

MONSERRAT GALAPAGOS CRUISE ITINERARY B+C

8d/7n Thu-Thu



DAY 1: BALTRA AIRPORT/ SANTA CRUZ ISLAND (THURSDAY)

Baltra

Transfer to the boat to meet the guide and get on board.

Santa Cruz Highlands Excursion (PM) (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 – some are more than 1km (.6 mi) long! Wander along the volcanic tubes and keep an eye out for the (mainly) nocturnal barn owls that sometimes roost here.

DAY 2: RÁBIDA ISLAND / BARTOLOMÉ ISLAND (FRIDAY)

Rabida Island Excursion (AM)

Arrive at a red sand beach at Rábida to explore its trails. A short trail leads to a saltwater lagoon; another trail goes past the lagoon to the interior, where the revered palo santo trees grow. (When burned, the branches of this tree give off a pleasing aroma and ward off mosquitoes.) Head back to the beach to see prehistoric-looking pelicans nesting among low-lying bushes – it's a rare treat to watch parent pelicans return with gullets full of fish for the squawking youngsters.

Snorkelling (Isla Rábida) (AM) (45m-1h)

Take a panga ride from the beach to a cliff wall that drops off into the water to find one of the best deep-water snorkeling spots in the islands.

Bartolomé Island Landing (PM)

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) (PM) (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.

DAY 3: ISLAS PLAZA / SANTA FÉ ISLAND (SATURDAY)

South Plaza Island Visit (AM)

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.

Sante Fé Hiking (PM)

Lace up your hiking boots to explore the island's flora and fauna. Trek toward the cliffs along the island's northern shore to see a forest of giant prickly pear cacti (Opuntia). See endemic land iguanas lounging in their favourite forest, and feasting on Opuntia pads and fruit.

DAY 4: PUNTA PITT / CERRO BRUJO (SUNDAY)

Punta Pitt Visit (AM)

Enjoy amazing wildlife watching and interesting geological formations on this fascinating expedition. Arrive at a quiet cove on the eastern tip of San Cristóbal to explore Punta Pitt. Made up of volcanic tuff substrate, it's the only site in the Galápagos where it's possible to see three species of boobies and two species of frigatebirds.

Snorkelling (Punta Pitt) (AM)

Snorkel around Punta Pitt Island and spot schools of fish swimming below. On the shore admire the nesting birds and sun bathing sea lions.

Cerro Brujo Visit (PM) (1h-3h)

Visit Cerro Brujo to explore its coastline, and look for wildlife on the beach, in the water, and in the air. Learn about the human and natural history of the area from the Galápagos CEO. Take a refreshing dip in the turquoise water, and head out on a short walk to a freshwater lagoon – a great place to see flamingos.

DAY 5: LOBOS ISLAND / TIJERETAS/INT. CENTER (MONDAY)

Isla Lobos Visit (AM)

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.

Snorkelling (Isla Lobos) (AM)

Snorkel right off the beach at peaceful Isla Lobos, amid the families of sea lions and their inquisitive pups looking to play. Spot nesting frigate birds and the famous blue-footed boobies resting on the shore. Be sure to bring your camera to catch some snaps at this prime wildlife watching haven.

Interpretation Center Visit (PM) (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.

Tijeretas Hill (PM)

This hill bears its name thanks to the frigate birds as "Tijeretas" is how people locally call them. Here we will enjoy from a great view of beautiful landscapes at the foot of a frigate bird nesting colony.

DAY 6: BAHÍA GARDNER / PUNTA SUÁREZ (TUESDAY)

Gardner Bay Visit (AM) (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) (AM) (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.

Punta Suárez Visit (PM)

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 sea birds, 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.

DAY 7: CORMORANT POINT/FLOREANA ISLAND (WEDNESDAY)

Punta Cormorant Visit (AM)

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, and explore the lava tubes with the Galápagos CEO.

Snorkelling (Champion Islet) (AM)

Jump on in and get up close and personal with the playful sea lion colony that reside in the waters off this tiny island. Keep an eye out for sea turtles, rays and colourful fish swimming by. There can be currents in this area, this activity should be done by strong swimmers only.

Post Office Bay Visit (PM)

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)

DAY 8: CHARLES DARWIN STATION / AIRPORT (THURSDAY)

Charles Darwin Research Station Visit (AM) (45 m)

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.

Baltra

Fly back to mainland from Baltra airport.