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GALAPAGOS ENCOUNTER: CENTRAL ISLANDS (GRAND QUEEN BEATRIZ)

Discover wildlife at its finest in the Central Galapagos Islands. As we fly from Quito to the Galapagos Islands, located in the equatorial water of the Pacific Ocean, we suddenly find ourselves in a very different world. As we board our vessel, the M.Y Grand Queen Beatriz, and follow in the footsteps of Charles Darwin, we start to encounter nature at its finest. Sea lions and iguanas await us at Plaza Sur and Santa Fe, whilst in San Cristobal we meet the grand-daddy of the Galapagos – the giant tortoise. A hike on Bartolome offers panoramic views across some of the other islands, showcasing the dramatic volcanic landscape. This is indeed the Galapagos journey with something for everyone. Is this trip right for you? Although we don't ask travellers to complete a Physical Participation Form for this trip, we do ask that you read through the trip notes carefully to ensure that this trip is right for you. You'll need to feel comfortable with the included activities and with moving about the boat. The cabins and communal areas of the boat are spread over four decks, and the steps between the decks are steep. You will be entering and exiting a Zodiac boat (panga) during wet and dry landings and when returning from snorkelling. Although the waters we sail are usually calm, there are times when the sea can get rough and choppy. Steady sea legs (and a sturdy stomach) are needed when walking around the boat during bad weather. Rain or shine, your trusty crew will always be on hand to assist you. A typical yacht/boat for sixteen travellers is equipped with eight cabins each with en-suites. They are designed to maximise living area space, so sleeping quarters can be a bit cramped. That being said, the adventure and exhilaration of an authentic Galapagos trip more than

makes up for any discomfort. While at sea and when exploring the islands, you may be exposed to the sun for large parts of the day. It's important to use sun protection and drink plenty of water. Please note that while there is an itinerary in place, some changes may occur due to the weather or because of direction from the local authorities. This can happen with little notice so please be prepared for potential modifications to the route or activities. A sense of humour and flexibility will ensure you have a fun, relaxing trip through this beautiful part of the world no matter what happens. All of our Galapagos tours begin and end in Quito which is located approximately 2850 metres above sea level so you may experience some

altitude sickness.

ITINERARY

Day 1: (Sat) Arrive in Quito and transfer to hotel.

On arrival at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day will be at your leisure. A welcome meeting will be held in the evening at either 5pm or 6 pm when you meet others travelling with you on your cruise to the Galapagos Islands. Please check with hotel reception or check the reception notice boards for the time and place of the meeting for your trip. As today is an arrival day, you can arrive at any time as there are no activities planned until this important meeting. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early so you're able to attend. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). Quito sits at high altitude under the towering Pichincha volcano. It is a

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beautiful city, arguably one of the most beautiful in South America. The city stretches along the valley and is surrounded by the Andes. The Old Town of Quito is awash with history, with more than 30 churches to explore, and a number of fascinating museums. La Compania de Jesus is considered to be the most beautiful and ornate churches in the Americas. The city's oldest street, Calle La Ronda, is well worth exploring. As this trip spends very little time in Quito, we recommend you spend a few extra days before or after your trip to experience all the city has to offer. You may even wish to explore further beyond the city and visit Otavalo, Cotopaxi, the Cloud Forest or the Equatorial Monument. Special Information Quito is located at 2850 metres above sea level. At this altitude you may experience some of the milder effects of altitude sickness, such as dizziness, insomnia and a shortness of breath. If so, we recommend you avoid any strenuous activity. Please see the "Medical & Health Information" section for more details.

Day 2: Quito - Isla San Cristobal

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. Please note the pick-up time will usually be as early as 4:30 am (a boxed breakfast will be provided), as the airport is a one-hour drive away and you must allow for delays and check-in times. (Your tour leader will confirm this time with you at the Welcome Meeting on Day 1). A US\$20 per person transit card is payable on departure at Quito Airport and a US\$100 per person national park entry fee is payable on arrival on the islands. Please have cash on hand for these transactions as credit cards are not accepted. The flight to the Galapagos will make one stop in Guayaquil to pick up other passengers. (Total flight time is about 3.5 hours). You will be met in the arrival hall of the airport by the National Park Guide,

and transferred to your motor yacht 'Grand Queen Beatriz'. This afternoon you will travel into the interior of the island to visit the highlands site of 'Galapaguera of Cerro Colorado' (Red Hill) where the national park has established a breeding program and information centre for tortoises. Here, we will be able to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat and learn all about their origin, evolution and their threatened future. Estimated travel time/distance: Puerto Baquerizo (Isla San Cristobal) to Bartolome: 8 hours (70 nautical miles) Special Information Today is predominately a long travel day with an early morning start. Your first activity on the islands will not commence until after lunch. The airline we use to and from the Galapagos islands will provide a small snack but because it is such a long travel day we recommend that you carry your own snacks as well. The snacks they do provide are not gluten free, so if you require a gluten free diet, please ensure you carry your own. Please also keep in mind that the Galapagos has strict quarantine regulations in regards to bringing food onto the islands with many fruits and vegetables being on the restricted list. There will be time after check-in and before departure to buy snacks.

Day 3: Bartolome - Bahía Sullivan

Bartolome is one of the most spectacular volcanic landscapes in the Galapagos, full of parasitic spatter cones, lava flows, Galapagos penguins and lava lizards. It is a relatively new island in the archipelago and traces of its volcanic past can be seen everywhere, as evidenced by the amazing lunar-like landscape. The Pinnacle Rock is one of the most photographed sites in the Galapagos – an abrupt jag of rock protruding from the earth like a tooth, while nearby two golden bays back onto each other. You can hike to the top of a once-active volcano here (360



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wooden steps), and enjoy superb views across to Sullivan Bay, on nearby Santiago Island. If you are in luck you might catch a glance of the Galapagos Hawk here. You also have the opportunity to go snorkelling with plenty of tropical fish, starfish, white-tipped reef sharks, rays and hopefully penguins. On Santiago's eastern coast sits Bahia Sullivan, also known as James Island. Here you walk on Pahoe-Hoe lava, from an eruption that occurred in 1897, and witness the colonisation of plant species since the last eruption. Hopefully see some marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, sea lions, finches, turtles, sharks and penguins. On a walk, your guide will explain the geological history of the islands. Estimated travel time/distance: Bartolome to Isla Santiago (Bahia Sullivan): 0.5 hours (1 nautical mile) Isla Santiago (Bahia Sullivan) to Espumilla Beach: 3 hours (25 nautical miles)

Day 4: Isla Santiago - Espumilla Beach - Buccaneer Cove - Puerto Egas

Today you will visit some wonderful places. Espumilla Beach, on the northern coast of Santiago Island in James Bay, is one of the most idyllic locations in the Galapagos Islands and is an important nesting site for marine turtles. With large waves, it is also often a favourite amongst beach lovers. Potentially we will see Galapagos hawks up close, ghost crabs, blue-footed boobies (often plunging for fish) and brown pelicans. It is also well known for its palo santo forest and some extraordinary lava formations. You will also visit Caleta Bucanero (Buccaneer Cove), a natural monument of rocks caused by sea erosion. This cove was used by pirates to careen their ships. It is a place of local legends and stories! It is also where Darwin camped for nine days while making his study of the islands and their wildlife. If conditions are favourable, you can enjoy some further snorkelling. Puerto Egas is a black sand beach located on the

west side of James Bay and northwest of Santiago Island. South of the beach is Sugarloaf Volcano, which has deposits of volcanic tuff. This site is named Puerto Egas, after Hector Egas who last attempted to mine salt here. The walk along the beach offers hundreds of marine iguanas and Galapagos sea lions. You will also see amazing tidal pools formed from ancient lava flow and home to sponges, snails, hermit crabs, barnacles and fish. Snorkelling with the seals always offers the possibility of thrilling encounters. Estimated travel time/distance: Espumilla Beach to Buccaneer Cove: 0.5 hours (1 nautical mile) Buccaneer Cove to Puerto Egas: 0.5 hours (1 nautical mile) Puerto Egas to Puerto Ayora: 7 hours (60 nautical miles)

Day 5: Isla Santa Cruz - Quito

As flights to the mainland from Galapagos depart mid morning, it is an early start for our last morning on the islands. Depending on the time of our flight, our time spent on this final excursion could be limited. Our final excursion will be a visit to the Santa Cruz Highlands. We travel through the agricultural region and into the misty forests where we can see the Unique Scalesia cloud forest, get up close to the dome shaped giant tortoises in the wild, different species of Darwin finches and possibly the world famous woodpecker and warbler finches as well as vermilion flycatchers. This is your final excursion before you return to the airport in Isla Baltra for your flight back to Quito. As you will be leaving the boat this morning, please remember that if you have enjoyed the services provided by your guide and crew, a tip would be very much appreciated by them. As a guideline we recommend each passenger consider US\$15 per day for the crew and US\$10 per day for your guide. You can leave tips in envelopes that are placed in your cabin on the last day of your journey. Upon arrival in Quito Airport you will be



transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay. Special Information Today is predominately a long travel day with an early morning start. There will be a short morning activity before our mid-morning flight back to the mainland. The flight back to Quito is not due to arrive until late afternoon getting back to the hotel in time for an optional final group dinner.

Day 6: End Quito (Thu).

Your Galapagos adventure will come to an end today after breakfast. There are no activities planned for the final day so you are able to depart the accommodation at any time. There are many fascinating things to do in and around Quito, so please speak to our customer service representative about any optional activities that might be of interest. They can also assist you in booking a departure transfer to the airport. Special Information All travel times/distances and activity durations are approximate only and subject to change.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: GRAND QUEEN BEATRIZ

YOUR SHIP:	Grand Queen Beatriz
VESSEL TYPE:	Yacht
LENGTH:	30.20 metres
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	16
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2018

Welcome aboard our Queen Bea! Experience the 'Enchanted Islands' in our new custom-built yacht, the Grand Queen Beatriz. Custom built, with a stylish modern design, ensuite bathrooms, outward-facing windows in all cabins (and private balconies in some), and a jacuzzi on the sundeck, the 'Grand Queen Bea' will be one of the newest boats operating in the Galapagos. Facilities - All meals while on board, Sun deck and spa, Indoor and outdoor bar, TV/Lounge, Onboard gift shop Equipment - Snorkelling equipment, Wetsuits, Beach towels Accessibility - Stairs connect each deck, there is no elevator



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