



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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GALAPAGOS ISLANDS EXPEDITION IN DARWIN'S FOOTSTEPS

We offer you unique expedition cruises to sail in the footsteps of Darwin. Our Eastern itinerary explores San Cristobal, the first of the four Galapagos island visited by Darwin in 1835, and the easternmost landmass of the archipelago. We will also call at Mosquera Islet, see the land iguanas of Santa Fe and South Plaza, the giant turtles of Santa Cruz, and the amazing bird colonies of Española, Eden Islet, and North Seymour. The landings cover a wide array of ecosystems, spectacular landscapes, and great opportunities for wildlife watching, including most of the iconic animals of Galapagos. Begin your adventure with two nights at a hotel in Quito, one of South America's most charming capitals. This World Heritage city of graceful Spanish-era architecture is packed with cosy restaurants and small artisanal shops. From here we'll pay a visit to an active volcano and go on a nature walk in stunning surroundings, as well as experiencing a vibrant open-air market. After we fly to the Galápagos, step aboard Santa Cruz II - our comfortable and stylish expedition vessel ideally suited to remote adventures. You'll take part in an unforgettable cruise and experience the very best the UNESCO protected Galápagos has to offer. The onboard facilities are excellent, and you can look forward to mouth-watering dishes prepared by our chefs, as well as comfortable cabins to relax in after each exciting day of discovery. When the English naturalist Charles Darwin visited here aboard H.M.S. Beagle in 1835, he discovered that several species, including tortoises and land iguanas, had evolved differently depending on their habitat. His seminal work *On the Origin of Species*, proved revolutionary. On this science-oriented expedition, we'll be learning about Darwin's discoveries, as well

as making a few of our own. You'll get closer to the natural wonders with the use of our small expedition boats, kayaks, snorkelling gear and paddleboards. There's a wide range of activities to choose from, and the Expedition Team will guide you on landings. Safety and sustainability are always at the core of our operations, and our aim is to leave the smallest footprint behind wherever we go. For your safety, we always sail with a Medical



Officer onboard.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 Arrival

Your voyage of discovery begins in Quito, a city which straddles the equator and where it feels like spring is eternally in the air.



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Beautifully situated in a high valley, at 9,350 ft this is the second highest capital city in the world, and the views of the nearby mountains remind you at all times of your Andean location. Quito was founded on an ancient Inca settlement, and today it's a bustling and modern place. But you don't need to look too far beneath the contemporary façade to find the past, and the Old Town is a showcase of classical Spanish architecture. In fact, the city's diligent preservation of its history caused it to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site back in 1978. If you have enough time in the evening, make sure you visit the Calle La Ronda, an ancient pedestrianised street with links to poets and artists who have lived here. It's full of shops and cafes, and there are many handicrafts available for sale here. Take a look at the sparkling city lights that spread up the surrounding hills and mountains at night – truly a mesmerising sight! Experience another highlight of South America and discover the lost civilisation of the Incas, including the breath-taking mountain stronghold of Machu Picchu. Our optional 4-day Pre-Programme starts in Lima and ends in Quito. Or arrive a couple of days earlier to Quito and join us on a 4-day-tour to a Cloudforest Lodge at the Mashpi Reserve. This area is part of the Ecuadorian Choco rainforest, known as one of the world's greatest biodiversity hotspots. This optional extension programme is also available as post-programme.

DAY 2 Cotopaxi Volcano trip

Today you'll get up close and personal with one of Ecuador's natural wonders as we visit an active volcano and walk to a height of almost 12,800 ft. But first, we'll stop in on the photogenic Sangolqui open-air market, where you can sample different Andean specialities. The local indigenous people sell their produce here, and you'll see vibrantly-coloured legumes,

fruits and vegetables. Food aside, clothing and other handicrafts can be purchased here, and it'll give you a chance to chat with the friendly stallholders. Cotopaxi National Park, set amidst mountainous splendour, is only an hour-and-a-half's drive from Quito. This mostly treeless landscape is characteristic of the Andean moorlands, or paramo, and you may see herds of llamas roaming wild here. Birdlife to look out for includes the Andean Gull, several species of Hummingbird and – with some luck – the majestic Condor. We'll walk to Limpiopungo Lagoon, a beautiful lake that mirrors the dramatic surrounding peaks. Meaning 'Neck of the Moon' in the local Quechua language, 19,393 ft-high Cotopaxi has an almost perfectly conical form and is one of the highest volcanos in the world. Its yawning crater measures 2,620 ft, and features one of the few equatorial glaciers anywhere. The first recorded eruption of Cotopaxi was in 1534, terrifying both locals and conquistadors alike, and the last major one occurred in 1904. For lunch you'll be tasting delicious traditional dishes prepared by some of the region's best chefs in San Augustin del Callo, and in the late afternoon we return to the hotel and enjoy a nice dinner before calling it a night.

DAY 3 Your cruise begins

Following breakfast, we'll head to Quito Airport where our morning flight waits to take us across the blue Pacific Ocean to adventure. After only a couple of hours we'll land at the Galápagos Ecological Airport on Baltra Island – which runs of renewable power and is said to be the world's greenest airport! After we've landed in the spectacular Galápagos archipelago, a transfer will take you straight to the port where your home-away-from-home for the next few days is docked – our comfortable expedition ship Santa Cruz II. We'll start our



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oceanic expedition with a short, mandatory safety briefing to ensure you'll be safe sailing with us. You can check in and get settled before we meet for lunch in the beautiful restaurant, where the Captain will raise a toast and wish everyone an exciting adventure. Your cruise gets underway straight after lunch. Our first stop is only four nautical miles away, at the southern tip of Mosquera Islet. It's a small piece of volcanic uplift that sits between the larger islands of Baltra and North Seymour. A long and narrow sand bank is surrounded by lava reefs, and this is home to one of the largest colonies of sea lions in the Galápagos. Hop aboard a small expedition boat and head ashore, where you'll see the sea lions basking in the sun. This will be your first glimpse of the amazing diversity and richness of these islands, and the islet is thronged with many seabirds, including Blue-footed Boobies, as well as Sally Lightfoot crabs. The walk is easy, only a few hundred yards across flat and sandy dunes, and you'll learn more about the fragile marine and terrestrial ecosystems of the Galápagos from your guides as we explore.

DAY 4 Visiting the giants

Today we'll dock in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the archipelago's capital. It's a 40-minute drive to Cerro Colorado, where you'll get to visit a breeding centre for the highly endangered giant tortoise. It's a Galápagos icon with a natural lifespan estimated at over 100 years. The Cerro Colorado Tortoise Reserve is working to boost the numbers of these giant reptiles and bring them back from the brink. They live in conditions that are similar to their natural habitat and are able to thrive here. The tortoises amble around under the cover of a six-hectare forest, which is also home to dozens of other endemic species including the San Cristobal Mockingbird and the San Cristobal lava lizard. In

the afternoon, our small expedition boats take you to Punta Pitt at the eastern tip of the island. This unusual point consists of an eroded volcanic cone, and there's a trail here that provides spectacular views of the coastline. Punta Pitt is the only site in the Galápagos where you might see three species of boobies. The Blue-footed Boobie is easily recognised for its, well, blue feet! Enjoy a nature walk on land, or explore the coast aboard one of our small expedition boats. Snorkelling and swimming is excellent in the clear water here, and you might see sea lions performing their underwater acrobatics over the reef, so remember to bring your swimsuit and some good walking shoes.

DAY 5 Blissful beauty and evolving iguanas

Straight after breakfast, we'll set foot on an idyllic white sand beach on the island of Santa Fe and go on a scenic nature walk. The island is home to a colony of sea lions, as well as the endemic Barrington land iguana, which can usually be spotted sitting among the giant prickly pear cacti or lounging on rocks in the sun. The island has a blissful feeling about it, and we might relax by swimming or perhaps snorkelling from our small boats. If you want to get a peek at the under-water world, you could join a trip in our glass-bottomed boat. The kayaks are ready too, so why not discover this beautiful and wild island at your own pace. Following a nice, long lunch rustled up by our excellent onboard chefs we'll head to our next destination, South Plaza Island. Going there, we'll pass through a channel where the turquoise waters are offset by the white sandy beaches, which in turn contrast sharply with the black lava rocks. Along the shore, we might spot Frigatebirds, Swallow-tailed gulls and Shearwaters, gliding on the breeze. South Plaza Island is very small, but it hosts a stunning array of flora, in particular the flowering succulent sesuvium and dense patches of prickly

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pears. Land iguanas laze sleepily by the shore, while marine iguanas slip in and out of the water. If you're lucky you might even spot a hybrid of the two, which are the result of intergeneric breeding between the two sub-species - evolution in action!

DAY 6 Giant tortoises & island activities

This morning we'll head ashore at Puerto Ayora, the largest town in the archipelago, situated on Santa Cruz Island. It's here that we'll drop in on the Charles Darwin Research Station, where over 200 scientists and volunteers are working to conserve the wildlife of the Galápagos. Visit the breeding enclosures where you can see baby tortoises in incubators, and look upon Darwin's famous finches with your own eyes - these are the birds he used as a basis for his theory of evolution. Next, try out using a trapiche - a sugar cane grinder used to extract the juice which is then either drunk straight away or fermented into liquor. To get to the mill you can hop on our bus or go by bicycle if you're feeling more active. After experiencing the Opuntia Cactus Forest we'll enjoy lunch in the highlands. It's an entirely different ecosystem from the coastal plains, with moist green foliage and a cooler climate. It's also the place where the most giant tortoises roam. You'll have the option of seeing these giants in their natural habitat. They are easy to spot, lumbering around, munching on grass and wallowing in pools. When lunch is over, instead of spotting tortoises you could choose from several different activities, that could include mountain biking or kayaking in Tortuga Bay. You could also hike the 1.3 miles to this beautiful bay, and stop at Playa Brava, a beautiful snow-white beach that's a seasonal nesting site for green turtles. On the same walk, Playa Mansa is a secluded natural mangrove cove, with clear and tranquil waters ideal for

swimming, snorkelling or kayaking. Or you could simply enjoy the view from the shade of a mangrove! Due to conservation measures, numbers are limited in Tortuga Bay, so be sure to coordinate with the Expedition Team.

DAY 7 A conservation success story

Said to be one of the oldest islands at four million years, Española is also the most southerly in the archipelago. A magnet for birders, almost the entire world population of Waved Albatrosses breeds here between March and January. Be on the lookout for Nazca Boobies, Blue-footed Boobies, and Swallow-tailed Gulls, which are all present here. Also keep your eyes peeled for the Española lava lizard, which has a strikingly red hue, as well as the highly coloured marine iguanas which are a particular endemic subspecies only found here. Speaking of wildlife, there was good news in 2020 when a rare tortoise was found to have sired over 900 children. Diego, who is over 100 years old, was on loan from San Diego Zoo, and may have almost singlehandedly saved his subspecies from extinction. Because of his remarkable efforts he now lives in retirement on Española with his extended family and is expected to live to around 150. You'll get to witness the famous blowhole El Soplador - meaning 'the blower' - blast water 75 ft into the air. The effect is caused by waves crashing into a lava fissure at high tide and blowing the water out through a crevice. Afterwards, we'll head back on board for another lovely and relaxed lunch. In the afternoon, the postcard-pretty coral beach of Gardner Bay and the nearby Osborn Islet provide beautiful settings for observing sea lions, Mockingbirds, and finches as you take your time to simply relax or go for a dip in the water for some excellent snorkelling. Kayaking activities are available here too.

DAY 8 A small slice of Eden



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Eden Islet, off the coast of Santa Cruz Island, is a sliver of volcanic cone poking up through the sea. There's an abundance of wildlife here, and in the clear, shallow waters we'll hope to spot Galápagos green turtles, rays and some friendly reef sharks. We'll bring the snorkelling gear, so remember your swimsuit if you want to do some reef exploration. If weather permits, you can also take a trip aboard the glass-bottomed boat or paddle along the coast of Eden on a kayak. Look out for the Frigatebirds on shore with their characteristic rubbery red throats. Later, after a well-deserved spot of lunch aboard the ship, we'll head over to the island of North Seymour. This small and mostly flat piece of land was created when a volcanic eruption lifted up the seabed, which is why it looks so smooth and eroded. There's a small forest of silver-grey Palo Santo trees – also known as Saint's Wood – just above the landing site. These trees are typically leafless and remain dormant for half of the year, waiting for the rains as their cue to burst into bloom. The wood is famously used to make incense – see if you can detect the scent! This is a great site to observe colonies of Blue-footed Boobies, Frigatebirds, and Swallow-tailed Gulls. Sea lions and marine iguanas also call North Seymour home, happy to feast on the sea life in the rich waters here. When a young Darwin first laid eyes upon marine iguanas, he described them as “clumsy lizards” and “hideous-looking”, but we beg to differ, and we're sure you will too!

DAY 9 End of the expedition

As your expedition cruise comes to a close, it's time to bid farewell to the bounteous wildlife and amazing scenery of one of the world's most incredible nature destinations. We'll also say farewell to our wonderful crew and Expedition Team as we will disembark at Baltra Island. A transfer will take you to the airport,

where your waiting flight will bring you to Guayaquil. Upon arrival in Guayaquil, a representative will assist with the international flight connection. Alternatively continue from Guayaquil to Quito to catch your international flight from there. As you sit and reminisce about your recent adventure, we hope you are left with some amazing memories, newfound friends and the urge to explore more in the future. In fact, we hope that we'll be welcoming you aboard again before too long. Add some extra days to explore more of Ecuador with one of our optional post-programmes. Join us to the Ecuadorian Amazon and its heart, the Napo River. Fly to Coca and spend three nights in a lodge surrounded by the beautiful Amazon rainforest, and observe and learn about the flora and fauna during selected activities. Or travel from Quito to the Mashpi Reserve, a unique habitat and ecosystem. Enjoy a three-nights stay in a luxurious Cloudforest Lodge and discover the breathtaking area from there (also available as pre-programme). Both post-programmes have two nights in Quito included.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: SANTA CRUZ II

YOUR SHIP:	Santa Cruz II
VESSEL TYPE:	Motor Yacht
LENGTH:	72m
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	90
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2002 / 2015

From top to bottom, the Santa Cruz II features ample, indulgent spaces. Modern, generous social areas laid out with choice contemporary materials feature prominently on four of its five decks. With an intelligent layout, including wide hallways and broad stairwells, guests will immediately know their way around. From dining areas indoors and out, the gymnasium and Jacuzzis to the elegant bar and lounge, not to forget the well-stocked library, the ship is designed to please with sophisticated simplicity. Luxury ratios of crew and guides to passengers guarantee quality individual attention. Facilities: · Bar-Lounge-Restaurant Al fresco dining-BBQ· Gift shop· Gym· 24h Coffee Station (freecoffee, tea, and water)· Satellite telephone· WiFi hotspot (intermittent/low bandwidth)· PA system· Snorkelling equipment· Hair dryer Ipod/MP3 docking station· Safe deposit box (in cabin)· Hot tub (2)· Reading room and naturalhistory library· Multiple purpose room· Air conditioned throughout· Wetsuit rental· Glass bottom boat· Kayaks Photo shows Santa Cruz which is used for 2015 Galapagos cruises - Santa Cruz II will be used for 2016.



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INSIDE YOUR SHIP

Darwin Suite



Explorer cabin



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PRICING

28-Aug-2024 to 05-Sep-2024

Explorer cabin	£6036 GBP pp
Darwin Suite	£8135 GBP pp

11-Sep-2024 to 19-Sep-2024

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp

25-Sep-2024 to 03-Oct-2024

Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp
Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp

09-Oct-2024 to 17-Oct-2024

Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp
Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp

23-Oct-2024 to 31-Oct-2024

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp

06-Nov-2024 to 14-Nov-2024

Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp
Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp

20-Nov-2024 to 28-Nov-2024

Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp
Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp

04-Dec-2024 to 12-Dec-2024

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp

18-Dec-2024 to 26-Dec-2024

Darwin Suite	£8715 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£6439 GBP pp

01-Jan-2025 to 09-Jan-2025

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp

15-Jan-2025 to 23-Jan-2025

Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp
Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp

29-Jan-2025 to 06-Feb-2025

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp

12-Feb-2025 to 20-Feb-2025

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp

26-Feb-2025 to 06-Mar-2025

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp

12-Mar-2025 to 20-Mar-2025

Darwin Suite	£7902 GBP pp
Explorer cabin	£5875 GBP pp



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