

ITINERARY B2

8Days/ 7Nights

DAY 1/ Fri: BALTRA BACHAS

AM: Flight to Galapagos from Quito Airport.

The flight from Quito to the Galapagos is approximately 2 ½ hours on a Boeing 727. Upon arrival at Baltra travelers pass through an airport inspection point to insure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands and to pay the park entrance fee of \$100 (unless prepaid), and \$10 for the INGALA card which is an identity card that you need . Guides will meet you, collect your luggage, and escort you on the short bus ride to the harbor. Motorized rafts, called 'Pangas' will transport you to the M/C ANAHI and our crew will welcome you onboard. After departure and lunch, the first island visit is made.

PM: Bachas Beach, Santa Cruz Island

These two small beaches are found to the West of Turtle Cove. Their sand is made of decomposed coral, which makes it white and soft, making it a favorite nesting site for sea turtles. Behind one of the beaches there is a small brackish water lagoon, where occasionally is possible to observe flamingos and other coastal birds, such as black-necked stilts and whimbrels. The other beach is longer, but it has two old barges that were abandoned during the Second World War, when the USA used Baltra Island as a strategical point to protect the Panama Channel.

DAY 2/ Sat: GENOVESA ISLAND

AM: Darwin Bay

This bay has its origin when the crater of this island collapsed below sea level. The wet landing is on a beautiful white coral sandy beach. This is a favorite island for birdwatchers: red footed-booby, masked boobies, wandering tattlers, lava gulls, whimbrels, yellow-crowned, and black-crowned lava herons, and yellow warblers can be seen in the area.

Continuing on the trail, visitors climb gradually to the edge of the cliff seeing Red-Foots nesting in the Mangrove trees below. Bird watching includes sightings of sharp-beaked finches, large cactus and ground finches, Galapagos doves, and swallow-tailed gulls. Reaching the end the trail at the cliff's edge offers an incredible view of the island and the many birds living there.

PM: El Barranco

The visitor site of El Barranco is located in the southern part of Darwin Bay on Genovesa Island. The trail is on volcanic rock that has a length of 1.5 km and the tour can be done in about 2 hours. The youngest area of the island, from a geological point of view, lies in this area. The cliffs located in the south are composed of very fragile lava. The natural erosion that has occurred in these lava flows has become the ideal place for nesting Storm Petrels. You can see two species of petrels that nest in cavities and holes in the lava. One of its main predators is the short-eared owl. The red-footed booby nests only in the outer islands of the archipelago, Punta Pitt, Gardner (Floreana), Wolf, Darwin and Genovesa. Also present on this island is the masked booby. During the panga rides along the cliffs fur sea lions can be seen and several species of seabirds.

DAY 3/ Sun: SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

AM: Plazas

Plazas is located at the east of Santa Cruz Island, and forms part of two islands known as Islas Plazas. Despite its small size, some of the most interesting and outstanding species of the Galapagos are found here. The Plazas land iguanas are smaller than its relatives found at other islands. Throughout the island are several hybrid iguanas, a result of crossing a male marine iguana and a female land iguana, they are unique, recognizable at first glance by their black/gray color, with a land iguana's crest, but face and tail of the marine iguana. The big population of iguanas is due to the presence of tunas, their favorite food. Swallow tailed gulls nesting in the rugged cliffs are seen along with other sea birds as: audubon shearwaters, red-billed tropicbirds, frigate birds, and brown pelicans.

PM: Santa Fe

Located in the southeastern part of the Galapagos, this island was formed from an uplift instead than a volcanic origin, this is why is mostly flat. There are some theories which assure this could be the oldest island in the Archipelago. Santa Fe is the home of a number of endemic species like the Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snake, Galapagos mockingbird, rice rats, and one of the two species of lands Iguanas of the islands. After disembarking in the beautiful and clear waters you will be in contact with one of the many sea lion colonies. Along the trail many salt bushes can be seen

as well giant Pickly pear cactus, gigantism is a characteristic of oceanic islands. There are great possibilities of snorkeling with playful sea lions and tropical fishes.

DAY 4/ Mon: SAN CRISTÓBAL ISLAND

AM: Pitt Point

This place is on the north of San Cristobal. Here there are endemic species such as lava lizards and red-footed boobies. The view is impressive when you walk up to the high part of the island.

You may be lucky to see the red footed booby - the least seen of the bunch. It's also the home of the Chatham mockingbird, only found here on San Cristobal Island.

PM: Kicker Rock

Also known as the Sleeping Lion because of its resemblance, it is located of the coast of San Cristobal. The remains of a lava cone eroded by the sea, the two vertical rocks rising 500 feet from the ocean form a small channel that is navigable by small boats. This Galapagos Islands natural monument has become a favorite sight for cruises due to the many tropical birds, frigates, and boobies that fill the surrounding air.

Beneath the sea the nearly crystal waters offer a brilliant show of colorful tropical fish and invertebrates.

Lobos Island

Isla Lobos is about an hour by boat from Port Baquerizo Moreno. The length of the trail is 850 meters and the estimated travel time is one hour. There is a small population of blue-footed boobies and common frigate birds nesting on this site. You can observe the two species of sea lions present in the archipelago. During the tour you go through a dry vegetation zone, substrate of volcanic rocks and a sandy area. During the panga tour brown pelicans and several species of shorebirds can be observed; although, snorkeling, it's common to see juvenile sea lions, manta rays and sea turtles.

DAY 5/Tues: SAN CRISTÓBAL ISLAND

AM: Giant tortoise breeding center

It is located in the South East of San Cristobal, to 22.4 km from Port Baquerizo Moreno. Access is by road, the bus ride lasts approximately 40 minutes.

*It is located in the vicinity of Cerro Colorado, from which it derives its name, which is one of the few places where you can see *Calandrinia galapagosa*, a plant endemic to San Cristobal in danger of extinction.*

*This Galapaguera has been built to improve the status of the population of the island tortoises, *Geochelone chatamensis*, in an environment with conditions similar to their natural state and thus promote the development of tourism in San Cristobal.*

The infrastructure has been integrated into a large corral of 1415m² and includes: a visitors' center (including an interpretation center, conference room, gift shop, food bar, bathrooms and administration office), a breeding center (includes an herpetology lab and growing pens), interpretive trails and two houses.

In San Cristóbal there were two populations of tortoises, one located in the Northeast, currently consisting of approximately 1,400 individuals and where the first specimens transferred to Cerro Colorado. The other was south of the island (in an area adjacent to the Cerro Colorado Galapaguera); it became extinct due to extraction by whalers in past centuries.

The natural population of tortoises from San Cristóbal (north of the island) is seriously threatened by introduced animals (mainly wild goats, rats and cats), which to date has been impossible to eradicate despite the continuing efforts in this direction.

PM. Visits Interpretation Center

This center of interpretation exhibits the interesting history of Galapagos Island. Here you can be informed about nature, species, the discovery and colonization of this magic archipelago.

Inaugurated in 1998 by the former president of Ecuador Dr. Jamil Mahuad, this place, that is one of the most interesting tourist attractions in Galapagos Island, has the role of maintaining and spreading the information related to the life of these paradisiac islands.

It offers permanent presentations in an open air theater that is surrounded by natural wonders and a showing room where audiovisual material is exhibited about the volcanic origins of the island and its development.

Tijeretas Hill

It is called Tijeretas because this is the name commonly known for the frigates. It is located within walking distance of Port Baquerizo Moreno. Close to this site operated La Predial, which was a fishing society and who was present on the island between 1952 and 1960. In one of the vistas there is American-made cannon dating from the Second World War which taken by the Ecuadorian Navy in the early 1970s for military exercises. Another vista offers a panoramic view of the north coast of the island from where one can see the Kicker Rock (León Dormido), Cerro Mundo and Cerro Tijeretas. At the third vista there is a statue of Charles Darwin in honor of his stay in San Cristobal. The upper vista is located on Cerro Tijereta.

DAY 6/ Wed: ESPAÑOLA ISLAND

AM: Punta Suarez

This rocky land spot sustains one of the most impressive and varied colonies of sea birds in the Galapagos. Along its southern shore, high cliffs rise up from the sea affording the visitor spectacular views of soaring birds and of the blow whole where water spouts up to 50-75 feet into the air according to the intensity of the surf.

PM: Gardner Bay

Located on the north-eastern coast of Hood, Gardner Bay provides an excellent beach for relaxing, swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, and the opportunity to observe sea lions. Here we can also observe sharks in the crystal clear ocean waters.

DAY 7/ Thur: FLOREANA ISLAND

AM: Cormorant Point

This site offers probably the best flamingo lagoon in the Galapagos; it is also one of the largest in the islands. It's situated between two tuff lava cones that give the area a special atmosphere. There are various species of shorebirds to observe besides flamingos; the most frequent are common stilts, white-checked pintail ducks, and other migratory birds. It is very interesting to see the two distinct beaches: "The Green Beach" (due to its high percentage of olivine crystals in the sand) and the "Flour Sand Beach" which is made up of coral.

Devil's Crown

The Devil's Crown, located just off Punta Cormorant, offers some of the best snorkeling in the Galapagos. In fact, the only way to see the Crown is by water; it is termed a Marine Visitor Site, and no landings are allowed. Sometimes referred to as Onslow Island, this is an almost completely submerged volcano, and erosion has transformed the cone into a series of jagged peaks; as a result, this site really does look like a devil's crown.

PM: Post office bay

Historically, this site is the location of a wooden barrel that was placed in the 18th century by the crew of a whaling ship. It has been used since this time by mariners and tourists as a post office. The idea is to carry letters or postcards to their destination by hand. Apart from being the Post Office Barrel, this site was the landing area for some of the first colonists. We will continue to the north of the island and will ascent to an elevated slope to enjoy a beautiful vista at the Baroness lookout. It is said that Baroness Eloisa Von Wagner loved this place and spent several hours watching the horizon. Within walking distance (30 m) are the ruins of what is known as her house. From this lookout, the landscape covers the coastline from the Enderby islet to Post Office Bay, as well as Cerro Pajas, the pool of flamingos and wide forest of Palo Santo.

DAY 8/ Frid: SANTA CRUZ ISLAND**AM: Charles Darwin Station**

Although the great majority of Galapagos visitors come here to observe and appreciate natural wonders, it is also interesting to learn how the protection and conservation of the islands are carried out. One of the main attractions are the National Park information center, the Van Straelen Exhibition Hall, the Breeding and Rearing Center for young tortoises, Lonesome George (turtle from Pinta), and adult Galapagos tortoises in captivity.

After the morning excursion you will be taken to the airport for your flight to the mainland.