

Luxury Class- Yacht Galapagos

EVOLUTION



This charming 32-guest expedition yacht is ample enough to provide spacious staterooms, along with various social areas - including inside and outside dining - yet small enough for guests to be able to experience nature in an up-close and personal manner. This artful combination of factors results in a yacht which offers excellent service, accommodations and attention to detail, while causing minimal impact on the environment.

ITINERARY DAY BY DAY:

Itinerary B

DAY 1 SATURDAY

Baltra / Santa Cruz (L,D)

Upon arrival meet our naturalist guide, who will assist with the transfer to the Evolution, moored in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island.

The Galapagos Islands are located about 1000 km (620 miles) off the Pacific coast of South America. The archipelago is comprised of 13 major islands and scores of islets that served as a living laboratory for Charles Darwin, the renowned evolution theorist.

Long before Darwin arrived in the Galapagos, seafarers knew these isolated islands as home to some of the strangest and most wonderful wildlife imaginable, including birds that could swim but no longer fly, aquatic iguanas, dragon-like lizards left over from prehistoric times, and the giant Galapagos tortoises for which the islands were named.

Covering nearly 5000 square km (3100 square miles), the Galapagos Islands are now a National Park. The Galapagos National Park is the institution that controls the preservation of this environment, assisted by the Charles Darwin Research Station. Inaugurated in 1964 and based in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island, the Charles Darwin Research Station is the one place where visitors can easily see the famous Galapagos Tortoises, which may live up to two hundred years. This is also the training centre for naturalist guides who accompany all visitors landing at more than 40 approved sites on the islands, and members of the international scientific community often come to study at the station.

The National Park charges a visitor fee of \$100 USD, payable on arrival, which funds Park maintenance and supervision in the Galapagos, as well as ecological study, conservation and infrastructure development in Ecuador's other National Parks. Entry fees and the funds they generate for the National Park System are among measures taken by the Ecuadorian government to protect its natural heritage.

DAY 2 SUNDAY

Isabela / Fernandina (B,L,D)

In the morning we head to Isabela and visit Punta Vicente Roca, located at the "mouth" of the head of the sea horse shape of the island. Here we will see the remnants of an ancient volcano which form two turquoise coves and a bay that is well protected from the ocean swells. From this spot we have the opportunity to take panga rides along the volcano's cliff wall or explore a partially sunken cave at the water's edge. Masked and blue-footed boobies sit perched along the point and the sheer cliffs, while flightless cormorants inhabit the shoreline. This site offers excellent snorkelling opportunities.

Afternoon landing at Punta Espinoza on Fernandina Island, the youngest in the Galapagos Islands. Witness the largest colony of marine iguanas and a variety of bird life.

Fernandina Island is the youngest in the Galapagos Islands (approximately 700,000 years old) and is also one of the most volcanically active. A fascinating mix of mangroves, rocky shores, black sand beaches, and wildlife that have had relatively little human contact, Fernandina boasts some of the most diverse marine, wildlife and vegetation in the Galapagos.

The Island has erupted several times in the last 30 years, which has resulted in dramatic changes to the geographical landscape, even shifting the lake in the caldera from one side of the crater to the other.

DAY 3 MONDAY

Isabela (B,L,D)

Distinctively shaped like a seahorse, Isabela is the largest island in the Galapagos archipelago at around 4590 sq km. that is lined with a chain of active volcanoes, with the highest peak (Wolf Volcano) standing at 1700m. Not many tourists visit this Island, even though it has the largest colony of Galapagos tortoises and the beach is beautifully set with coconut palms. The main town, and the port we call on is Puerto Villamil.

Isabela is a relatively young island (approximately 1 million years old), and boasts fascinating geological evidence of the island's volcanic past that left it as we see it today. There is also fantastic flora and fauna, particularly on some of the island's volcanoes, which support completely different ecological zones than other islands in the archipelago. Many wild tortoises roam the highlands of Isabela, more so than any other island, and the rich waters surrounding the island provide plenty of nutrients for vast marine life, which allows for fantastic snorkelling opportunities.

DAY 4 TUESDAY

Bartolomé / Sullivan Bay (B,L,D)

Bartolomé Island (also called Bartholomew) has 2 main areas of interest. A hike to the summit of the island provides a clearer perspective of the islands' not-too-distant volcanic origins, and the panoramic view is one of the best among the islands. From here are visible the double-sided beach of Bartolomé directly below, the

volcanic tower rising out of the water next to it, and Santiago in the distance. After the summit hike, stop at the beach to relax in semi-tropical tranquility. There is great snorkelling among the submerged volcanic rock and around the base of the tower. A short hike to the beach on the opposite side is worth the minimal effort. It is not unusual to see sharks in these shallow waters, and marine turtles nest here from January through March.

Visit Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island in the afternoon to witness the striking and fascinating giant lava formations. Very few plants have managed to survive on this island due to the harsh environment and relatively new lava flow. Enjoy a walk along the lava formations before coming to a white coral sand beach, where plentiful sally lightfoot crabs and sea lions can be seen.

DAY 5 WEDNESDAY

Bachas Beach / Cerro Dragon (B,L,D)

Visit to Las Bachas where the sand at is made of decomposed coral, which makes it white and soft, and a favorite site for nesting sea turtles. The Sally Lightfoot crabs are abundant on the lava rocks along the water's edge. These crabs will eat anything they can get their claws on. On this hike, we see flamingos, Sally Lightfoot crabs, hermit crabs, black necked stilts, and whimbrels. The sea turtles had already abandoned their nests

Visit to Dragon Hill, one of the newest visitor's sites on Santa Cruz Island. Named for the large number of land iguanas that frequent the area, Dragon Hill has become an important nesting site for iguanas reintroduced there by the Charles Darwin Research Center.

Visitors will take a short walk from the beach to a hypersaline (saltier than the ocean) lagoon that is frequented by pink flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks and other species of birds. From here, they will pass through a Scalesia tree forest. Endemic to the Galapagos, there are only 400 specimens of the Scalesia tree left in the world. Past the forest, hike up Dragon Hill itself for impressive views of the bay.

DAY 6 THURSDAY

Santa Cruz (B,L,D)

In the morning we arrive in Puerto Ayora, on Santa Cruz Island. Santa Cruz is the second largest in the island group, and has the largest population, with Puerto Ayora as its main town. It also boasts the most varied of the islands' vegetation zones: coastal, transition, scalesia, miconia and pampa. The Charles Darwin Research Station is a 10 minute walk from the centre of the town. Here, an exhibition centre displays photos of recent volcanic eruptions, charts outlining geological formations and drawings of the evolutionary development of endemic species. A corral houses adult Galapagos Tortoises, and a nursery cares for young tortoises until they are about three years old, when their shells have hardened enough to resist attack from feral dogs. In the afternoon we may have the opportunity to visit the highlands and see giant land tortoises in the wild.

DAY 7 FRIDAY

Española (B,L,D)

Head to Punta Suarez on Española Island. The southernmost island in the Galapagos archipelago is home to several wildlife species, including masked and blue-footed boobies. A hike to the top of the cliff makes for spectacular photo opportunities.

Punta Suarez on the western side of Española Island (also called Hood) is spectacular: gargantuan waves break on jagged cliffs and large bird colonies thickly populate the interior of the island; there is a distinct feel of desolate wilderness here. The Waved Albatross is seen here from April to December during its mating/nesting season. This bird leaves land between January and March each year to make its annual odyssey far out to sea. Amazingly, Española is the nesting site to virtually the entire world population of this species, with more than 12000 pairs residing here. Large numbers of Masked and Blue-footed Boobies are also found here, Red-billed Tropic Birds dash madly through the air, and both Marine Iguanas and sea lions are common. A huge blowhole, where the surf is forced through a natural rock formation spouting seawater 15 to 20 m (49 – 66 ft) into the air, adds to the island's impression of untamed beauty.

Follow the trail through a rookery and learn the geological history of the island from our naturalist, including its dramatic volcanic features, climate, flora and fauna. Sail in the afternoon to Garner Bay, an excellent swimming and snorkelling site.

DAY 8 SATURDAY

San Cristóbal / Quito (B)

Reach San Cristóbal in the morning and visit El Junco Lagoon to see the diverse vegetation surrounding the largest freshwater lagoon in the Galapagos Islands.

Disembark after breakfast, visit the interpretation center and transfer to the airport for our flight to Quito.

Rate includes:

- All meals, Buffet (breakfast - lunch - dinner) water with meals.
- Accommodation in double cabins.
- Transfers from the airport to the yacht and vice versa in Galapagos.
- Excursions in the islands with English Speaking Naturalist Guide.
- Air ticket

Rate does not include:

- Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee: USD 100.00 per person
- Migratory Control Card: USD 20.00 per person
- Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.
- Snorkelling equipment for rent on board.
- Tips.

Note:

- Rates per person in U.S. Dollars
- Single occupancy supplement 80% or 100%
- The route of the ship and the itinerary are subject to change and can vary depending on the regulations and policies of the Galapagos National Park, weather, seasonal changes, safety, etc.