

SOUTH AMERICA - M/S BEAGLE: 8 DAY NORTHWEST



INTRODUCTION

The Beagle is named after the HMS Beagle, on which Charles Darwin visited the Galapagos Islands during the historic voyage that led to his ground breaking theory of evolution, inspired to a great extent by his observations in this extraordinary archipelago. A magnificent 105-foot sailing yacht with teak decks and beautifully designed interiors, The Beagle is a classic among Galapagos vessels, as well as being one of the friendliest and most comfortable.

Cruising the islands of the northwest Galapagos takes you to the islands of Santa Cruz, Genovesa, Isabela and Fernandina. Stunning scenery including volcanoes, lava tunnels, mangrove swamps, lagoons, coral beaches and towering cliffs await as well as an incredible wildlife with species found nowhere else in the world.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Baltra Airport / Las Bachas

On arrival at Baltra Airport all visitors pay their entrance fee to the Galapagos National Park. You will then be met by The Beagle's naturalist guide who will assist you with your luggage collection and accompany you on a short bus ride to the harbour to board The Beagle. After a light lunch on board, The Beagle navigates to Las Bachas. Located on the northern shore of Santa Cruz Island, Las Bachas is a white sand beach that is a major nesting site for the green sea turtles. On the shore there are marine iguanas, and in the lagoon area flamingos are common. Visitors are welcome to swim from the beach.



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DAY 2: Genovesa Island

After a dry landing we climb up Prince Philip's Steps. The steep ascent takes you 100 feet above sea level onto a lava rock trail leading you through Palo Santo forest full of nesting birds. You may see red-billed tropicbirds, Galapagos shearwaters and red-footed and Nazca boobies. The Palo Santo forest is dormant most of the year, awakening in the rainy season and giving the air a refreshing aroma. As you exit the latent trees you may be lucky enough to witness the panorama of thousands of storm petrels flying erratically beyond the lava flows. This is the perfect scenario for the island predator to make a successful kill. The short-eared owl is known elsewhere around the world as a nocturnal predator, but in Genovesa it hunts in bright daylight. More cat than owl, it waits patiently outside lava tunnels and crevasses to capture the stormy petrels as they leave their nests after feeding their young. After lunch and a snorkel along the amazing cliff sides, we visit the beach area of Darwin Bay, formed from a caldera collapse. The bay is home to frigate birds, red-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, flycatchers, lava gulls, storm petrels and Darwin finches, amongst many other species.



DAY 3: Puerto Egas

This morning see us making a wet landing onto a black beach at James Bay, also known as Puerto Egas. The shorelines are magical, combining tuff cones, lava flows and organic sand. The rocky coast with its very gentle slope is used by a great number of shore birds and reptiles.

Oystercatchers, whimbrels, sanderlings, turnstones, tattlers and other waders are found here along with marine iguanas and bright painted crabs that feed by the rich littoral zone. Large lava tunnels, that are partially collapsed, are the houses of Galapagos fur sea lions. An easy stroll takes us near the coast line where we observe tidal pools, marine birds, iguanas and sea lions. Migratory birds are also often present in this area and it is a good place to observe the Galapagos hawk. The trail ends at the grottos where fur seals sleep during the day. On returning to the beach there is the option to snorkel or swim. The snorkelling here can be one of the best in the archipelago in amongst sea turtles, parrot fish, damsel fish, white tipped reef sharks and much more... After lunch The Beagle starts navigating to the west side of Isabela Island.



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DAY 4: Isabela Island

Punta Vicente Roca offers an overwhelming diversity of geological formations. Located on the southwest end of Ecuador Volcano, only a few miles south of latitude 0, the area is an outstanding example of how the islands were formed and how the forces of change have transformed the landscape and shaped the wildlife. Vicente Roca is the home of tuff cones and lava dikes and is fertile ground for erosion and the disaster of collapse. We will look at the dramatic structures from our dinghies, as we watch the Galapagos penguins, brown noddies, blue-footed boobies and other marine life. When the waters are calm enough the snorkelling is fascinating, with the marine wildlife taking full advantage of the nutrient-rich waters. The walls of the tuff cones are full of colourful invertebrates and rich algae blooming that give us a great chance to watch numerous sea turtles feeding. At Tagus Cover we take a 30 minute hike to the top of a cliff to view the volcanic landscapes of Darwin Volcano and Darwin Lake, the latter an uplifted ultra-saline lake that is saltier than the sea. Historically used as an anchorage site by pirates and whalers, this site is again an excellent place for marine and land birds.



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DAY 5: Fernandina Island

Fernandina is the youngest island of the archipelago at only 30,000 to 100,000 years old. This immature shield volcano is less than an instant in the geological time scale. The whole Island is covered with hostile worthless lava, but at Punta Espinoza, the shoreline teems with life. As you disembark at Punta Espinoza, you must be careful not to step on the marine iguanas piled up together to retain body heat. This visiting site is rich in wildlife, including sea lions, flightless cormorants, penguins, herons, Sally light-foot crabs and many more species, all living side by side in this small area with its fascinating mangrove forest. Located to the south at the foot of the western side of Alcedo Volcano lies Urbina Bay. The landmass of the inlet was uplifted in 1954. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of shoreline was created, many coral reef extensions becoming exposed to the air as the upheaval raised the seabed. The new area of land became a perfect nesting terrain for the most beautiful land dragon. The land iguanas of Isabela are the largest in the Galapagos and in Urbina the colourful population offers a great example of their growing potential. The impressive yellow, orange/brown iguanas roam the lowlands looking for flowers, fruits, leaves and shoots of their favourite plants. The colony has grown substantially since the feral dogs and goats have been controlled through Project Isabela. This visit also affords an opportunity to see the Alcedo Volcano tortoise in its natural habitat.



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DAY 6: Elizabeth Bay / Punta Moreno

Elizabeth Bay is a marine visitor site so the excursion is made by dinghy to the Mariela Rocks, where there is an important colony of Galapagos penguins. The dinghy ride takes you into a cove surrounded by red mangroves. Here in these quiet lagoons there may be green sea turtles, spotted eagle rays, golden rays, brown pelicans, small sharks and flightless cormorants. Elizabeth Bay is the only place on Earth where old tropical mangrove forests and penguins can both be seen. A lava walk takes you to a series of lagoons with plenty to see along the way. Darwin's finches, Galapagos doves, Galapagos penguins, blue-footed boobies, mockingbirds and flightless cormorants are some of the abundant wildlife found here. Still on Isabela, the largest island in the Galapagos, you will explore Punta Moreno, a desolate and pristine landscape of impressive black lava flows affording good views of Alcedo and Sierra Azul volcanoes.



DAY 7: Isabela Island

After breakfast, we head for the Sierra Negra volcano, the second largest volcanic crater in the world. It sits in the southern part of Isabela Island. Transportation is available to the end of the road, followed by a 45-minute walk on a trail to the top of the volcano from where the caldera can be viewed. On returning from the hike, we visit the Arnaldo Tupiza Breeding Centre, to see the giant tortoises. The centre is set in beautiful gardens that feature native plants. Five species of giant tortoise have been bred in captivity here - Cazuela, Cinco Cerros, Roca Union, San Pedro, Tables and Cerro Paloma and there are over 300 juvenile and adult tortoises at the centre. Lunch is served back on board The Beagle, and after lunch there is the option to go swimming in one of the Coves of Villamil Port. In the afternoon the boat begins travelling towards Puerto Ayora.



DAY 8: Departure Day

Our Galapagos experience ends today, and you will be taken to Baltra Airport for your flight back to mainland Ecuador.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard Cabin
Inclusions	Airport transfers in Galapagos Lodging in Twin/Matrimonial cabin as confirmed All meals during your stay on board the Beagle Snorkel equipment All excursions lead by an English speaking naturalist Guide
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.
- 5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structures to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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