

GALAPAGOS LAND TOUR: THE MAGIC OF ISABELA ISLAND

Visiting: **Santa Cruz & Isabela Islands**

5
DAYS

4
NIGHTS

CODE: MI003

* Hotels depend on the category you choose – see alternatives below *
Hotels are subject to availability

DAY-BY-DAY TRIP ITINERARY

DEAR TRAVELERS, please take the time to read thoroughly the following itinerary as many important details and recommendations about the program are explained here. If you should have any questions or concerns after reading this itinerary, please do not hesitate in contacting one of our travel specialists, we will gladly provide you with further information and make any recommendations to make your trip the most suitable possible.

DAY 1 Arrive at **Baltra** Airport / Transfer to **Isabela Island** / Visit **Flamingos Lagoon**

You can arrive to the Galapagos Islands only by flight either from Quito or Guayaquil (air ticket not included). An English-speaking guide will be waiting for you at the Baltra airport. He will then take you to **Puerto Ayora** (Santa Cruz Island) for lunch. Afterwards, the guide will lead you to the **Public speedboat** towards **Isabela Is.** (departs at 14:00) for a two and a half hours ride. After arriving at Isabela and after a brief rest at the hotel, we head to the **Flamingo Lagoon**, the largest coastal lagoon found in the Galapagos and one of the main reproductive sites for the majority of flamingos. Dinner will be served at the local restaurant specified by the guide.

Accommodations in Isabela Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.



DAY 2 **Isabela Island:**
OPTION 1: Hike Sierra Negra + Chico Volcanoes / Snorkel at Concha Perla
OPTION 2: Full Day: Visit Cabo Rosa aka. Tuneles (**extra cost – please ask us**)

OPTION 1: Early in the morning (8:00 am), after breakfast, get ready for the **Sierra Negra Volcano hike** (comfortable clothes, walking shoes and a light rain jacket are recommended). Make sure your camera is stored in waterproof bags, wear some sunscreen, bring water, and a hat! Yourself will prepare your box lunch at the hotel with the foodstuff of your choice. We will then travel approximately 45 minutes by truck or bus to begin the 12 km hike (approx. 4 hours). The hike is long in terms of distance, but not very difficult as the inclines and declines are quite gradual. (**There is an option to ride horses for an additional cost, if interested please let us know beforehand**). Sierra Negra Volcano has the second largest crater in the world, measuring approximately 6 miles in

diameter and 300 feet deep. We will then reach **Volcan Chico**, which should provide a spectacular view of the islands.

Once we get back to the hotel we will take a short break to rest. In the afternoon, get to do some fine snorkeling in **Concha Perla**. Swim with sea lions, colorful varieties of fish and, with luck, sea turtles and rays. Return to the hotel to rest before heading to dinner at a local restaurant indicated by the guide.

OPTION 2: (extra cost – please ask us for more info)

There are two departure times for this tour, one at 08:00 am with return time at 13:00 pm approx., and one at 11:00 am, with return time at 16:00 pm. approx. The chosen departure time for your tour might vary; hence, you will be notified on the departure time for this day trip on the night before the tour.

Cabo Rosa aka. Los Tuneles. is perhaps one of the most beautiful sights in the archipelago. Continuous volcanic eruptions petrified into tunnel-like lava formations right in the middle of the sea, and crystal clear turquoise water allows an amazing view of marine vegetation and playful sea lions. The tour begins early at 8:00am via speedboat and the first stop is a small islet in the middle of the ocean, home to pelicans, blue-footed boobies, and sea lions. **Finados** snorkeling site is the next stop, where you can swim next to sea turtles, **Tintoreras** sharks (endemic to the islands), trumpet fish and surgeonfish. With some luck, eagle and golden rays will come to this site too. Getting to Los **Tuneles** will take around 1 ½ - 2 hrs. Once there, the speedboat will navigate through various spots in and around the Lava Tunnels. Here you get the chance to do some more snorkeling and enjoy some short walks while observing the landscape and wildlife inhabiting the area. **A box lunch** on board will be provided for this day. Dinner will be served at the local specified restaurant.

Accommodations in Isabela Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.



DAY 3 Isabela Island: Tintoreras Islet snorkel / Humedales Hike (Giant Tortoise Center)

After breakfasts, get ready to visit to **Tintoreras Islet**. Make our way to the dock of Puerto Villamil in order to embark on small speedboats (12 passenger capacity). After a short ride (approx. 20 min.) we will arrive at Tintoreras Islet. The name of the islet derives from the **sharks** that inhabit in the waters surrounding the islet, the famous white-tipped fins Tintorera Sharks. The islet is one of the most fascinating places on Isabela Island. **Galapagos sea lions, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, Sally Lightfoot Crabs, sea turtles, pelicans, and Galapagos Penguins** can all be found in this site. It is also one of main breeding sites for marine iguanas, and a great spot to get a close-up with them. After a hike around the islet, get back on the boat and cool off by snorkeling in the waters nearby. Swimming next to multicolor fish, starfish, sea urchins, and with luck **manta rays, sharks, and sea lions** is a major highlight in this excursion. After a fascinating experience we will return to the hotel for lunch.

In the afternoon, visit the **Giant Tortoise Breeding Center** of Isabela. Here you can observe a variety of species of giant tortoises. You will also hear how this center has successfully bred and raise the giant tortoises to preserve many endangered subspecies. Afterwards, we will visit the **Wall of Tears**

(Muro de las Lagrimas). Between 1946 and 1959 Isabela Island was used as a penal colony by the Ecuadorian government, and the prisoners were obligated to build this wall out of the sharp and hard volcanic rocks. The wall is 100 meters long and 7 meters high. On the way back we will make a visit to a **Lava Tunnel** near the Wall- Visits to **Mirador Orchilla, Estero de Isabela, and Playa del Amor** are also programmed. We will then return to the hotel to rest before heading to dinner at a local restaurant specified by the guide.

Accommodations in Isabela Island in the **hotel class of your choice.**



DAY 4 Transfer to **Santa Cruz Island:** Highlands Hike (Giant Tortoise) / Charles Darwin

Get ready to go to the dock (it is recommended to wake-up at 5:00 AM) to take the **Public speedboat**, which leaves at 7:00 a.m. (subject to change), to Puerto Ayora in Santa Cruz Island (approx. 2 hr.). Upon arrival the guide will take you to eat breakfast. After a short rest we will make our way to the **Highlands of Santa Cruz**. Here you will have the unforgettable opportunity to observe the famous Galapagos **Giant Tortoises** in their natural environment. The Islands themselves were named after these species. You will also be able to observe the famous Galapagos Finches, Bird Wizards, as well as endemic vegetation such as Escelacias forests and Matazarnos. Afterwards we will return to Puerto Ayora. Dinner will be served local-style menu in the restaurant specified by the guide.

In the afternoon, the guide will have specified the meeting time to begin the visit to the **Charles Darwin Research Station**. Here you can find a large variety of Giant Tortoise, one of each island in the archipelago. You will also learn about the ongoing conservation efforts directed at preserving the Giant Tortoises, as well as the natural environment of the archipelago as a whole. After this, we will make a short visit to the **Art Galleries of Puerto Ayora**. Dinner at a local restaurant specified by the guide.

Accommodations in Santa Cruz Island in the **hotel class of your choice.**



DAY 5 Transfer out **Baltra Airport** (Visit "The Twins" on way out) / Goodbye Galapagos!

On the final day we recommend waking up at 6:00 am to get ready and have breakfast before the transfer out to **Baltra Airport** where you will catch your return flight to either Quito or Guayaquil. The last visit to the Twin Craters on the way out will depend on the departure time of your flights and the general timings of the tour.

**** NOTE ** Itinerary** subject to change without prior warning depending on seasonal changes, weather conditions, and adjustments in policies set by the Galapagos National Park, and other unforeseen circumstances that may arise.

IMPORTANT REMARKS:

- ❖ **HOTEL SELECTION:** The hotel selection depends on the category of hotel that you choose. Once you choose the hotel class of preference, we will specify to you which hotels are available for the dates of your trip. Hotels are categorized in the following classes: **Economic Class, Tourist Class, Tourist Superior Class,** and **First Class**. All the hotels we work with have been carefully chosen by us after close inspection.
- ❖ **AIRFARE NOT INCLUDED:** The price of the tour does not include air tickets. We will gladly help your with the booking of the ticket from Quito or Guayaquil to Galapagos. You may also book the flights on your own if cheaper. PLEASE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT in which island you will arrive and leave from, and if you choose to book your own flight please try to book your arrival in the morning (before 12pm) and your departure in the afternoon (12 am or after) so that you don't miss any part of the tour. You can book your flight either through TAME, AEROGAL, LAN, or TAME (recommended).
- ❖ **RESTAURANTS:** We work with both hotel and local restaurants alike for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. This also depends on the chosen hotel class, as some hotels have restaurant services, **in which case food will be served on the hotel restaurant**. Meals are served in the "meal of the day" style. In case food is not served at the hotel, the guide will specify the chosen restaurant (**no transfers to and from the restaurants to the hotels are included in the cost of the program. However, distances are all at a minimum walking distance in Galapagos**).
- ❖ **LUNCH AND DINNER** during our tours consist on the meal of the day (not a la carte). Most provisions are bought in form the mainland to Galapagos; hence, a limited variety of food can be found. If you require vegetarian meals let us know ahead of time so we can make all arrangements necessary within the possibilities
- ❖ **GUIDES:** We organize excursion with local naturalist guides for each island (and sometimes for each activity). The guides will accompany you throughout all excursions, give explanations of the islands (flora and fauna) and coordinate the activities each day. Regarding lunch and dinner, the guide will specify the restaurant designated but he will not accompany you during this time. The guide's activities will start and end with each daily excursion. The guide will not go with you on the speedboats between islands either. We work with local and independent guides certified by the Galapagos National Park - if you feel that their guidance does not meet your expectations, feel free to leave a complaint at the National Park Direction, if possible at the time of the tour, to help improve the quality of service in the islands.
- ❖ **PUBLIC SPEEDBOATS:** We recommend that you take a seasickness pill before each ride between islands if you are prone to seasickness. It is also recommended that you carry small plastic bags with you in case of seasickness. The speedboats are not completely covered so please make sure that valuable objects and electronics are stored in a plastic bag. The **guide will not go with you on the speedboats** but a new guide will greet you on the other side. There are no services onboard as the speedboat space is limited and the journey is relatively short. A water taxi ride is sometimes required (depending on the tide) from the dock to the speedboat; the cost is **1 USD** per person and **per ride**. Please, make sure you bring cash in small denominations in case this expense is needed. ***This is a Public service out of our control.***

- ❖ **SCHEDULE OF EXCURSIONS:** The schedule of the excursions will be coordinated and determined locally through the guide and those responsible for the operations. The guide will indicate what time each activity will start. The transfers between islands on the public speedboats are the only activities that have fixed departure times.

INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS

THE RATE INCLUDES:

- ✓ Accommodation in selected hotels and rooms
- ✓ All meals (breakfast – lunch – dinner)
- ✓ All land and sea transportation within the Galapagos during the program
- ✓ Bilingual naturalist guides for each island and all activities
- ✓ Excursions and visits during the program
- ✓ Snorkeling Equipment (mask, fins, tube)
- ✓ Transfer Puerto Ayora – Isabela – Puerto Ayora by Public speedboat
- ✓ Transfer Baltra – Puerto Ayora – Baltra (by truck or by bus depending on group size)

THE RATE EXCLUDES:

- ✗ Air Ticket
- ✗ Galapagos National Park Entry Fee - \$100.00 US pp.
- ✗ Isabela Dock Fee - \$5.00 US pp.
- ✗ Migratory Control Card - \$20.00 US
- ✗ Transportation Baltra Airport – Itabaca Channel - **USD 5,00 per person** (subject to change).
- ✗ Transportation Itabaca Channel – Baltra Airport - **USD 5,00 per person** (subject to change).
- ✗ Extra cost for alternative excursion in Isabela Island on Day 2 (OPTION 2)
- ✗ Cost of the transfer between the hotels and the restaurants designated for the meals in each island.
- ✗ Water taxi from dock to speedboat (Isabela, Santa Cruz Islands - depending on the tide) - **\$ 1.00 US per person per ride**
- ✗ Soft-drinks and alcoholic beverages
- ✗ Tips.