

Hi,

I hope all is well in your world. Just wanted to write a quickie catch up note before my whole world changes once again. This is the last time I will write from the gorgeous Galapagos Islands. Spending 199 days on these enchanted islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I've seen and done so much, learned heaps, met so many wonderful people, eaten some incredible food, and had a fabulous time. It's a bit like I've been dreaming for the last six and a half months and now have to return to the "real world" – whatever that may be... I'm hoping the transition is easy (or that maybe there is no such place as the "real world" and the dream will continue).

New Year's Eve on Santa Cruz was a great event with the typical fireworks at midnight and fire-powered balloons set off into the air, a few of which burst into flames after a few minutes. Since I happened to be standing next to a tall, handsome French man (Matheu) at the countdown to midnight, I kissed him. We wandered around taking in the sights and sounds, watched the burning of the dolls; a symbolic final goodbye to the old year to make space for the new year to come in fresh and new. Me and Matheu hung out all night, to-ing and fro-ing between various events in numerous places; live music, canned music, street music. We danced with almost everyone we met and kissed friends; old and new. The bar and street parties lasted all night and well into the next day. As I walked home at 7am, some people told me I was going home too early, and that there was much more partying to do! Some were headed to the beach to continue dancing. Call me old if you like, but dancing salsa, merengue, samba and regaton all night until 7am kind of did me in!

The last few weeks have been a holiday of sorts. I haven't done very much at all; spent a couple of lazy afternoons on friend's boats, taking in the scenery around the island... Attached are a few photos of what is out there... With no work commitments and loads of time on my hands, I was just getting organized to exercise heaps more and hang out on the beach every day when I was knocked for six by a severe bout of bronchitis... That sucked! A week in bed, my tan fading, with no appetite and no desire to do anything but sleep, the focus was totally on restoring my good health. Ever the optimist, and with little else to do, I read almost the entire pile of books I'd inherited from my good friend Briar when she left. It's the most I've read in a year. Fortunately, they were mostly good books!

A few weeks back I joined the Ultimate Frisbee game which is played Monday, Wednesday and Friday on the volleyball courts, so it has become an important exercise date that I will miss terribly. Don't ask me why I didn't join the game ages ago... I should have! It's mostly peopled by volunteers from the Charles Darwin Research Station but anyone can join. Last Monday there were 25 players. We made five teams of five and switched out every two goals. It was crazy, but good fun. A few of the locals come and play with us too. And... after two months of no dance classes, the instructor finally started again... just two weeks before I leave! Bummed! But I haven't missed a class since she started again. Maybe I'll find another salsa class somewhere else... here's hoping!

On Saturday afternoon, I'm flying into Guayaquil but I still don't really have a plan for what comes after that. It's like it's just too traumatic to think about not being in Galapagos, so I can't think about what I want to do or where I want to go until I'm not here any more. It will work itself out as I go... I have no doubt that destiny will show me the way.

Meantime, be well, be happy! And keep in touch!

Big love, big hugs, big bubbles...
Roni Askey-Doran



Frigate Bird



Gordon Rocks



Land Iguana



Marine and Land Iguana



Masked (Nazca) Booby



Swallow-Tailed Gulls



Tropic Bird