

Sunday - Bartolome Island & Egas Port, Santiago (James or San Salvador) Island

Make a dry landing at Bartolome. On this young island, which is inhospitable to most plants and animals, you will feel as though you were walking on the moon. You will also have the opportunity to climb thirty minutes up a steep slope to the summit of Bartolome's dormant volcano. Pause along the way to marvel at lava bombs, spatter cones, and cinder cones. At the summit, gaze out across a panoramic view including famous Pinnacle Rock (an eroded tuff cone), tropical fish in crystal clear water, and perhaps, penguins, as well. On the other side of the island, encounter sea turtles and White-tipped Sharks. In the afternoon stroll along the shore at Egas Port, Santiago Island (James) to look for octopi, starfish, and other sea life in the tide pools. At low tide, catch a glimpse of marine iguanas feeding on exposed green algae. Watch also for Great Blue Herons, Lava Herons, oystercatchers, and Yellow-crowned Night Herons. Finally, visit the grottos (deep pools of clear water) to view fur sea lions, which once lived on the verge of extinction. (B, L, D)



Monday - Espinoza Point, Fernandina Island & Vicente Roca Point, Isabela Island

This morning, disembark at Espinoza Point, Fernandina Island, the youngest and most pristine island in the Galapagos, located in the western region of the archipelago. On Fernandina, find the largest Galapagos colony of marine iguanas, hundreds in number, basking in the sun along the rugged shoreline. Watch sea lion harems with resident bulls, as the bulls carefully guard their territory; and see Flightless Cormorants build their nests on the point, while Galapagos Hawks fly overhead. Look for the remnants of recent lava flows that stretch around the coast. After lunch, sail to Vicente Roca Point on the northern shore of Isabela Island. Here, natural erosion and the collapsed cone of Ecuador Volcano have formed dramatically carved cliffs and a system of rookeries and canals that are a geological wonder. This area also promises the highest probability of seeing whales any time of the year. (B, L, D)

Tuesday - North Seymour Island & Black Turtle Cove, Santa Cruz Island



Spend the morning on North Seymour Island, a low, flat island created by the uplift of a submarine lava formation. Hundreds of Magnificent Frigate Birds (a species distinct from the Great Frigate Bird) display their red pouches during mating season and nest along side Blue-footed Boobies, s in a grove of Palo Santo trees. In the afternoon, anchor at the entrance to Black Turtle Cove, a mangrove swamp on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island. Enter by panga, or Zodiak, into a number of small, elusive passageways, as you follow your expert guide. This is a great place to see large schools of Golden Rays, Green Sea Turtles (they are on the rare and endangered species list), White-tipped Sharks, and Galapagos Sharks, as well as Lava Herons, Yellow Warblers, and a variety of other bird species. (B, L, D)

Wednesday - Interpretation Center, San Cristobal Island & Cerro Brujo

This morning, drop anchor in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, San Cristobal, to visit the impressive Interpretation Center, opened in 1999. Here, gain a more complete understanding of the natural and human history of the Islands. In the afternoon, you will have a wet landing on the beach at "Wizard Hill" (Cerro Brujo). Here you will encounter sea lions, crabs and a few interesting birds, such as the yellow Warbler, ground finch, plover, oyster catchers, lava heron and diving Blue-footed Boobies, s). You will have an opportunity to wander along the beach or swim and snorkel. (B, L, D)

Thursday - Espanola (Hood) Island

In the morning, make a dry landing at Suarez Point on Espanola (Hood) Island, where barking sea lions and curious mockingbirds will greet you. Then, take a substantial hike along the coast of rocky Suarez Point to observe one of the most

diverse and impressive colonies of sea birds on the islands. On the southern shore, cliffs jutting up from the sea set a spectacular scene for the island's soaring birds and famous blow hole. Although some bird life is seasonal, many species, such as the Blue-footed and Masked Boobies, make this their home all year long.

Gardner Bay

After lunch on the ship, enjoy this magnificent beach. It is home to many sea lion colonies and the turquoise colored water makes a beautiful contrast to the white sand that consists of shell dust. Mocking birds fight for their territory and inspect the backpacks of the tourists. About 50m of the coast there is a rock where you can encounter tropic fish and rays while snorkeling. But more spectacular is the Gardner Rock that can be reached with a panga. It is home to white-tipped reef shark, cactus finch and other colorful sea dwellers and very popular among snorkelers. (B, L, D)

Friday - Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz (Charles Darwin Station) & Radida Island

On this island, you will visit the Charles Darwin Research Station for an excellent overview of the ecology of the Galapagos Islands and of the conservation efforts to protect them. If time permits, wander through the small village of Puerto Ayora (Academy Bay), and mail your postcards with Galapagos Island postmarks.

Rabida Island

In the afternoon you will have a wet landing on Rabida Island. This is a small island covered by dry and coastal vegetation and has a central volcano of 367 m2. It contains the largest variety of lava types, red being the dominant color. A saltwater lagoon provides occasional sights of Flamingos. While the beach holds a large sea lion colony, fur seals also may be seen here. Red sands and teal waters characterize this island. Sea lions cover the waterfront, and the bull is always making a show of his bravado. There's a short walk to the top of the trail where you can take fabulous photos of the clear waters and volcanic peaks.



There's also great snorkeling. Keep near the rocks and keep your eye out for sharks and rays. (B, L, D)

Saturday: Bachas Beach & Baltra Island

This morning you will visit Bachas Beach on San Cristobal Island. The sand at Las Bachas is made of decomposed coral, which makes it white and soft, and a favorite site for nesting sea turtles. Sally Lightfoot crabs are abundant on the lava rocks along the water's edge. These crabs will eat anything they can get their claws on. You will also see flamingoes, hermit crabs, black-necked stilts, and whimbrels. Afterwards you will sail into Baltra and transfer to the airport for your flight back to the Ecuador mainland. (B)

Explorer II 8-Day WED-WED

Wednesday: Arrive San Cristobal and Cerro Brujo

Arrive at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno Airport, San Cristobal Island, where your crew will meet you and escort you to the Explorer II. Once on board, you will have an orientation followed by a lifeboat drill. In the afternoon, you will have a wet landing on the beach at "Wizard Hill", or Cerro Brujo. This is a nice introduction to the wildlife of the Galapagos as you encounter sea lions, crabs and a few interesting birds (e.g. Yellow Warbler, Ground Finch, Plover, Oyster Catchers, Lava Heron and diving Blue Footed Booby). Here you will have an opportunity to wander along the beach or swim and snorkel. You will return back to the ship for a welcome cocktail and dinner. (L, D)

NOTE: The \$100 per person Galapagos National Park Tax has been prepaid.

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Saturday: Santa Cruz Island (Bachas Beach and Dragon Hill)

This morning you will visit Bachas Beach on San Cristobal Island. The sand at Las Bachas is made of decomposed coral, which makes it white and soft, and a favorite site for nesting sea turtles. Sally Lightfoot crabs are abundant on the lava rocks along the water's edge. These crabs will eat anything they can get their claws on. You will also see flamingoes, hermit crabs, black-necked stilts, and whimbrels. In the afternoon you will visit Dragon Hill where a new visitors center has been opened by the Galapagos Islands National Park administration. After a dry landing at a dock, the walk takes you to a hypersalinic (saltier than the ocean) lagoon behind the beach, often frequented by flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks and other species of birds. A short walk up the hill rewards you with a great view of the bay and a nesting site of land iguanas. Many of the Iguanas that nest here have been re-established by the Charles Darwin Research Station. (B, L, D)

Sunday: Bartolome Island & Egas Port, Santiago (James or San Salvador) Island

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At low tide, catch a glimpse of marine iguanas feeding on exposed green algae. Watch also for Great Blue Herons, Lava Herons, oystercatchers, and Yellow-crowned Night Herons. Finally, visit the grottos (deep pools of clear water) to view fur sea lions, which once lived on the verge of extinction. (B, L, D)

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Wednesday: San Cristobal Island

Enjoy an early morning breakfast before you disembark and proceed to the airport for your return flight to mainland Ecuador. (B)



Explorer II 5-Day SAT-WED

Saturday - Baltra Island and Dragon Hill

Arrive at the new facility on Baltra Island, where your crew will meet you and escort you to your anchored ship. Once on board, you will have an orientation followed by a lifeboat drill. In the afternoon you will visit Dragon Hill where a new visitors center has been opened by the Galapagos Islands National Park administration. After a dry landing at a dock, the walk takes you to a hypersaline (saltier than the ocean) lagoon behind the beach, often frequented by flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks and other species of birds. A short walk up the hill rewards you with a great view of the bay and a nesting site of land iguanas. Many of the Iguanas that nest here have been re-established by the Charles Darwin Research Station. You will return back to the ship for a welcome cocktail and dinner. (L, D)

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Wednesday - Interpretation Center, San Cristobal Island and Return to Quito

Arrive on San Cristobal Island this morning for a visit to the impressive Interpretation Center, which opened in 1999. Take this opportunity to gain a more complete understanding of the natural and human history of the Islands. Afterward, proceed to the airport for your return flight to mainland Ecuador. (B)

Explorer II 4-DAY WED-SAT

Wednesday: Arrive San Cristobal and Cerro Brujo

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