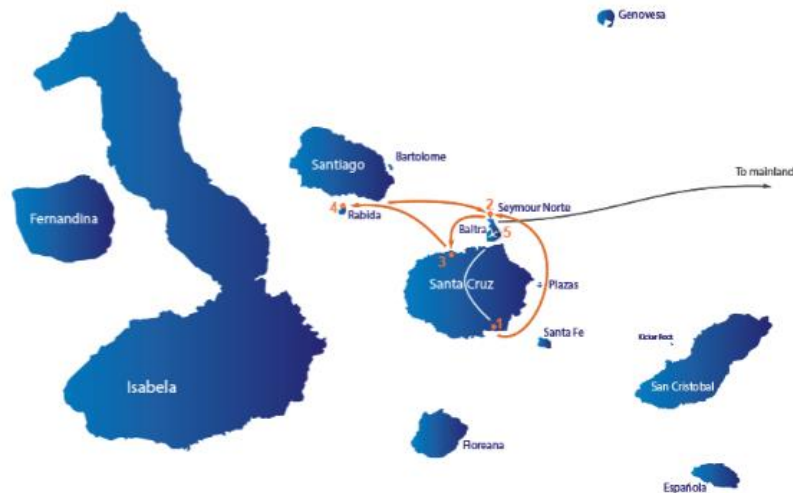


ITINERARY 5 DAYS B

From Sunday to Sunday



Day 1 – Santa Cruz Island

A US\$20 per person transit card is payable on departure at Quito Airport and a US\$100 per person national park entry fee is payable on arrival on the islands. Please have cash on hand for these transactions as using credit cards can be time consuming.

You will be met in the arrival hall of the airport by a National Park Guide, and transferred to the catamaran 'M.Y. Grand Queen Beatriz'. Lunch will be served on the boat. This afternoon you will visit Santa Cruz, the second largest island in the Galapagos. The small town of Puerto Ayora is the economic centre of the archipelago, and home to the Charles Darwin Research Station. As well as undertaking vital conservation work, the station also makes for interesting exploration and offers the best opportunities for close encounters with giant tortoises. You will also observe baby tortoises and land iguanas.

Galapagos Natural Life S.A

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Day 2 – North Seymour & Mosquera Islet



Today you will take a morning excursion to North Seymour. The trail on North Seymour crosses the inland through the island and then explores the rocky coast. Along the way the trail passes colonies of blue footed boobies and frigate birds. The magnificent frigate bird, a large black bird with a long wingspan, and a hooked beak, is extremely fast and has excellent vision. Frigate birds are known for the large red pouch on their necks. During mating season the males throw back their heads, inflate the pouch (sometimes to the size of a soccer ball), and shake trying to capture the attention of female frigates.

Boobies and frigates have an interesting relationship. Sharing the same nesting area on North Seymour, blue-footed boobies nest on the ground making their nests from the twigs of the palo santos trees, while the frigate birds nest just above them in the saltbushes. After lunch you will visit the small sandy island of Mosquera, it's a relaxing, picturesque stop. Along the rocks and in the tide pool, sally lightfoot crabs (red lava crabs) scamper back and forth, skipping across small pools of water in search of food. These crabs with their bright red shell tops and blue under shells are stunning against the black lava.

Day 3 – Black Turtle Cove & Dragon Hill

Today you will take a morning excursion to Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) - a red mangrove wetland on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island. You will paddle among the cove's peaceful waters, for your first taste of the underwater riches of this region – it's a wonderful place to see green turtle and is a nursery for rays and Galapagos sharks.

There is also abundant birdlife, such as the yellow warbler and lava heron. This is also a breeding area for turtles, so it is not uncommon to see them mating. Go for a walk on Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) this afternoon, this is one of the best places to see land iguanas in the islands. You'll walk along the trail from the beach, and along with the land iguanas, other sightings include marine iguanas, flamingos and Sally Lightfoot crabs.



Day 4 – Chinese Hat / Rábida Island

Rábida, also known as 'Jervis' is a tiny island sitting roughly five kilometers south of Santiago and is one of the most striking of the archipelago. Introduced species were eradicated in 1971, meaning that the indigenous wildlife has now been returned to a state of splendid isolation. Additionally, volcanic activity here has produced vivid, fantastical colors, not least the beaches of red sand and cliffs of scarlet.

From the shore, the trail leads through to what is one of the finest lagoons in the Galapagos for viewing flamingos. Rábida is also a wonderful place to spot nesting pelicans. Elsewhere, pintail ducks, marine iguanas and sea lions are all present. Sombrero Chino is a small islet located near the south-east coast of Santiago. It's shaped like a Chinese hat (Sombrero Chino) when seen from afar, and is geologically fascinating, with many lava tubes leading from the cone to the coast.



Day 5 – Santa Cruz Island

As flights to the mainland from Galapagos depart mid morning, it is an early start for our last morning on the islands. Depending on the time of our flight, our time spent on this final excursion could be limited. Today you will take an early morning excursion to Las Bachas, which was so named after the barges abandoned by the American Navy here in the 1940s. The sandy, white beaches of Las Bachas on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island are a nesting site for the Pacific green turtle, and marine iguanas are also commonly seen. The sand here is particularly white and soft as it is made of decomposed coral.

The rocks provide great snorkelling and are the perfect habitat for the Sally Lightfoot crabs, which are plentiful on the island. A saltwater lagoon near to the beach is home to flamingo and whimbrel, and look out too for great blue herons. This is your final excursion before you return to the airport in Baltra for your flight back to Quito. As you will be leaving the boat this morning, please remember that if you have enjoyed the services provided by your guide and crew, a tip would be very much appreciated by them. As a guideline we recommend each passenger consider US\$15 per day for the crew and US\$10 per day for your guide. You can leave tips in envelopes that are placed in your cabin on the last day of your journey. Upon arrival in Quito Airport you will be transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay.

END OF TOUR

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