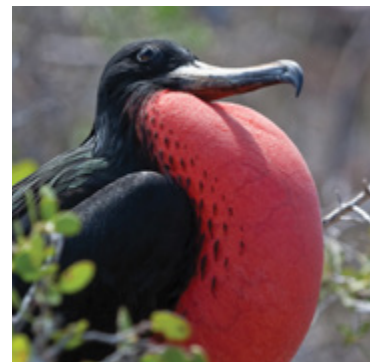




explore
GALAPAGOS

DARWIN'S ENCHANTED ISLES

March 20–29, 2025







EDUCATIONAL EXPEDITION TO THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS MARCH 20-29, 2025

On an active, experiential learning expedition under the guidance of the islands' highest-rated naturalists, explore Darwin's Enchanted Galapagos Islands.

Activities: Travel between islands by speedboat. Walk, ride bikes; daily hikes, swimming and snorkeling.

Day 1: Thursday, March 20

DEPART THE USA / FLY TO QUITO, ECUADOR

Depart Chicago ORD at 9:20 AM UA1055; Arrive Houston 12:23PM / Depart HOU 6:10PM / Arrival in Quito 11:30PM

Evening arrivals in Quito. Surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes but only 24 km from the Equator, Quito enjoys a spring-like climate all year round. Although an important city in Inca and pre-Inca times, its original buildings have been erased and what remains today is divided between the historic Spanish colonial architecture and the clean lines of the modern era. This contrast of superb, well-preserved colonial churches and convents versus shining glass and sleek contemporary architecture makes Quito one of the most beautiful cities in Latin America.

Altitude: 9,350 feet. Overnight at Hotel San Francisco de Quito

Day 2: Friday, March 21 QUITO

After breakfast, we embark on a captivating exploration of the enchanting streets of Quito Colonial, a historical gem nestled in Ecuador's heart. Led by your expert local guide, explore a vibrant



tapestry of churches, structures, and historical sites, each holding a unique tale of the city's past.

Walking through the historic center, stop in the Plaza San Francisco, an emblematic urban scene since colonial times, step inside to behold the grandeur of the Church and convent of San Francisco, a majestic architectural complex, the oldest and most significant religious site in Ecuador.

At La Plaza De La Independencia, you'll find the city's most important buildings: the Government Palace, the Arzobispal Palace, the municipality offices, and the monumental Independence monument, that embodies the spirit of Ecuador's historic struggle for freedom. We'll take in the views over the entire city of Quito, at Mirador del Panecillo, the giant metal statue of the "Winged Virgin", the guardian of the city. At the "Middle of the World" monument on the equatorial line, straddle earth's two hemispheres. Finally, we'll enjoy a chocolate tasting experience and dinner. *Overnight at Hotel San Francisco de Quito (B,L,D)*



Day 3: Saturday, March 22

FLY QUITO / GALAPAGOS ISLANDS – SAN CRISTOBAL

Early morning breakfast, transfer and flight to the Galapagos Islands. The plane makes a brief stop in Guayaquil before continuing to the Galapagos Islands airport on San Cristobal.

Our base for the next three nights will be in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Archipelago of Columbus. We will have lunch, check in to our hotel then begin our Galapagos experience.



This afternoon we visit the San Cristobal Interpretation Center, for an introduction to the islands, then walk to the Frigate birds hill for a beautiful view. Finally, we end our afternoon at Playa Mann where we can swim and enjoy the playful Galapagos sea lions. *Overnight at Hotel Blue Marlin or similar. (B,L,D)*

Day 4: Sunday, March 21

ESPAÑOLA ISLAND – ROCA TORTUGA

Today's adventure takes us to one of the most beautiful and pristine islands in the archipelago, and a paradise for sea birds, where we'll find a large Nazca Booby colony, Blue Footed Boobies, and if lucky, we'll see the Waved Albatross that comes to nest, typically between April and May.

There are two excellent opportunities to snorkel: Roca Tortuga and Manzanillo Beach. We'll swim amongst colorful tropical fish, sea lions and other marine life. *Overnight at Hotel Blue Marlin or similar. (B,L,D)*

Day 5: Monday, March 21

KICKER ROCK – MANGLECITO BEACH

Today we explore the surroundings of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. We take a day-tour boat to see Kicker Rock or Sleeping Lion, which is the remains of an old tuff cone. Besides the wonderful view, this is a great place to snorkel; we will see many tropical fish and often sea turtles and little sharks, and if very lucky hammer-head sharks.





As we enjoy a packed lunch, we continue by boat to Manglecito Beach / Puerto Grande, a beautiful white coral beach with sea lions, marine iguanas and shore birds, with opportunities to swim and snorkel. *Overnight at Hotel Blue Marlin or similar. (B,L,D)*

Day 6: Tuesday, March 25
SANTA CRUZ - CHARLES DARWIN STATION AND HIGHLANDS

This morning, we depart San Cristobal by speedboat and move to Santa Cruz Island for three nights in Puerto Ayora, the main community in the Galapagos and the headquarters of the Galapagos National Park.

First, we'll explore the highlands of Santa Cruz by bus, to discover giant tortoises in their natural habitat. Santa Cruz has a population of about 8,000 giant tortoises. We'll have a delicious lunch at a local farm.

Next, we'll meet a farmer, Mr. Adriano Cabrera, who welcomes us to his family's farm where coffee, bananas and sugarcane are produced. Learn about the life of a local farming family and agriculture in the island climate. You may wish to take home coffee or brown sugar that they produce. *Overnight at Hotel La Laguna (B,L,D)*

Day 7: Wednesday, March 26
SANTA CRUZ - TORTUGA BAY BEACH

This morning, we will walk for about an hour to reach one of the most beautiful beaches in the world, Tortuga Bay Beach, named after the turtles that nested here in the past. As we walk, we'll pass through an endemic cactus forest as we observe small land birds, until we reach the white sand beach. Pelicans, frigate birds, boobies, ghost crabs and marine iguanas have no fear of sharing the clear waters and beach with us as we swim, snorkel or kayak. We'll have a picnic lunch on the beach.

This afternoon, we visit the famous Charles Darwin Research Station. Here we'll learn about conservation programs carried out by the National Park, with the scientific support of the Charles Darwin Station. We visit the Tortoise captive breeding program and learn about famous "Lonesome George" who died in 2012, the last Pinta tortoise.

Dinner is on your own this evening. *Overnight at Hotel La Laguna (B,L)*

MARCH 20–29, 2025

\$5,725 per student, land only
Plus \$900 International Airfare

\$900 deposit.

Final payment of \$5,725 due on or before December 20, 2024

REGISTER ONLINE

Conservancytravel.org/FenwickGAG0325



Day 8: Thursday, March 27

SANTA FE ISLAND

This morning cruise over to the nearby Island of Santa Fe and the protected and rich turquoise waters of Barrington Bay. Explore part of the island, in search of two endemic species, then swim and snorkel. There will be another opportunity to snorkel along the cliffs of Santa Fe, here you will encounter clear water and several different species of fish.

Your adventure will end at Playa Escondida where you can go for a beach stroll as you enjoy the white sandy beach, the blue water and the wildlife.

Farewell Dinner. *Overnight La Laguna (B,L,D)*

Day 9: Friday, March 28 SANTA CRUZ / BALTRA / QUITO

This morning we depart magical Galapagos and fly back to the mainland; arriving in Quito late afternoon. After dinner, we head to the airport for departure to the USA. (B,D)

Depart just after midnight on your return flight home.

Day 10: Saturday, March 29 ARRIVE HOME

UA 2083 Depart Quito 12:35 AM / UA1100 Dep Houston 8:40 AM / Arrive ORD 11:23 AM

All itineraries are subject to approval by the Galapagos National Park and may vary according to changes in park regulations. The exact order of daily activities may vary according to local boat transportation schedules.

INCLUSIONS:

- ✓ Round-trip airfare from Chicago to Ecuador
- ✓ 1 checked baggage
- ✓ Round-trip Domestic flights from mainland to Galapagos
- ✓ Eight nights hotel accommodations in Standard category rooms; 2 nights in Quito; 6 nights in the Galapagos, double/triple occupancy for students
- ✓ Meals as detailed as included in the itinerary (B:8; L:7; D:6)
- ✓ Expert Galapagos Naturalist Guide
- ✓ Expert Quito Guide
- ✓ Galapagos National Park Fee & Galapagos Transit Control Card
- ✓ Private land transportation throughout the program
- ✓ Speedboats between islands on shared basis
- ✓ Snorkeling Gear (Mask, snorkel, fins and mesh bag)
- ✓ Excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- ✓ Potable water provided to refill your personal water bottle; soft drinks, water, juice, tea & coffee at included meals
- ✓ Gratuities for Tour Guide, Naturalist Guide and drivers

EXCLUSIONS:

- Transfers to/from Chicago airport
- Services not detailed in the itinerary
- Excursions not detailed in the itinerary
- Personal expenses such as passport fees, excess baggage fees, laundry, internet and phone calls, beverages not detailed as included with meals or on transportation, camera fees, etc.
- Travel Insurance



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Register online at

Conservancytravel.org/FenwickGAG0325

