

ITINERARY OPTION 1 (C)

From Sunday to Sunday

DAY 1: QUITO / BALTRA ISLAND

Baltra

Take an early flight to the Galápagos Islands. Head to Bachas Beach to see Sally Lightfoot crabs, flamingos and sea lions.

Bachas Beach Landing

Bachas Beach (2h-3h)

Head to Bachas Beach where the sand is made of decomposed coral, making it soft and white, and a favourite site for nesting sea turtles. Spot abundant Sally Lightfoot crabs on the lava rocks along the water's edge -- these crabs will eat anything they can get their claws on! Trek to see a wide range of wildlife, including flamingos, hermit crabs, black necked stilts, and sea lions.

DAY 2: GENOVESA ISLAND

Visit Darwin Bay and marvel at the sheer number of birds along the many trails. Head to El Barranco in the afternoon to see the many types of boobies, including red-footed boobies.

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

Visit this sunken caldera for a great snorkelling opportunity. See large schools of tropical fish swarming near the vertical walls, and, if lucky, see a manta ray or hammerhead.

Darwin Bay Visit

Walk along the white coral sands of Darwin Bay surrounded by bustling sea birds. Follow the trail and see nesting frigatebirds, gulls, and boobies. Be sure to bring your camera to take some snaps of your new feathered friends.

El Barranco Visit

Visit "El Barranco" aka Prince Phillip's Steps located on the southern tip of the island for an amazing wildlife watching opportunity. Hike up the steps to see a seabird colony that is full of life including the breeding grounds for red-footed boobies and masked boobies.

DAY 3: BARTOLOMÉ ISLAND / SULLIVAN BAY

Visit Bartolomé for a guided tour to see the island's dramatic volcanic features. Continue to Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island to witness the giant lava formations contrasting the white-coral-sand beach.

Bartolomé Island Landing

Hike to Bartolomé's summit for a stronger perspective of the islands' not-too-distant volcanic origins, and enjoy a panoramic view – it's one of the best among the islands! See other Galápagos Islands in the distance as well as Pinnacle Rock, the island's famous towering landmark.

Snorkelling (Bartolomé Island) (45m-1h)

Take the opportunity to swim and snorkel around Pinnacle Rock, one of the most iconic volcanic rock formations on the islands. Home to Galápagos penguins, friendly sea lions, sea turtles, and a huge variety of fish, Bartolomé and its surrounding waters are a fantastic place to explore the natural wonders of the Galápagos.

Sullivan Bay Visit

Visit Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island to see one of its star natural attractions – striking and fascinating giant lava formations. Very few plants have managed to survive on this island due to its harsh environment and relatively new lava flow. Enjoy a walk along the lava formations before coming to a white-coral sand beach, where abundant Sally Lightfoot crabs and sea lions gather on shore.

DAY 4: BLACK TURTLE COVE / CERRO DRAGÓN

Search for marine life in the mangroves at Black Turtle Cove by panga, after, spot a variety of birdlife at Cerro Dragón.

Black Turtle Cove Excursion

Explore the mangroves by panga to find rich marine wildlife between the fresh and salt waters. Keep any eye out for manta rays and sea turtles in this tranquil ecosystem. Whitetip reef sharks can also be seen gliding by.

Cerro Dragón Visit (1h-3h)

Visit Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) for some prime birdwatching. Take a short walk from the beach to a hypersaline (saltier than the ocean) lagoon frequented by pink flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks, and other species of birds. Pass through a Scalesia tree forest; endemic to the area, there are only 400 specimens of Scalesia trees left in the world.

DAY 5: SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

Disembark in Puerto Ayora and visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to see the giant Galápagos tortoises. In the afternoon, visit the highlands to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat.

Charles Darwin Research Station Visit

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.

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 6: 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)!

Punta Cormorant 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 (Corona del Diablo) (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 7: 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 8: PUERTO BAQUERIZO MORENO / QUITO

San Cristóbal

Learn about the history of the Islands at the San Cristóbal Interpretation Centre before flying back to Quito.

Interpretation Center Visit

San Cristóbal Island (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 that make the Galápagos so fascinating.