



ECUADOR

GALAPAGOS WILDLIFE ODYSSEY ABOARD THE M/Y ERIC/FLAMINGO/LETTY

Selected by Condé Nast Traveler magazine as one of the world's 10 perfect cruise itineraries

DURATION : 11 days / 10 nights
SEASON : Year round
DEPARTURES : Guaranteed with a minimum of 2 participants
TRIP RATING : Easy/moderate Highlands & Natural History Cruise, Grade (I) - This trip includes Andean activities at elevations between 8,000-9,500' as well as an 8 day/7night cruise with occasional wet landings (ankle to knee deep water) to reach the observation sites. Optional water activities include swimming and snorkeling with marine wildlife and slow paced hikes of up to 4 hours duration on occasionally rough or rocky trails. Anyone in reasonably good fitness and condition, who is able to walk unassisted for up to 4 hours, should be able to enjoy a visit to the highlands and the *Enchanted Isles*.

2011 DATES : On request any week throughout the year, subject to availability

INTRODUCTION :

Galápagos National Park straddles the equator 600 miles west of Ecuador's Pacific coast. Undisturbed for centuries and isolated from the mainland, unusual species of birds, plants, reptiles and some mammals developed on the rocky, volcanic atolls of the *Enchanted Isles*. Darwin's visit and subsequent studies of the island's flora and fauna in 1835 contributed to the formulation of his theory on the evolution of species and brought this fascinating ecosystem to the attention of the world. The park, Ecuador's largest, was established in 1959 to protect the archipelago's unique environment and wildlife. Its landmass consists of nearly 3,000 square miles, is divided between 6 large islands, 12 smaller islands, and over 40 islets. In 1986, the creation of the Marine Resources Reserve expanded the preserved area to include more than 27,000 square miles of ocean. Unique to the Galápagos experience is the opportunity for travelers to come face-to-face with wildlife and birds that have no fear of humans. This exciting program features one of the most complete 8-day itineraries in the archipelago and provides the ideal opportunity to explore these remarkable islands and to watch and photograph their unique wildlife in small, intimate groups.

After a night in Quito, we tour the Lake District, visiting with artists from a variety of handicraft specialties. Following a flight to the Islands, we begin the cruise aboard our comfortable 20 passenger, superior first-class motor-yacht. Accompanied by 2 English speaking naturalist guides, we learn about the natural history of these enchanted islands, visiting the most outlying sites as well as important central and southern islands. We study marine iguanas and flightless cormorants on Fernandina, watch endemic land iguanas on North Seymour, observe red-footed boobies on Tower and blue-footed boobies on Hood, swim with penguins at Bartolomé and have the chance to snorkel with sea lions and fur seals! While enjoying beautiful views of white, olive or red sand beaches caressed by turquoise waters, we're impressed by the powerful forces of nature.

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01 (FRI): USA/QUITO

Arrive this evening to **Quito**, Ecuador's charming capital city, located at 9,350' in an Andean valley. After walking through Customs travelers are welcomed by our local staff and driven to one of the city's finest hotels, the centrally located Swissotel.

DAY 02 (SAT): LAKE DISTRICT/OTAVALO MARKET

This morning a scenic drive north takes us through the twisted canyons of the Guayabamba River to arrive at the fertile valleys of the Lake District and the community of **Otavalo** (8,300'). Here we catch the start of the weekly market (one of South America's largest) at the live animal auction. Dating back centuries, this market began when Indians from the lowland jungles would visit the highlands to trade their products. The raucous noise created by squealing piglets and bellowing calves contrasts with the quiet Otavaleños' typical silent bartering. We join dozens of locals heading to the four plazas where the handicraft and produce stalls are set up. We find a multitude of crafts here including wood carvings, ceramics and leather goods from all over the country. There is also plenty of opportunity to shop for the exquisite woolen products or embroidery work for which the Otavalo weavers are renowned. Their talent, combined with a sharp business sense, has contributed to world-wide recognition of their proficiency as weavers, and they have become one of the most prosperous of all indigenous groups in South America. Following our explorations, we enjoy a delicious Andean lunch, then visit several handicraft artists (leather workers, bread dough artists, weavers, etc.). By late afternoon, we return to the Swissotel to prepare for the cruise. Dinner is on your own this evening. **Driving distance:** 196 miles or 5 hours (round-trip). (B,L)

DAY 03 (SUN): QUITO/SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND (GALAPAGOS)

Following breakfast, we're picked up at the hotel to return to the airport. Here, our guide assists us with checking in for the flight to **San Cristóbal Island** (with one stop in Guayaquil en route). We land at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galápagos Islands and the oldest settlement in the archipelago. Disembarking, we pass through a line where park officials stamp our passports. Our naturalist guides are waiting to transfer us to the boat docks to catch the *panga*, or dinghy, out to our modern yacht. A light snack on board refreshes us before we locate our cabins and settle in. We set sail for **Playa Ochoa**, where we have a chance to snorkel or swim with a small colony of sea lions. Behind the beach, there is a tidal lagoon where birds can be spotted including the rare Chatham mockingbird. At sunset, we cruise around Kicker Rock (Leon Dormido), a vertical tuff cone formation that abruptly juts up almost 500 feet out of the ocean. On the cliffs, we find blue-footed boobies, masked boobies and magnificent frigate birds. Tonight is our first overnight navigation. (B,D)

DAY 04 (MON): TOWER ISLAND

We cross the equator overnight (8 hour navigation) to reach Genovesa, or **Tower Island**. Tower is the most northeasterly in the chain and one of the best places to observe marine birds. After breakfast, we board our *panga* to cross the water-filled crater on this horseshoe-shaped island to the first visitor site, **Prince Phillip's Steps**. Following a dry landing (no need to step into the water, we disembark onto rough lava steps), we climb up a short, steep trail that leads to the top of the cliffs and a winding path inland through dry forest vegetation. We pass through one of the largest red-footed booby colonies in the archipelago, watching as the birds roost in trees, build their nests or incubate their eggs. We also observe masked boobies and great frigatebirds as we hike towards the 82-foot-high cliffs on the far side of the island. Here we observe thousands of Galápagos storm petrels as they wheel overhead and we might possibly spot the short-eared owl, a diurnal bird who preys on them. After the walk kayaks are available to paddle along the shoreline. Following lunch we have a wet landing on the white coral beach of **Darwin Bay's** and hike along a trail that winds its way to the top of the cliff where we have a great view of the surrounding area. We watch marine birds including swallow-tailed gulls, lava herons, yellow crowned night herons, ground finches and large cactus finches. After the hike it's time to explore the water since the shallow crater gives us the opportunity to swim or snorkel in calm, clear turquoise waters (good opportunities to see spotted eagle rays or golden cownose rays). Sea lions, and sometimes fur seals, are present as well. Returning to the yacht, we enjoy dinner and a presentation before beginning our next navigation. (B,L,D)

DAY 05 (TUE): FERNANDINA/ISABELA ISLANDS

This morning, we visit **Punta Espinosa on Fernandina Island**, the youngest and most active in the archipelago. If we're lucky, we may observe whales or dolphins between the two islands. A dry landing onto black lava fields brings us to one of the largest colonies of marine iguanas in the islands. We watch with fascination as these amazingly charming but ugly creatures pile on top of each other for warmth after spending up to 25 minutes submerged in the cold waters to

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feed on algae. Continuing to the point, we observe several couples of flightless cormorants, watching as they go through their courtship ritual, build their nest or incubate their eggs. A curious sight, these agile blue-eyed swimmers appear rather clumsy on land as their wings dangle uselessly from their sides and they hop from rock to rock. In this area, we may also watch sea lions, lava lizards and possibly a great blue heron or Galápagos snake. Fernandina's lava landscape is one of the most dramatic we see during our trip, and we hike back inland a short distance to observe lava cactus and other colonizing plants among the stark black rocks. This afternoon we have a dry landing at **Tagus Cove** on **Isabela Island**. A steep dirt trail heads uphill to a lookout point offering a nice view of a relatively fresh lava flow. We can observe various species of finches and yellow warblers and plants. On top is a classic photo op of the Galápagos with the boats anchored in the quiet bay and a brackish lake shimmering in the foreground. This afternoon is an excellent opportunity to go snorkeling, or explore the coves in a *panga* or clear-bottom sea kayak. After our activities we return to the yacht for a dinner under the stars. (B,L,D)

DAY 06 (WED): SANTIAGO ISLAND

Watching the sunrise this morning, we find ourselves at **Puerto Egas**, the best visitor site on James, or **Santiago Island** (fourth largest island in the archipelago). Following a wet landing, we walk along the black lava shoreline whose pools, caves and inlets harbor a variety of intertidal wildlife, including red Sally lightfoot crabs which attract hunting herons. We watch dozens of marine iguanas, as well as a variety of invertebrates such as starfish, sea anemones, sea urchins, marine snails, barnacles, chitons and limpets. Arriving to the grottos, a lava formation with deep clear water pools, we'll look for the Galápagos fur seals, once on the verge of extinction. Additional wildlife that might be observed at this site including great blue herons, lava herons, Darwin's finches, yellow warblers, and lava lizards. Before lunch we have an opportunity to kayak or snorkel with an abundance of tropical fish. While onboard eating the yacht carries us to the other side of the island and the scenic landscapes of **Sombrero Chino** (Chinese Hat) located off the southern tip of the island. After a wet beach landing with sea lion colonies, the trail gives way to a primeval landscape of volcanic rubble including cracked lava formations and lava tubes. The lava tubes are fragile and one must be careful to stay on the trail. We find marine iguanas and pairs of oystercatchers. There are good photographic opportunities here as this site conveys a strong feeling that you've come to a very special place in the world. There is a briefing followed by dinner as we anchor in a calm protected area. (B,L,D)

DAY 07 (THU): BARTOLOME/NORTH SEYMOUR

Our day begins with a dry landing on **Bartolomé Island**, where it seems like we're walking on the moon, since this young island is inhospitable to most plants and animals. We hike for about 30-minutes along a steep trail and wooden stairs to reach the summit of the volcano. Along the way, we observe a variety of colonizing plant species such as *Tiquilia* and *Brachyaceus*, or lava cactus. We learn about splatter and parasitic cones, identify both aa lava and ropey lava, and visually trace the course of hollow lava tubes across the island. From the top we have a spectacular panoramic view of the nearby islands, and can clearly observe Pinnacle Rock, an eroded tuff cone in the bay below. This scene is especially beautiful in the early morning light and is the frequent subject of landscape photographs taken in the islands. After descending, we take the *panga* to a small sandy beach in the cove (wet landing) where there are excellent snorkeling and swimming opportunities. There are 307 species of fish in the islands and schools of colorful tropical fish frequent these waters. We can watch blue parrotfish, white-banded angelfish, blue-eyed damselfish, moorish idols, yellow-bellied triggerfish, marine turtles and possibly Galápagos penguins or sea lions. The calm conditions make the cove a great place to practice snorkeling techniques. A short hike through mangroves takes us across the isthmus to another bay where we might observe white-tipped reef sharks and marine turtle nests. Following lunch we have a dry landing on **North Seymour Island** where a circular trail leads through some of the most active seabird breeding colonies in the archipelago. Magnificent frigatebirds, blue-footed boobies and endemic land iguanas are main attractions. Observable bird activity is always present with courtship, mating, nesting or chick rearing. Swallow-tailed gulls are frequently seen as are sea lions and marine iguanas. Endemic Palo Santo and shrubby type *opuntia* are the dominant plant species. Dinner and evening update back on board. (B,L,D)

DAY 08 (FRI): SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

After breakfast we disembark (dry landing) to visit the highlands of **Santa Cruz Island**, a *Scalesia* forest and Los Gemelos, a distinctive geology formation consisting of twin pit craters. This island has a variety of geology, wildlife, vegetation, and contains all of the Galápagos life zones. For instance, the coastal zone is only a few meters and the plantlife is greatly influenced by the presence of salt, giving us red, white, black, and button mangrove. The dry zone can be remarkably dry from May to December (*garua* season) when only the southeast sides of the volcanoes get any precipitation, and even then it is only a fine mist (*garua*). Here we can see the beauty of how various species have adapted to these extremely dry conditions, giving us a variety of cacti. This may also be when we have the opportunity to visit giant tortoises in the wild (Dec-mid April) if weather conditions are favorable. As we drive inland we will have

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lunch at one of the *fincas*, or farms, in the highlands. This afternoon will be one of the few times we see civilization throughout our Galápagos journey. After lunch we head to **Puerto Ayora** and the **Charles Darwin Research Station**. Here we will be afforded the opportunity to get up close and personal with giant tortoises at the breeding and rearing center, a favorite among visitors, and meet some of the international research staff that have made preservation of the Galápagos ecosystem a scientific priority. Founded in 1959, the Research Station has a Natural History Interpretation Center and carries out educational projects to support the Galápagos National Park Service through conservation of natural resources, management of flora and fauna, and the sustainable use of resources. After visiting this incredible facility we are given time to stroll the main street of Puerto Ayora and buy souvenirs or just relax and enjoy the bay filled with sailboats, seabirds and marine iguanas. Although dinner is served onboard, passengers may stay in town for the evening and have dinner on their own. (B,L,D)

DAY 09 (SAT): HOOD ISLAND

This morning we wake in **Punta Suarez** at the western end of Hood Island. We approach a small cove in our *panga*, and are probably escorted by half-a-dozen curious juvenile sea lions, tagging along and playing in the motor's wake. Following another wet landing, we hike through a very large blue-footed booby colony. This is one of the highlights of this site as there is always interesting behavior to observe - courtship dances with sky pointing, whistling and honking; mating, which takes about 20 seconds; nest building, starting with the first stick offered during the courtship ritual; or chick rearing! As many of the best nesting sites are located right on the trail, there are plenty of opportunities to take close-up photographs of the birds. We pass through a large masked booby colony, then make our way past a beach full of colorful marine iguanas. From the seaward cliffs above we can watch swallow-tailed gulls, boobies, red-billed tropicbirds and other marine birds swooping and diving into the waves. Behind the cliffs we encounter a colony of majestic waved albatrosses. These impressive birds, the largest in the archipelago, have a wing span of up to 8 feet and are so heavy they need to waddle quite a distance to reach the cliffs and catch an updraft in order to take off. The courtship ritual of these beautiful creatures is one of the most complex mating dances of any bird species. It includes honking, whistling, bill clicking, swaying and more and can take up to 4 hours to complete! The albatrosses are out to sea from January through March and typically cannot be observed during these months. Colorful Sally light-foot crabs crawl along the shoreline near the famous "Blow Hole." This is the scene most people envision when they decide to visit Galápagos. Walking back to our *panga*, we might see large cactus finches and are likely followed by Hood mockingbirds looking for fresh water. This afternoon we visit **Gardner Bay** on Española, or Hood Island, the most southerly island in the archipelago and one of the richest in terms of wildlife. The bay has a beautiful white sand beach and is reached by a wet landing. This is a good place for long, contemplative walks on the beach as well as swimming, and there is excellent snorkeling by the small islets in the entrance to the bay. In addition to the sea lion colony found here, we might also observe a Galápagos Hawk and marine iguanas. This evening we enjoy a special Captain's Farewell cocktail followed by dinner and a 5-hour voyage to anchor in the bay off San Cristobal Island. (B,L,D)

DAY 10 (SUN): SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND/QUITO

Rising early this morning, after a beautiful sunrise, we head into **Puerto Baquerizo Moreno Bay** to visit the **Interpretation Center** opened in 1999. Here we gain a more complete understanding of the natural and human history of the Islands. Following a chance to purchase some souvenirs or snacks, we say goodbye to our crew and transfer to the airport for the afternoon flight back to **Quito**, arriving in the early evening. We're met at the airport and transferred to the comfortable Swissotel. This evening we join our local guide for a congenial Ecuadorian farewell dinner at one of the best restaurants in town. (B,D)

DAY 11 (MON): QUITO/USA

Transfer to the airport with check-in assistance for return flight to the USA. (B)

NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: Although we do our best to adhere to the schedule, the day-by-day activities on this itinerary are subject to change at any time for numerous reasons beyond our control including Galápagos Park Regulations and/or participant health, weather, sea and/or road conditions.

We recommend making reservations well in advance (at least 4-6 months for regular programs and 1 year for holiday departures) to ensure space on the date of your choice. Reservations placed within 90 days of departure will be accepted only if space is available and must be paid in full at the time of booking.

This trip is suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities age 7 and up. Some departures may include families with children. Hiking/driving distances and altitudes are approximate, times indicated are NET (they do not include lunch breaks, rest stops, time to explore the area, etc.).

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2011 LAND COSTS:

| <u>Upper (Dolphin) Deck</u> | <u>Main (Booby) Deck</u> | <u>Lower (Iguana) Deck</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| \$5,775 ppd | \$5,410 ppd | \$5,035 ppd (2-3 participants) |
| \$5,625 ppd | \$5,260 ppd | \$4,885 ppd (4-6 participants) |
| \$5,525 ppd | \$5,160 ppd | \$4,785 ppd (7-12 participants) |

p.p.d.=per person double occupancy. For parties of 3, a triple cabin is available on the lower Iguana Deck, and is the same per person price as indicated above for the lower deck.

For single travelers willing to share accommodations, roommates are matched on a first-come, first-serve basis on the lower deck only. Forced singles will have to pay a supplemental fee of \$2,105 on the lower deck. A single for hotels only is \$330.

Children Discounts: Kids age 7 to 11 at the time of travel are entitled to a discount of \$845 ppd (lower, deck), \$935 ppd (main deck) or \$1,035 ppd (upper deck) on the *Wildlife Odyssey* Land Cost. For youngsters age 12 to 14 at time of travel, the discount is \$505 ppd (lower deck), \$565 ppd (main deck) or \$615 ppd (upper deck) respectively.

Note: Children's discounts are limited to one per each accompanying adult and two per family. No discounts are allowed during the end of the year holidays. Children 11 or younger may be permitted on departures other than the designated Family Departures. Other restrictions may apply.

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled (transfers on different days are additional). Ground transportation in spacious and comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers. Occasionally, other Southwind travelers may share the same vehicle, particularly for transfers or tours in Quito.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance**.
- Galápagos National **Park entrance fee** of \$100 p.p. (\$50 per child 11 or under).
- Galápagos **Transit control card fee** of \$10 per person
- All **accommodations in first-class (4-5 star) hotels** as listed (or at similar hotels) on a shared basis with private bath. Note: As reservations for early arrivals or late departures are not placed at the same time as those for our group space, we may have to use a different hotel for those nights. Advanced bookings are recommended if you plan to arrive early or extend your stay. Double beds for couples (primarily queen or king-sized) can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as most hotels offer very few rooms with double beds.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification required).
- All **guided tours** and excursions listed on the mainland (including applicable entrance fees), accompanied by a bilingual local guide in Quito & Otavalo.
- Arrival & departure transfers on San Cristóbal or Baltra islands.
- Accommodations on the superior first-class, 20 passenger sister yachts, M/Y Eric, Flamingo or Letty in a double cabin with private bath.
- Experienced sailing crew and staff of 10, including a chef and 1 or 2 licensed English speaking naturalist guides (certified by the Charles Darwin Research Station and National Park Service). The ship provides 2 guides with a minimum of 14 guests. Should there be fewer than 14 guests, there may only be one naturalist on board. Officers on board are also bilingual.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, International nor local flights to/from the islands (see **Estimated Airfare** on page 8).
- Ecuadorian departure taxes (\$41 when leaving the country).
- Alcoholic beverages or items of a personal nature like laundry, telephone calls, souvenirs etc.
- Tips to the local staff as warranted.
- Any expenses incurred in preparing for this trip such as but not limited to non-refundable airline tickets or travel insurance, nor additional costs resulting from flight schedule changes, delays, cancellations or missed connections.

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TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing a plan to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance helps to cover unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, geologic events, local strikes, a personal injury/illness to you, family member or your traveling companion could cause interruption or changes to your itinerary, missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or need for medical attention on the trip or evacuation which is why coverage is important. We recommend the *Worldwide Trip Protector (WTP)* plan offered by Travel Insured International (TII). **Kids 17 and under are free with related adult on the WTP plan.** Information and an application are sent upon receipt of your deposit (sooner if requested). Policies can be purchased securely online at: www.southwindadventures.com/insurance.html. If you, your traveling companion or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you should purchase the WTP policy within 21 days of your deposit in order to be reimbursed for non-refundable costs if a recurrence of the condition forces you to cancel your trip (some restrictions apply). Please call our office or visit our website for more information.

M/Y ERIC, FLAMINGO OR LETTY: These superior first-class 20-passenger yachts were constructed between 1990-1992 and were completely refurbished in 2004. The ships have the best modern navigational and safety equipment available including: 24 mile Furuno Radar, Magellan Satellite Navigator, Electric Compass, Magnetic Compass, Barometer, VHF-FV Radio, two 14-person wooden lifeboats, 40 life jackets, 10 circular buoys, fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. The boats are identical 83 foot long and 24 foot wide, triple decked motor yachts built specifically for exploring the islands with a cruising speed of 14 knots. Accommodations are in spacious double cabins with private baths that have hot and cold fresh water showers. The upper decks (Dolphin and Booby) have large picture windows that allow for panoramic views while cruising and the lower deck (Iguana) has small, operable port holes. The boats are air conditioned throughout and have comfortable public areas including a dining room, bar/lounge and conference area with TV, DVD and stereo equipment. A sun deck with cushioned lounge chairs and observation area provides opportunities to enjoy the sun and ocean.

Snorkeling equipment (masks, fins, snorkel) and clear bottom sea kayaks (1 double, 1 single) are provided at no additional charge and available on a first-come, first-serve basis. You can have a 3 mm wet suit in your preferred size pulled from the on board inventory prior to your arrival for exclusive use during the cruise, the fee is \$25 charged to your on board account. If you choose not to reserve in advance (and pay no fee), you can still choose from the remaining wetsuits on board on a first-come, first-serve basis (ie. sizes cannot be guaranteed).

Either vessel may be used on this itinerary. **Note:** To learn more about these yachts and view a photo gallery, please visit: <http://www.galapagosconnection.com>

ON BOARD: A typical day on board begins with a beautiful sunrise and breakfast served in the dining room at 07:30. At about 08:30, we join our English-speaking naturalist for a 3-4 hour shore excursion. We board our *panga*, or small motorized dinghies, and travel to a specified visitor's site for disembarkation. We may have either a dry landing on a rocky beach or special jetty, or a wet landing where wading through knee or thigh deep water is required. Once on shore our guide will explain the unique features of this location and talk about the life forms we encounter as we hike along designated trails and beaches. There is typically time for about 45 minutes of snorkeling before lunch for those that enjoy this activity.

We return to the yacht for lunch, which is served at about 12:30, and an opportunity to rest as we cruise to our next visitor site. In the afternoon we again head out for a 3 hour excursion that may or may not include snorkeling amid colorful tropical fish, swimming with sea lions or cruising in the *panga* to view marine birds and wildlife along the cliffs if there is no designated landing site. A delicious dinner featuring Ecuadorian as well as International specialties is served on board at about 19:00 in the evening. Before or after dinner our guide will discuss the next day's activities, recommend the clothing and gear that will be needed, and talk about any special features of the observation sites we visited. There is time for astronomical observation outside or some reading and a movie in the lounge before retiring for the night. **Note:** The longest navigations (4-8 hours) are done at night in order to maximize time on the islands.

CRUISE GROUP SIZE:

Minimum: 10 participants

Maximum: 20

Each ship guarantees sailing with a minimum of 10 passengers, the cruise operator generally fills each departure. Assuming the ship sails, SWA will operate this trip for a minimum of 2 Southwind passengers. There will be other passengers on board who have booked through other travel companies. They will not participate in the full 11-day Southwind program that includes the Otavalo market and services on the mainland and thus do not count toward the group size in determining land costs.

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OPTIONAL DIVING: Travelers who are certified scuba divers can choose to purchase an optional scuba package for an additional fee, advanced reservations are required. The package is available every week on the M/Y Eric, Flamingo or Letty and includes two days of diving (Friday and Saturday) with four dives-tanks provided by a local dive shop. The dive package includes filled tanks, weight belt, weights, BCD, regulator, wet suit, boots, fins and hood. Although not required, we recommend all divers have sufficient experience with at least 20 logged dives or advanced dive certification due to strong currents, cold water, thermo-clines and large marine life. **A minimum of 2-3 divers per departure is required** (one member of your party can dive as long as someone else on board is also diving). Please inquire for further details.

FAMILY ADVENTURES: A visit to the enchanted isles of Galápagos National park makes an ideal family vacation. Adults and kids alike love the contact with wildlife and water activities. Children as young as 5 are welcome aboard on the Family departures, and those 14 years old and under qualify for discounts. Ask for the designated Family Departures (March, June-August).

SHORT VERSION (9 days/8 nights): Travelers with limited time can choose a 6 day cruise aboard the Eric/Flamingo/Letty. The itinerary is the same as the 8 day cruise until Friday morning (Day 08) when we disembark on Santa Cruz island and transfer to the airport on Baltra for the return flight to Quito. We are met and transferred to the Swissotel before joining our guide for a farewell dinner. On Day 09, we transfer to the airport and check-in for the flight home. Contact our office for further details and availability.

OPTIONAL TRIP EXTENSIONS: Travelers with a few extra days may wish to include a visit to the Amazon Rainforest, Cuenca & the southern highlands or the Western Cloud forest. Extensions require a minimum of 2 participants. Call our office to request our **2011 Ecuador: Summary of Trip Extensions** or view them on our website, click on *Trips>Galápagos Wildlife Odyssey>Extend Your Trip*.

COMBINATION TRIPS: : For those who would like to spend an extra week exploring South America, and wish to see other areas of interest, our *Galápagos Wildlife Odyssey* departures have been designed to coordinate with our tour to **Machu Picchu** in Peru for a once-in-a-lifetime 17-day adventure. Other departures may coincide with different programs or a special combination can be created for a minimum of 4 participants.

CHOICE OF BOATS: Similar programs are available on any of several Galápagos vessels that Southwind has selected including: the luxurious 48-passenger M/V Eclipse or M/Y La Pinta, the deluxe 16-passenger catamarans M/C Nina, M/C Athala or M/C Journey III, the lovely 18-passenger M/Y Grace, the 32-passenger M/Y Evolution, the 42-passenger M/V Isabela II, the 90-passenger M/V Santa Cruz, and the luxury-class 100-passenger M/V Explorer II. Since visitor sites and activities may vary slightly and land costs will differ, contact our office for details or see our website to view the boat selection.

PRIVATE GROUPS: Special charters of the above yachts (or any vessel that we work with) are available for private parties. We suggest making charter arrangements 1-1.5 years in advance and would be happy to provide you with prices and more information.

ISLAND CONSERVATION: Galápagos National Park is one of South America's foremost ecotourism destinations and the continent's conservation leader. The number of vessels and boat capacity are strictly limited (the largest ship accommodates 100 guests). The number of daily visitors are restricted based on the carrying capacity of each site and guides enforce conservation attitudes among their guests (contact with wildlife is not allowed, littering & smoking are prohibited). As a member of the International Galápagos Tour Operators Association (IGTOA), SWA is actively involved with conservation efforts in the archipelago. IGTOA's mission is to maintain the Galápagos as a unique world heritage offering education, adventure and inspiration to future generations of travelers through long-term protection of the islands' marine and terrestrial ecosystems as well as its endemic species. The M/Y Eric, Flamingo, and Letty also focus on sustainability in their own operations, and in 2006 became the first carbon-neutral company in the Galápagos. These yachts are recipients of SmartVoyager, a voluntary environmental program of the Rainforest Alliance, implementing the following programs: on-board recycling and use of biodegradable products; environmentally-responsible management of water and solid waste; installation of revolutionary Trabold oil filters which increase efficiency and decrease oil usage; and providing scholarships to local children to study conservation education. And most recently one of the sister ships became the first hybrid energy tour boat in the Galápagos with the addition of 40 solar panels and two wind turbines.

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WEATHER: The Galápagos Islands have a surprisingly cool, sub-tropical climate. Weather is regulated by the cold Humboldt, or Peruvian, current (northeasterly trade winds flowing along the western coast of South America and out to the islands) during the dry season and the warm waters from the Panama Basin during the wet season. The islands only receive an average of 10" of rain per year so it is never "rainy". Temperatures vary according to the strength of the trade winds. **December through June**, the cooling currents subside and temperatures rise. Many consider this the hot season or "rainy" season. Daytime highs are in the upper 80's and low 90's, falling to the low 70's at night. The water temperature is also at its warmest during these months (averaging 72-76°F). February through April have the highest precipitation levels (between 1-2" per month) with the rest of year having less than 1" per month. During the months of **July through November**, the trade winds pick up again so the climate is cool and breezy. Many prefer to call this the cool season rather than the dry season. Air temperatures average 73°F during the day (62°F at night) and the water temperature is 68°F. The sea can be a little bit choppy during these months and the sky can be somewhat misty, a phenomenon locally called *garua*.

| TEMPERATURES | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| MAX AIR TEMP | 84 | 86 | 88 | 86 | 82 | 78 | 76 | 74 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 80 |
| MIN AIR TEMP | 70 | 74 | 74 | 72 | 72 | 68 | 66 | 64 | 62 | 64 | 66 | 68 |
| AVE SEA TEMP | 74 | 76 | 76 | 76 | 74 | 74 | 72 | 66 | 68 | 70 | 72 | 74 |
| AVE RAINFALL | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.5 | 0.75 | 0.25 | 0.5 | 0.25 | 0.5 | 0.25 | 0.5 | 0.5 |

Temperatures are given in degrees Fahrenheit and rainfall amounts are in inches.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost for this trip DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Round-trip airfare from US gateways to Quito is about \$800-\$1,000. This amount does not include the **local flight** Quito-Galápagos-Quito estimated at \$440 per person round-trip. Flights to Quito are currently serviced by American Airlines (from Miami), Continental Airlines (from Newark and Houston), LAN Airlines (from Miami and JFK) and Delta (from Atlanta). Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind will send you more information about booking your flights to match your land itinerary. **Note:** We recommended that you **DO NOT** purchase any airline tickets until your trip is guaranteed, please call our office to check the trip status.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Submit Southwind's Trip Reservation Form along with a \$1,000 per person per trip deposit (payable by check or credit card). The form and deposit can be completed securely online at www.southwindadventures.com by clicking on "Book a Trip" at the top of our homepage. If you prefer, you can print the Trip Reservation Form and mail/fax it to our office with your deposit. You can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements (**your deposit will be charged and your reservation confirmed once we receive your Trip Reservation Form**).

Land Balance: Final payment is due at 90 days by Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express or check. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due. Provided services and space are available, reservations can be accepted up to 21 days before departure. Galápagos vessels are relatively small compared to other cruises, so they typically sell out several months in advance. Early booking is required for all departures. Galápagos trips do not qualify for any Southwind discounts except the Children Discounts mentioned under the Land Cost section.

Cancellation Fees and other policies are outlined under the 2011 Terms & Conditions on Southwind's website (click [Book a Trip](#)>2011 Terms & Conditions).

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