

YACHT LA PINTA

Combined East & North Galapagos Itineraries

7 Nights Friday - Friday



Itinerary is a guide only. Our route and programme varies according to National Park policies and regulations, weather conditions, seasonal changes, safety reasons and the wildlife we encounter.

FRIDAY

Tortoise Reserve at Cerro Colorado (San Cristóbal Island)

Arrival by plane to San Cristóbal Island and transfer to La Pinta Yacht for cabin assignment, introductory briefing and lunch. After lunch disembark at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (dry landing) for a 45-minute bus ride to the highlands of San Cristóbal. Here, the National Park service has created a site to preserve and re-establish the population of giant tortoises of San Cristóbal Island, affected due to hunting by early colonizers. Hike through a transition forest, where terrestrial birds such as finches, mockingbirds, doves can be seen. Take the bus back to the town. Lunch on board.

Cerro Brujo (San Cristóbal Island)

A dinghy ride along the shores of tuff-stone layers takes guests to **Cerro Brujo's** white coralline beach (wet landing). The beach is a large expanse, great for walking, with rewarding birdwatching with good views of seabirds like blue-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, herons, frigate birds, and more shore birds. Also, look out for Galápagos sea lions. Highlights ashore include the Chatham (San Cristóbal) mockingbird, Chatham lava lizard; both species are endemic to this island, and seen nowhere else in the Galápagos. These are the same shores that Charles Darwin walked upon, back in September 1835, as San Cristóbal was the first island where he set foot in the Galápagos. Evening Cocktail, briefing and dinner.

SATURDAY

Natural Galapaguera (San Cristóbal Island)

Early disembarkation (wet landing) for what is probably the longest hike on the itinerary (4 miles). The trail goes up the slopes of San Cristóbal's well eroded shield volcano. The trail takes guests through the arid zone, a great place to see Darwin's finches and other land birds including the endemic Chatham mockingbirds. Along the way, one can spot some of the last individuals of the San Cristóbal giant tortoise population, living in the wild -- tortoises here were almost hunted to extinction during the late 19th century by local colonizers. After the invigorating hike, enjoy a swim to cool off before returning back on board for lunch.

Punta Pitt (San Cristóbal Island)

Morning disembarkation (wet landing) on the northeastern side of the island. Pitt Point is an eroded tuff cone; the trail that ascends from the beach provides spectacular views of the shoreline. This is the only site in the Galápagos where the three species of boobies can be found together, as well as the two frigate species, plus a colony of bachelor sea lions along the beach. After the walk, if conditions are favourable, there is a chance to swim from the beach. Lunch on board.



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Sunday

Punta Suarez (Española (Hood) Island)

Morning outing at Punta Suarez (dry landing) for an exciting walk on lava/boulder terrain to visit its unique sea bird colonies, including the waved albatrosses (April - December), Nazca (masked) boobies, blue-footed boobies, swallow-tail gulls, and the famous blowhole. Among its land birds, the Hood island mockingbird, and three species of Darwin's finches are common highlights. Also, look for red-green-black marine iguanas. Back on board for lunch.

Gardner Bay (Española Island)

In the afternoon, disembark (wet landing) at a white coral beach for a short walk to observe the sea lions, mockingbirds, finches or enjoy the beach. There is great snorkelling in this area (snorkelling equipment is available for guests at no extra cost), or ride the glass-bottom boat. Briefing and dinner.

Monday

Charles Darwin Research Station

Morning disembarkation (dry landing) to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and the 'rearing in captivity' programme for the giant tortoises. Here guests witness the efforts and results of all the field work done in the name of science. An impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest and many land birds can be also seen. Transfer by bus across Santa Cruz Island and a short ferry ride to Baltra. Transfer to the airport to take the flight back to the mainland.

El Chato (Santa Cruz Island)

After lunch, travel by bus to El Chato Reserve, one of the best places in the archipelago to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat. The tortoises are easy to spot, lumbering around, eating grass and leaves and wallowing in the small pools that are common in the reserve. You may also spot some highland birds, like cattle egrets, mockingbirds, finches or flycatchers. There are several lava tunnels in the reserve, a great place to spot the barn owl. There is also a small lagoon covered in red algae where gallinules and Galápagos pintails can be found. Bus ride to Puerto Ayora to board Yacht La Pinta. Introductory Briefing including the expedition plan for Tuesday, welcome Cocktail and dinner.

Tuesday

Bahía Ballena – Whale Bay (Santa Cruz Island)

After breakfast disembark (wet landing) at a beautiful olivine beach (a volcanic crystal that forms in fast-cooling lava). The area has historical relevance since a small community lived in this area in the late 1900s, collecting lichen (Rosella Tictoria), used in the textile industry. The trail leads guests to an old water hole used by the former settlers. There are also boobies, land birds and beautiful views of the northwest side of Santa Cruz Island to enjoy. Several activities are possible after the walk, such as snorkelling or a panga ride along the shoreline. Back on board for lunch.

Sombrero Chino Islet

Less than a quarter-of-a-square-kilometre in size, the tiny island of Sombrero Chino gets its name from its appearance: a Chinese hat. Lying just off the southeastern tip of San Salvador Island (James), this island, only formed fairly recently, makes a beautiful visit as one explores along its 400-metre long trail, which begins at a crescent-shaped white sandy beach. Several species of shore birds can be spotted, along with marine iguanas, lava lizards and sally lightfoot crabs. The cove offers excellent swimming and snorkelling opportunities with white-tipped reef sharks and tropical fish. Galápagos penguins also zoom past here sometimes. Briefing and dinner.

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Wednesday

Bartolomé Island

Disembark at Bartolomé Island (dry landing) for a hike to the summit. A great way to start the day! This is a steep climb up a wooden staircase with handrails and several resting and observation stops; the view from the top is worth the effort. Following the walk, a dinghy ride around colossal Pinnacle Rock, is rewarding, followed by time to enjoy the beach (wet landing) and some snorkelling, with possible Galápagos penguin sightings. Guests can also ride on the glass-bottom boat for great views of the underwater world. Lunch on board.

Sullivan Bay (James Island)

After breakfast, board the *panga* for the short ride to the landing site at Sullivan Bay on the East Coast of Santiago. Wet landing on a white coral sand beach and a walk over lava that flowed here less than 100 years ago. This is the perfect place to see and feel the volcanic origin of Galápagos. The last major eruption on Santiago was probably in the early 1900's. One observer aboard a sailing vessel reported that the ship approached the lava flow so closely that the pine tar used to seal the hull of the ship began to soften, and the captain had to hurry the ship away from the bay. Briefing and dinner.

Thursday

Darwin Bay (Tower/Genovesa Island)

In the afternoon, a wet landing for an easy stroll observing thousands of birds, mainly frigate birds, red footed and masked boobies, gulls, herons, finches and mockingbirds. Optional walk over sharp lava and uneven terrain for dramatic views, or else return to the beach to enjoy swimming and snorkelling at this beautiful natural harbour. The more adventurous can snorkel along the cliffs or paddle sea kayaks. Lunch on board.

Prince Philip's Steps (Tower/Genovesa Island)

The morning starts with a very interesting panga ride along the cliffs and then disembark (dry landing) on rocks for a steep climb (90 feet) up some stairs. Once at the top of the stairs, the land is flat, allowing for a stimulating walk of about a mile to the other side of this small island, observing large colonies of masked boobies, frigate birds and storm petrels. Those not wishing to disembark can enjoy a longer panga ride along the cliffs (depending on weather conditions). Farewell Cocktail, departure briefing and dinner.

Friday

Baltra Island

Disembark at Baltra Island. Transfer to the airport to take the flight back to the continent.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

The itineraries and program are subject to change without prior notice, due mainly to adjustments in the policies and regulations of the Galápagos National Park, weather conditions, seasonal changes and safety reasons.



Dry landing: guests step from the dinghy onto rocks or a dock.

Wet landing: as the dinghy edges onto a sandy beach, guests step into knee-deep water and wade ashore

