

ITINERARY EAST

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS

SATURDAY - SATURDAY



DAY 1 – SATURDAY

MORNING FLIGHT TO BALTRA & BLACK TURTLE COVE

PM: After arriving at Baltra airport, we will be greeted by our naturalist guide to then board the M/Y WildAid's Passion and have lunch. Following our meal, we will navigate a short distance to Black Turtle Cove, a large mangrove lagoon on the northern coast of Santa Cruz Island. Pelicans and herons roost on the branches, while marine dwellers such as green sea turtles and golden rays may cruise right next to the *panga* as it makes its way through the mangroves.

The day ends with dinner and a briefing for the next day's activities on board the yacht.

DAY 2 - SUNDAY

DARWIN BAY & EL BARRANCO



AM: We travel to Genovesa Island and for a wet landing on Darwin Bay, a unique site with a beautiful beach, lined with red mangroves and soft-haired prickly pear cacti, where red-footed boobies and great frigatebirds perch tamely.

PM: After a dry landing at El Barranco, we will climb to the edge of a cliff where frigatebirds, masked boobies, and red-footed boobies make their nests. The trail will take us to the inner part of the island, populated by *palo santo* trees and cacti. We will be seeking out the impressive red-billed tropicbird amidst Galapagos storm petrels and the endemic short-eared owl.

DAY 3 - MONDAY

BARTOLOME AND CHINESE HAT

AM: We will have a dry landing on Bartolome, followed by a mild climb up a set of wooden steps to reach the summit of a spatter cone for a breathtaking panorama of the island's iconic Pinnacle Rock and views of neighboring Santiago, and other central islands in the distance. Afterward, we will visit the white sand beach used as a nesting site by sea turtles, followed by snorkeling in the waters of Bartolome Island, where it is not unusual to spot Galapagos penguins.

PM: Less than a quarter of one square kilometer in size, this island gets its name from being shaped like a Chinese hat. The hat shape is best appreciated from the north side. Lava formations can be seen on the western side of

the island, formed under the sea and later raised upward, making it possible to observe coral heads on the lava. Be amazed by the landscapes covered by sea lions' colonies, marine iguanas, and Galapagos penguins.

DAY 4 - TUESDAY

RABIDA & DRAGON HILL



AM: Wet landing onto Rabida's deep-red beaches to explore the red island's fascinating interior and saltwater lagoon, where flamingos are usually present. Darwin's finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, and yellow warblers feed off the vegetation. Given the right time of the year, we may see brown pelicans nesting on salt bushes that fringe the beach.

PM: In the afternoon, we navigate a short distance to Cerro Dragon on Santa Cruz's northwestern shore with a dry landing to visit a saltwater lagoon, home to greater flamingos, black-necked stilts, and white-cheeked pintails. Further inland we will find a fantastic land iguana nesting site.

DAY 5 - WEDNESDAY

SANTA CRUZ HIGHLANDS & DARWIN RESEARCH STATION

AM: We will spend this day visiting Santa Cruz Island's most famous highlights. We will have a dry landing at the dock of Puerto Ayora to then board our transportation and head to the island's highlands. This area, in contrast to the coastal region, has lush vegetation and forest due to the humidity in the higher regions.

We will visit one of the ranches of the area where it is possible to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat. As these animals migrate from the coastal area to the highlands and back, the chosen ranch will depend on the presence of the tortoises since they roam free and change locations. This is also a good place to see the ground finch of the Island, which populates these forests where it is also possible to see the yellow warbler.

PM: We will return to the ship for lunch and to freshen up to then head back to Puerto Ayora for our second visit of the day, the Charles Darwin Research Station. Here, we will see tortoises from different islands. The animals are found in large semi natural pens for their protection, but also to ensure an easy view for the visitors.

The pens are divided according to four different stages: eggs, neonates, juveniles (held here until they are mature enough to be "repatriated"), and adults.

DAY 6 - THURSDAY

PLAZA SUR & SANTA FE ISLAND



AM: We will have a dry landing on one of the oldest docks of the archipelago on colorful Plaza Sur, home to vibrant green prickly pears, deep red Sesuvium, and coppery-orange land iguanas. Impressive seaward cliffs make the perfect perching spot for a variety of coastal birds. This is also a great place to observe the sea lion adult and pups swimming along the shores.

PM: After a wet landing on Santa Fe, we will encounter a white beach where sea lions are usually resting. We will be looking for the endemic species of land iguana, which is larger with a deeper shade of yellow than land iguanas on other islands. The biggest prickly pear cacti in the Galapagos are also found here.

DAY 7 - FRIDAY

GARDNER BAY & PUNTA SUAREZ

AM: Following a wet landing, we will spend the morning in Española Island's Gardner Bay, an outstanding beach with sea lions, marine iguanas, and the bold Española mockingbird. Close to Española, there is a beautiful array of islets ideal for observing marine life. While snorkeling at one of these locations, we will come face to face with the marine reserve's endemic species including the playful sea lions.

PM: After this visit, we will head to Punta Suarez, one of the most popular landing sites in Galapagos. The highlights include: sea lions near the landing place (sometimes seen body-surfing in the large breakers) large marine iguanas, with red-colored males in the breeding season, oystercatchers, blue-footed and masked boobies, Galapagos hawks, Galapagos doves, swallow-tailed gulls, red-billed tropicbirds, and three species endemic to Española: the waved albatross (present only from April to December), the Española mockingbird, and the Española lava lizard. The trail ends in *El Soplador*, a blowhole that sprays water some 25 meters (75 feet) into the air.

DAY 8 – SATURDAY

TWIN CRATERS & DEPARTURE

AM: This is our last day on the islands. After breakfast we will disembark in Puerto Ayora to take our transport to the Baltra airport, making a short stop to visit the Twin Craters. The *Gemelos* are two deep craters located to the side of the road that leads from Puerto Ayora to the other side of the island in order to arrive to the airport. These huge holes were most likely created in a volcanic explosion or by magma chambers having collapsed underneath the island's surface. This is also an excellent place to see the Galapagos hawk and the Santa Cruz barn owl. The surrounding forests are also filled with birds such as the vermilion flycatcher and the yellow warbler.

After this visit, we will continue our way to the Baltra airport for the departing flight to mainland Ecuador.