a population of about 2 million people. After we pick up our luggage, we'll go to our hotel "Sebastian" which is located in the northern part of Quito. Enjoy a restful night for our Galapagos adventure begins in the morning!

***NOTE: Quito is at an altitude of 9,300 ft. If your physician does not recommend that you travel to a destination at this altitude, an alternate Galapagos routing can be arranged via Guayaquil, which is at sea level.**

DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9TH – QUITO/GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Today after an early breakfast, we will take our bus to the airport in Quito for our flight to the Galapagos Islands' airport on Baltra, arriving around noon. After going through Galapagos arrival procedures, we cross the channel from Baltra to the northern side of Santa Cruz Island, where our private bus is waiting to take us for lunch at a wonderful farm and restaurant called "Narwhal", home of the best grilled chicken in the islands. After lunch we will continue to the city of **Puerto Ayora**, the colorful town that is the administrative center of the Galapagos National Park, the location of the Darwin Station and where our **Hotel Fernandina** is located. Today after we check-in, we'll get our snorkel gear and have an opportunity to become comfortable with it in the hotel swimming pool, so that we can all enjoy the underwater world of the Galapagos to the fullest.

Santa Cruz Island is a large, high island in the center of the archipelago on which volcanic activity has long since ceased, although there are still some interesting ecological remnants. The wetter southeast side faces the prevailing trade winds and holds the archipelago's largest human population of about 20,000 people. (B.L.D)

DAY 3 – THURSDAY MARCH 10TH - CHARLES DARWIN STATION AND TORTUGA BAY BEACH



This morning we will visit the famous Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about the conservation programs carried out by the National Park with the scientific support of this investigation center. We will also see and learn about the tortoise captive breeding program and of course we will visit our famous friend "**Lonesome George**" and his two unhappy females. If you like to support conservation work and scholarship to local kids you can purchase some souvenirs at the Darwin Station shop. To get to our next destination you can choose between walking and taking a boat there.

If you like a good exercise for about 50 minutes, this is a good opportunity. Or, you can get on the boat and get there in a relaxed and comfortable way.

Our next site is considered to be one of the most beautiful beaches in the world, "**Tortuga Bay**", named after the turtles that used to nest here many years ago. We will enjoy the clear water, swimming, kayaking, sunbathing and relaxing. Much Galapagos wildlife can be found here, such as pelicans, frigatebirds, ghost-crabs and marine iguanas. After walking and swimming we will go back to our hotel to shower, relax, and then enjoy a wonderful dinner in town. (B.L.D)

DAY 4 – FRIDAY MARCH 11TH – SOUTH PLAZA ISLAND



This morning after breakfast, we take our bus to the Itabaca Channel in the northern part of Santa Cruz, where we will board our boat that will take us for a wonderful day of exploration. South Plaza Island is a small uplifted island that holds a large colony of Galapagos sea lions. This is a great place to understand their social structure. You will see females, lots of babies and a very exclusive place for the old males, the bachelor's colony.

Our walk will take you along the magnificent cliff formation, where you can see many sea birds including pelicans, Nazca boobies, tropicbirds, gulls, noddy terns and more. The landscape is also very colorful, consisting of prickly pear cactus and small sessuvium vegetation. After a delicious Galapagos lunch, we'll put on our snorkel gear and explore the unique underwater life...different types of fishes like parrot fishes, damselfishes, Moorish idols, surgeons, etc. (B,L,D)

DAY 5- SATURDAY MARCH 12th – HIGHLANDS OF SANTA CRUZ



Today we are going to explore the highlands of Santa Cruz. We travel by bus through private farmland to a place in the highlands where **giant tortoises** are found in their natural habitat. Santa Cruz has a population of about 2,000 giant tortoises. In this place we'll also see one of the natural wonders, a **lava tube** and we will walk underground for about 30 min to enjoy this geological formation. Our busy morning will end with a delicious lunch in the highlands at one of the nicest farms on the island. This is also a place we can play soccer, volleyball and enjoy the swimming pool. After lunch we will stop at a farm run by Adriano Cabrera, who is a true **Galapagos farmer**. Mr. Cabrera will show us his family farm and share his vast knowledge as a long time farmer. We'll see a small coffee, banana and sugar-cane plantation and many other interesting plants in the area. (B.L.D)

DAY 6 – SUNDAY MARCH 13TH BARTOLOME ISLAND



Today we're off on another terrific adventure! We will take our bus to the other side of the island where we will be met by our speedboat to take us to Bartolome Island. **Bartolome** is one of the most beautiful islands in the Galapagos, a true paradise for geologists. First we'll enjoy a wonderful volcanic view of one of the most photographed places in the Galapagos, Pinnacle Rock, along with many volcanic spatter cones. Next, we'll take a short ride by boat to look for the endemic Galapagos penguins that are found here.

Our next activity at Bartolome Island will be swimming and snorkeling. Here we have a chance to go in the water and explore the diverse marine life. We'll see different fish species, small sharks, and if we're lucky get to swim with a Galapagos penguin. In the afternoon we take our speed-boat back to Santa Cruz and return to our hotel in Puerto Ayora. (B,L)

DAY 7 - MONDAY MARCH 14TH - NORTH SEYMOUR ISLAND AND BACHAS BEACH



This morning, we're taking a bus across the island (40 min) to the Itabaca channel where we'll be met by our day tour boat which will take us to **North Seymour** Island (1 hour). This is a small, flat, uplifted island. Here we'll see magnificent frigate-birds, blue footed boobies, gulls, land iguanas and playful sea lions. After a 90 minute walk, you'll come back to the boat, have a drink, change clothes and then go snorkeling to see the many different tropical fish and maybe get to play with the sea lions.

This afternoon after a typical Galapagos boat lunch, we'll go to "**Bachas Beach**" located on the northern part of Santa Cruz. This is one of the most beautiful beaches in the islands with nice clear blue water. Here we'll see a flamingo lagoon, sally light foot crabs, marine iguanas, pelicans and boobies flying by. After walking and swimming we'll go back to our boat and back to the hotel to refresh before enjoying another great dinner. (B,L,D)

DAY 8 - TUESDAY MARCH 15TH - GALAPAGOS - QUITO - CITY TOUR

This morning after breakfast we will say good-bye to our new friends in the Galapagos Islands and return to the airport of Baltra for our flight to mainland Ecuador. Lunch is served aboard the flight and this afternoon we arrive in Quito where we are met by our local guide.

This afternoon after we check in, we will take our bus to go on a **city-tour**. We will see the old Quito which has not changed much since colonial times. We will see some of the nicest colonial churches of South America, convents, the presidential palace and its park. This evening, a special dinner at a local restaurant awaits us. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 - WEDNESDAY MARCH 16TH - MIDDLE OF THE EARTH - OTAVALO MARKET - PEGUCHE WATER FALL



This morning after breakfast, we'll take our private bus to the city of **Otavalo**, where we'll see the world-famous Otavalo Indian Market. Here we'll see the colorful clothes, ponchos, blankets, and hand-crafts made by these well known artisans. This is a good place to shop for souvenirs and also a fun place for bargaining.

Today we'll enjoy a nice Ecuadorian lunch at "La Casa del Sol " which is owned and run by Otavalo indigenous people. We'll have a true Indian-style lunch at this very colorful place, but before lunch we'll walk a little to see the great "**Peguche Waterfall**". About 10 miles north of Otavalo is the village of **Cotacachi**, Ecuador's leatherwork center. Formerly made of tough cowhide, the goods have now increased in quality, and there is an excellent choice of jackets, skirts and boots, as well as briefcases, bags and wallets. Late afternoon we'll go back to our hotel for a nice relaxing siesta and then enjoy another wonderful dinner. (B.L)

DAY 10 - THURSDAY MARCH 17TH - QUITO - USA

This morning after breakfast our guide will take us to the Mariscal Sucre airport in Quito for our flight back home.

YOUR TOUR INCLUDES:

- International airfare, Chicago or Miami to Quito, Ecuador and return. (See NOTE below.)
- All airport transfers in Quito and the Galapagos.
- Hotel accommodations.
- All the activities specified in your itinerary.
- Naturalist Guides in the Galapagos and Tour Guide on the mainland.
- All your meals specified in your itinerary.
- Soft drink or water with your meals and a water dispenser with purified water at your hotel in the Galapagos Islands.
- Snorkeling gear, wet suit and a mesh bag.
- Galapagos National Park fee.
- Internal air: Quito / Galápagos / Quito.
- Immigration card in the Galapagos.
- Tips for Guides, porters, drivers and included meals.
- Ecuadorian phone for the group leader.
- Lots of fun.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Travel insurance.
- Items of personal nature.
- Medical care.
- Internet service.
- Quito departure tax \$47 (collected locally and subject to change).
- Scuba diving.
- Fuel surcharge.
- Alcohol of any kind.
- One dinner in Quito and one in the Galapagos.

**PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY: \$3,990 from Chicago, \$3,860 from Miami.
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$880.**

NOTE: While we have a guaranteed base airfare, the taxes, fees and surcharges associated with the fare are always subject to change until time of ticketing, which is typically 30 days prior to departure. Therefore, your total price can change until time of ticketing, regardless of your payment status.

YOUR CRUISE & TOUR HOSTS AND EXPEDITION LEADERS



Company founder **Peggy Crull** has spent the past 38 years in the travel industry and opened Downtown Travel, Inc. (now Cruise & Tour) in 1975. **Dennis Crull** joined the company in 1983. Together, the Crulls have been on well over 150 cruises including destinations such as Indonesia, French Polynesia, the Norwegian Fjords, the Greek Isles and Antarctica. They have led groups on safari in Kenya, ridden elephants through the jungles of Thailand, and explored the Galapagos Islands and the depths of the Amazon. And they've cruised on every size and type of vessel, from French canal barges to the Queen Mary 2. The thing they love most about their business? "Meeting people and helping to make their travel dreams come true!"