

The Galapagos Islands

DAY BY DAY

ITINERARY C+D

8 days – 7 nights

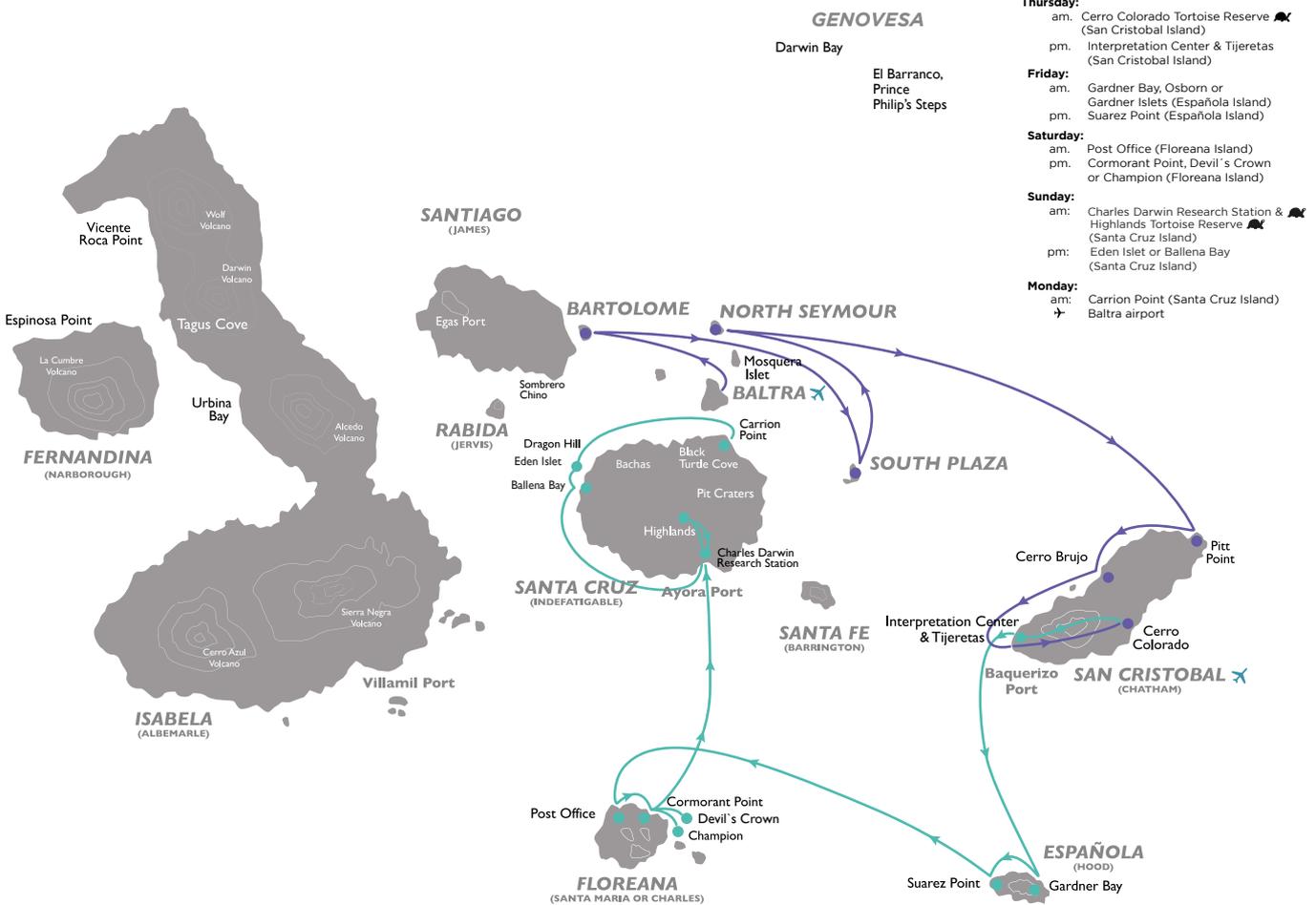
Our Galapagos itineraries offer unforgettable experiences, with our weekly departures allowing you to experience 3, 4, 7, and up to 14 nights tours including: full board, two daily guided excursions with optional activities such as snorkeling, kayaking, dinghy rides and our new feature daily diving tours for license-holding divers.



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8 Days / 7 Nights



- Monday:**
→ Baltra Airport
pm. Bartolome Island
- Tuesday:**
am. South Plaza Island
pm. North Seymour Island
- Wednesday:**
am. Pitt Point & Islet (San Cristobal Island)
pm. Cerro Brujo (San Cristobal Island)
- Thursday:**
am. Cerro Colorado Tortoise Reserve (San Cristobal Island)
pm. Interpretation Center & Tijeretas (San Cristobal Island)
- Friday:**
am. Gardner Bay, Osborn or Gardner Islets (Española Island)
pm. Suarez Point (Española Island)
- Saturday:**
am. Post Office (Floreana Island)
pm. Cormorant Point, Devil's Crown or Champion (Floreana Island)
- Sunday:**
am. Charles Darwin Research Station & Highlands Tortoise Reserve (Santa Cruz Island)
pm. Edén Islet or Ballena Bay (Santa Cruz Island)
- Monday:**
am. Carrion Point (Santa Cruz Island)
→ Baltra airport



DAY 1 - MONDAY
am – Baltra Airport

Departure from Quito or Guayaquil to Baltra Island (2 ½-hour flight). Arriving in the Galapagos, passengers are picked up at the airport by our natural guides and taken to a ten-minute bus drive to the pier to board the M/V Galapagos Legend.



pm – Bartolome Island

Dry or wet landing. We discover a fascinating landscape formed by different volcanic parasitic cones —lava bombs, spatter, cinder cones — that resembles the moon. Going up to the summit there will be an impressive views of the surrounding islands, including the eroded tuff cone Pinnacle Rock. We also encounter marine iguanas, lava lizards, and blue-footed boobies.

Beach time is a great opportunity to do snorkeling and see the famous Galapagos Penguins, sea turtles and White-tipped Reef Sharks among a great variety of colorful fish. For many visitors, this may turn out to be the best snorkeling experience. Crystal clear water is the perfect spot to appreciate the incredible marine life it has to offer.

Due to its geographical location, the lack of vegetation is immediately noticeable however, there are pioneer plants including the endemic *Tiquilia nesiotica* and *Chamaesyce* (known as sand mat or spurge in English), lava cactus, and *Scalesia* bushes.

Difficulty level: intermediate

Type of terrain: trail made of 372 steps.

Duration: 1 ½-hour walk / 1-hour snorkeling



DAY 2 - TUESDAY
am – South Plaza Islet

Dry landing. There are two Plaza Islets (north and south) located east of Santa Cruz Island. On the northern part of the Islet, visitors begin the journey along an impressive cactus forest where colorful yellow and red land iguanas live, the population number is around 300 animals; during the dry season they survive on fruits and flowers of the opuntia cacti. A peculiar thing to see in South Plaza is the hybrid iguana (sea and land). When reaching the highest point, tropicbirds can be seen. During the dry season (June – January) the usually greenish and yellowish vegetation change of color creating a bright red landscape (sesuviumedmonstonei plant).

Difficulty level: intermediate

Type of terrain: rocky

Duration: 2-hour walk



pm –North Seymour Island

Dry landing. Off of Baltra Island and not far from Santa Cruz, North Seymour is located.

This landmass was formed by a series of underwater volcanic eruptions, which deposited layers of lava on the ocean floor. An approximately two-hour walk amidst large nesting colonies of blue-footed boobies, magnificent and great frigate birds, and swallow-tailed gulls for an in depth encounter with sea bird breeding cycles and sea lions. You will also encounter land iguanas, and on a lucky day, you might even come across the endemic Galapagos Snake.

Difficulty level: intermediate

Type of terrain: rocky

Duration: 2-hour walk, 30 minutes snorkeling





DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY
am – Pitt Point & Islet (San Cristobal Island)

Wet landing followed by a high-intensity hike on rocky terrain. The trail includes a 90 meters long, olivine beach and a path that climbs to the top of a volcanic tuff, through several magnificent viewpoints. This is probably the only site where the three booby species of the Galapagos can be seen together, as well as, two species of frigate birds and a sea lion colony. It is also excellent for dinghy rides and snorkeling, where a good range of sea birds can be observed.

Difficulty level: difficult
Type of terrain: rocky
Duration: 2½-hour walk / 40-minutes snorkeling or kayaking



pm – Cerro Brujo (San Cristobal Island)

Wet landing. Cerro Brujo is an eroding tuff cone that at several locations is composed of AA lava formations and a beautiful white sandy beach, great for snorkeling and sunbathing. There is a lagoon visit where migratory bird species can be seen: Black-necked Stilts, Ruddy Turnstones, Whimbrels, other sandpiper species and White-cheeked Pintails. Cerro Brujo offers beautiful views of Kicker Rock, the southern part of San Cristobal and the adjacent coast.

Difficulty level: easy
Type of terrain: sandy
Duration: 1-hour walk / 1-hour snorkeling



DAY 4 - THURSDAY
am – Cerro Colorado Tortoise Reserve (San Cristobal Island)

Dry landing in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. Passengers visit the San Cristobal Giant Tortoise Breeding Center to learn about the National Park's conservation programs. Enjoy a beautiful landscape on the way to the Reserve. Passengers will also have the opportunity to visit the village's port, have a drink or shop for arts and crafts and other souvenirs.

Difficulty level: intermediate
Type of Terrain: sandy
Duration: 40-minute bus drive to the Reserve / 1-hour visit



pm – Interpretation Center & Tijeretas Hill (San Cristobal Island)

Dry landing in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of the Galapagos Islands. Passengers visit the Interpretation Center, an excellent place to learn about islands' history in The Museum of Natural History which displays information about the volcanic origins of the islands, their remoteness from the continent, ocean currents, climate, the arrival of the different species and their colonization, among other points of interest. The human history is also showcased, chronologically narrating the most significant events related to the discovery and the island's colonization.

Difficulty level: easy /intermediate
Type of terrain: flat/stairs
Duration: 1-hour visit / 1-hour walk

Tijeretas Hill involves a high-intensity walk amidst beautiful landscapes and a magnificent view at the foot of a frigate bird nesting colony.

Difficulty level: difficult
Type of terrain: Rocky
Duration: 1-hour visit





DAY 5 - FRIDAY
am – Gardner Bay, Gardner & Osborn islets (Espanola Island)

Wet landing on a beautiful white coral sandy beach guarded by a colony of sea lions. There are no trails, so we stay along the shore where we can spot Galapagos hawks, American Oystercatchers, Galapagos Ground Doves, Hood mockingbirds, Yellow Warblers, lava lizards, marine iguanas, and three species of Darwin's finches: a subspecies of the Large Cactus Finch, which is similar to the large ground finch, the Small Ground Finch (*Geospiza fuliginosa*) and the Warbler Finch (*Certhidea Olivacea*), another endemic subspecies. Swimming and snorkeling offer a great variety of the Galapagos' marine wildlife: king angelfish, Creole fish, damsel fish, parrotfish, manta rays, and white-tipped reef sharks.

Difficulty level: easy
Type of terrain: sandy
Duration: 1-hour walk / 1-hour snorkeling



pm – Suarez Point (Espanola Island)

Dry landing. An island of geological interest, we explore volcanic formations and a riveting wildlife: large sea lion colonies and seabirds including the Espanola mockingbird, Nazca Boobies, and the spectacular Red-billed Tropicbird. You will also encounter marine iguanas, lava lizards, and the colorful Sally Lightfoot Crabs.

A somewhat lengthy hike will bring you among Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies, right up to nesting grounds that sometimes overlap the trail. Other birding favorites include Galapagos Dove, Galapagos Hawk, Swallow-tailed Gulls and the world's largest colony of Waved Albatross, an unequivocal highlight during mating season (May-December).

Admire the island's dramatic backdrop, featuring the famous "Soplador", a seaward blowhole that shoots up water up to 23 m (75 ft) in the air.

Difficulty level: difficult
Type of terrain: rocky
Duration: 2 ½-hour walk



DAY 6 - SATURDAY
am – Post Office (Floreana Island)

Wet landing. Located on the north side of Floreana, the bay was named because in 1793 Captain James Colnett installed a wooden barrel which served as an informal post office for sailors passing through, who would take letters with them back to their destinations. Today, visitors continue the tradition by placing unstamped postcards inside the barrel, hoping that some other traveler, going to the letter destination, will take it back for free. The chances are that the letter posted can take a long time to arrive at its destination. However, there have been cases where it has arrived before the sender.

We may also encounter Darwin's finches, Yellow Warbler and Lava Lizards. Great snorkeling opportunities with Green Pacific Sea Turtles. As well, the island is best known for its endemic vegetation: *Scalasia villosa*, *Lecocarpus Pinnatifidus*, and the Galapagos Milkwort. Snorkelers can practice on the main beach among playful sea lions.

Difficulty level: easy
Type of terrain: sandy
Duration: 30-minutes walk / 1-hour snorkeling



pm – Cormorant Point / Devil's Crown / Champion (Floreana Island)

Wet landing, on an olivine green, sanded beach. We hike from the black mangrove beds to a brackish lagoon, which usually holds one of the largest flamingo populations in the Galapagos. This island features some endemic plants such as *Scalasia villosa*, white and black mangrove, and holy stick. The trail continues to a beautiful white sandy beach, one of the most important nesting sites of Green Pacific Sea Turtles. It is important to avoid walking in the water due to the Sting Rays that may be hiding in the sand, which can be dangerous if accidentally stepped on. From the beach, one can spot sea turtles, blue-footed boobies plunging into the water, and small reef sharks floating along the shoreline in the search for food.

This coral-sand beach marks the end of our trail, and we head back to the olivine beach we landed on, to swim or snorkel amongst sea turtles, reef fish, sea lions and, on a good day, white-tipped reef sharks. A small colony of penguins resides on Floreana and can sometimes be observed as well.

Difficulty level: easy
Type of terrain: sandy & flat
Duration: 1-hour walk / 1-hour snorkeling





DAY 7 - SUNDAY

am – Charles Darwin Research Station & Fausto Llerena Breeding Center (Santa Cruz Island)

Dry landing. We visit the Station where the Galapagos giant tortoise breeding program takes place as part of our efforts to preserve the fragile Galapagos environment and where the famous Lonesome George (the last surviving specimen of his species) lived for decades. Admire a prickly-pear cactus forest and variety Darwin's finches and other land birds. The Darwin Station also works providing environmental education to the communities, schools, and tourists visiting the Galapagos Islands. You will also have some free time to visit the town and shop for souvenirs.

Difficulty level: intermediate

Type of terrain: flat

Duration: 1 ½-hour visit

am – Highlands Tortoise Reserve (Santa Cruz Island)

Dry landing. In the mountains of Galapagos is possible to admire different kind of birds, such as: tree and ground finches, vermilion flycatchers, paint-billed crakes, yellow warblers, and cattle egrets (usually standing on the tortoises' shell). The journey to the reserve offers great opportunities to see the contrasts that the island offers in reference to the variety of ecosystems. The road goes from the coast through the agricultural zone and straight up to the dense humid forests. Often, Galapagos Giant Tortoises are also seen on the way, wandering through pastures in the paddocks. This spot is a birdwatchers' haven, since almost every land bird present on the island lives or migrates here.

Difficulty level: easy

Type of terrain: flat & muddy (depending on season)

Duration: 45-minute drive / 1 ½-hour walk



pm – Ballena Bay / Eden Islet (Santa Cruz)

Wet landing. Ballena (Whale) Bay is a beautiful green sand cove at the base of Dragon Hill on the west coast of Santa Cruz Island. The beach contains a large amount of olivine crystals of volcanic origin. The crystals were formed when the magma was still underground. The content is magnesium, iron and silica. A small population of tortoises from Pinzón Island lived at the site, but were probably taken by whalers or previous inhabitants. Opportunity to see marine iguanas and sea birds followed by snorkeling.

Difficulty level: intermediate

Type of terrain: rocky

Duration: 1 hour walk / 1 hour snorkeling



DAY 8 - MONDAY

am – Carrion Point (Santa Cruz Island)

Dinghy ride at the entry of the Itabaca Channel in a lagoon with turquoise water, where we can observe sharks, blue-footed boobies, and different kinds of fish.

Difficulty level: easy

Type of terrain: none

Duration: 1-hour dinghy ride



pm – Baltra Airport

After the visit, passengers will be transferred to the airport for their return flight to Guayaquil or Quito.