

YACHT LA PINTA

Northern Galapagos Itinerary

4 Nights Monday - 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.

Monday

Baltra Airport

Morning arrival at Baltra Airport, transfer to the Itabaca Channel. A small ferry will take us across the Channel to the north shore of Santa Cruz Island. We board our bus to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island, where guests will learn about the unique montane ecosystems and biodiversity. Lunch at a local restaurant.

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

