

ECUADOR - DAPHNE PURE GALAPAGOS



INTRODUCTION

The ultimate Galapagos adventure, combining iconic sights such as Pinnacle Rock with off-the-beaten-track gems as you sail to some of the remotest parts of the Galapagos archipelago. Explore the west coast of Isla Isabela by small panga boat and venture to Isla Fernandina in the far west, home to the highest density of marine iguanas in the Galapagos. Discover the turtle-dotted sands of Las Bachas and the old pirate haunt of Buccaneer Cove. Snorkel with sea lions, turtles, iguanas and white-tipped reef sharks and take in the incredible array of birdlife. This is a paradise for wildlife-lovers.

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8 Days

LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Galapagos Islands



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DAY 1: Isla Santa Cruz

Welcome to the Galapagos! Today you will be meeting other travellers arriving from Quito at Baltra Airport. Please be at the airport by 09.30am. The guide cannot wait for you so you need to make sure that you are there on time. Once you have met up with the rest of the group, a 10 minute transfer will bring you to the Daphne which will be anchored in Baltra. Once on board, you'll be assigned a cabin, meet the crew and get to know your naturalist guide and fellow travellers over a delicious lunch. Sail from Baltra to Las Bachas (approximately 30 minutes; 4 nautical miles). The lush sands of Las Bachas, on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, are a nesting site for the Pacific green turtle. Marine iguanas are also commonly spotted. The sand here, made of decomposed coral, is particularly white and soft. The rocks make for excellent snorkelling and are populated by Sally Lightfoot crabs which are plentiful on the island. A saltwater lagoon just near the beach is home to flamingo and whimbrel – you might also see a great blue heron. Remnants of a floating pier, a testimony to the US presence in the Galapagos during World War II, can also be seen.



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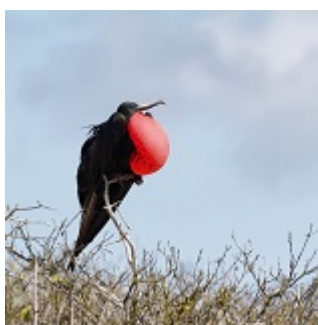
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DAY 2: Isla North Seymour - Isla Bartolome

Sail from Baltra to Isla North Seymour (approximately 45 minutes; 5 nautical miles). This is one of the most visited islands of the Galapagos. First up is a solid walk, the highlight of which may well be blue-footed boobies and swallow-tailed gulls. Boobies and frigates have an interesting relationship, sharing the same nesting area on North Seymour. Blue-footed boobies nest on the ground while the frigate birds nest just above them in the saltbushes. As you walk, look out for land iguanas, marine iguanas, Galapagos sea lions and the endemic incense tree. After the walk, go snorkelling and encounter a great variety of fish – perhaps white-tipped reef sharks, rays and sea lions. Next it's off to Isla Bartolomé (approximately 2.5 hours; 18 miles), one of the most spectacular volcanic landscapes in the Galapagos, full of parasitic spatter cones, lava flows, Galapagos penguins and lava lizards. Bartolomé is a relatively new island in the archipelago. Put on your walking shoes and climb over 360 wooden steps to the summit, where an amazing view of Pinnacle Rock awaits. This is one of the photographed sights in the Galapagos: an abrupt jag of rock protruding from the earth like a tooth, near two back-to-back golden bays. Hike to the top of a once-active volcano and enjoy superb views across to Sullivan Bay on nearby Santiago Island. If you're in luck, you might catch a glimpse of the Galapagos hawk. There's also the opportunity to go snorkelling among the colourful tropical marine life.



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DAY 3: Isla Santiago

Head to Puerto Egas (approximately 4.5 hours, 35 nautical miles), a black-sand beach on the west side of James Bay, northwest of Santiago Island. It's home to some amazing volcanic tuff formations. Take a stroll along the beach where marine iguanas, pelicans, finches, mockingbirds, oystercatchers, Galapagos sea lions and Galapagos fur seals are known to frolic. You can see the amazing tidal pools, formed from ancient lava flow, providing a home for sponges, snails, hermit crabs, barnacles and fish. Snorkelling in the midst of seals always offers the possibility of thrilling encounters. After Puerto Egas, sail to Espumilla Beach (approximately 45 minutes; 5 miles), located on the northern coast of Santiago Island. Experience the texture of its unique soft sand on your feet. The waters are tranquil, yet can also form large waves, making it a favourite among beach lovers. The vegetation is a vivid green. Not only is this island a nesting site for marine turtles, it's also a place to see ghost crabs, blue-footed boobies (often plunging for fish) and brown pelicans. There's also the chance to see Galapagos hawks up close. It is also well known for its palo santo forest and some extraordinary lava formations. Next you will visit Buccaneer Cove (approximately 15 minutes; 2 nautical miles) and witness its spectacular geology of volcanic ash (tuff). Here you might find the remains of objects used by pirates in centuries past. This is where Darwin camped for nine days while making his study of the islands and their wildlife. If conditions are favourable, you can enjoy some more snorkelling.



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DAY 4: Isla Isabela - Isla Fernandina

Visit Tagus Cove, where pirates and whalers used to collect turtles for their travels. Enjoy a short visit here (approximately 2 hours), perhaps snorkelling or checking out the ancient graffiti on the walls (the oldest of which is from 1836). Witness flightless cormorants, blue-footed boobies and a variety of waterfowl and penguins (the most northerly penguins in the world). You will walk to a lookout point for a stunning panorama of the north of Isabela Island and the Wolf volcano. This morning you will also visit nearby Fernandina Island, the youngest of the Galapagos Islands. It's also volcanically active and the most westerly island, making it one of the least visited. The third largest in size, it erupted most recently in 2009. The absence of introduced mammals gives it a unique landscape, and it boasts the highest concentration of marine iguanas on the archipelago. The northeast tip, Punta Espinosa, is a narrow ledge of lava and sand extending from the base of La Cumbre volcano. You will take a walk around the beautiful peninsula, which boasts such wildlife and plant life as lava cacti, marine iguanas, barking sea lions, tiny penguins and Sally Lightfoot crabs. Keep a lookout for that marvellous Galapagos predator hunting from the treetops - the Galapagos hawk. Top-notch snorkelling opportunities await in the clear waters, and turtles and sea lions can be seen swimming around and feeding on the shore. This is a great spot to see flightless cormorants drying their atrophied wings amid the volcanic landscape.



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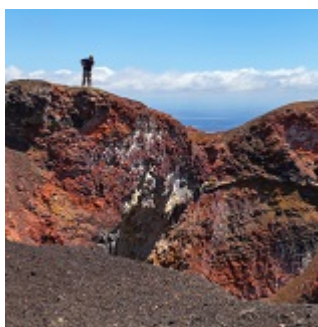
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DAY 5: Isla Isabela

Today you will land at the archipelago's largest island – Isabela. The island is located in one of the youngest geological areas in the world, having formed less than a million years ago. Here you will take a Panga ride along Elizabeth Bay, which is located on the west coast of Isabela Island and does not permit landings. Keep your binoculars and camera at the ready to photograph the second-smallest penguins in the world. You might also spot blue-footed boobies perched on the islets or diving for their next meal. Then you'll head for the mangrove forest, which is quite unique in the Galapagos, to see sea turtles, sea lions, penguins, lava herons, rays and plenty of colourful fish – pompanos, dorados and mullets. Your destination is Punta Moreno (approximately 2.5 hours; 18 nautical miles) on the south west coast. You'll spend the afternoon here. This coastline has some of the most beautiful blue lagoons and rocky terrain in the Galapagos, with a backdrop of three active volcanoes, myriad flamingos and incredible lava formations. Landing is impossible here too, due to the delicate ecosystem. Go for an amazing walk on top of the black lava field with the majestic view of Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul in the background. Depending on the season, you can see brown pelicans nesting on top of the mangroves, lava and candelabra cactus, plus lava lizards. You'll pass brackish water lagoons, covered with several different plants, where pink flamingos, ducks and black neck stilts rest. Then jump aboard once again and head out for a snorkel and look out for the elusive sea horse. An overnight sail takes us to Puerto Villamil (8 hours, 64 nautical miles).



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DAY 6: Isla Isabela

This morning, visit Las Tintoreras, a little peninsula at the entrance of Isabela Island's Port. Here there's a viewing walkway from where you can look down into the narrow channel to see a colony of white-tipped reef sharks swimming and sleeping - and the occasional sea lion among them. Blue-footed boobies, penguins, marine iguanas and crabs also make their home here. Enjoy a nice long walk on a gravel path, heading through lava flows and spotting plenty of marine iguanas. The natives of the islands call white sharks 'tintoreras', hence the name of this spectacular site. This is where everything comes together for one big marine and wildlife party. Without trying you will see sea lions, penguins and frigate birds. After breakfast you will take a bus up to Sierra Negra Volcano where you will see the crater and explore the area. This volcano last erupted in 2005. In the afternoon you will visit the Interpretation Center and Humedales, the wetlands of Isabela. You'll reach them via a complex trail which winds around for some six kilometres. Upon arrival you'll find an intriguing spread of flora and fauna (including flamingos) and some spectacular scenery. Tonight, sail to Cerro Dragon (5 hours 45 minutes, 45 nautical miles).



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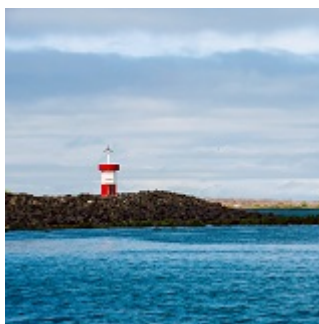
DAY 7: Isla Santa Cruz


Wake up this morning on Santa Cruz's north coast and visit Cerro Dragon aka Dragon Hill. From the dry landing, walk to a brackish lagoon that's frequented by birds such as stilts, pintail ducks, sandpipers, sanderlings and occasionally flamingos. Further inland, the trail offers a beautiful view of the bay and the western area of the archipelago. This area is a nesting site for land iguanas and is constantly monitored by the Charles Darwin Research Station. The arid-zone vegetation makes for some fine birdwatching. Darwin's finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, Galapagos flycatchers and yellow warblers are all regulars here. The path can be challenging, but the reward is a spectacular view of the bay. In the afternoon you will visit Punta Carrion in north-eastern Santa Cruz. First sail to the Baltra dock (approximately 2.5 hours; 18 nautical miles), then to Punta Carrion (approximately 1 hour; 6 nautical miles). This is a shallow and protected cove, ideal for snorkelling and swimming. Wildlife is plentiful here – keep your eyes peeled for blue-footed boobies, Galapagos herons and great blue herons. Go swimming among the rays and white-tipped reef sharks. Afterwards, sail from Punta Carrion to Puerto Ayora (approximately 4 hours; 30 nautical miles).



DAY 8: Isla Santa Cruz

This morning you will visit the Santa Cruz Highlands. Travel through the agricultural region and into the misty forests where you can see the unique Scalesia cloud forest, dome-shaped giant tortoises in the wild, different species of Darwin finches and possibly the world-famous woodpecker and warbler finches. You might also glimpse a vermillion flycatcher. Then it's time to bid farewell to your fellow travellers as your trip comes to an end after this activity. You will be taken to the airport directly after this activity. If you plan to extend your stay after your cruise in Puerto Ayora you will need to make your own way back to town (your guide can assist with this).




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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS	
Accommodation	Standard

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Inclusions	<p>Meals 7 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners</p> <p>Transport Boat, Bus, Zodiac (Panga)</p> <p>Accommodation Overnight boat (7 nights)</p> <p>Included activities Isla Santa Cruz - Bachas Beach Walk (1 hour) - Wet Landing Isla North Seymour - Walk (2 hours) - Dry Landing Isla North Seymour - Snorkelling (1 hours) Isla Bartolome - Walk (1.5 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Bartolome - Snorkelling (1.5 hours) Isla Santiago - Puerto Egas - Walk (1.45 hours) - Wet Landing Isla Santiago - Puerto Egas - Snorkelling (1 hour) Isla Sanitago - Espumilla Beach - Walk (1.5 hours) - Wet Landing Isla Sanitago - Espumilla Beach - Snorkelling (45 mins) Isla Sanitago - Buccaneer's Cove - Sail (15 mins) Isla Isabela - Tagus Cove - Walk (1.45 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Isabela - Tagus Cove - Snorkel (1 hour) Isla Fernandina - Punta Espinosa - Walk (2 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Fernandina - Punta Espinosa - Snorkel (1 hour) Isla Isabela - Elizabeth Bay - Panga Ride (2 hours) Isla Isabela - Punta Moreno - Walk and Panga ride (2 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Isabela - Las Tintoreras visit (1.5 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Isabela - Sierra Negra Volcano Crater Walk (3.5 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Isabela - Los Humedales (Wetlands) - Dry Landing Isla Isabela - Interpretation Center Visit Isla Santa Cruz - Cerro Dragon - Walk (1.5 hours) - Dry Landing Isla Santa Cruz - Punta Carrion - Snorkelling (1 hour) Isla Santa Cruz - Highlands Visit (1 hour) - Dry Landing</p>
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
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

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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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