

## ECUADOR - 8 DAY EASTERN & WESTERN GALAPAGOS ISLANDS | ELITE



### INTRODUCTION

Spend 8 days soaking up the sun in the Galapagos Islands. You will sail onboard the 16 passenger, luxurious ship - Elite. Enjoy a range of activities such as stand up paddle boarding, kayaking, snorkelling and panga rides and 2 landings a day (subject to government approval and weather conditions\*)

The Galapagos is a wildlife enthusiasts dream. Exploring the Eastern and Western Islands will allow you to see a variety of topography and a mix of flora and fauna. See a wide range of birds, giant tortoises, turtles, sea lions and perhaps even sharks or whales. You will visit Sierra Negra, one of the most active volcanoes in the Galapagos and head up to see the huge caldera. You'll also head to a giant tortoise breeding centre, which plays an important part in conservation of these fascinating and endemic creatures.

*\* Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.*

### ITINERARY

#### DAY 1: Arrive in San Cristobal & El Junco Lagoon

AM: Arrive at San Cristobal airport where you will be transferred to the vessel. PM: El Junco Lagoon Walk up the rocky path surrounded by rich vegetation and wildlife to the rim of the El Junco Lagoon, an impressive crater lake located in the highlands of San Cristobal island. Here you will enjoy superb panoramic views of the island, and you can often catch frigate birds diving and bathing in the crystal clear water below.



#### TRIP CODE

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#### DEPARTURE

Selected Saturdays

#### DURATION

8 Days

#### LOCATIONS

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## DAY 2: North Seymour Island & Dragon Hill

AM: North Seymour North Seymour island is a small island named after Lord Hugh Seymour, a senior British Royal Navy officer. Walking amongst the low, bushy vegetation you will be able to observe a large variety of birds, including blue-footed boobies, swallow tailed gulls and a large population of frigate birds. Look out for the marvellous bright red chests of the male frigates used to attract a mate. PM: Santa Cruz Dragon Hill The name Dragon Hill refers to the large population of Galapagos land iguanas that have made their home here. As you walk along the rocky coastline and through the forests of cacti and Palo Santo trees, you will no doubt encounter a number of these incredible creatures that resemble miniature dragons. The high tide also makes this a fantastic place to snorkel as the coral attracts a plethora of colourful fish close to the shoreline.



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### DAY 3: Cormorant's Point and Devil's Crown

AM: Cormorant Point Start your day with a visit to Cormorant Point on Floreana Island. Despite the absence of Galapagos Cormorants, the area is renowned for its stunning beaches, including a greenish-hued sandy shore. A short walk leads to a saltwater pond where flamingos feed and nest. On the other side of the point, a breezy white sand beach awaits, offering a chance to spot unique plant species and marine life like stingrays and sharks. You can wade in the shallows and enjoy the beach's beauty while watching for Sally Lightfoot Crabs. PM: Devil's Crown Afterward, hop on a Zodiac to explore Devil's Crown, an underwater volcanic crater that resembles a crown. Snorkel to discover vibrant coral reefs and diverse marine species, along with a variety of birds drawn to the open waters. In the afternoon, take a short stroll from Puerto Villamil on Isabela Island to the Arnaldo Tupiza Breeding Center. This oasis specializes in conserving Isabela's five giant tortoise subspecies. Witness the success of their protective efforts, even reviving the Cerro Paloma tortoise subspecies from near-extinction. The center's tranquil setting and lush surroundings provide a relaxing backdrop for observing and photographing the tortoises. The trail to the breeding center winds through a marshy landscape on raised boardwalks, preserving the delicate ecosystem. Look out for wading and swimming birds as you explore this unique area.



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### DAY 4: Moreno Point & Urbina Bay

AM: Moreno Point Punta Moreno is an excellent site for fans of geology and bird lovers. The ground is covered in rough lava, dried out after an eruption decades ago. The formations of the lava rock indicate how it flowed and dried and are very interesting for geologists. The lava flow cooled unevenly, and in places there are little ponds of brackish water popular with wading birds like flamingoes, herons and stilts. You may even get to see the occasional Pintail Duck in one of the pools! There is little in the way of vegetation, but some hardy pioneer plant species and cacti have begun the process of breaking the lava rocks down into something friendlier for plants and animals. There are small lizards and snakes to be found in and among the rocks. Along the coastline, tidal pools may trap some interesting sea life, and you may get to see some marine iguanas swimming and diving down to feed on underwater algae. Also snorkeling along the shoreline, lucky guests may spot some Galapagos Penguins. PM: Bachas Beach, Santa Cruz Bachas is one of the more beautiful beaches in the entire Galapagos archipelago – and that’s really saying something. It is a long stretch of pristine white sand where sea lions lounge and crabs scuttle back and forth. It was used by the Americans during World War Two: “Bachas” is actually a play on the word “barges,” which were once landed here. Sea turtles nest in some of the sand dunes here, and your guides will ask you to stay clear of the marked areas so as not to disturb their eggs. A short distance away are two saltwater ponds where flamingos are frequently seen. There is no real hike here: only the warm sandy beach. After a stroll along the sand and a refreshing dip, some of our guests like to do some easy snorkeling in the gentle surf.



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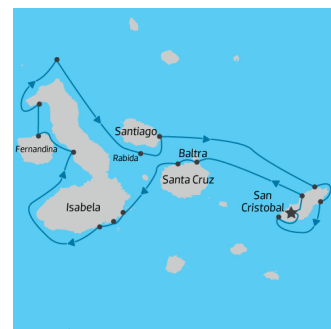
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## DAY 5: Espinosa Point & Vicente Roca Point

AM: Espinosa Point, Fernandina Years after your trip, many of your favorite photos will have been taken here on Espinosa Point. Hundreds of marine iguanas bask in the sun near the landing point: sharp-eyed guests may even spot some swimming in the surf, ready to dive down and gnaw some algae off of the rocks offshore. Galapagos hawks soar overhead, looking for a meal, or stare, stony-eyed, at visitors from their perch in a tree. At the end of one of the trails, flightless cormorants – a species unique to the islands – make their nests and clumsily waddle around. In the gentle surf off the point, monstrously large sea turtles surface, gulp a mouthful of air, and sink again. Some visitors will spot the shy Galapagos snakes slithering between the cracked lava rocks. Tidal pools have been known to capture large stingrays, which then must await the next tide to escape to the sea again. Geology buffs will marvel at the lava formations which make up the rugged ground here. Unforgettable! PM: Vicente Roca Point, Isabela Vicente Roca Point, on the rocky coast of Isabela Island, is not a walking tour. The visitor site is the coastline itself: rocky and pounded by the surf. Pangas keep a safe distance from the treacherous waves, making their way along the coastline. Visitors can expect to see both varieties of sea lions native to the Galapagos: the Galapagos Sea Lion and the Fur Sea Lion. Also, lucky guests may see penguins along the rocky shore and any number of sea birds nesting along the cliffs and soaring overhead. The snorkeling is excellent here: the guides will pick the best spot depending on the conditions, and guests have the possibility of seeing sea lions, penguins and turtles in addition the usual parrot fish, surgeon fish, sergeant-majors and other stars of the pacific reefs.



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### DAY 6: Rabida Island & Bartholomew Island

AM: Rabida Rabida island is most known for its dark red sand beach surrounded by a backdrop of cliffs and steep volcanic hills full of Palo Santo trees and endemic cacti. A panga ride around the shoreline gives the chance to spot blue-footed and nazca boobies and water activities such as snorkelling, kayaking or paddle boarding are ideal for seeing white tipped sharks and rays. On the beach you will find a large noisy colony of sea lions and the surrounding salt brush is home to a nesting colony of pelicans. Inland, bird watchers will delight in seeing mockingbirds, yellow warblers and Darwin finches - Rabida is the only site where all nine Darwin's finches are found.

PM: Bartholomew Island Bartholomew island is an islet located in Sullivan Bay and its most famous landmark is a huge volcanic cone named Pinnacle Rock. A walking trail leads up to a viewpoint at the summit of the island where you can enjoy spectacular views of Pinnacle Rock and the surrounding lava flows. The northern beach, a nesting site for green sea turtles, is perfect for snorkelling where sightings of spotted eagle rays, penguins and reef sharks are possible.



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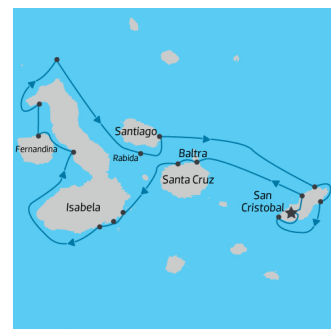
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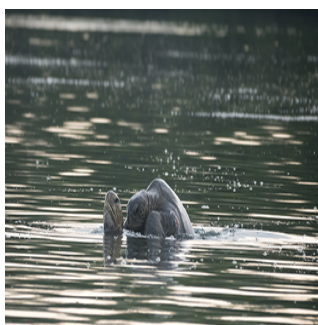
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### DAY 7: Black Turtle cove and Santa Cruz highland

AM: Black turtle cove After breakfast, you'll head to Black Turtle Cove, located on the north shore of Santa Cruz. This stunning location is home to three different species of mangroves, creating a unique and thriving habitat for a diverse range of marine life. As you drift through the calm waters aboard our Zodiac, keep an eye out for spotted eagle rays and diamond-shaped mustard rays swimming in formation, white-tipped reef sharks slipping beneath the boat, and Pacific green sea turtles surfacing for air and to mate. You'll also see a variety of waterfowl, including pelicans, herons, and egrets feeding in the cove. It's a peaceful and awe-inspiring experience. PM: Santa Cruz Highlands and the Charles Darwin Research Station. In the afternoon, you will visit the highlands of Santa Cruz island to see giant tortoises in the wild. These enormous animals give this renowned archipelago its name. You can easily appreciate the Galapagos giant tortoises in their natural habitat, eating and lumbering among others. This is also a good place to see birds such as short-eared owls, Darwin's finches, yellow warblers, Galapagos rails and paint-billed crakes. As part of this experience, you will visit underground lava tunnels formed by cooled and solidified lava. Afterward, you'll go to Fausto Llerena Giant Tortoise Breeding Center that is managed by the Galapagos National Park Service and biologists from the Charles Darwin Research Station. The purpose of the center, named for a legendary park ranger, is to raise Galapagos tortoise hatchlings in a protected environment. When the tortoises are large enough to fend for themselves, they are released into the wild. The program has been very successful, and in recent years hundreds of young tortoises have been released on several islands. You will see different sub-species of tortoises in various species of development, from tiny young hatchlings smaller than the palm of your hand to fully-grown behemoths lumbering about their enclosures. Your guide will accompany you and provide information about the programs and facilities. The breeding center is located at the Charles Darwin Research Station, just outside of the town of Puerto Ayora. In addition to the tortoises, you may see finches, warblers and other birds in and around the tall tree cacti, and tiny lava lizards scurrying about underfoot.



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## DAY 8: San Cristobal Interpretation Center & Depart

AM: San Cristobal Interpretation Center A short distance from the centre of San Cristobal is the San Cristobal Interpretation Center, which provides an overview of the fascinating history of the islands. The main areas of focus, which are addressed through a number of expositions are: natural history, human history and conservation for the future. You can also take one of the trails behind the center that lead to some great viewpoints of the ocean and volcanic rocks below. Depart from San Cristobal Airport.



## INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board ship	
Inclusions	<b>INCLUSIONS</b> Accommodation on board M/C Elite Transfers in the Galapagos Islands All meals Water coffee and tea Glass of house wine for dinners Captain's Welcome & farewell cocktail All excursions as per the itinerary* English-Speaking Naturalist guide Snorkeling equipment Wetsuits Kayak equipment	
	<b>EXCLUSIONS</b> Return airfares from mainland Ecuador Galapagos National Park Entrance fee (US\$200 per person from Aug 2024 - Subject to change) Galapagos Transit Control Card (US\$20 per person - Subject to change) Soft drink & alcoholic drinks other than specified Personal expenses Gratuities for crew/guides (recommended approximately \$15 USD per person per day)	
	Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
	Single Surcharge	A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.

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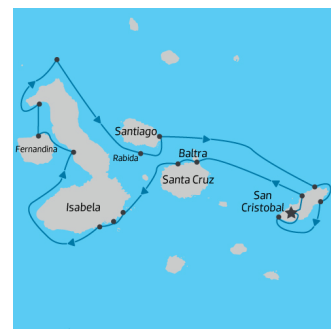
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Notes	<p>All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice.</p> <p>Please note kayak activities are subject to weather conditions.</p> <p>Prices are based on per person, twin share* (unless otherwise stated)</p> <p>Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time</p> <p>* Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.</p>
Price Dependent upon	<p>Departure date, fuel surcharges, cabin category, currency fluctuations, seasonality and availability.</p>

SUSTAINABILITY

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