



IN THE STEPS OF PIRATES & DARWIN

ITINERARY STARTING IN BALTRA ISLAND
7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS FROM SATURDAY TO SATURDAY



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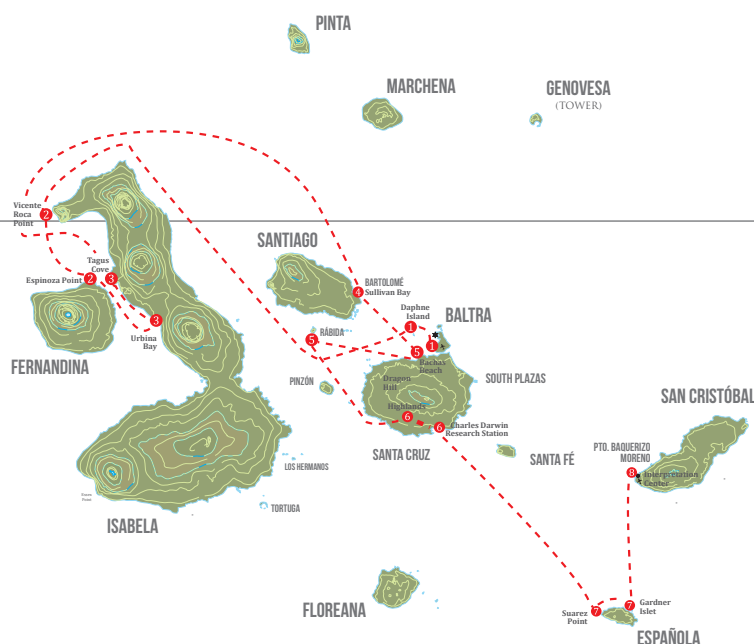




The **Galapagos** seas tend to be calm, making travel by yacht the ideal and only way to experience the full spectrum the islands have to offer. In contrast, only a handful of park visitor sites are accessible by day boats where you will spend most of your day getting to and from your destination. Our live

This golden age lives on today aboard the **M/V Evolution**, where the destination is designed to be experienced as a voyage through one of the world's most remarkable natural wonders, the Galapagos archipelago. From the rich wood paneling and brass appointments of the dinning saloon, to the rattan furnishings of the outdoor sky lounge under shade, the 32 passenger **M/V Evolution** is designed to evoke warmth and richness, while providing all the modern comforts and amenities, including a state of the art navigation system. Her comfortable and tastefully designed cabins offer full ensuite bathrooms. Cabins are cleaned twice daily. There are many spaces where you can relax outdoors and under shade, while inside the yacht is fully air conditioned. The main saloon, where your guide will give presentations on the each day's activities, provides a relaxing environment with a giant wrap around sofa and full entertainment center. An onboard boutique carries both necessities and souvenirs. **M/V Evolution** provides fine onboard dining in both her dining room and al fresco on the rear deck. At sunset happy hour is a highlight atop the sky lounge bar and is often accompanied by leaping dolphins and rays. Did we mention the yacht's sundeck and giant Jacuzzi to warm up in after snorkeling?

*"...in that little world within itself...we seem to be brought somewhat near to that great fact -- that mystery of mysteries -- the first appearance of new beings on this earth."
- Charles Darwin*



*Galapagos
Islands*

EDEN FOR ANIMALS

DAY 1 - SATURDAY

AM: Baltra Island
PM: Daphne Major and Minor Islands

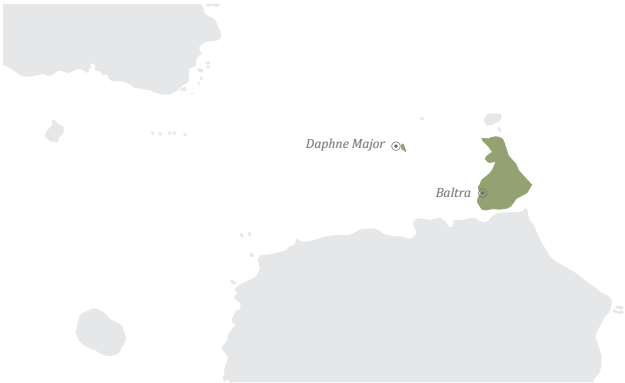


You'll need to rise early this morning to catch your flight to the Galapagos. All our flights to the Galapagos originate in Quito, and stop briefly in the port city of Guayaquil to take on passengers before heading on to the islands. For this itinerary you will be landing on the island of **Baltra**. After passing through **Galapagos National Park** inspection your National Park Guide will be there to greet you, holding a sign with the name of your yacht. Your guide will accompany you on the short bus ride to the waterfront. During WWII the island of **Baltra** was a US Air Force base and one can still see the remnants of the old foundations left behind from that era. We transfer via panga (launch) to the waiting **M/V Evolution**. The crew will see that your luggage is transferred to your cabin.

At the dock we board a dinghy (panga) to make the short crossing to **M/V Evolution**. You only need to bring your carry-on luggage on the panga as our crew will transfer your luggage to your cabin. You'll have time to settle into your new home for the week before assembling to review safety procedures and coming events with your **Galapagos National Park Guide**. While this is taking place the **M/V Evolution** will start her engines and set off into the archipelago.

Daphne Minor, a tuff cone (giant pile of compressed volcanic ash shaped like a cone), sits off the north coast of **Santa Cruz Island**, west of **Baltra Island** and **North Seymour Island**. While off limits to all but limited scientific parties going ashore, we've obtained permission from the National Park to navigate around the island, close by. You will have a front row seat to witness bustling

colonies of blue-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, magnificent frigate birds and more. You'll also have the opportunity to observe short-eared owls and red-billed tropicbirds. This island has (natural) historic importance as a result of the husband-wife biology team of Peter and Rosemary Grant conducting a 20 year field study into the behavior and life cycles of finches as relates to Darwin's theory of natural selection. Their work is chronicled in the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Beak of the Finch*. As the sun sets on your first day in the Enchanted Archipelago, you'll toast to the voyage ahead with a welcome cocktail.



ACTIVITIES

AM

Morning: Fly to Baltra in the Galapagos Islands and board **M/V Evolution**.
Type of Landing: N/A

PM

Late Afternoon: Daphne Minor
Type of Landing: N/A

Meals: Lunch, & Dinner



THE ARCHIPELAGO'S NEWEST WORK

DAY 2 - SUNDAY

AM: Punta Vicente Roca

PM: Punta Espinoza



Fernandina

Isabela

Located at the 'mouth' of the head of the sea horse, which forms the northern part of the Isabela is **Punta Vicente Roca**. Here the remnants of an ancient volcano forms two turquoise coves with a bay well protected from the ocean swells. The spot is a popular anchorage from which to take panga rides along the cliff where a partially sunken cave beckons explorers. Masked and blue-footed boobies sit perched along the point and the sheer cliffs, while flightless cormorants inhabit the shoreline. The upwelling of coldwater currents in combination with the protection of the coves make **Punta Vicente Roca** one of the archipelago's most sought after dive spots. One cove is only accessible from the sea by way of an underwater passage. The passage opens to calm waters of the hidden cove where sea lions laze on the beach having traveled along the underwater route. The entire area of **Punta Vicente Roca** lies on the flank of 2,600 foot Volcano Ecuador. This is the island's sixth largest volcano. Half of Volcano Ecuador slid into the ocean leaving a spectacular cutaway view of its caldera. The site offers deep water snorkeling where sea lions turtles, spotted eagle rays and even manta rays are the attraction. After our visit here we set off south and west across the Bolivar channel. Keep your eyes open in this best place in the islands for spotting whales.

Fernandina is the youngest and westernmost island in the Galapagos. It sits across the Bolivar Channel opposite **Isabela**. Our destination is **Punta Espinoza**, a narrow spit of land in the northeastern corner of the island, where a number of unique Galapagos species can be seen in close proximity. As our panga driver skillfully navigates the reef, Galapagos penguins show off by throwing themselves from the rocks into the water. Red and turquoise-blue zayapas crabs disperse across the lava shoreline, while blue and lava herons forage through the mangrove roots. The landing is a dry one, set in a quiet inlet beneath the branches of a small mangrove forest. A short walk through the vegetation leads to a large colony of marine iguanas—a schoolyard of **Godzilla's children**—resting atop one another in friendly heaps along the rocky shoreline, spitting water to clear their bodies of salt. Nearby, sea lions frolic in a sheltered lagoon.

Dominating this landscape from high overhead looms the summit of La Cumbre, 1,495 meters (4,858 feet), one of the most active volcanoes in the world. Farther down this stretch of shore, the world's only species of flightless cormorants have established a colony near an inviting inlet frequented by sea turtles. Because these birds evolved without land predators—it was easier to feed on the squid, octopus, eel and fish found in the ocean—the cormorants progressively took to the sea.

They developed heavier, more powerful legs and feet for kicking, serpent-like necks and fur-like plumage. Their wings are now mere vestiges. Back toward the landing and farther inland, the island's black lava flows become more evident, forming a quiet, inner mangrove lagoon where you will spot rays and sea turtles gliding just below the surface. Galapagos hawks survey the entire scene from overhead.

The snorkeling off **Punta Espinoza** offers some real treats, as many of the creatures you just saw on land, including the Godzilla-like marine iguanas, flightless cormorants, Galapagos penguins and sea lions await you in the waters off the point (which incidentally was used as a set during the making of Master & Commander). A key feature of the ocean bottom here are the troughs formed by volcanic rock and ocean currents. Because these waters reach out into the Bolivar Channel they can be quite cold. Sea turtles like to hang out in the warm water of the troughs. You'll also see marine iguanas ferrying back and forth between underwater grazing areas and their colonies on shore. This is an excellent place to see underwater iguanas munching on algae. If you are fortunate you may catch a glimpse of a flightless cormorant demonstrating their swimming abilities or watch a Galapagos penguin zip by. You will feel the difference in ocean temperature and watch the water get clearer as you move from the more protected shallow areas out into the cold rich waters of the channel. The Bolivar Channel is the very best place in the Galapagos to see dolphins and whales. On rare occasion our groups have been able to swim with dolphins, kayak with melon headed whales and even spot the elusive sperm whale.

Punta Vicente Roca

Punta Espinoza

ACTIVITIES

AM

Morning: Punta Vicente Roca

Type of Landing: Wet

Level of Walk: Easy

Other Activities: Snorkeling,
Panga Ride

PM

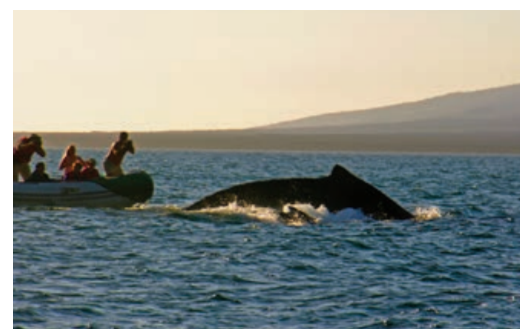
Afternoon: Punta Espinoza

Type of Landing: Dry

Level of Walk: Easy

Other Activities: Nature
Hikes & Snorkeling

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner



YELLOW DRAGONS & UNDERWATER PASTURES

DAY 3 - MONDAY

AM: Urbina Bay
PM: Tagus Cove



Isabela is the largest island in the archipelago, accounting for half of the total landmass of the Galapagos at 4,588 square kilometers. Though narrow in places, the island runs 132 km from north to south, or 82 miles. **Isabela** is formed from six shield volcanoes that merged into a single landmass. It is also home to the highest point in the Galapagos, Wolf Volcano at 1,707 meters (5,547 feet), and calderas of up to 20 kilometers (12½ miles) across.

Urbina Bay is directly west of Isabela's Volcano Alcedo, where we will make an easy, wet landing (a hop into a few inches of water) onto a gently sloping beach. In 1954, a Disney film crew caught sight of this gleaming white strip, and went to investigate. To their astonishment, three miles (5 km) of the marine reef had been uplifted by as much as 13 feet (4 meters) prior to their arrival. They discovered schools of stranded fish and other creatures in newly formed tidal pools along with the skeletons of sea turtles and sharks unable to make it to the ocean as a result of the uplift event. Alcedo erupted a few weeks later.

Now visitors can walk amongst the boulder sized dried coral heads, mollusks and other organisms that once formed the ocean floor. A highlight of this excursion is the giant land iguanas, whose vivid and gaudy yellow skin suggests that dinosaurs may have been very colorful indeed. **Giant tortoises** inhabit this coastal plain during the wet season, before migrating to the highlands when it turns dry. Our landing beach provides a nesting site for sea turtles and will also provide you with opportunities to snorkel amongst marine creatures, or just relax on shore. Here we must take care not to step on the sea turtle nests dug carefully into the sand. For those looking for snorkeling from a beach this is the place, with tropical fish hiding amongst the rocks to the north side of the bay.

We head north along the western coast of **Isabela Island**, to **Tagus Cove**, named for a British warship that moored here in 1814. Historically the cove was used as an anchorage for pirates and whalers. One can still find the names of their ships carved into the rock above our landing, a practice now prohibited. The cove's quiet waters make for an ideal panga ride beneath its sheltered cliffs, where blue-footed boobies, brown noddies, pelicans and noddy terns make their nests, and flightless cormorants and penguins inhabit the lava ledges.

From our landing, a wooden stairway rises to the trail entrance for a view of Darwin Lake; a perfectly round saltwater crater, barely separated from the ocean but above sea level! From the air one can see that both **Tagus Cove** and Darwin Lake are formed from one, partially flooded, tuff cone on the eastern edge of giant Darwin volcano. The cove is formed by a breached and flooded section of the crater with Darwin Lake forming the very center of the same cone. The trail continues around the lake through a dry vegetation zone, and then climbs inland to a promontory formed by spatter cones. The site provides spectacular views back toward our anchorage, as well as to Darwin Volcano and Wolf Volcano to the north. While one does not normally think of greener pastures when planning to

snorkeling, that is exactly what you will find at **Tagus Cove**. The carpet of green algae that covers the floor of the cove gives the impression of a submerged pasture, and really that is just what it is. You can find marine iguanas grazing the algae along with numerous sea turtles gliding and munching their way along. Because the cove opens to the rich waters of the Bolivar Channel this is one of the best snorkeling sites in the island. You also have a good chance of snorkeling with underwater feathered friends including Galapagos penguins and rare flightless cormorants. For those who want to dive deeper there are special rewards waiting for you at 3 meters where camouflaged creatures await, including scorpion fish nestled against the outcrops and sea horses masquerading as twigs of the seaweed waving in the currents. The rare Port Jackson shark can also be found here. Kayakers can enjoy a paddle around the cove, offering excellent views of nesting birds on the cliff walls above.

As we set sail north to navigate out of the channel back towards the central islands keep your eyes peeled as this is one of the best places in the islands to spot whales and dolphins that feed in these productive waters created by the upwelling of the Cromwell Current. And while you watch you can enjoy a happy hour at the Sky lounge on the upper rear deck.



ACTIVITIES



Morning: Urbina Bay
Type of Landing: Wet
Level of Walk: Moderate
Other Activities: Nature Hikes, & Snorkeling



Late Afternoon: Tagus Cove
Type of Landing: Dry
Level of Walk: Difficult
Other Activities: Nature Hikes, Snorkeling, Panga Ride & Kayaking

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner



PINNACLE & LAVASCAPES

DAY 4 - TUESDAY

AM: Pinnacle Rock
PM: Sullivan Bay



Bartolomé is famous for **Pinnacle Rock**, a towering spearheaded obelisk that rises from the ocean's edge and is the best known landmark in the Galapagos. It served as a back drop in the film Master & Commander: Galapagos penguins—the only species of penguin found north of the equator—walk precariously along narrow volcanic ledges at its base. Sea lions snooze on rocky platforms, ready to slide into the water to play with passing snorkelers. Below the surface, shoals of tropical fish dodge in and out of the rocks past urchins, sea stars and anemones.

A perfectly crescent sandy beach lies just to the east of the pinnacle and across a narrow isthmus another beach mirrors this one to the south. Sea turtles use both beaches and another to the west of the Pinnacle as nesting sites and can sometimes be seen wading back out into the shallow water near the shore, or resting in the sand recovering from the arduous task of digging nests, laying eggs and covering them over.

Penguins like to rest atop the nearby rocks by our next landing site, about a quarter mile east along the shore. Here the submerged walls of a tiny volcanic crater give the impression of a large fountain pool. This dry landing—no wet feet!—is the entrance to a 600-meter (2000-foot) pathway complete with stairs and boardwalks leading to Bartolome's summit.

The route is not difficult and presents an open textbook of the islands' volcanic origins; a site left untouched after its last eruption, where small cones stand in various stages of erosion and lava tubes form bobsled-like runs down from the summit. At the top you will be rewarded with spectacular views of **Santiago Island** and **Sullivan Bay** to the west, and far below, **Pinnacle Rock**, where the crystal turquoise waters of the bay cradle your yacht. Our next landing site is a short distance away to the southeast.

If you created a partnership between well know glass artist Dale Chihuly and mother nature the result would be **Sullivan Bay**. Back in 1897 the island fired up its own internal kiln giving birth to a field of pahoehoe ("rope-like" in Hawaiian) lava reaching out into the channel toward **Bartolome**. The results gleam in the sun like a gigantic, obsidian sculpture.

It stirs the imagination to envision the once-molten lava lighting up the earth, flowing into the sea and sending plumes of superheated steam skyrocketing into the air as pockets of gas in the flow exploded when the lava hit the water. The flow gave birth to new land as it engulfed vegetation, leaving some plants forever etched into the earth. Today the flow stands as a great walkway gallery of abstract shapes

resembling braids, curtains and swirling fans. Brightly colored painted locusts and lava lizards punctuate the black volcanic canvas, as does the occasional finger of lava cactus and spreading carpetweed. We hike south into the flow taking time to admire the Earth's craftwork as we proceed.

Upon our return to the black rocky coast you may spot Galapagos penguins that dot the shore. Unlike the penguins, which mimic the lava with their color, sally light foot crabs stand out against the black rocks as a reminder of their once molten state. The snorkeling along the edge of the lava flow is very good for swimming with penguins and sea lion. Squadrons of spotted eagle rays pass through the channel, and sea turtle that lay their eggs on nearby **Bartolome** swim past, while white-tipped reef sharks patrol the bottom.



ACTIVITIES

AM **Morning:** Pinnacle Rock
Type of Landing: Dry
Level of Walk: Difficult
Other Activities: Nature Hikes, Snorkeling & Panga Ride

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner

PM **Afternoon:** Sullivan Bay
Type of Landing: Wet
Level of Walk: Moderate
Other Activities: Nature Hikes, Snorkeling



THE RED ISLAND

DAY 5 - WEDNESDAY

AM: Playas Las Bachas
PM: Rabida (Jervis) Island



At the north end of **Santa Cruz Island** is **Las Bachas**, comprised of two sandy white-coral beaches that are major egg-laying sites for sea turtles. The official story of how Las Bachas got its name comes from the **Galapagos National Park**. During WWII the US military discarded two barges on the beaches. When the first settlers to the area following the war arrived they mispronounced barges as bachas, resulting in the name. There are other explanations of how the location got its name having to do with indentations left in the sand by both egg laying sea turtles and their departing hatchlings, but we will go with the Park's.

We go ashore the white sandy beach and are greeted by patrolling blue-footed boobies. A brief walk inland takes us to a lagoon where pink flamingos are often found along with great blue herons, common stilts, brown noddys, white-cheek pintail ducks and migratory birds. Snorkeling today is from the beach and you can also enjoy a swim in these waters, which are typically warmer than in other places in the Galapagos.

At the geologic center of the archipelago, **Jervis** presents an island of a different color with its deep red sandy beach and equally red towering cliffs. Even the starfish are red. The flanks of a sloping volcanic cinder-cone rise sharply from the coast and looking up one can see where the vegetation transitions from the arid zone to the wetter Scaevola zone. A hedgerow of green saltbush frames the beach between the clear teal waters of the Pacific making for one of the more colorful islands. A noisy colony of sea lions inhabits these scarlet shores. This is also the best place in the islands to get close to nesting brown pelicans raising their chicks in precariously positioned nests atop the saltbush.

A short trail inland offers observations of land birds including **Galapagos** dove, cactus finch and the large ground-finch. Hidden behind the narrow strip of green saltbush is a briny lagoon frequented by flamingos. These large pink birds feed for up to 12 hours a day on the pink shrimp larva and water boatman that give them their color. We follow the trail to the left and up from the beach to the top of the rocky peninsula that juts from the island towards north. As we climb higher we pass through groves of prickly pear cactus, some oddly reminiscent of Mickey Mouse. The top of the overlook reveals excellent views back toward the lagoon and red sea cliffs beyond.

Rabida also offers a nice kayaking route starting on the eastern side of the peninsula, then around and along it. The route continues west past the

beach, then beneath the island's towering red cliffs. This is a great place to spot sea turtles from your kayak. They sometimes swim right up without noticing you and then dart into the depths once they see you. Make sure you to stop kayaking when you reach the red diamond shaped sign where there is a large rock where both blue footed and masked boobies like to perch.

Beneath the ocean surface **Rabida** offers excellent snorkeling along the shore of the little peninsula. The sea turtles you just saw topside are easier to see once you are in the water. Giant schools of striped sailfin snappers have been seen to carpet the deeper sections, attracting Galapagos sharks. Large schools of yellow tail surgeon fish thread through passages between the rocks. You can look for chances to swim with sea lions and penguins as well and keep your eyes open for marine iguanas grazing the underwater greenery. We've also have had groups watch orca right off the shore on rare occasions but this pod can also be seen elsewhere as they patrol the islands.



ACTIVITIES

AM

Morning: Las Bachas
Type of Landing: Wet
Level of Walk: Easy
Other Activities: Nature Hikes & Snorkeling

PM

Afternoon: Rabida
Type of Landing: Dry
Level of Walk: Easy
Other Activities: Nature Hikes, Snorkeling, Panga Ride & Kayaking

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner



REALM OF THE TORTOISE

DAY 6 - THURSDAY

AM: Darwin Station / Puerto Ayora
PM: Highlands



Santa Cruz, our next stop, is the second largest island in the Galapagos and something of a hub for the archipelago. Baltra, where one of the archipelago's two airports is found, is on the far north end of the island. Puerto Ayora, located in the south of this large, round volcanic island is the seaside economic center of the Galapagos, focused on fishing and tourism. The little port town offers restaurants, hotels, souvenir shops, internet cafés and a place to get your laundry done!

This morning we visit Puerto Ayora, home to both the Galapagos National Park Service Headquarters and Charles Darwin Research Station, the center of the great restorative efforts taking place in the park, and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Here we visit the Giant Tortoise Breeding & Rearing Program run by the research station, which began by rescuing the remaining 14 tortoises on the island of Española in 1970. This program has restored the population of animals there to over 1,000 today. You will see many of these animals, with their sweet ET necks and faces; from hatchlings to juveniles to large, distinguished individuals. This is where famed tortoise, Lonesome George, lived out his last days as the last of his particular race of tortoise.

A highlight of any trip to the archipelago is a visit to the Santa Cruz Highlands, where the sparse, dry coastal vegetation transitions to lush wet fields and forests overgrown with moss and lichens. Our afternoon destination is the Wild Tortoise Reserve where we will have chances to track and view these friendly ancient creatures in their natural setting. This extends to the adjacent pasturelands, where farmers give tortoise safe quarter in exchange for allowing paying visitors to see them.

When viewing the tortoise in their natural setting you are literally scratching the surface because there is another world awaiting you beneath the highlands. Lava tubes are formed when the outer surface of a lava flow cools, insulating the interior lava, which continues to flow on leaving a hollow tube as the result. The tubes become covered with earth over time and the result is a perfectly formed underground tunnel courtesy of Mother Nature. A wooden stairway descends to the mouth of the arched entrance to one of these underground passages and continues to the narrow opening that marks its exit. There are lights to show you the way but it's also a good idea to bring a flashlight.

The terrestrial world of the tortoise and underworld of the lava tubes meet at Los Gemelos (the twins). These two large sinkholes craters were formed by collapsed lava tubes. The contrast between the marine desert coast and verdant Lost World look of the highlands is most striking here and you can easily encounter rain even when sun is shining a half an hour away at the coast. Los Gemelos are surrounded by a Scalesia forest. Scalesia is endemic to Galapagos and many endemic and native species call the forest home. This is an excellent place to view some of Darwin's famous finches along with the elusive and dazzling vermillion flycatcher. We return to Puerto Ayora with time for shopping, visiting an internet café or simply enjoying this little port town near the edge of the world.



ACTIVITIES

AM

Morning: The Charles Darwin Research Station.

Type of Landing: Dry

Level of Walk: Easy

Other Activities: Shopping in Puerto Ayora

PM

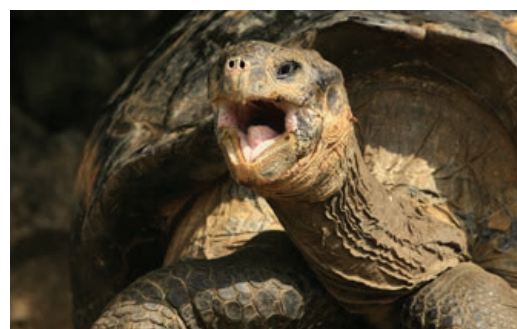
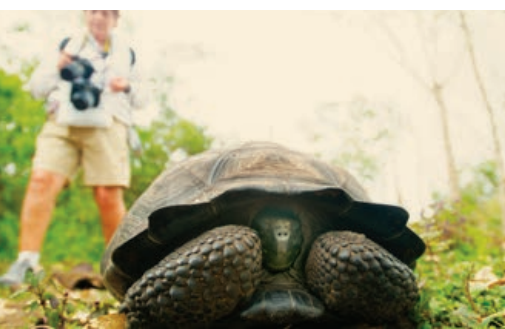
Late Afternoon: Highlands.

Type of Landing: Dry

Level of Walk: Easy

Other Activities: Nature Hikes

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner



THE PERFECT BEACH & BLOWHOLE

DAY 7 - FRIDAY

AM: Punta Suarez
PM: Gardner Bay, Gardner Islet



Hood is the southernmost island of the archipelago, and is one of the most popular due to the breathtaking variation and sheer number of fauna that greet visitors along with well known **Gardner Bay**. The giant tortoise was reintroduced to **Hood** in the 1970's and counts as one of the park's great success stories. They reside in an off-limits area.

The quantity and variety of wildlife at **Punta Suarez** is remarkable. Sea lions surf the waves beyond the breakwater landing, and tiny pups are known to greet your toes upon arrival. A few steps inland is a colorful variety of marine iguana in the Galapagos. They bear distinctive red and black markings, some with a flash of turquoise running down their spine. They nap in communal piles or cling to the rocks for warmth. The trail then takes us beside the western edge of the island where masked boobies (also known as Nazca boobies) nest along the cliff's edge. The trail descends to a rocky beach before rising to an open area where you may see a large gathering of nesting blue-foot boobies. Galapagos doves, cactus finch and mocking birds forage nearby, unconcerned by human presence. Both lava and swallow-tailed gulls, with their red ringed eyes, sit atop the cliffs in company with marine iguanas.

The trail continues to the high cliff edge of the southern shore; below, a shelf of black lava reaches out into the surf where a blowhole shoots a periodic geyser of salt water into the air. Further east along the cliff is the Albatross Airport where waved albatross line up to launch their great winged bodies from the cliffs, soaring out over the dramatic shoreline of crashing waves and driven spray. These are the largest birds you will see in the Galapagos with wingspans up to 2.25 m or 7.4 ft. They are the only species of albatross exclusive to the tropics. In the trees set back from the cliff is one of only two places in the world where the waved albatross nests. The 12,000 pairs that inhabit **Hood Island** comprise all but a tiny fraction of the world's population of this species. Lucky visitors can watch courtship 'fencing' done with great yellow beaks. Large, fluffy, perfectly camouflaged chicks adorn nests on the ground nearby. The Albatross lay their eggs from April through June though they can be seen fencing long after that. Eggs take two months to hatch. Hungry chicks can eat up to 2 kg (4.4 lb) a day which keeps their parents busy. By December the chicks are fully grown and ready to set out on their own in January. Pairs mate for life.

On the northeastern shore of **Hood**, **Gardner Bay** offers a magnificent long white sandy beach, where colonies of sea lions laze in the sun, sea turtles swim offshore and inquisitive mockingbirds boldly investigate new arrivals. You will be lured from the powdery white sand into the turquoise water for a swim, but just a little further off-shore the snorkeling by **Gardner Island** offers peak encounters with playful young sea lions and schools of surprisingly large tropical fish, including yellow tailed surgeonfish, king angelfish and bump-head parrot fish. The young sea lions like to snack and play along **Gardner Island's** sea cliff. They dart up from the depths, playfully show off their skills and then disappear. Sleepy white-tipped reef sharks can also be seen napping on the bottom. **Gardner Bay** and Islet also offer inviting waters for those interested in kayaking. For all who visit here, **Española** is a highlight of the Galapagos.



ACTIVITIES

AM **Morning:** Punta Suarez
Type of Landing: Dry
Level of Walk: Difficult
Other Activities: Nature Hikes

PM **Late Afternoon:** Gardner Bay, Gardner Islet
Type of Landing: Wet
Level of Walk: Easy
Other Activities: Nature Hikes, Snorkeling, Panga Ride & Kayaking

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner



FARWELL TO DARWIN'S FIRST ISLAND

DAY 8 - SATURDAY

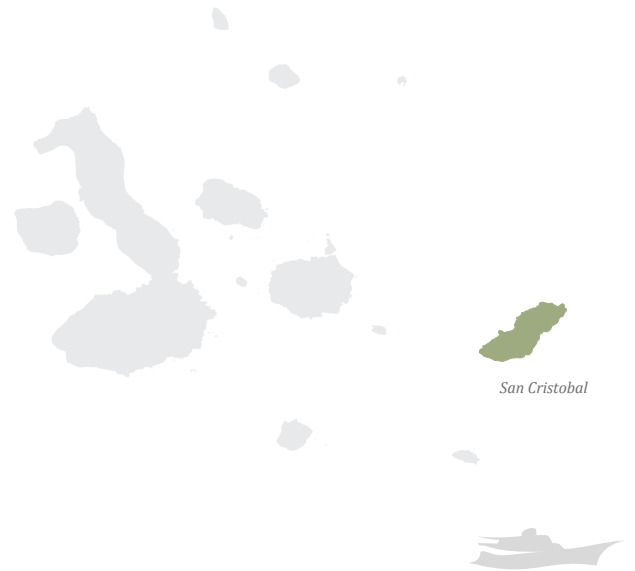
AM: Interpretation Center / Flight Home



San Cristobal was the first island Darwin visited when he arrived in 1835. He reported encountering a pair of giant tortoises feeding on cactus during that outing. Today the airport of this easternmost island in the chain is increasingly used as the arrival point for flights into and out of the Galapagos. The administrative capital for the province is **Puerto Baquerizo Moreno** on the southwestern shore. Your guide will give you clear instructions on the rest of the day's events before we go ashore. Once we arrive in port we board a dinghy (panga) to make the short crossing to dock. In recent years a great deal of effort has gone into sprucing up the waterfront including the building of the new municipal dock. You only need to bring your day pack as the crew will pick up your luggage at your cabin and insure that it gets to the airport, which is less than a 5 minute drive from the waterfront.

In 1998 the **Galapagos National Park Visitor Center** opened for the benefit of islanders and travelers alike, presenting a comprehensive exhibit of the islands' natural history, human interaction, ecosystems, flora and fauna. This is our last stop in the islands and it is also the place where cultural activities take place, including theatre, exhibitions and workshops. From the Interpretation Center, a short trail arrives at **Frigate Bird Hill**, where both "magnificent-frigates" and "great-frigates" can be seen in the same colony—ideal for learning to distinguish the two bird species. The interpretation center will be our final stop today before departing the islands.

Along with your tour of the visitor center museum there will be time to stroll the quaint tiny port town, with time to shop for last minute souvenirs before taking the bus to the airport where you will have your last chance to make purchases in the Galapagos. There is one final check point before entering the waiting area from which you will board your flight. Almost all flights to the mainland stop in Guayaquil and continue on to Quito so make sure you know where to get off the plane. We say farewell to the **Galapagos** as you begin your journey home, or on to other destinations like the Ecuadorian highlands, Amazon or nearby Peru.



San Cristobal

NOTE ON GALAPAGOS ITINERARIES

To lessen the environmental impact on visitor sites, The **Galapagos National Park** has decided that vessels permitted to operate within the park cannot revisit the same site within **14 days**. As a result our yachts now repeat the same itinerary every two weeks (instead of every week). We split our two week long itineraries in half with the result that we now operate two different **8 days / 7 nights** voyages from **Saturday to Saturday**. We therefore alternate itineraries every other week. Both itineraries are excellent and guests visiting the islands will be pleased with either choice. While there are always tradeoffs of what one can and cannot see during a weeklong trip through the Galapagos, you can now see almost everything by doing back to back itineraries aboard the **M/V Evolution**.

M/V Evolution

To take a virtual tour of the Evolution featuring photos, deck plan, video, itinerary & more go to

<https://www.quasarex.com/galapagos/mv-evolution>



Interpretation Center

ACTIVITIES

AM

Morning: Interpretation Center

Type of Landing: Dry

Level of Walk: Easy

Other Activities: Nature Hikes

Late Morning: Return to Mainland Ecuador

Meals: Breakfast

Forbes

Condé Nast
Traveler

CNN

TRAVEL+
LEISURE

LUXURY
TRAVEL

ELITE

Sotheby's




QUASAR
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