

## **East itinerary - Full description**

### **Day 1 - Saturday**

PM

After arriving at Baltra airport we will be greeted by an Angermeyer Cruises representative to then board the Passion and have lunch. After lunch, we will navigate a short distance to Black Turtle Cove, a large mangrove lagoon on the north coast of Santa Cruz Island. Pelicans and herons roost on the branches, while marine dwellers such as green sea turtles or golden rays may cruise right next to the panga as it makes its way through the mangroves.

### **Day 2 - Sunday**

AM

We travel to Genovesa Island and reach Darwin Bay (wet landing), a unique site lined with red mangroves and soft-haired prickly pear cacti where red-footed boobies and great frigatebirds perch tamely.

PM

At Prince Philip Steps (dry landing), we climb the edge of a cliff where frigatebirds, masked boobies, and red-footed boobies nest. We will be seeking out the impressive red-billed tropicbird amidst Galapagos storm petrels.

### **Day 3 - Monday**

AM

Dry landing at Bartholomew to climb up the wooden steps and reach the summit of this spatter cone for a most breath-taking panorama of the island's well photographed Pinnacle Rock, views of neighbouring Santiago and many other central islands in the distance.

PM

We head across to Sullivan Bay (dry landing) in Santiago to walk over a recent lava flow, including very fresh pahoehoe lava formations, lava bubbles containing crystallized minerals, and pioneer plants. Along the shoreline, we may find Galapagos penguins and herons going after small fish.

### **Day 4 - Tuesday**

AM

Wet landing onto Rábida's deep-red beaches to explore the red island's fascinating interior and saltwater lagoon. Darwin's finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, and yellow warblers feed off the vegetation. Given the right time of the year we may see brown pelicans nesting on salt bushes that fringe the beach.

PM

We head across to Cerro Dragón on Santa Cruz's northwest shore (dry landing) to visit a saltwater lagoon, home to Greater Flamingos, black-necked stilts, and white-cheeked pintails. Further inland we find a fantastic land iguana nesting site.

### **Day 5 - Wednesday**

AM

We will spend this day visiting Santa Cruz Island's most famous highlights. We will have a dry landing in the dock of Puerto Ayora to then board our transportation and head to the island's highlands. This area, in contrast to the coastal region, has lush vegetation and forest due to the humidity that gathers in the higher regions.

We will visit one of the ranches of the area where it is possible to see giant tortoises in

their natural habitat. As these animals migrate from the coastal area to the highlands and back, the chosen ranch will depend on the presence of the tortoises, as they roam free and change locations. This is also a good place to see the Galapagos hawk and barn owl of this island and the surrounding forests are filled of birds such as the vermilion flycatcher or the yellow warbler.

PM

We will enjoy lunch at the ranch to then head back to Puerto Ayora for our second visit of the day, the Charles Darwin Research Station and the Fausto Llerena Breeding Center.

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.

After this visit, we will have some time to explore the town of Puerto Ayora and its many souvenir shops, before boarding the M/Y Passion for dinner and the evening briefing.

### **Day 6 - Thursday**

AM

Dry landing on one of the oldest docks of the archipelago, colorful Plaza Sur is home to vibrant green prickly pears, deep red Sesuvium and coppery-orange land iguanas; impressive seaward cliffs are excellent for a variety of coastal birds. This is also a great place to observe the adult and pup sea lions swimming along the shores.

PM

After a wet landing on Santa Fe onto a white beach where sea lions are usually resting, we will be looking for the endemic species of land iguana, larger and yellower than land iguanas on other islands. The largest prickly pear cacti in the Galapagos are also found here.

### **Day 7 - Friday**

AM

Punta Suárez (dry landing) is a spectacular walk to give insight into the intimacies of life at sea, with nesting sites of blue-footed and Nazca Boobies, as well as the fascinating breeding rituals (April to December) of the waved albatross. Lined with neon-colored marine iguanas (January), and lazy Galapagos sea lions, we walk up to an amazing viewpoint of the famous blowhole.

PM

We will spend the day in fantastic Española, starting with Gardner Bay (wet landing), an outstanding beach with sea lions, marine iguanas, and the intrepid Española Mockingbird.

### **Day 8 - Saturday**

AM

This is our last day in the islands. After breakfast we will disembark in Puerto Ayora to take our transport to Baltra Airport, doing a short stop to visit the lava tunnels found in the highlands. These intriguing tunnels were formed by a lava flow that hardened on the outside while still maintaining its fluid scolding state on the inside, leaving hollow tunnels where it passed. We will walk inside one of the tunnels (that are artificially illuminated to help visitors) to have a close look at the formations and learn more about the origin of these very volcanic archipelago.

After this visit we will make our way to the Baltra airport for the flight to mainland Ecuador.