Galápagos: Aboard Polaris

ITINERARY – 10 DAYS/9 NIGHTS DEPARTING EVERY FRIDAY

The Galápagos Islands, located 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador, provide a natural habitat for some of the world’s most unusual animals. This remarkable journey brings you face to face with the extraordinary natural wonders of this wildlife sanctuary. With an experienced staff of Naturalists, you encounter wildlife that does not fear people and is so abundant that you may have to watch your footing to avoid disturbing the nap of a resting sea lion or a passing iguana. Animal life varies from island to island, but likely encounters include: penguins fishing off the rocky lava shores, blue-footed boobies performing a courtship “dance” ritual, or a male frigatebird ballooning his crimson chest pouch to attract a female. You can snorkel with playful sea lions, kayak and swim in the amazing Pacific, or find a quiet corner of a deserted beach.

Friday, Day 1: U.S./Guayaquil, Ecuador
Depart U.S. and arrive Guayaquil by late evening. We’ve found that Miami is a convenient gateway for most, and we have a non-stop group flight departing from here, but other air alternatives are available. Our air coordinators can help determine which airline and flights are best for you. Upon arrival in Quito drive to the Hotel Hilton Colón.

Saturday, Day 2: Guayaquil/Galápagos/Santa Cruz/Embark
This morning fly to the Galápagos. Flying time is approximately 2 hours; upon arrival immediately board the Polaris. During lunch we’ll sail to Santa Cruz Island for a magnificent introduction to the wildlife of Galápagos. Spend the afternoon exploring mangrove-flanked channels and the shoreline of Cerro Dragon, looking for land iguanas, sea lions, a variety of birds and schools of golden rays. (B,L,D)

Sunday-Friday, Days 3-8:
While our exact routing depends on the National Park Service, we will visit the following islands. Here is a brief description of what each island offers. (B,L,D)

Bartolomé
This is an enchanting landscape where lava, mangroves and golden sand converge. Great walks, views and a chance to snorkel with penguins — a tropical oxymoron.

Santiago
Santiago provides us a chance to see the Galápagos fur seal, along with the opportunity to enjoy the best “tide pooling.”

Santa Cruz
The epicenter of Galápagos administration as well as the Charles Darwin Research Center where we’ll learn about their vital preservation work. We’ll head up into the highlands to roam the moss-draped lush landscape where wild giant tortoises often forage.

Isabela
Anchor off the picturesque port of Puerto Villamil. Walk the streets of this small town, visit the nearby saltwater lagoons, home to flamingos or simply stroll along a beautiful beach. Visit
the tortoise breeding center which is jointly administered by the Galápagos National Park and the Charles Darwin Research Station. We’ll also explore Isabela’s caves and shoreline and search the waters for dolphins, whales, sea turtles and the elusive ocean sunfish — the mola-mola.

**Española**
We will visit two distinctly different parts of the same island. See blue-footed boobies, sea lions galore, Española marine iguanas which develop particularly vivid coloration, and waved albatross (mid-April through mid-December) exclusive to this island. Snorkel and stroll the island’s lovely beaches.

**Saturday, Day 9: Galápagos/Disembark/Guayaquil**
This morning disembark the ship and fly to Guayaquil. The late afternoon and evening are free to explore the city and prepare for your journey home. Overnight at the Hotel Hilton Colón. If you would like to visit the colonial city of Quito, please inquire about our optional extension. (B)

**Sunday, Day 10: Guayaquil/Home**
This morning fly home — or anywhere else you might have decided to go. (B)
**Polaris**

**Capacity:** 80 guests in 41 outside cabins.
**Registry:** Ecuador. **Overall length:** 238 feet.

**Public Areas:** Ship is fully air-conditioned. Covered deck with hammocks, chairs and tables; Doctor’s Office; Fitness Center; Gift Shop; Library; Lounge with full-service bar and facilities for films, slide shows and lectures; and Sky Deck. Our Ecuadorian Captain and Officers welcome guests to the Bridge in accordance with our “Open Bridge” policy.

**Meals:** Served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Menu is international with an Ecuadorian flair.

**Cabins:** All face outside with windows or portholes (A Deck only), private facilities and climate controls.

**Expedition Equipment:** Kayaks, glass bottom boat, hydrophone, snorkeling gear, Splash-Cam, underwater video camera, video microscope, wet suits and Zodiac landing craft.

**Special Features:** Guest internet kiosk, laundry service, LEXspa & floating platform. A ship’s doctor, Undersea Specialist and Video Chronicler are also on board.

**Category 1:**
A Deck # 102–105 - Spacious cabins have two lower single beds, a writing desk and one or two portholes.

**Category 2:**
A Deck # 101; Main Deck # 200–221 - Centrally located cabins feature two lower single beds, a writing desk and a view window (except cabin #101 on the A Deck, which has three lower beds and two portholes).

**Category 3:**
Upper Deck # 301, 303, 305, 307 - Conveniently located, cabins feature two lower single beds, a writing desk and a large view window.

**Category 4:**
Upper Deck # 302, 304, 306, 309, 311, 315, 319 - Spacious cabins feature two lower single beds, a writing desk and a large view window.

**Category 5:**
Upper Deck # 300, 308, 317, 321 - These are the largest cabins and can accommodate a third person. They have either two lower single beds which can convert to a queen bed. All have a desk, convertible sofa bed, table and two large windows.

**Note:** Sole Occupancy cabins are available in Categories 1 and 2 only. Third person rates are available in certain categories at one half the double occupancy rate.

**Shared Accommodations:** If you wish to share accommodations, arrangements can be made at the double occupancy rate in Category 1 and 2 only.