

Ultimate Galápagos Exploration & Ecuador's Amazon Wilds

DAY 1 Depart U.S. • Arrive Quito, Ecuador

Destination: Quito

Accommodations: [Mercure Alameda Quito](#) or similar

Today's Activities: You depart from the U.S. and fly to Quito, Ecuador's capital city, nestled at the foot of the Pichincha volcano. On your arrival anywhere from late morning to late this evening, your O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader or O.A.T. representative will meet your flight at the Quito airport and help you transfer to your hotel, a ride of about 45 minutes to an hour. You'll receive your room assignment, check into your room, and enjoy the rest of the day and evening to settle in, with meals on your own. Depending on where we stay, our centrally-located hotel may feature a restaurant, bar and lounge, and gym. Your rooms will likely include a double bed, cable TV, wireless Internet access, and a private bathroom. As you get acquainted with your hotel, perhaps you'll meet travelers who took the pre-trip extension, *Best of Peru: Lima, The Sacred Valley & Machu Picchu*, who have already checked in.

DAY 2 Visit Equator Museum • Agave Spirit museum

Destination: Quito

Meals included: B L

Accommodations: [Mercure Alameda Quito](#) or similar

Activity Note: Today's activities take place at elevations above 9,000 feet. We recommend staying hydrated while at high altitude. You may rest at the hotel if necessary.

Breakfast: Beginning at 6:30am, enjoy a leisurely buffet-style breakfast at your hotel. You may choose from a variety of local and international dishes—from eggs and cereals to fruit and yogurt.

Morning: We'll meet with our Trip Experience Leader for a Welcome Briefing around 9am in the hotel. During this 45-minute briefing, we will introduce ourselves and review our itinerary in more detail (including any changes that may need to occur). Our Trip Experience Leader will also discuss logistics, safety and emergency procedures, and answer questions we may have—come prepared; this is your chance to get them answered firsthand, whether you have questions about a particular optional tour, how much free time you'll have during your first stay in Quito, or specific activities or places you are hoping to see.

At around 10am we depart for the Inti Nan Museum, arriving around 45 minutes later to explore the museum's replicas of indigenous sun temples and other interesting artifacts. Inti Nan is the Quechua phrase for “Path of the Sun,” and the sun quite literally charts a path through the museum—it sits directly on the equator.

We then depart at about 12pm for a 15-minute drive to Agave Spirit, a museum which aims to preserve the heritage of locally

distilled liquors, such as tequila, mezcal, and miske, a uniquely Ecuadorian version of mezcal. Upon arrival around 12:15pm, we'll hear a brief introduction about these cherished beverages and tour the museum, learning about the harvesting and distillation process.

Lunch: Around 1pm, we'll sample spirits such as miske and enjoy local dishes like lupin beans *ceviche* with quinoa tortillas, plantains, and corn fried with water.

Afternoon: At about 2:15pm, we'll depart for our hotel hotel, arriving around 3pm. Once there, you can pursue your own interests this afternoon. You might ride the cable car for views that, on a clear day, extend to Cotopaxi, one of the world's highest active volcanoes. Or take in the urban oasis of Parque Metropolitano. Your Trip Experience Leader will also have ideas for ways to make the most of your time in Quito.

Dinner: On your own—you might relax at the hotel restaurant. Or, ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions for a restaurant nearby. You'll find that there's a wealth of choices, from Latin to Chinese.

Evening: Your evening is at leisure. Catch the nightlife outside your door, or relax in your comfortable room.

Freedom to Explore

Make the most of your explorations in Quito on these off-the-beaten path activities. These recommendations are designed by our team of local experts with women travelers in mind. Your Trip Experience Leader will help facilitate these activities, including reservations if needed, and provide the most up-to-date information while on your adventure.

- **Travel by taxi with your Trip Experience Leader to Quito's Botanical Garden:** The garden showcases plants from different ecosystems all around Ecuador, including the wetlands, the cloud forest, and the drier scrub lands. You'll also discover greenhouses of ornamental plants such as roses and bonsai trees. The biggest attraction is the orchids, as Ecuador boasts the highest diversity of orchids in the world. It is also a great place for bird-watching, as the garden attracts over 50 species such as hummingbirds, fly-catchers, and colorful tanagers.
 - **How to get there:** A 5- to 15-minute taxi ride with your Trip Experience Leader; about \$5 USD one way.
 - **Hours:** Monday-Friday: 10am-3pm, Saturday and Sunday: 9am-4:45pm, holidays: 9am-4pm
 - **Cost:** About \$10 USD.
- Experience a tribute to pre-Columbian natives at the **Chapel of Mankind Museum:** Explore the depths of human emotion as you witness themes like exploitation, anger, tenderness, and sacrifice in this exhibit focused on the suppression of Latin Americans. The last great masterpiece of Ecuadorian artist Oswaldo Guayasamin, considered to be one of the masters of 20th-century Ecuadorian art, the Chapel of Mankind not only contains his paintings, murals, and sculptures depicting the history of marginalized Ecuadorian communities, but contains his own collection of colonial art. Inside the chapel, an eternal flame burns in honor of all those who have died fighting for human rights.
 - **How to get there:** A 5- to 15-minute taxi ride, about \$10 USD one way.
 - **Hours:** 10am-5pm, daily.
 - **Cost:** Entrance fee is about \$8 USD per person.
- Attend the **Jacchigua Ballet:** See this award-winning national folkloric performance that celebrates the heritage and culture of Quito. The fascinating choreography symbolizing the customs, traditions, myths, and

expansive history of the region, and was the result of many years dedicated to researching the roots of some of the most authentic cultures of Ecuador. The ballet's director, Rafael Camino, has spent most of his life among the Andean communities studying their arts and listening to the oral tradition that shapes the mythology of the region. Some dances are actually based on the traditional celebrations of indigenous communities, such as the Saraguros, who can trace their ancestry back to the ancient Inca. Jacchigua derives its name from Quechua word *jacchima*, which refers to a social gathering of workers and their families after the harvest, including food, drink, and—of course—dancing. Performers consist of both adult dancers and children, which gives the audience a taste of what attending a true *jacchima* might be like.

- **How to get there:** A 5- to 10-minute taxi ride, about \$5 USD one way.
- **Hours:** 7:15pm-9:20pm, Wednesday and Friday.
- **Cost:** About \$50 USD.

DAY 3

Santa Clara Market • Explore Quito • Controversial Topic: Sex work in Quito's Old Town with sex worker

Destination: Quito

Meals included: B L

Accommodations: [Mercure Alameda Quito](#) or similar

Activity Note: Travelers on select departures will fly to Coca this morning to begin their Amazon experience. They will return to Quito on Day 6 and will enjoy their market visit, Quito tour, and Controversial Topic conversation on Day 7. All included features remain the same.

Breakfast: Buffet breakfast is served at the hotel beginning at 6:30am.

Morning: We'll board our bus around 8am and make a quick drive to Santa Clara Market, a colorful open market where you'll find stalls stacked with exotic fruits, vegetables, spices, medicinal ingredients, meats and fish. Upon arrival around 8:15am, we'll begin exploring the various sections of the market. Be sure to keep an eye out for tree tomatoes, giant *guanábana*, gooseberries, dragon fruit or *granadilla*.

At around 9:15am, we'll drive to the old town to begin exploring the city paths and historic sites of Quito on foot with our Trip Experience Leader. A charming colonial city that has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Quito is South America's oldest capital, founded by Sebastián de Benalcázar on December 6, 1534. Today we experience its delicate blend of Spanish and indigenous cultural influences. As we explore the city, we'll get an introduction to sites like La Basilica Church, Independence Plaza, and La Compañía de Jesus Church, an eye-popping, multi-domed Catholic complex whose gilded interior is nestled behind an equally impressive façade carved from volcanic stone. During our half-hour-long visit to this local landmark, we'll learn about its complicated construction, which began in 1605 and took a whopping 165 years to complete. We'll also have ample time to admire its dazzling gold-leaf motifs up close.

After our visit concludes around 11:45pm, we'll make our way to San Francisco Plaza, one of the largest plazas in Quito. We'll

have ample time to mingle among the locals who pass through the plaza each day—from farmers and businesspeople, to sex workers awaiting clients. Sex work is both legal and regulated in Ecuador—in fact, in 2007 the Ministry of Health established a program to provide healthcare services for sex workers, including health screenings every 30 days. Almost half of the country's 55,000 sex workers live in Quito, where they have become increasingly visible in recent years after most of the city's brothels were shut down, forcing the sex workers to take to the streets. Their neighborhood of choice is Quito's Old Town, an historic neighborhood lined with colonial architecture that is popular with tourists. We'll have the opportunity to meet one of these women for an illuminating, hour-long conversation about what life is truly like for Quito's sex workers, before making our way to lunch at a local restaurant, where we'll hear another perspective on this controversial industry.

Lunch: At about 1:15pm, we'll toast the start of our adventure with a Welcome Lunch at a local restaurant, where you'll savor an authentic taste of Ecuadorian fare.

Afternoon: Leaving the restaurant around 2:30pm, we'll re-board our bus to transfer back to the hotel, a ride of about a 30 minutes. The rest of the day is free. Perhaps you'll take a stroll along Avenue Amazonas, or enjoy the amenities of your hotel.

Dinner: On your own. Your centrally located hotel is surrounded by options. Your Trip Experience Leader would be happy to recommend options located 10 to 15 minutes away by taxi.

Evening: At leisure. You will find plenty of activity on Avenue Amazonas, or simply relax at the hotel.

DAY 4 Quito • Fly to Coca • Cruise to Amazon lodge

Destination: Amazon rain forest

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: **Yarina Lodge** or similar

Activity Note: Today's transfer involves a half-hour flight and one-hour motor canoe transfer. Agility and balance are required for embarking small motor canoes. Also, please note that flight times given are for weekdays and vary for weekends. Flight times absolutely cannot be guaranteed for any given day.

Breakfast: A buffet breakfast is available at your hotel beginning at 6:30am.

Morning: We'll get an early start this morning, departing around 7am for the hour-long drive to the airport, where we'll catch a flight to Coca, a small town on the banks of the Napo River in the Amazon River watershed. Our 45-minute flight is scheduled to depart at around 9:30am. Upon arrival around 10:15am, we will pick up our luggage and take a 5-minute bus ride to a nearby dock, where we'll board a motorized canoe. Departing around 11:15am, we'll cruise about 45 minutes to our lodge on the Napo River, a tributary of the Amazon. In the words of writer Joe Kane in *Running the Amazon*: "The Amazon cannot be understood just as a river. It is a whole wilderness, a great integrated system of rivers and jungles."

For three days, we'll have a rare opportunity to increase our understanding of the Amazon jungle—because it'll be our home.

Competition among the plants and trees for rain and sunlight is fierce here. Ultimately, only about ten percent of light from the sun penetrates the jungle canopy and reaches the forest floor.

We arrive at our rain forest lodge at around noon. On arrival, we'll have an orientation briefing at the lodge—our base in the Amazon. The lodge has a simple design in keeping with its remote rain forest location, preserving the natural ambiance, but each cabin has electricity and a private bath offering warm-water showers.

Lunch: Around 1pm at the lodge, featuring regional specialties.

Afternoon: You have a few hours this afternoon to explore trails that take you into the surrounding forest, take a siesta in a hammock on your own private balcony. Then, at about 6pm, we'll set off for 30-minute walk to get familiar with our jungle surroundings.

Dinner: At about 7pm, our small group reconvenes for dinner at the lodge restaurant, which serves a Ecuadorian gourmet meal crafted from fresh local ingredients.

Evening: Enjoy the facilities of the lodge until the time comes to let the sounds of the jungle lull you to sleep.

DAY 5 Explore the rain forest • Sapococha Lagoon

Destination: Amazon rain forest

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: [Yarina Lodge](#) or similar

Activity Note: Today's activities may vary, depending on the weather and the season. Agility and balance are required for embarking small motor dinghies and walking in the Amazon rain forest. We recommend bringing a walking stick for hiking over surface roots and on muddy, steep terrain.

Breakfast: Breakfast is available at the lodge beginning at 6am.

Morning: At around 8am, we'll depart for a roughly 3-hour walk through the forest, keeping our eyes peeled for a variety of wildlife. We return to the lodge at around 11:15am, where you'll have 1 hour of free time.

Lunch: We regroup at around 12:30pm for lunch at the lodge.

Afternoon: Following lunch, you'll have about 1 hour of free time before we depart around 2pm for the 10-minute walk to Sapococha Lagoon. We will spend about 1 hour canoeing around the lagoon, listening to a concert of bird and monkey calls while we learn about different types of aquatic plants.

We return to the lodge at around 4pm and have about three hours of free time. You might succumb to the lure of your private

hammock, or go for a stroll on the grounds.

Dinner: Dinner is served at around 7pm.

Evening: Afterward, you are at leisure to enjoy the lodge's amenities.

DAY 6

A Day in the Life of an indigenous Kichwa village • **Grand Circle Foundation visit: Carlos Fernando Sanminguel School • Home-Hosted Lunch**

Destination: Amazon rain forest

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: **Yarina Lodge** or similar

Exclusive O.A.T. Activities: Prepare for a full day of immersive cultural discoveries as we spend *A Day in the Life* of an indigenous Kichwa village deep within the Amazon rainforest. We'll visit a school supported in part by **Grand Circle Foundation** and join a family for a **Home-Hosted Lunch**. Read more about these activities below.

Early Morning: Early risers can choose to set off at 6:30am on a bird-watching excursion (weather permitting) for a glimpse of the colorful avian life that make their home in this lush Amazon setting.

Breakfast: Today's breakfast is available beginning at 7:30am.

Morning: At around 8:30am, we set out by canoe to experience *A Day in the Life* of Flor del Pantano, a village of about 30 residents belonging to the Amazon's indigenous Kichwa people. We'll arrive at the village at around 9am.

Our cultural experience begins when we walk to the Carlos Fernando Sanminguel School (when in session), a local primary school and **NEW Grand Circle Foundation** site.

Grand Circle Foundation

Carlos Fernando Sanminguel School

Partner since: **2021**

Carlos Fernando Sanminguel school serves about 20 Kichwa children between the ages of five and twelve. During our visit, we'll meet the teachers and students, and see firsthand what education is like in this indigenous community.

Our partnership with the school began in 2021, and during our visit, we'll witness the difference our travel dollars are making in the children's lives. With Grand Circle Foundation's support, the school is currently constructing a dining facility for the students, and is expanding the community's access to clean water for drinking and cleaning. As we tour the school and speak with the students and families who rely on its services, we'll observe how these initiatives are helping to improve

the lives of Flor del Pantano's residents.

[Learn more about the sites we support »](#)

Then, around 10:15am, our *A Day in the Life* experience continues as we walk to the home of a local family, where we'll get fully acquainted with the Kichwa people's culture, traditions, and daily lives. Our host will be Cristina Grefa Andi. Cristina is the descendant of generations of Kichwa people—with our small group size, we'll connect closely with her to learn about the traditional Kichwa way of life as we tour her home and lush garden.

Agriculture has always been a fundamental pillar of Kichwa society, and the garden is one of the most important parts of any family's home. Cristina will introduce us to her family's garden, where we'll have the chance to learn about the various crops and herbs that are cultivated, and even have the opportunity to roll up our sleeves and help out with some hands-on activities.

We'll join in on the planting or harvest (depending on the season) of the cassava root, one of the most cherished crops that the Kichwa people grow in the rainforest. The humble root boasts a number of nutritional and medicinal properties, and takes center stage in many Kichwa ceremonies—Cristina will tell us about the role that the cassava root plays in the community, and demonstrate how its peel can be used as a moisturizer and exfoliator in skincare products. In addition to the cassava plant, we'll learn about the other crops that Kichwa families grow—either for subsistence or sale in local markets—such as bananas, corn, palm hearts, cotton, coffee, and cocoa.

We'll also learn how Kichwa traditions are changing in the face of the encroaching modern world. As timber and oil companies have moved in and deforested the Amazon, the Kichwa people have turned to livestock and ecotourism to supplement their subsistence economy—as we'll learn later, after lunch, this growing interconnectedness with the global economy has been changing the fabric of Kichwa society in recent generations.

Lunch: At around 11:15am, we'll help Cristina prepare our **Home-Hosted Lunch**. We'll split into smaller groups to participate in various kitchen tasks, and to learn how to prepare traditional Kichwa cuisine. The main dish will be *maito*—fresh-caught fish wrapped in the large green leaves of the *bijao* plant and cooked over an open flame. *Maito* is a special dish that is only served on celebratory occasions or to welcome honored guests—our opportunity to enjoy it with our hosts is a rare privilege that few Americans ever get to experience.

We'll also help prepare side dishes such as boiled green plantains and roasted white cocoa beans, and prepare a dessert made of seasonally-available fruit. Cristina will also show us how to make *chicha*, a popular local fermented drink made from cassava root and sweet potato. After working together to help prepare the feast, we'll all sit down at the family table around 12:30pm and enjoy a delectable meal and friendly conversation.

Afternoon: Following lunch, at around 1:45pm, we'll conclude our *A Day in the Life* experience when we meet Juanita (Cristina's mother-in-law) for a demonstration of a traditional Kichwa healing ceremony. One by one, our small group will receive this

experienced medicine woman's blessing to receive a cleansed soul and good health and harmony for our future travels. With the family's help, we'll try our hand at using traditional blowguns. From an early age, Kichwa youth are trained in the use of these handcrafted weapons loaded with poisoned darts (lethal only to small animals) to hunt food for their community. As we'll soon see for ourselves as we join them in a round of target practice, skillful use of these simple devices can be much harder than it looks.

We'll board our canoes at around 2:15pm and ride the river back to the lodge, arriving at around 2:45pm. You'll then have the rest of the day to relax or explore independently as you please.

Dinner: Our final dinner at the lodge is served at around 7pm.

Evening: Afterward, you are at leisure to enjoy the lodge's amenities.

DAY 7 Coca • Fly to Quito

Destination: Quito

Meals included: B L

Accommodations: [NH Collection Quito Royal Hotel](#) or similar

Activity Note: Agility and balance are required for embarking small motor canoes in the Amazon rain forest. Also, we will spend the next two days at elevations above 9,000 feet. We recommend staying hydrated while at high altitude. Please note that flight times given are for weekdays and vary for weekends. Flight times absolutely cannot be guaranteed for any given day.

Travelers who began their Amazon experience on Day 3 will enjoy a full day in Quito today, including a market visit, city tour, and Controversial Topic conversation.

Breakfast: Arise early for breakfast beginning at 7:30am.

Morning: At around 8am, we board a motorized canoe to return to Coca via the Río Napo. On arrival around 9am, we'll transfer 5 minutes by bus to the airport for a half-hour flight to Quito, scheduled to depart at 10:30am. On arrival in Quito, we transfer 45 minutes to a local restaurant.

Lunch: Around 12:30pm, enjoy an included lunch in Quito featuring regional specialties.

Afternoon: After our lunch concludes around 1:45pm, we'll make our way to our hotel, arriving around 2pm. Depending on where we stay, our centrally-located hotel may feature a restaurant, bar and lounge, and gym. Your rooms will likely include a double bed, cable TV, wireless Internet access, and a private bathroom.

The remainder of the afternoon is free for independent exploration of Quito. Your Trip Experience Leader will have suggestions, or you might visit the Artisan Market near Plaza Foch to browse for Ecuadorian handcrafts and artwork. Or, perhaps you'll relax in your room.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader would be happy to offer restaurant recommendations.

Evening: Enjoy a relaxing evening at the hotel.

DAY 8 Quito • Optional Papallacta Hot Springs tour

Optional Tour

Destination: Quito

Meals included: B

Accommodations: NH Collection Quito Royal Hotel or similar

Activity Note: We will spend today at elevations above 9,000 feet. We recommend staying hydrated while at high altitude. You may rest at the hotel, if necessary.

Breakfast: From 6am to 8am, buffet breakfast is available at the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy free time in Quito. With a full day to explore the city, you might like to visit one of the farther-flung neighborhoods in Quito: perched above the eastern side of the valley, Guapulo feels like a small Andean town set within the city limits. This bohemian neighborhood is best known for its artsy cafes, colonial-era church, and sweeping views of Quito.

Or, at around 8:30am, join our full-day optional tour to the Andean village of Papallacta and the Termas de Papallacta to experience a relaxing day surrounded by the natural beauty of Ecuador's highlands.

Lunch: If you join us on the optional tour, lunch is included. Otherwise, you are sure to find many possibilities for lunch on your own during your independent explorations.

Afternoon: Continue your exploration of Quito. If you have taken our optional tour, you will return to the hotel at around 3:30pm.

Dinner: On your own. With so many choices available to you, you might want to ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

Evening: The evening is at leisure. You might seek out one of the many nearby establishments serving craft beer or a club featuring live music.

DAY 9 Fly to the Galápagos • Embark ship

Destination: Galápagos islands

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: Galápagos Small Ship

Activity Note: The following description is meant only as a general guide to the cruise itinerary that you are likely to follow. The

selection and order of islands visited cannot be guaranteed due to the Galápagos's frequently variable weather, marine and environmental conditions, and changes in airline schedules between the mainland and the Galápagos. This is a carefully managed park with fragile ecosystems. To safeguard them (and to ensure your own comfort), boat and park authorities have the prerogative to revise our course at a moment's notice. You may rest on board instead of participating in any hikes if you prefer.

Breakfast: Arise very early and have a light breakfast at the coffee station.

Morning: We depart for the airport at around 4:45am, arriving at around 5:30am. Our 2.5-hour flight to the Galápagos is scheduled to take off around 6:45am. Upon landing in the Galápagos mid-morning, we make a short bus transfer to the dock, where we board our small ship. You can stow your gear in your cabin, orient yourself on deck, and enjoy the anticipation of the cruise ahead. The ship features lounge areas, a bar, a sun deck, and a dining room serving local and international cuisine. The simply appointed cabins have twin beds, a window, and a private bath with shower.

For seven days, we explore the archipelago—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—by ship, enjoying comfortable cabins and the services of an expert crew. Our Trip Experience Leader will give us an orientation briefing, including conservation techniques suggested by the Galápagos National Park. He or she is a graduate of the elite certification program conducted at the Charles Darwin Research Station on Isla Santa Cruz by the Galápagos National Park Service.

We file our Galápagos cruising itinerary with the conservation authorities of the Galápagos National Park. Park biologists periodically review it, and they have the authority to make changes to our plan to minimize our impact on the ecosystems of the islands. Our Trip Experience Leader also provides the park with information on species behavior, and we are proud to work in cooperation with the park officials in preserving the priceless natural wonders of the Galápagos.

Each morning during our cruise, the sight of an island seemingly floating off the bow may send a shiver of anticipation through you. A small dinghy brings us close to the islands for wet or dry landings, which require wading through knee-deep clear water.

On shore, a gaudily colored Sally Lightfoot crab may scuttle by your foot as you watch iguanas sunning on the sands. It is an adventure of Darwinian proportions.

All meals are included during our cruise, and no matter which island you call on, each of the next days will follow a similar pattern.

Lunch: Our small group gathers for our first lunch on board at around 12:45pm.

Afternoon: You have an hour to settle into your cabin and get acquainted with your floating home before we gather for a safety drill. Our ship will be sailing toward our next island stop, where we might hike across volcanic landscapes or, if time allows, swim near our ship.

Dinner: We sit down to dinner on our ship at around 6pm, with plenty of tales to tell as stars fill the darkening sky.

Evening: Retire to your cabin. As you sleep, you'll be cruising toward another adventure in the Galápagos.

DAY 10 Galápagos cruise

Destination: Galápagos islands

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: Galápagos Small Ship

Activity Note: We'll make numerous landings by small dinghies that involve stepping into knee-deep water to wade ashore.

Balance and agility are required to participate, and please pack accordingly. You may rest on board instead if you prefer.

Breakfast: All breakfasts on board are served buffet-style in the ship's dining room. Service begins at 7am today, and you are welcome to dine at your convenience.

Today's Activities: For the next six days, we continue our Galápagos travel. Although wildlife sightings are unpredictable, we may see blue-footed and Nazca boobies, frigatebirds, pelicans, Galápagos doves, swallowtail and lava gulls, Darwin finches, or herons. We'll also marvel at sea lions and iguanas throughout our travels.

During the summer and fall, the Humboldt Current moves through the Galápagos Islands, cooling sea and land temperatures, and creating a mist that covers the islands—locally known as *garua* (soft rain)—during the day. The Humboldt Current is strongest from July to October, delivering choppy water that surrounds the islands.

Lunch: We return to the ship at about noon for lunch. Similar to dinners, most of your lunches onboard will be seated, with your choice of soup and entrée. You may also visit the buffet for salads and desserts.

Afternoon: We continue our explorations of the Galápagos.

Dinner: Dinner is served on board at around 6pm tonight.

Evening: Perhaps you'll relax in the lounge, or gaze at an amazing panoply of stars from the sun deck.

DAY 11 Galápagos cruise

Destination: Galápagos islands

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: Galápagos Small Ship

Activity Note: We'll make numerous landings by small dinghies that involve stepping into knee-deep water to wade ashore.

Balance and agility are required to participate, and please pack accordingly. You may rest on board instead if you prefer.

Today's Activities: We continue our Galápagos travel. Here is a preview of the islands you may call on. Islands visited depend on the ship's itinerary.

Santiago (James)—Tidal pools reveal a profusion of octopi, starfishes, and other undersea life. Rare fur sea lions that were once on the verge of extinction cavort nearby, and we often spot oystercatchers, blue herons, and yellow-crowned night herons.

Bartolome—One of the youngest islands, Bartolome displays a fantastic landscape of lava formations—including the famous Pinnacle Rock. The mangroves often hide mating sea turtles.

South Plaza—Sea lions often greet us raucously as we step ashore. We also find land iguanas busy eating the opuntia cactus flowers and pads. There are colonies of swallow-tailed gulls, shearwaters, and red-billed tropicbirds.

Rabida (Jervis)—A reddish beach and steep volcanic slopes give this island its distinctive look.

Leon Dormido (Kicker Rock)—Cruise around this sheer 500-foot tuff cone formation, where blue-footed boobies and sea lions abound. Santa Cruz—At the Charles Darwin Research Station, learn about pioneering ecological studies and the giant Galápagos tortoise-breeding program.

Floreana (Charles)—Like the other islands, Floreana has its coterie of remarkable creatures. But it's the human stories that will engage you here as your guide tells of the first inhabitant, a shipwrecked Irishman, and the quirky “post office” in a barrel, where sailors have been leaving letters for delivery since 1793. This “post office” still operates today.

Santa Fe (Barrington)—Hike through a forest of opuntia cactus, where land iguanas doze, and then snorkel in clear water with coral reefs, manta rays, sea turtles, and colorful schools of fish. North Seymour—Here you'll find the largest colony of frigatebirds in the Galapagos and a major nesting site for the blue-footed booby. On the beach, sea lions ride the waves.

San Cristobal (Chatham)—The town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on this island is the sleepy capital of the Galápagos province. Ochoa Beach boasts pelicans and other sea birds, as well as a delightful swimming beach. Nearby is Lobos Island, where you'll see pelicans, frigatebirds, and a sea lion colony.

Española (Hood Island)—Sea lions, marine iguanas, and many kinds of birds are found here, including Darwin's finches, Hood mockingbirds, and blue-footed and masked boobies. Along the southern shore, spectacular cliffs rise up from the sea. From November to April, the remarkable waved albatross, which can spend years at sea without touching land, can be seen performing their unique, perfectly-choreographed mating ritual.

Today's Meals: All meals will be served in the ship's dining room. Your crew and Trip Experience Leader will inform you of precise start times, and there will be daily memos posted around the ship to inform you and your fellow travelers of meal times.

DAY 12 Galápagos cruise

Destination: Galápagos islands

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: Galápagos Small Ship

Activity Note: We'll make numerous landings by small dinghies that involve stepping into knee-deep water to wade ashore.

Balance and agility are required to participate, and please pack accordingly. You may rest on board instead if you prefer.

Today's Activities: Today we continue our Galápagos travel. An O.A.T. traveler commented that, “The Galápagos are sun, sea, and a workshop in evolutionary biology.” Once on land, we'll walk with our naturalist Trip Experience Leader along trails that bring us close to the many indigenous species.

Today's Meals: All meals will be served in the ship's dining room. Your crew and Trip Experience Leader will inform you of precise start times, and there will be daily memos posted around the ship to inform you and your fellow travelers of meal times.

DAY 13 Galápagos cruise

Destination: Galápagos islands

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: Galápagos Small Ship

Activity Note: We'll make numerous landings by small dinghies that involve stepping into knee-deep water to wade ashore.

Balance and agility are required to participate, and please pack accordingly. You may rest on board instead if you prefer.

Today's Activities: Today we continue our Galápagos travel. When we are not viewing wildlife on shore, we can swim, sunbathe, and perhaps go snorkeling among sea lions and vividly colored tropical fish. Throughout the trip, we'll see magnificent landscapes of white-sand beaches, sparkling clear aquamarine water, and black and red volcanic rock landscapes.

Today's Meals: All meals will be served in the ship's dining room. Your crew and Trip Experience Leader will inform you of precise start times, and there will be daily memos posted around the ship to inform you and your fellow travelers of meal times.

DAY 14 Galápagos cruise

Destination: Galápagos islands

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: Galápagos Small Ship

Activity Note: We'll make numerous landings by small dinghies that involve stepping into knee-deep water to wade ashore.

Balance and agility are required to participate, and please pack accordingly. You may rest on board instead if you prefer.

Today's Activities: Today we continue our exploration of the Galápagos. As we take in their striking seascapes, we can consider how they have impressed great American writers in two different centuries. Herman Melville blended knowledge of the islands, gained from his days as a sailor, with fiction in his 1854 novella *The Encantadas* or *Enchanted Isles*. More than 100 years later, Kurt Vonnegut's 1985 novel *Galápagos* drew inspiration from the author's own visit to the archipelago. Unique and remote, the

Galápagos Islands will no doubt continue to influence creative artists for centuries to come.

Today's Meals: All meals will be served in the ship's dining room. Your crew and Trip Experience Leader will inform you of precise start times, and there will be daily memos posted around the ship to inform you and your fellow travelers of meal times.

DAY 15 Galápagos cruise • Farewell Dinner

Destination: Galápagos islands

Meals included: B L D

Accommodations: Galápagos Small Ship

Activity Note: We'll make numerous landings by small dinghies that involve stepping into knee-deep water to wade ashore. Balance and agility are required to participate, and please pack accordingly. You may rest on board instead if you prefer.

Today's Activities: This is the last day we spend in the Galápagos, and we'll continue to enjoy snorkeling, exploring, observing wildlife, and hiking around the islands.

Today's Meals: All meals will be served in the ship's dining room. Your crew and Trip Experience Leader will inform you of precise start times, and there will be daily memos posted around the ship to inform you and your fellow travelers of meal times. Tonight, we'll enjoy a special Farewell Dinner onboard.

DAY 16 Disembark ship • Fly to Quito • Return to U.S. or begin your post-trip extension

Meals included: B D

Activity Note: Today, we will fly to Quito from the Galápagos. Depending on your ship and flight itinerary, you'll depart from either Baltra Island or San Cristobal Island. We do not recommend that travelers departing from San Cristobal make their own flight arrangements before 10pm, as flights from San Cristobal Island arrive in Quito around 6pm.

Breakfast: Enjoy a final breakfast on board beginning at 6am.

Morning: At around 8am, we bid farewell to our captain and crew and disembark our Galápagos vessel. We then take a short bus transfer to the airport, where our flight to Quito is scheduled to depart a little after 10:30am.

Lunch: On your own—perhaps you'll pick up a snack at the airport.

Afternoon: Our 2.5-hour flight to Quito arrives around 3pm. We'll have a day room at a hotel near the airport available to each traveler for the rest of the afternoon.

Dinner: At around 6pm, we gather for dinner at the hotel restaurant.

Evening: At around 9pm, board a 10-minute bus transfer to the airport for your flight home. Travelers taking the post-trip extension to *Riobamba & Cuenca: Cultural Treasures in the Ecuadorean Andes* will stay overnight in Quito.
