

M/Y FLAMINGO & M/Y LETTY

Itinerary "A"

MONDAY

This morning we visit **CERRO BRUJO**, a breathtaking white power-sand beach, said to be one of the most spectacular in Galapagos and have an opportunity to snorkel or kayak right from the beach.

This afternoon, we visit the northeast tip of San Cristobal, **PUNTA PITT**, is a tuff formation that serves as a nesting site for many sea birds including blue footed, Nazca and red-footed boobies, frigatebirds, swallow-tailed gulls and storm petrels. Punta Pitt is considered to be a first class site for birds and equal to Genovesa (Tower) Island.



TUESDAY

This morning we have a dry landing at **Punta Suarez, HOOD (ESPANOLA)**, where we witness the highest rate of endemic species in Galapagos. Sea lions noisily greet us as we land on their beach. Curious Hood mockingbirds peck at our shoelaces.



From April to November, the waved albatross, found only on Espanola, perform their wild mating ritual. Colonies of blue-footed boobies engage in "sky-pointing" to show off for potential mates. Nazca (formerly masked) boobies busily care for their young. Stunning swallow-tailed gulls are the only nocturnal gulls in the world. Red-billed tropicbirds take shelter under the cliffs. We also find Darwin's Finches, Galapagos Doves and Galapagos Hawks. Observe a

unique species of marine iguana identified with traces of red and green colorings. Colorful sally light-foot crabs crawl along the shoreline near the famous "blow hole". This is the scene most people envision when they decide to visit Galapagos. During lunch, we motor to the other side of the Island.

In the afternoon, we have a wet landing on **Gardner Bay, ESPANOLA (HOOD)**. Walk along seemingly endless stretches of this white sandy beach where you'll find large colonies of sea lions. There is no trail to follow so this is a chance to explore and you may find a Galapagos Hawk, Darwin's Finches or Hood Mockingbird. Swim with sea lions from the beach or just relax on the beach. There's an excellent snorkeling site off Gardner Islet with a colorful diversity of sea life near Tortuga Rock in caves covered with invertebrates.

Passengers are also permitted to use the kayaks at this particular site.



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WEDNESDAY

This morning we step ashore at **Punta Cormorant, FLOREANA (Charles)**, one of the few populated islands in the Galapagos. Floreana presents a rich history with mystery and intrigue.



Set food on a green-sand beach alive with the sounds of sea lions. Follow a trail to a brackish lagoon, home of the pintail ducks, common stilts, and the pinkest Flamingos in the world. Wind your way past a rich variety of plants including morning glories, cutleaf daisies, palo verdes and scalesia leading to a beach with power soft sand. Sea turtles lay their eggs in

the sand dunes and rays swim in the shallow water.



After the walk, we have an opportunity to snorkel at **Champion Islet**.

This afternoon we visit Post office Bay, not the most scenic, but probably the most famous sites in Galapagos. Here is where a post barrel was put into use in the late 18th Century by English whaling vessels. You are invited to leave a post card and to pick up any mail from your home area.

THURSDAY

This morning visit the "Humedales" or Wet Lands, characterized by sandy beaches, rocky shores, and mangroves. There are a number of trails with all four species of mangroves, secluded beaches, natural pools, lava tunnels and the cemetery for the island's first inhabitants. This area is also the mating area for the pink flamingos and one of the best areas to view migratory birds.

In recent years the national park has released young giant tortoises from the Isabela Breeding Center in this area and by following the trail it's possible to encounter small 5 year old and 25 year old giant tortoises in the wild.

At the end of the road you will find the Wall of Tears a sad reminder of the history of Isabela. The wall was constructed between 1946 and 1959 while Isabela was a penal colony. As punishment the prisoners were forced to build the wall from huge blocks of lava. The wall is named for the many convicts that died while building the wall.



Afternoon: Located in the Southwest portion of Isabela is **Sierra Negra Volcano**, considered the oldest and largest volcano on Isabela. From Puerto Villamil, we travel by motorized vehicle to Santo Tomas. From here, we continue by horseback to the rim of the caldera, traversing a lava field through a series of craters and fumaroles until we reach Volcan Chico. Along the way, you will usually spot the vermillion flycatcher, Galapagos martins, whimbrels, egrets, Galapagos Hawks and possibly the dark-billed cuckoo.

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FRIDAY

This morning we visit, **Black Turtle Cove (Caleta Tortuga Negra)** where we take a zodiac ride through a series of coves surrounded by mangroves. Here you may view pairs of mating marine turtles (Sep-Feb), white tipped reef sharks, spotted eagle rays and beautiful yellow cow-nosed rays, provided you remain quiet while the engines are turned off.



This afternoon we visit **Bartolome**, where it seems like we are walking on the moon. This young Island is inhospitable to most plants and animals. After a dry landing, climb 30 minutes up stairs leading to the summit of a once active volcano. Along the way, we pause to marvel at lava bombs, spatter cones and cinder cones.

From the top of the wooden stairs, we can gaze out across the island for a panoramic view of the island and "Pinnacle Rock", an eroded tuff cone. Down below, crystal clear water is an invitation to snorkel from the beach or Zodiac with schools of tropical fish and Galapagos Penguins.

SATURDAY

This morning, we visit **SOUTH PLAZA**, a small geological uplift with tall cliffs offering spectacular views.



After a dry landing, the trails lead us through Prickly Pear cactus or Opuntia and Sesuvium. Here we can find the Galapagos land iguana feeding on the cactus leaves. Toward the end of the hill, we encounter a colony of bachelor sea lions. The dominant bulls are in various stages of recovery from battles lost over prime beach territory. We also find swallow tailed gulls, shearwaters and red-billed tropicbirds who build their nests along the cliffs.

Travel by bus to the **highlands** of **SANTA CRUZ** Island. The scenery gradually changes as we wind our way through all seven vegetation zones found in Galapagos. Here, we visit the tortoise reserve at one of the private farms in the highlands where we encounter giant tortoises in their natural habitat. We visit *Los Gemelos*, Spanish for "The Twins", a pair of large pit craters where we find the bright red male vermilion flycatcher. We stop at "the tunnels", the largest lava tubes found in Galapagos.

or

We visit the **Charles Darwin Research Station**. We visit all three tortoise corals and the breeding center with new hatchlings and miniature tortoises not yet ready to be repatriated. Scientists from all over the globe work at the station and conduct biological research from anatomy to zoology. We also visit the Van Straelen Hall where there are exhibits and a short video presentation. Visitors can see the pen of Lonesome George, the last surviving member of the Pinta Island subspecies.



Back on board, enjoy the Captain's Farewell cocktail followed by dinner and a briefing.

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SUNDAY

This morning, we drop anchor in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, **SAN CRISTOBAL**. We visit the Interpretation Center opened in 1999. Here we gain a more complete understanding of the natural and human history of the Islands.

Afterwards, we head straight to the airport for our flight back to the mainland departing SCY at 12PM on Aerogal37.