

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS - GALAPAGOS WESTERN ISLANDS



INTRODUCTION

On this island-hopping expedition, discover the captivating fauna and distinctive scenery of the Galapagos Islands. See sea lions having fun on Rabida, giant tortoises on Santa Cruz, and marine iguanas in Santiago. Trek over volcanic terrain on Isabela and Fernandina, look for rare birds on Santa Fe, and take in South Plaza's strikingly beautiful scenery. This 8-day tour promises various ecosystems and up-close experiences with some of the most amazing and unusual creatures found in the Galapagos.

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

PLEASE NOTE: Pricing is subject to change and availability at the time of booking. [Contact us](#) for more information.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE

ECBE8DW

DEPARTURE

Select Mondays

DURATION

8 Days

LOCATIONS

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, South America




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DAY 1: Arrive Galapagos Islands

Upon arrival at Seymour Airport on Baltra Island, you will be warmly welcomed and transferred to the Galapagos Explorer. Only accessible by panga boat, Black Turtle Cove is a mangrove estuary featuring three different mangrove species: black, red and brown. Pristine and naturally secluded, the cove is a haven for rare fauna and flora and has been declared a turtle sanctuary. Here you'll encounter brown pelican, brown noddies, herons as well as blacktip sharks and stingrays that often use the sheltered cove as a birthing place. Pangas are required to turn off their motors while visiting the cove, allowing you to truly become immersed in the sights and sounds of your natural surrounds.



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DAY 2: Chinese Hat & Rabida

This morning, visit Chinese Hat, an island featuring a gently sloping volcanic cone that emerges from the ocean, resembling the distinctive shape of an old-fashioned Chinese hat. In the west you can see lava formations topped with coral heads, which are an indicator that the flows were once formed under the sea. A visit to this island provides an excellent opportunity for the interpretation of geologic features such as lava tubes and lava flows. Look out for large colonies of bright-red Sally Lightfoot crab, marine iguanas, lava lizards and sea lions. The lava cactus growing in between the lava cracks is also an incredible sight. Sombrero Chino is also known as an excellent snorkelling spot. Protected by the larger Santiago Island, the island's surrounding waters are calm yet still deep enough to attract some spectacular marine life like parrotfish, king angelfish, stingrays, hogfish and whitetip reef sharks. Very lucky snorkellers may also see the rare Galapagos penguin. Kayaking along the sheltered coastline also provides wonderful sightings of the unique lava flows and wildlife that resides here. Also known by the name of 'Jervis' in honour of a British Admiral John Jervis, Earl of St. Vincent, Rabida Island is one of the most colourful and volcanically varied islands in the archipelago and a great snorkelling site. Its famous red sandy beach (the only one in the Galapagos) and stunning lookouts provide unmatched photographic opportunities. The island is also a birdwatcher's delight where some of the region's rarest species are in abundance, including nine varieties of finches, pintail ducks, the large-billed flycatcher, the Galapagos hawk and the brown pelican. You may also be lucky to see the American flamingo, the world's pinkest flamingo. Snorkelling provides close encounters with sea lions, garden eels, whitetip sharks and eagle rays.



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DAY 3: James Bay & Espumilla Beach

Home to several species of shore, land and sea birds, today you'll walk along the coastline in search of American oystercatchers, lava herons, great blue herons as well as bright-red Sally Lightfoot crabs. Towards the end of the walk, you'll find a beautiful, eroded lava tunnel offering one of the only chances to see the Galapagos fur seal. Weather permitting, this is also a great snorkelling site with juvenile blacktip sharks, stingrays and scorpionfish. Enjoy a secluded cove with pristine white sand, ideal for leisurely walks, swimming in turquoise waters, and kayaking along a coastline sculpted with dramatic cliffs. Keep your eyes peeled for the abundant wildlife that calls this sacred space home. Located on the northwest side of Santiago, Buccaneer Cove is named after the first navigators and pirates, and later whalers, that used the island as an anchorage place to beach their boats while they went looking for food and water. Today, the cove is home to a variety of marine birds and sea lions. The cove is no longer a landing site, but a panga boat ride can be rewarding, with views of pelicans, herons, swallow-tailed gulls, and boobies. Look for two unusual rock formations that have eroded to look like 'the monk' and 'the elephant'.



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DAY 4: Fernandina Island

Fernandina is one of the youngest island in the archipelago, with more visible lava fields than anywhere else in the Galapagos. Situated across the iconic Bolivar Channel from Isabela Island, lucky explorers may be able to spot whale sharks and sunfish en route. Espinosa Point his is one of the most untouched islands in the Galapagos. No foreign species have ever invaded Fernandina and the unique landscape was created by lava fields of the volcano La Cumbre. Marine iguanas conglomerate in larger groups than in any other island. They bask around in the sand, swim near the shore and sometimes block the pathways. Among the unique species found here, is the flightless cormorant. A bird that due to the lack of predators had to adjust their way of survival and perfect their skills of finding food in the ocean. Their wings, tails and feet progressively adapted for swimming. To see these birds, is to witness evolution happening right in front of you. Other impressive fauna to look out for include Galapagos hawks, Fernandina snakes, sea lions and lava lizards, making for an exciting experience while walking around the island. This afternoon, visit Tagus Cove, a short walking trail takes you to the top of the cliff from where you can view Darwin Lake, an uplifted ultra-saline lake saltier than the sea. You can also see several volcanoes from here. Look carefully at the graffiti on the surrounding cliffs of the cove, it has been written by pirates, whalers, and buccaneers in past centuries.



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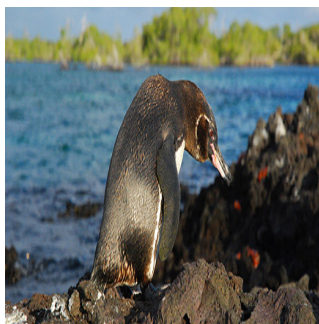
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DAY 5: Elizabeth Bay & Moreno Point

Few have the privilege of exploring this secluded bay, teeming with abundant marine life. Cruise by panga boat into the sheltered mangrove lagoon, where the tallest red mangroves in the Galapagos tower overhead. Silence descends as the engines purr to a stop, allowing the bay's symphony to come alive. Spot graceful sea turtles as they surface for a breath before diving back into the depths. Peek between the gnarled mangrove roots and catch a glimpse of nesting penguins. Stingrays and golden rays glide effortlessly beside your panga boat, while flightless cormorants, blue-footed boobies, frigatebirds, and petrels flit amongst the canopies. Moreno Point on the north coast of the island, although at times rather cold, is ideal for snorkelling boasting schools of chubs creole fish, harlequin tuskfish, penguins and sea turtles. The main attraction of this are the coastal lagoons in the middle of black lava flows where several unique bird species can be found. Walk in the lava flows of Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul, some of the Galapagos' most active volcanoes, and between the islands' three cacti species (lava, candelabra and prickly pear). A panga boat ride offers opportunities to see large marine iguanas, Galapagos penguins and flightless cormorants.



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DAY 6: Santa Cruz Highlands & Darwin Station

After a 30-minute bus ride, you'll arrive at El Chato, a private ecological reserve, to see giant tortoises roaming freely. Next, stroll through the Highland's lush forests, where numerous bird species, including various finch varieties, can be spotted. If there's enough time, you'll explore 'Los Gemelos' (Twin Craters), two collapsed calderas surrounded by a distinctive scalesia forest - a highlight of the highlands. This afternoon, visit Charles Darwin Research Station where you will see an active breeding site for giant tortoises. It's thanks to these noble efforts that this species has escaped extinction. Strolling through the park not only showcases the various tortoises, including the saddleback tortoise, but also the land iguanas that are bred and nurtured at the centre. After this, use your free time to explore the town, experiencing the local culture firsthand. This is also the perfect opportunity to relax on board the Galapagos Explorer, enjoying the hot tub and al fresco sundeck.



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DAY 7: Santa Fe & South Plaza

A short walking trail takes you to a large colony of sea lion, afterwards leading you inland to spot Santa Fe's endemic land iguana as well as its prickly pear cactus forest which features the largest prickly pear in the Galapagos. With some luck, you may even see the rice rat unique to the island. Santa Fe is also one of the best snorkelling sites in the islands, with sea lion, stingrays, hawk fish, parrotfish and eagle rays. Kayaking is also possible with wonderful sightings of sea lion and shore birds. This afternoon, visit a unique landscape of steep cliffs filled with red Sesuvium plants and Opuntia cacti makes for some of the most interesting wildlife observations available in Galapagos. Land iguanas are easily seen from the walking trail under the shade of cactuses waiting for a prickly pear to fall. Swallow-tailed gulls and rid-billed tropicbirds, along with various other sea birds, use the rising air to glide effortlessly over the escarpment and the protected rocky seashore is prime habitat for large colonies of noisy sea lion.



DAY 8: Mosquera Islet & Departure

A small island with white sandy beaches, black lava rocks and turquoise waters, Mosquera Island is the last stop of your Galapagos adventure. Highlights include the island's vibrant colony of Galapagos sea lion, one of the archipelago's largest, and the nesting grounds of the lava gull, the rarest gull species on the planet. Other creatures to look out for include Sally Lightfoot crabs, marine iguanas and pelicans. Thereafter, it is time to wave a fond farewell to the Galapagos Explorer as you head to Seymour Airport on Baltra Island for your flight onward.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin on board a Luxury Yacht

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Inclusions	<p>INCLUSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation in double cabin Transfers in the Galapagos and airport assistance VIP Lounge at Seymour Airport All meals during the cruise Water, juices, coffee, tea & soft drink House wines & local spirits All excursions as per the itinerary* English-Speaking Naturalist guide with a 1:6 guide to guest ratio Snorkelling equipment & short wetsuit Kayak & Paddle board equipment Internet (via Starlink) Limited laundry* <p>EXCLUSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) Premium alcoholic drinks other than ones mentioned above Personal expenses Gratuities for crew/guides Services not specified
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.
Notes	<p>All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice.</p> <p>Please note kayak & paddle board 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	Seasonality, fuel surcharges, currency fluctuations and availability at time of booking.

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SUSTAINABILITY