

## ISABELA II YACHT



## ITINERARY NORTHERN From Monday – Friday

**5 Days – 4 Nights**

### **Day 1 - BALTRA / SANTA CRUZ**

Monday: Baltra Airport / Highlands

#### **Baltra Airport**

We arrive at Baltra Airport and transfer to the Itabaca Channel to take a ferry across to Santa Cruz Island. A 30-minute bus ride takes us to a restaurant in the Highlands of Santa Cruz Island to enjoy lunch, and then continue to Puerto Ayora.

#### **Highlands**

After lunch, we drive to a nearby reserve that is one of the best places in the archipelago to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat. The tortoises are easy to spot, lumbering around, munching on grass and leaves, and wallowing in small pools. There are several lava tunnels to explore in the reserve, too. A short bus ride takes us down to Puerto Ayora to board the Isabela II.

## **Day 2 – SANTIAGO ISLAND AND CHINESE HAT**

Tuesday: Egas Port / Chinese Hat

### **Egas Port**

Following a wet landing on the black, sandy beach, our trail takes us to enjoy close-up encounters with recently reintroduced land iguanas, plus land and marine birds amid a landscape of tuff-stone layers, jagged rocks, and lava flows. At low tide, marine iguanas graze upon the algae beds. We can also observe a colony of fur seals, usually dozing in the shade of some rocks.

### **Chinese Hat Islet**

This islet, formed only relatively recently, makes a wonderful afternoon visit as we explore the wildlife along its 1,312 ft long (400 m long) trail, which begins at a crescent-shaped, white sandy beach. The cove offers excellent swimming and snorkeling opportunities amid white-tipped reef sharks and Galapagos penguins.

## **Day 3 – Genovesa Island**

Wednesday: Prince Phillip's Steps / Darwin Bay

### **Prince Phillip's Steps**

The day kicks off with a panga ride along the cliffs of "Bird Island" as Genovesa is affectionately nicknamed, followed by a landing at a steep staircase that connects us with a flat plateau. From here, the trail winds its way through large colonies of Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, great frigatebirds, and storm petrels. With luck, we'll be able to spot the short-eared owl. Those who do not wish to disembark can enjoy a longer panga (inflatable dinghy) ride along the cliffs, weather conditions permitting. Snorkeling and kayaking activities are available.

### **Darwin Bay**

We land after lunch at the beautiful white beach of Darwin Bay. Here we walk amid literally hundreds of birds, most of which are frigatebirds, red-footed and Nazca boobies, as well as gulls, herons, finches, and mockingbirds.

## **Day 4 – SANTA FE ISLAND**

Thursday: Santa Fe and South Plaza Island

### **Santa Fe Island**

We take the dinghy over to this idyllic sandy-white beach populated by colonies of sea lions. Galapagos hawks are often easily observed, perched atop salt bushes. The Santa Fe land iguana may be spotted during our exploration. Following the walk, we can snorkel and swim along a natural wave barrier or ride the glass-bottom boat.

### **South Plaza Island**

Following lunch and some rest, we disembark (dry landing) in this channel, whose turquoise waters contrast brilliantly with the white sand and black lava of the shoreline. Beyond, a carpet of scarlet sesuvium succulents serves as groundcover for a grove of luminescent green prickly-pear cactus. Yellow-grey land iguanas sit beneath these, waiting patiently for pears to drop. Along the coastline we find sea lion colonies, while frigates, swallow-tailed gulls and shearwaters glide, playing with the thermals.

## **Day 5 – BALTRA ISLAND**

Friday: Baltra Airport

Our journey ends at Baltra Island where we transfer to the airport to take the flight back to the mainland.