

Queen of Galapagos

8 Days - 7 Nights

Monday SAN CRISTOBAL - LOBERIA
Tuesday ESPAÑOLA: SUAREZ POINT - GARDNER BAY
Wednesday FLOREANA: CORMORANT POINT - POST OFFICE BAY
Thursday ISABELA: HUMEDALES, CENTRO DE CRIANZAS, TINTORERAS
Friday SANTA CRUZ. CHARLES DARWIN STATION - HIGHLANDS
Saturday NORTH SEYMOUR - CHINESE HAT
Sunday PLAZAS - SANTA FE
Monday SAN CRISTOBAL - INTERPRETATION CENTER AIRPORT

8 Days - 7 Nights

Friday BALTRA - SANTA CRUZ: HIGHLANDS
Saturday NORTH SEYMOUR - CHINESE HAT
Sunday PLAZAS - SANTA FE
Monday SAN CRISTOBAL - INTERPRETATION CENTER-LOBERIA
Tuesday ESPAÑOLA: SUAREZ POINT - GARDNER BAY
Wednesday FLOREANA: CORMORANT POINT - POST OFFICE BAY
Thursday ISABELA: HUMEDALES, CENTRO DE CRIANZAS, TINTORERAS
Friday SANTA CRUZ: CHARLES DARWIN STATION - BALTRA

5 Days - 4 Nights

Monday SAN CRISTOBAL - LOBERIA
Tuesday ESPAÑOLA: SUAREZ POINT - GARDNER BAY
Wednesday FLOREANA: CORMORANT POINT - POST OFFICE BAY
Thursday ISABELA: HUMEDALES, CENTRO DE CRIANZAS, INTORERAS
Friday SANTA CRUZ: CHARLES DARWIN STATION – BALTRA

4 Days - 3 Nights

Friday BALTRA - SANTA CRUZ: HIGHLANDS
Saturday NORTH SEYMOUR - CHINESE HAT
Sunday PLAZAS - SANTA FE
Monday INTERPRETATION CENTER - SAN CRISTOBAL AIRPORT

DETAILED ITINERARY

MONDAY *San Cristobal*

PM - Arrival at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, San Cristobal, Galapagos.

Your flight from Quito (via Guayaquil) to the Galapagos will land at San Cristobal Airport. Upon arrival, your guide will be waiting for you. He will collect your luggage and escort you on the short bus ride to the harbor. Motorized rafts, called Pangas, will transport you to the M/Y PRINCESS OF GALAPAGOS.

The crew will welcome you on board. After a briefing and a light lunch the first site is visit.

Visit to Lobería

A short 10 minutes bus ride from Puerto Baquerizo is La Lobería. La Lobería home to a large sea lion colony and nursery. There are frequently dozens of sea lions visible at any time. Low tide is one of the best times to visit however, since it is when the mother's bring the pups into the tide pools for swimming lessons.

TUESDAY *Española*

AM - Punta Suárez: we'll walk a trail that leads through a blue-footed booby nesting colony and the only known nesting site of the enormous waved albatross. Along the way we will marvel at marine iguanas, watch sally lightfoot crabs scurry over the lava, and keep an eye out for Galápagos hawks perched on the low vegetation. The trail leads toward the cliffs where we will watch albatross and other seabirds soaring and see the famous blowhole, a fissure in the lava where water spurts high into the air like a geyser

PM - Gardner Bay: here we'll see Galápagos sea lions. Ashore, we will meet the endemic hood mockingbird, known for its tendency to follow tourists, yellow warbler, American oystercatcher, wandering tattler, and some of the thirteen species of Darwin's finches including large cactus finch and warbler finch.

WEDNESDAY *Floreana*

AM - Punta Cormorant is a beach tainted green, due to the accumulation of olivine crystal mineral. The trail leads inland to a brackish lagoon where flamingos and migratory birds can be observed. Later you will arrive at a beach with sand so fine that it has been dubbed "Flour Sand Beach". Here you see green sea turtle nests high on beach and can wander in the shallows observing baby stingrays and even baby sharks.

PM - Post Office Bay/Devil's Crown

We'll visit the famous Post Office, which has been in operation since 1793 when Captain James Colnett installed an empty rum barrel to serve as a post box. Sailors and pirates would leave letters in the barrel, where the next sailing crew who could take them to their destination would pick them up. Devil's Crown is a half-submerged volcanic cinder cone, considered to be one of the most outstanding snorkeling sites of the Galapagos Islands, offers encounters with sea lions, white tips sharks, turtles and an array of reef fish. On this tour look out for: flamingos, sea lions, lava lizards, shearwaters, marine iguanas, great frigate birds, blue footed boobies, brown noddie terns, brown pelicans, white tip sharks, sting rays, sea turtles, yellow tailed surgeonfish, Mexican hogfish, sergeant major fish and occasionally Penguins

THURSDAY *Isabela - Pto Villamil*

Isabela is the largest of the islands in the Galapagos, more than 4 times larger than Santa Cruz the next largest. Isabela is 80 miles (100 km) in length and though it is remarkably beautiful it is not one of the most visited islands in the chain. One of the youngest islands, Isabela is located on the western edge of the archipelago near the Galapagos Hot Spot. Approximately 1 million years ago, the island was formed by the merger of 6 shield volcanoes On the southern shore of the Island, we can find the Capital of Isabela, Puerto Villamili which is a peaceful small town with a relaxed attitude.

AM: Humedales

Upon arrival at Isabela, we'll visit the marshlands or humedales, where elevated walkways take us over tidal lagoons that house four mangrove species and provide habitat to flamingos and numerous migratory birds. We then visit Estuary Beach, where freshwater artesian springs flow into the sea, providing a perfect opportunity to swim amongst the mangroves.

PM: Nesting Center

Villamil is often considered the most beautiful site in the Galapagos with its long white sand, palm lined beaches. Behind Villamil are several brackish water lagoons where pink flamingoes, common stilts, whimbrels, white-cheeked pintails, gallinules are usually seen. The lagoons are nesting areas between November and April. The beaches and lagoons near Villamil are home to the best migratory bird viewing in the Galapagos Islands.

PM: Tintoreras

We will also visit Las Tintoreras (translating as white-tipped reef sharks). Tintoreras is situated to the south of Puerto Villamil and has a small bay of completely tranquil turquoise water, where it is possible to appreciate sea lions, sea turtles, marine iguanas, penguins, and the white-tipped reef sharks for which the island was named.

FRIDAY *Santa Cruz Island*

AM: Charles Darwin Station

This afternoon, we'll visit the Charles Darwin Research Station where we'll learn about the land iguana captive breeding programs and all about the efforts to protect the islands' rare population of giant tortoises, including the island's most famous resident, a 70-year-old tortoise- known as "Lonesome George", thought to be the last surviving member of a subspecies from Pinta Island. Also we'll see the tiny newborn tortoises and sit alongside the huge adults in their corrals. We'll continue with a walk through a giant prickly-pear cactus forest, followed by a stroll along the main street of Puerto Ayora where merchants display a variety of handicrafts.

PM: Highlands

During your visit to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island, you will walk through tunnels formed by rivers of red hot lava, gaze down into giant pit craters formed by collapsed magma chambers, trek through lush green cloud forest observing many colorful species of birds, and, seek out giant Galapagos Tortoises in the wild

The two gigantic pit craters offer another dramatic and exciting insight into the formation of these islands. Nestled in a cloud forest in the highlands of Santa Cruz this visitors' site offers great bird watching, plant identification and nature trails. Los Gemelos are in fact surface magma chambers that were once filled with red hot, liquid magma. This magma was expelled or drained away leaving huge empty chambers just below the land surface. Over time, the ceilings of these caverns weakened and collapsed leaving two enormous holes in the forest that had grown over the top of them.

You'll see the lush green forest of endemic Scalesia and Galapagos Guava Trees is a cool and refreshing change from the heat of the coast. The forest is shrouded in clouds (or garua, a light mist) most of the year and so lush green vegetation is abundant as are a wide variety of birds including the bright red vermillion flycatcher, many species of Darwin finches, Galapagos doves and yellow warblers.

You'll have the opportunity to see a Galapagos giant tortoise in its natural habitat. These enormous creatures roam freely between the national park areas and the agricultural zone. This visit offers the ideal opportunity to view these ancient creatures munching on lush green vegetation or wallowing in the mud of the seasonal pools that attract them from the lowlands during the dry winter season. Many bird species may be observed too, including migratory shore birds at certain times of year!

SATURDAY

AM: North Seymour

Located slightly to the north of the airport island of Baltra, North Seymour is a low, flat island, formed as a result of the uplift caused by magma build up below. It is covered with low, bushy vegetation and contains the largest colony of magnificent frigate birds in the Galapagos. Land iguanas are common here too. There is also a population of blue-footed boobies that perform an amusing courtship dance when nesting conditions are right, making this one of the highlights of the visit

PM: Chinese Hat

Chinese hat is a tiny island just off the southeastern tip of Santiago Island is less than a quarter of 1 sq km in size. It is a fairly recent volcanic cone, which accounts for its descriptive name; it has the shape of a down-facing Chinese hat. The hat shape is best appreciated from the north side. Opposite Sombrero Chino, on the rocky shoreline of nearby Santiago, Galapagos penguins are often seen. There is a small sea lion cove on the north shore, where boats anchor and land at the visitor site. A 400 mt trail goes around the cove and through a sea lion colony and marine iguanas cover the landscape. The volcanic scenery is attractive, and there are good views of the cone. There are snorkeling and swimming opportunities in the cove.

SUNDAY

AM: South Plaza

A small but in the winter season a very colorful uplifted island just off the east coast of Santa Cruz Island. South Plaza has a unique landscape of Sesuvium plants and Opuntia cacti and provides some of the most

interesting plant and wildlife observation spots in Galapagos. Land iguanas are easily seen from the trail, normally lazing in the shade of the cacti. Swallow-tailed gulls and frigate birds use the rising air off the sea to glide effortlessly over the escarpment. Towards the far end of the island a "bachelor colony" of male sea lions can be observed. You will eat lunch anchored close to the rocky seashore inhabited by a large colony of playful sea lions.

PM: Santa Fè

Located south of Santa Cruz Island, a walk around this dry, rugged island offers the chance of spotting the Santa Fè land iguana that is only found here. The turquoise water of the stunning bay where you will be anchored offers the opportunity to snorkel with sea lions. You will land on the sandy beach of a beautiful protected bay where you will be greeted by colonies of sea lions. A short circular trail takes you along the cliff edge where you can most likely spot the iguanas as well as many lava lizards and even the Galapagos Hawk. The trail brings you back round onto a second beach that is also inhabited by sea lions and blue-footed boobies sit on the rocks. Snorkel in the bay with sea lions and admire the many species of reef fish and occasionally sea turtle and rays. Lunch will be served whilst still anchored in the bay. On this tour look out for: sea lions, land iguanas, lava lizards, swallow-tailed gulls, lava gulls, shearwaters, storm petrels, marine iguanas, great frigate birds, blue footed boobies, brown noddie terns, brown pelicans, white tip sharks, sting rays, sea turtles.

MONDAY *San Cristobal*

AM: Interpretation Center

San Cristóbal is the easternmost island in Galapagos; on its southwestern side is the own town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the providence of Galapagos. On Puerto Baquerizo Moreno is the Interpretation Center newly opened by the Galapagos National park in 1998, which is truly an extraordinary contribution to the information and education of the islands communities and the travelers; its 80% is focus in the anthropology of the Galapagos, the 20% is scientific.

Transfer to the Airport to take your flight to Mainland.