



## 6-DAY CRUISE- ISABELA & FERNANDINA

**Start Day: Friday**

**End Day: Wednesday**

**Islands to be visited:**

**- Baltra - North Seymour - Isabela - Fernandina - Santa Cruz**

The Galapagos Hotspot, a fiery crucible that has given birth to the most beautiful archipelago the world has ever seen. Born from the molten entrails of the earth, and separated thousands of miles from civilization, these Islands were the perfect laboratory for life to flourish and create a small piece of paradise on earth.

On this 6-day cruise we sail to the western part of the archipelago, a land filled with volcanic craters, wild and untamed, where pristine beaches and giant volcanoes await you.

Feel humbled at the sight of the giant caldera of the Sierra Negra Volcano and its amazing lava walls, that rise over 6 feet from the ground. Be witness to the uncontrollable force of the lava rivers that have formed this amazing island.

Discover idyllic beaches, where life has taken over lava fields and where animals coexist in perfect harmony, on the journey of a lifetime to the islands that led Darwin to understand the origin of species.

## Day 1 FRIDAY

*Arrival and first visit to the Islands.*

### **AM: Baltra Island**

Our first stop is to Baltra Island, also known as South Seymour (named after Lord Hugh Seymour). Located in the hearth of the archipelago, Baltra serves as the main airport to the islands and it will be our first stop before our journey.

Upon arrival, we clear the Galapagos National Park checkpoint. Customs agents check passports and the transit control card, after check-in, we enter the islands (If you have not previously paid your Galapagos entrance fee you will be asked to pay on spot, payments are cash only: \$100 USD for adults and \$50 USD for children under 12 years of age. Please consult rates and conditions before your departure since rates may change without notice from the Galapagos authorities.)

We are welcomed by our naturalist guide and staff at airport's exit, please remember to collect your luggage from the belt.

Next we take a short coach ride to the Seymour dock to board the Pangas (this is how the locals commonly refer to dinghies) to the yacht where crew members await to welcome you with a cold drink and show you your cabins.

A briefing is given about the ship's facilities and a safety drill is conducted by your cruise concierge. Lunch is served afterwards and we start navigating to North Seymour island.

### **PM: North Seymour Island**

**Landing type: Dry landing,**

**Possible activities: Walking, comfortable walking shoes are recommended, snorkeling, panga ride.**

Our first visit is the islet of North Seymour, a 1.9 square kilometer (0.73 sq mi) islet that is home of one of the largest colonies of frigate birds in Galapagos. A magnificent bird that is easily recognizable by its red pouch that swells during mating season, and one of Galapagos most iconic birds. The island is also home to other unique birds like blue footed boobies and swallow-tailed gulls that can usually be seen nesting in, or perching over, the bushy vegetation.

We return to the yacht and prepare to set sail for our next destination.

Meals included: Lunch & Dinner

## Day 2 SATURDAY

*Isabela and Fernandina are the youngest islands on the archipelago and a constant reminder of how life can flourish even in the most strenuous conditions.*

### **AM: Isabela Island - Vicente Roca Point**

**Landing type: No landing,**

**Possible activities: Snorkeling, panga ride, aquatic activities during this visit.**

The Island of Isabela is the largest of the archipelago and it is shaped like a giant seahorse when seen from the air. It is also home to a great number of endemic species, including reptiles and marine birds.

The Galapagos marine reserve is the second largest in the world and one of the richest. Today, we discover its vast treasures by snorkeling in its waters. Our first snorkeling point will be Vicente Roca Point, here schools of fish gather close to the rocky formations where they can find shelter from predators.

After exploring the underwater world surrounding us, we return to the ship and prepare for our afternoon excursion.

### **PM: Fernandina Island- Espinosa Point**

**Landing type: Dry landing.**

**Possible activities: Hiking, over slippery rock, good shoes are required.**

Fernandina is the youngest island of the archipelago and the closest one to the hotspot that gave birth to the Enchanted Islands. This also makes Fernandina the island with most volcanic activity in the archipelago. The continuous eruptions on the island have formed pathways of lava that extend all over Fernandina. This has left very little space for fertile ground. Yet, to our amazement, these very few fertile spaces have been colonized by cacti and small bushes, converting this desolated terrain into a forest filled with life. Large colonies of iguanas take advantage of the warm lava fields and abundance of algae on the coast to feed and breed.

Punta Espinosa is also the home of the flightless cormorant, another unique endemic species in the Galapagos islands. This is the only type of Cormorant that has lost its ability to fly; its wings have been atrophied and their bodies have perfectly adapted to dive and fish in these rich waters.

We return to the ship and have some time to say goodbye to this amazing sight, while taking many photos of the amazing sunset closing the day.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## Day 3 SUNDAY

*Northern Isabela, discover the coves and bays that served as lairs for pirates and whalers.*

### **AM: Isabela Island - Tagus Cove**

**Landing type: Dry landing.**

**Possible activities: Hiking, snorkeling, panga ride.**

Tagus cove, that was the perfect hideout for pirates and buccaneers back in the 17th century, also hosted one of the most renowned visitors of the archipelago, Charles Darwin. During its journey to the “Encantadas”, the Beagle spent some time anchored in Tagus Cove. Follow your guide on an exciting excursion of the Island and share Darwin’s journey of discovery in this lost paradise.

After disembarking we take the trail to Darwin’s lake. This impressive saltwater lake sits over an eroded tuff cone and the concentration of minerals doubles the salinity of the oceanic waters that surround the island. The path leads to the lookout point from where we have wonderful views of the lake, a great photo op.

Afterwards, we can enjoy some snorkeling at the cove. The calm waters of Tagus are the perfect place to enjoy the sight of colorful fishes, marine turtles and rays that glide over the seabed in perfect harmony. Look out for the Galapagos penguins.

### **PM: Isabela Island - Urbina Bay**

**Landing type: Wet landing.**

**Possible activities: Hike (two available trails – short: 1 km/0.6 mi or Long: 3 km/1.9mi), snorkeling, dinghy ride.**

Urbina bay is proof of the unpredictable and strong force of nature. In 1954, a sudden uplift raised the seabed 16 ft. high, expanding the coast half a mile. This event that shook the foundations of the island was so sudden that many animals were caught in the newly formed coast line.

During our hike, we will witness the remains of corals and shells of the animals that didn’t have enough time to escape from this cataclysmic event. While hiking we look for colorful land iguanas and Galapagos tortoises roaming close to the visitor’s trails.

Return to the yacht for a well-deserved night’s rest.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## Day 4 MONDAY

*There are many unique species in the Galapagos, but none as cute as the tiny Galapagos Penguin.*

### **AM: Isabela Island - Elizabeth Bay**

**Landing type: No Landing.**

**Possible activities: Panga ride.**

We start the day visiting Elizabeth bay. Surrounded by a large group of islets, this bay is considered to be the largest nesting area for the Galapagos Penguin (the only species of penguin that lives north of the equatorial line). We board our dinghies and ride close to the different islets looking closely to observe these cute birds up close.

A narrow cove takes us to a small bay where mangrove trees have created a beautiful forest that serves as refuge for marine birds and colorful fishes, rays and green marine turtles. Water in this mangrove forest is so clear that we are able to spot them from the comfort of our panga.

We return to our yacht and prepare for the next excursion.

### **PM: Isabela Island- Moreno Point**

**Landing type: Dry landing.**

**Possible activities: Hiking, good shoes are needed, snorkeling, dinghy ride.**

In the afternoon we visit Punta Moreno. A safe-haven for marine birds, Moreno Point presents the perfect opportunity to spot ducks, waders, stilts, blue-winged teals, moorhens (common gallinules), and sometimes flamingos. Some of which can be found feeding in the small ponds that have been formed by the erosion of the basaltic lava terrain creating a rich ecosystem.

This walk is over lava fields with uneven terrain, so good shoes are needed. We return to our yacht and prepare for the next excursion.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## Day 5 TUESDAY

*The Sierra Negra volcano possesses one of the largest volcanic craters in the world. We will be witness to the untamed power of nature and the breathtaking dry lava rivers in its interior.*

### **AM: Isabela Island- Sierra Negra Volcano**

**Landing type: Dry Landing.**

**Possible activities: Hiking.**

Our journey takes us to the small town of Puerto Villamil; we dock here and begin our excursion to the rim of the volcano. A short coach ride takes us to the base of Sierra Negra volcano to start our hike to the crater rim. A lookout point on the edge of the rim will reveal an amazing view of the cauldron and its interior. This overwhelming sight unveils the uncontrollable force of nature that has formed enormous lava walls that rise over 6 feet above the ground and frozen lava rivers that once flowed in the interior of the volcano, all giving life to this sleeping giant.

In the afternoon, we visit the wetlands, an ecosystem that strongly contrasts with the deserted rim of the volcano.

### **PM: Isabela Island- Wetlands & The Wall of Tears**

**Landing type: Dry Landing.**

**Possible activities: Hiking.**

Small lagoons, mangrove trees, and swamps have formed this unique and amazing ecosystem. Home of a large variety of birds, the wetlands are considered a sanctuary for many endangered species and one of the best places to admire the different varieties of birds that inhabit the island. Among them we find greater flamingos, common stilts, whimbrels, white-cheeked pintails, and gallinules.

We continue later to the Wall of Tears. This structure is testimony of the penal colony that was established on Isabela. The extreme conditions and severe punishments in which the felons faced gave this grim wall its name. Today only a portion of the wall is still standing.

We say goodbye to the small town of Villamil and we continue our cruise to the next destination.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## Day 6 WEDNESDAY

*Charles Darwin's scientific expedition inspired many others to study and comprehend the complexity of these ecosystems. In this visit we will learn more about their research and efforts to preserve this unique ecosystem.*

### **AM: Santa Cruz Island - Charles Darwin Research Station-Baltra Airport**

**Landing type: Dry Landing.**

**Possible activities: Walking.**

The Charles Darwin research station was established in 1964 in order to provide the scientific community with resources to conduct their research and support the conservation efforts carried out by scientists from all over the world.

One of the most iconic conservation programs carried out by the Charles Darwin Foundation is the breeding and care of the Galapagos tortoises. We visit them in all their stages, from small eggs and hatchlings that can fit in the palm of your hand, to the 400 pound gentle giants that gave its name to the islands.

We take an overland transfer by coach to Baltra Island Airport in order to take our flight back to mainland Quito or Guayaquil and then home.

At the airport, the guide and a member of the crew will assist you during the check-in process and accompany you to the security gates, they will say goodbye and wish you a safe trip back home. Please remember to show your transit control card when requested.

Meals included: Breakfast.