



Explore the Treasures of Ecuador

Galapagos Islands Expedition Cruise & Andean Cultural Discovery
January 11-26, 2011

Travel on the Pan-American Highway through the Spectacular Avenue of the Volcanoes

- Learn about the long history and living traditions of the indigenous cultures in the Andes
- Bargain for leather goods, wood carvings, weavings and tapestries, and other handicrafts in local Indian markets
- Overnight at a 400 year old Hacienda and enjoy the genteel colonial lifestyle
- Learn about ancient indigenous cultures of the Andes and see their descendants today

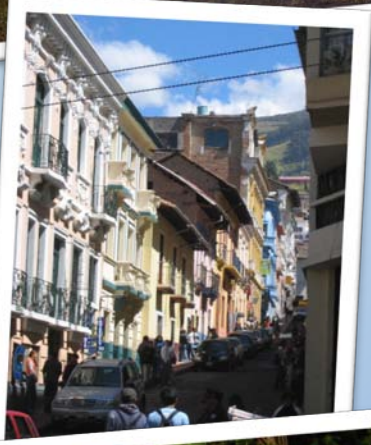
Explore the Colonial Quarters of Quito and Cuenca- both UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- Ride the narrow gauge train through the snow capped Andes down the "Devil's Nose"
- See where genuine Panama hats are made
- Taste traditional highland Ecuadorian specialties- llapingachos, hornado, choclo y queso, humitas
- Experience the unique wonders of the Galapagos with expert naturalist guides as we cruise for 5 days aboard our expedition ship

Observe the Giant Galapagos Tortoises in their Native Habitat

- Go ashore on Bartolome, Isabela, Fernandina, Santiago, Rabida, and Santa Cruz islands (2 landings per day) to walk in Darwin's footsteps
- Swim or snorkel with playful seals among colorful tropical fish
- Learn about on-going studies of adaptation and evolution at the Charles Darwin Research Station
- Savor superb fresh island seafood like corvina encocado, ceviche mixto, and camarones
- Encounter- in turn- colonies of dragon-like marine iguanas, seals, sea lions, penguins, frigate birds, boobies, cormorants, flamingos, turtles and of course the giant Galapagos tortoise

Stargaze at the equator and locate the Southern Cross among brilliant constellations



TREASURES OF ECUADOR

Colonial Quito, Galapagos & Along the Avenue of Volcanoes

Day 1 **Tuesday, January 11 | Miami/Quito**

We meet in Miami for our 4-hr flight to Quito, Ecuador. Quito sits on the equator but at 9350' altitude, so the air will be fresh and thin. Our boutique hotel is a restored historic home in the heart of colonial Old Town. Let us retire early to help us acclimatize.

Day 2 **Wednesday, January 12 | Quito**

Quito's Old Town is considered the best preserved example of Spanish colonial architecture in the Americas. Quitenos are proud to live in a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ornate churches on every square hold treasures of religious art. Historic mansions, commercial buildings and municipal buildings line the cobblestone streets. Quito's dramatic 477-year history is revealed on our walking tour of the historic center. At Plaza Grande, we will see the Palacio del Gobierno and the Cathedral. Plaza San Francisco reveals spectacular views of Volcan Pinchicha and the Monastery of San Francisco is the oldest in Ecuador. Later our condor's view of the town center from Panecillo Hill will give us perspective to appreciate the unique high Andean setting and beauty of the capital.

Day 3 **Thursday, January 13 | Quito/Galapagos: Bartolome**

Our morning flight takes us westward over the Andes. We see white capped volcanoes pierce the sky as we wing along the Equatorial line towards the coast then out over the Pacific 600 miles to the Galapagos Islands. There, we transfer to our MS Galapagos Legend and begin the cruise. Our naturalist will brief us on our itinerary as we enjoy lunch, weigh anchor and make for the afternoon dry landing on Bartolome Island. On the shore we will see interesting volcanic formations including lava bombs, spatter, and cinder cones. We hike to the summit to enjoy an impressive view of the surrounding islands and the eroded tuff cone of Pinnacle Rock. As we walk we should encounter large colonies of marine iguanas, lava lizards, tiquilla, and various cacti. A small bay will invite swimming or snorkling. There will be the Galapagos penguins, sea turtles, and white tipped sharks at a safe distance.

Day 4 **Friday, January 14 | Galapagos: Isabela - Ferdinand**

Morning Shore Excursion on Isabela Island (Urbina Bay): After a wet landing, we will walk to Fossil beach and then to the coral area. On the way we hope to observe giant tortoises, land iguanas and flightless cormorants. Afternoon Shore Excursion on Fernandina Island: After a dry landing at Espinosa Point, we will see large marine iguanas mingling with sally-light foot crabs. There will be nesting sites of flightless cormorants, then Galapagos penguins, Galapagos hawks, and sea lions. Among the flora and volcanic formations we will note brachycereus cactus, and two kinds of lava formations "pa-hoe-hoe" lava and "AA". Mangrove beds extend into the sea, depicting a healthy and thriving eco-system.

Day 5 **Saturday, January 15 | Galapagos: Santiago - Rabida**

Morning Shore Excursion on Santiago Island: There will be a wet landing on the dark sand beach at Egas Port. Most of the landscape is tuff-stone layers and lava flows, the surrounding area is good for spotting and observing hunting herons, great blue herons, lava herons, oyster catchers, and the yellow crowned night heron. On the shore, we will enjoy the sight of marine iguanas grazing upon algae beds at low tide sharing space with red sally light-foot crabs. There is a colony of fur-seals swimming in deep pools of cool water called "grottos". In this beach you can swim or snorkel in search of octopuses, sea horses, star fish and other sea life. Afternoon Shore Excursion on Rábida Island (Jervis): Wet landing at the dark red colored beach of volcanic origin frequented by sea lions. This is considered the geographic center of Galapagos because it has the most diversified volcanic rocks of all the Islands. A short trail leads to a salt water lagoon, where we may spot flamingos. We expect to observe boobies and 9 species of Darwin's finches. A dinghy takes us to an excellent opportunity for snorkeling on the reef.

Day 6 **Sunday, January 16 | Galapagos: Santa Cruz**

Morning Shore Excursion to Santa Cruz Island (Charles Darwin Station): We will have the opportunity to tour the Charles Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora, staffed with international scientists conducting biological research and conservation projects. Here you can observe very old giant tortoises that are part of the breeding program. A giant prickly-pear cactus forest attracts a great variety of land birds. Later we will have independent time to walk around town and shop for books or souvenirs. Afternoon Shore Excursion to Santa Cruz Island (Highlands): One of the options is to cross the highlands of Santa Cruz. We will visit Cerro Chato. On this visit, you'll be able to observe the famous giant tortoises that gave the name to the archipelago. On the hill, we can walk through dormant lava tubes. Optional activity: We will try to organize a scuba diving opportunity today and/or tomorrow for anyone who is interested and certified. This would be in lieu of the regularly scheduled tours.

Day 7 **Monday, January 17 | Galapagos: Santa Cruz**

Morning Shore Excursion to Santa Cruz Island (Bachas Beach): Our last wet landing will be on the north coast of Santa Cruz Island. There you will be surrounded by different sea birds, marine iguanas, sea turtles, and will want to swim once more on this wonderful white sand beach. We must return to the Galapagos Legend to check out, then disembark and transfer to our land-based Silberstein Hotel in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz. The afternoon will be independent to relax or explore the bohemian island town. We will offer an optional trek in the highlands of Santa Cruz where we will explore lava tubes and seek the giant Galapagos tortoise in its native habitat. Tonight let us organize a social hour at the patio of our hotel so we can share tales of our afternoon adventures, then enjoy a traditional island dinner.

Day 8 **Tuesday, January 18 | Galapagos/Quito**

The morning will be free before transferring to the airport for our flight back to Quito. In the afternoon, we will ride the Teleferico (cable car with gondolas) up to the summit of Cruz Loma of the Pinchincha Volcano. The observation deck is at 13,284' and offers spectacular views and photo opportunities of the city and the Avenue of the Volcanoes.



Day 9 **Wednesday, January 19 | Quito**

The best place to learn about the indigenous pre-history of the region is at the Central Bank of Ecuador. You will be amazed at the treasures of precolumbian gold, ceramics, textiles and the visual testimony of technologically advanced ancient cultures. It does make sense to protect these finds in a bank vault. Later we learn about the history of independence where it happened- the ancient San Augustin Monestary which is now also a museum. The afternoon will be free to discover more of Quito.

Day 10 **Thursday, January 20 | Quito/ Otavalo**

Otovalenos are traders by tradition and highly skilled in artisan crafts. Colorful expertly woven textiles and tapestries, baskets, ropes, felt hats and jewelry are waiting for us in the market. Bargaining is expected, so give it your best effort! Whatever you pay for that special item, it will all the more special for the experience. Later, we will enjoy a short hike near Quiococha Lake, believed by the natives to be bottomless. Quiococha is a crater lake of volcanic origin, and is part of Cotachi-Cayapas Reserve. We will enjoy a lunch of typical Andean food near here, then this afternoon we will visit the village of Pechuge, an ancient community famed for their textiles and tapestries. We will continue on to Cotacachi, famous for its beautiful tooled leather work where you can pick up a nice jacket. Tonight during our social hour before dinner, let us show and tell our bargaining exploits.

Day 11 **Friday, January 21 | Otovalo/Cotapaxi**

Our journey along the Avenue of the Volcanoes continues as we make our way south to Cotopaxi Volcano. Cotopaxi National Park is considered a most important natural reserves in Ecuador. We hope to spot an Andean wolf, deer, alpaca, vicunia and perhaps the elusive Andean condor. The majestic volcano towers over the park. The Cotopaxi has a perfect snow-covered cone and is the highest active volcanoes in Ecuador. Our hike in the national park will be horizontal. We will overnight at Hacienda La Cienega, a 400 year old working hacienda. this may become our most favorite and memorable hotel of the trip.

Day 12 **Saturday, January 22 | Cotopaxi/Banos/Riobamba**

We will be thrilled by the majestic panorama of the towering cones flanking our route as we continue south along the Avenue of the Volcanoes to Banos on the eastern slope of the Andes. Here the humid warmth of the Amazon basin reaches up towards the highlands, and the environment becomes tropical cloud forest. A short hike takes us to El Pailon del Diablo (Devil's Caldron) and a remarkable waterfall, and we explore the town a bit also. Banos (Spanish for "baths") has long been known for its rejuvenating thermal springs. Let's test the waters thoroughly and get energized for a strenuous day tomorrow. Then we continue to Riobamba where we overnight.

Day 13 **Sunday, January 23 | Riobamba/Cuenca**

We must depart early to board the narrow gauge train that will carry us through picturesque landscape and down the precipitous mountain called the Nariz del Diablo (Devil's nose). As the train chugs along, Perhaps we will see Mingas, These are communal groups of farmers, working terraced fields as they have since pre-columbian times. We disembark the train and drive to the sight of an ancient Canari culture stronghold and now archaeological museum site. Ingapirca was conquered by the Incas in 1400 AD and became the northernmost outpost of Tihuantinsuyu- the Inca Empire of the Sun- that stretched 4000 km from Ecuador to Chile. It was a regional governmental, religious, and ceremonial center until Pizarro's conquest. Ingapirca has been restored to give a good idea of its functions and it is once again controlled by Canari people. After a guided site visit we continue further south to our overnight stop Cuenca. Cuenca is known as the City of Eternal Spring. The colonial gem is favored by Ecuadorians for its charm, beauty, clean streets and relaxed life-style. Tonight, after an evening promenda with the locals around the square, you may want to visit the Pena (South American folk music nightclub) across from our hotel where you might hear the lonesome notes of Andean pan-pipes and guitars lament the conquest of the Incas in songs like "El Condor Pasa".

Day 14 **Monday, January 24 | Cuenca**

The small towns of Gualaceo, Chordeleg, and Sigsig are nestled in the lovely countryside near Cuenca and remain traditional artisan centers. We will watch craftsmen at work and learn about ceramics, gold and silver working, weaving, woodcarving, and creating the very fine sombreros de toquilla, better known world-wide as "Panama hats". Hopefully you have left room in your suitcase for one more special handmade piece.

Day 15 **Tuesday, January 25 | Cuenca/Quito**

We get acquainted with charming old town Cuenca this morning on a walking tour. Our afternoon treat will be the thrilling birds-eye view the Avenue of the Volcanoes on the flight back to Quito. Late afternoon will be free for independent exploration or shopping. Then we will gather for our farewell dinner and to celebrate the extraordinary experiences we shared in Ecuador and on the Galapagos islands.

Day 16 **Wednesday, January 26 | Quito/Miami**

Transfer to the airport this morning to catch the international flight to Miami and back home, or join us on the extension.



Charles Darwin called the Galapagos Islands "a separate center of creation," and *Herman Melville* described them as "the Enchanted Islands."



"The natural history of these islands is eminently curious, and well deserves attention ... Considering the small size of these islands, we feel the more astonished at the number of their aboriginal beings, and at their confined range ... Hence, both in space and time, we seem to be brought somewhat near to that great fact--that mystery of mysteries--the first appearance of new beings of this earth."

Charles Darwin, 1835

GENOVESA (Tower Island): Basaltic lava flow, Opuntia cacti, Palo Santo trees, sea lions, fur seals, marine iguanas, storm petrels, gulls, shearwaters, tropic birds, masked and red-footed boobies, frigate birds.

NORTH SEYMOUR: Swallow-tailed gulls, fur sea lions, blue-footed boobies, yellow warblers, lava (Dusky) gulls, red-billed tropic birds, Galapagos snakes, land iguana, frigate birds, Palo Santo trees, varied vegetation.

ESPANOLA (Hood Island): Sea lions, albatross, mockingbirds, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, masked boobies, swallow-tailed gulls, pelicans, petrels, finches, lava lizards, Sally light-foot crabs, oyster catchers, blowhole, Galapagos dove.

FLOREANA ISLAND (Charles): Devil's Crown volcanic cone, tropic birds, blue-footed boobies, mangrove region, flamingo lagoon, Audubon's Shearwater, noddy terns, feral organisms, Post Office Bay, coral sand beach.

SANTA CRUZ (Indefatigable): Academy Bay, Charles Darwin Research Station and tortoise breeding pens, Darwin finches, lava gulls, herons, lava lizards, Puerto Ayora village, curio shops, assorted vegetation.

SOUTH PLAZA ISLAND: Sea lions, Darwin finches, Opuntia cacti forest, Sessuvium, swallow-tailed gulls, tropic birds, petrels, land iguana, lava lizards, Sally light-foot crabs, Audubon's Shearwater.

BARTOLOME ISLAND: Pinnacle rock, mangrove region, volcanic landscape with spatter cones and lava tubes, swimming beach with some coral development and assorted marine life.

ISABELA ISLAND (Albermarle): Tagus Cove, Cinder volcanoes, penguins, flightless cormorants, noddy terns, crater with salt lake, marine iguanas, pelicans, Audubon Shearwaters, blue-footed boobies.

FERNANDIA ISLAND (Narborough): Punta Espinoza, mangrove forest, recent lava flow with different lava formation (aa, ropey, pillow), hawks, blue-footed boobies, lava lizards, land and marine iguanas, fur seals.

JAMES ISLAND (Santiago): Flycatchers, mockingbirds, yellow warblers, oystercatchers, pelican brown noddies, boobies, fur seals, sea lions, seal and sea lion grotto, Sally light-foot crabs, marine iguanas, lava lizards.

Reservation Form

Treasuries of Ecuador

January 11-26, 2011*
\$4780 from Miami**

Galapagos Islands Expedition Cruise & Andean Cultural Discovery Journey

Deposit Received: _____
Full Payment Received: _____
Confirmation Sent: _____
Other: _____

Permission to sail through the Galapagos is restricted to preserve the fragile environment. Our allotment is limited to 18 enthusiastic travelers. Please indicate your interest soon in order to secure your place on this exceptional adventure.

Please complete this entire form and enclose a \$400.00 deposit (per person). Final payment is due November 15, 2010.

Full Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____

State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Passport Number: _____

Please enter my reservation for:

Main Tour

Extension TBD

My main reason for participating in this tour is:

Accommodations (please indicate your preference):

Please note: Your preference will be requested, but may not be available at all hotels. Singles receive beds, as available.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

I would like to share a room with: _____

Please assign a non-smoking roommate.

I would prefer single accommodations where available.

Single Supplement for hotel and cruise is \$1430 for the main tour, including single berth on the cruise.

We prefer a double bed.

We prefer two beds.

* Dates subject to minor change with final land confirmations.

**\$4780 per person, double occupancy, includes all airfare from Miami including to the Galapagos, National Park taxes, Ingalá fees, and fuel surcharges.

Flight arrangements: This tour originates and terminates at Miami International airport in Miami. The Post Tour originates in Quito, Ecuador and terminates at Miami. The tour includes all air and land arrangements per itinerary.

Each applicant must read and sign the following Responsibility Statement.

Responsibility Statement Mexi-Mayan Academic Travel, Inc.

The undersigned has read the schedule of activities for this tour and recognizes and accept any risk thereof. The undersigned also understands and hereby agrees for and on behalf of himself, his dependants, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to abide by the conditions set forth under Responsibility in the Tour Conditions and General Information, and to release and hold harmless Mexi-Mayan Academic Travel, Inc. and any of its officers, agents, licensees or representatives from any and all liability for delays, injuries or death, or for the loss or damage to his property however occurring during any portion of, or in relation to this tour and the extension.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please make checks payable to Mexi-Mayan Academic Travel and mail completed form and payment to:

Mexi-Mayan Academic Travel, Inc.
8 North Loomis
Naperville, IL 60540

Treasures of Ecuador

January 11-26, 2011

Galapagos Islands Expedition Cruise & Andean Cultural Discovery Journey

TOUR CONDITIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR FEATURES: The group tour, Treasures of Ecuador, includes international air from Miami based on prices available at time of publication, domestic flights within Ecuador including flight to Galapagos, guided tours, bilingual tour escort, all entrance fees including \$100 Galapagos National Park tax, 5 day/4 night Galapagos Islands cruise, hotels, meals each day per final itinerary, bus transportation, transfers, and handling for one bag. Tour originates and terminates at Miami.

TOUR COST: The tour cost, \$4780 per person, double occupancy, is based on rates at time of publication, and on minimum group size of 18. All rates are per person and based on double occupancy. A single supplement will be charged when requested and where single rooms are available.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: Secure your reservation with a \$400 deposit per person. Final payment will be due November 15, 2010.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellations must be received in writing by MMAT to qualify for a refund. Prior to November 15 no penalty. November 16 – December 20, 2010 a \$150 penalty will apply. After December 20, a refund of recoverable expenses, minus a \$200 cancellation fee, will be given. No refund for cancellations after December 31, 2010. Airline tickets, once written, belong to the passenger. No refund for no-shows.

INSURANCE: International health and trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. Upon receipt of reservation, an application form for trip cancellation, accident, and baggage insurance will be mailed.

PREREQUISITES: A passport for U. S. citizens. Openness to experience a rich and varied culture with an active friendly group of experienced travelers.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST OF THIS TOUR: Services not specifically described in the final itinerary, beverages and meals not announced, optional tips to guides, and drivers, excess baggage charges and items of a personal nature such as laundry and telephone charges.

SCHEDULE OF MAILINGS: Upon request of the reservation and deposit, you will receive a confirmation, application form for trip cancellation, medical and baggage insurance and travel hints. A bill for the balance will be mailed later. Upon receipt of your final payment, your travel documents will be sent.

THE TOUR OPERATOR AND THE ESCORTS: Mexi-Mayan Academic Travel, Inc., 8 North Loomis Street, Naperville, Illinois, 60540, phone (630) 878-8594, specializes in cultural and educational travel. Steve Carr, MMAT Vice President, will escort the group.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Mexi-Mayan Academic Travel, Inc., its officers and corporate agents, and its appointed escort for this tour, act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation, hotels, and automobile and bus contractors. They will not be held responsible for accident, delay, sickness, personal injury or death, loss of personal property, additional expenses due to weather or other causes beyond their control. Mexi-Mayan Academic Travel, Inc. reserves the right to amend the itinerary if weather or other factors make it necessary or advisable.

QUESTIONS: For more information about the tour, please call Steve Carr at (630) 878-8594 or email stevercarr@aol.com.