

SANTA CRUZ

Western Galapagos Itinerary



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.

WEDNESDAY

Baltra Island

Morning arrival to Baltra Island by TAME flight and immediate transfer to the dock to board M/V Santa Cruz. Welcome introductory briefing and lunch.

North Seymour Island

Afternoon disembarkation (dry landing) for a walk along the coast and the interior of the island, observing bird colonies of blue footed boobies, frigate birds, swallow tailed gulls and also sea lions and marine iguanas. Opportunity for snorkeling or coastal exploration. Evening briefing, welcome cocktail and dinner.

THURSDAY

Punta Vicente Roca (Albermarle Point, Isabela Island)

After breakfast, disembark (wet landing) at the northernmost point on Isabela Island, Albermarle Point, named in English after the Duke of Albemarle in the 17th century. This is an historic site, where an old radar station dating back to WWII, and installed there by American troops, can still be seen. Fauna here includes the largest marine iguanas of the Galápagos, a healthy population of Flightless Cormorants. This is the only place in the world where one can encounter penguins in the Northern Hemisphere. Amid the mangroves, guests can spot great blue herons and brown pelicans nesting. Lunch on board.

Punta Espinoza (Fernandina Island)

Afternoon visit to the youngest island of the archipelago, Fernandina. Disembark (dry landing) for a one-mile walk over dark lava. Punta Espinoza has an amazing combination of barrenness and a lot of wildlife. Having no introduced mammals, Fernandina boasts a very unique environment with the highest density of marine iguanas, sharing their space with sea lions, sally-light foot crabs, hawks, penguins and the flightless cormorant. Evening briefing and dinner.

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FRIDAY

Tagus Cove (Isabela Island)

On the northwest of Isabela, secluded Tagus Cove provided a favourite anchorage for pirates and whalers over the centuries. Old graffiti is still found on its walls. The vegetation in the area includes the fragrant palo santo trees. These white-barked trees are leafless and look dead most of the year. They leaf and spring back to life in the wet season. An uphill hike takes guests to the back of Darwin Crater, filled with salt water. The view at the end of the trail is worth the climb. Darwin is one of Isabela's six volcanoes, a remarkable contrast to the lower islands to the east of the archipelago. Possibilities to swim, snorkel or ride kayaks. There is no beach in the area, so these activities are done from the pangas. Briefing and dinner.

Urbina Bay (Isabela Island)

After breakfast (wet landing) disembark at Urbina Bay, located at the foot of volcanoes Alcedo and Darwin, west of Isabela Island, the result of an uplifting of the ocean in 1954. Here you can find corals, shells, and many other calcareous organisms exposed above water. This area is also home to large and very colourful Galápagos land iguanas, giant tortoises (occasionally); a good spot to observe Darwin's finches. Along the shoreline, after the hike, guests may encounter flightless cormorants and see penguins while snorkelling in this beautiful cove. Lunch on board.

SATURDAY

Puerto Ayora and the Charles Darwin Research Station

Morning disembarkation (dry landing) to visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station and the giant tortoise pens, including tortoise celebrities like "Lonesome George" within an impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest home to many land birds. These are the headquarters of scientific investigation, conservation and the National Park administration. Lunch at the poolside of the Finch Bay Eco Hotel.

Highlands of Santa Cruz Island

After lunch, visit the highlands of Santa Cruz Island, with their impressive Scalesia forest and the geological formation of the twin pit craters known Los Gemelos. From December to mid-April a visit to see the giant tortoises in the wild may be included, if weather conditions are good. Next day's expedition plan and dinner.

SUNDAY

Post office Bay and Baroness's Tower (Floreana (Charles) Island)

Morning visit to Post Office Bay. A short walk leads us to the historic barrel site, where mail can be left for other guests from other vessels to be hand-delivered. This tradition of two centuries is unique. Near Post Office Bay, we explore the north shore of Floreana along narrow channels teeming with life. Rays, turtles and sea lions can be seen gently swimming next to our pangas. After a wet landing and a short walk up to a volcanic cone, we reach the Baroness's Tower, from where the entire northern shore of the island can be seen. Learn more about the fascinating past of this island. Lunch on board.

Punta Cormoran (Cormorant Point, Floreana Island)

Disembark at Punta Cormorant (wet landing) at an olivine-crystal beach for an easy walk that includes a brackish water lagoon where bird species like greater flamingos, pintail ducks, common stilts, herons, sandpipers, and others may be observed. This outing also includes a white-sand beach where sea turtles come out at night to nest (from December to May). Possibility of snorkelling or a glass-bottom boat ride at Champion Islet. Briefing and dinner.

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MONDAY

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

