



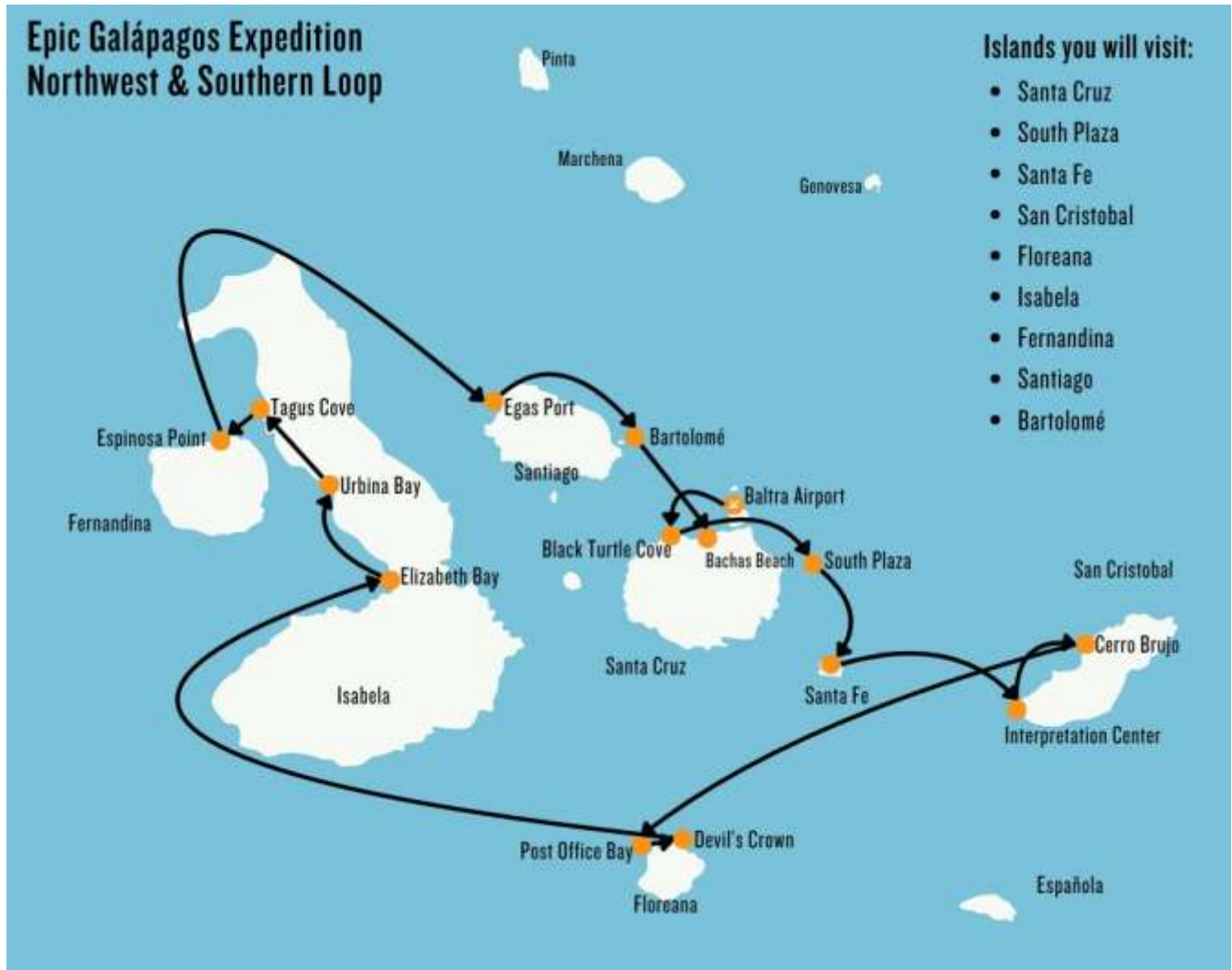
Naturalist Itinerary

Danubio Azul

Epic Galápagos Expedition Northwest & Southern Loop

Days	Island	Visiting Sites
Tuesday	Santa Cruz	AM: Arrive To Baltra Airport PM: Black Turtle Cove
Wednesday	Santa Fe	AM: South Plaza Island PM: Santa Fe Island
Thursday	San Cristobal	AM: Interpretation Center PM: Cerro Brujo
Friday	Floreana	AM: Post Office Bay PM: Champion Islet / Devil's Crown
Saturday	Isabela	AM: Elizabeth Bay PM: Urbina Bay
Sunday	Isabela / Fernandina	AM: Tagus Cove PM: Espinosa Point
Monday	Santiago / Bartolome	AM: Egas Port PM: Bartolome
Tuesday	Santa Cruz	AM: Las Bachas Beach PM: Baltra – Flight Back To Quito Or Guayaquil

Map



Note: Itinerary is subjected to change because of management by the Galápagos National Park Service, local weather conditions and other unpredictable natural events.

Tuesday

AM: Arrive To Baltra Airport

PM: Black Turtle Cove

Departure from Quito or Guayaquil to Baltra Island (2 ½ hour flight). Arriving in the Galapagos, passengers are picked up at the airport by our naturalist guides to take advantage of the time in the archipelago.

In this vast tidal lagoon system that extends nearly a mile inland, we encounter four distinct species of mangroves. As we navigate through the maze-like channels in our panga, we'll come across numerous turtles, various types of herons, along with sharks and rays. The experience feels almost unearthly, as if we're journeying back to the dawn of time.

Wednesday

AM: South Plaza Island

PM: Santa Fe Island

Santa Fe Island features white sandy beaches bordered by sea lion colonies. As we follow the island's trail, we pass through a unique cactus forest that provides a habitat for the Santa Fe land iguanas, the largest iguanas in the islands. This island is home to numerous species, including the Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snakes, rice rats (one of the few rodent species native to the Galapagos), various fish species, and one of the archipelago's four mockingbird species.

The Plaza Islets, two small islands located east of Santa Cruz, consist of North and South Plaza. On North Plaza, visitors can begin their journey through an impressive cactus forest that's home to about 300 vibrant yellow and red land iguanas. During the dry season, these iguanas rely on the fruits and flowers of the opuntia cacti for survival. South Plaza offers a unique sighting of hybrid iguanas—a mix of marine and land species. At the island's highest point, tropicbirds are visible. From June to January, the typically green and yellow vegetation transforms into a brilliant red landscape due to the blooming of the *Sesuvium edmonstonei* plant.



Thursday

AM: Interpretation Center

PM: Cerro Brujo

The Interpretation Center is packed with fascinating information, providing an excellent overview of the Galapagos' formation, its global importance, as well as the threats it faces and ongoing conservation efforts. Afterward, we'll hike to Frigatebird Hill (Cerro Tijeretas), where we'll have excellent views of both species of frigatebirds, along with a stunning panorama of the bay below.

As we approach the shore from our pangas, we're immediately awed by the grandeur of the towering cliffs of 'Cerro Brujo' We can spend time relaxing on the beach alongside sea lions, snorkel from the shore, or take a stroll to a secluded lagoon where we may encounter black-necked stilts, ruddy turnstones, whimbrels, and white-cheeked pintails.

Friday

AM: Post Office Bay

PM: Champion Islet / Devil's Crown

A brief walk from the beach takes us to the iconic Post Office Barrel, which is said to have been established in 1793 by Captain James Colnett. It remains the oldest active 'post office' in the Pacific. Whalers and fur sealers used to leave addressed letters in the barrel for others heading home to deliver. In keeping with this tradition, modern visitors often take letters to personally deliver them in their own countries.

Upon arrival to Punta Cormorant, a keen observer will notice that olivine, a volcanic crystal, has given the dark beach a delicate green tint. Our walk leads us past island-endemic Scalesia plants to a large, shallow lagoon that is often home to a striking group of pink greater flamingos. We then continue through a palo santo tree forest, eventually reaching a powdery white beach that serves as a nesting site for green turtles. As we wade barefoot in the shallow waters, we may spot diamond stingrays and white-tipped reef sharks.

One of the most popular snorkeling spots in the islands, Devil's Crown is an eroded volcanic cone teeming with a rich variety of



fish and marine life. We'll swim alongside large schools of yellow-tailed surgeonfish, salemas, and creolefish, and with some luck, we may even encounter turtles, spotted eagle rays, parrotfish, and hammerhead sharks! The rugged 'crown' serves as a roosting site for boobies, noddies, tropicbirds, and frigatebirds.

Saturday

AM: Elizabeth Bay

PM: Urbina Bay

Elizabeth Bay is situated on the east coast of Isabela Island and features several islets that can be explored by dinghy. These rocky islets are home to penguins and blue-footed boobies. With its clear waters and rich marine life, the area is an ideal spot for snorkeling, offering views of vibrant fish schools, sea lions, and possibly even sharks.

Urbina Bay is situated at the base of Alcedo Volcano on the west coast, nestled between Tagus Cove and Elizabeth Bay. In 1954, a significant uplift occurred here, causing the land to rise more than 16 feet. This geological shift extended the coastline by half a mile, leaving marine life stranded on the newly formed shore. The bay is also an excellent spot for snorkeling.



Sunday

AM: Tagus Cove

PM: Espinosa Point

We begin with a dry landing on Galapagos' largest island, where we'll explore the history of its five volcanic eruptions. The trail leads us to Darwin's saltwater crater lake, offering stunning views of lava fields and volcanic formations. After retracing our steps, we'll take a dinghy ride along a shoreline teeming with marine life, where we can observe a variety of seabirds, including Blue-footed Boobies, Brown Noddies, terns, Flightless Cormorants, and, depending on the season, a large colony of Galapagos Penguins, which are only 35 cm tall—the only penguin species in the world to live in the tropics. The population of these penguins is around 2,000, most of which inhabit the western part of Isabela, with some further south. We'll also have the chance to snorkel in deeper waters.



Lastly, we'll spot graffiti thought to be left by 19th-century pirates, offering a fascinating glimpse into the island's history.

From Espinosa Point, visitors can enjoy expansive views of Isabela Island across the Bolivar Channel, a region renowned for having some of the richest diversity of endemic marine life in the Galapagos. This area is home to the largest, most primitive-looking marine iguanas, which can be seen alongside sea lions and Sally Lightfoot crabs. Fernandina offers an excellent chance to observe flightless cormorants at their nesting sites, as well as Galapagos penguins and the island's apex predator, the Galapagos hawk. The island's landscape is primarily covered by Pa-hoe-hoe and AA lava formations, and inland vegetation is sparse, with only a few brachycereus cacti. Along the shore, mangroves can be found.

Monday

AM: Egas Port

PM: Bartolome

Wet landing. Egas Port features a black volcanic sand beach, which was visited by Darwin in 1835. The trail begins with volcanic ash (eroded tuff) and continues over rough terrain made up of basaltic volcanic rock. The striking, layered landscape along Santiago's shore is home to a variety of wildlife, including the unusual yellow-crowned night heron, as well as marine creatures like lobsters, starfish, and marine iguanas grazing on algae beds alongside Sally Lightfoot crabs. It's easy to spot colonies of endemic fur seals swimming in the cool, volcanic rock pools.

Bartholomew, home to the iconic Pinnacle Rock, is an extinct volcano featuring a stunning array of volcanic formations in shades of red, orange, black, and even green. A staircase trail leads to the summit, offering one of the best panoramic views of the islands. The beach is an excellent spot for snorkeling, with a chance to see the Galapagos penguin.



Tuesday

AM: Santa Cruz, Las Bachas Beach

PM: Baltra – Flight Back To Quito Or Guayaquil

Located on the northern shore of Santa Cruz, Las Bachas is a popular swimming beach. One of the few remaining traces of the U.S. World War II presence in the Galapagos, a floating pier, can be spotted here. The area is home to flamingos, Sally Lightfoot crabs, hermit crabs, black-necked stilts, and whimbrels. Sea turtles also nest along the beach.

