

ECUADOR - CORAL II



INTRODUCTION

Cruise the Galapagos Islands with this 4 day itinerary full of beautiful nature and exploration. At Charles Darwin Station you will learn about the efforts that have been done to restore the tortoise populations in the Islands and at Floreana Island you will learn interesting stories about the human history of the Galapagos. At Cormorant Point you might find migratory birds, a green sand beach made of olivine and behind the flamingo lagoon, a white sand beach where nesting sea turtles and sting rays might be found.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE

ECTSC4D

DEPARTURE

Selected Sundays

DURATION

4 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Galapagos Islands



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DAY 1: Baltra Airport / Santa Cruz Island

Take a flight from Quito or Guayaquil to Baltra. The flight from Quito to the Galapagos is approximately 2 ½ hours and from Guayaquil approximately 1 ½ hours. Arriving in the Galapagos, passengers are met at the airport by our naturalist guides and driven ten minutes by bus to the pier to board the M/Y Coral I or M/Y Coral II. PM - Fausto Llerena Breeding Centre - Charles Darwin Station (Santa Cruz Island) Dry landing. We visit the Station where the Galapagos giant tortoise breeding program takes place as part of our efforts to preserve the fragile Galapagos environment and where the famous Lonesome George (the last surviving specimen of his species) lived for decades. The program is conducted by Galapagos National Park staff with the collaboration of scientists from the Charles Darwin Research Station. Eggs are brought from the Galapagos Islands of Pinzon, Santiago and Santa Cruz to the station where they are incubated artificially. The “galapaguitos” (little Galapagos) are hatched and reared until the age of 5 years when they are released in their native areas when they are capable of surviving the effects of introduced predators (rats, pigs and dogs). Since 1970, more than 2,000 “galapaguitos” have returned to their native areas. On the visit you can admire a prickly-pear cactus forest and a variety of Darwin’s finches and other land birds. The Darwin Station also works to provide environmental education to communities, schools within the Islands and tourists who are visiting the Galapagos. If there is enough time, you can visit the town and shop for souvenirs.



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DAY 2: Dragon Hill (Santa Cruz)

Dry landing. We walk past a brackish lagoon where feeding flamingos can occasionally be found. The trail leads across typical dry zone vegetation up to Dragon Hill, an important nesting ground for endemic land iguanas, and offering scenic views of the anchorage and neighbouring islands. The forest is home to mockingbirds, Darwin's finches, yellow warblers and Galapagos doves. PM - Bartolomé Dry or wet landing. Here we discover a fascinating moonscape formed by different volcanic parasitic cones - lava bombs, spatter cones and cinder cones as we hike to the summit for impressive views of the surrounding islands, including the eroded tuff cone Pinnacle Rock. We may also encounter marine iguanas, lava lizards and blue-footed boobies. Beach time is a great opportunity to snorkel and see Galapagos penguins, sea turtles and white-tipped reef sharks as well as a great variety of colourful fish. For many visitors, this may turn out to be the best of snorkelling experiences as the water here is generally clear, without too much surf and full of marine life. Due to its geographical location, the lack of vegetation is immediately noticeable. Pioneer plants can be seen, so called because they are the first to establish roots on new ground. They include *Tiquilia nesiotica* (known as gray matplant and which is endemic to the island) and *Chamaesyce* (known as sand mat or spurge in English), lava cactus and *Scalesia* bushes. Behind the beach are dunes covered by mangroves.



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DAY 3: Rábida

Wet landing. Dark red sand covers these unique beaches with their incredible landscape. Rábida is considered the epicentre of the Galapagos Islands due to the diversity of its volcanic geology.

Nesting brown pelicans are found from July to September and 9 species of the famous Darwin's finches can be seen. We take a dinghy ride along the cliffs to observe nesting seabirds and snorkel off the coast, where marine life is particularly active. PM - Buccaneers Cove/ Espumilla Beach
This is an amazing location, featuring the remains of an eroded shoreline that is home to seabirds, fur seals and the playful sea lions. Its different shapes have been made throughout a process caused by erosion of the waves and the wind. Espumilla Beach is a white-sandy beach in James Bay and is a popular place among visitors. There are mangroves and a small palo santo forest that lead to salty-water lagoons that are home to wading birds like flamingos. In the upper dunes are a nesting site for sea turtles. A good place to snorkel to see rays.



DAY 4: Black Turtle Cove (Santa Cruz)

Black Turtle Cove is found on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island and accessible only by sea. Four species of mangrove crowd from the shore out into the lagoon. Here turtles enjoy swimming in the calm waters, peaking their heads above the surface while fish, rays and small sharks circle below. White-tipped reef sharks can sometimes be seen beneath the boat. Seabirds including pelicans, herons and egrets all feed in the cove. This cove has been declared a "Turtle Sanctuary". After the visit you are transferred to Baltra Airport for your return flight to Guayaquil or Quito.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin on ship

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Inclusions	<p>Shipboard accommodation All meals whilst on board including snacks All shore excursions Guiding and lectures by Galapagos Naturalist Guide English-speaking Expedition team Fuel surcharge Welcome and farewell cocktails</p> <p>Exclusions Return airfares from mainland Ecuador Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee (US\$100 per person subject to change) Galapagos Transit Control Card (US\$20 per person subject to change) Visa Fees (if applicable) Travel insurance Gratuities for the crew Optional activities whilst on board</p>
Difficulty Rating	1 (easy)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

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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 structured to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are

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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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