

## **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS & PERU**

### **A family adventure**

When travellers return from visiting the Galapagos Islands, their eyes sparkle with wonder as they tell marvelous tales. You may think their stories are pure fabrication: birds that no longer fly, tortoises weighing up to 300 kilos, penguins from the Antarctic living right on the equator, and blue-footed boobies doing sophisticated mating dances. But you would be wrong. The Galapagos Islands are just as amazing as everyone says...there is nothing in the world quite like them!

Your journey continues to Peru; a walk through time, from the mystery of pre-Inca civilizations to the monumental engineering of the Inca emperors and the elegant architecture of the Spanish conquistadors. Beginning in cosmopolitan Lima, the City of Kings, you'll take in the outstanding archaeological museum telling the rich history of vanished civilizations. Next, take one of South America's most spectacular flights over the snow-capped Andes to Cusco and travel onward by car to the Sacred Valley. Here, in the heart of the Inca empire, you'll explore incomparable Inca ruins, mingle with the locals at the bustling Indian Market and enjoy stunning views of the Andes. You'll travel by train to Machu Picchu and stay overnight near the site to allow you take in the crown jewel of the Inca civilization in unhurried, meditative quiet. Your trip concludes in colonial Cusco, a treasure of a town with its charming narrow streets lined with the Incas' exquisite rock work. There's plenty of time to explore the splendid Baroque cathedral and the mansions and colonnades built on the ruins of Inca palaces.

#### **Day 1 Arrive in Quito**

Your adventure begins on your arrival in Quito, capital of Ecuador, a dazzling old colonial city nestled in the snow-capped Andes Mountains. After clearing customs, you'll be met and taken to your hotel.

#### **Day 2 Quito, city tour**

After an enjoyable buffet breakfast at the hotel, you'll depart for a four-hour scenic tour of Quito. This tour includes both the modern and colonial areas of the city, including the Plaza de Independencia, La Compania Church, San Francisco and San Augustin. In the afternoon, feel the magnetism of the earth's gravitational pull as you stand at the Middle of the World. The monument is built over the site where an expedition of French astronomers measured the Equator in 1736. However, recent measurements made by satellites mark the Equator 300 meters north of this monument. You'll want to try balancing an egg on a nail head and tricks of gravitational force!

### **Day 3 - 7 Galapagos Cruise**

This morning, you'll transfer to the airport for your flight to Guayaquil and onward to San Cristobal.

Some notes about highlights you will enjoy on a Galapagos Cruise in July:

Sea bird communities are very active (breeding), especially the Blue Footed Boobies on Espanola. Flightless cormorants perform beautiful courtship rituals and nesting activities on Fernandina.

If you walk along the shores of Puerto Egas (Santiago Island), you could find American oystercatchers nesting.

Lava lizards initiate mating rituals until November

Cetaceans (whales & dolphins) are more likely to be observed, especially off the western coast of Isabela

Great month to see the four stages of nesting in Blue Footed Boobies: eggs, chicks, juveniles and sub-adults.

Water temperature does not reach more than 21C (68F)

### **Day 7 Fly to Lima**

After your visit of the Charles Darwin Research Station, you'll transfer to the airport for your flight to Guayaquil and onward connection to Lima. Upon arrival in the Peruvian capital, you will be met by our representatives and transferred to your hotel.

### **Day 8 Lima – Fly to Cusco**

This morning's guided tour introduces both the colonial and modern sections of this "City of Kings." Colonial sites include the lovely Plaza de Armas with its cathedral and palace, and the exquisite Torre Tagle Palace, modern day seat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In modern Lima, drive along the exclusive residential areas of Miraflores and San Isidro. Visit Lima's National Museum for an excellent overview of the overlapping and conquering cultures which have shaped the country's history as seen in its architecture, ceramics and textiles. After lunch at a local restaurant, you'll be transferred to the airport for your flight to Cusco.

### **Day 9 Drive to Sacred Valley**

This morning you will take a walking tour of Cusco, the oldest continuously inhabited city in the western hemisphere. During the walk, you will see the important landmarks of this enchanting city and also the nearby ruins of Kenko, Puca-pucara, Tambomachay as well as the Sacsayhuaman fortress. Once the center of the Inca civilization, modern Cusco is a delightful combination of Inca and colonial architecture. During the tour, you will visit Cusco's Cathedral, Santo Domingo Church and the Plaza de Armas.

In the afternoon, you'll drive to your hotel in the Urubamba Valley. Better known as *El Valle Sagrada de los Incas*, the Sacred Valley is a beautiful stretch of small villages and ancient ruins, some of the finest in all of the Americas.

**Day 10**                      **Sacred Valley**

After breakfast, you'll depart from your hotel for a visit to magnificent ruins in the area. Your first stop is Ollantaytambo, where you will visit a massive fortress. Here you see Inca canchas, enclosures of multi-family living quarters that share just one exit to the street, ingenious stonework, cobbled streets, and an extensive communal water system that survives to this day. At Pisac, you will visit the largest fortress-city complex of the Incas and one of the largest in ancient America. Located high up on a ridge overlooking the valley, its ruins extend from a fortress to a temple complex where you can see some of the finest Inca stonework in existence.

**Day 11**                      **Machu Picchu**

Early this morning, you'll continue through the Sacred Valley to Machu Picchu, travelling by Vistadome train. Upon arrival, enjoy lunch at the Orient Express' Sanctuary Lodge, located just a few steps from the Inca citadel. Today you will have tour of ruins, with an optional hike up Huayna Picchu or to the Gateway of the Sun. The Incas chose this site for its immense natural beauty which still has a powerful punch today. The snow-capped peaks to the east and the towering mountains to the west are a spectacular frame to the city. With your guide, you'll have an intensive visit of the site.

**Day 12**                      **Machu Picchu-Cusco**

You'll have time this morning to revisit the site before catching the train back through the Sacred Valley and on to Cusco. Consider getting up early to watch the sunrise – a dramatic and unforgettable sight. You'll have time this afternoon to enjoy Cusco at leisure.

**Day 13**                      **Fly Cusco-Lima**

You'll fly from Cusco to Lima, where you connect with your homeward bound flights.