

Galapagos Natural Life

Tourist Superior Class - Yachts Galapagos

ARCHIPEL I CATAMARAN



ITINERARY DAY BY DAY

Itinerary 'A' 8 days / 7 Nights

DAY 1 - MONDAY

In the morning: Airport

Your guide will meet you at the airport, assist you with the luggage and accompany you on the short bus ride to the port of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. Here you will climb aboard the catamaran Archipel I. After greeting the crew and the captain, your cabins will be assigned to you and then you will enjoy your first lunch on-board.

In the afternoon: Cerro Colorado

Cerro Colorado Tortoises Protection and Growing Centre, is located at approximately 40 minutes by bus to the southeast of the island. This centre was built to improve the status of the population of the island tortoises. It includes a large corral, a visitor centre, breeding centre and an interpretive trail. Along this trail it is possible to see different species of native and endemic plants as well as birds including the San Cristobal Mockingbird, Yellow Warblers, and many species of finches and the Galapagos flycatcher.

DAY 2 - TUESDAY

In the morning: South Plaza

After breakfast you will enjoy an unforgettable guided walk on South Plaza, the best place to encounter endemic Galapagos land iguanas, patient and photogenic models. You can also look out for some of the unique hybrids between the male marine iguana and female land iguana. Arriving at the upper rim, about 20m/75ft downwards impressively droning waves splash against the foot of soaring cliffs. Clouds of petrels, storm petrels, shearwaters and brown noddies make spectacular flights and sometimes look like they're walking on the waves. Take your binoculars and don't miss the red-billed tropicbird with its graceful long tail and spectacular mating fights. These cliffs are also a nesting place for the endemic swallow-tailed gull.

In the afternoon: Barrington Bay

After lunch you will land right in the middle of a Galapagos sea lion colony on the beach, where you will have time for a refreshing swim or excellent snorkelling among tropical reef fish in the crystal-clear azure waters of Barrington Bay. You will also encounter bizarre giant prickly pear cactus (opuntia) forests. These are the largest cacti on the islands, with extremely thick trunks, and can grow over 10m/33ft tall! At the end of the morning we have a wet landing at the beach of Santa Fe where we have a guided nature walk. This extraordinary island is a remnant of probably the most ancient volcano on the Galapagos. Your guide will decide whether the easy shorter circuit is followed, or a strenuous longer hike land inward (moderate level; about 3km/2mi).

DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY

In the morning: Champion Islet

Bottlenose dolphins frequently escort our passage to Champion Islet and you can see them from nearby jumping the waves! Underwater, Galapagos sea lions are playful acrobats that become the number one attraction. There are also lots of reef fish, and perhaps a green Pacific turtle. An inflatable dinghy ride along the shoreline of this islet offers sightings of lots of seabirds that are endemic to the archipelago, including Galapagos penguins, blue-footed boobies, magnificent frigate birds and red-billed tropicbirds, swallow-tailed gulls and lava herons. A bird watcher's wish is to get a glimpse of the Charles Mockingbird on top of prickly pear cacti. This mockingbird is a scientific and historic key species, because it put Darwin on track of his theory of 'adaptive radiation'.

In the afternoon: Loberia / Asylum of Peace

The Asylum of Peace Island is of historical interest for guests. This hike goes past a mesmerising cave and visits a fascinating freshwater spring. La Loberia beach gets its name from the huge amount of sea lions that populate the island and rest on the sand. It's an ideal spot to relax by the ocean, go snorkelling as well as enjoy the sea lions that live there.

DAY 4 - THURSDAY

In the morning: Charles Darwin Station

Our dinghies will bring you to the touristic pier of Puerto Ayora, from where you will be brought to the Charles Darwin Research Station. This is where biological research and indispensable conservation management of this unique archipelago are carried out. The complex houses interpretation and information centres about the National Park and the Galapagos Marine Reserve. The most memorable part of your visit will probably be the successful breeding centre and the enclosures with Galapagos giant tortoises. Afterwards, you will have some free time to stroll around.

In the afternoon: Highlands

Because wild Galapagos giant tortoises don't stop at official National Park boundaries, dozens of them also roam on the adjacent woodlands in the populated agricultural zone of Santa Cruz. Thanks to their concentration around their favourite muddy pools, these semi-open pastures and moist scalesia-woodlands are the best place for a quick visit.

DAY 5 - FRIDAY

In the morning: Las Tintoreras

Just outside the harbour of Puerto Villamil a group of islets protrude just above the ocean. The jagged black formations, dotted with mangrove and candelabra cactus, are the remnants of a lava stream that has ended up in the ocean.

Marine life gets trapped, including spectacular whitetip reef sharks (called "tintoreras" in Spanish, as is the site's official name). This species of shark is fairly common in the archipelago, and generally spotted on the seabed when snorkelling, while they rest from their nocturnal hunts. At this unique location you can observe them comfortably from the bank in the crystal-clear turquoise waters. Sometimes turtles and elegant white-spotted eagle rays or golden rays glide back and forth through this calm channel, as well as smaller fish and Galapagos sea lions. Also, this is where the largest species of marine iguanas reproduce. The rocky shoreline with its intertidal life also attracts sally lightfoot crabs, lava herons and Galapagos penguins, which reside on the other (western) side of Isabela.

In the afternoon: Tortoise Breeding Centre / Wetlands

Isabela Island is the largest and one of the youngest islands in the Galapagos archipelago. We land in Puerto Villamil, which has the second smallest population in the Galapagos with approximately 3000 habitants. First, we will visit the Flamingos Lagoon; the largest coastal lagoon found in the Galapagos and one of the main reproductive sites for the greater flamingos. On your visit to Colorado Hill, you will get to discover the amazing and emblematic giant Galapagos tortoises in the Tortoise breeding centre, and maybe even get to see one hatch (seasonally)! In addition, you will get to see how much hard work is put into saving the last local giants of San Cristobal.

DAY 6 - SATURDAY

In the morning: Moreno Point

Punta Moreno is located between the volcanoes Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul, on the north coast of Isabela Island. The trail leads along the lava river Pahoehoe to a complex of several coastal lagoons. The main attraction are various bird species which can be found in lakes and mangrove forests.

In the afternoon: Elizabeth Bay

The inflatable dinghy will turn landwards, leaving the surf behind and entering the calm estuary of Elizabeth Bay through a narrow entrance. Graceful Pacific green turtles swim gracefully around you, sometimes popping up their heads to take a breath. You might also see spotted eagle rays or sharks. Brown pelicans and blue-footed boobies show diverging plunge-diving techniques, while lava herons and great blue herons prefer to wait patiently for what comes along. You can also compare the huge red mangroves with black, white and button mangroves.

DAY 7 - SUNDAY

In the morning: Tagus Cove

In the morning we will enter the Bolivar Channel to Tagus Cove (navigation time:3h). Meanwhile you can enjoy the delicious lunch buffet before snorkelling and visiting Tagus Cove.

Explosive eruptions have blown out a part of the outer rims of both tuff cones, and created their characteristic horseshoe shapes and Tagus Cove. The inner crater rim contains Darwin Lake. Traditionally sailors started to write the names of their vessels on the eastern cliffs of Tagus cove.

During the hike along the inner crater ridge of Darwin Lake you can continue to a great viewpoint on the outer caldera rim, with views to the outstretched lava slopes of Darwin Volcano.

This arid inland zone is overgrown with characteristic tropical dry forest vegetation including a special variety of palo santo, Galapagos cotton and yellow cordia (muyuyu).

During the hike you can spot different Darwin's finches, flycatchers and Galapagos hawks.

In the afternoon: Punta Espinoza

Espinoza Point is Fernandina's only terrestrial visitors site, and one of the few locations where you will find some bizarre outgrowths of natural selection. The figurehead is the emblematic flightless cormorant that lives exclusively in the remote west of Galapagos, and could be considered as the 'holy grail of evolution'. You will also love the almost unworldly views with the dominating cone of Volcán La Cumbre as a spectacular backdrop. The narrow headland that you walk along is the end of a lava tongue that has reached the coast and solidified upon contact with the cold seawater.

DAY 8 - MONDAY

In the morning: Bachas Beach / Airport

These two small beaches are located in the west of the Turtle Cove on Santa Cruz. Their sand consists of decomposed corals, which makes it white and soft. This makes it the favorite nesting site for sea turtles. Behind one of the beaches there are small water lagoons, where flamingos and other coastal birds, such as black-necked stilt birds and rainbows, can occasionally be spotted. On the second beach, which is the wider one, you can explore the remains of two abandoned warships. In the Second World War these were left by the US, as the island of Baltra was used as a strategic point for the protection of the Panama Canal. After this excursion, you will be escorted to the airport for your flight to Quito or Guayaquil.

Notice: According Galapagos National Park, itineraries are subject to changes.

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 10.00 per person.
- Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.
- Snorkelling equipment for rent on board.
- Tips.

Note:

- Rates per person in U.S. Dollars.
- Single occupancy supplement 50%.
- 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