

# CHARLES DARWIN'S 200<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN GALAPAGOS

escorted by Dr. Robert H. Rothman  
February 7 – 19, 2009

*"There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms, most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved."*

## *Charles Darwin*

The Galapagos Archipelago is a cluster of some 13 volcanic islands and associated islets and rocks located just under the equator, about 600 miles west of Ecuador in South America. The oldest of the islands are about 4 million years old and the youngest are still in the process of being formed.

The islands were discovered by chance in 1535 when father Tomas Berlanga, the bishop of Panama sailed to Peru to settle a dispute between Francisco Pizarro and his lieutenants after the conquest of the Incas. The bishop's ship stalled when the winds died and strong currents carried him out to the Galapagos. In his account of the adventure, he described the harsh, desert-like condition of the islands and their trademark giant tortoises. He wrote about the marine iguanas, the sea lions and the many types of birds. He also noted the remarkable tameness of the animals that thrill and delight modern visitors.

Following the bishop, the islands were rarely visited and became the refuge for pirates and privateers preying on Spanish galleons and coastal towns. Subsequently they became the haunts of whalers and sealers. The biggest attractions to these visitors were the fur seals and the giant tortoises. Tortoises could be kept alive in the hold of ships for up to a year with no food or water so, needless to say, the tortoise populations were decimated. Each island has its own unique variety of tortoise and the depredation caused the extinction of several and placed most of the others on the endangered list. Today, the Pinta island tortoise is survived by a single male, named "Lonesome George".

Charles Darwin was the first to make a scientific study of the islands in 1835. He was a young student just out of university and was the naturalist on a round-the-world scientific and geographical voyage on board HMS Beagle (1831 - 1836). He had spent the previous four years exploring the geology and wild-life of South America. In later life, Darwin maintained that the Galapagos were the source of all his ideas and research and, of all the visitors there, the Galapagos are today most closely associated with Darwin.

### **February 7 - Saturday**

#### **Arrival in Quito**

Departure from hometown to Quito  
Quito airport: meeting and transfers to the Patio Andaluz Hotel.

### **February 8 - Sunday**

#### **Scenic Tour of Quito and Equator Monument**

Breakfast at the hotel. First, a visit to downtown Quito to explore this urban jewel and its treasures of art and architecture. Quito's colonial quarter, the largest and best preserved of South America, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The stroll starts at the Independence Plaza, flanked by the Cathedral, the Presidential Palace, the Municipal Building and the Archbishop's Palace. Visit the temple of La Compañía de Jesús and its awesome gilded interior. Continue on to the Monastery of San Francisco, one the of great religious buildings of the New World; its impressive façade and atrium that lead to its Baroque interior influenced by Moorish style, with the winged Virgin of Quito at its main altar.

Continue to the Equatorial Monument, 25 Km. (16 miles) north of Quito, which marks the exact Middle of the World, latitude 0°, where you can stand with a foot on each hemisphere. Visit the Ethnographic Museum, which shows the different Native American groups living in Ecuador. Lunch at a typical restaurant.

Dinner at one of the best restaurants in Quito. (B/L/D)

### **February 9 - Monday**

#### **Overnight Visit to the Otavalo Region**

Breakfast at the hotel. Home to the Otavalo Indians, the Province of Imbabura is a picturesque land of lakes, majestic landscapes and fertile farmlands. To the north of Quito, the province of Imbabura is one of the most popular destinations in Ecuador: a magical land of lakes, snow-covered mountains and terraced farmlands.

This excursion takes you north, to the land of the Otavaleños and South America's most famous Indian fair. Early departure from Quito towards Calderón, a small village that keeps the tradition of making colourful dough figurines of Indian dolls, llamas, flowers and even great Christmas ornaments. Continue on the Panamerican Highway through dramatic mountain scenery to the textile market of Otavalo, where

visitors will enjoy visiting the stalls full of ponchos, scarves, blankets, wall hangings, woven belts, hats, handbags and much more. Here Otavaleños barter in silence, in marked contrast to the raucous noise of other markets; take your time to negotiate the best bargains. Then, proceed to Peguche, an Indian village very near Otavalo that is home to the artisans who do the weaving in their homes; guests can learn about their culture and beliefs. Lunch is at one of the charming country inns. Overnight at Hacienda Pinsaquí. (B/L/D)

### **February 10 - Tuesday**

#### **Return to Quito**

Breakfast at the hotel. Return to Quito in the afternoon. (B/L/D)

### **February 11 - Wednesday**

#### **Quito to Galapagos**

Breakfast at the hotel. Early morning flight to Galapagos and transfer to the M/S Mary Anne, a delightful 16 passenger, 210-ft motorsailer, Mary Anne. After sailing there will be a briefing, lunch and a safety drill, followed by a visit to Plaza Island. (B/L/D)

### **February 12 - Thursday**

#### **Morning at Gardner Bay, Espanola Island**

Anchor in a protected bay which has a gorgeous white sandy beach dotted with hundreds of basking sea lions. The site



#### **MARY ANNE**

**# of passengers:** 16

With a crew of 8, plus 1 naturalist guides, the 16-passenger S/S Mary Anne is considered one of the best first class vessels operating in Galapagos. Spacious and beautifully maintained, you experience the cruise in great comfort. All cabins have ocean view and private facilities with fresh, hot and cold-water showers. There is a comfortable lounge, cozy bar, ample sundeck and seating area, plus her own fresh water-maker.

involves a pleasant and relaxing stroll along the beach followed by a refreshing swim. Possibility to see the Hood mockingbird, sea turtles, sting rays and black tipped sharks.

#### **Afternoon at Punta Suárez, Española Island**

Española is one of only two breeding sites in the world for the waved albatross. Other highlights are Sea Lions, Tropic birds, Blue Footed Boobies, and Darwin Finches. (BB/L/D)

#### **February 13 - Friday**

##### **Morning visit to the Highlands of Santa Cruz Island**

to view the large tortoises in the wild. Highlights include a visit to the twin pit craters of Los Gemelos, then to Cerro Chato for an opportunity to admire the famous giant tortoises that gave the name to these islands. There are 11 sub-species remaining today from the original 15 which inhabited the islands.

#### **Afternoon at Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island**

One of the archipelago's most important human settlements is Puerto Ayora, where the Darwin Research Station is located. Staffed with scientists from around the world involved in studying and protecting the wildlife of the islands, one of their most important projects is a tortoise breeding program. See the breeding pens and observe the tiny future giants of the islands. Highlights are Giant Tortoises, Lonesome George, Darwin Finches. (BB/L/D)

#### **February 14 - Saturday**

##### **Afternoon visit to North Seymour Island**

One of the best places to see blue footed boobies and magnificent frigate birds. Blue footed boobies are found on the flat area near the coast (they nest from May to November).

## **Your Tour Leader**

### **Dr. Robert D. Rothman**

In May of 2007, Dr. Rothman visited Galapagos for the 20<sup>th</sup> time, conducting his annual trip to introduce his students to these enchanted islands. Dr. Rothman is a biology professor with a Ph. D. in Genetics, and teaches courses in Genetics, Genetic Engineering, Vertebrate Evolution, and Bioethics at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). He has a special interest in Dinosaurs and in the relationship between science and popular culture, especially science and religion. He is also very interested in the history and philosophy of biology and has made a very intensive study of Darwin's life and work. As such, Dr. Rothman is the best person to escort the tour specially planned to celebrate Charles Darwin 200<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary. We are lucky that he is able to accommodate our request to lead the tour in his busy schedule.

You will see Frigate birds, Sea Lions, Swallow-tailed Gulls, Marine Iguanas.

#### **Afternoon at Sombrero Chino, Santa Cruz Island**

This short walk, only 250 meters, is an easy one and is followed by a swim at the sandy beach. Don't be surprised if penguins and sea lions join you in the clear blue waters. (BB/L/D)

#### **February 15 - Sunday**

##### **Morning at Black Turtle Point, Isabela Island**

A bathing beach surrounded by mangroves. Visitors who venture into the swamp may see the Mangrove Finch, which holds twigs or spines in its beak and uses the tool to hunt for grubs

#### **Afternoon at Punta Espinosa, Fernandina Island**

The sight of largest colony of Marine iguanas, so numerous that they completely cover the rock surfaces at the landing area. See Sally Lightfoot crabs, flightless cormorant nesting points, Galapagos penguins, Galapagos Hawks and sea lions. Note the atrophied wings and bright blue eyes of the flightless cormorants. Keep an eye out for small groups of penguins fishing and diving along the shores. (BB/L/D)

#### **February 16 - Monday**

##### **Morning at Puerto Egas, Santiago or James Island**

Finches, doves, and hawks can be seen inland. Along the rugged shoreline, marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs and sea lions laze in the tide pools, also home to a variety of invertebrate organisms, including sea-urchins, octopi and starfish. Swimming among the sea lions is possible at James Bay.

#### **Afternoon at Rábida Island**

A visit to this island is memorable due to the colour of the sand and soil, a rich russet that gleams in the sun. Highlights include Brown Pelicans, Yellow Warblers, Flamingoes, Sea Lions. (BB/L/D)

#### **February 17 - Tuesday Morning at Sullivan Bay, Santiago Island**

Walk over a field of lava and observe lava lizards and tiny plants such as the mollugo, the lava colonizer trying to survive.

#### **Afternoon at Bartolomé Island**

One of the most visited and most photographed islands in the Galapagos, the view of the colossal Pinnacle Rock, an eroded tuff cone, and the beaches below is magnificent. Possibility for swimming and snorkelling around the Pinnacle Rock, where penguins are usually seen. (BB/L/D)

## **RATES:**

Double	US\$ 5,925
Single Supplement	US\$ 4,600

#### **Included in the cost of the tour:**

- \* All airport transfers in Quito and Baltra (Galapagos)
- \* Accommodation in king size or twin-bedded rooms – 4 nights at Patio Andaluz Hotel in Quito and 1 at Hacienda Pinsaqui
- \* Scenic tour of Quito and Middle of the World Monument
- \* Two days excursion to the Otavalo Region
- \* Airfare Quito – Galapagos – Quito
- \* Entrance fee to the Galapagos National Park
- \* Seven nights cruise aboard the M/S Mary Anne – upper single and lower double-bedded cabin with private shower and toilet – hot & cold running water
- \* Gratuities to guide and crew
- \* All meals throughout
- \* The services of English-speaking guides throughout

#### **Included in the cost of the tour**

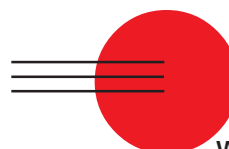
- \* International airfare
- \* Drinks and alcoholic beverages
- \* Items of personal nature, such as telephone calls, laundry, etc.

#### **February 18 - Wednesday Return to Quito**

Excursion at Mosquera before going to the airport for the flight to Quito. In Quito, reception at airport and transfer to the Patio Andaluz Hotel. Farewell dinner at one of the finest restaurants in Quito. (BB/L/D)

#### **February 19 - Thursday Depart Quito**

Transfer to the airport to board flight for home.



## **Galapagos Holidays**

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