

Galapagos Natural Life

Tourist Superior - Galapagos Yachts

Aida Maria - YACHT



ITINERARY DAY BY DAY

Itinerary E 6 days / 5 nights only 2 thursday per month

DAY 1 - THURSDAY

In the morning: Airport

Fly from the Ecuadorian mainland to the islands on an early morning 90-minute flight. As you prepare to land in Baltra, look out the window. The landscape below will seem otherworldly – you'll truly be landing in a place like no other. The Galapagos Islands are completely unique and you're about to see why. Your bilingual naturalist guide will greet you at the airport and meet you after customs.

In the afternoon: Highlands

After shopping in Puerto Ayora and lunch on the boat (guests may dine in town if they desire), you'll explore the highlands or "parte alta" of the island, which is a moisture-rich area with fertile volcanic soils. You'll learn about the vegetation and animal life of this zone, often strikingly different than that found at lower elevations and our best opportunity to find the famous giant tortoises in their natural habitat.

Darwin's Finches, Yellow Warblers, and other land birds will fly in and out of the moss-covered trees. From this high vantage point you'll be treated to beautiful views of the island. In the late afternoon you'll return to town. For those who wish to check out the nightlife, this is your chance; the boat will be docked in port most of the night.

DAY 2 - FRIDAY

In the morning: Post Office Bay

After returning to the boat for lunch you'll sail on to Post Office Bay, where the islands' original post office (really only a wooden barrel) was established in 1793. The current system still functions as it did three centuries ago: Visitors drop off unstamped letters and postcards AND pick-up whatever mail they can hand deliver themselves when they return home! (Try it, it actually works!).

In the afternoon: Cormorant Point / Devil's Crown

When you wake up and look out your porthole on Day 6 you will see Floreana, one of the greenest islands in the archipelago. Ask your guide to tell you about its mysterious history laden with rumors of witches, murderous baronesses, blackmail, and dubious disappearances.

Your first stop is Punta Cormorant, where you'll follow a footpath to a lagoon inhabited by flaming-pink flamingos. You will also pass by Carolina Beach, a Sea Turtle nesting area and a superb spot for watching sea birds and sea rays. Back on the yacht, you'll skirt the island's coast until you arrive at La Corona del Diablo (the Devil's Crown), a sub-marine crater that offers some of the most spectacular snorkeling in the Galapagos. This is a great spot for seeing the wide array of tropical fish, many endemic to the islands, including purple sea stars and spiky sea urchins. The crater's most thrilling undersea creatures, however, are the white-tipped sharks. As with most of the creatures in the Galapagos they are unperturbed by your presence, so you can swim in their company freely and fearlessly.

DAY 3 - SATURDAY

In the morning: Suarez Point

Española is one of the most magical of all the islands. It is a place where the animals reign supreme and we humans are merely guests. As your dingy brings you to shore you'll see Sea Lion pups sunbathing with Marine Iguanas and Blue Footed Boobies nesting in between, and nearby may be a Galapagos Hawk. If it is Booby mating season watch the bonded pairs do the infamous Booby dance (if it's not mating season, ask your guide to demonstrate - after all it's their job to teach you about the local fauna!). As you follow the footpath around the island, you will pass hundreds of Blue Footed Booby nesting sites including one colony of masked boobies.

There is a good chance you'll see the thief-like Frigate Bird (which has the habit of stealing other birds' food), as well as the stunning Red-Billed Tropicbird and the nocturnal Swallow-Tailed Gull. If it is the right time of the year (mid-April to December) you'll also encounter the giant Waved Albatross. Apart from a few pairs that breed on Isla de Plata, off the Ecuadorian mainland, all of the world's 12,000 Waved Albatross breed on Espanola Island. At the end of the breeding season, the entire population leaves the island and heads out to sea, where they spend years without touching land; four or five years may pass before the fledglings return to Espanola.

In the afternoon: Gardner Bay

As you make your way around the island you'll pass by El Soplador, a giant blowhole that explodes to heights reaching 25 feet. In the nearby tide pools you can often find lounging sea lions enjoying the blowhole's misty spray. Following lunch on board the yacht, you'll visit Garner Bay, a great place for sunbathing, swimming and snorkeling. Lionfish, Flycatchers, and Galapagos Hawks will keep you company as you relax under the rays of the evening sun. Dinner on the yacht completes your day.

DAY 4 - SUNDAY

In the morning: Interpretation Center

In the afternoon will be the visit to the Interpretation Center in Puerto Baquerizo, the local branch of the Galapagos National Park Service, where your guide will explain the formation of the islands, how the flora and fauna arrived and were established in Galapagos, as well as visit the corrals where there are several species of giant tortoises under the care of the National Park Service. For those of you arriving on that day, you will go from the airport straight back to the boat to show you to your accommodations.

In the afternoon: Isla Lobos

On your 8 th day of visiting the Galapagos you'll arrive early in the morning to San Cristobal, the capital of the Galapagos. The first site will be Isla Lobos, a very small islet made of volcanic rocks that gets its name from the colony of Sea Lions (Lobo de Mar in Spanish) that live there. Here you can observe the behavior and interaction of Sea Lions living in a small community.

Before taking the flight back to the mainland you will have some time to visit the town on your own for last minute shopping or people watching in the Galapagos. Transfer to airport.

DAY 5 - MONDAY

In the morning: Santa Fe Is.

After breakfast on the yacht, you'll continue to Santa Fe Island. Upon arrival to the island, you'll be treated to a noisy welcome from the local Sea Lion colony. Following your naturalist guide on the island paths you'll reach Santa Fe's main attraction, a towering forest of giant cacti. Scattered around the cacti trees you'll see a number of the island's indigenous sun-seekers: marine and land iguanas, the rainbow-streaked lava lizards and, if you're lucky, land tortoises - the namesakes of the islands. After the walk you'll dive into the salty sea and snorkel in the company of Sea Lions, Lion Fish and Sea Turtles. Finally, you'll return to the yacht for lunch.

In the afternoon: South Plazas

After lunch we'll navigate to Plazas Island, where a large colony of Sea Lions lounge daily in the equatorial sun. Plaza also boasts excellent examples of typical Galapagos native flora such as the towering cacti "trees" that form the principal diet for both the Land Iguanas and the Cactus Finch. Other birds that may flutter by include Lava Gulls, Yellow Warblers and Red-Billed Tropicbirds.

DAY 6 - TUESDAY

In the morning: Charles Darwin Station

Charles Darwin Station. After breakfast you'll sail to Santa Cruz Island, where you'll visit the world-famous Charles Darwin Station, a non-profit institution that dedicates itself to studying and protecting the flora and fauna of the Galapagos. This is one of the best places to see land tortoises, including Lonesome George museum. Then you'll visit the station's Tortoise Rearing Center. Here you can find baby, hand-sized tortoises, between the ages of one and five, and marvel at how they achieve such large sizes as adults (500 lbs. or more!). Galapagos tortoises are believed to have a lifespan of over 100 years, so the young ones have a long life ahead of them as long as they receive the protection they need. Aside from the Station headquarters, Santa Cruz Island is home to the largest town and economic center of the Galapagos, Puerto Ayora. In this portside town you can buy souvenirs (postcards, t-shirts, books, etc.) of the islands. Check out the unique Galapagos ceramic shop near the entrance of the Charles Darwin Station.

Return to the boat & sail to Baltra Island to catch your plane back to the mainland.

Rate includes:

- All meals (breakfast - lunch - dinner) water with meals.
- Accommodation in double cabins.
- Transfers from the airport to the yacht and vice versa in Galapagos.
- Excursions in the islands with English Speaking Naturalist Guide.
- **Air ticket.**

Rate does not include:

- Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee: USD 100.00 per person.
- Migratory Control Card: USD 20.00 per person.
- Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.
- Snorkelling equipment for rent on board and wetsuit.
- Tips.

Note:

- Rates per person in U.S. Dollars.
- Single occupancy supplement 80% or 100%.
- The route of the ship and the itinerary are subject to change and can vary depending on the regulations and policies of the Galapagos National Park, weather, seasonal changes, safety, etc.

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Quito - Ecuador - South America