

AS SEEN IN
DOCTOR'S REVIEW
& MEDICAL POST

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT ESCAPE

CME & ECOLOGICAL TOUR OF ECUADOR (INCLUDING THE GALAPAGOS & ECUADORIAN AMAZON)

(WITH OPTIONAL 5 DAY EXTENSION TO PERU, INCLUDING MACCHU PICCHU)

November 21 - December 6, 2015

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The Destinations... Quito, the Ecuadorian Amazon and the Galapagos Islands



Ecuador is located in north-western South America, bounded by Colombia on the north, by Peru on the east and south, and by the Pacific Ocean on the west. Named after the Spanish word for equator, Ecuador straddles the equator and has an area of 272,045 square kilometres. Ecuador's mainstream culture is defined by Ecuador's mestizo majority and, like their fascinating ancestry, is a mixture of European and Amerindian influences infused with African elements inherited from slave ancestors. Ecuador's indigenous communities are largely integrated into that mainstream culture to varying degrees, but some may also practice their own unique cultures, particularly the more remote indigenous communities of the Amazon basin.

Quito is the perfect place to begin exploring Ecuador. See the historic sites of Quito's Old Town and the city's dozens of museums, visit its hundreds of shops, cafes, and restaurants and take a trip into the highlands and the fascinating markets of Otavalo at the crossroads of the Andes.

The **Ecuadorian Amazon** rainforest is one of the most breathtaking areas of the world. Under each broad leaf lies a whole new world, including 25,000 species of birds, 3,500 kinds of orchids and countless varieties of insects. This is the area with the greatest bio-diversity in the entire planet. Millions of different kinds of plants call this ecosystem their home. Over 50 varieties of multi-colored butterflies can be seen in their natural habitat. Search the trees for serpents and tarantulas, or watch as monkeys swing from branch to branch overhead and armadillos and ocelots prowl the forest floor. Visit a local indigenous community, many of whom are direct descendants of the Maya-Quiche culture of Central America. Watch how the women decorate traditional ceramics using their own hair as a paint brush and crushed, local stones as the base for paint. Or practice hunting your prey with a native, curare tipped blow gun which you've seen made in front of your eyes.

And, lying 965km west of the mainland in the Pacific Ocean, the **Galapagos Archipelago** encompasses over 50 islands of volcanic origin that are spread out over an area of about 4,500 square kilometers. Perhaps more so than any other place in the world, the fauna of the Galapagos Islands, part of Ecuador, are incredibly unique. The fascinating species found one these islands includes the Galapagos land iguana, blue-footed booby, Galápagos green turtle, sea cucumber, 13 endemic species of finch, Galápagos penguin, flightless cormorant, Galápagos hawk and sea lions to name but a sample. And, of course, the islands will always remain famous for the visit, in 1835, of Charles Darwin's ship, the Beagle. His observations of this amazing wildlife, their remarkable adaption to a hostile environment, and the subtle variations between races of the same species living on different islands led directly to his theory of natural selection and evolution.

Further information can be found at -

<http://ecuador.travel/>

Ecuador Tourist Board

<http://www.galapagospark.org/>

Galapagos National Park

<http://www.galapagos.org>

Galapagos Conservation Organization

The detailed itinerary...

Day 1 : Nov 21, 2015 (Sat) - Depart Toronto for Quito, Ecuador

Fly from Toronto to Quito, Ecuador.

Dep:	Toronto (YYZ)	Copa Airlines	CM 471	21-Nov-15	8:30 AM
Arr:	Panama City (PTY)			21-Nov-15	2:01 PM
Dep:	Panama City (PTY)	Copa Airlines	CM 159	21-Nov-15	3:24 PM
Arr:	Quito, Ecuador (UIO)			21-Nov-15	5:26 PM

After clearing customs and immigration, transfer from airport to hotel in Quito.

Evening at leisure. Overnight in Quito.

Day 2 : Nov 22 – Quito – Full day city tour including the “Middle of the World” (B, L, D)

*Built on a carpet of ancient Incan ruins, Ecuador's bustling capital of **Quito** was the first city in the world to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site being designated the “Heritage of Mankind”. Located in the foothills of the Andean mountains and overlooked by Mount Pichincha, the city, and its surrounding area, is considered one of the most beautiful regions in Latin America. Located at 9200 feet above sea level, but only 25 km from the Equator line, Quito enjoys a near perfect spring-like climate with mild, sunny days and cool nights almost year-round. Broad Ecuadorean smiles, racy salsa music and big bowls of hearty stews and soups warmly counter Quito's snowy mountainous backdrop. In the historic Old Town, superbly preserved baroque churches and monasteries exemplify the fusion of Spanish, Italian, Moorish, Flemish and indigenous influences while and contrast with the contemporary architecture of modern Quito, a cosmopolitan city of great cultural diversity.*

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today you will explore this diverse and unique city. Enjoy a walking tour of **Quito's colonial quarter**, the largest and best preserved of South America where you will visit the Independence Plaza, flanked by the Cathedral, the Presidential Palace, the Municipal Building and the Archbishop's Palace. Visit the temple of La Compañía de Jesús and its awesome gilded interior. Continue on to the Monastery of San Francisco, one of the great religious buildings of the New World; its impressive façade and atrium that lead to its Baroque interior influenced by Moorish style, with the winged Virgin of Quito at its main altar. Lunch at a local restaurant in Quito.

Enjoy lunch in the restaurant El Crater and then continue to the Middle of the World.

The **Equatorial Monument**, 16 miles North of Quito, which marks the exact Middle of the World, latitude 0°, where you can stand with a foot on each hemisphere. Visit the **Ethnographic Museum** inside the monument, which shows the different Native American groups living in Ecuador. Beside the monument there is a colonial-style town, complete with main square, church, post office, bullring, cafeterias, restaurants and many gift shops with postcards and souvenirs.

Dinner at La Ronda – one of the city's most traditional local restaurants, very colonial, with thick white-stucco walls, red carpeting, sloped wood ceilings, brick archways, dark-wood high-back chairs, and iron chandeliers.

Overnight in Quito.



Day 3 : Nov 23 – Quito Academic Program (B)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Physicians – Academic program in the hotel in the morning followed by tours of local Quito public and private hospitals in the afternoon.

Non-physicians – escorted morning walking tour of La Mariscal Sucre area including the local market and the Central Bank Museum (known locally as the "Gold Museum"); free time in the afternoon.

Lunch will be provided in the hotel for all participants.

Evening at leisure, Overnight in Quito.



Day 4 - 7 : Nov 24 - 27 (4 days / 3 nights) – Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest Ecolodge Program (B, L, D)

Breakfast at hotel and then transfer to Quito airport for your short flight from Quito to Coca.

Fly over the high Andes and down to the Amazon frontier town of Puerto Francisco de Orellana (called Coca by the locals). From here you travel by motorized canoe two and a half hours down the Napo River, followed by a short walk through a thick palm forest to **Sacha Lodge** - your home for the next three nights and base for an incredible Amazon adventure!



Sacha Lodge is located within a 5000-acre private ecological reserve in Ecuador's Amazon region, an accessible yet pristine rainforest sanctuary and home to about 500 species of birds, pink dolphins, giant otters, caiman, tapirs, capybaras, and more. Among this lodge's exclusive attractions are a 940-foot long canopy walkway and tower giving unparalleled access and views of the treetops, one of the largest butterfly houses in Ecuador, and the Yasuni parrot lick. Combining these natural attractions with excellent food, comfortable lodging and some of the best guides in the whole Amazon area, Sacha commands a respected reputation amongst Amazonia ecolodges. For bird-lovers in particular this is considered to be one of the best lodges in Latin America.

During your stay you will learn about herbal medicine through a "hands-on" rainforest walk (Quichua native) and a presentation on the Useful Plants of Sacha Lodge (from the 2005 professional study by Barry Thomson) *

There will also be presentation on traditional healing methods from a local village shaman.



Day 7 : Nov 27 – Sacha Lodge – Otavalo (B, D)

Breakfast at the lodge.

Return from Sacha by the same route as upon your arrival to the lodge.

Arrival in Quito in the afternoon and then head north into the foothills of the Andes to the beautiful area of lakes and distinct picturesque towns of **Imbabura province** where many of the inhabitants of Quito have their weekend escapes. This is the land of the Otavaleños including South America's most famous indigenous trading fair at Otavalo.

When entering Imbabura, stop at Miralago for a short stop and a wonderful sight of the San Pablo Lake.

For the next 3 nights, you will stay in a 17th-century Ecuadorian hacienda close to Otavalo. The haciendas of Ecuador are vestiges of the colonial period. Currently, many of the owners of the estates have converted them into luxury hotels that offer an escape from big cities and a glimpse into the life of the field in the Ecuador. Many of these haciendas are still dedicated to agriculture aside from being hotels.

Dinner and overnight at the hacienda in the Otavalo area.

Day 8 : Nov 28 – Imbabura / Otavalo (B, L, D)

Imbabura is commonly known as "the land of lakes", due to its high number of water reserves compared to other provinces. Lakes, volcanoes, valleys and paramo are some of the main components of Imbabura's landscape. Towns like **Otavalo** have a large indigenous population that produces handicrafts and multicoloured woven goods for export, made by hand, which represent the indigenous culture of the northern sierra. In the same way, and there are many other small towns that each have their own production speciality.



Breakfast at hacienda.

Some free time to relax in the morning at your charming, 400 year old Hacienda – walk through the grounds of this lush, botanical paradise or just relax around the fireplace of the cozy lounge.

Then, head to the main Saturday market in **Otavalo**, the most famous indigenous trading fair in South America where you can explore, and barter, at the many stalls full of ponchos, scarves, blankets, wall hangings, woven belts (fajas), hats, handbags, silverware and much more.

For lunch, visit another historic hacienda in the area.

In the afternoon, proceed to **Peguche**, an Indian village very near Otavalo that is home to the artisans who specialize in weaving. Visit a local weaving factory to see how the fine woolen products (tapestries, wall hangings, sweaters) are made on traditional weaving machines.

Later, you will also have the opportunity to see a **local shaman demonstrate traditional healing techniques**. In Ecuador, Shamanism is a respected medical profession with practitioners being licensed through local and national associations of shamans and working closely with medical doctors to diagnose and treat many medical ailments. Shamans are believed to be able to talk to the spirit world, usually through spirits of their ancestors, the forest and even through animals. The role of the shaman is that of both diagnosis and healing and they work in conjunction with doctors practicing western medicine from a healing perspective depending on the level and type of healing that is deemed necessary.



The Shaman will diagnose, and also “cleanse” a person of bad spirits or sickness, by means of natural medicine mediums - they use water or alcohol in order to disappear bad energy by blowing it to the person and some will use plants, eggs or even animals, as part of this process.

Dinner and overnight at the hacienda in the Otavalo area.

Day 9 – Nov 29 – Otavalo (B, D)

Breakfast at hacienda.

In the morning, drive to the beautiful **Cuicocha Lake** (literally “Lake of the Guinea Pig”), a flooded volcanic caldera, and take a walk along its shores to witness the spectacular views. Then onto **Cotacahi**, a town famous for its production of fine leather goods before stopping at a **music workshop** to see how many of the Andes wood instruments are made and enjoy a short performance.

Free time to enjoy the hacienda in the afternoon.

Dinner and overnight at the hacienda in the Otavalo area.



Day 10 - 14 : Nov 30 - Dec 4 – Otavalo – Galapagos Islands cruise

M/V Santa Cruz – 5 days/4 nights - Northern Island itinerary (B, L, D)



Lying 965km west of the mainland in the Pacific Ocean, the **Galapagos Archipelago** encompasses over 50 islands of volcanic origin that are spread out over an area of about 4,500 square kilometers. Perhaps more so than any other place in the world, the fauna of the Galapagos Islands, part of Ecuador, are incredibly unique. The fascinating species found one these islands includes the Galapagos land iguana, blue-footed booby, Galápagos green turtle, sea cucumber, 13 endemic species of finch, Galápagos penguin, flightless cormorant, Galápagos hawk and sea lions to name but a sample. And, of course, the islands will always remain famous for the visit, in 1835, of Charles Darwin's ship, the Beagle. His observations of this amazing wildlife, their remarkable adaption to a hostile environment, and the subtle variations between races of the same species living on different islands led directly to his theory of natural selection and evolution.

Your five day **Northern Island Itinerary** cruise of discovery will show you some of the most beautiful islands in the Galápagos. The itinerary begins on Monday from the bay near Baltra airport, from where we'll sail to the glorious white beach of Las Bachas with a pair of brackish water lagoons only a few steps from the sea. These lagoons are the feeding grounds of various wading birds, from stilts to flamingos. On Tuesday, we explore two fascinating visitor sites on Santiago Island: Buccaneer Cove, home to a large number of marine birds, sea lions, and inter-tidal organisms, and Puerto Egas, with its great walk along pools full of life and good snorkelling and swimming possibilities. The next day we visit the red-sand beach of Rábida Island, a lovely trail around some cliffs and a popular spot for swimming, followed by the volcanic viewpoint of Bartolomé in the afternoon, combining a hike, a swim, a beach and coastal exploration – a top Galápagos day! From here we sail northeast to the sunken crater of Genovesa, a wild place home to thousands of marine birds, a world a million miles from our own. We finish in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galápagos Province.

Day 10 : Nov 30 – Galapagos Cruise (Baltra, Santa Cruz) (B, L, D)



Baltra played an important role in the history of these islands. It was used by the U.S. Air Force during the Second World War; many U.S. Navy and crews of the submarines were stationed here to patrol the Pacific Ocean and protect the Panama Canal from enemy attack. During this period most of the indigenous fauna of the island was exterminated but land iguanas have recently been successfully re-introduced and can be seen near the Baltra airport. Ground finches, pelicans, frigate birds and the sea lions ("your Galapagos hosts" that can often be seen hanging around upon arrival at the dock to welcome visitors to the Islands) frequent the island which is a flat and dry, surrounded by reefs and few beaches with some vegetation such as cacti Opuntia (Prickly Pear Cactus) and other small trees. At the end of the war, the U.S. turned the base and its airport over to the government of Ecuador and today it is an Ecuadorian civil and military airport, as well as a naval base. As such, it is not actually within the boundaries of Galapagos National Park.

Santa Cruz (Area: 986 km², Maximum Altitude: 864m, Volcano: 964 m) supports one of the largest human populations of the five inhabited islands. Some 4,000 residents are distributed between the cattle-farming communities in the lush highlands and the coastal town of Puerto Ayora. Here you can visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to see the huge land tortoises, or los galápagos, which once flourished in the islands. The populations were decimated in the early 1800s by the whaling ships that stopped in the islands to fill their holds with fresh meat. On the north shore of the island, accessible only by sea, is an extensive mangrove lagoon called Black Turtle Cove. Here in the peacefulness of the mangroves turtles break the surface of the still waters, while fish, rays, and small sharks cruise below.

Bachus Beach, on the north shore of the island of Santa Cruz, is a white sand beach where you can see some sea turtles nesting sites; you will also experience a small lagoon where some migratory birds, herons, pelicans, zayapas (crabs), among other species, can be seen. The name Bachas originates from the World War II, when the American army left two barges thrown away on the beach. The first settlers could not pronounce the name correctly in English which led on the beach of Las Bachas. Coastal vegetation predominates in this zone; one of the most representative sea turtles nesting sites of Santa Cruz Island. It is a good place also to watch flamingos, as well as aquatic and migratory birds.

Breakfast at hacienda.

Transfer from hotel to airport for morning flight from Quito to Baltra in the Galapagos Islands to board the M/V Santa Cruz anchored in the bay near Baltra. Introductory talk from ship's naturalists and lunch.

Galapagos Transit Control Card (Ingala card) payable (US\$10/person) at Quito airport and Galapagos Park Fee (US\$100/person) payable upon arrival at Baltra airport - both part of the pre-Galapagos entry process.

Sail to **Las Bachas (Bachas Beach)** for an afternoon visit.

- Fauna: Greater flamingo ,magnificent frigate bird ,lava gull, marine iguana, lava lizard, white cheeked pintail duck, brown pelican, large ground finch, medium ground finch, green sea turtle.
- Flora: maytenus octogona, scorpion weed, White mangrove, black mangrove, red mangrove, Galapagos carpetweed.
- Main Attraction: Green sea Turtles 'Favorite place to nest and leave their eggs.
- Type of terrain: Beach, sand made of chorals; Physical condition: low; Wet landing

Day 11 : Dec 1 – Galapagos Cruise (Buccaneer Cove / Puerto Egas - James Island) (B, L, D)



*Northwest of Santa Cruz Island, **Santiago Island**, also known as James Island (Area: 585 km², Maximum altitude: 920m, Volcano: 920 m, last eruption 1890) is one of the oldest of the islands and a place of great geological significance being the fourth territorial extension. Santiago is composed of a number of tuff cones and a central volcanic dome. The vegetation is dense in the highlands because of the humidity, and a scalesia forest covers the northwest side of the volcano. Once a favorite island of pirates and whalers, Santiago is now appreciated for its Galápagos fur seal grotto and newly plant-colonized lava flow on the southern coast. Unfortunately, settlers introduced goats, pigs, donkeys, and rats to Santiago Island, which devastated the landscape and caused it to go almost barren. At one time, the feral goat population was estimated to have reached about one hundred thousand, started by only four introduced animals in the early 1800s. Due to an extensive effort by the Galápagos National Park Service and the Charles Darwin Research Station, the goats have been eradicated and the vegetation on the island is returning to its natural state. Pigs were once the main predators of Galápagos green turtle eggs; but now, the pigs, too, have been entirely eradicated on Santiago. It has several unique landing spots including Puerto Egas, Espumilla Beach, Buccaneer Cove and Sullivan Bay.*

Morning visit to **Buccaneer Cove**, afternoon visit to **Puerto Egas**.

In the morning, explore the coastline along the impressive cliffs of **Buccaneer Cove**, with its distinct purple sands, learning about the area's distant and recent history. Pirates used to refit their boats and search for water and giant tortoises here and years ago, several ceramic jars were found at the bottom of the bay; some were filled with marmalade — others, wine. Today, the cove is home to a large number of marine birds, sea lions, and inter-tidal organisms. Enjoy fantastic natural formations such as the "Elephant Rock", "The Bishop" and an impressive natural cave. This is a great site for snorkeling or panga ride.

In the afternoon, explore **Puerto Egas**, with its volcanic pitch black shores being an excellent location to see shore and sea birds, while land birds can be observed a little more inland. Disembark at the beach, where there is time to enjoy a swim or snorkel amid a rocky shoreline, usually in the company of marine turtles. From here, a hike where there are ample opportunities to see land and marine birds amidst a landscape of tuff-stone layers and lava flows. At low tide, marine iguanas graze upon the algae beds and, at the end of the trail, discover a colony of the endemic Galápagos fur seals.

- Fauna: Galapagos Mockingbird, galapagos hawk, marine iguana, galapagos fur seals, galapagos dove, woodpecker finch, small ground finch, cactus finch, large ground finch, medium ground finch
- Flora: beach morning glory, thread leafed chaff flower, castela, yellow cordial, incense tree, galapagos lantana, gray matplan, prickly pear cactus
- Main Attraction: caves and salty mines, sea lions colony, snorkelling opportunities
- Type of terrain: Beach, paths; Physical condition: low-medium; Wet landings

Day 12 : Dec 2 – Galapagos Cruise (Rabida Island, Bartolome Island) (B, L, D)



Often called the geographic center of the Galápagos archipelago, **Rábida** — just south of Santiago — is predominantly composed of scoria, a particulate material created when hot lava meets seawater. Scoria has a high iron content, giving the island a red color. Rábida's single volcano is extinct, but it left behind a legacy: a spectacle of tall, red cliffs and a red-sand beach; which when played against the teal waters, makes this island visually stunning. On these red sands, marine iguanas and a noisy colony of Galápagos sea lions attempt to rest in the shade of nearby caves. Brown pelicans make homes by the beach in saltbushes. Behind the beach is a lagoon where wading birds and white-cheeked pintail ducks feed. A short trail inland leads through Littoral and Arid Zone plants, such as palo santos, prickly pear cacti, and spiny bushes. Galápagos doves, Galápagos mockingbirds, yellow warblers, and several species of Darwin's finches flutter in the vegetation, while blue-footed boobies and Nazca boobies linger in the cliffs. Unfortunately, introduced goats led to the extinction of several native species on the island, including geckos, land iguanas, and rice rats. In 1971, however, the Galápagos National Park Service successfully eradicated goats from Rábida, causing the island to bloom with diversified biota again.

In the morning, disembark on **Rábida Island's** red-coloured beach, caused by the unusually high content of iron in the volcanic material. Our walk brings us close to a large colony of sea lions, marine iguanas, mockingbirds, yellow warblers and several species of Darwin's finches. Very close to the beach, a salt pond hosts migrating greater flamingos at certain times of year. This is a great place to snorkel from the beach, both for beginners as well as for experienced snorkelers, due to the unique combination of underwater species encounter (scores of near-shore and pelagic fish) and submarine landscapes. Non-snorkelers will enjoy a ride on the glass bottom boat or a panga ride. During navigation to our next island, dolphins are sometimes spotted!

- *Wildlife: sea lions, marine iguanas, mockingbirds, yellow warblers and several species of Darwin's finches*
- *Flora: black mangrove, Galapagos croton/milkwort, leatherleaf, moyoyo, prickly pear cactus, saltbush, spiny bush*
- *Main attraction: flamingos, sea lion colony, snorkelling opportunities.*
- *Type of terrain: beach; Physical Condition: Low: Wet landing*



An extinct volcano **Bartolomé Island** (Area: 1.2 km², Maximum altitude: 114m) appears to be geology in its purest form: The island is dotted with craters, cinder cones, lava flows, spatter cones, and broken lava tunnels which run down from the summit. And, as an extinct volcano, it hosts a variety of red, orange, green, black and bright soils, bright volcanic formations and recent volcanic cones. And just offshore is Pinnacle Rock, the tuff cone that is probably the most famous (and most photographed) landmark in the Galápagos. Although at first glance, words that describe a moonscape — such as barren and desolate — might come to mind, Bartolomé supports a starkly beautiful complex of life. Some Arid and Littoral Zone plants have taken hold. On the slopes of the volcano, low-to-the-ground gray matplant thrives in the volcanic sand; and spurge, which forms a small tuft of green with tiny, white flowers, pushes up. Endemic lava cacti adorn some of the older lava. Species include brown pelican, Galapagos penguins, tintorera sharks and sea turtles.

In the afternoon, a wet landing on the golden beach of this famous island, dominated by the imposing Pinnacle Rock. There's great snorkelling (with the possibility of seeing a Galapagos penguin...) and swimming from the beach plus the chance to ride the glass bottom boat. But the highlight is a moderately steep hike to the summit of this diminutive island that boasts fantastic views of the archipelago - Pinnacle Rock, Sullivan Bay, and Daphne Major and Minor. The climb is aided by a wooden deck-like staircase, resting platforms and handrails – the view from the top is worth the effort! A panga ride will also take you around the colossal Pinnacle Rock.

- *Wildlife: brown pelican, Galapagos penguins, white tip reef sharks, green sea turtles.*
- *Flora: Galapagos Carpetweed, maytenus octogena, thorn shrub, white / red mangrove, salt bush.*
- *Main attraction: a panoramic view of the archipelago and Pinnacle Rock.*
- *Type of terrain: wooden staircase (360 steps), beach.*
- *Physical Condition: High (if making the climb to the summit); Dry landing*

Day 13 : Dec 3 – Galapagos Cruise (Prince Philip's Steps/ Darwin Bay - Genovesa Island) (B, L, D)



Genovesa Island (Area: 14 km², Maximum altitude: 76m). Less than half a degree north of the Equator, Genovesa is often referred to as "Bird Island" for the vast numbers of pelagic seabirds that come here to nest. Great frigatebirds, red-footed boobies, swallow-tailed gulls (including Galapagos gulls; the only nocturnal gulls in the world), and storm petrels all breed here by the thousands. However, there are no land reptiles — with the exception of some very small marine iguanas. This is due to the direction of the ocean currents, which couldn't carry the terrestrial animals here. Marine fauna around this island include sea lions and the smallest marine iguanas in the Galapagos Islands. The island has a single volcano that emerged only 76 m above the sea surface. The crater is located in the center of the island contains a lagoon and ships sail directly into its large, breached caldera to anchor. Due to its remote location and lack of freshwater, Genovesa remains almost unaltered; there are no introduced species on the island.

The morning starts with a visit to **Prince Philip's Steps**, one of two landing sites, which was given its name after the visit of Prince Philip of the United Kingdom in the 1960s, which helped stimulate international interest in the survival of the Galápagos. You will take a panga ride along the cliffs (where you may meet some Galápagos fur seals...) and then disembark for a steep climb (90 feet,) up some stairs to reach a flat rocky plateau. After negotiating the steps, you'll enter an Arid Zone forest of low palo santos, where great frigatebirds drape themselves in the trees and Nazca boobies and red-footed nest on the ground. The trail, which is on top of an old pahoehoe lava flow, then heads inland to the east coast where hot, fluid lava once flowed into a fracture, leaving a big crack. Standing here, you'll be surrounded by a cloud of Galápagos storm petrels, which nest in large numbers in the crevices and lava tubes. This same colony is occupied at night by Madeiran storm petrels. Well-camouflaged short-eared owls hide in the crack so they can launch attacks on the other birds.

Those not wishing to disembark can enjoy a longer panga ride along the cliffs (depending on weather conditions).

In the afternoon, land at the beautiful white, coral-sand beach of **Darwin Bay** to enjoy some swimming and/or snorkelling at this beautiful natural harbour. Galápagos sea lions come here to swim; and red-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, and great frigatebirds nest throughout the year in the saltbushes nearby. Then, take an easy stroll past the beach, you'll find tidal lagoons with lava gulls and yellow-crowned night herons. Above on the cliff, swallow-tailed gulls lay big, speckled eggs in nests made of white coral pieces and black volcanic gravel. Red-footed boobies and frigates hover, taking advantage of the rising winds. Near the end of this walk, thousands of storm petrels flutter at the cliff's edge, where they nest in crevices. Short-eared owls can sometimes be seen, hunting the storm petrels during daylight hours.

- *Wildlife: great frigatebird, Nazca boobie and red-footed boobie, Galápagos storm petrel, Galápagos fur seal, Galápagos green turtle, Galápagos sea lion, various finches, lava gull/heron, short eared owl, small marine iguanas*
- *Flora: red mangrove, salt bush, Galapagos croton, Galapagos shore petunia, lava / prickly pear cactus*
- *Main attraction: variety of nesting birds.*
- *Type of terrain - Prince Philip's Steps: steps, paths; Physical Condition: Medium-High (due to initial steps); Dry landing*
- *Type of terrain - Darwin Bay: beach, paths; Physical Condition: Low; Wet landing*

During the cruise, there will be the following CME activities which will take place when the ship is sailing between the island visits -

- **Lectures by Canadian physicians & interactive discussions**
- **Visit to the ship's hospital to meet with the ship's doctor to review on-board medical equipment and learn about common medical ailments at sea**

The exact day / time of the shipboard medical components will be notified on board dependent upon sailing times.

The itineraries and programme are subject to change without prior notice, due mainly to adjustments in the policies and regulations of the Galápagos National Park, weather conditions, seasonal changes and safety reasons. For island excursions, you will always go ashore by zodiac (known locally as a panga) while the ship anchors off shore. There are two different kinds of island excursion landings, ie

- *Dry landing: guests step from the zodiac (panga) onto rocks or a dock.*
- *Wet landing: as the zodiac (panga) edges onto a sandy beach, guests step into around 20 cm (8 inches) of water and wade ashore.*

Day 14 : Dec 4 – Galapagos Cruise (San Cristobal) - Quito (B)



San Cristóbal (Area: 558 km², Maximum Altitude: 730m, Volcano: 759m) is geologically one of the oldest islands, reflected by its eroded volcanic peaks in the north and densely vegetated slopes in the south. The provincial capital of the Galápagos, **Puerto Baquerizo Moreno**, lies at the head of Wreck Bay at the southwest tip of the island. One of the archipelago's two airports is here (the other is on Baltra Island). It is the only island in the Galápagos with permanent freshwater, held in a small lake named **El Junco** near the top of the island. Because of this availability of water, the island was settled early in Galápagos history. In fact, Charles Darwin's first stop in the Galápagos was on San Cristóbal in 1835 when the island was the home of the archipelago's governor. In the mid 1800s, the small, farming community of **El Progresso** was a penal colony for criminals from Ecuador. It was later taken over by Manuel Cobos, who treated the convicts as slave laborers. During an insurrection, the convicts murdered Cobos.

In 1998, the Galápagos National Park Service opened the **San Cristóbal Interpretation Center** here, giving visitors the opportunity to learn more about the plants, ecosystems, wildlife, and human history of the archipelago. On the eastern side of the island is **Punta Pitt**, an unusual place carved from the tuff formations of an ancient volcano and graced with a green-sand beach. This is the only place in the islands where you can see all three species of boobies nesting — blue-footed, Nazca, and red-footed. An endemic species of lava lizard also makes its tracks on the olivine crystals. The island is also the home of the **Galapaguera Tortoise Reserve**, which was established to preserve the San Cristóbal subspecies of giant tortoise. San Cristóbal originally had two populations of Galápagos giant tortoises: one in the northeast, consisting of approximately 1,400 individuals; and one in the south in an area adjacent to the current preserve, which became extinct.

Disembarkation in the morning and then a visit to see the breeding programme of **giant tortoises at Cerro Colorado**. It is located in the South East of San Cristobal Island and is also one of the few places where you can see *Calandrinia galapagosa*, an endemic plant to the island in danger of extinction. The site was built in 2002 to increase the population of the giant tortoise population also endemic to San Cristobal, one of the 11 populations of Galapagos land tortoises (*Geochelone Chathamensis*). It includes 12 hectares of dry forest in the area of Cerro Verde. Because of the fertility of the captive breeders, this program has yielded its first results in 2005-2006 after the arrival of 11 new members. There is also a small interpretation center where visitors learn about these reptiles and the conservation and breeding programs. Along the trail you can observe different birds such as mocking birds, yellow warblers and small ground finch, tree finch and flycatchers.

- Fauna: yellow warbler, Chatham mockingbird, Galapagos flycatcher, small tree finch, small ground finch, giant tortoise .
- Flora: Acacia, Galapagos croton, Guayabillo, heart-leaved scalesia, poison apple, matazano, cat's claw.
- Main Attraction: Giant tortoises from San Cristobal Islands
- Type of field: high, rocky and humid; Physical condition: medium; Dry landing

Following the visit, return to town and transfer to the airport (San Cristobal) for return flight to Quito.

Evening at leisure. Overnight in Quito.

Galapagos images...



Red lava crabs



Giant tortoise



Land iguana



Fur seal



Sea lion



Blue footed boobies

Day 15 – Dec 5 - Quito (B, D)

Breakfast at hotel.

Free time to explore this UNESCO capital.

Farewell dinner at a traditional restaurant in Quito. Overnight in Quito.

Note : If you are extending your trip to spend five days in Peru to explore Lima, Cuzco and the Sacred Valley of the Incas and the spectacular Macchu Picchu you will take a daytime flight from Quito to Lima, Peru. See full information on this optional extension later in this brochure.

Day 16 – Dec 6, 2015 (Sun) – Quito (B) - Toronto

Breakfast at hotel.

Transfer to the airport and return flight to Toronto.

Dep:	Quito, Ecuador (UIO)	Copa Airlines	CM 828	6-Dec-15	3:06 PM
Arr:	Panama City (PTY)			6-Dec-15	5:02 PM
Dep:	Panama City (PTY)	Copa Airlines	CM 470	6-Dec-15	6:24 PM
Arr:	Toronto (YYZ)			6-Dec-15	11:52 PM

The accommodation...

The cruise ship... Galapagos Islands cruise – MN SANTA CRUZ (5 days / 4 nights)



With an overall length of 72m and with a speed reaching 13 knots, the first class **M/V Santa Cruz**, based in the Galapagos since 1998, is the only ship exclusively designed for exploring the Galapagos and it is one of the most elegant of the vessels cruising the Galapagos' waters. Designed to provide both comfort and scientific information to 90 passengers visiting the Galapagos National Park, this vessel travels up to the remotest islands of the Archipelago. With several itineraries, each planned to offer the best of the archipelago in such a way as to ensure the continued preservation of this unique ecosystem, and 6 passionate and expert naturalists, the Santa Cruz offers an environmentally friendly and educational cruise focused in the Natural History of the Galapagos. The **Galapagos Naturalist Team** consists of a Chief Naturalist and five Naturalists who will not only escort guests ashore in small groups but will also provide on-board presentations and eye-catching lectures regarding natural history issues that complement your island excursions. Together with the Captain, they will plan the day's program and at night, they become your experts in explaining the beautifully arranged constellations of the southern skies.

The ship features a spacious interior and social areas with full air conditioning as well as a large bar, complete with a dance area. The elegant dining area offers buffet style breakfast and lunch, with a full service dinner served to your table. The expansive sundeck not only offers a bar, but also the perfect location for whale watching by day and stargazing the Southern Hemisphere's skies by night. Enjoy from a relaxing Jacuzzi or one of the reclining sun chairs.

One of the few ships in the Galapagos Islands with a glass bottom boat, the Santa Cruz offers a great alternative for those not apt to snorkel. The ship is complete with 49 cabins, accommodating up to 90 guests, all with private bathrooms and air conditioning. From a safety perspective, the ship has been certified with the highest International Classifications: ABS (*American Bureau of Shipping*), IMS (*International Management System for the Safe operation of Ships and for pollution prevention*) and SOLAS (*Safety Of Life At Sea*).

Facilities on board: 49 cabins, restaurant (buffet breakfast/lunch, a la carte dinner), lounge and pool bar, 24 hour tea/coffee station, boutique, gift shop, reading room and natural history library, conference room, jacuzzi, wildlife observatory deck, medical officer, glass bottom boat, e-mail / internet, radio, satellite telephone / fax communications. Snorkeling equipment is included and wet suits area available for hire for a small fee.

Cabin features*: all cabins on the ship feature twin beds, closet, vanity dresser, hairdryer, safety deposit box, 110/220 volt outlets, telephone.

The ship has 4 decks, lowest through highest, being Main (lowest), Upper, Boat and Sun (highest). We have an allocation of the following cabin types (all outside cabins) –

- Main deck - Main Standard twin : 2 twin beds, porthole, 125 sq ft
- Upper deck - Upper Standard twin : 2 twin beds, window, 125 sq ft
- Boat deck - Boat Standard twin (T) : 2 twin beds, window, 125 sq ft
- Boat deck - Boat Standard Plus twin : 2 twin beds, porthole, 130 sq ft
- Boat deck - Boat Superior twin: 2 twin beds, panoramic floor to ceiling window, 165 sq ft
- Boat deck - Boat Junior suite (T) : 2 twin beds, panoramic floor to ceiling window, 235 sq ft
- Boat deck - Boat Master suite (T) : 1 double bed, panoramic floor to ceiling window, 250 sq ft T – (T)riple occupancy available

It is not possible to choose specific cabin numbers.



Standard twin



Superior twin



Junior Suite

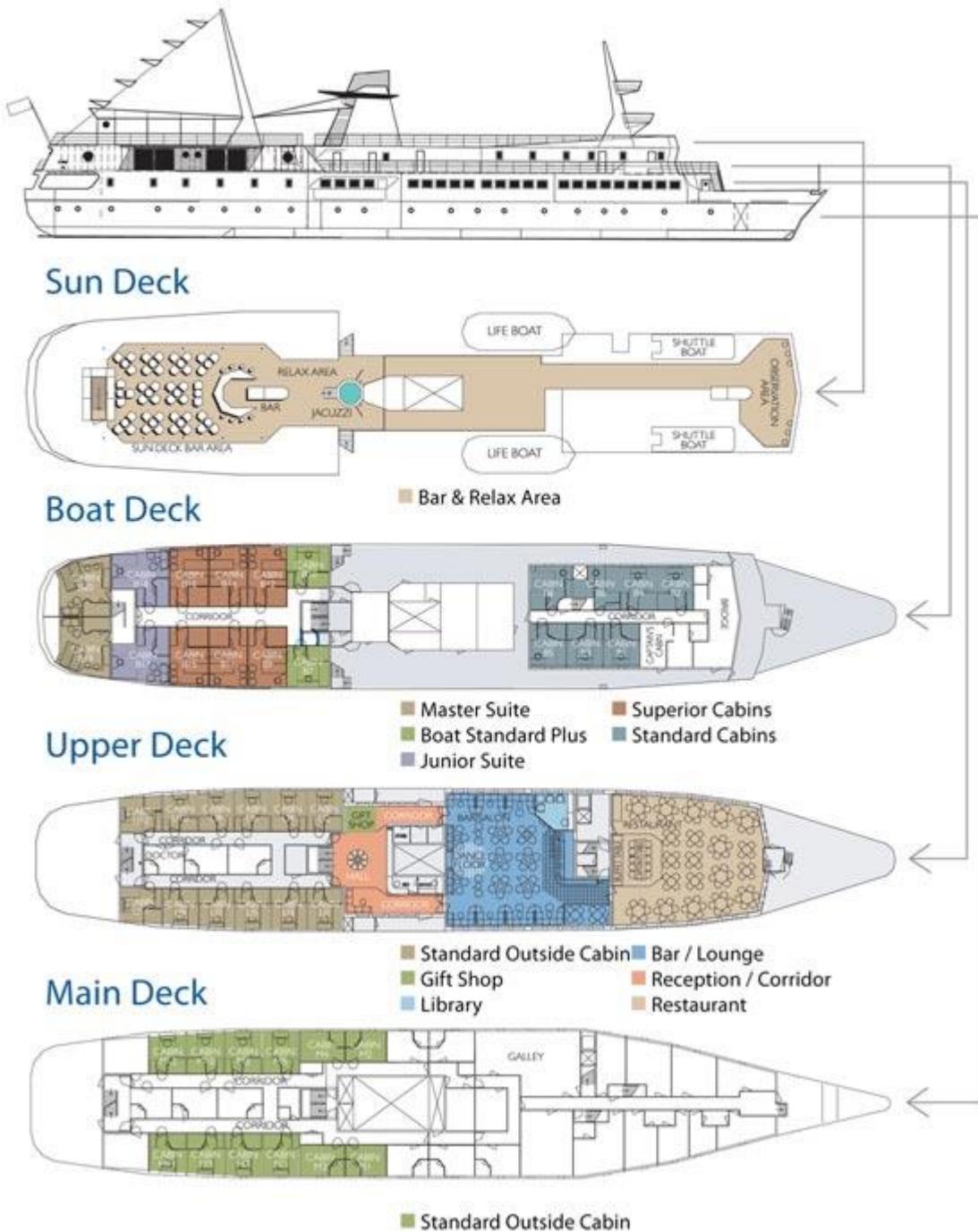
Activities: The reason that you travel to Galapagos is to experience the islands and their unique Fauna. Therefore, we have designed your programs in such a way that they allow you to perceive Galapagos from different perspectives: guided hikes, relaxing beach walks, snorkeling and swimming – even the ship's own glass bottom boat for those who wish a more relaxing option to view the diversity of the marine wildlife. The islands are visited twice a day and always involve a leisurely hike in a small group led by your own naturalist guide, allowing you to experience close encounters with nature. Transportation to each island is by ship's Zodiac as the Santa Cruz anchors offshore – part of the Galapagos Conservation Authority's regulations. There are both dry and wet (beach) landings dependent on each island and some of the hikes are on rocky, uneven terrain which require a certain level of physical condition (see physical condition rating for each island landing in the main body of the itinerary). Other activities include star gazing, scientific and ecological onboard conferences, and natural history lectures. Official web site – <http://www.santacruzgalapagoscruise.com/>



SEE OUR ARTICLE ON THE GALAPAGOS IN THE MEDICAL POST – NOV 3, 2009

<http://www.doctorsontour.ca/medical-post-2009.php>

DECK PLANS



UPDATE RE SHIP AT AUG 11, 2015 MIGRATION FROM MN SANTA CRUZ TO MN SANTA CRUZ II

There has been a recent change in the ship for the Galapagos Northern Isles 5 day cruise component of your tour. The owners of the MN Santa Cruz, the ship listed in our brochure above (pages 15-17) and which has been operating in the Galapagos Islands for many years, have recently purchased a replacement ship, the **MN Santa Cruz II** and, effective October 2015, this ship will replace the MN Santa Cruz.



The MN Santa Cruz II is actually a newer ship (constructed in 2002 and fully refurbished in 2015) and is a straightforward migration from one ship to another with staff, naturalists, day of operation, island itineraries etc all remaining unchanged. The Santa Cruz II is equipped to the same high standards as the MN Santa Cruz with equivalent on-board facilities including beautifully designed communal areas and viewing platforms, indoor and outdoor dining options, two lounge bars, a well-stocked library, two ocean view hot tubs and a state of the art gym. It is of a very similar size and layout to the MN Santa Cruz with the equivalent number of (4) decks (lower to upper being Horizon, Expedition, Panoramic and Sky – MN Santa Cruz decks were Main, Upper, Boat and Sun) and 50 total cabins (MN Santa Cruz had 49 cabins) and most cabins are significantly larger on MN Santa Cruz II compared to the equivalent category cabin on MN Santa Cruz.

Full information regarding the MN Santa Cruz II may be found at -

<http://www.metropolitan-touring.com/galapagos/santa-cruz-ii-cruise>

A separate brochure of the MN Santa Cruz II is also available at -

<http://www.doctorsontour.ca/resources/EcuadorGalapagosAmazon/Ecuador%20-%20Cru%20-%20Santa%20Cruz%20II%20-%20brochure.pdf>

Cabin categories remaining on the Santa Cruz II are now limited to -

- Horizon Deck - Explorer twin (163 sq ft)
- Panorama Deck - Darwin Suite double (325 sq ft)

The hotel and hacienda bases...

Hilton Colon, Quito (4*)

In the heart of the Mariscal Sucre downtown area on the Avenidas Amazonas, the Hilton Colon Quito hotel offers refined accommodation to both the discerning business and leisure traveler and is convenient for museums, local restaurants and nightlife as well as a short taxi drive from Quito's Old Town. 200 rooms (each with satellite TV, telephone, mini bar, 24 hour room service, a/c, wi-fi, safety deposit box), restaurant & bar, fitness centre & spa treatments, massage, conference centre and casino. Additional info at

http://www1.hilton.com/en_US/hi/hotel/QUIHIF-Hilton-Colon-Quito-hotel/index.do



Hacienda Pinsaqui, Otavalo (4*) ... in the foothills of the Andes

In the heart of Ecuador's Imbabura lake district, Hacienda Pinsaqui is a restored, 17th-century Andean estate rich with centuries of history. It is ideally situated at the base of Imbabura Volcano, just north of the world-famous Otavalo market, and only an hour-and-a-half from Quito, Ecuador's charming capital. Its location also allows effortless access to the region's many attractions: the lakes of San Pablo, Cuicocha and Mojanda, as well as the white colonial city of Ibarra and local handicraft villages like Cotacachi. Each traditional room is unique and has a character all of its own and includes a log-burning fireplace, sheepskin rugs and pieces of traditional art.

<http://www.haciendapinsaqui.com/>



In the unlikely event that a property needs to be changed it will be substituted with one of a similar standard.

The Amazon Ecolodge... SACHA ECOLODGE (4 days / 3 nights)



Location

Sacha Lodge is east of the town of Coca on the Napo River in Ecuador's Amazon region within a 5000-acre private ecological reserve.

Getting there

From Quito, a 25-minute flight takes you over the Andes Mountains' majestic snow-covered peaks and down over 8500 feet (2600 meters) into the Amazon Region. The flight destination is the port town of Puerto Francisco de Orellana, locally known as Coca, where you will be met by your guide and taken to a private dock to boarding a covered motorized canoe for a 2-hour, 50-mile (80-kilometer) trip down the sediment-rich waters of the Napo, the largest river in Ecuadorian Amazonia.



During the journey you may spot handsome shore birds such as herons, kingfishers, spoonbills and ospreys between the scattered native huts as you travel steadily away from civilization. Upon arrival to Sacha Lodge's private reserve, take your first walk along a raised boardwalk through dense flooded palm forest where several species of monkeys are often sighted. The path leads to Pilchicocha lake, a blackwater paradise where dugout canoes await to carry you across the lake to the lodge.

Facilities

The lodging at Sacha was carefully designed to offer comfort to the traveler yet preserve the environment and rainforest ambience. All of the 26 cabins, with high thatched roofs and private shaded terraces, are constructed with traditional materials to meld into their lush surroundings. Each of the cabins has a private bathroom with flushing toilet and hot shower, insect screens, electrical outlets, ceiling fans and hammocks overlooking the jungle where you may see fauna such as toucans, agoutis and monkeys right outside the cabin.

Meals are prepared buffet style in the restaurant and cater to a wide variety of tastes and above the main bar and lounge is a raised lookout, offering a scenic view of Pilchicocha Lake and excellent opportunities to birdwatch.

Activities

Days during your stay at Sacha Lodge are filled with discovery. Activities are spread out over a wide area and allow visitors to explore several distinct but equally fascinating habitats. Several trails lead through pristine terra firme forest, where 150 foot kapok trees tower above and roots form huge buttresses to give trees support. Others follow strategically raised boardwalks in seasonally flooded forests, where walking on the ground would be nearly impossible during most of the year due to groundwater.

A favorite activity is to paddle dugout canoes along tannin-rich black-water creeks and lakes, where luxuriant lianas, orchids, bromeliads and palm trees thrive. And wherever an outing may lead the possibilities of spotting animals, from the tiny pygmy marmoset to the feared ocelot or puma, are endless. Swimming and piranha fishing are also popular and, for the adventurous visitor, there are night walks and canoe trips in search of caiman and other nocturnal creatures.

A typical day at Sacha begins at sunrise or earlier, in order to take advantage of the cool morning hours when the rainforest's animals are most active. In the afternoon, visits begin at around 3:00 and often continue into the evening, when the nocturnal insect and frog chorus begins.

Sacha Lodge's guests are divided into small groups for activities, each of which are led by not one but two guides. One is a native guide, raised in the area and with expert knowledge of the rainforest's medicinal and other useful plants. This guide will often share stories from local culture, and lead the way with accustomed eyes that are incredible for spotting the jungle's hidden creatures. The second guide to accompany each group is a bilingual naturalist, who has been educated in the biology and ecology of the rainforest and who will translate for the native guides as well as share their own scientific knowledge about any plants and animals you may encounter.

Sacha Lodge offers a number of very unique sites to its visitors. A **130-foot observation tower** and a **940-foot canopy walkway** both give visitors a chance to get above the rainforest canopy for incredible views of the area. These areas are also great places to observe toucans and macaws and, with luck, spot noisy howler monkeys or a three-toed sloth. Another site is the **butterfly house** where over 40 local butterfly species are bred. Visitors can see the process of breeding and raising these colorful insects and wander through the "flying room." Finally, there's the **Yasuni Parrot Lick**. Just a short distance from Sacha Lodge is Ecuador's most famous parrot lick, where visitors can observe dozens of the magnificently colored birds feeding on the clay.

Average physical condition is required to participate in several of the lodge's activities – however, according to your interests and physical condition (but not your age!), different activity levels are offered which depend mainly on the distance and time you would like to spend on the rainforest trails; all other activities can be included in any program..... and there is always the option of taking some time to just relax in your hammock and experience the sights and sounds of the Amazon...

Additional information at <http://www.sachalodge.com/>



The Academic Program (approx 15 CME hours)...

The specific details of our educational program will be available at a later date but will include the following as noted in the detailed itinerary -

- Quito conference with lectures by Canadian & Ecuadorian medical experts & interactive discussions.
Keynote presentation from -
 - **Dr Alvaro Davalos, Quito, IAMAT** on -
 - **Discussion of local Ecuadorian health care issues (including insight into Tropical Medicine)**
- Visits to public and private hospitals in Quito
- Presentations on traditional healing methods by a shaman in Otavalo (Andes foothills) and one of the local Amazonian communities close to Sacha Lodge.
- Learn about herbal medicine through a "hands-on" rainforest walk (Quichua native) in the Amazon and a presentation on the Useful Plants of Sacha Lodge (from the 2005 professional study by Barry Thomson) *
- Visit to the M/V Santa Cruz ship's hospital and meeting with the ship's doctor to review on-board medical equipment and learn about common medical ailments at sea.

In addition, there are opportunities available for any physician who would like to make a short presentation at the conference - please let us know if you are interested in speaking by completing the relevant section of the tour registration form. A certificate of attendance will be provided to all attendees of the Academic Program.

Inclusions and Exclusions...

Inclusions –

- Round trip international flights from Toronto to Quito, Ecuador. Internal flights in Ecuador as per detailed itinerary.
- Modern, air conditioned coach transportation
- 5 day / 4 night Galapagos cruise on the MN Santa Cruz II
- 4 days / 3 nights at Ecuadorian Amazon Sacha Ecolodge,
- 5 nights at Hilton Colon (Quito),
- 3 nights at a Hacienda in the Ecuador highlands
- 15 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 12 dinners
- Comprehensive daily itineraries including, island sightseeing, naturalists and lecture services, Amazon ecolodge activities, escorted tours of local cultural sites and museums
- Academic program and tour of local medical facilities in Quito
- All admission fees (except those specifically noted above)
- Fully escorted tour including services of local English speaking cultural, ecological and naturalist experts
- Porterage

Exclusions –

- Beverages (both soft drinks and alcoholic beverages)
- Gratuities
- Galapagos Transit Control Card (Ingala card) (US\$10/person)
- Galapagos Park Fee (US\$100/person)
- Travel insurance – please note, **travel insurance (including medical and trip interruption coverage) is highly recommended** for this tour. Coverage is available through doctors-on-tour – please check for further details in our brochure.
- All items of a personal nature such as telephone / internet usage, laundry services etc

For **invoicing** purposes re doctors and their spouse, we can also provide a separate invoice with the doctor's air cost plus 100% of the accommodation costs included in the doctor's invoice.

AMAZON ECOLOGES AND THE GALAPAGOS SHIPS HAVE LIMITED CAPACITY AND FILL UP SEVERAL MONTHS IN ADVANCE – OUR PREVIOUS TRIPS ON THIS ITINERARY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OVERSUBSCRIBED AND THEREFORE WE RECOMMEND REGISTERING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE YOUR RESERVATION.

Misc information you need to know...

Travel documentation and visas

An entry visa for Ecuador is not required for Canadian citizens but your passport must have an expiry date no earlier than 6 months after your scheduled departure date from Ecuador.

Mandatory vaccinations

There are no mandatory vaccinations required at the present time (April 2015) for entry into Ecuador. A list of our medical recommendations will be provided closer to departure.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION – HIGHLIGHTS OF PERU

LIMA, CUSCO, MACHU PICCHU & THE SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS

(5 NIGHTS : DECEMBER 5 - 10, 2015)



Day 15 – Dec 5, 2015 - Depart Quito, Ecuador for Lima, Peru

Breakfast at hotel.

Free time to explore this UNESCO capital before your late afternoon flight from Quito to Lima, Peru.

After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met upon your arrival by a representative of our local tour operator partner in Peru. Transfer from airport to hotel.

Overnight in Lima.

Day 16 – Dec 6 – Lima – Cuzco (B)



The city of **Cuzco**, the ancient capital of the Incan Empire, was placed on the World Cultural Heritage List by UNESCO in 1983, and is without a doubt one of the most important destinations in Peru. There are Incan buildings waiting for you to discover them among its cobble-stoned streets, ones like the Koricancha and the palace of Inca Roca as well as Andean Baroque structures from the Colonial Period like the Cathedral and the Church of the Company of Christ. In addition, you can visit the picturesque neighborhood of San Blas where the best artisans in the department have set up their workshops. This magical city also has an exciting nightlife with cafes, restaurants, and bars for all tastes. Just ten minutes away from the city, there are the massive walls of the Sacsayhuamán fortress, and a few kilometers from there, you find the archeological sites of Qenko, Pukapukara, and Tambomachay, Incan buildings constructed completely with stone. It is also the gateway to the Sacred Valley of the Incas and access, by train, to Macchu Picchu.

Breakfast at hotel and transfer to airport for flight to Cusco where you will be met upon arrival and transferred to the hotel.

For physicians, there will be an early morning visit to the **Regional Cuzco Hospital**, to meet with a local doctor and learn about the local health care system in the region.

Non-physicians will enjoy free time to relax and acclimatize to the city's high elevation (11,000 ft)

In the afternoon, embark on a city tour of this charming old city. Cuzco was the capital of the Inca Empire and, according to legend, the city was built by Inca Pachacuti, who transformed Cuzco from a sleepy city-state into the vast empire of Tahuantinsuyu. The first Spaniards arrived in 1533, and undertook the construction of a new city on the foundations of the old Inca city, replacing temples with churches and palaces with mansions for the conquerors. The tour will include -

- **Koricancha (Sun temple):** As Cuzco was the center of the Tahuantinsuyo (Inca Empire), this is one of the most important of Inca temples. Originally a temple of the Killki culture, its walls served as the foundation for the construction of the Convento de Santo Domingo
- **Cathedral:** The first Cuzco Cathedral was built in 1539 at the Suntur Wasi Inca site; in 1560, the construction of a new cathedral on the Kiswir Kancha lot, palace of Inca Wiracocha, was ordered. The actual Cathedral was finished in 1664, a century after.
- **Sacsayhuaman:** The best known Inca ruin nearby Cuzco is the fortress of Sacsayhuaman, likely a religious construction for cosmology veneration and investigation (although some investigators believe it had a military function). The construction is herculean given the size of the megaliths, some of which weight between 90 and 128 tons.

Evening at leisure. Overnight in Cuzco.

Day 17 – Dec 7 – Cuzco – Urubamba Sacred Valley of the Incas – Machu Picchu (B, L, D)



The Urubamba Valley, better known as **El Valle Sagrado de los Incas** (*the Sacred Valley of the Incas*), is a relaxed and incomparably beautiful stretch of small villages and ancient ruins spread across broad plain and rugged mountain slopes northwest of Cusco. The magnificent Inca ruins found from Pisac to Ollantaytambo and beyond -- some of the finest not only in Peru, but also in all of the Americas -- are testaments to the region's immense ceremonial importance. The Incas built several of the empire's greatest estates, temples, and royal palaces between the sacred centers of Cusco and Machu Picchu, positioned like great bookends at the south and north ends of the valley.

Through the valley rolls the revered Río Urubamba, a pivotal religious element of the Incas' cosmology. The Incas believed not only that the flow of the Urubamba was inexorably tied to the constellations and the mountain peaks, but also that the river was the earthbound counterpart of the Milky Way. With the river as its source, the fertile valley was a major center of agricultural production for the Incas, who grew native Andean crops such as white corn, coca, potatoes, and other fruits and vegetables in expansive fields and along spectacularly terraced mountain slopes. The valley continues to serve as a breadbasket for Cusco, providing grains, peaches, avocados, and much more. The villages of the Sacred Valley remain starkly traditional - Quechua-speaking residents work the fields with primitive tools and harvest salt with methods unchanged since the days of the Incas, and market days remain important rituals.

Breakfast at hotel followed by full day Sacred Valley tour, including the following highlights –

- **Chinchero:** Chinchero's population is composed of twelve indigenous communities that maintain the *ayllu* system, even though it does not correspond anymore to the organization system in force before the Spanish conquest.
- **Maras:** Maras is recognized because of the salt mines, exploited since Inca times. The mines are made up by approximately 3,000 small pools, and the work consists in filling them with salt water until the water evaporates and the salt remains.
- **Ollantaytambo:** It was also an important administrative center with probable military functions if one considers the walls and towers. There are also traces of ancient roads and aqueducts.

Lunch at a local restaurant before transfer to Ollantaytambo station for your late afternoon Executive Class **Inka Rail train to Machu Picchu** – a spectacular journey to the town of Aguas Calientes situated at the end of the valley and the gateway to Macchu Picchu.



Check in to your hotel, the **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel**, a pueblo of whitewashed bungalows in an Andean style village within a secluded 12 acres of exquisite beauty nestled into terraced hills, where guests follow stone pathways to their rooms, located in comfortable one or two-story casitas. Facilities include a spa and first class restaurant offering stunning views of the rushing Vilcanota River.

<http://www.pueblohotel.info/>

Dinner and overnight at hotel.

Day 18 – Dec 8 – Macchu Picchu - Cusco (B, L)

*Standing 2,430 m above sea level, in the midst of a tropical mountain forest in an extraordinarily beautiful setting, the **Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu** was probably the most amazing urban creation of the Inca Empire at its height. As the last stronghold of the Incas and of superb architectural and archaeological importance, Machu Picchu is one of the most important cultural sites in Latin America*

Set on the vertiginous site of a granite mountain sculpted by erosion and dominating a meander in the Rio Urubamba, Machu Picchu is a world renowned archaeological UNESCO site and its giant walls, terraces and ramps seem as if they have been cut naturally in the continuous rock escarpments. The construction of this amazing city, set out according to a very rigorous plan, comprises one of the most spectacular creations of the Inca Empire. It appears to date from the period of the two great Incas, Pachacutec Inca Yupanqui (1438-71) and Tupac Inca Yupanqui (1472-93).

While the Inca people certainly used the Andean mountain top, erecting many hundreds of stone structures from the early 1400's, legends and myths indicate that Machu Picchu (meaning 'Old Peak' in the Quechua language) was revered as a sacred place from a far earlier time. Whatever its origins, the Inca turned the site into a small (5 square miles) but extraordinary city. Invisible from below and completely self-contained, surrounded by agricultural terraces sufficient to feed the population, and watered by natural springs, Machu Picchu seems to have been utilized by the Inca as a secret ceremonial city.

Two thousand feet above the rumbling Urubamba River, the cloud shrouded ruins have palaces, baths, temples, storage rooms and some 150 houses, all in a remarkable state of preservation. These structures, carved from the gray granite of the mountain top are wonders of both architectural and aesthetic genius. Many of the building blocks weigh 50 tons or more yet are so precisely sculpted and fitted together with such exactitude that the mortar-less joints will not permit the insertion of even a thin knife blade. Little is known of the social or religious use of the site during Inca times.

Macchu Picchu also provides a secure habitat for several endangered species, notably the spectacled bear, one of the most interesting species in the area. Others animals include: dwarf brocket, the otter, long-tailed weasel, pampas cat and the vulnerable ocelot, boa, the Andean cock of the rock, and the Andean condor.

Early breakfast at hotel before you guided **tour of Machu Picchu**, entering the Park area at dawn to witness the sunrise and enjoy this awe inspiring archeological site.

Rediscovered by Hiram Bingham more than a century ago, Machu Picchu is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Its architectural beauty, spectacular natural landscapes and the energy held in its enigmatic structures will take your breath away. You will follow in the footsteps of the ancient Incans as you explore this magical citadel along with your guide. After the tour, return to Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel for lunch.



Lunch will be at Inkaterra. Later afternoon, take the return train back from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo and return to Cusco.

Evening at leisure. Overnight in Cusco.

Day 19 – Dec 9 – Cuzco - Lima (B, L)



Breakfast at hotel and transfer to the airport for your morning flight to Lima where you will be met upon arrival and transferred to the city for lunch in a local restaurant.

In the afternoon, enjoy a city tour where the highlights will be -

- **Cathedral:** It is placed where the first Church of Lima was. The interior is austere, although it shelters real historic jewels like the finely carved wooden pews of the Baltasar Noguera choir, different side altars, and the remains of Francisco Pizarro. In addition, you can visit the Museum of Religious Art that possesses an important collection of canvases, sculptures, chalices, and chasubles

- **Convento de San Francisco:** is the Spanish name for Saint Francis Monastery located in Lima, Peru. The building is noted for its 17th century architecture, a high example of Spanish Neoclassicism. Catacombs are built under the monastery, and are said to connect to other catacombs beneath the cathedral and other churches.

Evening at leisure. Overnight in Lima.

Day 20 – Dec 10 – Lima - Toronto (B)

Breakfast at hotel.

Transfer to the airport and return flight to Toronto.

Dep:	Lima , Peru (LIM)	Copa Airlines	CM 760	10-Dec-15	1:38 PM
Arr:	Panama City (PTY)			10-Dec-15	5:19 PM
Dep:	Panama City (PTY)	Copa Airlines	CM 470	10-Dec-15	6:24 PM
Arr:	Toronto (YYZ)			10-Dec-15	11:52 PM

The hotel bases...

Lima, Peru (1 night)	Costa del Sol Ramada http://www.ramada.com/hotels/peru/lima/hotel-costa-del-sol-ramada-lima/
Cuzco, Peru (2 nights)	Costa del Sol Ramada http://www.ramada.com/hotels/peru/cusco/hotel-costa-del-sol-ramada-cusco/hotel-overview
Aguas Calientes, Peru (1 night)	Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel http://www.pueblohotel.info/
Lima, Peru (1 night)	Casa Andina http://www.casa-andina.com/select-miraflores/

All of the accommodation will be in first class properties. (In the unlikely event that a property needs to be changed it will be substituted with one of a similar standard)

Inclusions

- International flight from Quito, Ecuador to Lima, Peru
- Internal flights in Peru as per detailed itinerary
- Private, modern, air conditioned transportation
- Accommodation in first class properties as per detailed itinerary
- 5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 1 dinner
- Comprehensive daily itineraries including privately escorted tours of local cultural sites and museums
- Visit to local medical facilities in Cuzco
- All admission fees (except those specifically noted above)
- Services of local English speaking cultural guides / tour escorts **
- Portage at hotels

Exclusions

- Beverages (both soft drinks and alcoholic beverages)
- All items of a personal nature such as telephone / internet usage, laundry services etc
- Domestic and international (airport taxes)
- Gratuities
- Travel insurance

** Note: this extension will not be escorted from Ecuador to Peru but you will receive the services (local representative, cultural guides / tour escorts) of our local tour operator partner in Peru upon your arrival for the duration of this optional extension to Peru.

Misc information you need to know...

Travel documentation and visas

An entry visa for Peru is not required for Canadian citizens but your passport must have an expiry date no earlier than 6 months after your scheduled departure date from Peru.

Mandatory vaccinations

There are no mandatory vaccinations required at the present time (April 2015) for entry into Peru. A list of our medical recommendations will be provided closer to departure.

Insurance information...

We strongly recommend that you take out travel insurance to provide you with peace of mind due to, in particular, limited provincial health care coverage afforded to Canadians while traveling overseas and the cancellation provisions inherent in your booking. We offer two insurance coverage options –

Non-medical package – There are **significant inherent cancellation penalties** associated with your booking as detailed in our booking terms and conditions and this insurance package provides coverage for all monies paid for your trip if you should have to cancel due to medical, or other listed, reasons either relating to yourself or a member of your immediate family. It also covers you for trip interruption costs short notice return flight home etc) for medical reasons again, either relating to yourself or an immediate family member as well as flight and travel accident and baggage insurance

Deluxe package – provides coverage for all the components in the non-medical package, plus unlimited health coverage while in the destination

Note, if you believe you may have coverage through your **credit card** we would strongly advise checking with the credit card company the actual coverage afforded to ensure it covers medical, trip cancellation and trip interruption as not all of these items are covered (or may only offer limited coverage as to trip duration or insured \$amount in the event of a claim - sometimes as low as only \$1,000 per person) by all kinds of cards.

Total insurable costs (\$ per person)	NON-MEDICAL PACKAGE								DELUXE PACKAGE				
	0-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	0-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74
4000 - 4500	319	335	385	430	491	691	806	911	385	393	487	571	901
4500 - 5000	345	361	418	471	538	748	862	975	410	420	519	610	946
5000 - 5500	370	388	451	509	585	803	916	1,035	434	444	550	646	990
5500 - 6000	394	414	483	548	629	857	970	1,097	459	471	580	685	1,033
6000 - 6500	420	440	516	588	675	912	1,025	1,159	484	495	610	722	1,076
6500 - 7000	444	466	547	627	720	966	1,080	1,220	508	520	641	759	1,119
7000 - 7500	470	492	580	665	766	1,020	1,134	1,282	533	545	672	796	1,164
7500 - 8000	494	518	612	705	811	1,075	1,188	1,344	557	570	703	833	1,207
8000 - 8500	519	544	645	744	857	1,129	1,243	1,404	581	596	733	871	1,250
8500 - 9000	544	570	677	782	902	1,183	1,297	1,466	606	621	764	908	1,294
9000 - 9500	569	596	711	822	948	1,238	1,351	1,527	630	645	794	945	1,337
9500 - 10000	593	622	743	861	993	1,293	1,406	1,589	655	671	825	982	1,381
10000 - 10500	613	645	768	891	1,028	1,333	1,446	1,629	675	694	850	1,012	1,416
10500 - 11000	633	667	793	921	1,063	1,373	1,486	1,669	695	716	875	1,042	1,451
11000 - 11500	653	690	818	951	1,098	1,413	1,526	1,709	715	739	900	1,072	1,486
11500 - 12000	673	712	843	981	1,133	1,453	1,566	1,749	735	761	925	1,102	1,521
12000 - 12500	693	735	868	1,011	1,168	1,493	1,606	1,789	755	784	950	1,132	1,556
12500 - 13000	713	757	893	1,041	1,203	1,533	1,646	1,829	775	806	975	1,162	1,591
13000 - 13500	733	780	918	1,071	1,238	1,573	1,686	1,869	795	829	1,000	1,192	1,626
13500 - 14000	753	802	943	1,101	1,273	1,613	1,726	1,909	815	851	1,025	1,222	1,661
14000 - 14500	773	825	968	1,131	1,308	1,653	1,766	1,949	835	874	1,050	1,252	1,696
14500 - 15000	793	847	993	1,161	1,343	1,693	1,806	1,989	855	896	1,075	1,282	1,731

Testimonials...

What our physicians said about our previous educational escapes...

"A thoroughly enjoyable week – informative lectures, well organized tours and great company!
Dr. Dagnija Kalnins, Port Credit – Los Cabos, Mexico, 2003

"Great hotel facilities, excellent service – an extremely enjoyable, and educational, week
Dr. Doug Wooster, Toronto – Chile, 2005

"Great company, well organized and interesting tours, educational lectures and great food (and wine....!) –
Fantastic trip!"

Dr. Ray Martin, Toronto – Argentina, 2006

"Thanks for planning such an amazing trip. Our congenial group enjoyed so many rich experiences together and collected memories to last a lifetime. Each day was an adventure!
Andrea Maurice – Vietnam / Cambodia, 2007

"I want to express our appreciation for a wonderful trip. The tour operator and the guides were excellent and everything went very smoothly.... this was a tremendous trip which we will need to review again over the coming days to catalogue and appreciate all the places we visited and the marvelous things we saw.. Thanks again for all the hard work in putting the trip together with the memorable result that was achieved..."

Dr. Rudy Hyles, Mississauga – **Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2008**

"Wonderful people! Wonderful places!"

Dr. Phil McGuire, Ottawa – Peru, 2009

"The organization and accommodation were both excellent. We were always looked after with consideration and provided with a wide variety of interesting activities and experiences. The guides were most helpful and informative. A wonderful tour!"

Dr. Michael Dales, Toronto - **Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2009**

"I do not have words to express my appreciation and admiration for the your hospitality and service provided by your company and your partners on the ground in India"

Dr. Sudhir Pandya – Northern India, 2009

"I would like to thank you very much for a wonderful trip."

The Galapagos experience and the snorkeling was memorable.

I especially loved the Amazon rainforest/jungle experience.

That was the highlight of my trip. I loved every second of it.

The overnight (Achuar village) experience was the absolute best.

Your planning of the trip was personal and perfect.

Your choice of guide was impeccable. Carlos was the best guide we have ever had in our travelling experience.

The group bonded and I would to travel again with them.

My wife and I have done quite a bit of travelling in the past few years, and your expertise and personal touch made the trip worry-free, professional, interesting, knowledgeable, and extremely unique.

We will definitely travel with you again.

In fact, we are already saving money for our next trip with you."

Dr. Rick Black, Ancaster - **Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2009**

"We thoroughly enjoyed the recent trip to East Africa.

All lodges were excellent. The event was a huge success. A lifetime highlight"

John Bright - Kenya & Tanzania – March, 2010

"A wonderful trip. It was amazing to see so many different animals co-existing on the beautiful African plains. The Kenyan and Tanzanian people we met were gracious and welcoming.

Our host/trip manager was excellent - very bright, knowledgeable, good problem solver, great people skills - a delightful man who really made our trip memorable. Our guide/driver was also excellent - very knowledgeable, an excellent driver and keen to make our safari experience a good one. We had lots of fun and learned a lot from him. I loved the parks and reserves - the Serengeti and Ngorongoro are absolutely amazing".

Andrea Maurice, Toronto – Kenya & Tanzania – March, 2010

"The guides throughout the trip were superb, well informed with excellent local knowledge and willing to discuss any topic! The visits to the local hospitals were excellent. A fantastic tour!"

Dr. Linda Stirk, Toronto - Ecuador & The Galapagos (and Peru), 2010

"In addition to exploring the fantastic sights, and tastes, of Northern India, our group visited local hospitals and clinics to learn more about how medicine is practiced in India as well as in the SOS Children's village in Jaipur and the Mother Teresa charity Mission in Agra" - Dr. Serge Puksa, Northern India, 2011

"The trip surpassed all my expectations. The country itself was far more interesting than I thought and the tour itself was very well organized. The wineries were a treat and the physicians and their spouses were lots of fun. I would be happy to do another trip!"

Dr. Steven Traplin, Guelph – Spain Gourmet tour, 2011

"We found this tour to be a wonderful adventure... even more than we had anticipated. The planning and attention to detail on the ground ensured we had a comprehensive introduction to the many wonders of Ecuador. I will definitely consider participating in another program and will be certain to share details with my colleagues"

Dr. Alison Kelford, Oakville - Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2011

"The Southeast Asia tour was a great success. Ellen and I are resonating with the sights, sounds and smells from the visit! " Dr. Ron and Ellen Pace, Waterloo – Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia, 2012

"We really enjoyed the tour of Bali and we were glad that we could do it with Dr. (Mel & Bonnie) Borins who showed us the real Bali and not the tourist angle. Every moment was an experience of its own. Thank you so much for organizing such a unique experience"

Dr. Nilam Clerk & Shobha Amin, Toronto - Bali, 2012

"Excellent! Loved the trip and well worth it. Life changing experience, excellent speakers and very well organized. Met some great people and will keep in touch for future trips. Will definitely book another doctors-on-tour trip in the future"

Dr. Janel Gracey, London – Bali, 2012

"This was a fantastic trip that I will cherish forever. Your programs are well planned and excellent. We look forward to doing another one soon"

Dr. Ricki Sabga, Leamington – Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2012

"We had a magical time in Machu Picchu - such a spiritual time at day break - our guide was great! Memorable and well organized. Many thanks for the fabulous trip - your company does such a great job and such an opportunity for us.. and what a great group of people to share such an amazing trip with."

Dr. Paul Bates, London – Ecuador & the Galapagos, Peru 2012

"What an amazing trip this was ! You did such a fantastic job – well organized with wonderful support staff – everything left on time, great food, weather & traveling companions – and (our guide) Gonzalo was the best ! Thank you very much for such an unforgettable adventure."

Jack & Lore Brown, London - Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2012

"I have been fortunate to enjoy four trips with doctors-on-tour since 2009 - to Ecuador, Vietnam/Cambodia/Laos, India and Bali. All these tours were wonderful. Well-organized, excellent accommodations, top notch guides, remarkable CME experiences that broaden one's outlook on medicine and really great leaders of the tours. You should seriously consider taking one of these exotic trips. Beats lying on a beach!"

Dr. Linda Rapson, Toronto – 2013

"Just back from the South India tour and it was amazing!!! I am already keen to return to the north on one of your tours. I am a total convert to the doctors on tour trips!! I really enjoyed the varied itinerary...Kumar was outstanding, very professional and certainly made the trip run smoothly, never an easy job in a group that size, different personalities,etc....but he really was exceptional. Lacuma was also fantastic, very capable and organized. So....well done!!"

Dr. Susan Smith, Fredericton, N.B. – South India, 2013

"The whole trip was wonderful and very well organized. We appreciated the advance preparation information packages. The hotel accommodation was excellent and the guides provided a lot of background information in Indian culture and society which made the trip even more valuable as a learning experience. We enjoyed all of it – including meeting Dr. Peter, & Mary, Bloch (Group Medical Director) and the great people in the group!"

Dr. Ron Eliosoff, Ottawa - South India, 2013

"A wonderful trip that I would recommend to anyone"

Dr. Janel Gracey, London – Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2013

"We had a wonderful trip. It was such an interesting mix of people that we laughed all the way through - an amazing experience and a fabulous time. The Pantanal was awesome and we also totally loved the old colonial town of Paraty. We enjoyed ourselves so much we are thinking of signing up for another one soon. Thanks again - you did a wonderful job - it was a dream".

Dyana Fournier, Toronto – Brazil, 2013

"I was extremely pleased with my second trip through doctors-on-tour to Kenya & Tanzania - the tour was one of the most amazing things I have experienced!"

Dr. Kerri McGuire, Ottawa - Kenya & Tanzania, 2013

"I wanted to let you know that the trip to East Africa was excellent. The safari was well organized from beginning to end and John, our knowledgeable guide, unfailingly and graciously coped with all the challenges of the adventure. This was my third trip to Tanzania in the past 2 years and I came away feeling that I had finally seen the positive side to this beautiful country. We were fortunate to see far more animals than we had anticipated and the drivers took time to let us watch various scenarios play out rather than simply snapping a picture and moving quickly on. Having compared this safari to reports from others and to my previous one to the Ngorongoro Crater last year, I can honestly say that this was superior in every way. I definitely would recommend it to interested others.

Dr. Pat Barry, Burlington - Kenya & Tanzania, 2013

"Fantastic experience! Every detail to perfection."

Dr. Les Marien, Orangeville, On. - Spain Gourmet, 2013

"The experience was fantastic. Thoroughly enjoyed ourselves"

Dr. Pat Stansberry, Sherwood Park, AB - Ecuador (Galapagos) & Peru, 2013

"Had a great time! Very well organized"

Dr. Yusuf Januwala, Ipswich, Queensland, Australia - Ecuador (Galapagos) & Peru, 2013

"I want to give you some feedback on our amazing trip to South Africa. Our guide Craig was exceptional; lunch at La Petite Ferme was a highlight, great food, wine and scenery; in Swaziland, glass factory was very good the candle factory was great; Kapama River (Game) Lodge - amazing ! Soweto - great ! South African Airlines were great to travel with friendly service and, overall, it was a great trip"

Dr. Steve and Marg Szarka, Hamilton, On. - South Africa, 2014

"We had a wonderful trip. Places we stayed during the tour were all very nice and I every one had a good time. Your local tour manager was wonderful, extremely helpful and very well organized. Thanks again for all your help"

Dr. Kumar Banerjee, Vancouver, B.C. - South India, 2014

"Let me commend your team for this most excellent adventure. Both Lorna and Ashley have done an amazing job on every issue, always seeking consensus, to help us throughout the journey. They deserve a tremendous vote of appreciation".

Dr. Fred Engle, Toronto, On. - Chile, Argentina and Patagonia Cruise, 2014

"It was an amazing trip thru Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos. It exceeded all our expectations. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were gracious hosts. Their thirst for adventure and generosity of spirit added so much to our trip. The group we traveled with were a great bunch and we hope to cross paths in the future. The CMEs were informative and I enjoyed seeing the varied medical sites in each country"

Dr. Tom Stark, Timaru, New Zealand - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2014

"A brief note from Hillary and me to thank you for the flawless organization. The guides were superb and the choice of events, above and beyond the usual tourist musts. These were a lot of fun, while adding to our understanding of local cultures".

Dr. Alan Barkun, Montreal, Qc. - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2014

"Macchu Picchu and Galapagos were the highlights. Wonderful guides, very well organized and enjoyable. Tour leader did a great job !"

Dr. Michael Garner, Montreal, QC - Ecuador (Galapagos) & Peru, 2014

"Our guide was absolutely fantastic - the best I have ever been with. A very informative trip.

Dr. Yusuf Mnyusiwalla, Waterloo, On. - New Zealand, 2015

"The trip to South Africa was awesome - I would rank it up there with my favorite so far with Doctors on Tour. The people in our group were wonderful - it was a total joy and I can see now why South Africa is one of your favorite destinations"

Dyana Driscoll, Toronto, On.- South Africa, 2015



Doctors-on-Tour - Spain



Doctors-on-Tour - Ecuadorian Amazon



Doctors-on-Tour - India



Doctors-on-Tour - Bali

And finally, this is an article written by one of our Group Medical Directors, and published in Doctor's Review, who hosted our November 2009 program to Ecuador with the optional extension to Peru...

ECUADOR (including the Galapagos, Amazon & Quito) and PERU

An article by Dr. Rachel Kassner – Group Medical Director, Doctors-on-Tour - November 2009

A physician finds a wonderful way to combine education and travel

My husband, our 12 year old son and I just returned from what I can only describe as a trip of a lifetime. We were on an exceptional tour with several other physicians organized by doctors-on-tour, a Toronto based company specializing in offering a combination of vacation and (professional advancement) education to exotic worldwide locations. We spent almost 2 weeks visiting Ecuador, the Galapagos and the Amazon rainforest, and then several of us continued on to Peru for another 5 days.

It's difficult to choose what was the most spectacular part of the trip. Let me first mention Peru, even though it was the last stop on our trip. Although I'd been to Peru before, I think that we all agreed that there was something magical about our visit to the Inca sites, and to Machu Picchu in particular. My husband, who didn't expect to be moved by it, was awestruck. This incredible site was not lost on our son- he's still talking about it. What the Incas achieved and what still survived (in spite of the destruction by the Spaniards) is mind boggling. They were a civilization advanced beyond belief. The guides were extremely knowledgeable, and we felt that it wasn't just sightseeing, but an education. We stayed at the fabulous Inkaterra Eco Lodge about ½ hour from Machu Picchu, at the edge of the cloud forest. The Lodge sits on 100's of acres, grows its own organic vegetables and coffee, and has trained nature guides who conduct bird watching and nature hikes through parts of its own rainforest. Spectacular!

But no, Peru wasn't the highlight for us. We loved Ecuador. After a couple of nights in Quito, we flew on to the Galapagos Islands. The Galapagos, made famous by Darwin, are part of Ecuador and are situated in the Pacific Ocean over 900 km. west of the mainland. We were met at the airport by the crew of the Galapagos Explorer II, a 100 passenger ship that sails among the various islands. We spent 4 nights aboard the ship. All the wildlife in the Galapagos is heavily protected and access is strictly controlled. The ship has its own Galapagos born and trained guides who are walking encyclopedias on the geological history of the Islands and the wildlife endemic to each. Twice a day we would board zodiacs from the ship and head out for about 3 hours to visit a particular island. The guides made sure that we didn't miss a thing: land and sea iguanas; Sally Lightfoot crabs; the incredible frigate bird with his red gullet puffed out like a balloon to attract a mate; blue footed boobies; sea lions in abundance; enormous land tortoises; penguins; flightless cormorants; other birds in large numbers and varieties; and more and more species too numerous to mention. We also had a number of snorkeling opportunities, and there's no bigger thrill than swimming with the sea lions as they frolic around you.

And then back to Quito. Quito is a wonderful city, with a rich history. We also had an opportunity to journey north to Otavalo. What a treat! We visited towns that each specialized in only one craft: leather; weaving; mazapan (ornaments made out of dough and then glazed in captivating designs and colours – our son brought back a spectacular chess set whose pieces depict the wildlife of the Galapagos). We visited a 3rd generation family of musicians and makers of all types of pan flutes. They demonstrated how they make a simple pan flute, the sounds of each of the different instruments, and then put on a performance for us. We were captivated. We visited the Otavalo craft market which was an absolute kaleidoscope of colours. The wares are a bargain by North American standards and of course we always wished that we had bought more. The people are friendly and their clothing is so picturesque. An enchanting hacienda provided us with a refreshing overnight stay. None of us wanted to leave. Our guide Carlos was wonderful; he showed us his country and left us with a real understanding and appreciation for Ecuador and its people.

As incredible as all of this was, I think that our family felt that if we had to choose the most unique and spectacular part of the trip, it was the 4 days we spent in the Amazon rain forest.

Amidst all of this travel and moving from locale to locale, there was still time for a CME component. There were presentations on various topics from members of our group; a discussion on Ecuadorian health care by a local physician in Quito; visits to both public and private hospitals; a presentation by a biologist in the Galapagos; a visit to the ship's infirmary, and a hands-on introduction to natural and herbal medicines by our guide in the rainforest. There was also a local shaman who performed a cleansing ritual on one of our group that left us all agape!

This was a fabulous way to visit exotic places and still get first hand knowledge and understanding of health care as it exists other than in our North American environment.

Dr. Rachel Kassner is a family physician in Charlottetown, PEI and travels extensively. She is formerly the Head of the Department of Family Medicine at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown and is also the President of the Medical Society of Prince Edward Island as well as being a physician liaison on the project to implement unified electronic health records Province-wide.

The fine print...

The Terms & Conditions contained herein are the terms under which on-Tour and Doctors-on-Tour (being operating brands of Britcan International Consulting (B.I.C.) Inc) accepts reservations. Our liabilities are limited. When you make a payment of deposit and/or final payment, it is also an acknowledgement of receipt and acceptance of these terms and conditions.

RESERVATIONS & DEPOSIT Early reservations are recommended to guarantee your reservation as several of the accommodation providers with which we make arrangements on your behalf have limited capacity. All services are strictly on a request basis, both for air travel and land requirements and subject to availability of seats and hotel/lodge/camp rooms. A guaranteed non-refundable deposit of \$600 per person (together with the applicable travel insurance premium) is required with your reservation request. Tour extensions are also subject to additional non-refundable deposits as detailed in our brochure. Reservations made for travel within 105 days will require full payment at the time of reservation. Certain non-standard arrangements may require higher deposit and the same will be advised to you at the time of booking. Please be aware that some airfares (outside of our group air blocks) require full payment at time of booking and will be advised to you accordingly.

FINAL AND/OR BALANCE DUE PAYMENT: Guaranteed payment of all balances due is no later than 105 days prior to departure date. If payment of the balance due is not received by the stipulated date, we reserve the right to cancel your reservation without refund of deposit.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS: Visa & MasterCard credit cards are accepted as form of payment. Credit card payments require that the passenger complete and sign our Booking Form as verification of their approval for the credit card to be charged both for the initial deposit as well as the future balance payments on the date they become due, together with any other charges due relating to the booking that have been requested by you in writing (including by electronic mail communication). No services will be provided without receipt of the signed Booking Form. Third party payments may have restrictions.

CANCELLATIONS & CHANGES: The deposit amounts (for both the main tour and any optional extensions reserved) are non-refundable. Cancellation penalties for bookings cancelled by the client after the final balance due date (105 days before departure) are as follows: 105 – 61 days before departure – 25% of total price paid; 60 – 31 days – 50% of total price paid; 30 days or less – 100%. (Notwithstanding the foregoing, any domestic Canada flight purchased as an additional service to the advertised package is 100% non-refundable irrespective of the date of cancellation). If payments are not received by their due dates, we reserve the right to cancel the booking without further notice. There will be no refund for unused land arrangements after departure from North America. In the event of the cancellation by doctors-On-Tour of any or all components of the travel services offered herein, doctors-On-Tour will have no responsibility beyond the refund of all monies received from the client, which will be deemed to constitute full settlement. Individual airfares purchased outside of our groups air blocks are subject to different rules and cancellation fees. Some airfares may be non-refundable once the booking is confirmed regardless of when it was made. Details will be provided at the time of booking.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To protect against cancellation charges, we strongly recommend purchasing Cancellation Protection and Travel Interruption Insurance. Cancellation insurance must be purchased at time of initial deposit. In the event of illness, medical and hospital expenses are the traveler's responsibility and no refunds will be made, partial or total, for the purchased tour. We strongly urge that you purchase either the Non-Medical insurance (ie Cancellation Protection and Travel Interruption Insurance) or Deluxe Insurance (Non-Medical coverage plus Health coverage) packages offered by our doctors-on-tour through RBC Insurance.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION, VISA & OTHER IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS: A Canadian citizen must be in possession of a passport that must remain valid for a minimum of 6 months from the date of conclusion of their journey. Tour participants must also ensure that they comply with all visa and health requirements of countries they intend to visit. A tourist entry visa is not required for entry into Ecuador or Peru. Non Canadian citizens may have different requirements. It is the passenger's responsibility to ensure that all his or her passport, visa and mandatory health vaccination requirements for entry into the country are met and the cancellation penalties referred to above will apply if a passenger is not allowed into the destination country (or determines in advance of departure that he will not be allowed into the destination country) due to lack of proper documentation including, but not limited to, passport, visa, customs, health or currency provisions required by the destination country thus preventing him from participating in the tour. Final tour documents consisting of detailed tour itinerary, vouchers, and airline tickets will be forwarded approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure subject to receipt of final payment.

PRICING POLICY : Accommodations and services at the destination are contracted in local currencies and/or US Dollars. Due to frequent fluctuations in currency exchange (as well as other factors beyond our control including, but not limited to, fuel costs, transportation taxes and airport and local surcharges), prices are subject to change with or without notice and surcharges may apply for which we would endeavor to inform you as soon as possible. However, once we have received your final payment we would either waive any price increase or allow you to cancel your booking without penalty.

UNUSED PORTION OF THE TOUR: No refund will be made for any unused accommodations, missed meals, transportation segments, cruise portions, sightseeing tours or any other service. Such unused items are neither refundable nor exchangeable.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations on twin occupancy basis, is provided at the hotels/lodges/cruise ships as specified or similar. Single room supplements apply to persons occupying sole use of a room/cabin but travelling with other passengers on the same tour and sharing transport cost on transfers, game drives, coach tours, sightseeing and excursions. Quoted single room rate does not necessarily mean single occupancy of a double room, as several of the establishments offered have especially designed single occupancy units. Local accommodation ratings in overseas destinations outside of Canada may not always be consistent between individual properties in that particular destination nor are they necessarily comparable to an equivalent rating in North America. The right is reserved to substitute hotels/lodges/camps/cruise ships should conditions warrant such change for reasons beyond our control. Rooms/cabins are assigned by the respective supplier(s) on a run-of-the-house basis, in category (ies) as specified in the itinerary.

SINGLE PASSENGERS TRAVELLING TOGETHER: If you are travelling with a companion and each paying separately the regular each of two double sharing accommodation rate and your companion decides to cancel, the remaining travelling passenger will be responsible for either finding a replacement travelling companion to take the cancelled passenger's place or must pay the single supplement and travel on a single basis.

MEALS & BEVERAGES: Meals as included on our itineraries are either buffet meals and/or table d'hôte. Meals ordered through room service are not included and must be paid directly to the establishment. Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and bottled water are included only where indicated on the itinerary. Unless specifically mentioned in your itinerary, all drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) are to be purchased and paid directly to the establishments.

OPTIONAL TOURS, EXCURSIONS AND TRIP EXTENSIONS: It is our intent to operate any Optional Extensions on a private group basis. However, should the number of participants be of an insufficient level, we reserve the right to either

- (1) add a surcharge to the previously stated selling price to be able to still offer the extension on a private basis or
- (2) operate any individual tour on a shared basis with other non-group participants or
- (3) cancel the tour and provide a full refund of all monies paid.

No refunds can be provided for cancellation of any tour by the client while in the destination.

SPECIAL REQUESTS: While we will make every effort to accommodate special requests, eg., room/cabin locations, adjoining rooms, non-smoking rooms, bed preferences, special dietary meal requests, these cannot be guaranteed and Doctors-on-Tour cannot be held responsible if such requests cannot be fulfilled. Requests for upgrading rooms/cabins are subject to additional charges. Any deviations to the standard program arrival and departure flight dates should be notified at the time of booking and are subject to availability and also any applicable flight class supplement.

DOCUMENT DELIVERY: Your travel documents will be sent to you approximately 3 weeks prior to departure. For bookings received within 3 weeks of departure, express delivery of documents will require a courier delivery fee of \$30 to cover extra handling and processing. Additional courier charges will apply for all residents outside of Canada, irrespective of when the booking is made.

CONSUMER PROTECTION: on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour are licensed under the Ontario Government Ministry of Consumer & Corporate Relations, Travel Industry Act 1974, Registration No. 50009110. The Act is administered by the Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO), the government regulated body which is responsible for enforcing and monitoring the Travel Industry Act, including the protection of advance monies paid to its registrants by consumers. More information about TICO is available at <http://www.tico.on.ca/>

NOTICE TO TRAVELLERS: Canadians enjoy a living standard which is among the highest in the world. In other countries, the uninterrupted supply of water and electricity, local health conditions, levels of security and standards of food and beverages may sometimes differ from those enjoyed at home. Illness or inconvenience resulting from the services provided or omitted at the destination are outside the reasonable control of on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour who bear no responsibility for such illness or inconvenience. on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour cannot accept responsibility for the behaviour of other guests/groups nor the unlikely event of the withdrawal of services or facilities due to local cultural and political events or holidays.

FORCE MAJEURE: on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour shall not be liable for any claims, losses, damages, costs, expenses, delays or loss of enjoyment, of any nature or kind whatsoever, resulting from events beyond our or a supplier's reasonable control, including but not limited to acts of God, strikes, lockouts or other labour disputes or disruptions, wars, blockades, insurrections, riots, earthquakes, weather conditions, floods or acts or restraints imposed by government authorities.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES : on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour makes arrangements with airlines, tour operators, ground handlers, hotels/lodges, cruise lines, car rental companies & other independent parties to provide you with the travel services and other services you purchase. Although we take care in selecting these suppliers, we have no control over them and, therefore, cannot be responsible for their acts or omissions. In the unlikely event that a hotel / lodge described in this brochure is not available we reserve the right to provide an alternate hotel / lodge of the equivalent standard. We also reserve the right to substitute another airline if the particular airline described in this brochure is not available.

The travel services provided are subject to the applicable provincial Travel Industry Acts and Regulations and are subject to the conditions imposed by these suppliers and their liability is limited by their tariffs, conditions of carriage, tickets and vouchers and international conventions and agreements.

on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour shall not be responsible for any loss, damage or injury, whether physical or mental, or to property, resulting from any delay, substitution or deficiency of quality of equipment or service, or any act, omission, negligence or commission of any party supplying any of the services or accommodation herein, its agents, servants, employees, subcontractors or for any claims for such loss, damage, or injury, whether physical or mental, arising therefrom, or from any cause that arises by reason of actions of parties other than doctors-On-Tour. In the event that it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort or well being of the passengers, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour . The right is reserved to withdraw any or all tours should conditions warrant, also to decline to accept or retain any passengers as members of the tours. on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour can assume no responsibility for lost tickets or coupons. The liability of on-Tour / Doctors-on-Tour for any loss, damage or injury, whether physical or mental, arising from its own acts, omissions or negligence, is limited to the price of the services purchased.