



GALAPAGOS BEST

www.galapagosbest.com



Telefax: 032-605 748
Riobamba

Horseback riding, biking,
climbing, trekking and camping

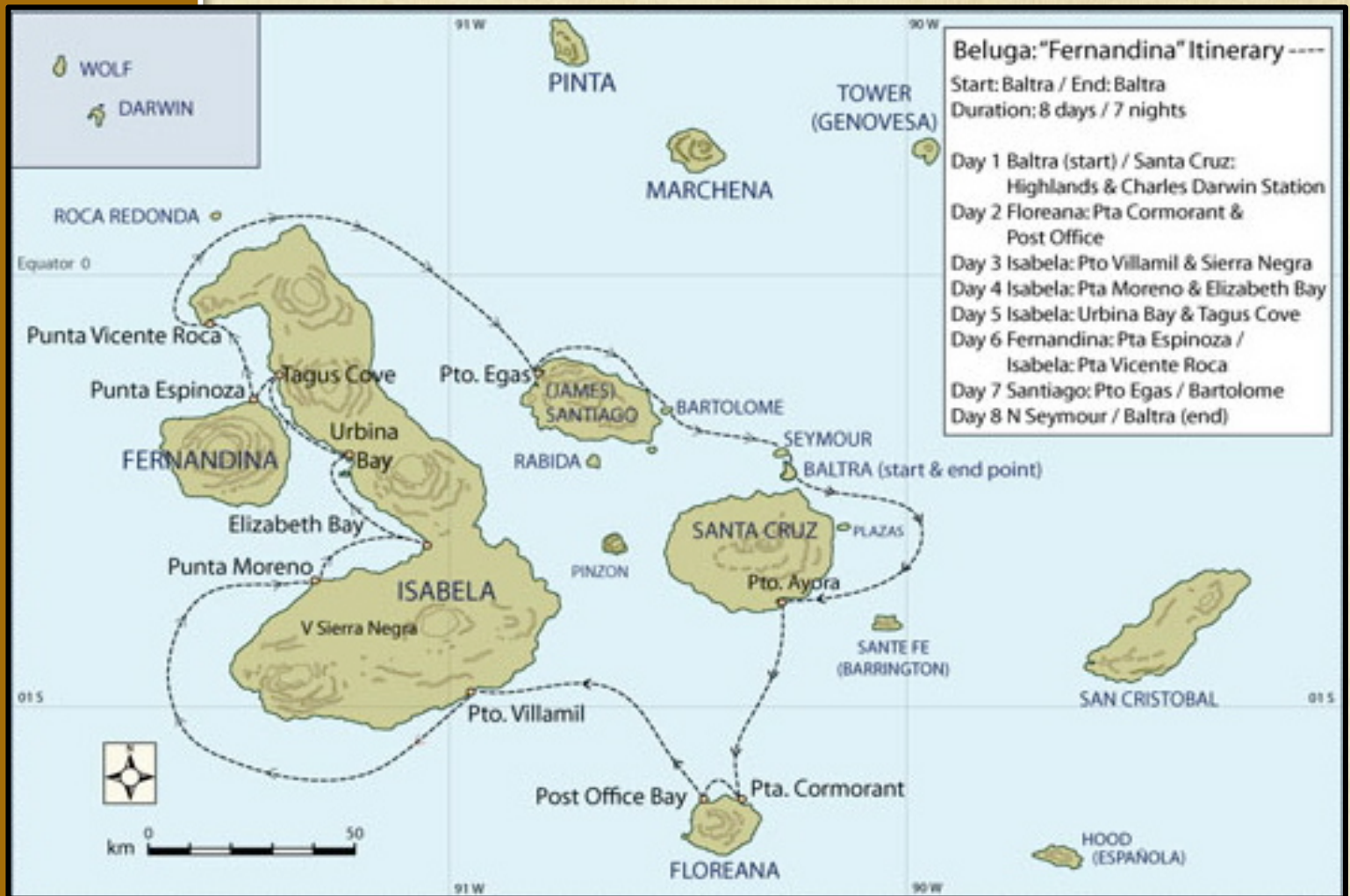
LAB MEMBER GALÁPAGOS TOUR INFORMATION

GROUP SIZE: This trip is limited to 14 participants
(in seven double cabins on the Yacht Beluga).

COST: \$6500 plus airfare from the US to Guayaquil, Ecuador.

TRAVEL DATES:

April 17 th , 2014	Depart from the USA Arrive in Guayaquil
April 18 th	Depart from Guayaquil Arrive in the Galápagos
April 18 th - 25 th	Aboard Yacht Beluga in the Galápagos
April 25 th	Depart the Galápagos Arrive in Guayaquil
April 26 th	Depart from Guayaquil Arrive in the USA



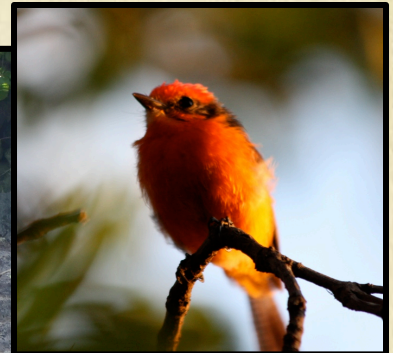
ITINERARY

April 17th: Arrive in Guayaquil, Ecuador

Please arrange your flights so that you arrive in Guayaquil by the evening, but preferably earlier. *You want to avoid choosing the last flight of the day, because you don't want to risk missing the flight the next morning to the Galápagos if you're delayed in transit overnight.*

Your tour representatives will meet you upon arrival at the airport, after customs. From there, we will take care of transportation to the Oro Verde Hotel, where you will have the opportunity to find dinner, rest, and prepare for the next morning's departure.

If you are interested in arriving a few days early to travel and explore the wildlife and countryside of mainland Ecuador, Galápagos Best can likely arrange activities for you. Please let us know if you plan on arriving on a different date so we can work with you individually to plan your adventures.



April 18th: Fly into Baltra Island

Visit Santa Cruz Island–Highlands

After spending the night in Guayaquil, we will gather for breakfast at the hotel, travel a short distance to the airport, and board our 1.5 hour flight to Baltra Island in the Galápagos.

Upon landing on Baltra, we will take a bus into the highlands and have lunch at a local ranch. Then we will venture into the highlands in search of wild Giant Tortoises and many organisms that are restricted to moist habitats at high elevations. These often include Woodpecker Finches and other tree finches, Galápagos Rails, Galápagos Flycatchers, and endemic plants including the tree-like giant daisies (*Scalesia*).

After our hike, the Yacht Beluga will be waiting for us. While we settle into our cabins, the Beluga will sail away to Floreana.

April 19th: Visit Floreana Island—Cormorant Point, Devil’s Crown, & Post Office Bay

Located south of Santa Cruz, Floreana is an island known for its spectacular lagoon, where majestic flamingos wade and forage in the water, along with ducks, stilts, flycatchers, and many species of finch. Floreana also boasts unique “green” beaches, where some of the sand is composed of olivine crystals.



Devil’s Crown, named so because of the coral formations lining this partly submerged volcanic crater, makes for fantastic snorkeling. In the afternoon,

we will visit Post Office Bay, one of the few sites in Galápagos famous for its human history—in 1793, whalers left mail in a wooden barrel for others to pick up and hand-deliver (no stamp required!), and the tradition continues on today. Be sure to bring addresses of loved ones back home!

April 20th: Visit Isabela Island—Sierra Negra, Puerto Villamil, Las Tintoreras, & Los Humedales

Today we will start our journey around Galápagos' largest island, Isabela. Beginning in the south at Puerto Villamil, we bask in the presence of Sierra Negra, one of the most active volcanoes in the archipelago. The site has a series of trails, with magnificent views of the bay. This area is also home to the Alcedo race of Giant Tortoise.



Nearby, in the clear turquoise waters of Las Tintoreras, we will observe sea turtles, White-tipped Reef Sharks, Galápagos Sea Lions, and sting rays. Las Tintoreras is also one of the main breeding sites for Marine Iguanas, so we are sure to see piles of them during our visit here. We will also have a chance to explore Los Humedales (wetlands), a spectacular series of lagoons and mangrove swamps known for their migrant bird populations.



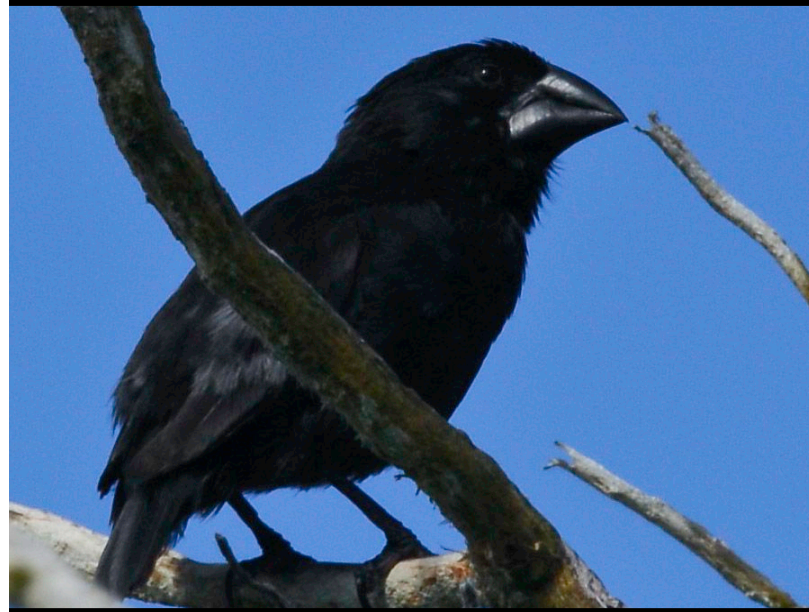
April 21st: Visit Isabela Island—Elizabeth Bay & Moreno Point

A beautiful spot for observing marine wildlife—particularly sea turtles as they rest and feed—Elizabeth Bay is not accessible on foot; we will explore the area by zodiac. Also a favorite for many birds, we will likely see Lava Herons, pelicans, Flightless Cormorants, and Galápagos Penguins.

A very young lava flow, Moreno Point offers a rich look into the archipelago's volcanic past, as well as pockets of life in surrounding lagoons. Paint-billed Crakes, Common Gallinules, and White-cheeked Pintails are a common sight here.

April 22nd: Visit Isabela Island–Urbina Bay & Tagus Cove

Urbina Bay is unique for its stretch of above-water coral, which emerged as a result of a volcanic uplift in 1954, when the entire coast shifted more about a mile away and stranded the reef. The underwater life is stunning and diverse—highlights include hundreds of colorful tropical fishes, including the King Angelfish and the Bump-head Parrotfish. We will also journey into the arid zone of the island, where we will encounter the largest Land Iguanas in the Galápagos, as well as Giant Tortoises.



Later, we will explore Tagus Cove, where whalers from days of old would hunt tortoises, and have left inscriptions on some of the rock faces. Our steep (but short) hike is sure to reward with breathtaking views of Darwin Lake. This tuff cone is an amazing place to see ground and tree finches, Galápagos Hawks, Yellow Warblers, Galápagos Flycatchers, and occasionally the Woodpecker Finch.

*April 23rd: Visit Fernandina Island–Espinoza Point &
Isabela Island–Vicente Roca Point*



Located to the west of Isabela, Fernandina Island is the most pristine of the Galápagos volcanoes and the surrounding waters are the richest in the whole archipelago. Highlights along the coast include Lava Cacti, Marine Iguanas, American Oystercatchers, Sally Lightfoot Crabs, and Flightless Cormorants.

Back on Isabela for the last time, we will head to Vicente Roca Point: a paradise for bird-lovers. Not far off the trail, nocturnal Swallow-tailed Gulls guard their nest scrapes, Nazca Boobies feed along the cliffs, and, if we're lucky, Blue-footed Boobies dance hopefully for a mate. Many other species of birds nest here, including gulls, storm petrels, and Brown Noddy Terns. Due to the upwelling from the Cromwell Current, the water on this side of the island hosts an abundant food supply for the many avian inhabitants nearby, in addition to whales, dolphins, and Sea Lions.



April 24th: Visit Santiago Island–Puerto Egas & Bartolomé Island

Almost 120 years after Darwin arrived on Santiago Island, we will follow in his footsteps, admiring the overlapping volcanoes and the



truly spectacular landscape that surrounds them. The shady, rocky coastlines of Puerto Egas, located on the southern end of James Bay, provide one of the best opportunities to see large colonies of Galápagos Fur Seals. The beaches on the north end of the bay are frequently used as nesting sites for sea turtles. Santiago also hosts a crater where people used to extract salt—today it serves as a seasonal saltwater lagoon frequented by many bird species.

East of Santiago, Bartolomé is a small islet famous for Pinnacle Rock: one of the most iconic sites in the entire archipelago. This spectacular rock formation caused by an underwater volcanic eruption is home to Galápagos Penguins, herons, and hawks. Stingrays, Spotted Eagle Rays, Sea Turtles, White-tipped Reef Sharks, and many colorful fish swim in the waters below—and we will snorkel with them.





April 25th: Visit North Seymour Island, Return to Baltra Island

A fantastic place to observe breeding birds, North Seymour Island boasts the largest colony of Magnificent Frigatebirds in Galápagos. True to their name, the males inflate their red throat pouches and spread their wings to the sky, hoping to impress the females flying overhead—a show that is, at the very least, impressive to us humans! Swallow-tailed Gulls and Blue-footed Boobies are also a sure sight on this small, flat island. Sea lions love to bask on the lava rocks—quite a sight when the waves crash in!—and a small forest of silver Palo Santo trees crowns the north end of the island. North Seymour is absolutely teeming with life, and is a perfect place to wrap up our Galápagos adventure.



After our visit to North Seymour Island, we will sail back to Baltra Island, say goodbye to Yacht Beluga, and fly back to Guayaquil. From there we will drive back to the Oro Verde Hotel, eat our last meal together, and stay the night. We will discuss airport transportation times for the following day.



April 26th: Fly back to the USA from Guayaquil

Participants will fly home on their individual flights. We will provide breakfast and arrange transportation to the airport from the hotel. If you are interested in staying on to explore mainland Ecuador after your visit to the islands, Galápagos Best can likely arrange activities for you. Please let us know so we can work with you individually to plan your adventures.



HOTEL AND SHIP

HOTEL IN GUAYAQUIL: While on mainland Ecuador, we will



stay at the Hotel Oro Verde, a five-star hotel located close to both the international and internal airports. We will stay there two nights: the day before our departure

to the islands (the evening of April 17th) and the night we return from the islands (the evening of April 25th).

THE YACHT BELUGA: In the Galápagos, we will be traveling and sleeping aboard the Yacht Beluga, a First Class 110' motor yacht. Amenities include eight double cabins, each with private bathroom and hot shower, air conditioning, spacious indoor lounges and outdoor deck areas, expansive windows, and modern safety and navigation equipment. Six cabins are outfitted with separate upper and lower berths; two have larger matrimonial style beds.



WATER: Although the water and food are generally safe in Ecuador, occasional stomach upsets may occur, as is universally true when traveling. To be safe, you should avoid tap water and drink only bottled water when on land. On board the ship, the drinking water is purified and safe.

FOOD: Aboard the Beluga, the chef will prepare a great variety of high quality cuisine, including lots of fresh salads, fresh local fruits, fish, beef, chicken, etc. We are able to cater to most special needs; if you have food allergies or other dietary restrictions, please let us know at least a month in advance of your trip.

HEALTH: No vaccinations are currently required for travel to Ecuador if you travel there directly from the United States. The CDC recommends that the normal “childhood” vaccines should be up to date: Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR Vaccine), Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP Vaccine) and Polio vaccine. Malaria is not an issue in Galápagos.

Please be sure to let the trip leaders know about any special health circumstances, including allergies, medications, or existing health conditions—all of which we are happy to accommodate as best we can.



This trip is best suited for participants who are in good general health and who have reasonably good mobility. We move between ship and shore in small boats, and although all outings are optional, you won't want to miss out on our strolls on the islands nor the many opportunities to swim or snorkel. By way of comparison, our walks are not likely to seem more strenuous than a morning-long bird-walk along your local beach or forest preserve at home.

OUTSIDE COMMUNICATION: Once we are on board the Beluga, there is often (but not always) decent cell phone coverage as we move through the islands. On some of the islands, internet may also be available through your cell phone, but this is often unpredictable and slow. When we visit one of the inhabited islands, we can arrange for access to an internet café.

If someone needs to contact you in an emergency while you are in the Galápagos, they should contact Sonia Collin at our office via email at info@galapagosbest.com (and please copy Fausto at galapagos2005@yahoo.co.uk and Sonia at soniacollin@yahoo.com) or by phone at 593-989251272. Sonia will then relay the message to the Beluga via short and long wave radio.

DAILY SCHEDULE: A typical day will begin early to take advantage of the morning peak of animal activity, with breakfast often at about 6:30am and a quick departure thereafter to sites on land. Although each day is different, most involve several trips by zodiac to special locations on the islands, as well as one or two separate opportunities for snorkeling or other water activities. We will return to the yacht for all meals. Lunch is generally served at noon. We generally eat dinner just after sunset, at about 6:30pm. In keeping with the intellectually enhanced theme of this trip, we will take advantage of some of our time in transit or in the evenings for formal and informal discussions of biological topics related to things we see.

TOUR LEADERS



Fausto Rodriguez is one of the most experienced and biologically knowledgeable guides working in the Galápagos. Fausto was raised in the countryside of the Central Andes, south of Quito. In 1990, he embarked on a two-week holiday to the Galápagos, where he fell in love with the islands. He began working as a mate aboard different boats, leading Spanish-speaking groups. In 1996, he officially became a licensed Galápagos

National Park naturalist guide. The same year he moved to the United Kingdom, where he settled in London and completed a degree in Languages and Tourism. In 1999, he returned to Ecuador and began guiding again in the Galápagos and elsewhere; he generally focuses on wildlife, with particular interests and strengths in geology, plants, birds, and mammals. He is passionate about guiding and teaching, and even though he has been exploring them for quite a while now, he is still just as excited about the Galápagos Islands and their nature as when he visited them for the first time. His animated sense of wonder and discovery is infectious!





Dr. Irby Lovette

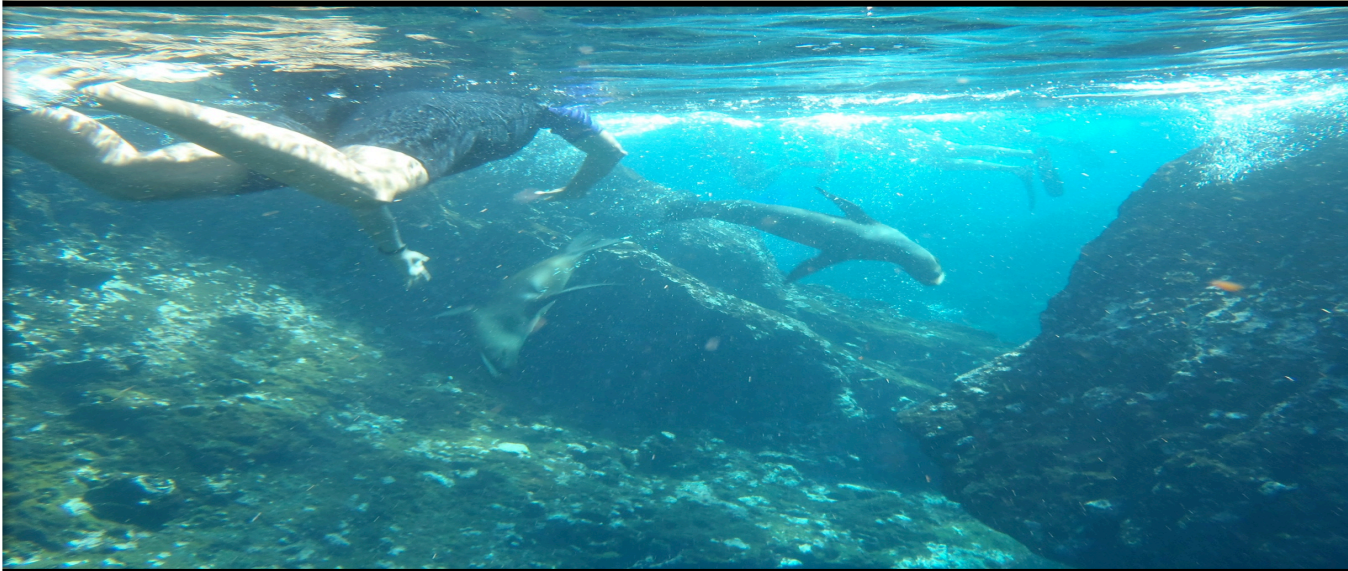
represents the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, where he is the Director of the Fuller Evolutionary Biology Program and Associate Director of Academic Affairs. He is also an Associate Professor in Cornell's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. His experiences in the Galápagos began in 1991, on a six-month stint as a young field assistant working on the now-famous

study of Darwin's Finches on tiny Isla Daphne, a project later featured in the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Beak of the Finch*. In more recent years, Irby has studied the evolution of island birds, including the mockingbird radiation in the Galápagos that was an important inspiration for Charles Darwin. More generally, Irby's research addresses questions about the ecology, evolution, behavior, and conservation of birds and other animals. He has published more than 100 scientific papers and is the lead editor of the forthcoming revision of the Lab of Ornithology's *Handbook of Bird Biology* textbook.

At Cornell, Irby teaches introductory evolutionary biology, graduate seminars, and intellectually rigorous field courses, including a long-standing and very popular course in Kenya on ecology and animal behavior. He has won several University awards for undergraduate teaching and mentoring. His undergraduate field course in the Galápagos is a newer endeavor, one that engages freshman students from under-represented backgrounds; as part of their Spring Semester experience, these students take both a Galápagos-themed

version of the core evolution course required of all Cornell Biology majors, and a Freshman Writing Seminar that treats human perspectives on this islands, from the earliest explorers to today's residents and visitors. As part of this curriculum, they visit the Galápagos with Irby during Cornell's Spring Break holiday. This year, Irby will be staying on in Galápagos after the students leave to lead this special Lab Members' Trip.

Irby is 44 years old and lives in Ithaca with his wife Heidi and son Jamie. He grew up in California's Bay Area and his educational background includes an undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania.



FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The fee for the tour is \$6500 per person in double occupancy. This includes nearly all arrangements from the time we arrive in Ecuador until we leave: all airport transfers, hotel nights in Guayaquil on the arrival and departure days, the flight to and from mainland Ecuador to the Galápagos, National Park entrance and other Galápagos visitor fees, room and board on the Beluga, and all tips and gratuities.

This price does NOT include airfare from your home to Guayaquil, Ecuador. It also does not include meals other than both breakfasts in Guayaquil, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, optional equipment rentals, souvenirs, or other items of a personal nature.

TOUR REGISTRATION

All payments and official registration should be made directly with the tour operator, Galápagos Best. Please initiate the reservation and booking process by sending an email to info@galapagosbest.com. Please also copy that message to Lynn Swain (MLS539@cornell.edu) at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

In order to issue your final confirmation, we will need the following information; most of this is required by the Galápagos National Park as part of your visitor permit:

- Passenger's full name
- Passport number
- Copy of passport
(in the case of children)
- Nationality
- Date of birth
- Marital status
- Medical restrictions
- Special Dietary Needs

Payment in full is required at the time of registration and serves to reserve your spot on the trip.

Payment should be made by bank-to-bank wire transfer to Galápagos Best.



WIRE TRANSFER DETAILS

Beneficiary Name:	BEAUTYEXPED CIA LTDA
Account Number:	1000103648
Beneficiary Phone Number	593-42436098
	OR CELL 593-99-982785
Beneficiary Address:	Padre Aguirre 104 y Malecón, Edf. El Fortín, piso 3, ofc 3
Beneficiary City:	Guayaquil - Ecuador
Beneficiary Bank Swift Code:	BINTECEQ
Beneficiary Bank Name :	BANCO INTERNACIONAL
Beneficiary Bank Address:	Ave. 9 de Octubre y Panama. City of Guayaquil
Intermediary Beneficiary Bank RTN OR SWIFT CODE:	PNBPUS33
Internacional Sort/Routing/ Clearing Code:	ABA 026005092
Intermediary Bank Name:	WACHOVIA BANK N.A
Intermediary Bank Account Nr:	2000192001410
Intermediary Bank Address:	NEW YORK



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In February, Galápagos Best will provide participants with a package of information on what to expect in the Galápagos, including more travel details, packing suggestions, and suggested field guides and background readings.



GALÁPAGOS BEST TERMS AND CONDITIONS

RATES

The rates quoted include:

- All meals, bilingual guides and activities throughout the cruise
- Use of wetsuits and snorkeling equipment (mask, snorkel, fins)
- Roundtrip airfare to Galápagos from Guayaquil
- Galápagos National Park Entrance Fee
- Galápagos Transit Control Card
- Tips to crew and staff

The rates above do not include:

- Alcoholic beverages consumed onboard
- The price of this tour is based on double occupancy (2 persons sharing a cabin). The supplement if you are traveling alone and wish to occupy a solo cabin on board the Beluga is 80% (\$5200).



CANCELLATION POLICY

All cancellations must be made in writing. If a cancellation is received more than 121 days prior to tour departure date, 10% of the total tour price will be forfeited. Cancellations made between 120 and 60 days prior to tour departure date will forfeit 30% of the total tour price. For any cancellations received less than 60 days prior to boat departure, the full tour cost will be retained.

No refunds will be provided for a cancellation due to cancelled, delayed, or missed flights. It is important to arrive in Guayaquil with time to spare to allow for travel delays on the way to Ecuador. Galápagos Best strongly recommends that participants obtain trip cancellation/interruption insurance to better protect themselves; such insurance should also have coverage for medical evacuation.

WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US!!