

ITINERARY E2

4 DAYS / 3 NIGHTS



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TOURS

Mainland Ecuador &
Galápagos Islands

WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY



DAY 1 - WEDNESDAY

SANTA CRUZ HIGHLANDS & DARWIN RESEARCH STATION

After arriving at Baltra airport, we will be greeted by our personnel and have a short transfer to the Itabaca channel, where we will board a ferry to reach Santa Cruz Island, where another transport will take us to Puerto Ayora, where the M/Y Passion is anchored. Once in Puerto Ayora, we will board the yacht and have time for a short snack, before departing for our first visit to the islands, 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. Afterward, we will head back to Puerto Ayora, where we will have some time to explore the town and shops by ourselves (this is the only chance of shopping during on this itinerary) before boarding the M/Y Passion at around 5:00 p.m.

Once on board, the crew and captain will welcome us, have a short security drill and enjoy dinner and the briefing for the next day's activities.

DAY 2 - 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 3 - 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 4 – 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 craters 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.