

SOUTH AMERICA - MY PASSION



TRIP CODE

ECTSP8E

DEPARTURE

Saturdays

DURATION

8 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Galapagos
Islands



INTRODUCTION

Waved albatrosses, red-footed boobies, large-beaked ground finches, large cactus finches, dense colonies of land iguanas and the largest giant opuntia cacti are all waiting to be discovered as you cruise amongst the islands aboard the luxurious M/Y Passion. Visit lagoons and lava flows, swim with penguins, snorkel alongside turtles and encounter giant Galapagos tortoises in their natural environment. See nesting frigatebirds, swallow-tailed gulls, red-billed tropicbirds and swarms of petrels at Genovesa. We invite you to experience all this and much more on board the M/Y Passion, cruising the eastern side of the Galapagos Islands.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival to Santa Cruz Island

On arrival at Baltra airport you will be greeted by our representative who will escort you to the M/Y Passion for boarding followed by lunch. After lunch, we will navigate the 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 and golden rays may cruise alongside the panga as it makes its way through the mangroves.



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DAY 2: Visit Genovesa Island

AM We travel to Genovesa Island and reach Darwin Bay where we make a wet landing. This is 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 we make a dry landing, before climbing the edge of a cliff where frigatebirds, Nazca boobies and red-footed boobies nest. We will be seeking out the impressive red-billed tropicbird amidst Galapagos storm petrels.



DAY 3: Bartholomew & Sullivan Bay

AM After a dry landing at Bartholomew we climb up the wooden steps to reach the summit of this spatter cone for the most breathtaking panorama of the islands' well photographed Pinnacle Rock, along with views of neighbouring Santiago and many other central islands in the distance. PM We head across to Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island for a dry landing. Here we walk over a recent lava flow, including very fresh pahoe-hoe 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: Rábida Island & Dragon Hill

AM A wet landing on Rábida's deep-red beaches enables us to explore the red island's fascinating interior and saltwater lagoon. Darwin's finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, and yellow warblers feed off the vegetation and at the right time of the year, brown pelicans can be seen nesting on salt bushes that fringe the beach. PM We head across to Cerro Dragón on Santa Cruz's north-west shore and make a dry landing. We 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.



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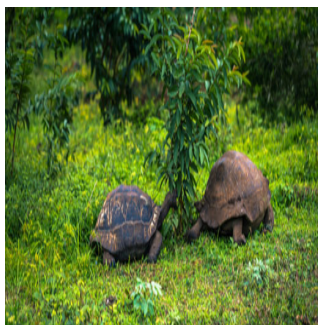
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DAY 5: Santa Cruz highlands & Charles Darwin Station

AM We will spend today visiting Santa Cruz Island's most famous highlights. We will have a dry landing in the dock of Puerto Ayora before boarding our vehicle and heading to the Islands highlands. This area, in contrast to the coastal region, has lush vegetation and forest, due to the humidity that gathers in the higher zones. We will visit one of the ranches in 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 freely and change their locations. Galapagos hawks and barn owls can be seen here and the surrounding forests are filled with birds such as the vermilion flycatcher and the yellow warbler. PM We will enjoy lunch at the ranch before heading back to Puerto Ayora for our second visit of the day, the Charles Darwin Research Station and the Fausto Llerena Breeding Centre. 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 tourists. 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 usual briefing.



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DAY 6: Plaza Sur & Santa Fe

AM This morning sees us making a dry landing on one of the oldest docks of the archipelago, colourful Plaza Sur. Plaza Sur is home to vibrant green prickly pear cacti, deep red Sesuvium and coppery-orange land iguanas. Impressive seaward cliffs provide habitat 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 onto a white beach on Santa Fe where sea lions are usually resting, we look 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.



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DAY 7: Punta Suarez & Espanola


AM We arrive at Punta Suárez and make a dry landing. Here there is a spectacular walk that takes us past the nesting sites of blue-footed and Nazca boobies, and you may be lucky enough to witness the fascinating breeding rituals (April to December) of the waved albatross. Lined with neon-coloured marine iguanas (January), and lazy Galapagos sea lions, the track takes us to an amazing viewpoint of the famous blowhole. PM We will spend the afternoon on fantastic Española Island, starting with Gardner Bay (wet landing), an outstanding beach with sea lions, marine iguanas, and the intrepid Española mockingbird.



DAY 8: Departure day

AM This is our last day on the islands. After breakfast we will disembark in Puerto Ayora to transfer to Baltra Airport, making a short stop to visit the Twin Craters en route. The Gemelos (twins) are two deep craters located to the side of the road that leads to Puerto Ayora from the other side of the island. It is thought that these huge holes were created in a volcanic explosion or by magma chambers underneath the island’s surface. This is also a good place to see the Galapagos hawk and the barn owl. The surrounding forests are filled with birds including the vermilion flycatcher and the yellow warbler. The vegetation of the highlands contrasts greatly with the arid coastal zones. After this visit we head to Baltra airport for the flight back to mainland Ecuador.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS	
Accommodation	Superior
Inclusions	Accommodation on board the MY Passion Daily excursions Guided Expeditions by Naturalists Captain's welcome cocktail All soft drinks Complementary en suite snacks
Difficulty Rating	1 (easy)

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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 structured 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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