oceanSpray

The Ultimate Galapagos Experience

6Days/5Nights "A"

Itinerary

2016

6 Days / 5 Nights "A"
Ocean Spray
Itinerary Outline

Saturday
AM: Baltra Arrival and Transfer
PM: Chinese Hat

Sunday
AM: Isabela – Vicente Roca Point
PM: Fernandina – Espinosa Point

Monday
AM: Isabela – Tagus Cove
PM: Isabela – Urbina Bay

Tuesday
AM: Isabela – Elizabeth Bay
PM: Isabela – Moreno Point

Wednesday
AM: Santa Cruz – Charles Darwin Station
PM: Santa Cruz – Twin Craters (Los Gemelos)

Thursday
AM: South Plaza
PM: Transfer to Baltra Airport

Terms to Know

Landings – Landings are how you arrive to the visitor sites. Each site is visited by dinghy, also known as zodiac or panga.

Panga – Panga is the Spanish term for dinghy or zodiac. You will hear this word often.

Dry Landing –Upon arrival to the visitor site you will not have to enter the water when exiting the zodiac or dinghy.

Wet Landing – Upon arrival to the visitor site you will exit the dinghy by entering the water first, then walking ashore.

No Landing – There will be no landing because activity will consist of panga ride or snorkeling.

Dinghy Ride – The dinghy ride is a simple ride on the water around the visitor area. This is done when there is no landing permitted or to get a better view of nearby wildlife or landscapes.

Possible Activities – All activities are to be ultimately decided by the guide considering weather, sea conditions, and other factors. The activities listed in all itineraries are the final decision made by the Galapagos National Park officials with the best interest of the islands in mind. These cannot be altered in any way.

Day 1 (Saturday) – Arrival and Chinese Hat

ARRIVAL TO BALTRA ISLAND (GALAPAGOS)

Assistance will be provided upon your arrival by An Ocean Spray representative after passing through immigration and baggage claim. When ready, you will be transferred to the yacht. You will then be shown to your cabin where you will have some time to settle in before the welcome briefing and lunch.

PM: Chinese Hat

Chinese Hat: This small island is located in the central area of Galapagos, just of the south eastern tip of Santiago Island. It is named after its unique cone hat looking shape formed from volcanic activity many years ago. The visit offers rare, up close viewing of Galapagos wildlife and well preserved remnants of fragile volcanic rock that can't be found in such a unique condition anywhere else. The islet is home to a colony of sea lions on the white coral sand beach.

Chinese Hat

Possible Activities: A hike of 400 meters starting at the beach rising up to 160 feet exploring the different volcanic remnants and rare plant life along with amazing views; Snorkeling among White-Tipped Reef Sharks and various tropical fish.
Difficulty: Moderate
Type of Landing: Wet Landing
Highlights: White-cheeked Pintail Ducks, colorful fish, sea lions, Brackish Water Lagoon, penguins, and the Galapagos Hawk.

Day 2 (Sunday) – Vicente Roca Point & Espinosa Point

AM: Isabela Island – Vicente Roca Point

Isabela Island: This is the largest of all the Galapagos Islands, about 120 km long, and is peculiarly shaped like a sea-horse! It is one of the few islands that are populated. The last census that was taken estimated about 2,200 people living on the Southern part of the Island. The island was formed by 6 different shield volcanoes from North to South that erupted continuously, eventually joining together to form on entire land mass. Of all the islands in the archipelago, Isabela is the most active with the latest eruption coming from Wolf Volcano in May of 2015. There are lots of unique wildlife on Isabela such as the pink iguana, and more wild tortoises than any other island with a different type of species near each of the 6 volcanoes.

Vicente Roca Point: On Vicente Roca Point the geological formations are simply outstanding and it is a great place to view various bird species such as blue-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, gulls, storm petrels, and brown noddy terns. Activities here are all done on the water by either dinghy or panga, or snorkeling. On this western part of the island the Cromwell Current provides cold water and many nutrients. Due to this it is possible to see various feeding frenzies of an assortment of animals such as whales, dolphins, sea lions, and marine birds diving. At times it may also be likely to see fur seals.

Vicente Roca Point

Possible Activities: Snorkeling and dinghy ride
Difficulty: Easy / Moderate
Type of Landing: No Landing
Highlights: Blue-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, sea lions, fur seals, whales. Snorkel - various tropical fish, sea turtles and other marine animals.

PM: Fernandina Island – Espinosa Point

Fernandina Island: No foreign species have ever invaded Fernandina Island and therefore it is one of the world's most pristine island ecosystems. It is one of the most active islands and is the westernmost island in the archipelago. The volcano "La Cumbre" dominates the landscape with lava fields reaching the ocean. The Cromwell Current also flows on the west making the cold and nutrient rich water an ideal habitat for the Galapagos Penguin and Flightless Cormorant that nests here.

Espinosa Point: This area on Fernandina also provides a great opportunity to see the Galapagos Hawk. Land iguanas are found on the inner parts of the island near the volcanoes caldera and marine iguanas will nest on the coast during certain times of the year. There is only one visitor site to Fernandina which may involve a hike or snorkeling opportunity, making the rest of the island unspoiled in a most natural state.

Espinosa Point

Possible Activities: Hike or Snorkel
Difficulty: Easy/Moderate
Type of Landing: Dry/Slippery
Highlights: Flightless cormorant, Active Volcano "La Cumbre", various types of impressive lava formations, AA lava, Marine Iguanas, occasional land iguanas, Galapagos penguins, sea lions and sally light foot crabs. Snorkel – marine iguanas, colorful species of fish, eagle rays, sea turtles

Day 3 (Monday) – Tagus Cove & Urbina Bay

AM: Isabela Island – Tagus Cove

Tagus Cove: This visitor site is located on the upper west part of the island and was named after and English war ship that used to pass the islands in the 1800's. This was a famous spot for many pirates and sailors who have even left their names and the names of the ship inscribed on volcanic rock. There are many different characteristics of the island here from various volcanic activities such as large volcanic rocks or small little balls of petrified rain. On the hike the path leads to Darwin Lake with a tuff cone.

Tagus Cove

Possible Activities: Hike, Kayaking, Panga Ride, or Snorkel
Difficulty: Easy/Moderate
Type of Landing: Dry
Highlights: Galapagos penguins, flightless cormorant, finches, land iguanas, large-billed flycatchers, hawks, land birds and remnants of past pirates and sailors. Snorkel – Galapagos penguins, various species of fish, sea turtles.

PM: Isabela Island – Urbina Bay

Urbina Bay: A bit more south of Tagus Cove is Urbina Bay. Urbina Bay is an interesting site due to the uplifts of the island caused by volcanic and tectonic activity. When it rose, so did the corals and reefs that were under the surface. You can still see them although they are beginning to deteriorate due to air exposure. There are chances of seeing giant tortoises, land iguanas, and more flightless cormorants near the coast.

Urbina Bay

Possible Activities: Hiking and snorkel
Difficulty: Easy /Moderate
Type of Landing: Wet
Highlights: Exposed coral reef, giant tortoises, Galapagos hawk, land iguanas, flightless cormorants. Snorkel – green sea turtles, larger fish, Galapagos penguins.

Day 4 (Tuesday) – Elizabeth Bay & Moreno Point

AM: Isabela Island – Elizabeth Bay

Elizabeth Bay: A visitor site on the way down to the southern parts of Isabela Island is Elizabeth Bay. There are a series of islets, a lagoon and mangroves surrounding it. The mangroves provide a great place to observe many birds and at the lagoon it is possible to see sea turtles resting and feeding.

Elizabeth Bay

Possible Activities: Panga Ride
Difficulty: Easy/Moderate
Type of Landing: No Landing
Highlights: Sea turtles, red and black mangroves, lava herons, Galapagos penguins, rays, flightless cormorants.

PM: Isabela Island – Moreno Point

Moreno Point: On the South Western point of Isabela Island is Moreno Point. With striking black geological features it is home to endemic species known only to the barren lava flows found here. Various activities are possible such as a hike, a panga ride to better see various sea birds, geological features, and snorkeling to view the vibrant underwater life.

Moreno Point

Possible Activities: Panga Ride, Hike, Snorkeling
Difficulty: Moderate/Difficult
Type of Landing: Dry Landing
Highlights: Common gallinules, flamingos, paint-billed crakes, white-cheeked pintails, sea turtles, white-tipped reef sharks, pintail ducks. Snorkeling – assortment of fish, sea lions, green

Day 5 (Wednesday) – Fausto Llerena & Los Gemelos

AM: Santa Cruz – C.C. Fausto Llerena Charles Darwin Research Station

Santa Cruz Island: Today Santa Cruz is one of the most popular tourist sites. With a population of about 12,000 Galapagos natives, it has the longest paved road in the entire archipelago. One of the biggest conservation efforts is to eliminate all non-native plants and animals that are destroying native and endemic species on the island. There is no longer any volcanic activity but that does not mean there is no evidence. Santa Cruz means holy cross, but it's English name comes from the British vessel – Indefatigable.

Charles Darwin Research Station: The station conducts many different research projects and provides assistance to other researchers and governmental institutions and agencies, especially the Galapagos National Park. Many of the results are later published online, in magazines, and popular scientific journals. The research station also plays a big part in educating the community and public schools in Galapagos. There is also the longtime running Giant Tortoise restoration program that includes various stages of the giant tortoise from eggs, hatchlings and adults.

CHARLES DARWIN STATION

Possible Activities: Walk
Difficulty: Easy
Type of Landing: Dry Landing
Highlights: See the latest advances in research at the Charles Darwin Research Station. Also see Giant Tortoises and land iguanas.

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PM: Los Gemelos (Twin Craters)

Twin Craters: The Twin Craters or Gemelos, meaning twins in Spanish, are two caved in magma chambers of a previous volcano. After years of erosion and extinction, the once full chambers caved in leaving two similar craters that can be seen on a short hike that passes by a Scalesia forest.

Los Gemelos (Twin Craters)

Possible Activities: Hike
Difficulty: Moderate
Type of Landing: Dry Landing
Highlights: On the trail to the craters many different land birds can be seen in the Scalesia forest – finches, short eared owls, vermilion flycatchers, and Galapagos doves.

Day 6 (Thursday) – South Plaza & Departure

AM: South Plaza Island

South Plaza: South Plaza is one of the smallest islands with a visitor site, but is home to an incredible amount of diverse flora and fauna. It has a large population of Sesuvium plants like the prickly pear cactus tree that is an important source of food for the land iguana. Just a few years ago mice were finally eradicated from the island, helping the population of land iguanas grow healthily once more.

South Plaza Island

Possible Activities: Short hike, Panga ride, Kayaking
Difficulty: Easy
Type of Landing: Dry Landing
Highlights: Cacti native only to South Plaza, land iguana, finches, sea lions, swallow tailed gulls, red-billed tropicbirds.

Transfer to Baltra Airport

Your cruise has officially come to an end. We hope you enjoyed your Galapagos Cruise! We will now transfer you to your scheduled departure from Baltra Airport to mainland Ecuador. Safe travels!

IMPORTANT:

Itineraries and activities are subject to change without prior notice depending on weather conditions, water currents, and sea conditions.

The wildlife described above is not guaranteed to be seen during your visit. Please remember to respect your distance between any and all wildlife.

Please stay on marked trails and heed the directions of your Naturalist Guide.