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The Exotic Galapagos Islands

By Eduardo Landazuri

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by: **Eduardo Landazuri**

The Galapagos Islands were named after the giant Galapagos tortoises. The archipelago emerged six million years ago as a result of volcanic activity in the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. These enchanted place on earth is composed of 19 islands and more than 40 islets, with white sand beaches, dark and solid rocks, unique landscapes, deep crystal clear waters, you can enjoy yourself swimming with playful sea lions around you, watching friendly sharks cruise six feet under you. All these wonderful nature makes you feel as if you are part of it all.

It has a world record of especial titles and management categories: the islands are Ecuador's first National Park; UNESCO World natural heritage Site, both the terrestrial Park and the Reserve, (the second largest and possibly the most unique in the world); Biosphere Reserve and a Whale Sanctuary.

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS LOCATION

This alluring complex ecosystem is located 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) off the coast of Ecuador, northwest of South America in the Pacific Ocean.

WILDLIFE OBSERVATION

Some of the most unusual and fascinating species in the world, both terrestrial and marine, are found in the Galapagos islands. Here most of the surface (96%) is a National Park, surrounded by a protected Marine Reserve, both UNESCO World Heritages Sites.

On Santa Cruz island, the Giant tortoises can be seen at the Charles Darwin Research Station (including famous Lonesome George, the only remaining tortoise from "Pinta" island) and also in the wild, in the highlands of this Galapagos island. There are 15 sub-species of giant tortoises. Some prefer the upland zones of the large islands because of humidity, grassy pastures and small ponds to drink and stagger about. Others prefer islands with low elevations, dry terrain, and with lots of prickly

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vegetation like cactus. The largest populations are found in Alcedo Volcano on Isabela Island, and in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island.

BIRD WATCHING

A total of 140 species of birds have been registered in Galapagos. About half of the resident birds cannot be seen , anywhere else in the world. You can observe shore and lagoon birds such as ducks, stilts, herons, warblers, pelicans and frigates all easily approachable, just like all the Galapagos animals.

Eight species of Darwin's Finches are found on Santa Cruz island; most of which can be observed all around the island. Charles Darwin's concepts were founded by modern evolutionists by studying the different beaks of these finches.

SNORKELING AND DIVING

The Galapagos islands are considered a world premier destination for scuba diving and snorkeling. The protected waters of its Marine Reserve have been well preserved, nearly untouched by external sources. Here the crossroads of marine currents has resulted in a unique marine ecosystem.

GALAPAGOS WEATHER

Although the islands are tropical, there are two markedly different seasons : the warm, humid and sunny season from December to May and the dry, windy and not-so-sunny season from June to November.

Transitional months are January, April and May. The Warm Season offers hardly any wind (so the sea is usually very calm) and the visibility tends to be better. In the Dry Season there is more wind, sometimes the sea tends to be choppy and the visibility lower.

THE MEANING OF GALAPAGOS

Amongst the first groups that came to Galapagos, we had many of Spanish origin. In traditional Castilian language, the word "Galapago" was used to describe the frontal piece of the riding saddle, and upon seeing the many tortoises the islands had in earlier years, but more important, the shape of their carapace (shell), they named this archipelago "Islands of the Galapagos". And this is the official story of the name of these islands

Visit the most complete Site ever made about the Galapagos Islands and Ecuador. You will find outstanding and solid information regarding these Enchanted Islands and the country to which they belong (Ecuador).

I am a business administrator and run my own Consulting company, I live in Quito and have been in the Galapagos Islands for more than 10 times already, I have also studied a lot about them.

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The wonderful and unique wildlife and landscapes of the islands has always impressed me. That's why I decided to build a Site promoting the Galapagos so people around the world will know more precise information about this wonderful spot on Earth.

Five Must See Places Of South America

By Mark Van Overmeire

The Wonderful Creatures of The Galapagos Islands

A wonder of creation, the Galapagos Islands have captured the imagination of poets and biologists alike. Separated from the mainland in the waters of Ecuador, evolution created stunning endemic creatures such as the giant tortoise and the sea iguana, animals found only on the Galapagos. The most groundbreaking work ever to be published concerning evolution, "The Origin of Species", was based on observations made on the Galapagos Islands by Charles Darwin.

Lake Titicaca

Lake Titicaca evokes a spiritual tranquility and is the most beautiful lake I've ever seen. It touches the clouds at an altitude of 12.532 ft. (3.820 m.) with amazing dark blue waters never seen before. Titicaca, the biggest freshwater lake of South America, lies on the borders of Bolivia and Peru and hosts some wonderful islands such as "The Floating Islands" and "The Island of the Sun".

Machu Picchu - The Lost City of The Incas

Machu Picchu, the Lost city of the Incas, is a mystical, sacred place. The ruins are one of the most enigmatic and beautiful ancient ruins in the world. Rediscovered on July 24, 1911 by Yale archaeologist Hiram Bingham, Machu Picchu (meaning 'Old Peak' in Quechua, the language spoken by the Incas) was thought to be a sanctuary for the preparation of priestesses and brides for the Inca nobility. The dramatic setting in a remote area of the Peruvian Andes enhances the shroud of mystery even more. I invite you to visit Machu Picchu - The Lost City of The Incas at

Patagonia

Patagonia is without doubt one of the most mesmerizing places of the world. It encompasses the South of both Argentina and Chile. The name Patagonia stands for 'Land of the Big Feet'. Legends say that discoverer Ferdinand Magellan and his crew saw a tribe of nine foot tall giants with big feet. He named the tribe the Patagons or big feet. It's paradise for the adventurous traveler with landscapes impossible to imagine. Highlights are whale watching in Puerto Madryn, visiting Ushuaia (the southernmost city of the world) and hiking in Torres del Paine national park.

Salar de Uyuni

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The big secret of South America is without doubt the Salar de Uyuni, the worlds largest salt flat, in Bolivia. It's the largest in the world, a staggering 4.025 square miles (10.500 square km.). The beautiful Fish Island (Isla Pescada) gives an wonderful contrast with the salt lake. The "salar" continues in the atacama desert, near the border of Chile, with geysers, the red and green lake, hot baths and a never ceasing tranquility.

Mark Van Overmeire is a passionate musician, photographer and traveler. He has traveled extensively in South America and Southeast Asia and is the founder of Travel Amazing South America, a travel site at

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