

MONSERRAT GALAPAGOS CRUISE ITINERARY C+D

7d/6n Mon-Sun



DAY 1: AIRPORT / TIJERETAS HILL/INT.CENTER (MONDAY)

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 2: 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 3: 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 4: CHARLES DARWIN STATION/HIGHLANDS (THURSDAY)

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

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 (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 5: DRAGON HILL / CHINESE HAT (FRIDAY)

Dragon Hill (AM) (1h-3h)

Visit Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) for some prime birdwatching. Take a short walk from the beach to a hypersalinic (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.

Chinese Hat Visit (PM) (1h-2h)

Explore Chinese Hat's beautiful landscape and spectacular white-coral sand beach followed by snorkeling with sea lions and penguins and swimming opportunities in the cove.

Snorkelling (Chinese Hat) (PM) (45m-1h)

Snorkel right from the white-coral sand beach and come face to face with playful sea lions and large schools of tropical fish. Keep an eye out for marine iguanas and penguins too!

DAY 6: EL BARRANCO / DARWIN BAY (SATURDAY)

Today we will be visiting the beautiful and remote Genovesa Island. This northern island, famous for its red-footed colony, is a paradise for bird lovers. It is estimated that about 200,00 Red-footed boobies live on this island.

Prince Phillips's Steps (AM) (2h)

El Barranco or Prince Phillips's Steps as otherwise known, was named after a visit by the British Monarch in 1964. El Barranco's steep 81-foot stairway leads up to a high cliff-face that opens out onto the plateau surrounding Darwin Bay. Here an amazing view can be appreciated. Once at the top of the stairway we will meet Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, mockingbirds, and finches along the way of a palo santo trail. It will also be possible to see wedge-rumped storm petrels swarm and short-eared owls.

Darwin Bay (PM) (1 ½h)

Darwin bay was formed by the collapse of the flooded caldera of Tower Island, another name used for Genovesa. After landing at a small sand and coral beach, it easy to realize why this island is a bird lover paradise. Among the bird species found here, the most common are swallow-tailed and lava gulls, mockingbirds, yellow-crowned night herons, lava herons, Galapagos doves and yellow warblers. We will continue on a short and flat trail to encounter redfooted booby and great frigatebird nests. We will visit a tidal lagoon where sea lions swim playfully ending our path on a cliff with magnificent views of this remote part of the Galapagos.

DAY 7: BLACK TURTLE COVE / BALTRA ISLAND (SUNDAY)

Black Turtle Cove Excursion (AM)

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.

Baltra

Disembark at Baltra and fly back to Ecuador mainland.