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CME, ECOLOGICAL & CULTURAL TOUR OF ECUADOR & PERU

(INCLUDES GALAPAGOS CRUISE, QUITO, CUZCO & MACCHU PICCHU)

November 19 – December 4, 2016

The Organizers...

Dr. Steve Szarka, B.Eng., M.Eng., M.D., C.C.F.P. - Hamilton, On.

Dr. Steve Szarka is a family physician with a private practice in Hamilton, Ontario. His undergraduate education in both Electrical and Computer Engineering (B.Eng, M.Eng) and Medicine (M.D) was also obtained at McMaster University in Hamilton. In Hamilton, he helped establish, and was the Lead Physician for, one of the first Primary Care Reform Networks (PCN) in Ontario. He has also served on Steering Committees for the establishment of the first Family Health Team in Ontario, and to help establish protocols for the Family Health Team in the Hamilton Area relating to the management of chronic care diseases as it pertains to diabetes. He currently holds the position of Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University and is the President of the Hamilton Academy of Medicine.

He developed a special interest in phlebology and sat on the board of directors for the Canadian Society of Phlebology. This has been a challenging position that has allowed him to interact and teach his colleagues in this field, both here in Canada and as an invited speaker all over the world. This will be Dr. Szarka's third venture hosting a Doctors-on-Tour program following his leadership of the fully-subscribed CME tours to Eastern Europe (September 2015) and South East Asia (February 2016).

Dr. Szarka may be contacted at –

e: szarkas@mcmaster.ca, Tel: 1-905-648-3322

Doctors-on-Tour >

Doctors-on-Tour was created in 2000 and specializes in offering ecological, cultural, gastronomical and adventure travel to exotic destinations for physicians who want to combine learning and travelling. Our programs offer targeted educational programs offering updates on current topics of interest together with meetings and discussions with local health care representatives to specifically discuss common medical developments in, and challenges facing, the local health care systems in both Canada and the country where the meetings and discussions are being located. This also includes in-depth tours of hospital facilities (both public and private) in order to meet with local medical practitioners and review, and compare, facilities, techniques and practices on a first hand basis. We offer programs in several worldwide locations including to such diverse and intriguing areas as **South America (Brazil, Chile/Argentina, Ecuador/Peru), Africa (Kenya/Tanzania, South Africa, Zanzibar, Kilimanjaro climb), India, China, South East Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos & Bali), New Zealand and Europe (Eastern Europe, Spain).**

Additional information, including detailed program brochures downloadable in pdf format and recent testimonials, can be found at www.doctorsontour.ca . The company is a licensed retail travel organization under The Travel Industry Act of Ontario thereby affording complete protection of all monies paid prior to departure. (TICO registration no. 50009110).

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The Destinations... Ecuador (including the Galapagos Islands) and Peru



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.

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 on these islands includes the Galapagos land iguana, blue-footed booby, Galapagos green turtle, sea cucumber, 13 endemic species of finch, Galapagos penguin, flightless cormorant, Galapagos 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://en.ecuador.travel/>

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

<http://www.galapagos.org>

Ecuador Tourist Board

Galapagos National Park

Galapagos Conservation Organization



From ancient cultures to bustling cities to extraordinary landscapes, few destinations have as much to offer visitors as **Peru**, an astonishingly varied country. Here you'll find panoramic mountain ranges, vast deserts, beautiful beaches and tropical jungle, not to mention fantastically rich history, archaeology, wildlife and enduring indigenous cultures.

Images of the extraordinary remains of ancient civilizations will inevitably jump to mind. The Inca stronghold **Machu Picchu** is one of the most famous and photogenic archaeological sites in the world and the mysterious Nazca Lines boggle the brain, but there are hundreds of similarly fascinating and even older sites to discover.

All are set in stunning landscapes, whether parched desert coast, soaring sierra or remote rainforest overflowing with wildlife. Such a diverse landscape generates diverse pleasures; you can hike through snowy peaks one day, and relax on the beach the next; paddle a dugout through lowland rainforest or hop on a traditional reed boat on some of the world's highest lakes.

The towns and cities of Peru are equally fascinating. **Lima's** shiny and modern Miraflores area and grand and imposing historical centre are an example of the wealth of the country at its height. Contrasting beautifully is the ancient capital of **Cuzco** with its steep, winding, cobbled street and its more than 1,000-year history. In between is everything from established cities to large communities to tiny indigenous villages, at extremes in altitude and temperature.

Peru is a hiker's dream, with some of the world's most picturesque and challenging mountain ranges in the world. The richness of accessible wilderness allows you to really immerse yourself in nature and discover the country for yourself. The country has so much to offer and mesmeric music, well-stocked museums, rich culture and uncommonly friendly people and you have a destination with something for everybody.

Further information can be found at -

<http://www.peru.travel/en/>

www.peru.org.pe

The Academic Program (15 CME hours)...

Complete details of our Academic Program will be provided in your full documentation package, however, as noted in the detailed itinerary, the program will include the following –

- Medical tour of **Regional Cuzco Hospital**, Cuzco to meet with local doctors and learn about the Peruvian medical system
- **Shaman presentation**, using local herbs & explanation of the natural medicine used by Peruvian ancestors, Puno
- **Academic Conference on board M/V Santa Cruz** with lectures by Canadian & Ecuadorian medical experts & interactive discussions
- Visit to the ship's hospital on the **M/V Santa Cruz** to learn about common onboard medical issues
- Medical tour of **Otavalo Provincial Hospital**, **Otavalo** to meet with local doctors and learn about the Ecuadorian medical system

In addition, any physician who would like to make a short presentation at the Academic Conference on board the Santa Cruz II in the Galapagos, should register their interest by completing the relevant section of the program registration form and our Group Medical Director, Dr. Steve Szarka (e: szarkas@mcmaster.ca, Tel: 1-905-648-3322), will contact you directly.

A certificate of attendance will be provided to all attendees of the Academic Program.

The detailed itinerary...

Day 1 – Nov 19, 2016 (Sat) - Depart Toronto for Lima, Peru

Fly from Toronto to Lima, Peru.

Dep:	Toronto (YYZ)	Copa Airlines	CM 471	19-Nov-16	7:55 AM
Arr:	Panama City (PTY)			19-Nov-16	1:42 PM
Dep:	Panama City (PTY)	Copa Airlines	CM 493	19-Nov-16	3:45 PM
Arr:	Lima, Peru (LIM)			19-Nov-16	7:15 PM

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 2 – Nov 20 – Lima (B,L)



Breakfast at hotel and in the morning, enjoy a city tour of Lima where the highlights will be -

- Convento de San Francisco
- Central Reserve Bank Museum
- Plaza de Armas
- Miraflores and San Isidro district

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Balance of the day and evening at leisure. Overnight in Lima.

Day 3 – Nov 21 – Lima – Cuzco (B,D)



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.

Dinner will be at one of the city's local restaurants.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Day 4 – Nov 22 – 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 Macchu 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 (Aguas Calientes).

Day 5 – Nov 23 – Macchu Picchu (B,L,D)

*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 it's 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 to enjoy this awe inspiring archeological site in relative solitude for several hours before the daily train from Cuzco arrives with passengers late in the morning (this is one of the **points of differentiation of our program**, as many other tours only visit Machu Picchu for the day from their Cuzco base with no overnight stays in Aguas Calientes – a totally different experience)



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.



In the afternoon, take a short (approximately 1-1.5 hours each way, optional, moderate fitness level required) guided trek to the **Sun Gate**. The Sun Gate is the point at which ancient travelers (and now hikers) of the Inca Trail (bearing the Incan Ruler and his entourage on their backs) would have caught their first sight of Machu Picchu.

This hike provides a different perspective of the ruins with a spectacular view over the mountain from where the Inca Trail approaches

Dinner and overnight at the hotel (Aguas Calientes).

Day 6 – Nov 24 – Machu Picchu – Cuzco (B)

Breakfast at the hotel and some free time before transfer to Aguas Calientes station for your mid-morning Vistadome train to Ollantaytambo and road transfer to Cuzco.

Free time in the afternoon to explore this World Cultural Heritage city.

Evening at leisure.

Overnight in Cuzco.



There will also be a **Shaman presentation**, using local herbs & explanation of the natural medicine used by Peruvian ancestors. This is known as "**Tribute to the earth**": In the Andean world, pre-Hispanic religious fervor has survived until today in age-old rites that link Man to Nature, where the earth enjoys huge symbolic importance. The Pachamama or Earth goddess, dwells in the Urkhupacha, the Underworld, and provides her fruits to feed Man. Thus, within the reciprocal nature of the Andean people, villagers make offerings to her. These offerings include coca leaves, chicha, wine and jungle seeds called huayruros, believed to have magical powers.

The coca leaf, a sacred plant which serves to mediate between the inner world (the Apu and the Pachamama) and the outer world (that of Man) is found in countless mestizo religious celebrations in communities in the country's interior and even urban centers.

Dinner and overnight in Cuzco.

Day 7 – Nov 25 - Cuzco – Lima – Quito (Ecuador) (B)

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to Cuzco airport for morning flight to Lima and onward flight from Lima to Quito, Ecuador.

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

Overnight in Quito.

Day 8 – Nov 26 – Quito – Quito city tour including the “Middle of the World” (B,L)



*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 it's 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 mild 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 hotel.

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 the of 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. Continue to El Panecillo Hill for a beautiful and impressive view of the Andean landscape.

Then continue to the **Equatorial Monument**, 16 miles North of Quito, stopping on the way for lunch, 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.

Evening at leisure to explore one of Quito's many fine restaurant offerings. Overnight in Quito.

Day 9 – Nov 27 – Quito - Imbabura / Otavalo - Quito (B,L)

***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 hotel. Today head north on a spectacular drive into the foothills of the Andes to the beautiful area of lakes and distinct picturesque towns 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. Our first stop is **Calderón**, a small village that keeps the tradition of making colorful dough figurines of Indian dolls, llamas, flowers and even great Christmas ornaments. Observe how each figure is molded by hand, with dough of different colors carefully put together; then it is baked and varnished.

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

Continue on to Otavalo.

Physicians – Visit to the Otavalo Provincial Hospital to learn about the Ecuadorian medical system.

Non-physicians – Spend time at South America's most famous market in **Otavalo** - explore, and barter, at the many stalls full of ponchos, scarves, blankets, wall hangings, woven belts (fajas), hats, handbags, silverware and much more

Lunch at one of the traditional haciendas dating back to the 16C just outside Otavalo.



Return to Quito in the afternoon with a stop en route in **Cotacachi**, a town famous for its production of leather goods and maybe take home some fine quality leather items at exceptional prices.

Evening at leisure. Overnight in Quito.



Day 10-14 – Nov 28-Dec 3 – Quito – Galapagos Islands (M/V Santa Cruz – 5 days Northern Itinerary cruise)



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 on 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. In 5 days, you can see 11 of the BIG15 Galapagos species !

Day 10 – Nov 28 – 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 the hotel.

Transfer from hotel to airport for morning flight from Quito to Baltra in the Galapagos Islands to board the MV Santa Cruz. Cabin assignment, introductory talk and lunch.

Sail to **Las Bachas (Bachus 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 corals; *Physical condition:* low; *Wet landing*

Day 11 – Nov 29 – 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*

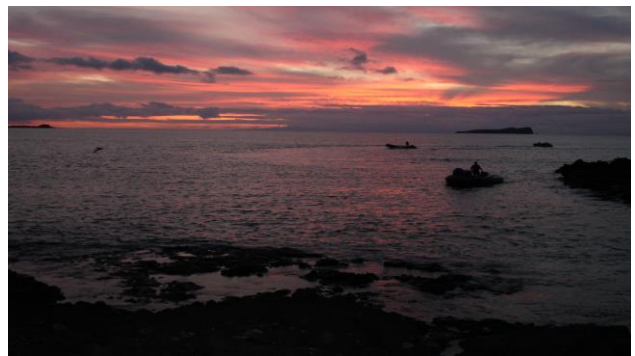
Day 12 – Nov 30 – Galapagos Cruise (Rabida Island, Bartolome Island) (B,L,D)



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, muyoyo, 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 1 – 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 learn about common onboard medical issues

The exact days / times will be notified with your complete documentation package.

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 2 – 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 Progreso 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-leafed scalesia, poison apple, matazarno, 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 to take the flight back to Quito.

Overnight in Quito.

Galapagos images...



Red lava crabs



Giant tortoise



Land iguana



Fur seal



Sea lion



Blue footed boobies

Day 15 – Dec 3 - Quito (B)

Breakfast at hotel.

Free time to explore the UNESCO capital of Quito.

Farewell dinner in the evening at one of the city's fine restaurants.

Overnight in Quito.

Day 16 – Dec 4, 2016 (Sun) – Quito - Toronto

Breakfast at hotel and some free time in the morning for any last minute shopping or sightseeing.

Transfer to the airport for your flight back to Canada.

Dep:	Quito, Ecuador (UIO)	Copa Airlines	CM 828	14-Dec-16	3:15 PM
Arr:	Panama City (PTY)			14-Dec-16	5:00 PM
Dep:	Panama City (PTY)	Copa Airlines	CM 470	14-Dec-16	6:11 PM
Arr:	Toronto (YYZ)			14-Dec-16	11:52 PM

The accommodation...

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



With an overall length of 72m and with a speed reaching 10.5 knots, the M/N Santa Cruz II is one of the newest expedition vessels operating in the Galápagos Islands and was brought into operation in October 2015 replacing its legendary predecessor, the MV Santa Cruz.

The 50-cabin Santa Cruz II is a chic new way to explore the wonders of the Galápagos Islands in style and comfort offering guests the unrivalled service and guiding fort which its predecessor became so well know while ensuring the utmost care is taken to preserve the islands' delicate ecosystem via the latest in sustainable sailing technologies.

The Santa Cruz II has five spacious decks, with modern interiors designed by renowned ship designer, Richard Nilsson. Created with the ethos of stylish simplicity at its heart, the ship ensures sumptuous surroundings from which to take in the magnificent vistas of the enchanted islands. Relax in the beautifully designed communal areas and viewing platforms, including indoor and outdoor dining options, two lounge bars, a well-stocked library, two indulgent ocean view hot tubs and a state of the art gym.

Luxury ratios of crew and guides to passengers guarantee quality individual attention with 90 guests accommodated in 50 contemporary designed cabins across three decks. Guests can choose from luxuriously appointed single, double and triple cabins, or opt for one of the three even more exclusive Darwin Suites, an exceptional standard of accommodation on the Panorama Deck, where guests will receive elevated service and carefully refined extras such as a take-home Galápagos coffee table book, a tablet loan and a CD of Expedition photos and videos at the end of your cruise capturing those special memories.

Creative Ecuadorian and international cuisine will be prepared under the watchful eye of the ship's Cordon-Bleu trained gastronomic director. Freshly caught fish and seafood and locally grown organic fruit and vegetables will feature heavily on menus served in the colourful Beagle Dining Room and al fresco on the Panorama Deck.

Designed to provide both comfort and scientific information to guests visiting the Galapagos National Park, the ship offers four, five and nine night educational itineraries in the Northern, Eastern and Western Galápagos Islands sailing to some of the remotest islands of the Archipelago focused in the Natural History of the Galapagos while planned in such a way as to ensure the continued preservation of this unique ecosystem. On each itinerary, there is a **Galapagos Naturalist Team** consisting of an Expedition Leader and seven naturalist guides 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 as they also become your experts in explaining the beautifully arranged constellations of the southern skies. Activities can be tailored to each guest's personal interests and range from daily land expeditions to a host of aquatic activities, including ocean kayaking, snorkelling with sea lions and glass bottom boat expeditions – all of the options permitted by the Galápagos National Park.

Facilities and amenities -

- Bar & Lounge
- Restaurant
- Al-fresco dining-BBQ
- Gift Shop
- Gym
- 24h Coffee station (coffee, tea, chocolates and chilled water)
- Satellite telephone
- WiFi hotspot (intermittent/low bandwidth)
- PA system
- Snorkelling equipment (included)
- Hair dryer
- iPod/MP3 docking station
- Safe deposit box (in cabin)
- Hot tub (2)
- Reading room and natural history library
- Multiple purpose room
- Air conditioned throughout
- Wetsuit rental
- Glass bottom boat
- Kayaks
- 24/7 infirmary (medical doctor on board)

Certifications: For passenger and crew safety, the vessel is fully compliant with all IMO, MARPOL, and SOLAS guidelines

Cabin Categories -

The Santa Cruz II's Swedish-designed cabins **reflect the latested in cruise trends**. Comfortable spaces and large picture windows illuminate the interior spaces and allow guests to take in the views, offering elegant relaxation areas after a day of active exploring. The ship has 50 cabins for 90 guests, 36 of which can be interconnected, offering flexibility for guests from single travellers to families. 43 **Explorer Double Cabins** are located on the Horizon (23), Expedition (17), and Panorama Decks (3). In addition, there are three **Darwin Suites** on the Panorama Deck with double picture windows, will provide superb comfort and deluxe amenities for more discerning guests.

- 43 Explorer Double Cabins (163 sq ft / 15.2 m2) - Horizon, Expedition and Panorama Decks
- 2 Explorer Triple Cabins(192 sq ft / 17.8m2) - Horizon Deck
- 3 Darwin Suites (325 sqft / 30.0m2) - Panorama Deck

Interconnected cabins are available for families.

* It is not possible to choose specific cabin numbers



Explorer Double Cabin



Darwin Suite

Cabin amenities and features -

Explorer Cabin (163 sq ft / 15.2 m2) - Horizon, Expedition and Panorama Decks)

- Convertible (2 twin to 1 double) beds in 90% of cabins
- Air conditioning
- Picture window
- Hair dryer
- iPod/MP3 docking station
- Public address system
- In-room safe
- Reading lights

Darwin Suite (325 sqft / 30.0m2) - Panorama Deck

- 1 queen sized bed
- Separate sitting area
- Inset tablet in each suite
- L'Occitane-en-Provence amenities in bathrooms
- Bathrobes
- Deluxe extra pillows
- Special edition take-home coffee table book
- Air conditioning
- 2 Large picture windows
- Hair dryer
- iPod/MP3 docking station
- Public address system
- In-room safe
- Reading lights
- Free Internet access in ship's hot-spots (one access code per room)*
- Wetsuit usage included
- Turn-down service delicacy
- In-cabin national & international magazines
- Expedition photos and videos on CD

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.





SANTA CRUZ II TOP FEATURES:

A vessel designed and built for wildlife exploration in remote areas

- Small groups – average just **11 guests per guide**
- 99% of visitor **sites are not shared** with other vessels
- Glass-bottom boat, kayaks, snorkelling, swimming, panga coastal exploration (**all aquatic activities** authorised by the National Park)
- A 58% increase in Passenger **Space Ratio (29.6)**
- **Barbecue** and al-fresco dining
- Separate lecture areas for **simultaneous presentations**
- 90% of all cabins include **convertible beds** and 72% (36) are **interconnected cabins**
- **No cabins at sea level**, near engines or generators
- A Cordon-Bleu **gastronomy director**
- A **medical doctor on board**, with a fully equipped infirmary, free of charge
- Sustainable cruise technology, including a **waste-water treatment plant**
- 31% reduction in fuel consumption compared with its predecessor, resulting in a **lower environmental footprint per guest**

A full online brochure is available at https://issuu.com/metropolitantouring/docs/brochure_santa_cruz_ii

And check out the video "Introducing the Santa Cruz II" at <https://vimeo.com/131458873>

And click below for an article written about our Galapagos program published in The Medical Post...

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

The hotels...

Location	Hotels
Lima, Peru (2 nights)	Four Points by Sheraton (4*) http://www.starwoodhotels.com/fourpoints/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=3762&language=en_US&localeCode=en_US
Cuzco, Peru (2 nights)	Costa del Sol Ramada (4*) http://www.ramada.com/hotels/peru/cusco/hotel-costa-del-sol-ramada-cusco/hotel-overview
Aguas Calientes, Peru (2 nights)	Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel (5*) http://www.inkaterra.com/inkaterra/inkaterra-machu-picchu-pueblo-hotel/the-experience/
Quito, Ecuador (5 nights)	Hilton Colon (4*) http://www1.hilton.com/en_US/hi/hotel/QUIHIHF-Hilton-Colon-Quito-hotel/index.do

All of the accommodation will be in 4* and 5* properties as noted above. (In the unlikely event that a property needs to be changed it will be substituted with one of a similar standard)

The price... Cdn \$10,495 / person
(Early Booking Price valid until June 13, 2016 – save \$500/person)

Pricing (exc. Insurance) / per person	Inc. Air from Toronto
Per person (double occupancy) - includes Explorer Double cabin, Horizon Deck on M/N Santa Cruz II (other cabin types have a supplement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • registrations up to June 13, 2016 • registrations after June 13, 2016 	\$10,495 \$10,995
Single supplement	Very limited number of single cabins - \$ pricing on request
Supplements to upgrade accommodation on M/N Santa Cruz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explorer Double cabin, Expedition Deck • Explorer Double cabin, Panorama Deck • Darwin Suite, Panorama Deck 	\$ 300 (per person) \$ 500 (per person) \$ 1,200 (per person)
Single share matching fee	\$ 300 **
Transportation / hotel taxes and fees	\$ 685
Academic program registration fee	\$ 600 (per MD registrant)
Payable locally - Galapagos Park Entry Fee - Galapagos Park Ingala Card	US\$ 100 US\$ 20

After the Early Booking rates expire on June 13, 2016, the pricing will increase to \$10,995/person

** Single share matching fee – can't find a traveling partner but don't want to pay a single supplement? We'll keep our eyes open for similar clients and try and find you a compatible person to share a room with.

Flights also available directly from Montreal (departing one day earlier on Friday November 18 with an extra night in Lima on November 18; returning one day earlier on Saturday December 3). Please contact us for rates.

REPEAT CUSTOMER DISCOUNT

If you are one of our many repeat clients, having travelled with Doctors-on-Tour on one of our previous educational tours, you are eligible for our Repeat Customer Discount. Simply deduct \$100 /person for each separate tour that you have travelled with the company on up to a maximum of \$300 /person (ie travelled on one previous tour, deduct \$100; two tours, \$200; three or more tours, \$300). **Please note, this discount is subject to the payment (s) for the tour being made by cheque.** The discount is to be made from the final balance payment with the deposit amount being paid in full.

CANADIAN \$ PRICING !

Please note, unlike many programs offered by other companies including a Galapagos cruise component which are quoted in US\$, **our prices remain in Canadian\$** - and, with a premium now of over 30% (at May 2016) when paying in US\$, this makes a significant difference.

COST EFFICIENT INVOICING !

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.

NEW ! ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM

Our **online registration form** may be accessed via the direct link below -

<https://fs22.formsite.com/Doctorsontour/GAL1611RegistrationForm/index.html>

Inclusions and Exclusions...

Inclusions –

- International flights from Toronto to Lima, Peru and Quito, Ecuador to Toronto.
- Regional flights – Lima-Cuzco, Cuzco-Lima, Lima-Quito, Quito-Galapagos, Galapagos-Quito
- Modern, air conditioned coach transportation
- 11 nights first class hotel accommodation
- 5 day / 4 night Galapagos cruise (Northern Islands itinerary) on the M/V Santa Cruz
- 16 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 9 dinners
- Comprehensive daily itineraries including, island sightseeing, naturalists and lecture services, escorted tours of local cultural sites and museums
- Academic program
- 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 unless specifically included above)
- Gratuities
- Galapagos Park Entry Fee (US\$100/person) – payable locally
- Galapagos Park Ingala Fee (US\$20/person) – payable locally
- 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 (page 22)
- All items of a personal nature such as telephone / internet usage, laundry services etc

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 (WITH A NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT OF \$700 PER PERSON, PLUS APPLICABLE TRAVEL INSURANCE PREMIUM) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE YOUR RESERVATION AS WELL AS TO HAVE THE BEST CHOICE OF CABIN CATEGORY.

Misc information you need to know...

Travel documentation and visas

An entry visa 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 / Peru.

Mandatory vaccinations

Ecuador – none; Peru – none

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				
Age>	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	345	362	416	464	530	746	870	984	416	424	526	617	973
4500 - 5000	373	390	451	509	581	808	931	1,053	443	454	561	659	1,022
5000 - 5500	400	419	487	550	632	867	989	1,118	469	480	594	698	1,069
5500 - 6000	426	447	522	592	679	926	1,048	1,185	496	509	626	740	1,116
6000 - 6500	454	475	557	635	729	985	1,107	1,252	523	535	659	780	1,162
6500 - 7000	480	503	591	677	778	1,043	1,166	1,318	549	562	692	820	1,209
7000 - 7500	508	531	626	718	827	1,102	1,225	1,385	576	589	726	860	1,257
7500 - 8000	534	559	661	761	876	1,161	1,283	1,452	602	616	759	900	1,304
8000 - 8500	561	588	697	804	926	1,219	1,342	1,516	627	644	792	941	1,350
8500 - 9000	588	616	731	845	974	1,278	1,401	1,583	654	671	825	981	1,398
9000 - 9500	615	644	768	888	1,024	1,337	1,459	1,649	680	697	858	1,021	1,444
9500 - 10000	640	672	802	930	1,072	1,396	1,518	1,716	707	725	891	1,061	1,491
10000 - 10500	667	701	835	968	1,116	1,445	1,572	1,776	734	754	923	1,098	1,535
10500 - 11000	694	731	867	1,005	1,159	1,494	1,626	1,835	761	784	956	1,136	1,578
11000 - 11500	721	761	900	1,043	1,202	1,542	1,680	1,894	788	814	988	1,174	1,621
11500 - 12000	748	791	932	1,081	1,245	1,591	1,734	1,954	815	843	1,021	1,212	1,664
12000 - 12500	775	820	964	1,119	1,288	1,639	1,788	2,013	842	873	1,053	1,250	1,707
12500 - 13000	802	850	997	1,157	1,332	1,688	1,842	2,073	869	903	1,085	1,287	1,751
13000 - 13500	829	880	1,029	1,194	1,375	1,737	1,896	2,132	896	933	1,118	1,325	1,794
13500 - 14000	856	909	1,062	1,232	1,418	1,785	1,950	2,191	923	962	1,150	1,363	1,837
14000 - 14500	883	939	1,094	1,270	1,461	1,834	2,004	2,251	950	992	1,183	1,401	1,880
14500 - 15000	910	969	1,126	1,308	1,504	1,882	2,058	2,310	977	1,022	1,215	1,439	1,923

For residents of Ontario, simply accept your choice of insurance (Non-Medical or Deluxe coverage) on our *online* registration form and we will apply the premium above on your invoice confirmation (if using our *pdf* registration form, enter the applicable premium from the above table when completing the registration form)

For residents of Canadian provinces other than Ontario, insurance regulations state that travel insurance should be taken out directly with RBC Insurance, albeit through a direct web link hosted on our web site at www.DoctorsonTour.ca . You should purchase your travel insurance policy by clicking on the RBC Insurance button in the "Useful Links and Files" section of our South Africa web page within the Upcoming Programs section of www.DoctorsonTour.ca .

Non Canadian residents should make their travel insurance arrangements independently, as our travel insurance provider, RBC insurance, only allows for travel insurance coverage to be sold to Canadian residents.

Testimonials...

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

"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

"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

"We had a great visit to the Falls. Stefani was a very helpful guide. The hotel and facilities were fabulous. The tour overall was an exciting experience. Thanks to you both and Ian for the hard work and planning.
Drs. Hirsch and Indra Rastogi, Ancaster – Brazil, 2011

"In addition to exploring the fantastic sights 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

"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 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

"Spain greatly surpassed my expectations, offering wonderful gastronomic experiences, lavished with outstanding wines and extremely hospitable people with a culture and history that is as rich as deep. Fernando Garcia, through his many connections, was able to allow us access to exclusive vineyards , where we were submerged in to the local cuisine and regaled with their finest wines".

Dr. Peter Bloch, Oakville – Spain Gourmet tour, 2011

"Our guide was excellent, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Cooking classes were good and the hotels were excellent"

Dr. Barbara Flanagan, Charlottetown – Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia, 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

"A quick personal note to tell you how much we enjoyed our trip to Spain & Portugal. The whole agenda was well planned and well carried out. The winery visits and dinners were amazing, we learned so much about the history and making of Port."

Dr. Blair Fraser, Guelph – Spain & Portugal, 2012

"We had a magical time in Machu Picchu - such a spiritual time at day break - our guide was great! Many thanks for the fabulous trip - memorable and well organized. 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 ! Your company 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

"We enjoyed our extension to the UAE and saw an amazing amount in a short time. Our guide was very helpful, informative and pleasant and we appreciated how he was able to inform us about the country, it's people and customs. Excellent !"

Drs Christopher & Margaret Ibey, Parry Sound, On. – United Arab Emirates, 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

"Excellent trip – hotels, guides, food and company and we saw such wonderful sites.

Dr. Martin and Eileen McIntyre, Brantford - 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 Driscoll, 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

"Fantastic experience! Every detail to perfection."

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

"Had a great time! Very well organized"

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

"Our guide was amazing - so professional and knowledgeable. Great itinerary - Well done !"

Dr. Susan Smith, Frederickton, N.B - South Africa, 2014

"I want to give you some feedback on our amazing trip to South Africa. Our guide 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 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

"We felt the tour is one of the best (CME tours) we have been on. We keep missing the great Chilean wines and Argentinian beef. Right sized group and great company. CME tours were interesting and informative. Our guides were good and I enjoyed learning about the country from their comments".

Dr. Eduardo Aenlle, Fallbrook, California - Chile, Argentina and Patagonia Cruise, 2014

"It was an amazing trip thru Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos. It exceeded all our expectations. Our group leaders 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

"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 fabulous - she took superb care of us and added so much to the trip through her knowledge of New Zealand history, flora and fauna. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were wonderful medical leaders - calm, helpful, interesting and vivacious- kudos to them."

Drs. Peter & Louise Bobechko, Toronto, On. - New Zealand, 2015

"I really enjoyed this tour - Rajasthan and Agra are beautiful. Our tour escort, Kumar, has great people skills, and has been very attentive to everyone's needs - Himanshu has been an excellent guide and is very knowledgeable. We would love to return to India on your South India program"

Dr. Rajalaxmi Wong, North Bay, On. - North India, 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

"Bob and I enjoyed the time shared with each of you in Bali, My expectations for the tour were met and exceeded .It really was a small window into the Balinese culture. To (our group leaders) Bonnie and Mel, Thanks! Hope this isn't our last tour. You all were interesting and gracious, Terima Kasih. Salam Jalan"

Dr. Bob & Evelyn Lawler, Gibsonia, PA - Bali 2015

"We had a fabulous experience, enjoying a fun group of travelers and loving the beautiful art and history of Spain. The warm, friendly and family culture feeling of Spain was memorable and a testimony to the connections of Chef Fernando Garcia".

Dr. Gerry Mittler, Vancouver, BC - Spain Gourmet, September 2015

"Thank you for your excellent guidance during our trip to Ecuador. the trip was very good, and the logistics and handling of the group were excellent"

Dr. David Spence, London, On - Ecuador (including the Galapagos and Amazon), 2015

"The trip was exceptional in every way. Our guide was more than just a tour guide - the knowledge she shared was detailed and interesting - what an ambassador for her country ! The high level of care that she offered was above and beyond anything that we have ever experienced. We thoroughly enjoyed every minute of this trip ! Thank you !"

Dr. Les Marien, Orangeville, On - New Zealand, 2016



Doctors-on- Tour – Ecuadorian Amazon



Doctors-on-Tour - India



Doctors-on-Tour – Spain



Doctors-on-Tour - Chile & Argentina

And finally, this is an article written by one of our Group Medical Directors, and published in Doctor's Review, who hosted a previous program to Ecuador & 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 fines 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 Maccu 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 Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel 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 – a truly memorable experience, totally peaceful experience and at one with nature - no anxiety or stress. Must have been all that clean air.

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 Actuar 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.

And click below for another article written about our Galapagos program published in The Medical Post...

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

The fine print...

The Terms & Conditions contained herein are the terms under which Doctors-on-Tour and on-Tour (being operating brands of Britcan International Consulting (B.I.C.) Inc. and together, for the purposes of these Terms & Conditions, being referred to collectively as DOT/OT/BIC) 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 and cruise cabins. A guaranteed non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person (\$700 per person for programs which include a cruise component), together with the applicable travel insurance premium, is required with your reservation request. Tour extensions and, where applicable, seat upgrades in aircraft cabin categories higher than economy, are also subject to additional non-refundable deposits as detailed in each specific program's brochure. Reservations made for travel within 105 days of the travel date 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 at the time of your booking confirmation.

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. We do accept any other kinds of cards, including either American Express or Diners Club. Your online authorization by way of our Online Registration Form acts as your approval for the credit card provided as part of your registration to be charged for both the initial deposit (and travel insurance premium, where applicable) 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 current or future electronic mail communication). For registrations that are not received via our Online Registration Form, but instead are forwarded to DOT/OT/BIC by mailing, faxing or e-mailing a scanned completed copy of our (non-online) Registration Form, your signature on such (non-online) Registration Form verifies your approval for your credit card to be charged. No services will be provided without receipt of either the authorized Online Registration Form or the duly signed (non-online) Registration 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 DOT/OT/BIC of any or all components of the travel services offered herein, DOT/OT/BIC 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 confirmation.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To protect against cancellation charges, we strongly recommend purchasing Cancellation Protection and Travel Interruption Insurance. 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 DOT/OT/BIC 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 for all destinations offered with the exception of New Zealand, Spain/Portugal and countries on our Eastern Europe program where the passport must remain valid for a minimum of 3 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 (or, in some cases, a reciprocity fee) is required for entry into the following destinations offered by DOT/OT/BIC -

- Brasil, India, Kenya, Tanzania (tourist entry visa must be obtained prior to departure from Canada)
- Cambodia, Indonesia (Bali), Laos, Vietnam, Zambia (tourist entry visa may be obtained upon arrival in the destination)
- For entry into Chile or Argentina, a reciprocity fee is payable (in Chile, this is payable upon arrival; in Argentina this must be paid prior to leaving Canada)

A tourist entry visa is not required for entry into Ecuador, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, Spain and any country on our Eastern Europe program

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 participate 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: We use a variety of accommodations on our programs with many of our properties specifically chosen to reflect the local style and culture of the region. Our rating system reflects the majority of the accommodations throughout each program but some variety can occur. Ratings are based not only on room quality but also on facilities and location. Accommodation ratings in overseas destinations outside of Canada are an arbitrary measure and their definition from country to country can differ slightly as well as not always being consistent between individual properties in that particular destination nor are they necessarily comparable to an equivalent rating in North America. Rooms are assigned by the respective supplier(s) on a run-of-the-house basis, in category (ies) as specified in the itinerary and the right is reserved to substitute properties/hotels/lodges/camps/cruise/ships as conditions warrant such change for reasons beyond our control. Accommodations on twin occupancy basis, is provided at the properties/hotels/lodges/camps/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.

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 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 DOT/OT/BIC 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 to us by separate e-mail 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. Additional delivery charges will apply for clients residing outside of North America.

CONSUMER PROTECTION: DOT/OT/BIC 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 it's 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 DOT/OT/BIC who bear no responsibility for such illness or inconvenience. DOT/OT/BIC 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.

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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.

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