

SOUTH AMERICA - COMPLETE GALAPAGOS | GRAND DAPHNE




INTRODUCTION

This 10-day cruise of the Galapagos Islands introduces you to the natural wonders, spectacular scenery, rich history and incredible flora and fauna of this remote group of islands. Snorkel around the underwater volcano known as Devil's Crown, witness the huge albatross colonies of Espanola, the southernmost island of the Galapagos and search for red-footed boobies on Genovesa Island. Hike through Opuntia forests, Scalesia cloud forest and across volcanic landscapes, encountering fascinating and colourful creatures every step of the way. Every day will be an incredible adventure of discovery.

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

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ECTSCG
DEPARTURE
Tuesdays
DURATION
10 Days
LOCATIONS
Ecuador, Galapagos Islands


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DAY 1: Quito

Bienvenidos! Welcome to Ecuador. A welcome meeting will be held in the evening at either 5pm or 6 pm when you meet others travelling with you on your cruise to the Galapagos Islands. Please check with hotel reception or check the reception notice boards for the time and place of the meeting for your trip. As today is an arrival day, you can arrive at any time as there are no activities planned until this important meeting. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early so you're able to attend. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). Quito sits at high altitude under the towering Pichincha volcano. It is a beautiful city, arguably one of the most beautiful in South America. The city stretches along the valley and is surrounded by the Andes. The Old Town of Quito is awash with history, with more than 30 churches to explore, and a number of fascinating museums. La Compania de Jesus is considered to be the most beautiful and ornate churches in the Americas. The city's oldest street, Calle La Ronda, is well worth exploring. As this trip spends very little time in Quito, we recommend you spend a few extra days before or after your trip to experience all the city has to offer. You may even wish to explore further beyond the city and visit Otavalo, Cotopaxi, the Cloud Forest or the Equatorial Monument.



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DAY 2: Baltra - Santa Cruz Islands

Today is mostly a long travel day, and your Galapagos activities will begin after lunch. Rise early and transfer to the airport (approximately 1 hour) for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. Pick-up may be as early as 4:30 am (your leader will confirm this at the welcome meeting) and a boxed breakfast will be provided. You will be met in the arrivals hall of the airport by a transfer guide (look out for 'Daphne' signs). Your transfer guide will take you on an airport public bus for a short distance (approximately 5 minutes), then you'll board the public ferry and head across the Itabaca Channel (approximately 7 minutes). All public transport fees are included. Once you reach Santa Cruz Island, it's time for your first Galapagos destination - take a private bus to the Highlands. After a short journey (approximately 10 minutes), arrive at Los Gemelos, which are twin sinkholes (not volcanic craters) created by the collapse of surface material in underground fissures and chambers. It is surrounded by the unique Scalesia cloud forest, so be on the look-out for the abundant bird life including different species of Darwin finches, woodpeckers, warbler finches and vermilion flycatchers. Continue into the highlands (approximately 30 minutes) and explore a rancho farm, where you will take a walk and enjoy your first lunch on the islands. The walk around (approximately 2 kilometres) reveals giant tortoises in their natural habitat. After lunch, travel to Puerto Ayora (approximately 45 minutes) where your yacht Daphne and her crew will be waiting for you. Once on board, you'll be assigned a cabin and meet your crew and naturalist guide. Settle in for your first night on the islands.



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DAY 3: Isla Floreana

Discover the quirky maritime history of Post Office Bay, home of the oldest postal system in the Americas. Take the opportunity to post a letter in the historic post office barrel from 1793 which is still used today. Galapagos visitors can leave letters and postcards to be collected by the next passing boat. Snorkelling and a lovely panga ride are also included in this outing. Afterwards, head ashore at Punta Cormorant where the sand is made up of fine olivine crystal (a glassy volcanic mineral that gives the beach an olive-green colour). This is the best place to see Galapagos sea lions. Keep an eye out for pink flamingos and other waterbirds wading in the lagoons, including pintails and stilts. The moderate 2-kilometre walk continues to a white-flour sandy beach, which is an Eastern Pacific green turtle nesting site. Young diamond stingrays are commonly found in the shore line. Enjoy the view of the turquoise crystalline ocean. Just offshore, the famous Devil's Crown is an old eroded volcanic cone and a popular roosting site for seabirds such as boobies, pelicans and frigates. Red-billed tropicbirds can also be seen nesting in the rocky crevices. The centre of the cone is an outstanding spot and many people find this one of the best snorkelling experiences of their trip. You might see rays, sharks, sea lions and turtles.



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DAY 4: Isla Espanola

Sail overnight and wake up on the island of Española, the spectacular southernmost island of the Galapagos. Because of its remote location, this island has a large population of endemic fauna. It is the breeding site for nearly all of the world's 12,000 pairs of waved albatrosses and also home to colonies of blue-footed and masked boobies. Trails from the golden beaches, where sea lions bathe and marine iguanas make their way towards the water, lead you right through the middle of booby colonies, and Galapagos doves and mockingbirds are also often seen. Land at Punta Suarez, one of the most attractive locations in the Galapagos, home to a large and varied wildlife population. A walk along its rocky trails (approximately 3 km) takes you to a cliff-top viewpoint that affords magical panoramas. Boobies line the rocky shoreline below, while frigate birds can be seen overhead. Enormous male sea lions lounge nearby, and albatross use the cliffs as their 'runway', getting airborne on the southeast winds. If you're lucky you might spot the elaborate courtship rituals performed by albatrosses before the female chooses her lifelong mate. Next, head to Gardner Bay, one of the most beautiful beaches of the Galapagos Islands. It's full of sea lions and hooded mockingbirds. Enjoy a walk (approximately 1 km) along the beach, and do some snorkelling which could be great for playing with sea lion pups and many fish. The rocks off the coast provide particularly great snorkelling, with reef sharks, turtles and many species of tropical fish (such as surgeon and angelfish). Small white-tipped reef sharks are also often spotted resting under the rocks.



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DAY 5: Isla San Cristobal

Shake off any early morning doziness with a trip to Leon Dormido (Kicker Rock). This basalt crater rises 150 metres above the water and is divided into two parts by a narrow channel. Cruise around kicker rock as nesting seabirds flank the boat, tropicbirds soar overhead and sea lions lounge by the water. Next, spend some time snorkelling at Cerro Brujo, providing opportunities to see Galapagos sharks and sea turtles. Or perhaps enjoy the beautiful beach with a leisurely walk to photograph the interesting sea lions who can often be seen at this location. Later, sail to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on the island of San Cristobal. Some passengers will be leaving and others joining the group today, so you have some free time to explore the town of San Cristobal. In the afternoon you will visit the San Cristobal Interpretation Centre, which brings the history and geography of the archipelago to life, from its volcanic origins to the present day. If there's time, your guide may be able to organise an optional visit to the highlands of San Cristobal, for a chance to see giant tortoises in the wild. The price of this optional activity depends on the number of passengers attending. Relaxing on the beach is a great option for those who don't wish to partake in this excursion.



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DAY 6: Isla Santa Fe - Isla Plaza Sur

Isla Santa Fe is home to more sea lions, and these ones are very eager for swimming partners! It's a lovely place to take a dip, offers a dense concentration of wildlife, and is a fantastic place to see many of the stars of the Galapagos in one relatively small area. Expect to see Galapagos hawks, land iguanas, a variety of finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, sea lions, marine turtles, frigatebirds, Galapagos doves and lava lizards. This stunning island boasts one of the most attractive coves in the whole archipelago. The jade-green waters are ideal for snorkelling. Take a hike along the coast into the Opuntia forest (approximately 1.5 hours). From here you can see Santa Fe's trees - the largest in the Galapagos - along with a forest of giant cacti and palo santo trees. The trail can be a little rocky, so mind your step. Once back at the beach, you'll have time for a snorkel. Playful sea lion pups and fluorescent fish make for nice company. Afterwards, continue to Plaza Sur (South Plaza), a small, picturesque island. Take a walk (approximately 1.5 hours), getting close to sea lions and passing one of the Galapagos' largest land iguana populations which rest among cacti, volcanic landscapes dotted with brightly coloured sea-purslanes. The southern cliffs are great for spotting tropicbirds and swallow-tailed gulls, as well as 'the Gentlemen's Club' - a gathering of male sea lions. Today there may be an extra stop along the way to Plaza Sur to restock the provisions for the boat. Later tonight, set sail for Isla Genovesa.



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DAY 7: Isla Genovesa

After an overnight sail, reach Isla Genovesa, the archipelago's north-eastern outpost. It's undeniably worth the voyage. Dolphins are often spotted in the waters around beautiful Genovesa. These varied landscapes are a twitcher's paradise, with all three kinds of boobies, including the rare red-footed booby, and numerous other species such as tropicbirds and frigate birds. Next, Bahia Darwin (Darwin Beach) is another superb site with large breeding colonies of seabirds and frigates and other birds such as lava herons, swallow-tailed gulls, mockingbirds and, hopefully, vampire finches. Enjoy a moderate walk (approximately 2.5 hours) that passes tide pools, sea lions and diamond stingrays. This walk involves sand and some rocky sections. The steep Prince Philip's Steps lead you to the heart of the seabird rookeries, with birds overhead and nesting among the cliffs. Look out for storm petrels on the island's rocky plains; Genovesa is the only place in the world where these birds can be seen flying during the day. Afterwards, perhaps cool off with a snorkel. The island's magnificent marine life makes for spectacular snorkelling - you might encounter manta rays, sharks, turtles and moray eels, plus many species of fish. Later tonight, depart Isla Genovesa for Isla Santiago.



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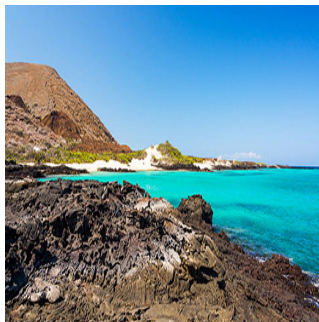
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DAY 8: Isla Santiago - Isla Santa Cruz

On Santiago Island's eastern coast sits Bahia Sullivan, also known as James Island. Here you'll take a walk along pahoehoe lava (approximately 1 hour), which was created by an eruption that occurred in 1897, and witness the plants that have grown on the site since that last eruption. With some luck you might see some marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, sea lions, finches, turtles, sharks and penguins. During your walk, your guide will recount the geological history of the islands. Then travel to Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill): one of the best places to see land iguanas in the islands. From our dry landing, walk to a brackish, lagoon spotting lagoon birds such as stilts, pintail ducks, sandpipers, sanderlings and flamingos. Further inland, the trail offers a beautiful view of the bay and the western area of the archipelago. This area is a nesting site for land iguanas, which is constantly monitored and assisted by the Charles Darwin Research Station. The arid-zone vegetation makes for an ideal place to see Darwin's finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, the endemic Galapagos flycatcher and yellow warblers. The path can be challenging but it will be worth it for a spectacular view of the bay.



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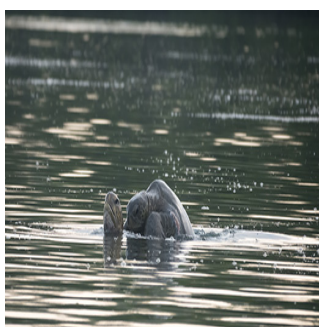
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DAY 9: Isla Santa Cruz - Baltra - Quito

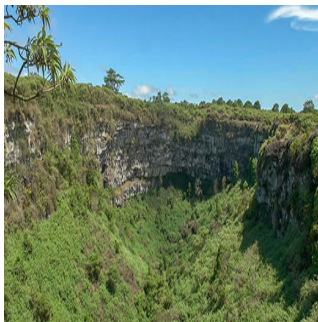
As flights to the mainland from Galapagos depart mid-morning, it's an early start for your last morning on the islands. Depending on the time of your flight, your time spent on this final excursion may be limited. Explore Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) on a panga. This red mangrove wetland is located on the north shore of Isla Santa Cruz. You will paddle along this peaceful cove to experience its many underwater riches. It's a breeding area for green turtles, so you might catch sight of them mating. There is also abundant bird life, such as the yellow warbler and lava heron. It is also a nursery for golden cow-nose rays, eagle rays and Galapagos sharks. This is your final excursion before you return to the airport in Baltra for your flight back to Quito. The flight will stop over in Guayaquil to drop off and/or pick up passengers. Arrive at Quito Airport (approximately 4 pm) where you will be transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay. Your local representative may stop by at your hotel this evening to get your feedback on your Galapagos experience.



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DAY 10: Quito

Your Galapagos adventure comes to an end after breakfast this morning. There are no activities planned for the final day, and you are free to depart the accommodation at any time. There are many fascinating things to do in and around Quito, so please speak to your customer service representative about any optional activities that might be of interest. They can also assist you in booking a departure transfer to the airport.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board ship & hotel
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INCLUSIONS

- 2 nights group hotel in Quito
- Arrival Transfer in Quito (must have flight arrival plans confirmed 30 days prior)
- Transfers in Galapagos
- Accommodation on board Grand Daphne in double cabin
- All meals during the cruise
- Guiding by Galapagos National Park Certified Guide
- All visits and excursions/landings according to the itinerary*
- Snorkel Gear (mask, tube and fins)
- Kayaks
- Unlimited purified water, coffee and tea

EXCLUSIONS

- Local Taxes
- Round trip flight to/from Galapagos
- Any other airfares unless otherwise specified in the itinerary
- Galapagos National Park Entrance fee (US\$200 per person from Aug 2024 - Subject to change)
- Galapagos Ingala card (USD 20,00 per person - Subject to change)
- Passport & Visa Expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Alcoholic & soft drinks
- Additional visits
- Additional meals
- Excess baggage charges
- Telecommunications charges (Wi-Fi is not available on the boat at all whilst in the Galapagos Islands)
- Wetsuit Hire
- Personal expenses and tips
- Items not specified

Inclusions

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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<p>Notes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before checking in on a flight from Quito to the Galapagos there is a US\$20 transit fee that must be paid. On arrival in the Galapagos you must pay a US\$200 national park entrance fee per person from August 2024. The proceeds of these funds go directly to ongoing preservation, conservation and management of the islands. These additional costs must be paid in cash. - When booking, please make sure that your name is spelt correctly, and that you book using the name in your passport (particularly if you are recently married). If you are issued a new passport with a different number between the time that you book and the time you travel, please take both the old and new passports with you. - All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice. - Please note kayak activities are subject to weather conditions. <p>* Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.</p>
<p>Price Dependent upon</p>	<p>Seasonality, fuel surcharges, currency fluctuations and availability at time of booking.</p>

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SUSTAINABILITY