

Route A 8 Tage Yolita II

Day 1 – Sunday

AM: Arrival at Baltra Airport:

Upon arrival at Baltra Airport, you will first pass through an airport inspection point where your TCT (Transit Control Card) will be checked and stamped (please keep this carefully with your passport as you will need to show it again when you leave Galapagos). Here you will also pay the Galapagos National Park entrance fee of USD 100 (unless it has been prepaid). To ensure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands, your luggage will be inspected as well. At the arrival hall a naturalist guide will meet you and escort you on a short bus ride to the harbor at Baltra. By dinghy you will be taken to the yacht.

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 it 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 strategically point to protect the Panama Channel.

Day 2 – Monday

AM: Darwin Bay, Genovesa Island

This bay has 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-boobies, masked boobies, wandering tattlers, lava gulls, whimbrels Yellow-crowned, black-crowned and 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, Genovesa Island

El Barranco is located at the southern part of Darwin Bay and it is also known as Prince Philip's Steps. Passengers will climb to a plateau that is part of the stretch of land that surrounds Darwin Bay on its eastern side. There is a big population of Masked boobies and Red-Footed boobies in the trees; Storm petrels and Short-eared Owls have found the ideal place for nesting in the lava flows.

Day 3 – Tuesday

AM: Bartolome Island

Bartolome Island is situated across Sullivan Bay. It has an altitude of 114 meters, from where we can observe one of the most beautiful sceneries of the Galapagos Islands such as: Volcanic cones, lunar-like craters, lava fields, and the famous Toba formed pinnacle eroded by the sea. There is very little vegetation on this island.

It has two breathtaking beaches where marine turtles exist and at the base of the pinnacle, as well as a very small colony of Galapagos penguins.

PM: The Sullivan Bay, Santiago Island

Santiago, also called James, or San Salvador Island, is located in the west central part of the Galapagos archipelago. It is the fourth largest island in the archipelago (following Isabela, Fernandina and Santa Cruz). Along with some of the large western volcanoes of Isabela and Fernandina, Santiago is also volcanically active, with many young flows and cones to be seen, particularly along the south, west, and east coasts. These may even be seen from the summit of Darwin Volcano and from space. A number of historic eruptions have been reported over the last 2 centuries. Santiago actually consists of two coalesced volcanoes: a typical shield volcano on the northwest end and a low, linear fissure volcano at the southeast end.

Day 4 – Wednesday

AM: Sierra Negra Volcano, Isabela Island

Isabela Island is the largest and one of the youngest islands in the Galapagos archipelago. We land in Puerto Villamil, which has the third largest population in Galapagos with approximately 3000 hab. We head up to the highlands from Puerto Villamil to Sierra Negra slope, and later we will do some hiking on uneven terrain until we arrive to the Sierra Negra volcano rim. Sierra Negra is the second widest crater in the world. From this viewpoint, you have fantastic sights to the 6 x 5 -mile-wide crater, the rest of the volcanoes, and Perry Isthmus, a 12 Km wide lava field. From here we can hike to Chico Volcano to watch the striking lava formations, examples of the geological occurrences that have created the Galapagos Islands.

PM: Wetlands and Tortoise breeding center, Isabela Island

This afternoon the wetlands close to Puerto Villamil village will be visited. There are a few lagoons, swamps and mangroves, primarily known for their migrant bird populations. One of the most attractive species to be seen is the flamingo.

You will also visit the Arnaldo Tupiza breeding center, where giant tortoises are reared in captivity on Isabela, to better protect the main sub specie of this island.

The Wall of Tears also known as 'Muro de las Lagrimas' is another point of interest; the wall was constructed of blocks of lava rock between 1946 and 1959, when Isabela was a penal colony.

Day 5 – Thursday

AM: Elizabeth Bay, Isabela

This is a marine visitor site, the excursion is carried out in a zodiac and so there is no landing point. Your zodiac ride starts with a visit to the Marielas islets where there is the largest and most important penguin colony in the Galapagos Islands. The excursion continues into the cove that is surrounded by red mangroves where you can admire their red roots and green leaves. It is here that you are able to observe sea turtles, flightless

cormorants, spotted eagle rays, golden rays, brown pelicans and sea lions. Frequently visitors have been able to see Galapagos Hawks soaring overhead whilst schools of Pompano and Dorado fish swim below.

PM: Tagus Cove, Isabela Island

Tagus Cove, a tour along the cliffs in a zodiac will give the visitors a good chance to see the Galapagos penguin, the flightless cormorant and other sea birds. From the landing dock it is about a 30 minute hike along the trail up to the top of the cliff from where you can view Darwin Lake, an uplifted ultra saline lake saltier than the sea. You can also see several volcanoes from this location. Look carefully at the graffiti on the surrounding cliffs of the cove, it has been written by pirates, whalers and buccaneers in past centuries.

Day 6 – Friday

AM: Urbina Bay, Isabela Island

Urbina Bay is located along the west coast of Isabela, between Elizabeth Bay and Tagus Cove. It is close to the base of the Alcedo Volcano. The coastline has undergone a major uplift in 1954, which caused the shore to expand three quarters of a mile out. Here you will be able to find corals, shells, and many other calcareous organisms exposed above water. Urbina Bay is home to large and colorful land iguanas and giant tortoises of the Alcedo Volcano population. A lot of Darwin finches can be seen as well.

PM: Punta Espinoza, Fernandina Island

Fernandina is the third largest island in the archipelago and has a single visitor site: Punta Espinoza, located at the northeastern tip of the island. Just across Tagus Cove, is a visitor's site where some of the unique species of Galapagos can be seen. Marine iguanas conglomerate in larger groups than in any other island. They bask around in the sand, swim near the shore and sometimes block the way at the landing dock. Among the unique species found here, is the Flightless Comorant. A bird that, due to the lack of predators, evolved differently; it's wings, tails and feet progressively adapted for swimming. To see these birds, is to witness evolution happening right in front of you. You can observe the flightless cormorants and penguins very closely.

Day 7 – Saturday

AM: Espumilla Beach, Santiago Island

Espumilla beach is located on a northern coast of Santiago Island in an area known as James Bay. During the last presence of the 'El Niño' phenomenon, one of the two lagoons in this site, underwent a process of sedimentation, thus causing the disappearance of a representative colony of flamingos. The main attractions are the Palo Santo forest and the marvelous marine iguanas. The beautiful brown colored sandy beach is an important site for nesting marine turtles. The snorkeling is great and you may see moray eels, sharks and octopi.

PM: Rabida

Rábida Island is unique because of the red color of the rocks and sand. The volcanic material in this island is very porous and external factors as rain, salt water and sea breeze have acted as an oxidizing agent.

A short walk along a trail lead us to a coastal lagoon behind the beach, which permits the observation of land birds, such as finches, doves, yellow warblers and mocking birds. At the

lagoon there is a colony of flamingos. The beach is often full with sea lions, and there are good snorkeling opportunities.

Day 8 – Sunday

AM: Daphne Major

Daphne Major is a volcanic island just north of Santa Cruz Island and just west of Baltra Island. It consists of a tuff crater rising 120 m. above the sea. An intensive study of Darwin's finches has taken place here by the biologists Peter and Rosemary Grant. Their results have been supporting strongly Darwin's theory of evolution. We are not allowed onto the island. Daphne offers a big variety of other birds including Galápagos Martins, Blue-footed Booby, Nazca Booby, Short-eared Owls, Red-billed Tropicbirds and Magnificent Frigate birds.

Transfer to Baltra airport for your flight back to Guayaquil or Quito.