

ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE IN GALÁPAGOS

featuring the M/V *Isabela II*
January 20 – 28, 2028

With an optional Pre-Extension to
QUITO HIGHLANDS

January 18 – 21



Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY


HIGHLANDS
BIOLOGICAL STATION



Cover & Above photo captions go here....

**ISOLATED FROM THE
MAINLAND FOR MILLIONS
OF YEARS, THE GALÁPAGOS
ARCHIPELAGO IS CENTRAL
TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF
LIFE'S TENACIOUS RICHNESS
AND DRIVE TOWARDS
CHANGE.**



Here on these magnificent islands 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador, we'll find the rich abundance of wildlife that so inspired Charles Darwin in 1835. The islands offer a variety of terrain to explore including lava fields, lush green vegetation in the highlands, and sandy beaches. Amid the spectacular geology of these volcanic islands, we'll find the Giant Galápagos tortoises, flocks of frigate birds and blue-footed boobies, Darwin's finches and Galápagos penguins, colonies of marine iguanas and sea lions, along with other fascinating sea life—a fabulous archipelago of biological rarities and geological marvels, “a little world within itself” as Charles Darwin declared. Each day offers several face-to-face encounters with animals and birds that are remarkably unafraid of humans. Our home among the islands will be the luxury yacht *Isabela II*, a versatile 183-foot expedition vessel accommodating 40 guests. Designed for active exploration of the Galápagos, *Isabela II* also carries kayaks and a glass bottom boat that can be used at certain sites permitted by the National Park as well as wet suits, paddle boards and snorkeling equipment. The ship has a superb staff of resident naturalists who will be on hand to explain the islands' natural wonders. The latest in sustainable technology also gives *Isabela II* the added advantage of protecting the delicate Galápagos ecosystem that it navigates around. From the spacious deck of *Isabela II*, near Santa Cruz Island and far from the crowds, our journey culminates with a viewing of the annular solar eclipse in breathtaking clarity, as the dramatic “ring of fire” ignites the sky in a truly unforgettable spectacle.



STUDY LEADER

Dr. James (Jim) Costa

Your study leader is Dr. James (Jim) Costa, professor and executive director of the Highlands Biological Station of Western Carolina University, where he teaches biogeography,

Darwin's Origin of Species, and comparative temperate-tropical ecology split between Highlands Biological Station and Wildsumaco Biological Station in Ecuador.

Jim has written extensively on the explorer-naturalists Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverers of evolution by natural selection, and has traveled in Darwin's footsteps among the Galápagos Islands many

times. The author of ten books, his most recent works include *Radical by Nature: The Revolutionary Life of Alfred Russel Wallace* (Princeton 2023), *Darwin and the Art of Botany* (Timber 2023, with Bobbi Angell), and *The Descent of Man: An Annotated Edition of Darwin's Classic Work* (Princeton 2026, with Elizabeth Yale).

Recipient of the Alfred Russel Wallace Medal and a Trustee of the Charles Darwin Trust, Jim has been awarded research fellowships at Harvard's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of the NY Botanical Garden, and the DFG-Centre for Advanced Study at the University of Hamburg. For many years, he co-instructed Harvard's summer program on Darwin and evolution at Oxford University, and is a long-time research associate of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard and study leader/lecturer for the Harvard Alumni Association Travel Program.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Thursday, January 20 Arrive to Guayaquil, Ecuador

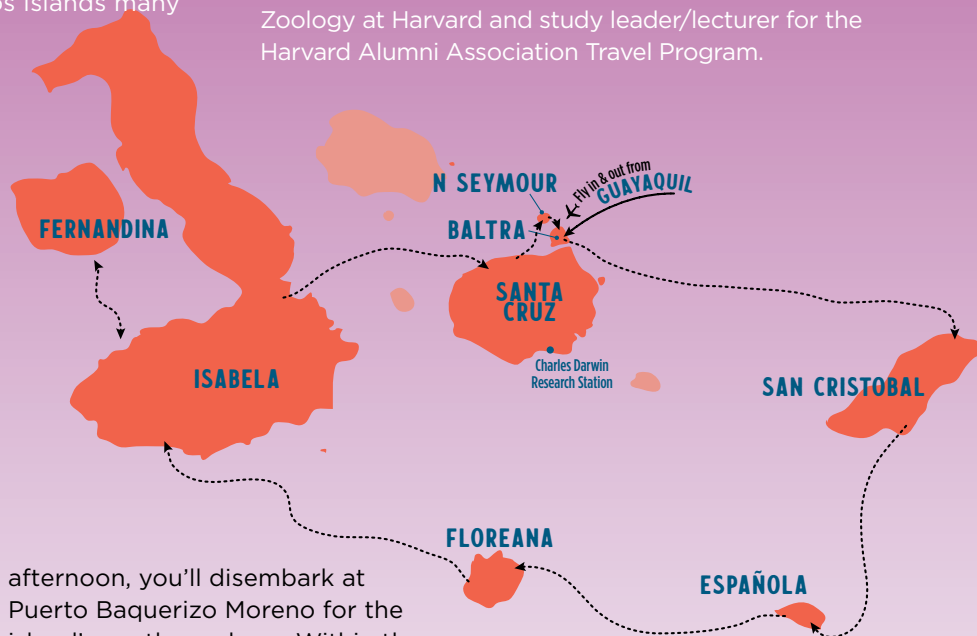
Depart the U.S. on a flight to Guayaquil, Ecuador and transfer to our hotel on arrival. HILTON COLÓN GUAYAQUIL (MEALS ALOFT)

Day 2: Friday, January 21 Baltra Island • Board *Isabela II*

We land at Baltra Island by plane in the morning and transfer to the nearby dock to board the *Isabela II*, where we take part in an introductory briefing, boat drill, and lunch. In the afternoon we will visit Las Batchas. These lagoons are the feeding grounds of various wading birds, from stilts to flamingos. You may enjoy swimming at this beach, too. Back on the ship, settle in with a welcome cocktail, a briefing on the next day's expedition plan, and a delicious dinner. M/V *ISABELA II* (B,L,D)

Day 3: Saturday, January 22 San Cristobal Island

In the morning, we land on the eastern tip of San Cristobal Island, Punta Pitt, which Darwin visited on September 15, 1835. We'll follow a trail to the beach and observe the famous Galápagos boobies and the endemic San Cristobal Mockingbird. This is the only site in the archipelago where all three species can be found together, along with two frigate bird species, and bachelor sea lions. Additional water activities will also be offered if weather permits. In the



afternoon, you'll disembark at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno for the island's southern shore. Within the deciduous forest at Cerro Colorado, we will visit the iconic, endangered giant tortoises, and other endemic species. M/V *ISABELA II* (B,L,D)

Day 4: Sunday, January 23 Española Island

Welcome to Española Island! Start your morning in Gardner Bay for a walk on the beach to observe sea lions, the endemic Española mockingbird, finches, and to soak in the scenery. You'll then have the opportunity for snorkeling, kayaking, an inflatable dinghy ride, or a ride on the glass-bottom boat. Return to the ship for lunch on board followed by an outing at Punta Suarez. This scenic location boasts lava and boulder terrains as well as colonies of albatrosses, boobies, swallow-tailed gulls, the unique marine iguanas, and the coastal landmark dubbed the "blowhole." M/V *ISABELA II* (B,L,D)

Day 5: Monday, January 24 Floreana Island

We're venturing to Floreana Island today. Disembark in the morning at Cormorant Point, a curious green olivine-sand beach, and walk to a lagoon where American flamingos can be observed. From there, cross the island to a white-sand beach which is a nesting ground for sea turtles. You'll have the opportunity at Champion Islet to snorkel, seek out the endemic Floreana mockingbird, enjoy a panga ride, or go out in a glass-bottom boat. After lunch, land at Baroness Cove and Post Office Bay to visit the historic barrel that has served as an informal post office in the archipelago for over two centuries—one of Charles Darwin's stops. M/V *ISABELA II* (B,L,D)



Day 6: Tuesday, January 25

Isabela Island • Fernandina Island

Disembark at Punta Moreno, Isabela Island for a meander through mangroves in search of sea turtles. Take in the landscape that is dominated by giant volcanoes on a trail that loops through lava formations, pioneer lava cactus, and endemic *Scalesia* trees. Here, we hope to see the rarest of the rare: Galápagos penguins and flightless cormorants! Additional water activities are offered here. The afternoon will feature Punta Mangle on volcanically active Fernandina Island, the youngest and most pristine island in the archipelago. Board a panga to explore the coastline and volcanic geology of the archipelago's youngest ecosystem of tiny bays, mangroves, and coves teeming with wildlife. *M/V ISABELA II* (B,L,D)

Day 7: Wednesday, January 26

ANNULAR ECLIPSE

Santa Cruz Island • North Seymour Island

Early morning: Experience a dramatic annular solar eclipse from the deck of the ship. The eclipse is just under way as dawn breaks over the Pacific, and about 90 minutes later (7:23 to 7:27 a.m.) witness the Moon pass directly in front of the Sun, leaving a glowing "ring of fire" in the sky. The viewing location for the annular eclipse will be on the Ship near Santa Cruz Island.

Optional Pre-Trip Extension

Quito (January 18 - 21)

Begin your journey with a three-night stay in Quito, Ecuador's historic, UNESCO World Heritage-listed capital. This program includes a full-day tour of Quito, exploring its beautifully preserved colonial and Republican-era center, ornate churches, and panoramic viewpoints while immersing you in the city's rich culture and Andean charm. On your second full day, venture north to the famous Otavalo Market, one of South America's most colorful and authentic artisan markets, where you can browse handwoven textiles, jewelry, and local crafts while experiencing Indigenous traditions. After immersing yourself in the region's culture and scenery, conclude your trip with a flight to the Galápagos Islands to join the main program. The extension includes 3 nights in Quito, arrival and departure transfers between Quito airport and hotel, private transportation, English-speaking local guide, breakfasts, two lunches at local restaurants with beverages, and a flight from Quito to Baltra (Galapagos Islands). The pre-trip extension price is based on a minimum of 8 participants and includes a credit for the unused first night in Guayaquil on the main program.

You'll arrive on Eden Islet on Santa Cruz Island this morning for another panga ride to the volcanic Islet to observe blue footed boobies, reef sharks, and frigates. Weather-permitting, water activities will be offered. We'll spend the afternoon on North Seymour Island, a volcanic uplift from the ocean floor resulting in a flat geological landscape and many marine fossils. The otherworldly landscape of North Seymour is dotted with endemic giant prickly-pear cactus pollinated by the only endemic bee in the islands, Darwin's carpenter-bee. Practically one giant rookery, the island is teeming with colonies of blue-footed boobies, two species of frigatebirds, swallow-tailed gulls, tropic-birds, and others, as well as sea lions and marine iguanas. Explore the coast with snorkeling and a panga ride, and end the day with dinner. *M/V ISABELA II* (B,L,D)

Day 8: Thursday, January 27

Baltra Island • Guayaquil

Our journey ends at Baltra Island where we transfer to the airport to take the flight back to the mainland. Upon arrival we'll check into our hotel to rest and freshen up. Later we gather for a festive farewell dinner. *HILTON COLÓN GUAYAQUIL* (B,D)

Day 9: Friday, January 28

Flights back to U.S.

Transfer to the airport for flights home. (B)



PROGRAM NOTES

Please note that the Galápagos park authorities allow only a set number of vessels and a limited number of visitors, as established by the park. This, in combination with the attraction of an eclipse, brings high demand and limited visitors. We expect the program to sell out.

Please keep in mind that viewing the annular eclipse is weather-dependent, so there is always a chance that passengers will not be able to view it or will only be able to view it for a short time. Neither Royal Adventures nor the Highlands Biological Station guarantees the viewing of the annular eclipse. Keep in mind that unexpected schedule changes could affect the program. The Tour Director will keep the group informed of any changes to activities.

Program pricing will increase after December 31, 2026, due to contracts and service agreements with suppliers.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This program is a joint departure for Highlands Biological Station of Western Carolina University and the California Academy of Sciences to explore the Galápagos Islands and view the annular eclipse. This is a moderately active program. In the Galápagos, walks are approximately one to two miles long (sometimes over uneven and rocky terrain) at a leisurely pace suitable for wildlife observation and photography. There will be wet landings on many islands. Panga or glass bottom boat rides along the coast and shorter walks are available for participants as an alternative to longer and more challenging excursions. There are opportunities for swimming and snorkeling and sea kayaking (snorkeling equipment, wetsuits, and kayaks are available aboard Isabela II) and internet service, while available, can be spotty. The Galápagos Islands are at sea level and temperatures range between the low 70s and high 80s°F in the islands. Travel is by regular scheduled commercial airlines, motor coach, air-conditioned ship, and inflatable “Zodiac-style” pangas.

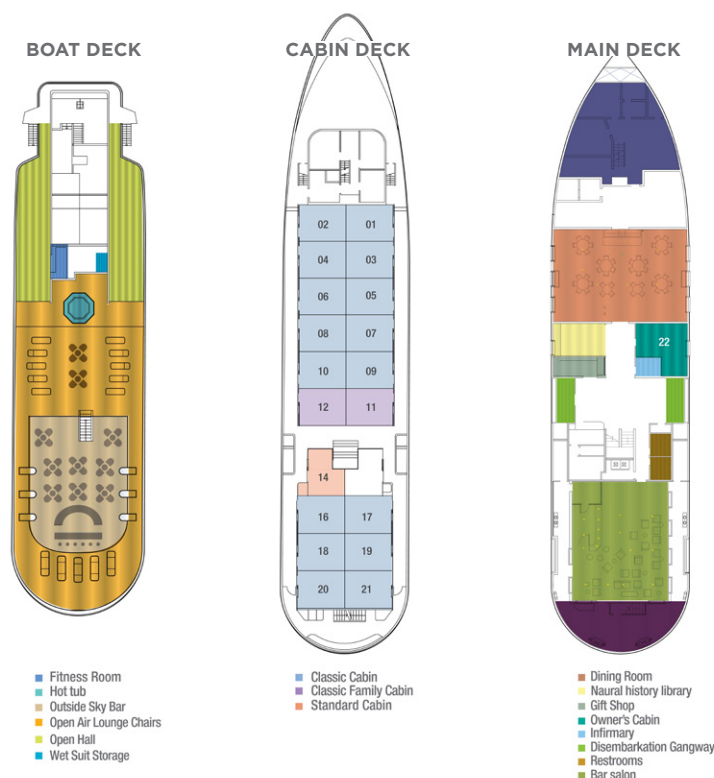


M/V ISABELA II

Home for this voyage is the intimate 40-passenger Motor Yacht, *Isabela II*, the ideal vessel for exploring the Galápagos in the most comfortable, stylish way, with three spacious decks to enjoy. Guests can admire sunny skies, evening sunsets, and starry nights from atop the Sun Deck, which features open (exposed) and covered (nonexposed) areas, such as: the outdoor bar, hot tub and fitness room. On the Main Deck, passengers access the very comfortable dining room, in addition to the reception area, gift shop, library, and infirmary. The dining is excellent, with a mix of continental cuisine and Ecuadorian specialties. Onboard crew consists of 24, well-trained team members made up of naturalists and the crew, as well as a resident physician.

All the required equipment for exploration is ready and set for your convenience: a glass bottom boat, kayaks, snorkeling equipment and wetsuits (available to rent for an additional fee) and a large and comfortable panga boat. All 20 cabins have private bathrooms, small sitting areas, air conditioning, a safe deposit box, and hair dryer. Guests can choose between the ship's Classic (16), Classic Family (2), Standard (1), and Master Suite (1) Cabins. Each cabin is equipped with two twin beds or 1 double bed, and located on the Cabin Deck, with the exception of the Master Suite, which is located on the Main Deck.

Cabins for single use are subject to availability.





LAND PROGRAM COSTS

Family Cabin \$9,890*

per person, based on triple occupancy
**Family Cabin includes a child discount.
 Must have at least one child 12 or under
 in the the room.*

Classic Cabin \$10,290*

per person, based on double occupancy
***Classic Cabin rooming with one child 12
 or under at the time of sailing \$500 off*

Master Suite \$11,190

per person, based on double occupancy

Classic Cabin \$13,290

single occupancy (limited availability)

These rates will expire after December
 31, 2026, due to contracts and service
 agreements with suppliers.

Optional pre-trip extension to Quito Highlands \$1,375

Per person, based on double occupancy

Pre-trip extension Single Occupancy \$1,725

Airfare: International roundtrip airfare
 from the U.S. to Ecuador is not included.
 A recommended flight itinerary will be
 made available to registered passengers
 departing and returning from Atlanta.

PROGRAM COST INCLUDES

Two-night accommodations at
 the 5-star Hilton Colón Guayaquil,
 Ecuador (Deluxe room) • 7 days
 / 6 nights cruise aboard the
 deluxe yacht *Isabela II* • Round
 trip in-tour flights from Guayaquil
 to Baltra and Baltra back to
 Guayaquil GYE/GPS/GYE (any
 significant increases to in-tour
 flights in 2028 or fuel surcharges
 will be an additional cost) •
 Eclipse viewing glasses • Ingala
 card / Transit Control Card (TCT)
 for Galápagos visitors • Galápagos
 Park entrance fee tax • VIP private
 group bag inspection at your
 hotel, prior to your flight to the

Galápagos • \$135 Referential Fuel
 Surcharge (Subject to changes)
 • Wifi in the common areas of
 the ship • Lectures/commentary
 by Dr. Jim Costa • Tour Director
 throughout • All meals in trip
 itinerary • All transportation
 within trip itinerary • Guided
 field trips, excursions, and tours •
 Professional English-speaking tour
 guides throughout • Welcome
 cocktail aboard *Isabela II* and wine
 with farewell dinner • Naturalist
 guides on the islands • Activities
 including: kayaks, paddle boards,
 and glass-bottom boat • Gratuities
 to local guides and driver

PROGRAM COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare (quoted
 separately) • Customary
 Shipboard Gratuities (suggested
 amounts at your discretion is \$15
 per day for the guide, \$10 per
 day for the crew, and a one-time
 total of \$15 for the barman for
 the duration of the cruise.) •
 Fuel surcharges from the cruise
 company • Fuel surcharges from
 the airlines • Added airport taxes
 or security fees or fuel surcharges
 imposed after the initial pricing
 of this program are not included •
 The ship has wetsuits available to
 rent for \$35-\$40 for the duration
 of the cruise • Alcoholic beverages
 other than welcome cocktail
 aboard *Isabela II* and farewell

dinner • Meals not specified in the
 itinerary • Personal items such
 as laundry, room service, e-mail,
 fax or telephone calls, or mini
 bar charges • Liquor, dishes, and
 beverages, not part of included
 meals • Passport issuance fees or
 renewal fees • Excess baggage
 charges • Individual transfers •
 Medical expenses • COVID-19
 testing • Travel or evacuation
 insurance • Optional extensions
 or deviations from the scheduled
 tour • Fuel surcharges imposed
 after the initial pricing of this
 program are not included •
 Gratuity to the Tour Director
 (at participant's discretion)

TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS, & FINAL

PAYMENT: To reserve a space on this program, a \$1,500 deposit is required per person, plus \$250 per person deposit for the optional Quito Highlands pre-trip extension, if applicable. Please either mail or email your registration form to Royal Adventures at 9 Crow Canyon Court, Ste 205, San Ramon, CA 94583, Email: info@royaladventures.com. If you wish to submit your registration online, please visit royaladventures.intellibook.co/site/#/hbs-galapagos-eclipse28 or scan the QR code on the registration form with your smartphone camera. Initial deposits may be charged to a credit card. Final payment is due June 25, 2027, and must be paid by check or wire transfer or ACH.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS: All cancellations must be received in writing by Royal Adventures by the participant. Until December 31, 2026: Your deposit will be refunded less \$600 per person. After December 31, 2026, there are no refunds of any deposit or payments. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other trip features or for any part of the program on which you choose not to participate. Royal Adventures handles all invoicing. CST #2009579-40.

TOUR SIZE: This tour is a joint departure between Highlands Biological Station and California Academy of Sciences members and friends on a first-come, first-served basis. The minimum group size is 15. Should the minimum not be met, we reserve the right to levy a small group surcharge.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance as the cancellation penalty in this brochure will apply. Trip cancellation insurance can be purchased through our recommended provider Travel Insured International, [CLICK HERE to get a quote](#) or call 1-800-243-3174 and mention Royal Adventures #53140. Most insurance plans need to be purchased within 14 days of paying the initial deposit in order to waive pre-existing medical conditions as well as to purchase "Cancel for Any Reason" insurance. Neither Western Carolina University Highlands Biological Station nor Royal Adventures accept liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable airline ticket or other expenses incurred by tour participants in preparing for the trip.

PHYSICAL HEALTH: Participation on the program requires that passengers be in generally good health. This is an active walking tour program, often over uneven terrain. It is essential that persons with any medical problems and related dietary restrictions make them known to us well before departure.

QUESTIONS: Please email Jim Costa (costa@email.wcu.edu) or phone: (828) 526-2602. Or contact Royal Adventures at (925) 820-6260 or email: info@royaladventures.com

RESPONSIBILITY: Royal Adventures, its owners, and employees act only as agents for the various independent suppliers and contractors providing transportation, hotel accommodations, restaurant, and other services connected with this tour. Such travel and services are subject to the terms and conditions under which such accommodations, services, and transportation are offered or provided, and the Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University and Royal Adventures and their respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns, accept no liability, therefore. The Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University and Royal Adventures assume no liability for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or other irregularity that may be caused by the defect of any aircraft or vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved. Additionally, responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages, or expenses of any kind due to sickness, epidemics, pandemics, pathogens, weather, strikes, local laws, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature, quarantine, *force majeure*, animal or insect bites, or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws of the country in which they are provided. If this tour is canceled due to a *force majeure* event or other forces beyond our control, only the recoverable portion of unused services or accommodations, if any, will be refunded or credited on a future Royal Adventures tour. A *force majeure* event, in relation to this tour, shall mean any circumstances beyond our control, including, but without limitation, to acts of God, explosion, flood, forceful wind, fire or accident, war or threat of war declared or undeclared, acts of terrorism, sabotage, insurrection, riots, strikes, civil disturbance, sickness, epidemics,

pandemics, quarantines, government intervention or other unforeseeable events. Limitations on travel arising from the COVID-19 pandemic or other pathogens shall be considered a *force majeure* event. Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University and Royal Adventures reserve the right to make changes in the published itinerary or to the trip leaders whenever, in their sole judgment, conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience, or safety of the tour participants. They reserve the right to withdraw this tour without penalty. Any physical or mental health condition of a participant that may require special medical attention or physical assistance must be disclosed in writing before booking so that the Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University and Royal Adventures may evaluate whether participation is feasible. Participants requiring assistance must travel with a companion who will be responsible for providing such assistance. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour or to substitute another qualified leader or special guest. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. The price of the program is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, airfare, or fuel increases will be passed onto participants. Neither the Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University nor Royal Adventures accepts the liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable airline ticket. The air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other trip features. I will not hold the Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University nor Royal Adventures and/or its employees or agents responsible for any expense or loss caused by my/our failure to purchase trip cancellation and evacuation insurance coverage. As part of the consideration and right to participate in this tour, each participant will be asked to sign a liability release, assumption of risk, and hold harmless agreement.

ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE IN GALÁPAGOS

featuring the M/V *Isabela II*

January 20 – 28, 2028



SCAN TO REGISTER



Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY

HIGHLANDS
BIOLOGICAL STATION

RESERVATION FORM

For the ease of registering online, please visit royaladventures.intellibook.co/site/#/hbs-galapagos-eclipse28 or scan the QR code listed. If you prefer to mail your registration, please complete the form below and return it to Royal Adventures with deposit check (if applicable) payable to “Royal Adventures” at:

Royal Adventures | 9 Crow Canyon Ct, Ste 205 | San Ramon, CA 94583

- ☐ Enclosed is my deposit of \$_____ \$1,500 per person (pp), plus \$250 pp for the *Quito Highlands pre-extension*, if applicable, to hold _____ place(s) on *Galápagos*, departing January 20, 2028, with the Highlands Biological Station. Final payment is due June 25, 2027, and must be paid by check or wire transfer

NAME AS ON PASSPORT

DOB

NAME AS ON PASSPORT

DOB

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

HOME PHONE

OFFICE PHONE

FAX

E-MAIL

Optional Pre-tour Extension

- ☐ I/We wish to join the Quito Highlands pre-tour optional extension

Payment Options

- ☐ Pay by check made payable to “Royal Adventures”
- ☐ Please charge my deposit for a total amount of \$_____ to: ☐ AMEX ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover Card

CARD #

EXPIRATION DATE

SEC CODE

Accommodations

- ☐ Double 1 Bed ☐ Double 2 Beds ☐ Single (limited availability)
- ☐ I will share accommodations with: _____

CABIN REQUEST:

- ☐ Classic Cabin ☐ Family Cabin ☐ Standard Cabin ☐ Master Suite

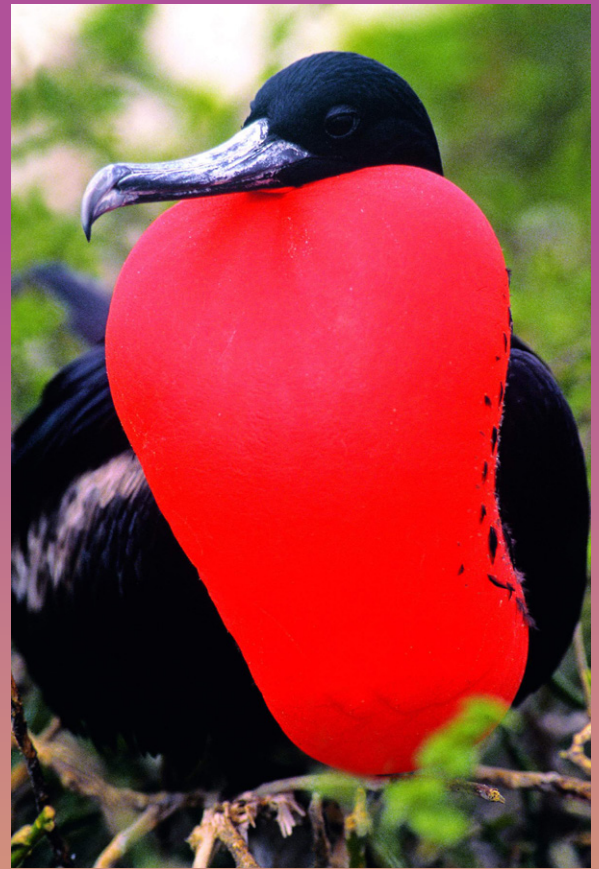
I/We have carefully read the Terms and Conditions and Responsibility sections of this brochure and agree to their terms on behalf of myself and the members of my party named above.

SIGNATURE

DATE

SIGNATURE

DATE



HIGHLIGHTS

Spend six nights aboard the *Isabela II*, an intimate 40-passenger motor yacht

View the spectacular annular eclipse onboard, away from the crowds and far from artificial light

Enhance your experience with lectures and discussions from Darwin and Galápagos expert Dr. James Costa

Enjoy spotting many iconic Galápagos species including marine birds (boobies, and swallow-tailed gulls), finches, Frigatebirds, giant tortoises, lizards, sea lions, and iguanas

Head out on the water for snorkeling, kayaking, an inflatable dinghy ride, or a ride on the glass-bottom boat

ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE IN GALÁPAGOS

featuring the M/V *Isabela II*
January 20 – 28, 2028

With an optional
Pre-Extension to

QUITO HIGHLANDS

January 18 – 21

Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY

HIGHLANDS
BIOLOGICAL STATION