

ITINERARY A

From Thursday to Tuesday

DAY 1: QUITO / SEYMOUR AIRPORT

Baltra

Catch an early flight to the Galápagos. In the afternoon, visit the highlands to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat.

Santa Cruz Highlands Excursion (2h-3h)

Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz and see the Galápagos giant tortoise in its natural surroundings. Explore the area and its incredible underground lava tunnels. Wander along the volcanic tubes and keep an eye out for the (mainly) nocturnal barn owls that sometimes roost here.

DAY 2: FLOREANA ISLAND / PUNTA CORMORANT

Visit Post Office Bay and enjoy guided walks to observe the bird and wildlife and learn about the natural history of Floreana Island. After, snorkel at Corona del Diablo.

Post Office Bay Visit

Floreana Island

Visit Post Office Bay and learn about its unique history. In the late 18th century, English whaling vessels placed a barrel here to be used as a post office. Today, the box is used mainly by tourists, who may drop off and pick up unstamped letters to be carried to far destinations. Continue the tradition – leave a letter and take one to deliver (be sure it makes it to the correct location)!

Cormorant Point Visit

Floreana Island

Visit Punta Cormorant, the only landing site on Floreana Island, and discover two amazingly different beaches: one with green sand, coloured by olivine crystals, and another with white sand particles known as 'Flour Beach'. Spend the afternoon observing flamingos and other shore birds feeding in the lagoon. Spot penguins and marine iguanas at the water's edge.

Snorkelling (Cormorant Point) (45m-1h)

Enjoy an amazing snorkelling experience at the 'Devil's Crown', an old underwater volcanic cone just north of the Punta Cormorant. Spot large schools of tropical fish, rays, reef sharks, and sea turtles that make their home among the coral reef. Be sure you're a strong swimmer; the currents can be intense.

DAY 3: PUNTA SUÁREZ / BAHÍA GARDNER

Enjoy the day on Española Island, one of the oldest in the archipelago. Visit Punta Suárez, known for its amazing bird colonies and home to the waved albatross (between April and December). After lunch, visit the white sandy beach of Gardner Bay and jump in for a snorkelling excursion.

Punta Suárez Visit

Visit Punta Suárez, one of most rich wildlife landing sites in the Galápagos. Be greeted by surfing young sea lions on arrival. Head to the trail to find many species of nesting seabirds, and, if lucky, see the waved albatross. Follow the path up to a cliff for great views over the ocean, and watch sea birds gliding in the wind.

Gardner Bay Visit (1h-3h)

Visit Gardner Bay's magnificent white sandy beach, home to sea lions and sea birds. Be sure to explore the beautiful turquoise water and its incredible sea life. Spot young sea lions and large schools of surprisingly big tropical fish, including yellow-tailed surgeonfish, king angelfish, and bump-head parrot fish.

Snorkelling (Gardner Bay) (45m-1h)

Head to Tortuga Rock and Gardner Bay for a spectacular snorkelling experience. Spot playful young sea lions and large schools of tropical fish, including yellow-tailed surgeonfish, king angelfish, and bump-head parrot fish. Look for white-tipped reef sharks napping on the bottom.

DAY 4: PUERTO BAQUERIZO MORENO

Learn about the history of the Islands at the San Cristóbal Interpretation Centre then get up close to marine life at Kicker Rock. In the afternoon, head to Isla Lobos known for its friendly sea lions.

Interpretation Center Visit (1h-2h)

Learn about the history of the Galápagos Islands from the very beginning of their volcanic origins through to today's conservation efforts. Tour the Human History exhibit to learn about the islands' discovery and

colonization, and discover the natural history and variety of flora and fauna fascinating.

Snorkelling (Kicker Rock) (2h-3h)

Embark on a snorkelling adventure at Kicker Rock, one of the most stunning landmarks in the Galápagos Islands that's home to an incredibly diverse range of marine life that inhabits the nutrient-rich water. Explore the rock which rises 150m (492 ft) above the ocean's surface, and is divided into two parts by a narrow channel. See an array of sharks and fish that are drawn to the rock and provide for an exhilarating unique snorkelling experience.

Isla Lobos Visit

Explore this tiny island by foot and boat for some great wildlife encounters. Take a panga ride to view the sea and shore birds nesting and feeding. Spot a small colony of blue-footed boobies as well as two species of sea lions.

DAY 5: SANTA FÉ ISLAND / SOUTH PLAZA

Visit Santa Fe island for a chance to mingle with the iguanas. Continue to South Plaza for some great bird watching opportunities.

Santa Fe Island Visit

Visit Santa Fé for amazing wildlife watching opportunities. Hike towards the cliffs along the island's northern shore to view the forest of giant prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*), which is home to endemic land iguanas. It is also one of the best locations to see sea turtles, sea lions, and maybe even get a glimpse of a whitetip reef shark from the panga.

South Plaza Island Visit

Visit South Plaza, one of the smallest islands in the Galápagos, which has one of the largest populations of land iguanas. Walk along a path through a cactus forest and view a combination of dry and coastal vegetation on this lively island, home to a wide range of fauna, including incredible birdlife. Spot red-billed tropicbirds and indigenous swallow-tailed gulls resting on the cliffs, and sea lions playing in the waters.

DAY 6: SANTA CRUZ ISLAND / QUITO

Baltra

In the morning, visit the Charles Darwin Research Center before flying back to Quito.

Charles Darwin Research Station Visit

Puerto Ayora (45m)

Visit Fausto Llerena Breeding Center, a great place to observe many species of tortoises and land iguanas in captivity. Brought back from the brink of extinction, see the famous Galápagos tortoise up close – a corral houses adult tortoises, and a nursery cares for the young until around age three when their shells have hardened.

This area also houses the Charles Darwin Research Station, a scientific organization initiated in 1964, which works to preserve the Galápagos' ecosystem through the conservation efforts of scientists, researchers, and volunteers. While the offices themselves are not open to visitors, the research station provides a study location for international scientists and environmental education for the local community.