The Galapagos Islands
EXPLORE DARWIN’S ENCHANTED ISLES
With expert biologist Dan Riskin | February 6 – 16, 2023

WorldwideQuest
Alumni Expeditions

16 passenger yacht
Exclusively for Canadian University alumni and friends
Island walks with your dedicated Galapagos Park naturalist

Zodiac excursions in 8-person groups

Snorkelling sessions

All taxes and tips included

Two-night Quito pre-cruise stay

Full eight-day cruise to 9 islands

Map of Galapagos Islands:
- Genovesa (Tower)
- Santiago (James)
- Baltra
- South Plaza
- Santa Cruz (Indefatigable)
- Santa Fe (Chatham)
- Floreana (Charles)
- España (Hood)
- Genovesa (Tower)

Pacific Ocean
Challenge ourselves to distinguish the “Darwin’s Finches”

Walk amongst dozing Galapagos Sea Lions

Observe Galapagos Giant Tortoises foraging peacefully on Santa Cruz

Watch the interactions among the bizarre Swallow-tailed Gulls

Discover the unique Chocolate Chip Sea Star clinging to the rocks while snorkelling
Our Galapagos private yacht expedition remains one of our most highly rated natural history programs and is consistently our travellers’ “trip of a lifetime”.

Our Alumni Study Leader and our Galapagos naturalist guide are on board to lead island walks and on-board talks as we set sail to discover these remarkable island ecosystems, skirting past nesting boobies, scouting the seas for breaching whales and snorkeling among colourful fish. Desolate at first sight, these rough and rocky isles are home to wonderfully strange and abundant wildlife. As Charles Darwin did almost 200 years before us, we will marvel at the many creatures found nowhere else on Earth.

All of the reptiles, half the birds, 32% of the plants, and 25% of the fish are unique to this amazing archipelago. It is a living museum of evolutionary changes.

What is so special about the Galapagos experience is that these creatures act as though humans are nothing more than a passing interest, allowing us to observe them up close. Undisturbed by our nearness, they engage in intriguing courtship displays, groom one another, forage for food and nurture their young. Giant Tortoises graze in the lush highlands and dinosaur-like Marine Iguanas sun themselves on black lava rocks along the shores. Tiny Galapagos Penguins and playful Galapagos Sea Lions dart through the waters like torpedoes, while frigatebirds patrol the skies.

There is no place in the world quite like the Galapagos Islands. Please call us to register for this small group tour!
Dan Riskin, PhD, is a television personality, scientist, and author. He is best known as the co-host of Discovery Canada’s flagship science program, *Daily Planet*, and as the host of Animal Planet’s hugely successful show about parasites, *Monsters Inside Me*.

He has published more than 20 papers in scientific journals, mostly about bats, but since 2011 or so has been focused full-time on science journalism. He is CTV’s Science and Technology Specialist, the Bell Media iHeartRadio science correspondent, and a sometimes guest-host for CTV’s W5.

Dan’s travels feed his passion to see bats in their natural habitats, but he also branches out to learn about and photograph birds, insects, and much more.

His first popular book, *Mother Nature is Trying to Kill You* (2014) was a Canadian bestseller, and his first book for kids, *Fiona the Fruit Bat* will be out this September (2022).

“Dan was exceptionally good. Knowledgeable and organized. Good personality and looked after everyone.”
– Kathleen D.

"Dan was wonderful! Very enthusiastic, always willing to answer questions and offer help. His lectures were informative and fascinating! He added much to our experience, and I enjoyed having him as our tour leader."
– Gillian L.

Dan made a video to personally invite you on his Galapagos adventure. **Watch it now** on YouTube!
Detailed Itinerary

Direct flights to Quito available from Toronto and Vancouver!

Monday, February 6: Arrival in Quito, Ecuador
Our adventure begins on our arrival in Quito, a dazzling old colonial city nestled in the snow-capped Andes Mountains. After clearing airport Customs, we’ll be met and taken to our hotel for a good night’s rest before the next day’s tour. Those participants that have just completed the Amazon or Machu Picchu extensions will also join us when we arrive.
Overnight: Garden Hotel San José de Puembo, Quito

Tuesday, February 7: Quito City Tour
After breakfast, we will depart for a city tour of Quito. We will visit the colonial centre of one of South America’s oldest capitals with its narrow streets and hanging balconies. Our tour will include Independence Plaza, La Compañía Church, one of Quito’s most beautiful religious buildings and San Francisco Church with its monastery, the first great colonial building. We’ll also drive to El Panecillo Hill for a panoramic view of the city. After lunch, we’ll visit the Quito Botanical Gardens, located within Parque La Carolina. Here, we can enjoy an array of plants as well as become acquainted with some of Quito’s beautiful birds such as the Southern Yellow-Grosbeak, Black Flowerpiercer, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Sparkling Violetear, Hooded Siskin and a number of northern birds here to spend the winter. This evening, we’ll enjoy a welcome dinner at the fantastic Theatrum restaurant in the old city.
Overnight: Garden Hotel San José de Puembo, Quito
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Wednesday, February 8: Flight to Baltra, Galapagos, and visit Santa Cruz
After an early breakfast, we’ll transfer from our hotel to the airport for the morning jet flight to the Galapagos Islands. The flight will take us to the airport on the small island of Baltra and, after going through the entry formalities, we’ll meet our Ecuadorian naturalist guide. From here, we will take a very short ferry ride to Santa Cruz Island and have a fitting introduction as we drive across the island, going to sea level into the highlands. We’ll stop at the El Chato Tortoise Reserve, home to the Western Santa Cruz Tortoise, one of the many species of famous giant Galapagos tortoise found in the archipelago. The cloud forests here are also home to various Darwin’s Finches, including two species of tree finch, the Green Warbler-Finch and the Vegetarian Finch. Later, we’ll descend to the far side of Santa Cruz and Puerto Ayora. This town is the home of the Charles Darwin Research Station, the operations centre for wildlife and conservation programs in the Galapagos.
Overnight: M/Y Beluga
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Thursday, Feb. 9 – Tuesday, Feb. 14: Exploring the Islands
During our cruise, we’ll be stopping at a number of interesting islands in the Galapagos archipelago. The M/Y Beluga follows a set itinerary that is approved by the administration of the Galapagos Islands National Park. However, it is possible that, depending on park regulations, weather conditions, and the wildlife of the islands, the actual islands and the order in which they are visited may be modified.
Overnights: M/V Beluga
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cruising by Galapagos Penguins

The M/Y Beluga usually includes the following islands for our itinerary:

Santa Fe (Barrington)
Here we find the endemic Santa Fe Land Iguana, Galapagos Sea Lion, and a forest of impressively tall Opuntia cactus “trees”, being the endemic *barringtonensis* subspecies of the Galapagos Giant Prickly Pear. We’ll also find the Galapagos Mockingbird, Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Pelican and several Darwin’s finches.
Visit the scenic island of Santa Fe to visit a colony of massive Magnificent Frigatebirds.
South Plaza
This diminutive, crescent-shaped island hosts a variety of wildlife, including breeding Swallow-tailed Gull, which is the world’s only truly nocturnal gull. A short walk will allow us to visit the south side of the island, which is a cliff that drops off directly into the ocean. We may see numerous Galapagos Land Iguanas.

San Cristóbal (Chatham)
We’ll visit the beach at Cerro Brujo (“sorcerer hill”) on the north side of the island. This is the first place where Charles Darwin landed. We may see the Chatham Mockingbird here and view a number of endemic plants. We’ll also snorkel at the impressive Kicker’s Rock (León Dormido). We’ll also visit the western tip of the island, landing at the town of Baquerizo Moreno. Depending on the weather, we may take a bus ride to Junco (“hoon-co”) Lagoon, which is one of the few permanent freshwater Galapagos lakes. It sits in the caldera (collapsed cone) of an extinct volcano. The area is surrounded by a unique shrubland habitat of Miconia and tree ferns. A climb up to the lake can provide a fantastic panoramic view of the surroundings in good weather. Because of its fresh water, El Junco is one of the few places where you can see frigatebirds bathing, which they do on the wing.

Española (Hood)
At Gardner Bay, nocturnal Green Sea Turtles bury their eggs in the white sand beach, Hood Mockingbirds may peck at your camera bag and the swimming is excellent. We’ll also sail to the other side of the island and enjoy the Blue-footed Boobies and the most intensely-coloured Marine Iguanas of all of the islands. Nazca Boobies also nest along the cliffs overlooking a well-known blowhole through which sea water is dramatically projected due to the surf. Because of the rocky terrain on the trails of this island, hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes and perhaps a trekking pole are recommended.

Floreana (Charles)
Flamingos feed in the island’s large salt-water lagoon and colonies of Galapagos Sea Lions line the beach. This is also a good area for snorkelling and enjoying some of the wonderfully diverse and colourful Galapagos fish. Floreana is best known for its colorful history of buccaneers, whalers, convicts, and early colonists. It is home of a famous wooden mail barrel at Post Office Bay, where letters are dropped off and picked up. You can drop off a letter or postcard here as well! We may snorkel at Devil’s Crown just offshore. The site is a completely submerged volcano that has eroded to create the appearance of a jagged crown.

Santa Cruz (Indefatigable)
In addition to our arrival day, during which we’ll drive north to south through the centre of the island, we will also visit Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) on the island’s northwest corner, where we visit a beach and lagoon. We may see flamingos here again and other wading birds. Dragon Hill is the only place on Santa Cruz where the Galapagos Land Iguana survives. Though we won’t climb the hill, it is possible some of the iguanas may wander down around the fringes and that we may spot one.

Santiago (James)
This island has very interesting landforms that attest to the volcanic origins of the Galapagos. We have an opportunity for a walk at Sullivan Bay that allows us to explore recent and less recent lava flows, view the plants that begin the colonization efforts of the flows, as well as see the wildlife that can at times blend in remarkably well with the ground. We have the best chance of seeing the Galapagos Penguin here.
Genovesa (Tower)
Located in the northeast part of the Galapagos Islands, this relatively small island is also known as “Bird Island” due to the large numbers of birds here. We’ll find Red-footed and Nazca Booby colonies, Lava Gulls, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Great Frigatebirds and various finches (including Gray Warbler Finch and Genovesa Ground Finch) near the white coral sands of Darwin’s Bay. We’ll also search for the endemic subspecies of Short-eared Owl and the Galapagos Fur Seal. We can snorkel in the bay for a chance to see rays, sharks and more!

Wednesday, February 15: Turtle Cove / Baltra / Fly to Quito
This is our last day in the Galapagos Islands. We’ll spend an hour first thing in the morning, paddling silently through a tranquil lagoon surrounded by mangroves. This lagoon is a nursery area for Hammerhead, Black-tipped and White-tipped Sharks. Golden (Cownose) and Spotted Eagle Rays glide slowly by our pangas and Green Sea Turtles are everywhere. This is a magical location. Our boat will return to Baltra and the crew will transfer us to the airport for our flight to Quito. Enjoy a farewell dinner in Quito.
*Overnight: Garden Hotel San José de Puembo*
*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Farewell Dinner*

Thursday, February 16: Departure day
We will be taken to the international airport for our flights home.
*Meals: Breakfast*

*Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in these notes are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.*
The island of Santa Fe (Barrington) forest of impressively tall Opuntia cactus “trees”, being the endemic *barringtonensis* subspecies of the Galapagos Giant Prickly Pear.
We charter the *M/Y Beluga* exclusively for our group of Canadian university alumni and friends.

This steel-hulled motor yacht is 33.5 metres long, accommodating 16 passengers and 8 crew. She travels at a speed of 12 knots, allowing us to get to 8 islands comfortably during our 8-day expedition cruise. She is well-appointed with comfortable air-conditioned private cabins and ample lounge and observation deck space.

**Here are your cabin options:**

**Standard**
- Cabin #1 (Lower Deck): two lower beds and portholes
- Cabin #2 (Lower Deck): two lower beds and portholes
- Cabin #3 (Lower Deck): one double bed and portholes
- Cabin #4 (Lower Deck): two lower beds and portholes
- Cabin #5 (Lower Deck): one queen size bed and portholes

**Premium**
- Cabin #6 (Main Deck): two lower beds and windows
- Cabin #7 (Main Deck): two lower beds and windows
- Cabin #8 (Upper Deck): two lower beds and windows (opens onto sun deck)
Tour Details

Tour Cost (per person): US$7295 (standard) – US$7495 (premium)

Single Supplement: If you wish guaranteed single accommodation, the single supplement for this trip is the tour cost plus an additional 50%. If you are travelling alone and you are willing to share, we will match you up with an appropriate roommate. If we cannot, the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.

Group Size:
12 – 14 participants

What’s Included:
• Taxes and gratuities: US$275
• 3 nights hotel in Quito, in double occupancy (in hotel listed or similar)
• Services and meals as listed in the itinerary
• Airfare from Quito to the Galapagos / Return to Quito
• 7-night Galapagos cruise aboard the M/Y Beluga based on double occupancy
• Gratuities for services provided by Quest
• Airport transfers if travelling with the group
• Services of bilingual naturalist guide on board, trained by the Darwin Research Station
• Services of your Alumni Study Leader Dan Riskin

Not Included:
• International airfare from your home to Quito / return from Quito
• Fuel surcharges on the boat or flights (if applicable)
• Meals not listed in the itinerary
• Day room in Quito (if required due to flight schedules)
• Galapagos National Park Fee (US$100 per person)
• Quito international airport departure tax
• Airport transfers, if not travelling with the group
• Alcoholic beverages and bar expenses
• Phone calls and items of a personal nature
• Additional transport required due to any emergency situation
• Galapagos Transit Control Card (US$20 per person)

Payment Details:
A deposit of US$500 per person is required to reserve your space on this tour. A payment of US$1000 is due six months prior to departure. The balance is due 90 days prior to departure.
What to Expect

Joining Instructions
Our tour starts upon arrival in Quito on February 6. All travellers arriving on the start date of the tour will be met on arrival and transferred to the group hotel. This transfer is included in the cost of the tour.

When you book the designated pre-trip accommodation with Worldwide Quest, your transfer from the airport to our group hotel on arrival is included. If you are making your own pre-trip arrangements, this transfer can be provided at additional cost.

The tour concludes with an included transfer to the Quito airport on February 16. Transfer times will be settled once your flight arrangements have been finalized. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Level of Activity: Moderate
You will be getting in and out of Zodiacs (pangas), for wet and dry landings, with assistance from the crew, walking at a leisurely pace, with frequent stops, on ground which is sometimes rough/rocky and hilly. Sturdy hiking shoes or boots are strongly advised. A trekking pole is also useful for extra balance. If you have any concerns about being able to participate in this trip, please contact us for further information.

Weather
Although the Galapagos Islands straddle the equator, the tropical heat is tempered by Pacific Ocean breezes and cold ocean currents. It is always a good idea to have a sweater handy in the evening. We will be visiting during the hot and rainy season when you can expect temperatures to range from 22 - 32°C, and occasional short, heavy showers.

COVID-19 Entry and Travel Requirements
All travellers on Worldwide Quest tours are required to be fully vaccinated and prepared to show proof of vaccination as per local regulations. Please refer to these websites for current requirements:

Canada: https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/

#SafeTravels
Worldwide Quest has been awarded the World Travel and Tourism Council’s #SafeTravels Stamp for adopting health and hygiene global standardized protocols. Learn more.
Additional Info

Extend your Stay
Many of our travellers like to arrive a day or two earlier or extend their stay to take advantage of being in the region. We have three exciting extensions that may interest you: an Amazon Rainforest Lodge extension; an Ecuador Cloud Forest Birding extension; and a Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of the Incas extension in Peru. The two first extensions are best done as pre-trips and the third could be done as a post-trip. We will be happy to send along details on any or all of these extensions so please don’t hesitate to write. We can also suggest other options, based on your time available, budget and interests.

Terms and Conditions
For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946). See full details here.

Cancellation Policy
All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing. See full details here.

Travel Insurance
We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.

How to Book
Please contact the Worldwide Quest office for more information and to secure your booking.

1-800-387-1483  |  416-633-5666
travel@worldwidequest.com