

Andes to Amazon and the Galapagos Islands

17th May – 1st June 2012

Price £3590 per person (plus international flight)

A 16-day journey that will take you from the unparalleled biological riches of the Amazon Rainforest where you will stay at the multi-award winning Napo Wildlife Centre then onto the spectacular high Andes of Ecuador. You will then travel to the Galapagos for an eight day cruise on board our own private yacht visiting some of the most spectacular islands in this remarkable archipelago. The trip will be led by Santiago Bejarano, one of the leading naturalists in the Galapagos who will be joined throughout the journey by some of Ecuador's top naturalist and cultural guides ensuring unparalleled service and an exceptional holiday.

Our own private yacht – **The Tip Top III**



Outline Itinerary

17 May	Depart UK - Arrive Quito
18-22 May	Amazon Rainforest
23 May	Quito
24 May	Andes – Indian Market
25 May – 1 June	Galapagos
1 June	Depart for UK



17 May

Arrive in Quito in the evening where we will be met by our local guide and taken to our hotel, the Hotel Quito, which has spectacular views over the valley of Cumbaya and an outdoor heated swimming pool as well as lovely gardens. A light evening meal together and evening free to relax.

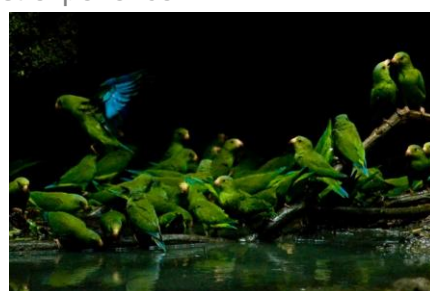
18-22 May Amazon Rainforest – Napo Wildlife Centre



Set by a lake in the heart of Ecuador's Amazon Rainforest the multi-award winning Napo Wildlife Center, is the greatest and ultimate alternative luxury eco-hotel in Amazonian Ecuador. The lodge, which is 100% owned and operated by the local indigenous community, enjoys a stunning location by the side of a secluded lake, with an incredible bird list of 568 species, spectacular parrot licks and a network of trails. The wildlife viewing is spectacular.



The lodge itself is beautiful with local architecture, hardwood floors and well considered amenities providing as much luxury as you would ever want in the Amazon. The main dining area, library and bar all have fantastic views across the lake. One of the highlights of your stay will be the 36 meter (120 ft) high Canopy Tower that gives superb access to the forest canopy, where around half of all life in the rainforest lives. The lodge also offers some wonderful mammal sightings, with upwards of six species of monkey observed from the Dining Hall tower area in a single afternoon. Giant Otters are also frequently seen and Capybara come into the lodge compound almost every night. For this part of the journey Santiago and the group will be joined by bilingual naturalist guides as well as native guides who will ensure an outstanding Amazon rainforest experience.



Returning to Quito at noon on the 22nd May, the afternoon and evening is free to relax. No group dinner is included on this night. Overnight Hotel Quito.

Napo Wildlife Centre is really an exceptional place – where you truly are guests of the local community. To read independent reviews of the Napo Wildlife Centre – please click the following link to Trip Adviser:

http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g609141-d520039-Reviews-Napo_Wildlife_Centre-Yasuni_National_Park.html



23 May

Quito

After a leisurely breakfast we will take a tour of the city of Quito, Ecuador's capital city nestled high in the Andes where we will be joined by a top cultural guide. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to its beautiful colonial buildings, Quito is a city with a rich history and gives a wonderful taste of Andean life. After a light lunch together in the historical old town we return to the hotel mid-afternoon. Then in the early evening we will meet up to go together for dinner at one of the city's restaurants.

24 May

Avenue of Volcanoes – Saquisilí Market

After breakfast we begin our journey to Ecuador's legendary Avenue of Volcanoes, a valley punctuated on either side by spectacular snow-capped volcanoes. Here we will visit the Indian market of Saquisilí, one of the largest and most colourful in Ecuador selling an array of local fruit and vegetables and other goods bought by the local indigenous community. Lunch in historic hacienda La Cienaga. Overnight Hotel Quito.



25- 1 June Galapagos

This morning we will take our flight to the Galapagos where we will be met by the crew of our private yacht the TIP TOP III.



The yacht has great service and a very friendly crew, accommodating 16 passengers in 10 double cabins each with private shower and toilet. There is a bar, dining room, library, sundeck and diving platform. Just some of the luxuries you'll enjoy on the yacht's three decks are wall-to-wall carpeting, air conditioning, a TV, a VCR, a full sound system, an inviting dining room, a fully equipped bar, a library filled with a variety of reading materials, a spacious sundeck, and snorkelling equipment. Moreover, each of the craft's homey cabins is outfitted with a private bathroom with both hot and cold water, a personal safe, and a wardrobe. We spend the next glorious eight days visiting the following islands:

Santa Cruz – we spend our first day here with lunch in the highlands surrounded by Giant Tortoises on their seasonal migration. We also visit the Charles Darwin Research Station which provides a perfect introduction to our Galapagos visit.



26 May

Santa Fe - The island is home to its own unique species of Land Iguanas (*Conolophus pallidus*). Amazing landscape dominated by very tall and wide perkily pear cactus. The swimming and snorkelling around this island is also wonderful, with sea lions, rays and a host of colourful fish.

Plaza - The best place in Galapagos to see Marine Iguanas, the world's only sea going lizard. It is also a great place to see land iguanas, sometimes side-by-side with their sea-going relatives. Here we will take a walk along some uplifted lava flows.

27 May

Sombrero Chino - Our first chance to swim with sea lions and if we are lucky, Galapagos penguins in the crystal clear waters around this huge cinder cone which is shaped like a Chinese hat (hence its name!). It is also a fantastic location for sea lions and an incredible volcanic landscape with the brightly coloured sally lightfoot crabs in stark contrast against the black rock.

Rabida - A red sandy beach with sea lions and nesting Brown Pelicans and an opportunity to snorkel with sea lions and eagle rays which are common in the waters around the island.

28 May

Black Turtle Cove - Sea turtle paradise! By November, sea turtles start to gather here, preparing for their annual nesting season. This morning we take a dingy ride through beautiful and peaceful mangrove forests where we turn our motor off and paddle slowly in search of sea turtles and other wildlife in the mangroves.



Cerro Dragon -We visit an area in the western-side of Santa Cruz Island which has seen a remarkable recovery of its land iguana population in recent years thanks to the work of the Galapagos National Park and Charles Darwin Research Station.

29 May

Floreana -In the morning we travel up to the highlands of Floreana to see more Giant Tortoises. The island hosts a healthy Giant Tortoise population and is part of the ongoing project to repopulate the island with tortoises by the Galapagos National Park. After lunch we go to the north-west of the island to Punta Cormorant, the best place to see Flamingos and stilts in the Galapagos. We will stay on the island until late afternoon as there is a chance we may see sea turtles coming up onto the beach.

30 May

Espanola- Santiago's favourite islands and one of the highlights of any visit to the Galapagos thanks to the islands colony of Waved Albatross who at the time of your visit will still have their chicks with them. Here we will also see the islands unique and colourful marine iguanas and large Lava Lizard and its own endemic species of mocking bird.

There will also be Blue-footed Boobies, and Nazca boobies along the path as we walk through the island. The island is also home to a spectacular white sandy beach which is a favourite with sea lions which we will also visit (see below)



31 May

San Cristobal- Today we make an early morning visit to the Galapagos Interpretation Centre and breeding centre for tortoises in San Cristobal. We will be able to walk through a large pen which houses tortoises that are endemic to this island. In the afternoon we will visit Cerro Brujo, and take a boat trip around an iconic landmark of Galapagos, Kicker Rock and enjoy the sunset!



01 Jun

Baltra – we return to the islet of Baltra today for our flight back to Ecuador. We return to Guayaquil in the afternoon, a steamy tropical town on Ecuador's Pacific Coast where we will be met and taken to the Grand Hotel Guayaquil, where we have a few hours to relax and freshen up and have our farewell meal together, before you return to the airport for your flight home.

Cost per person £3590

Includes: All accommodation as detailed , all meals, soft drinks with meals, flight Quito – Baltra-Guayaquil, \$10 Galapagos Migration Card, services of local expert guides and tour leader Santiago Bejarano throughout the trip, 8 days cruise on board the Tip Top III, 5 days full board at Napo Wildlife Centre, return flight Quito-Coca-Quito.

Does not include: international flight, US\$100 Galapagos National Park entrance fee, tips, personal expenses, services not detailed, dinner in Quito on the 22nd May, alcoholic drinks, departure tax from Guayaquil airport of US\$29.78.

Price is based on sharing double accommodation, if you prefer your own room there is a single supplement cost of £340 per person. All cabins on the yacht must be shared, except by special arrangement.

Tailor made extensions to this trip are available in Guayaquil, Galapagos, Quito, Ecuador's Cloud Forest and the Andes. We also can organise 'soft landings' arriving a day or so before the group trip begins so you are fully recovered from the flight and change in time zone before the trip begins. Please ask us for more details or see <http://www.thinkgalapagos.com>

Please note: *In Galapagos itineraries are unlikely to change significantly but are subject to change. Weather, wildlife breeding, instructions from the Galapagos National Park, specific abilities and interests of passengers as well as operational matters may cause your guide or captain to change the times or nature of your visits. Your guide will always endeavour to have the best itinerary for you within these constraints.*



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