

Red Mangrove Lodges 2012

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Our tour with Red Mangrove Lodges was truly memorable! We loved the in-depth experience with the flora, fauna and delighted in learning more about the fascinating history of the Galapagos. Our outstanding guide, Juan, was highly knowledgeable and customized the tour precisely for our capabilities and interests. We prefer taking the time required to observe and to participate fully in all the amazing natural-world phenomena we encountered.

Snorkeling off Floreana afforded us an excellent opportunity to spend time observing “up close and personal” the feeding habits of the many Pacific Green Sea Turtles which inhabit the area, and we were enthralled to witness their interaction with the sting rays who passed by. On our “open-air” bus trip to the highlands, we were greeted by an unusual sighting of a Short Eared Owl eating its prey. Sauntering through a tortoise reserve, we enjoyed watching the numerous Giant Tortoises meandering around. A few were immersed in a “mud sauna” for insect protection. It was fun watching a DVD (shown to us while we were actually standing in a pirate cave) about the stories of the early settlers to the island with an interesting tale about a Baroness who mysteriously disappeared.

On Isabela, we relished snorkeling amid the Galapagos Penguins and young sea lions and had a stupendous, once-in-a-lifetime experience of walking through a lava “moonscape” and seeing the “nursery” composed of piles of baby Marine Iguanas, which are found nowhere else in the world, cuddling for warmth. The walk ended with a gorgeous Galapagos sunset which set the entire sky afire with a beautiful orange hue and which illuminated “Sierra Negra” — the second largest volcano in the world.

Another Isabela highlight was exploring the above and below water labyrinth of lava towers and arches formed from various volcanic eruptions. We snorkeled in the crystal clear “aquarium-like” water filled with penguins, sea turtles, lobsters, white-tipped sharks and sting rays. Also we were thrilled to see the elaborate courtship ritual of the Blue-footed Booby.

This Red Mangrove experience greatly enhanced our appreciation of the diversity and uniqueness of the “Galapagos Paradise” which we’ll long remember.