

Galapagos Natural Life

Tourist Superior Class - Yachts Galapagos

ARCHIPEL II ECO - CATAMARAN



ITINERARY DAY BY DAY

Itinerary 'B' 8 days / 7 nights

DAY 1 - MONDAY

In the morning: Arrival at San Cristobal Airport

A guide will meet you, help you collect your luggage, and escort you on a short bus ride to the harbour.

In the afternoon: North Seymour

This islet is one of most visited sites, and it is teeming with birdlife. An easy circular path takes you through the archipelago's most extensive colonies of blue-footed boobies and frigate birds. At the beginning of the breeding season, adult frigatebird-males blow up their vivid red pouches to impressive football-sized balloons. This is one of the few spots where you can compare the magnificent and the great frigatebird breeding next to each other.

DAY 2 - TUESDAY

In the morning: Bartolome

The beautiful volcano islet of Bartolomé is among the youngest of the islands, and on a geological scale was just recently born out of fire. Although at first sight lifeless, Bartolomé offers some of the wildest landscapes and best panoramas the entire archipelago. To enjoy the postcard view of the idyllic 'Pinnacle Bay' you have to climb the stairs to the viewpoint on top of the island (114m/375ft). Enter a dramatic world of threatening (though extinguished) nearby spatter cones, craters, and lightweight lava droplets that have been spewed out by fiery fountains. The Summit Trail is also ideal for witnessing how scanty pioneer vegetation such as lava cactus struggles to take root in the bare virgin lava fields.

In the afternoon: Espumilla Beach, Buccaneer Cove

Espumilla Beach is an important breeding site for turtles, as it is no longer suffering from digging wild pigs. The turtles return year after year to bury their eggs into the cinnamon-coloured sand dunes. About two months later (roughly from February to August) the eggs hatch. The beach ridge hides a mangrove with two lagoons on the backside. A colony of American flamingos and aquatic birds used to be its main attraction, but after the climate phenomenon of El Niño, strong sedimentation altered the water environment, and now no longer provides their food. Vegetation zones are very close by, providing great scenic contrasts. During the climb up a hill, you will be rewarded with a beautiful view of the transitions from sea to beach and from mangrove to a dry palo santo forest. At the nearby Buccaneers Cove, there is a great snorkelling opportunity.

DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY

In the morning: Puerto Egas

Puerto Egas is a black beach located at the west side of Santiago Island. Volcanic tuff deposits formed this special black sand beach and made it the main attraction of the Island. This site is called Puerto Egas because Hector Egas attempted to exploit the salt, which failed because the price of salt on the continent was very cheap.

In the afternoon: Rabida

Rábida Island is unique because of the red colour of the rocks and sand. The volcanic material on this island is very porous and external factors such as rain, saltwater and sea breeze have acted as an oxidising agent. A short walk along a trail leads us to a coastal lagoon behind the beach where we can see land birds including finches, doves, yellow warblers and mockingbirds. Meanwhile at the lagoon there is a colony of flamingos.

DAY 4 - THURSDAY

In the morning: Charles Darwin Research Station

Although the great majority of Galapagos visitors come here to observe and appreciate natural wonders, it is also interesting to learn about how the protection and conservation of the islands are carried out. The main attractions are the National Park information centre, the Van Staelen Exhibition Hall, the Breeding and Rearing Centre for young tortoises, and adult Galapagos tortoises in captivity.

In the afternoon: Highlands

The road to the highlands leaves from Bellavista, a small village located a 15-minute drive from Puerto Ayora, and passes through the agricultural zone, near the National Park boundary, the Miconia Zone, and then goes to the Fern and Sedge zone. With clear weather, this area boasts beautiful scenes of rolling hills and extinct volcanic cones covered with grass and lush greenery all year round. Here you will visit the Twin

Craters, which are two pit craters, as well as a local ranch where we can observe the giant tortoise of Santa Cruz Island in its natural habitat.

DAY 5 - FRIDAY

In the morning: Cormorant Point

The peninsula of Cormorant Point forms the extreme north cape of Floreana, which formed by numbers of smaller volcanic cones, covered by tropical dry forest (palo santo). At the landing beach, you will be welcomed by a small Galapagos sea lion colony. The green sand on this beach contains a high percentage of glassy olivine crystals which have been blown out by the surrounding tuff cones. The 'flour sand' beach on the southern side of the peninsula is formed of even finer white coral sand which feels very smooth on your feet. Parrotsh have pulverised it, grinding the calcareous skeletons of living coral. You can spot schools of stingrays who love using the sandy bottom to hide themselves. During the first months of the year, Pacific green turtles come ashore to bury their eggs.

In the afternoon: Baroness Lookout & Post Office Bay

Post Office Bay is one out of three nearby visitor's sites on Floreana's northern coast. Bring your postcards and post them in the peculiar barrel on this historic site. The barrel commemorates an improvised mail service that was set up for communication between British 16th century whalers and poachers.

DAY 6 - SATURDAY

In the morning: Gardner Bay

The striking white beach at Gardner Bay is an important breeding site for Pacific green turtles. However, without doubt its main attraction is the Galapagos sea lion colony. Females stay year round in this nursery, suckling their pups until they are three years old, although they start to fish at five months. During the breeding and mating season, the colony becomes even bigger.

In the afternoon: Suarez Point

Huge ocean waves crash onto the southern basaltic cliffs of Suarez Point, forming a spectacular blowhole, where the water sprays metres high into the air (depending on the season, the tide and how strongly the sea breeze pushes the waves). Take your time for a meditative break in silence on this emblematic viewpoint, and convert this unforgettable moment in a lifetime experience.

DAY 7 - SUNDAY

In the morning: Pitt Point

Two wind sculptured tuff cones at Pitt Point make up the extreme eastern end of San Cristóbal, and thus, the archipelago as well. These cliffs were the first sight of land when HMS Beagle and Charles Darwin arrived on the 15th of September, 1835. On the small green sand beach, you will be welcomed by a group of barking Galapagos sea lions. This is a bachelor colony, where males usually relax and prepare themselves for fighting and mating.

From the saltbush and spiny shrubs behind the beach, a trail leads up to an area of tropical dry forest vegetation: most of the year you can find leafless palo santo trees, yellow cordia shrubs, tiny prickly pear cacti and carpetweed that turns red in the dry season. After the steep climb through a gully to the clifftop, you can wander around the only colony in Galapagos that has all three species of boobies: blue-footed, red-footed and Nazca booby; as well as both species of frigate bird (great and magnificent), famous because of their scarlet balloon-sized pouches during mating season. Frigate birds attack returning boobies and conduct aerial battles rather than fishing for themselves.

In the afternoon: Witch Hill

The primary attraction of this site is the coral sand beach, an excellent place to swim and snorkel. Witch Hill is the remains of a tuff cone and one of the first sites visited by Charles Darwin. It has an impressive landscape, where it is often possible to see coastal and migratory birds, including pelicans, blue-footed boobies and swallow-tailed gulls; as well as sea lions and marine iguanas. At times, the lagoon is completely dry and deposits of salt can be found at the bottom. The people of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno used to use the lagoon as a salt mine.

DAY 8 - MONDAY

In the morning: Interpretation Center / Airport

The Interpretation Centre just outside the provincial capital Puerto Baquerizo Moreno is a perfect introduction as well as an interesting complement to the field-explanations and briefings of your naturalist guide. Information panels (English/Spanish), pictures, maquettes and true to life dioramas tell the background story of the islands in a different way, which helps you to get an overview and learn what makes the Galapagos so unique. The well-maintained botanical garden with native species from the arid zone (including the giant prickly pear and candelabra cacti) is worth your visit as well; and you will probably spot the Chatham mockingbird, endemic to this island, that put Darwin on track of his evolution theory. The attractive exhibition is quite complete and explains a series of natural circumstances that create the Galapagos' unique environment: such as the volcanic genesis of the islands, their remoteness from the continent, its ocean currents, its special climate, the arrival of different species, and their establishment, among others. It also recounts historic discovery and attempts of colonisation; and shows a diorama with ancient mail barrels from Post Office Bay. Extensively it concludes how times have changed with current conservation and the many ways in which this is being achieved, as well as the environmental challenges that proceed.

Transfer out to San Cristóbal Airport (SCY) Assisted by the naturalist guide and some crew members, the dinghy will bring you and your luggage to the San Cristóbal Airport, where we will take the shuttle back to the airport.

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.s beverages.
- Snorkelling equipment for rent on board.
- 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