

Darwin's Trail: The Galápagos Islands



August Jennewein

Saint Louis Zoo Travel is pleased once again to offer an eleven island in-depth natural history tour of the islands made famous by Charles Darwin.

As in the past, it promises to fulfill your every expectation in comfort, viewing, and excitement. Good food, a friendly crew, a knowledgeable guide and a long string of unusual plants and animals will fill your days with lasting memories.

Situated 600 miles west of Ecuador and straddling the equator, this collection of volcanic islands offers a unique view of plant and animal life that has evolved over the period of its short existence. The stark volcanic landscapes contrast sharply with the plentiful and diverse examples of wildlife not found anywhere else in the world. Although there are similarities among the plants and animals on the different islands, there are also striking differences that even the amateur can spot, especially with the encouragement of the accompanying naturalist.



Your days will be filled with hiking excursions on many of the islands, as well as swimming and snorkeling for close-up viewing of underwater sights—all replete with extraordinary photo opportunities. You will see the same animals Charles Darwin saw and perhaps entertain the same kinds of questions he had about the land and sea iguanas, the turtles and tortoises, the frigate birds and the finches, the boobies and the cormorants. You will also visit the Charles Darwin Research Center, and find out about the Zoo's connection to the research and conservation work that goes on there.

Trip Activity Level: Moderate. This trip involves hiking and snorkeling (optional, but highly recommended). Since the islands are volcanic in nature, the island walks are on uneven terrain and may be quite hilly.

**Escorted by Jack Grisham,
Vice President, Animal Collections,
Saint Louis Zoo**

ITINERARY

Darwin's Trail: The Galápagos Islands

June 8 – 21, 2009

**\$7,090 per person double occupancy,
includes air from St. Louis**

\$6,170 land only

- › **Monday, June 8**
St. Louis International Air Flight
- › **Tuesday, June 9**
Quito, Ecuador to Baltra Island,
Galápagos
- › **Wednesday, June 10**
Santiago Island, Galápagos
- › **Thursday, June 11**
Santiago Island, Galápagos
- › **Friday, June 12**
Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos
- › **Saturday, June 13**
Tower Island, Galápagos
- › **Sunday, June 14**
Isabela and Fernandina Islands,
Galápagos
- › **Monday, June 15**
Isabela Island, Galápagos
- › **Tuesday, June 16**
Isabela Island, Galápagos
- › **Wednesday, June 17**
Espanola Island, Galápagos
- › **Thursday, June 18**
Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos
- › **Friday, June 19**
South Plaza and Baltra Islands,
Galápagos to Quito, Ecuador
- › **Saturday, June 20**
Quito, Ecuador
- › **Sunday, June 21**
Quito, Ecuador to St. Louis

For more information, contact Altair Travel at (314) 968-9600.

MONDAY, JUNE 8
St. Louis to Quito, Ecuador

Fly out of St. Louis into Quito, Ecuador where your adventure begins. On arrival (late evening), you will be transferred directly to the Hotel Mercure Alameda where we will spend the night. The Hotel Mercure Alameda is one of the finer hotels in Quito and it is said that they have the most personal service.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9
Quito, Ecuador to Baltra Island, Galápagos

After breakfast, we board a morning flight to Baltra Island in the Galápagos on Tame Airlines. On arrival we are met by our expert Galápagos guide and transferred to our yacht, the M/Y TIP TOP IV, waiting for us in the harbor. The 118 ft., steel-hulled TIP TOP IV was built in Guayaquil, Ecuador, in 2006. The design includes all modern navigation instrumentation and safety features. She has a crew of 8 and carries 16 passengers in 10 air-conditioned double cabins (all with two lower twin berths, which can be moved together to create a larger berth), each with a private bathroom and hot shower. The interior is very attractive, and features a library/conference room and a spacious dining room. There are extensive outside viewing (sun/shade) areas, all with very comfortable, cushioned lounge chairs. There is also a desalination water making system and an icemaker on-board. There are 2 double kayaks available for guest use.

Mosquera Islet will be your first shore landing within the national park. The islet, resembling a huge sandbar, is home to a population of Galápagos sea lions, numerous shore birds, and Sally lightfoot crabs – it makes the perfect introduction to Galápagos fauna! **B/L/D**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10
Santiago Island, Galápagos

This is the first of two days exploring Santiago Island, starting with Sullivan Bay offering a rare look at a “recently-formed” lava field, with fantastical Pahoehoe formations. Snorkeling here might offer a chance to be in water with the northernmost penguin species in the world. Sombrero Chino, perhaps more than any other visitor site, conveys the volcanic origins of the Galápagos. The shoreline is a wonderful snorkeling area with numerous coves and grottos. **B/L/D**

THURSDAY, JUNE 11
Santiago Island, Galápagos

On our second day on Santiago we visit James Bay/Puerto Egas, home to Fur Seal Grotto. Some of the best tide-pooling is also here, drawing a wonderful variety of shorebirds and seabirds. Rabida is one of the best snorkeling sites in the islands. The red sand beach also makes a striking backdrop for the ever-present sea lions. An inland lagoon often has a few flamingos, with the mangroves a common nesting area for brown pelicans. **B/L/D**

FRIDAY, JUNE 12
Santa Cruz and North Seymour Islands, Galápagos

Today has us visiting Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill) in the morning. This is a nesting site to a growing number of land iguanas, many of which have been repatriated from the Charles Darwin Research Station. Below the hill there is a hypersaline lagoon that is often frequented by flamingos and waders. In the afternoon we cruise to North Seymour which is a major nesting area for the blue-footed booby. The island



Kitty Mollman

is also home to the largest colony of magnificent frigate birds in the Galápagos. Both marine and land iguanas are found in good numbers, and sea lions often surf the rocky shore break. **B/L/D**

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Tower Island, Galápagos

Tower Island is located in the northeast portion of the Galápagos. Tower is an outpost for many sea birds. Darwin Bay is an anchorage within a caldera, with surrounding cliffs forming the inner portion of the rim. Along the small beach there is a forest of salt bush where adjacent colonies of great frigate birds and red-footed boobies are seen nesting. A visit to Prince Philip's Steps begins with a panga (zodiac) ride along the cliffs, watching for red-billed tropicbirds and the occasional fur seal, while squadrons of frigate birds fly overhead in their endless piratical pursuits. On shore a forest of dwarf palo santo trees is home to a colony of red-footed boobies. Along the lava fields storm petrels fly overhead in great numbers, while short-eared owls hunt among the lava cracks. **B/L/D**

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

Isabela and Fernandina Islands, Galápagos

Today we circumnavigate Roca Redona at sunrise observing the huge cliff-dwelling bird colonies. We then head to Isabela, the largest of the islands in this archipelago, for the next three days. A morning panga ride and snorkel at Punta Vicente Roca often provides a chance to get close to enormous mola mola. Later this morning, we traverse the colder/richer deep waters in a perfect time to be on deck for whale watching. We stop at Fernandina, the youngest of the Galápagos Islands. Punta Espinosa is a remarkable visitor site, with the largest colony of marine iguanas in the islands, in addition to flightless cormorants, Galápagos penguins, and Galápagos hawks, plus the endemic Galápagos lava cactus. **B/L/D**

MONDAY, JUNE 15

Isabela Island, Galápagos

Isabela is comprised of 6 volcanoes. Urvina Bay is the site of a dramatic volcanic uplift in 1954, where nearly 4 miles of coastline suddenly raised nearly 15 feet, with the coastline driven three quarters of a mile farther out to sea. The marine remnants and giant coral heads are a stark reminder. Inland land iguanas, and an occasional tortoise, are found here. Along the shore flightless cormorants and brown pelicans typically nest. Farther south, Elizabeth Bay is a mangrove inlet that we explore by zodiac. **B/L/D**

TUESDAY, JUNE 16

Isabela Island, Galápagos

Punta Cormorant is one of the most interesting landings – on an olivine beach, with an emphasis on plant life and shore birds. A brackish lagoon is home to flamingos, pintail ducks and common stilts. Favorite snorkeling areas are the offshore islets of Devil's Crown and Champion (where you might also get a glimpse of the Charles Mockingbird on shore). Post Office Bay, while possibly not the most scenic visitor site, is one of the most historically famous for its still-in-use barrel post office. The village of Black Beach is the smallest of island villages and the gateway to the highlands of Floreana. **B/L/D**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

Espanola Island, Galápagos

We visit Gardner Bay in Espanola Island which is a tranquil sandy beach known for sea lions, lava lizards, finches & Hood mockingbirds, to name just a few. Just off-shore, Gardner and Tortuga Rocks offer great snorkeling experiences. Punta Suarez is a paradise for birders, with waved albatross, Nazca boobies, blue-footed boobies, Galápagos hawks and marine iguanas (the most colorful in the islands) all vying for center stage. **B/L/D**



Kitty Mollman

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos

On Santa Cruz, the primary population center, Puerto Ayora is the scientific heart of Galápagos, including the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS). We will learn about the work the Saint Louis Zoo supports through the Galápagos Conservation Center. Depending on field work schedule, we hope to have one of the Zoo-supported scientists meet with the group. Following lunch on the waterfront in Puerto Ayora, we will take a van trip to the highlands, traversing all seven vegetation zones of the Galápagos. In addition to two enormous pit craters, other volcanic formations include some of the largest known lava tunnels in the Galápagos. Not surprisingly, the lush highland vegetation is home to a variety

of land birds, including vermillion flycatchers, Galápagos flycatchers, woodpecker finches, and dark-billed cuckoos. Tortoises are often seen in the wild here. Dinner will be at a local highland restaurant. **B/L/D**

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

South Plaza and Baltra Islands, Galápagos to Quito, Ecuador

Today we visit South Plaza. This geologically uplifted island is vegetated with the distinctive red mats of sesuvium, along with prickly pear cactus – both being the food base for the land iguanas. A walk along the sea cliffs is wonderful, with swallow-tailed gulls, shearwaters, and red-billed tropicbirds in flight at eye level. After the morning Visitor Site, we will sail to Baltra Island for our mid-day TAME Airlines flight back to Quito. On arrival (late afternoon) in Quito, we will be transferred directly to the Hotel Mercure Alameda where we will spend the next two nights. We will have a “farewell dinner” at one of the leading restaurants in Quito. **B/L/D**

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Quito, Ecuador

This is a free day. You can choose to do some shopping, local sightseeing, or perhaps a blend of the two. For those who would like to take one of several tours of Quito or the surrounding area, the manager of our sister company in Ecuador will be stopping by the hotel to discuss the departure schedules and itineraries (see our brochure, *Highlights Of Ecuador.*) **B**

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

Quito, Ecuador to St. Louis

We have an early morning departure to the international airport for your return flight home. This has truly been a trip of a lifetime as you retraced Darwin’ trail seeing the best that nature has to offer. **B**



Mark Grantham

Final island routings are set by the Galápagos National Park Service and are always subject to change.

Land Cost Includes:

- All accommodations, including 3 nights in a First Class hotel in Quito, Ecuador* and 10 nights aboard the yacht in the Galápagos
- All meals and non-alcoholic beverages aboard the yacht and most meals (as indicated in the itinerary) in Quito
- Round trip TAME Airlines Quito/Galápagos flights with the group
- All Airport transfers in Quito and the Galápagos
- The services of a Saint Louis Zoo Escort accompanying the tour, and a University-level Naturalist Guide conducting the land tours
- Trip cancellation and post departure trip insurance

* Accommodations in Quito include 2 people sharing a double room. If you prefer your own room, there is a Single Supplement Cost of \$150 per person; see the Reservation Information section of the Trip Application Form. All boat cabins must be shared, except by special arrangement.

Land Cost Does Not Include:

- International Airfare
- Tourist Card (\$10 per participant)
- National Park Entrance Fee/ Galápagos Port Tax (\$100 per participant)
- Departure Tax from Ecuador (\$42 per participant)
- Gratuities to guide and crew (suggested at \$200 per participant)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Local tours in mainland Ecuador
- Passport fees
- Items of a personal nature
- And some meals in Quito (as specified)

In addition there is currently a fuel surcharge/tax of \$260 per participant which will be billed prior to departure.

Air Arrangements: Our office will be happy to assist with international air arrangements out of either Miami or your home airport – please contact us for a quote.

Darwin's Trail: The Galápagos Islands

June 8 – June 21, 2009

Our Zoo Travel adventures fill quickly. To be assured of space prior to sending in your reservation form, please call: (314) 968-9600. This form with deposit should be sent to:

Altair Travel and Cruises
2025 South Brentwood Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63144
(314) 968-9600

PERSONAL INFORMATION – Please fill out one reservation form for each traveler.

Full Name of Traveler Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

(As it appears on your passport)

(2nd Traveler) Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of Birth _____ Cell Phone (____) _____

Evening Telephone (____) _____ Day Telephone (____) _____

E-Mail _____

PLEASE NOTE: Passport must have an expiration date of 6 months after return travel date.

Passport Number _____ Place of Issue _____

Date of Expiration (Day/Month/Year) _____ Birthplace _____

Special Medical Information _____

Dietary Restrictions _____

Special Requests _____

ACCOMMODATIONS

Double-Rooming with _____

Double-Please match with roommate if possible (if not I understand I will pay an additional single supplement)

Single Accommodations (very limited, not guaranteed)

I am a smoker Non-smoker

Unless specified otherwise, all boat cabins must be shared.

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Cell Phone: (____) _____ Relationship: _____

PAYMENT

The payment of a deposit represents an acceptance by the tour member(s) of the following Terms and Conditions.

Galápagos program fee is \$7090.00 per person, includes airfare, a fuel supplement and is subject to change. Should you choose to do your own air, the Galápagos program fee is \$6170.00.

The single supplement is very limited, pricing available upon request.

A deposit of \$750.00 per person is due payable with credit card or check and is required to hold space on this departure. Please make checks for deposit and final payment payable to Altair Travel and Cruises and send to:

Altair Travel and Cruises
2025 South Brentwood Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63144
(314) 968-9600

Final payment (including airfare and all optional land extensions trips) will be due March 10, 2009, 90 days prior to departure.

TRIP INCLUDES:

- Round trip airfare from St. Louis to Quito Ecuador
- Trip insurance including trip cancellation and interruption due to medical or accident
- All transportation during trip
- 11 day/10 night Galápagos Cruise on the Tip Top IV, (shared double rooms), all meals and non-alcoholic beverages on board
- Services of a University level Naturalist Guide, trained at the Charles Darwin Research Station, conducting the land tours in the Galápagos
- Services of an expert-level Saint Louis Zoo Leader accompanying the tour
- Three nights (shared double rooms) at Hotel Mercure Alameda in Quito, including most meals in Quito.
If any passengers opt to travel through Guayaquil rather than Quito, the program includes just 2 hotel nights (including breakfast)
- TAME Airlines flights Quito/Guayaquil/Galápagos round trip group flights
- All airport transfers in Quito to connect with individual international flights, as well as the group Galápagos flights
- Gratuities to baggage handlers and porters within Ecuador
- Extensive pre-departure materials
- Safari-style camp shirt
- Luggage Tags
- Services of Galápagos Travel Proinvertur staff in Quito, coordinating hotels, transfers and optional side tours
- A fuel surcharge of \$260.00 per passenger, which is subject to increase

NOT INCLUDED:

- The Ecuadorian Departure Tax (currently \$42.00 per person)
- The Galápagos National Park Entrance Fee (currently \$100.00 per person)
- The Galápagos Migration Card fee (currently \$10.00 per person)
- These fees are current and subject to change. They will be collected during the trip, please plan accordingly.
- Passport or Visa fees
- Some meals in Quito
- Alcoholic beverages
- Gratuities to the Naturalist Guide or crew of the yacht
- Personal items such as laundry, room service, telephone, faxes, and souvenirs
- Any tours in Mainland Ecuador

CANCELLATIONS

All cancellations shall be in writing. Travel insurance is included and is mandatory on this trip.
All deposits are non-refundable.

For cancellations received:

30-75 days prior to departure, there is a cancellation charge of 50% of the cost per person.

1-29 days prior to departure, on the departure date, or “no show”, there is a cancellation charge of 100% of the cost per person.

LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY

The Saint Louis Zoo, gti Galápagos Travel Corp. and Altair Travel and Cruises give notice that they are only agents for the owners and suppliers providing means of transportation, accommodation, meals, tours, and/or all travel related services.

Further, The Saint Louis Zoo, gti Galápagos Travel Corp. and Altair Travel and Cruises, assumes no responsibility or liability for any delay, mishap, inconvenience, expense, injury, or death, or damage to property occasioned through the negligence or default of any company or individual engaged in providing these arranged services.

Further, The Saint Louis Zoo, gti Galápagos Travel Corp. and Altair Travel and Cruises, assumes no responsibility or liability for any delay, mishap, inconvenience, expense, injury, or death, or damage to property occasioned through acts of God, detention, weather, strikes, or civil disturbances.

Further, The Saint Louis Zoo, gti Galápagos Travel Corp. and Altair Travel and Cruises, reserves the right to alter the itinerary and/or to substitute vessels, hotels, and/or airlines when deemed necessary or advisable.

The Saint Louis Zoo, Altair Travel and Cruises and our cooperating agents make every effort to select reliable suppliers and contractors to provide aid and other transportation services, hotels, guides and other travel related corrections equated with such services. Each traveler agrees not to hold The Saint Louis Zoo, Altair Travel and Cruises its owners, employees, agents, sponsoring organization and/or damage which results directly or indirectly from any act of omission of any person or firm which is to or does provide goods or services in connection with the trip or with any available option

The Saint Louis Zoo, Altair Travel and Cruises and its cooperating agents and sponsoring organization shall not be liable for circumstances arising as a result of Acts of God, weather, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, theft, pilferage, acts of nature, military, political or terrorist action, civil disturbances, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, discrepancies or changes in transit over which they have no control.

On advancement of a deposit, the traveler agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions set forth above.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

I have carefully read and accept the Terms and Conditions as stated on this page. I also acknowledge that during a trip to this destination and a tour of this nature, certain risks and dangers may be involved, including but not limited to shipboard travel, hiking over rocky and mountainous terrain and underdeveloped areas, high altitude, the forces of nature, and accident and illness in remote areas without means of rapid evacuation or availability of medical supplies and facilities. I am voluntarily participating in these activities with knowledge of the dangers involved and hereby agree to assume any and all risks, including injury and death. I therefore release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) gti Galápagos Travel Corp, The Saint Louis Zoo, and Altair Travel and Cruises, for bodily injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation in the tour. This release of liability is entered into on behalf of all members of my family, including all minors accompanying me. I certify that I am the parent or guardian of any such minors.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Parent or Legal Guardian must sign for person under age 21)

Signature _____ Date _____

If paying by Credit Card please fill out the following information

Credit card Number _____ Exp _____
Security Code _____

Credit card Authorization Signature _____

Your signature is needed to complete this form. Please carefully read all sections.

Please make a copy of this entire form for your records