The Galápagos Islands

A Family Adventure

WITH STUDY LEADERS

Healy Hamilton, Jeffrey Powell & Gisella Caccone

ABOARD THE SANTA CRUZ

JUNE 20–29, 2010
Dear Columbian,

We invite you to join a rich history of exploration and discovery on a summer voyage to the Galápagos Islands. From up-close interactions with fascinating wildlife to the joys of sharing a travel adventure with the whole family, this expedition offers something for everyone.

While every trip is unique because of nature's wonderful spontaneity, the highlights of this trip are best explained by someone who's been there. Enjoy observations from a 2009 Galápagos traveler whose journal captures the spirit, and some of the unexpected surprises, that await you and your family in this natural paradise.

Sincerely,

Susan K. Feagin
Executive Vice President
Columbia University Office of Alumni and Development

Columbia participants will be joined by travelers from the California Academy of Sciences and Yale Educational Travel. Availability is limited. We encourage you to make your reservation right away. Please call 1-866-3-ALUMNI (866-325-8664) to book your space today. For more information, email travelstudy@Columbia.edu or visit www.alumni.Columbia.edu/travel.
Nature, Unlike You’ve Ever Experienced It
It’s not so much that the animals here don’t notice us—I’m sure they do; it’s simply that they don’t feel threatened. And while I’m sure that every Galápagos visitor remarks on the same thing, it’s something that is so unlike any other encounter I’ve ever had with nature. Words don’t do justice to this experience.

Real-World Biology In Action
We’re lucky enough to see several tortoises wallowing in pools, munching on greenery, and, well, mating. The naturalists handle this beautifully, patiently explaining to the kids what is going on. At this point, the kids have seen examples of real-world biology, from the struggle of new-born chicks for survival to mating rituals. I can’t help but think what an incredible educational experience this is.

Sea Lion Ballet
We take a quick snorkel off the beach, and immediately sea lions are performing a ballet around us. At one point, a young boy and his mother linger as they watch two sea lions swim circles around them. The mother puts her arm around her son, and then one of the sea lions seems to imitate them by putting his fin on the back of the other. Unbelievable!
ITINERARY

This itinerary describes some highlights of this adventure; the exact itinerary will be determined by Galápagos National Park authorities.

U.S. / GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR Sunday, June 20
Depart the U.S. on the recommended group flight or independently. Upon arrival, check in to the hotel. HOTEL HILTON COLÓN

GUAYAQUIL / BALTRA, GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS (EMBARK) Monday, June 21
This morning fly to Baltra Island in the Galápagos. Twelve large islands and dozens of smaller ones, all volcanic, combine to form an ecological niche with towering volcanoes, crater lakes, and stunning lava formations. Upon arrival, board the Santa Cruz, your home for the next seven nights. Enjoy a panga, or small boat, ride among mangrove-ringed inlets and observe a landscape shaped by dramatic volcanic activity. Watch for boobies, pelicans, marine iguanas, sea turtles, and rays. Follow a trail to Dragon Hill, a nesting site for land iguanas and a rewarding location for bird lovers. SANTA CRUZ (B,L,D)

BARTOLOMÉ AND SANTIAGO ISLANDS Tuesday, June 22
Start the day with a hike to Bartolomé Island’s 600-foot summit for spectacular views of its fascinating volcanic topography. Ride in pangas around the colossal Pinnacle Rock, with time to enjoy the beach and snorkel with Galápagos penguins. See marine iguanas graze on emerald-green algae beds, and watch seabirds forage along the pitch-black shoreline of Puerto Egas on Santiago Island. Take a guided walk to observe colonies of sea lions and fur seals, as well as their playful pups. On board this evening, relax beneath a star-filled sky and join lively talks about evolution and the natural world. SANTA CRUZ (B,L,D)

RÁBIDA AND NORTH SEYMOUR ISLANDS Wednesday, June 23
Disembark at Rábida’s unusual rust-colored beach and walk to a nearby salt pond, where flamingos feed on brine shrimp and pelicans make their nests, then snorkel or swim off the beach. In the afternoon sail to North Seymour Island to enjoy its sandy shores that teem with Galápagos sea lions and marine iguanas. Visit colonies of blue-footed boobies, magnificent frigate birds, and swallow-tailed gulls during an afternoon walk, taking in views of both the coast and the interior of the island. SANTA CRUZ (B,L,D)

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND Thursday, June 24
This morning, ride up to the lush Santa Cruz highlands to see the giant daisy trees of the Scalesia Forest and observe tortoises in their natural habitat. Sail to Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and learn about a program devoted to rearing giant tortoises and releasing them into the wild. SANTA CRUZ (B,L,D)

SAN CRISTÓBAL ISLAND Friday, June 25
On San Cristóbal Island, visit the tortoise breeding center at Cerro Colorado. If time allows, stop at El Junco Lagoon, the only permanent freshwater lagoon on the islands. Later, sail past Kicker Rock, a spectacular volcanic formation off the coast, then travel to Cerro Brujo for a relaxing walk on the powder-soft sand beach or a swim with sea lions in the turquoise water. SANTA CRUZ (B,L,D)

ESPAÑOLA / FLOREANA ISLANDS Saturday, June 26
After breakfast, disembark at Punta Suarez on Española (Hood) Island then hike along lava terrain to visit colonies of waved albatrosses (with a wing span of 7-8 ft.) and Nazca boobies. During an afternoon excursion on Floreana Island, enjoy a walk to Punta Cormorant to visit a saltwater lagoon dotted with flamingos. Advanced snorkelers can explore the “Devil’s Crown” while others enjoy a ride in the glass-bottom boat. SANTA CRUZ (B,L,D)

FERNANDINA AND ISABELA ISLANDS Sunday, June 27
On Fernandina, the youngest island in the Galápagos, observe sea turtles and flightless cormorants during a walk over great fields of lava rock. In this unique environment, large numbers of marine iguanas coexist with sea lions, Sally Lightfoot crabs, and hawks. Later, snorkel with sea turtles along the cliffs of a partly submerged volcano on the northern tip of Isabela Island, then explore the area’s dramatic coastline. Tonight, enjoy a farewell reception and dinner. SANTA CRUZ (B,L,R,D)

BALTRA ISLAND (DISEMBARK) / GUAYAQUIL Monday, June 28
Return to Baltra for a flight to Guayaquil. Enjoy free time at the hotel this evening. HOTEL HILTON COLÓN (B)

GUAYAQUIL / U.S. Tuesday, June 29
Fly to the U.S. on the recommended flight itinerary, or independently. (B)

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO QUITO, ECUADOR June 16-June 20, 2010
Enjoy two nights in the colonial city of Quito, then travel to the Andes highlands province of Imbabura for an overnight stay at a traditional hacienda. Discover fine handicrafts and textiles at the Otavalo Indian market, then return to Quito for an additional night before flying to Guayaquil. Prices from $1,350 per person ($450 single supplement).

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO MACHU PICCHU, PERU June 29-July 5, 2010
Continue your educational journey with a visit to the lost Inca city of Machu Picchu, a fortress perched 2,000 feet above the valley floor that is among the world’s legendary, and spectacular, archaeological sites. Prices from $4,250 per person ($1,395 single supplement).
Snorkeling With Galápagos Penguins

I suit up, jump in, and see fish of every color. And penguins, yes, Galápagos penguins, darting about me as I snorkel. I could stay here for hours. And so could some of the kids, first-time snorkelers, who are the last to leave the water.

Study Leaders

Jeffrey Powell teaches General Biology, Evolution, Conservation Biology, and Genetics at Yale, and leads a joint research project in the Galápagos that uses genetic techniques to help understand diversity among giant tortoises. He will share new developments in the rapidly expanding field of conservation biology, including special concern for the kinds of tropical ecosystems we will be visiting.

Gisella Caccone is a lecturer at Yale, and senior research scientist in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She leads research in the Galápagos on giant tortoises and iguanas, as well as efforts to build local research capacity. She will discuss new initiatives in these areas and how modern genetic technology has influenced efforts to preserve biodiversity.

Healy Hamilton is a biodiversity scientist at the California Academy of Sciences, and an adjunct professor in the Department of Geography at San Francisco State University. On this trip she is hoping to find the Giant Galápagos Seahorse, which is found only in the Galápagos and grows to more than a foot long. Dr. Hamilton will share her deep commitment to promoting ‘ecoliteracy,’ an understanding of the natural world and our place within it.
While the Galápagos Islands straddle the equator, ocean breezes temper the daytime heat and cool off the nights. The ocean temperature is usually in the high 60s to low 70s Fahrenheit.

LOCAL NATURALISTS
In addition to onboard study leaders, this adventure also includes a team of local naturalists who are Galápagos National Park–trained experts on the unique flora and fauna of the islands. These experienced guides offer an in-depth understanding of this rich natural environment and its inhabitants, as well as a personal commitment to preserving this unique ecosystem.

YOUNG TRAVELERS
Most children are fascinated by animals, and in the Galápagos Islands most of the animals are fascinated by children! As a result of the absence of native land mammals in the Galápagos, many animals are unafraid of humans, allowing visitors unparalleled opportunities to view wildlife in a natural setting. A special feature of this trip is a customized educational program designed for school-age kids, 7-17. Separate age-appropriate activities give children a basic understanding of science and nature, and an appreciation for this natural paradise. For safety reasons, adult caregivers are responsible for their children at all times, both on board the ship and during shore excursions.

PROGRAM RATES INCLUDE
Seven nights aboard the Santa Cruz • Two nights at the Hotel Hilton Colón in Guayaquil, Ecuador • Round-trip airfare between Guayaquil and the Galápagos Islands • Meals as indicated in the itinerary, including a farewell reception and dinner • Comprehensive program of lectures, shore excursions, and special events • Youth activity program led by youth leaders • Galápagos National Park tax, airport departure taxes in the Galápagos, and entrance fees • Transfers and baggage handling between hotels, piers, and airports for those traveling on group flights • Gratuities to porters, guides, drivers, waiters, and ship crew for all group activities • Port taxes • Pre-departure materials and travel information • Professional tour management throughout

SANTA CRUZ
Ideal for cruising the Galápagos Islands, the Santa Cruz carries 90 passengers in comfortable, air-conditioned cabins that are suited for families of all sizes. The ship features sun decks, a lounge, a large dining room that accommodates all passengers in a single seating, a reading room, observation decks, and pangas for landing small groups on the islands. The ship is also equipped with snorkeling equipment for passengers and a glass-bottom boat.

PROGRAM RATES

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*Age 7-17

PROGRAM RATES DO NOT INCLUDE
U.S. domestic and international airfare (airfare between Guayaquil and the Galápagos Islands is included) • Passport or visa fees • Immunizations • Transfers to and from airports for individuals not using or meeting group flights • Excess baggage charges • Meals and beverages not specified as included • Optional excursions or deviations from the scheduled tour • Accident/baggage/cancellation insurance • Medical expenses • Laundry, telephone, room service, email, and fax calls • Other items of a purely personal nature and not stated as included • Airport security fees imposed by the government or airlines

AIRFARE
Airfare between the US and Guayaquil, Ecuador, is not included in the program rates. Group flights will be offered from Miami to Guayaquil; as of August 2009, round-trip economy-class airfare is estimated at $515. This fare is subject to change. Our tour operator is happy to assist you in making individual air travel arrangements.

POTENTIAL FUEL SURCHARGE
Every effort is made to keep program costs as low as possible, and rates do not include allowances to cover possible increases in fuel costs. Please be aware that the volatile nature of oil prices may make it necessary to assess a fuel surcharge. We appreciate your understanding.

Reserve your cabin today. Call 1-866-325-8664 or email travelstudy@Columbia.edu.
Please send your completed reservation form and deposit to Columbia Alumni Travel Study Program, 245 Mill St., 2nd Floor, Greenwich, CT 06830, or fax the form to 1-203-724-0844. For further information, contact the Columbia Alumni Travel Study Program at 1-866-325-8664. Or email us at travelstudy@columbia.edu.

RESERVATION FORM

NAME 1 (AS IT APPEARS ON PASSPORT) SCHOOL / DEGREE / YEAR

NAME 2 (AS IT APPEARS ON PASSPORT) SCHOOL / DEGREE / YEAR

NAME 3 (AS IT APPEARS ON PASSPORT) SCHOOL / DEGREE / YEAR

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE (HOME)

PHONE (WORK) PHONE (CELL)

FAX

COLUMBIA UNI

EMAIL

PAYMENT

Enclosed is a check for $____________($1,000 per person, made payable to High Country Passage) for         space(s) on the Galápagos: A Family Adventure program. OR

Please charge my deposit of $____________($1,000 per person) to the following credit card:        VISA        MasterCard         American Express

SIGNATURE DATE

SIGNATURE DATE

TERMS & CONDITIONS

PAYMENTS

A $1,000 deposit is required to hold space for the program. Please make your check payable to High Country Passage and mail it with the completed reservation form to Columbia Alumni Travel Study Program, 245 Mill St., 2nd Floor, Greenwich, CT 06830. MasterCard, VISA, and American Express are also accepted for deposit and final payment. Final payment is due February 20, 2010, 120 days prior to departure.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

Deposits are fully refundable if a written notice of cancellation is received by Columbia Alumni Travel Study Program within 30 days of receipt of deposit; after that, they are 100% nonrefundable. All payments are completely nonrefundable at or within 120 days prior to departure, regardless of date of deposit.

COST, ITINERARY, OR PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS

The itinerary, as contained in this brochure, is subject to modifications and change by the Columbia Alumni Travel Study Program and High Country Passage, the tour operator. Every effort will be made to carry out the program as planned, but alterations may still occur after the final itinerary is sent. Due to fluctuations in oil prices, a fuel surcharge may be added to your tour fee. Details and costs will be advised prior to your departure.

INSURANCE

The Columbia Alumni Travel Study Program strongly recommends that all tour participants purchase Trip Cancellation, Emergency Medical Evacuation, Baggage, Accident, and Medical insurance for their tour. Further information will be sent upon registration.

HEALTH

All participants should be in good health and capable of walking over sometimes steep, rough terrain. By forwarding the deposit, the passenger certifies that he/she does not have any physical or other condition of disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other passengers.

RESPONSIBILITY

Columbia University, its agent, TSS LLC, and the tour operator, High Country Passage (HCP), act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and ship arrangements and exercise every care possible. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity in connection with the service of any boat, automobile, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program, or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or carrying out the arrangements of the program. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, force majeure, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations in the published itinerary as may be deemed necessary, and to cancel or substitute lecturers. We reserve the right to cancel this program prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the program. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. Baggage is carried at the owner’s risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance. Neither Columbia University, TSS, nor HCP accepts liability for any carrier’s cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable air ticket connected with this program. We cannot guarantee the size of the Columbia Alumni Travel Study group.

I plan to share accommodations with:       

Please arrange a share for me (not guaranteed). I am a smoker non-smoker

I prefer single accommodations.

June 20–29, 2010

W / GREYSCALE

K / GREYSCALE

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The Galápagos Islands

A Family Adventure

WITH STUDY LEADERS

Healy Hamilton, Jeffrey Powell & Gisella Caccone

ABOARD THE SANTA CRUZ

JUNE 20–29, 2010

I am so close to a giant tortoise I can hear it breathing. An 11-year-old boy is staring down another tortoise a few feet away. “This is as good as it gets,” he whispers to his mother.