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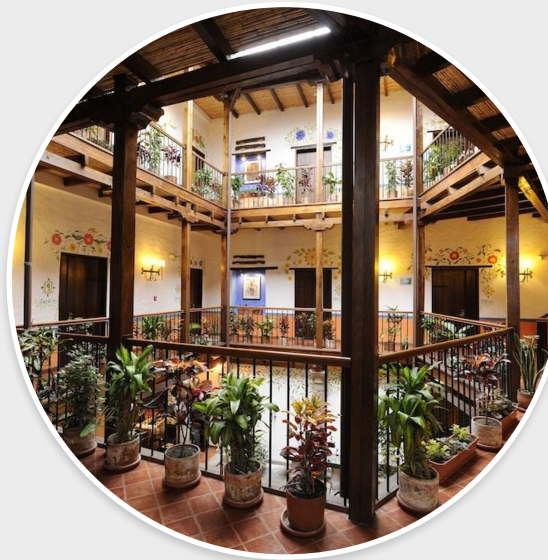
AMAZING PLACES

**HACIENDAS & INCA MARKETS
OF ECUADOR**

(with optional add-on)

DARWIN'S GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

January 2-15, 2022



DARWIN'S GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS ADD-ON (OPTIONAL)

JANUARY 2 – 7, 2022

Day 1

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2ND ARRIVE IN QUITO

Arrive at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport. Explore Amazing Places staff will be there to welcome you and escort you to our hotel in Quito.

Accommodation: La Casona De La Ronda

You'll be met and taken to La Casona De La Ronda. The moment you enter through the main wooden doors...you also enter into Ecuadorian history. This unique Heritage Boutique Hotel is located in one of the oldest Spanish houses called "Las Corralas" originally built in 1738, now a part of the Quito Historic Center.

Day 2

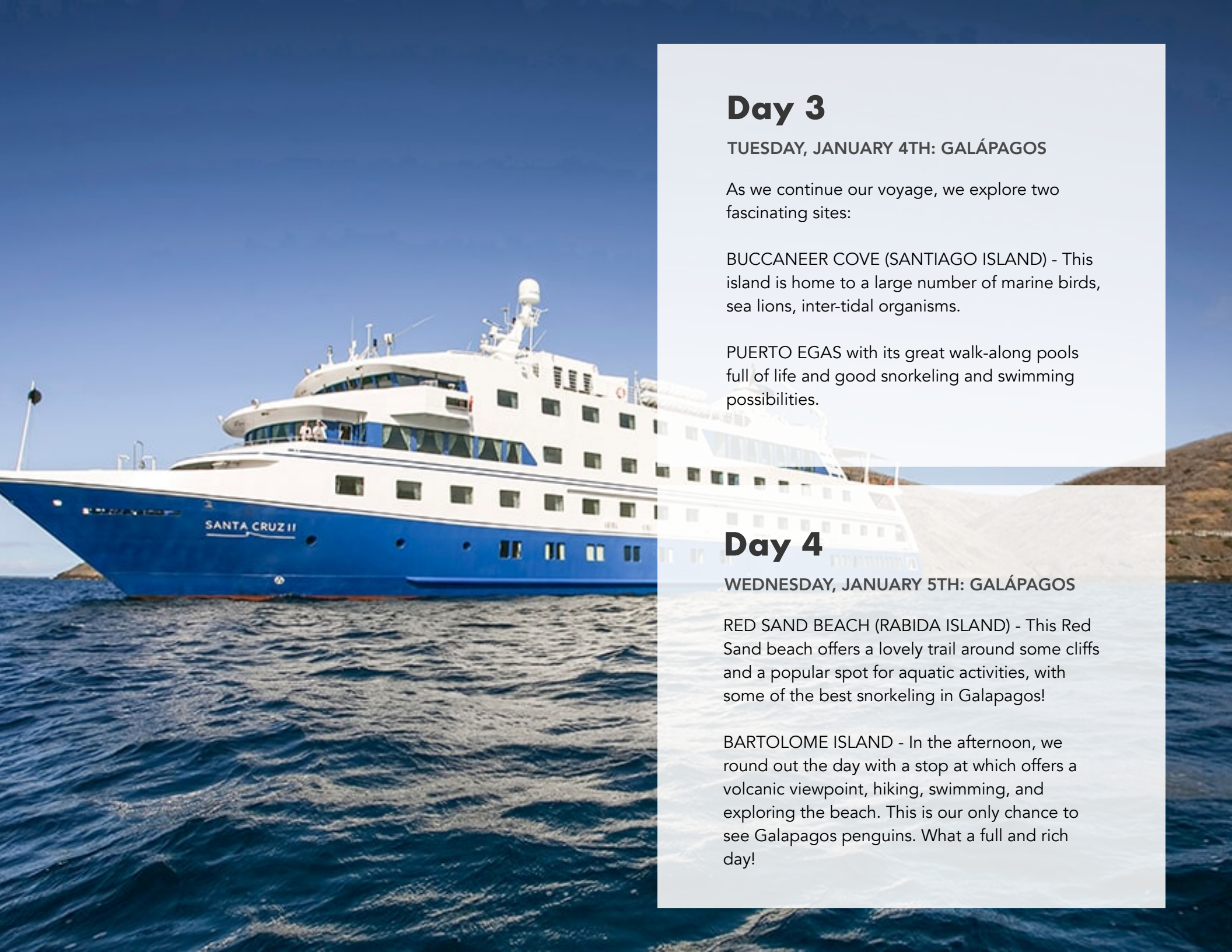
MONDAY, JANUARY 3RD: FLIGHT TO GALÁPAGOS

Land at Baltra Island by plane in the morning and transfer to the dock to board the Santa Cruz II, where we receive a welcome introductory briefing, boat drill and lunch.

This cruise ship is an ideal way to explore the Galapagos. A highly advanced Expedition Vessel specifically designed to operate in isolated regions, it is the perfect fit for exploring the remote Galapagos Islands. Discover the Galapagos the same way the early explorers did, with no other boats in sight! Guaranteed exclusive access to the islands so you'll always feel like each site is there just for you.

Las Bachas (Santa Cruz Island) - This beautiful site is located on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, a glorious white beach where a pair of lagoons provides feeding grounds for various wading birds, including stilts, pintail ducks and pink flamingos. You may enjoy swimming and or snorkeling at this beach too. Welcome cocktail, expedition plan for Tuesday and dinner.





Day 3

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4TH: GALÁPAGOS

As we continue our voyage, we explore two fascinating sites:

BUCCANEER COVE (SANTIAGO ISLAND) - This island is home to a large number of marine birds, sea lions, inter-tidal organisms.

PUERTO EGAS with its great walk-along pools full of life and good snorkeling and swimming possibilities.

Day 4

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5TH: GALÁPAGOS

RED SAND BEACH (RABIDA ISLAND) - This Red Sand beach offers a lovely trail around some cliffs and a popular spot for aquatic activities, with some of the best snorkeling in Galapagos!

BARTOLOME ISLAND - In the afternoon, we round out the day with a stop at which offers a volcanic viewpoint, hiking, swimming, and exploring the beach. This is our only chance to see Galapagos penguins. What a full and rich day!

Day 5

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6th: GALÁPAGOS

GENOVESA ISLAND - Sailing northeast, and crossing the equatorial line, we'll come to the sunken crater of this island, home to thousands of marine birds. It feels like a world a million miles from our own.



Day 6

FRIDAY, JANUARY 7th: GALÁPAGOS

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND – Last, an incredible encounter with nature in which we respectfully share a wild habitat with giant Galapagos tortoises at a private reserve up in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island. Then say farewell to the Galápagos Islands as we head back to the airport for our flight to Quito.



HACIENDAS & INCA MARKETS OF ECUADOR

JANUARY 7 – 15, 2022

If you are looking to take in the breathtaking Andes scenery, experience the Ecuadorian culture, and spend your nights in traditional haciendas along the way, this is the perfect trip for you!

Day 1

FRIDAY, JANUARY 7TH: QUITO

Arrive at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport from home or the Galápagos Islands.

This journey takes us to the finest haciendas in Ecuador, transporting us into another time while offering the highest quality comforts and luxury designed to forget the daily worries and liberate the stress caused by the times we have been living in.





HACIENDA LA COMPAÑIA AND ROSE PLANTATION

Accompanied by Explore Amazing Places staff and a local guide with in-depth knowledge of the visited areas, this travel adventure begins with a stop along our route to enjoy a typical Ecuadorian lunch at a private hacienda, La Compañía de Jesus, which over 300 years ago, belonged to the Jesuit order. The house and chapel have been in the hands of the Jarrín family for over 100 years. The charm of the French style home, and the fact that it is decorated with thousands of roses, which are brought from the rose farm belonging to the same family, makes this a memorable occasion.



HACIENDA CUSIN

Arrive at Hacienda Cusin, a restored 17th century Andean estate, now a charming and comfortable, country inn furnished with colonial antiques, tapestries, and Andean crafts. Located in the Imbabura province of the Northern Andes, the hacienda is the oldest in the country. Ancient stone walls topped with moss encircle two acres of gardens which attract over 50 species of birds. With its roaring fires, sumptuous tapestries, louche saints and antiques, the restored 19th-century former home of a successful hacienda owner is itself a collection of the culture, art and people of the Andes. The history of this Otavalo hacienda is faithfully revered yet playfully reimagined with mischievous touches; look closely and you'll find a Beatrix Potter garden cottage, a Bond villain's secret door, and politicians painted into an indigenous mural.

The background image shows a bustling market stall. In the foreground, there are several large, colorful shawls (fajas) with intricate patterns and bright colors like red, yellow, blue, and green. Some shawls have floral designs, while others have geometric patterns. In the background, more shawls are hanging from the ceiling, and a person can be seen walking through the market. The overall atmosphere is one of a traditional, vibrant market.

Day 2

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8TH: OTAVALO INCA MARKET

After breakfast we will travel 20 minutes to the Otavalo indigenous market, the most famous market in Ecuador. Indigenous people arrive at dawn by the mountain trails surrounding the city from nearby villages and towns to sell their products woven on back strap and Spanish treadle looms. Other crafts of the area include felt hats, knit sweaters, straw products, wood carvings and many other treasures for you to take home. The market is also a good place to buy an authentic Panama (made in Ecuador) Hat, spending as little as \$6 or as much as you want, depending on the quality.

Otavaleños are a special case among indigenous groups. Their financial success and cultural stability have allowed them to travel and educate their children abroad while still keeping a firm hold on their traditions at home. The typical dress of both the men and women make Otavaleños easily recognizable. Women traditionally wear elaborately embroidered white blouse over double layered wool skirts, white underneath and blue or black on top.

Shawls protect from the sun, keep them warm at night, or carry a baby. Necklaces of gold metal or red beads (once coral, now usually colored glass or plastic) are worn around the neck, and their long, black hair is tied back in a single braid and wrapped in a woven faja (hair ribbon). Men also wear their long, black hair braided in a shimba, often to the waist. The long hair is such an important symbol of ethnic identity that indigenous of any tribe are not required to cut it off when they enter the army. Blue wool ponchos are worn in all types of weather over white calf-length pants and rope sandals. A straight-brimmed felt fedora tops it off.

Most important, and unusual, Otavaleño weavers have been able to organize themselves efficiently, enabling them to hold onto their roots while keeping their business feet firmly in the present. They travel extensively abroad to sell their products in America, Europe, and Asia.



Day 3

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9TH: COTACACHI (LEATHER TOWN) and HACIENDA PENSIQUI

After a leisurely breakfast, spend the morning hiking, bird watching, or go on a cabalgato (horseback riding - optional). In the afternoon, we will visit the village of Cotacachi specializing in leatherwork where it is so important that Cotacachi is the home of the only high school in Ecuador that teaches leatherwork. Great shopping!

As evening approaches, we will head to the historic Hacienda Pinsaquí where an Andean band will entertain us in the cellar bar while we enjoy traditional appetizers and a canelazo, which is a fragrant brew of cinnamon and naranjilla (bitter orange). Dine in the main dining room where local cuisine is the specialty.

Day 4

MONDAY, JANUARY 10TH: HACIENDA CUSIN

After breakfast you may spend the day relaxing, getting a massage, exploring the many details of the hacienda such as: five acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, where the myriad plants and flowers – bougainvillea, jasmine, agapanthus, hydrangeas, begonias, poppies, geraniums, dahlias, primroses, orchids, magnolia, Aztec lilies growing and flowering throughout the year. Take well maintained bikes out for a spin to appreciate the area from ground level, over short or long trails, Popular cooking classes can be arranged with the talented team of chefs. Bird watch with more than 50 species of birds at the Hacienda.

Or, curl up by a crackling fireplace with a good book or magazine, paint in the gardens, write at the great inspiring desks of the library, delving into the 300-strong film library, find your way to spend a perfect day.





Day 5

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA MITAD DEL MUNDO (MIDDLE OF THE EARTH)

Say goodbye to Hacienda Cusin and head to the Middle of the Earth (Mitad Del Mundo) at latitude 00.00, longitude 00.00. Put one foot in the Northern Hemisphere and one foot in the Southern Hemisphere at the same time.

Next, travel south on Ecuador's Avenue of the Volcanoes, enjoying magnificent scenery of volcanoes in a valley that runs through the Andes mountain chain, arriving at the fascinating Hacienda La Alegria. Known for their warm hospitality, this charming family-owned, working hacienda offers a unique Ecuadorian experience combining local culture of working "Chagras" (Ecuadorian cowboys), history, and scenic landscapes. Prepare yourself for a unique experience!



Day 6

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA

Awaken to a sunrise and enjoy the breathtaking views across the valley to the extinct volcanoes of Ruminahui, Pasochoa, Atacazo, and in the distance the mighty cone of Cotopaxi, at 5897m, the highest active volcano in the world.

We will begin the morning with the Chagras (Ecuadorian Cowboys) as they reveal life in the day of working on the hacienda and in the mountains of beautiful Ecuador. A special hacienda midday Barbecue (in place of dinner) with the Chagras. The rest of the afternoon is free for art, hiking, exploring the hacienda, birding or horseback riding (optional) which is the specialty of the hacienda. A hot bowl of soup from Paty's kitchen, coffee, tea and snacks this evening.

Day 7

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA

This hacienda specializes in horseback riding vacations, so you'll have a unique opportunity to ride with the Chagras on surrounding trails and/or take riding lessons, or visit the Cloud Forest with a trail of wild orchids, (flexible optional activities). These luxuriant forests rank among some of the most bio-diverse habitats on the planet, with an astonishingly profusion of plant life. Another option is an Ecuadorian cooking class with proprietress Paty who will teach you the secret of making the favorite soup of the Andes – Locro, (Cooking class included); relax and explore the beautiful hacienda grounds for some great photo opportunities.

Social Hour in the living room before dinner.





Day 8

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA

Wake up with the horses this morning and enjoy a hearty hacienda breakfast. This will be a morning to paint. After lunch, say adios to Hacienda La Alegria with hugs all around and good wishes to owners Gabriel and Paty. Then, we travel to Quito and the Hotel La Casona De La Ronda.

Day 9

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15TH: CASONA DE LA RONDA

We begin our day with a walking tour of Old City, the first city to be named a UNESCO World Heritage site, and today beautifully restored. Starting with Plaza de la Independencia, located in the heart of the Old City, this busy plaza honors those heroes who started the movement toward independence from Spain.

We'll visit the most magnificent Church in the Americas, La Compañía. Then, shopping at Tianguuez, specializing in "Panama" hats (all Panama hats are made in Ecuador), and the famous jewelry of the indigenous designer Byron Ugshina. This shop is located in the cavern like catacombs of the Church San Francisco Established in 1536 by Franciscan Monks, this magnificent architectural masterpiece features a museum in its convent with art from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

We'll lunch at an environment unique in its panoramic view of the San Franciscan Plaza and the domes of the Compañía de Jesús Church, You'll savor delicious plates of Ecuadorian cuisine. The culinary traditions of the Andes, Coast, and Amazon all form a part of the menu. Many diverse options, made with corn, seafood, root vegetables, and tropical fruits are available.





Day 10

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16TH: LA CASONA DE LA RONDA

All good things must come to an end (until the next one). Time to say adios to Ecuador and head to the airport for flights home.

- The itinerary is carefully planned but subject to minor changes to take advantage of new travel opportunities.

Included in your Tour:

- in your Ecuador Art Workshop Tour: ■ 10 days, 9 nights at unique hotels ■ meals per itinerary, including gratuities ■ hotel baggage handling and driver gratuities ■ deluxe motor coaches, including driver tips

NOT Included:

- Airfare from your hometown to Quito, Ecuador ■ Airport baggage handling tips (we recommend 75 cents per bag) ■ Alcoholic beverages and tips for alcoholic beverages (10%) ■ Any Airport Security Taxes ■ Any expenses incurred should you choose to deviate from the itinerary ■ Optional Activities ■ Guide tip (we recommend \$2 - \$5 per day, per person)