

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS & ECUADOR

Includes 8-day private charter on *Seaman Journey*
February 8, 2019 - 24 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:
\$17,195 double/twin
\$18,885 single

tour
a more intimate travel experience



- > This tour is limited to 15 people. Early booking recommended!
- > Tour is exempt from GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$300 discount on first 6 seats; \$150 on next 3
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 262 points; redeem 262 points by Oct 4.

A tour of Ecuador with Galapagos Islands!

Ecuador is the smallest country in the Andes, but boasts five world heritage sites including 16th century colonial Quito. For most tourists, the country serves as a gateway to the Galapagos Islands and its other wonders are overlooked. On this tour, we visit El Angel Ecological Reserve, Napo Wildlife Center in the Amazon jungle, Cotopaxi Volcano, and Ingapirca Fortress, and ride the Devil's Nose Train. We spend 13 days exploring the cultural and natural wonders of mainland Ecuador. Then we fly to the Galapagos Islands for a cruise aboard the first-class passenger vessel *M/C Seaman Journey* (see third page for details). For 8 days and 7 nights, we cruise from island to island with an expert naturalist and observe the unique flora and fauna made famous by Charles Darwin. The ship carries only 16 people in 8 cabins.

Galapagos Islands

The Galapagos Islands are located 1,000 km west of the Ecuador mainland. They consist of 15 main islands and hundreds of tiny ones, created by volcanic activity up to four million years ago which continues periodically today. Much of the archipelago is protected by the Galapagos Islands National Park. The islands were discovered by the Spanish in 1535, then occupied by pirates and buccaneers during the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1835, Charles Darwin spent six weeks studying the islands' unique animal and bird life and published these observations in his book *The Origin of Species*.

Picture yourself walking around nests carelessly built by blue-footed boobies on the trail. Imagine feeling the cool Galapagos waters as you swim with penguins at the Equator and see playful sea lions, manta rays, and colourful fish through your snorkelling mask. Enjoy close encounters with armies of marine iguanas and hundreds of seabirds such as the waved albatross, flightless cormorants, and the magnificent frigatebird. Visit a giant tortoise. Animals do not fear humans, making it a natural paradise and haven for naturalists escaping a busy outside world. The Galapagos Islands are at the top of the list for most experienced travellers and this 8-day yacht excursion is sure to make it a lifetime memory.

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Includes

- Transportation to/from Seattle
- 15 nights of accommodation, hotel taxes and hotel service charges
- Flight on Delta Airlines from Seattle to Quito
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- 14 days of coach transportation in Ecuador including transfers between airports & hotels
- Bilingual guide in Ecuador
- Driving and walking tour of Quito
- Quito Cathedral & Church La Compañía
- Ethnographical Museum
- Equator Line Monument
- El Angel Ecological Reserve
- Otavalo artisan's market
- Flight from Quito to Coca and return
- 2-hour boat transfer on Napo River from Coca to Napo and return
- 2-day program at Napo Wildlife Center with birdlife and wildlife viewing
- Napo Canopy Tower
- Cotopaxi Volcano National Park
- Quilotoa Crater
- Devil's Nose Train
- Ingapirca Fortress
- Locally-guided tour of Cuenca
- Cajas National Park
- Tour of Guayaquil
- Flight from Guayaquil to Baltra, Galapagos
- Transfer from airport to cruise dock
- 8-day cruise of the Galapagos Islands on *Seaman Journey* with 7 nights in cabins
- Galapagos Islands National Park fee
- Migration Control Card fee
- Services of Galapagos Islands naturalist
- Use of snorkelling equipment and kayaks
- Flight from Baltra to Guayaquil
- Flight from Guayaquil to Quito
- Flight on Delta Airlines from Quito to Seattle
- Ecuador departure tax
- Gratuities for cruise crew, Galapagos naturalist, and Ecuador guides
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Luggage handling fee at hotels and airports
- **62 meals:** 22 breakfasts, 19 lunches, 21 dinners

Tour & cruise notes

Changes to tour: As this tour has been planned 9 months in advance, changes to air fuel surcharges, air taxes, departure fees, currency exchange rates, and other costs (either up or down) could occur, in which case the tour fare will be adjusted. Please note that with the current volatile fuel costs, airlines and the ship can add fuel surcharges any time, even after your final payment, and we must collect those extra costs from you. Hotels named in the itinerary could change, but substitute hotels will be of similar quality.

Single Rooms: These are available only on the land portion of the tour. During the Galapagos Islands cruise, a single must share a cabin with another single of the same gender or with the female tour director. Therefore we cannot confirm a single booking until an appropriate partner is ready to book and both agree to share a cruise cabin. Single fare quoted is based on single room on land and sharing on the ship.

Documentation: A passport is required, valid 6 months after return date. A visa is not required.

Triples: Triples are not available on this tour.

Health Clinic: Visit a travel vaccination clinic two months before departure to discuss possible inoculations for this tour. Bring this itinerary. There are currently no required inoculations, but you may want to discuss Hepatitis A/B and Yellow Fever.



Activity Level: Due to the historic nature of some cities and attractions, and walks looking for birds and animals, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk 1-2 kilometres, plus stand for an extended time on walking tours. The Napo Canopy Tower is 36 metres tall or 12 storeys up by stairs. To fully enjoy the Galapagos experience, you must be able to get into zodiacs, get out of them into ankle-deep water, and walk on rough trails or beaches in hot weather. Quito is at an altitude of 2,850 metres and, in the rest of Ecuador, we sometimes reach altitudes of 3,500 metres which can be demanding on the body. Seeing and experiencing everything mentioned in this itinerary requires active participation. The coaches cannot carry a scooter. This tour is not appropriate for people who depend on a walker. The tour director and drivers have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. Prior to Wells Gray accepting your booking, you will be required to sign a declaration that you are capable of travelling on an Activity Level 3 tour. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or need ongoing assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

M/C Seaman Journey

One of the highlights of this tour is the 8 days and 7 nights cruise of the Galapagos Islands aboard the *M/C Seaman Journey*. Wells Gray Tours has chartered the vessel, thereby creating an intimate atmosphere and allowing a flexible itinerary. This first-class yacht, launched in 2007, carries only 16 people in 8 cabins. Each cabin is air conditioned, has a window, and includes a private bathroom with shower. There is lots of open deck space for guests to relax and enjoy the views of the natural wonders of the Galapagos Islands. Other amenities are a dining room, two lounges, and library. Use of snorkelling equipment and kayaks is complimentary. The *Journey* is 30 metres long and 12 metres wide, and its catamaran design ensures a smooth ride. There is a crew of nine including a cruise director and a bilingual naturalist who gives expert commentary throughout the voyage. For more pictures, deck plans and a detailed description of the ship, refer to the website www.galapagoscatamarans.com/seaman-journey

Itinerary

Friday, February 8:

Transportation is provided to Seattle and we stay overnight near the airport.

Saturday, February 9:

Meals: B

We fly on Delta Airlines via Atlanta to Quito, Ecuador. Our coach and local guide meet us at the airport. We stay two nights in **Quito** at Patio Andaluz Hotel.

Sunday, February 10:

Meals: B,L,D

Quito has a picturesque location in the foothills of the Andes. Although it is just south of the Equator, the city has a pleasant, moderate climate due to its altitude of 2,850 metres. Quito is the oldest South American capital, settled in the first millennium, annexed by the Incas in 1487, captured by the Spanish in 1534, and liberated in 1822. It retains much of its unique Spanish Baroque architecture. The first stop on our local tour is Guapulo to admire the view of the city perched on the flanks of the **Pichincha Volcano** with two other volcanoes, Cayambe and Puntas, in the distance. The tour of colonial Quito highlights the city's historical and cultural background. We visit Independence Square, the narrow streets of La Ronda, the dazzling gold-leafed **La Compañía Church** and bustling San Francisco Plaza. After lunch, we have a unique experience at the **Equator Line Monument**, standing with one foot in the Northern Hemisphere and one in the Southern. The Ethnographical Museum displays the history of the Indian cultures of Ecuador.

Monday, February 11:

Meals: B,L,D

We drive north from Quito through mountains and valleys dotted with typical Andean Villages. We have the opportunity to taste the delicious biscuits "bizcochos", a traditional recipe of Ecuadorian highlands. We pause at San Pablo Lake, a place

that inspires a romantic atmosphere. Our destination is the **El Angel Ecological Reserve** where we stay two nights at Polylephis Lodge, a magical place in the forest.

Tuesday, February 12:

Meals: B,L,D

Polylephis Lodge offers several options for activities today. Take a walk into the Ecological Reserve to observe the endemic flora and fauna of the area. Enjoy a relaxing spa treatment. In the evening, a forest walk features mysticism and legends accompanied by native guides.

Wednesday, February 13:

Meals: B,L,D

Returning to Quito, we stop in **Otavalo**. Its artisans and textiles market is one of the most famous in South America. A vast array of handcrafts can be purchased including tapestries made on the Spanish weaving loom and indigenous back strap loom. We also visit the residents of Peguche who are known for weaving and farming skills, and for playing Andean music, and we see how they create the traditional Andean instruments. We stay overnight in Quito.

Thursday, February 14:

Meals: B,L,D

We take a short flight from Quito to Coca over the eastern Andes, then board a comfortable enclosed motor boat for a two-hour excursion along the Napo River, one of the tributaries to the Amazon. Our destination is the **Napo Wildlife Center**, a remote lodge and research facility accessible only by boat. This afternoon, we ride in a dugout canoe surrounded by overhead trees where we may spot monkeys, toucans, herons, kingfishers, parrots or macaws. We stay three nights at the NWC Lodge with lovely views of Añangu lake. After dinner, you may wish to join the guide for a viewing of cayman (alligator).

Friday, February 15:*Meals: B,L,D*

We rise early to reach the **parrot clay licks** at the height of activity about 8 am. Eleven species of parrots, parakeets and macaws can be seen. Later, we hike a forest trail to visit the Kichwa community of Añangu and share time with a family while accompanying them on daily activities.

Saturday, February 16:*Meals: B,L,D*

We visit the **Napo Canopy Tower** which is 36 metres high, so we experience life above the forest floor and a view usually reserved for birds. Flocks of colourful tanagers pass right through the canopy of the tree, blue and yellow macaws fly past, spider monkeys search for fruit, and two species of large toucans make their distinctive calls. The life of the forest canopy opens before you. Birds that are virtually impossible to see from the forest floor far below are right beside you, oblivious to people. The afternoon walk focuses on viewing lizards, colourful manakins, or golden mantle tamarin monkeys. You may want to paddle a dugout canoe around the lake and look for an otter family.

Sunday, February 17:*Meals: B,L,D*

Our guides paddle us back to the Napo River, then we take the motorboat to Coca, and fly to Quito for overnight.

Monday, February 18:*Meals: B,L,D*

We leave Quito, heading south through the amazing "Avenue of the Volcanoes." **Cotopaxi Volcano** is an Ecuador landmark at 5,897 metres and the highest active volcano in the world. Since 1738, Cotopaxi has erupted more than 50 times and the last eruption ended in January 2016. During a walk in the national park, we enjoy lush endemic flora and fauna such as the Chuquiragua (mountaineer's flower), wild horses, deer, and llamas. We also visit Limpiopungo Lake, located near Rumiñahui Volcano. We stay in **Cotopaxi** at Hacienda El Porvenir.

Tuesday, February 19:*Meals: B,L,D*

Today is a spectacular drive from Cotopaxi to Quilatoa, called Pujilí's Way, highlighted by the **Quilotoa Crater**. The volcano erupted in the 13th century and a brilliant green-blue-turquoise coloured lake formed inside the crater. It is about 250 metres deep and the caldera is 3 km across with its highest point at 3,914 metres. Depending on your energy level and acclimatizing, you can walk around the rim or part of it, or hike down 280 metres to the lakeshore (horses may be available). We stay overnight in **Riobamba** at Hacienda Abraspungo.

Wednesday, February 20:*Meals: B,L,D*

At Alausi, we board Ecuador's renowned "**Devil's Nose**" train. It is a four-hour round trip ride, highlighted by the airy crossing of the rocky promontory, Nariz del Diablo, where the train shunts back and forth along switchbacks to descend into the valley. Back on our coach, we drive to the incredible **Ingapirca Fortress**, built about 500 years ago by two powerful civilizations, the Incas and Cañari, who learned to live together in peace. The stones that make up the walls are so closely fitted that a paper cannot be inserted. These ruins are the most important in Ecuador. **Temple of the Sun** dominates the site which could have been a fortress, an observatory, or a temple. We continue to Cuenca and stay overnight at Hotel Carvallo.

Thursday, February 21:*Meals: B,L,D*

Cuenca is Ecuador's third largest city with a population of about 400,000. It is regarded as the most European city in Ecuador due to its 16th and 17th century era Spanish colonial architecture. Its red tiled roofs, cobblestone streets, flowery plazas, and museums make it very special and it is recognized as a World Cultural Heritage Site. We enjoy a driving and walking tour of romantic chapels and fascinating architecture. Next, we drive to **Cajas National Park**, an area of lakes, rugged peaks and wetlands high in the Andes. Then we drive all the way down to sea level at **Guayaquil**, Ecuador's largest city, and stay overnight at Unipark Hotel.

Friday, February 22:*Meals: B,L,D*

Our flight west to the **Galapagos Islands** takes 2½ hours. The plane lands on Baltra Island, then we take the ferry across Itabaca Channel to **Santa Cruz Island**. As we drive up into the highlands, we see many life zones of the Galapagos Islands. Whether it's the bright red feathers of a vermilion flycatcher or a Darwin's Finch, almost every bird present in the islands can be found here. Lunch is at Rancho Manzanillo which is a preserve for the **wild Galapagos Tortoise** and there should be excellent viewing opportunities. In the village of Puerto Ayora, we board the **Seaman Journey** and settle into ship life for the next week of our private charter cruise.

Saturday, February 23:*Meals: B,L,D*

Overnight, we cruise west to Isabela Island and around its south coast to reach **Fernandina Island**. Our first stop this morning is Mangle Point, a superior snorkelling site and a beautiful location for riding in a zodiac through a grove of mangrove trees. We are likely to see sea lions, tortoises, pelicans, rays, and birds too numerous to name. Next,

we cross to Punta Moreno on **Isabela Island** between the volcanos Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul. The trail runs along a pahohoe lava flow into a complex of coastal lagoons where bird watching is superb.

Sunday, February 24:

Meals: B,L,D

Urbina Bay is located at the base of Alcedo Volcano on the west coast of Isabela. This area experienced a major uplift in 1954 which caused the land to rise over 5 metres. The coast expanded 1 km out, leaving marine life stranded on the new shore. Our morning expedition ashore is along a 3 km trail across sand, pumice, lava, coral, and vegetation where we can observe iguana burrows, red and blue lobster, Darwin's finches, giant land iguanas, and even wild Galapagos tortoises. During lunch, the ship moves to Tagus Cove, located west of **Darwin Volcano** on Isabela Island. This was a favourite spot for pirates and whalers in the 1800s, and they started the tradition of inscribing the names of their boats in a small cave which we can see today. The Tagus name originated from a British warship whose crew crossed Isabela in 1814 looking for tortoises for food. The volcanic rocks are interesting here, especially the little balls of nearly spherical shape known as "lapilli" or petrified rain.

Monday, February 25:

Meals: B,L,D

We return to Fernandina Island overnight and arrive at **Espinoza Point** this morning. It is known for its large colonies of marine iguanas and as the habitat of unique species like the flightless cormorant, Galapagos penguin, Galapagos hawk, and Galapagos snake. This afternoon, we visit one of the most impressive sights of these enchanted islands – the soaring cliffs and lava formations of **Punta Vicente Roca**. This large bay has spectacular marine life, such as seahorses, sea turtles, and the fascinating Mola-mola or sunfish. On shore, we can find penguins, blue-footed boobies, terns, and sea lions. During snorkelling, we may observe sea turtles, stingrays, and puffer fishes.

Tuesday, February 26:

Meals: B,L,D

Overnight, we round the north end of Isabela Island, headed east to **Santiago Island**. It is the fourth largest island in the Galapagos after Isabela, Fernandina, and Santa Cruz. Santiago actually consists of two coalesced volcanoes: a typical shield volcano on the northwest end and a low, linear fissure volcano on the southeast end. We go ashore at Espumilla Beach, located on Santiago's northern coast. During the last El Niño phenomenon, one of the two lagoons here filled with sediment, causing the disappearance of a

representative colony of flamingos. The main attractions are the palosanto forest and the nesting of baby turtles. This afternoon, we visit **Puerto Egas**, a black sand beach on the west side of Santiago. The volcanic tuff deposits have favoured the formation of this black sand.

Wednesday, February 27:

Meals: B,L,D

Rábida Island is unique due to the red colour of all its rocks and sand. The volcanic material in this island is very porous and external factors as rain, salty water, and sea breeze have acted as an oxidizing agent. A short walk along a trail leads to a coastal lagoon behind the beach where we can watch birds such as finches, doves, yellow warblers, mockingbirds, and flamingos. During the afternoon, we visit **Chinese Hat**, a tiny islet off the southeastern tip of Santiago. It is a recent volcanic cone, shaped like a Chinese hat when seen from the north. On the west you can see lava formations, formed under the sea and raised upwards which explains the coral heads found on the lava. This is an excellent visit for interpretation of geological features such as lava tubes and lava flows. There are numerous colonies of sea lions, marine iguanas, and Galapagos penguins.

Thursday, February 28:

Meals: B,L,D

We spend the morning at Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island, then move to **Bartolome Island** after lunch. It has an altitude of 114 meters and, from the top, we can admire a panoramic view including volcanic cones, lunar-like craters, lava fields, and the famous Toba formed pinnacle eroded by the sea. There is very little vegetation on this island. It has two breathtaking beaches where marine turtles live and, at the base of the pinnacle, there is a small colony of Galapagos penguins.

Friday, March 1:

Meals: B,D

Our last stop is at Bachas Beach on **Santa Cruz Island**. The sand is made of decomposed coral so it is white and soft, making it a favourite nesting site for sea turtles. Nearby is a small brackish lagoon where it is possible to watch flamingos and coastal birds such as black-necked stilts and whimbrels. A historical attraction is two old barges that were abandoned during the Second World War when the USA used Baltra Island as a strategic point to protect the Panama Canal. In late morning, we say farewell to the Seaman Journey and go to the **Baltra Island airport**. Our flight to Guayaquil leaves this afternoon and we stay overnight at the Unipark Hotel.



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This tour is rated “Activity Level 3” by the tour planners at Wells Gray Tours. This rating is the highest activity level assigned to a tour, meaning that there is a lot of activity which could include one or more of (but is not limited to) the following:

- **You can walk 3 kilometres in 1 hour and up to 5 kilometres during a single trek.**
- **You can handle activity at high altitudes such as over 11,000 feet or 3,500 metres.**
- **You can walk on cobblestones, rocky trails, uneven sidewalks, and rocky or sandy beaches.**
- **You can climb one or two flights of stairs to a hotel room if there is no elevator.**
- **You can carry your own luggage in airports.**

Since a few people who are not capable of doing the above activities can hold up the entire group, Wells Gray Tours expects everybody booking a tour with “Activity Level 3” to be reasonably fit. You must be able to participate in activities without the assistance of the tour director, driver or other travellers.

Please read the following and sign acknowledging that these statements are true. The tour deposit will be due after you have signed this statement.

- **I want to travel on a Wells Gray tour with a rating of “Activity Level 3”.**
- **I have read the brochure with the full itinerary and description of the activities that are typical on this tour.**
- **I understand that this is the highest activity level that a Wells Gray tour can be rated.**
- **I am confident that I can participate in tour activities at this level and I will not hold up or delay the other members of the tour.**
- **I do not require the use of a wheelchair or a walker.**
- **If my physical condition changes between booking and departure date such that I can no longer do this level of activity, I will notify the Wells Gray office or agent. The specified penalties will apply for cancelling and travel insurance may cover this.**
- **If I am not capable of keeping up with the group or I require ongoing assistance, I understand that the Wells Gray tour director has the right to not allow me to participate in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, I acknowledge that I may be required to leave the tour and travel home at my own expense, and that travel insurance will probably not cover me.**

This statement has been implemented by Wells Gray Tours to maintain high quality itineraries, accurate timing, and the enjoyment of all tour participants. Each person booking this tour must sign this statement. Thank you for your understanding.

Signature _____ Name _____ Date _____