



GÁLAPAGOS ISLANDS SANTA CRUZ/ ISABELLA



9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS / QUITO - GALÁPAGOS

Day 1.- Assistance at the airport + transfer to the hotel

Accommodation: Quito

Day 2.- SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

Upon arrival to Baltra Island your naturalist guide will wait for you in the arrivals hall and take you to your first visit on Santa Cruz Island. Before this you will be transferred from Seymour airport by an airport bus (10 min ride) and a ferry ride (5min) to the northside of Santa Cruz in to town of Puerto Ayora which takes around 45 minutes to get to the hotel

In the afternoon, we will visit Charles Darwin Station, where we can check out giant tortoises in captivity and learn about the breeding program of this iconic animal then, return to the hotel for the Welcome Dinner.

Day 3 and 4.- SANTA CRUZ ISLAND (B, L)

NORTH SEYMOUR

AM: North Seymour is a small flat island, with a trail about two kilometers long. Palo santos trees are endemic to the island and stand just above the landing site usually without leaves waiting for the rain to bring them into bloom. Opuntia, the local prickly pear cactus, is the food for the land iguanas.

Swallow-tailed gulls sit perched in ledges of the cliffs only a few meters high from the shoreline. Amongst the emblematic fauna of the island you will be able to see sea lions basking on the lava rock, during the walk you can find land iguanas and colonies of blue-footed boobies and magnificent frigates.

PM: Las Bachas, a beautiful coralline beach located on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, is the perfect place for practicing snorkeling, swimming or to simply enjoy the white soft sand. Several brackish lagoons only a few steps away from the sea are the feeding grounds of various wading birds, from stilts to flamingos. - Wet Landing

SOUTH PLAZAS

AM: The Plazas Islands (North and South), Only South Plaza is open to visitors. Here the vegetation and is represented by annual plants such as sesuvium, and by opuntia cacti. The sesuvium, serves as groundcover for a grove of luminescent green prickly-pear cactus. Yellow-Brown land iguanas sit beneath waiting patiently for pears to drop.

Depending on the dry or the wet season the island wears a red carpet during the months of May to December.

You will disembark on South Plazas where you will be greeted by a colony of sea lions inhabits the island, The trail takes you gradually towards the southern cliff of the island where you will be able to observe nesting swallow-tailed gulls and several sea birds such as tropicbirds, frigates, Nazca and blue-footed boobies, Audubon shearwaters, pelicans gliding the sky.

PM: You will have the possibility of snorkeling in the calm waters of Punta Carrión where you will be able to observe a variety of tropical fish, sea turtles, rays,yellowtail mullets and white tip reef sharks that peacefully rest on the sandy bottom.



SANTA FE

AM: Santa Fé offers a beautiful bay, In the middle of a sunny day the lagoon turns into an eye-catching turquoise blue. The white Sandy bottom is only a few meters below the Surface.

You will disembark on a small sandy beach where you will be able to see a colony of sea lions basking lazily in the sun. A trail leads inland to the top of a Cliff, from where the view is breathtaking. Two species of land iguanas inhabit the archipelago, but one of these, the endemic dwells only in Santa Fe; it is bigger, with a whitish color, sometimes chocolate Brown when moulting. The Galapagos hawk often overlooks the beach.

This island is also characteristic by its forest of the giant prickly pear cactus, or RaDayte headed scalesia, is an attractive Bush with white flowers and exquisite fragrance.

PM: After the visit on land you will be taken to enjoy snorkeling in the clear waters of the anchoring site of Santa Fé. You will be able to see a variety of tropical fish and a possibility of swimming with sea lions, sea turtles, small white-tip sharks, spotted Eagle rays and round stingrays are common to the small bay.

BARTOLOME / SULLIVAN BAY

AM: A very impressive Little island in front of Sullivan Bay, with a landscape of real volcanic desolation: tuff cones, spatter cones, scoria formations and black volcanic sand.

A trail of 600-meters with stairs leads to the Summit of the central of the volcano. From the top of the volcano, the view is extraordinary and offers one of the most emblematic sceneries of the Galapagos Islands,. Towards the east, a field of spatter cones punctuates the island. Towards the west, one is amazed by the isthmus of Bartolome, cover by mangroves and bordered by two small coves of Golden sand in teh shape of half moons. On the north beach, the Pinnacle Rock stands like a finger pointed to the sky.

PM: Depending on the permission of the boat this day you have also the opportunity to do snorkeling in one of both places; on the north cove, under Pinnacle Rock or in Sullivan Bay, this last one is a clear evidence of the volcanic past of the islands. Both places give a unique experience.

Day 5. SANTA CRUZ/ ISABELA ISLAND (B)

Before heading to Isabela island, you have 2 option to visit one site:

Tortuga bay beach, a 45 minute walk on a cobblestone path (2.5 km one way) leads you to fine a white sandy beach common in the archipelago. An endemic forest of the tall Opuntia Cactus and volcanic rock surrounds the path making the view from the trek beautiful and mysterious. Throughout your walk you can spot finches, yellow warblers, mockingbirds, and lava lizards. Once there, it is an excellent place for swimming, snorkeling, kayaking or surfing. Marine iguanas, sharks, sea birds and sea turtles can be spotted here.

Or

The highlands of Santa Cruz where you will have the opportunity to get close to giant tortoises roaming in their natural habitat. Explore a cavernous underground Lava Tunnel where you can view one of the geological wonders of our volcanic islands.

***Here, we can help you organizing all the logistic.**

In the afternoon you are sailing to Isabela Island (unaccompanied) by public speedboat (2 hours). Speedboat rides can be bumpy therefore prepare yourself with seasickness medication.

By far the biggest island of the archipelago, the island is composed of six main volcanos quite Young and intermittenly active, five of which evolved in calderas, the old stage of a shield volcano. Upon arrival to Puerto Villamil our representative will meet you at the port and take you to your accommodation.

Enjoy your free evening hours in this remote Island. Isabela's sunsets are well known for their beauty.



Day 6 ISABELA ISLAND (B.BOX LUNCH)

Today you will visit one of Isabela's most impressive attractions the Sierra Negra and Chico Volcano. Sierra Negra is a huge caldera, ten kilometers wide, the oldest on the island. On the rim, the trail divides in two: Towards the west, it heads to Volcan de Azufre, an old sulphur mine that was exploited by the first settlers. Towards the east, the trail leads to volcán Chico on the external slope of Sierra Negra. The weather is often clear and good, once you reach the northern side of the caldera. Volcan chico has an overwhelming "lunatic" landscape with fascinating lava formations. This is a 16 km challenging hike on different terrains depending on the climate it can be hot, humid, muddy and/or rocky at times. For this hike its recommendable to have proper hiking boots, sun protection, and 2 liters of water per person.

After this excursion you have free time to enjoy some activities (not included) such as:

Snorkeling in "Concha y Perla" Bay

Surfing

Biking

Visit Isabela Interpretation center (Giant and babies tortoises from diferent volcanoes)

Flamingos lagoon

Visit the famous "Wall of tears". This wall is a proof of the genuine human history of the islands. Around 1944 at foot of a desolated hill, that was erected from big lava blocks by convicts of the penal colony. Two to three hours' walk from the town, on the way you have beautiful view points and sometimes you can see giant tortoises walking around freely, once at the end of the road you can see the only ruins still remains there.

Included activity

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o Hike to Sierra Negra and Chico volcano

Day 7 ISABELA / SANTA CRUZ ISLAND (B)

On our last day in Isabela we explore the well-known islet called Tintoreras, a path alongside a reef that is home to several white tip sharks -you can easily observe them from land. Before setting over to the islet you do a dinghy ride around the bay of Isabela to spot the famous Galapagos penguin, blue footed boobies, sea turtles and sea lions. The famous attraction in Tintoreras is the shark tunnel, this is where tintoreras (white tip sharks) come in and rest for the day before going out for hunting during the night.

Enjoy a snorkeling activity with high chances to swim with sea turtles, colorful fish and manta rays.

In the afternoon we are sailing back to Santa Cruz Island by public speedboat (2 hours, unaccompanied) for a last night out in town or do some last minute shopping before flying out the next day.

Included activities

Tintoreras excursion

Day 8. DEPARTURE DAY (B)

This morning you are transferred back to Baltra airport where you catch your plane back to Ecuador mainland (flight is not included). Please advise 15 days prior to the tour your arrival .

Day 9 TRANSFER

Transfer Out Quito International connections.

