

# THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

& AMAZON RAIN FOREST



**Join MPR Host, Sven Sundgaard!**

January 29 – February 9, 2024



**You're invited!** Please join me, MPR's meteorologist, Sven Sundgaard – on an unforgettable journey to the legendary Galápagos Islands and Amazon Rain Forest of Ecuador. While based on the island of Santa Cruz we'll spend our days exploring the many nearby islands of North Seymour, Santa Fe and Plaza Islands. Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and encounter remarkable species unknown anywhere else on earth. Certified naturalists will enlighten and expand your understanding of the amazing creatures and unparalleled diversity of the Amazon Rain Forest. Come commune with the iguanas and snorkel with sea lions on this amazing adventure with MPR!

## **JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS**

Explore the Galápagos Islands with naturalists ♦ Charles Darwin Research Station ♦ Unequalled diversity of wildlife ♦ Snorkeling with marine life ♦ Opportunities for short hikes on the Galápagos Islands ♦ Historic walking tour of the old colonial town of Quito, a World Heritage Site ♦ Knowledgeable, experienced local guides ♦ Intimate dining experiences ♦ A full day excursion to local markets and hot springs ♦ Travel with like-minded public radio listeners



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*Discover Quito's historic center*

### TRIP AT A GLANCE

4 Nights Quito

2 Nights Casa del Suizo – Amazon Rain Forest

5 Nights Galápagos Islands

### IT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ MPR's Sven Sundgaard - meteorologist with MPR News
- ✓ Full-time bilingual tour guide and naturalist
- ✓ Airport and hotel transfers in Ecuador with professional guides and drivers
- ✓ Six days of island hopping and exploration in the Galápagos Islands
- ✓ Three days in the Amazon Rain Forest
- ✓ Domestic flights to/from the Galápagos Islands
- ✓ Accommodations in charming 3 and 4-star hotels and lodges
- ✓ All breakfasts plus 12 additional multi-course meals
- ✓ Galápagos National Park Maps
- ✓ Entrance and excursions listed in the itinerary
- ✓ Gratuities for your tour guide and drivers
- ✓ Pre-tour suggested reading list
- ✓ Alumni appreciation discounts applied toward future expeditions
- ✓ A small, fun group of soon-to-be friends!

### NOT INCLUDED

- ✓ Optional round-trip air from the USA to Ecuador
- ✓ Travel Insurance
- ✓ Anything not listed on the itinerary
- ✓ \$120 Galápagos Islands National Park entrance fee



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## TRIP FACTS AND PRICING



12 Days/ 11 Nights (not counting air travel)  
\$7,395 per person double occupancy  
\$1,950 single supplement  
Optional Group Flight departs MSP on January 29  
Trip begins in Quito on January 29, 2024  
Trip ends in Quito on February 9-  
Group flight arrives in the USA on February 10 -  
\*On Delta Airlines via Atlanta

## DELTA AIRLINES: GROUP FLIGHT \$1,495

January 29: Depart Minneapolis at 10:00am for Quito, Ecuador via Atlanta

January 29: Arrive in Quito at 8:25pm in the evening.

February 9: Depart Quito at 11:55pm for Minneapolis via Atlanta

February 10: Arrive in Minneapolis at 9:00am

\* Deposit of \$250 per person required to secure your reservation on this flight.

## SAVE UP TO \$300!

- ✓ Reserve by September 1, 2023 and save \$100
- ✓ Pay your final balance by check and save \$100
- ✓ MPR and Earthbound travel alumni save \$100



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## **YOUR MPR ADVENTURE BEGINS ...**

Meal Key: B = Breakfast / L = Lunch / D = Dinner

### **DAY 1, January 29: Depart for Quito, Ecuador**

Your exciting expedition to Ecuador begins today as you board your flight. After a late evening arrival in Quito, meet your local tour director at the airport and transfer to your deluxe hotel in central Quito. *Overnight in Quito at the Swissôtel Quito*

### **DAY 2, January 30: Discover Quito and the Botanic Gardens**

On a guided mid-morning tour of Quito, you'll learn about its colonial past, history and culture. Visit the old town and see the Church of San Francisco, the first religious building constructed in South America by the Spaniards. See the facade of La Compania, the city's most ornate church. Admire the spectacular views of the Valley of Tumbaco. And on a clear day, you can see the impressive volcanoes surrounding the city. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Afterwards continue your visit to the local botanical gardens to observe a diversity of plants from different altitudes and ecosystems.

*Overnight in Quito at the Swissôtel Quito (B, L)*

### **DAY 3, January 31: East to the Amazon**

After breakfast, transfer by bus to La Punta Ahuano on the Napo River where you will board a canoe that will take you to your Amazon lodge. Enjoy the tranquility of the lodge and prepare to be amazed by both the wildlife and the Amazon culture. In the afternoon, visit Ahuano village for the opportunity to meet a local Quechua family and learn about their way of life before returning to the hotel. In the evening, dine together at the lodge.

*Overnight in the Amazon Rain Forest at Casa del Suizo (B, L, D)*



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*La Casa del Suizo Lodge, Amazon Rain Forest*

#### **DAY 4, February 1: A Full Day in a Private Nature Reserve**

This morning, after a canoe ride you can hike in the Misicocha Private Nature Reserve for approximately two hours while viewing the beautiful flora and fauna up-close. The Amazon Rain Forest is the world's largest ecosystem, so be sure to keep an eye out for the innumerable species of tropical plants and insects. Enjoy the views as you cross suspended bridges and fly through the rain forest on a short zip line basket ride. At the end of the hike, take a rafting trip on a traditional balsa log raft. The balance of the day is at leisure. You may choose one of the *optional* tours, including such as the Rescue Center or Canopy Adventure Park. Tonight, savor dinner with the group at the lodge. *Overnight in the Amazon Rain Forest at Casa del Suizo (B, L, D)*

#### **DAY 5, February 2: The Andes Cloud Forest and Natural Hot Springs**

This morning, board a canoe for the return trip to La Punta Ahuano and enjoy a scenic drive through small villages, stopping for lunch in Tena. After lunch, continue to the hot springs at Papallacta, tucked away in the Andes Mountains. After relaxing at Papallacta hot springs, we continue on to the Wyndham Quito airport hotel for an overnight and dinner. *Overnight near Quito airport at the Wyndham (B, L, D)*

#### **DAY 6, February 3: Fly West to the Galapagos Islands**

After an early breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight to the Galápagos Islands where you will spend the next five days island hopping with your naturalist. Upon arrival in Baltra you'll board the ferry for a short transfer to Santa Cruz Island and then continue by motor coach to Puerto Ayora. Passing through the highlands of Santa Cruz, you'll see the enormous change in vegetation from dry areas full of cacti to rainforest and fern zones. This afternoon visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about island conservation and the huge efforts to preserve this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy an independent lunch at a local restaurant. This evening we'll have a "welcome to the islands" dinner at a local restaurant. *Overnight in Puerto Ayora at Hotel SolyMar (B, D)*



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*Snorkel, swim & Experience the best of the Galapagos*



### **DAYS 7, 8 & 9, February 4, 5 & 6: - Explore the**

**Galapagos Islands:** Over the course of the next four days you'll enjoy full-day boat excursions to many of the nearby islands. Each of these islands has its own unique beauty to offer. North Seymour is a flat island and home to magnificent frigate birds like the Blue-Footed-Boobies. South Plaza Island is home to a large colony of sea lions and offers excellent examples of the typical flora like towering cacti "trees" which form the principal diet for land iguanas and cactus finch.

Bartholomew Island is a tiny island which boasts one of the most spectacular views of the archipelago from Pinnacle Rock. Climb to the 375-foot peak to enjoy this stunning view. Santa Fe is one of the oldest islands of the Galápagos and in its tranquil bay, one can find green sea turtles and spotted eagle rays while sea lions bask in sun on the beach. *Overnight in Puerto Ayora at Hotel SolyMar (B, L, D)*

### **DAY 10, February 7: Relax on Santa Cruz Island**

Today explore Tortuga Bay and a local beach near the town of Santa Cruz. Here you can just enjoy the beach and have a relaxing time. There is also the option to rent a kayak here. Later this morning, transfer by a local boat to the pier where a bus will be waiting to take us to the highlands of the Santa Cruz. Along the way there is lunch at a local ranch, a visit to a lava tunnel, and visit to see the famous giant tortoises in their natural environment. Return to the hotel in time for a farewell dinner. *Overnight in Puerto Ayora at Hotel SolyMar (B, L, D)*



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### **DAY 11, February 8: Fly from the Galapagos to Quito**

This morning is at your leisure. Later, transfer to the airport for your flight to Quito. (B)

Upon arrival in Quito, you'll be met and transferred to a nearby 4-star hotel. Relax, rest, and enjoy dinner at the hotel. \*Note: It is possible to fly home this evening. However, this would involve a long layover in Quito this evening. Therefore, we opted for a more relaxing, enjoyable return home on February 9-

### **DAY 12, February 9: Quito - Markets and Museums / Fly home this evening**

Rest and sleep in. Today you have a late checkout. Your guide will organize a transfer into the old town of Quito where you'll have time to visit a museum, shop and have an early dinner. In the evening arrive at the airport, check in and depart for the USA. Arrive home on Feb. 10

*- Itinerary Subject to Change -*

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## **MEET YOUR HOST!**



### **Sven Sundgaard, MPR Meteorologist**

The longtime Twin Cities meteorologist will offer forecasts and commentary at 7:50 a.m. weekdays on Minnesota Public Radio's "Morning Edition." He also is one of the contributors for MPR's weather blog *Updraft*. Sundgaard told his social media followers that he'll continue to contribute to the websites *Bring Me the News*, which features bite-sized local stories, and *Currently*, an online weather service. "I'm enjoying wearing many hats," he tweeted. "It's the DREAM of the 13-year-old weather geek in me."



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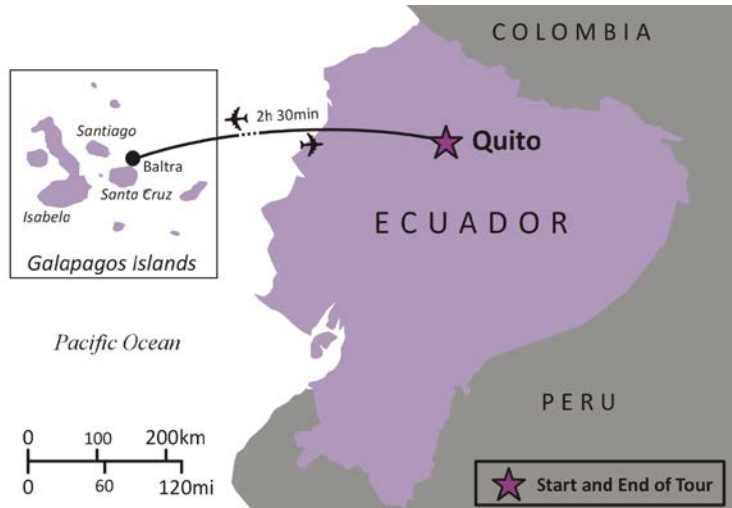
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## DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE ISLAND HOPPING

*This list is intended as a sampling of the islands that will be visited while in the Galapagos archipelago.  
The exact itinerary will depend on weather conditions and National Park permits.*



### BARTOLOMÉ ISLAND

Bartolomé is one of the "younger" islands in the Galápagos archipelago. This island, and Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island, are named after naturalist and lifelong friend of Charles Darwin, Sir Bartolome James Sullivan, who was a lieutenant aboard HMS Beagle. With a total land area of just .5 square miles, this island offers some of the most beautiful landscapes in the archipelago. The island consists of an extinct volcano and a variety

of red, orange, green, and glistening black volcanic formations.

Bartolomé has a volcanic cone that is easy to climb and provides great views of the other islands. Bartolomé is famous for its Pinnacle Rock, which is the distinctive characteristic of this island, and the most representative landmark of the Galápagos.

It has two visitor sites. At the first one, one may swim and snorkel around Pinnacle Rock; the underwater world there is really impressive. Snorkelers are in the water with the penguins, marine turtles, white-tipped reef sharks, and other tropical fish. The bay is also an excellent place to go swimming. The twin bays are separated by a narrow isthmus. Galápagos penguins are frequently seen and a small cave behind Pinnacle Rock houses a breeding colony. Seasonally, Bartolomé is the mating and nesting site for the green turtles. The herons use the gentler beaches.

### NORTH SEYMOUR

The endemic plant of this island is the lignum vitae tree, an icon of the site. In the summertime they look like dead trees, but after the February rains, they become green overnight giving the island a very special appearance. Other plant species abundant in the area are the Opuntia cactus, Croton, Castile and Sesuvium. Sometimes you can watch green iguanas taking shade under bushes. These animals were introduced in Seymour to test whether they can survive another landscape as they are found usually in Baltra. Frigates can be observed along the walking trail along with other species such as lava gulls, sea lions, brown terns, pelicans, tropical birds.



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## ISLA SANTA FE

Santa Fe Island, also called Barrington Island after Admiral Samuel Barrington, is a small island of 9 mi<sup>2</sup> which lies in the center of the Galápagos archipelago. Geologically it is one of the oldest, since volcanic rocks of about 4 million years old have been found here. The vegetation of the island is characterized by brush, palo santo trees and stands of a large variety of the prickly pear cactus *opuntia echios*.

The visitor sites are Barrington Bay on the northeastern side. There is great snorkeling with white tip sharks, sea turtles, rays, and colorful fish. Large numbers of sea lions are found in the bay.

## PLAZA ISLANDS

Just east of Santa Cruz Island, the Plaza Islands are distinct for their native populations of flora and fauna, but only South Plaza Island has a landing site. As you cross the jet-black lava rock, you will see one of the largest populations of land iguanas in the Galápagos Islands and one of the most unique. It's here where male marine iguanas have bred with female land iguanas to create the only hybrid land/marine iguanas in the archipelago. The remaining land iguanas, though smaller in size than other island populations, feature vibrant yellows and reds and enjoy the local delicacies of *Opuntia* cacti and the indigenous *Sesuvium*. Visitors will also see several big groups of sea lions, including one significant bachelor colony.



## QUESTIONS AND RESERVATIONS

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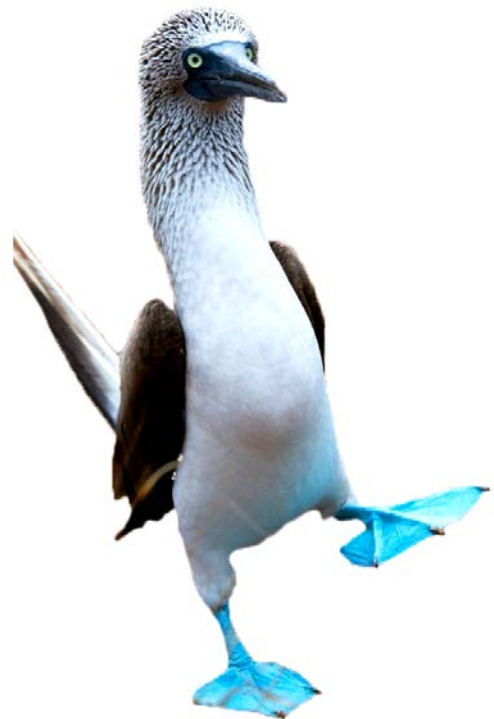
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# Things To Know

**RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS:** Early reservations are essential to guarantee a place on this departure. A \$750 per person deposit is due at time of sign up. An additional \$250 deposit is requested if opting for the group flight. Deposits are refundable for 30 days from your deposit date, or, up until August 1. After August 1, deposits are no longer refundable. A cancellation penalty of \$150 per person will be applied for those who have booked prior to July 1, 2023. Final non-refundable payment is 90 days before departure.

**HEALTH MATTERS:** It is the responsibility of each guest to be aware of their physical abilities or limitations, and to be in sufficient good health to undertake the trip. To make the most of your journey and participate in the various planned group activities, you should be able to be on your feet and walk unassisted for two to three hours (often over uneven cobblestones or pathways) with frequent standing. If you have questions about the physical requirements for your journey, please email or call our travel office. Any preexisting physical, mental, or emotional disability that may require attention must be reported in writing prior to the beginning the journey. Although it is not mandatory to participate in every planned and included group activity, not doing so isn't cause for a refund. For those desiring additional exercise, our trips allow free time to explore at your own pace. On boats, planes, ships and ferries, guests will need to be able to maneuver unassisted up and down gangways, stairs and in between decks.



**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Earthbound Expeditions strongly encourages the purchase of Travel Insurance Coverage. We include information about trip insurance in your deposit information. Please read Earthbound Expeditions' Terms & Conditions carefully in order to avoid incurring costly penalties.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** Click [here](#) to read the full Terms & Conditions.



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