GALAPAGOS ISLANDS - HIDDEN JEWELS OF THE WESTERN ISLANDS



TRIP CODE

ECGASI6B

DEPARTURE

Selected Saturdays

DURATION

6 Days

LOCATIONS

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

INTRODUCTION

The western islands of the Galapagos archipelago is an unmatched experience, traveling through one of the most pristine and environmentally diverse locations of the world. A remarkable route that highlights the magnificent natural beauties and raw power of nature is unveiled every day. You can tell you're going to have an amazing day the instant you wake up because of the boat's soft rolling. You go on daily excursions with knowledgeable naturalists to discover the distinctive landscapes of the islands and get up close and personal with its recognizable and unique animals. Every moment presents an opportunity to commune with nature in its most pristine form, whether you're snorkeling with playful sea lions in what feels like a never-ending aquarium, trekking through volcanic terrain, or taking in the rich marine life while exploring in pangas along the coast. Keep an eye out for giant tortoises, land and marine iguanas, as well as the small finches that bring the living history of these islands to life.

*Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.

PLEASE NOTE: Pricing is subject to change and availability at the time of booking. Contact us for more information.

ITINERARY

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DAY 1: Santa Cruz Highlands

Today the adventure begins with your flight to the Galapagos Island. Upon arrival, our dedicated crew will receive you at the airport, give you a warm welcome and then transport you to the cruise ship. En route, visit the highland forests of Santa Cruz, where you'll search for Galapagos Giant tortoises in their natural habitat. This area offers the best opportunity in the Galapagos to observe these gentle giants, some reaching over 300 kg (600 pounds!), as they graze and rest by freshwater ponds. The highlands are also a haven for a diverse range of birds rarely found in the lowlands, including finches (tree, woodpecker, and vegetarian finches), flycatchers, and various species of water birds. Depending on the itinerary, you may explore a lava tunnel and gain insights into how these extraordinary formations were shaped by ancient volcanic eruptions.



DAY 2: Punta Moreno & Elizabeth bay

Moreno Point is a magical place with extensive lava fields which look lifeless at first sight. Once inland, scattered brackish lagoons form oasis of life where you can find flamingoes, gallinules, ducks and herons. Along the shore we will look for penguins, marine iguanas, flightless cormorants, blue-footed boobies, sea lions, oystercatchers and other shore birds. You will have the opportunity to snorkel with see sea turtles, cormorants and many species of fish. Look carefully in the long seaweeds and you might find a sea horse. In the afternoon visit Elizabeth Bay, a beautiful sheltered bay surrounded by large mangroves and barren lava fields. There is no trail here so you will take a dinghy tour to explore many channels, pools and coves teeming with life. This is one of the best locations in the islands to see Galapagos penguins, but don’t expect to see thousands of them, as the entire population of the islands is only about 3.000 of them. Flightless cormorants also nest in the area and blue-footed boobies and pelicans often fish in these shallow and rich waters. Rays and sea turtles are also very abundant.



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DAY 3: Urbina bay & Tagus Cove

Embark on a morning expedition to Urbina bay, a place is known for the dramatic uplifting that happened here during the 1950's. A large portion of the coast was pushed up, exposing many hectares of previously submerged land. Look carefully along the trail and you will find small shells and corals, a proof that the area was underwater more than sixty years ago. The trail will give the opportunity to see land iguanas and, during certain seasons, giant tortoises. Galapagos hawks nest in the area and are often seen flying or perched on the trees. This afternoon, hike Tagus cove, one of the places Charles Darwin visited during his exploration of the Galapagos islands. A trail will take you through a dry Palo Santo forests where you can see Darwin finches and mockingbirds. You will get great views of Darwin's lake and the large volcanos of northern Isabela. A boat tour along the shore will give you chances to see penguins, cormorants, marine iguanas and a very unique species: the Galapagos martin, a small endemic bird which is one of the most endangered species on the island.



DAY 4: Espinoza Point & Albermarle Point

Located at the base of an imposing volcano (the most active in the Galapagos islands) Espinoza point is one of the jewels of the Galapagos National Park. As soon as you disembark you will be surrounded by hundreds of marine iguanas, as this is the largest colony for the species. Sea lions bask in the beaches while their pups play in tide pools. Along the shore you will see flightless cormorants, which are restricted to the western areas of the archipelago. Surrounded by cold plankton-rich waters, Punta Espinosa is home for an array of species, including herons, pelicans, oystercatchers, sea turtles, shorebird and many more. Look up in the mangroves as Galapagos hawks often perch to look for their prey. In the afternoon, explore Albermarle Point, a destination renowned for its abundant wildlife and historical significance. During World War II, the Americans constructed a radar base to detect the presence of Japanese warships approaching the Galapagos. Remnants of this radar are still visible today. Despite the barren landscape surrounded by vast lava fields, the coastal areas boast some of the largest marine iguanas in the islands, along with Galapagos penguins, flightless cormorants, and various shorebirds.



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DAY 5: Egas Port & Espumilla Beach

Contrary to its name, Puerto Egas lacks an actual "port," yet you may encounter remnants of past attempts to colonize the island in the 1960s. The trail winds along the coastline, teeming with wildlife, from marine iguanas basking in the sun to Galapagos sea lions, herons, oystercatchers, and numerous shorebirds. The trail culminates in an area known as "the grottos," hosting a small colony of the endemic Galapagos fur seal—more elusive up close than its relative. Notably, land iguanas were reintroduced to the area in 2019 after being extinct from Santiago for over a century, so keep a keen eye out for these impressive reptiles. Espumilla beach is a stunning 1km (0.6 mi) stretch of beach with rust-colored sand situated on the northern coast of Santiago. Encircled by expansive mangrove trees and a captivating native dry forest, this locale serves as the habitat for Galapagos hawks, along with a diverse array of finches, mockingbirds, and doves. Be sure to explore the salt pan, especially during the rainy season when you might encounter flamingos and ducks.



DAY 6: Dragon Hill & Departure

Located in the northern coast of Santa Cruz, Dragon hill gets its name from the land iguanas that inhabit this area, the only location in the whole island of Santa Cruz where you can see this large species of reptiles. Thanks to a very successful breeding program, this population of land iguanas, which was in the brink of extinction during the 70’s and 80’s, has rapidly recovered. There is also a small salt water lagoon where we can often see flamingoes, ducks, stilts, sandpipers and other shorebirds. After the visit, bid farewell to your guide and fellow travelers before being transferred to the airport in anticipation of your flight back to the mainland.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin On Board A Catamaran Yacht

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Inclusions	**INCLUSIONS** Accommodation in double cabin Transfers in the Galapagos and airport assistance All meals during the cruise Water coffee and tea & soft drink All excursions as per the itinerary* English-Speaking Naturalist guide Snorkelling equipment Kayak & Paddle board equipment **EXCLUSIONS** Return airfares from mainland Ecuador Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee (US$200 per person from Aug 2024 - Subject to change) Galapagos Transit Control Card (US$20 per person - Subject to change) Wet suit rental Alcoholic drinks Personal expenses Gratuities for crew/guides Services not specified
Difficulty Rating	2 (Light Adventure)
Single Surcharge	A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.
Notes	All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice. Please note kayak activities are subject to weather conditions. Prices are based on per person, twin share* (unless otherwise stated) Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time *Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions and government regulations.
Price Dependent upon	Seasonality, fuel surcharges, currency fluctuations and availability at time of booking.

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SUSTAINABILITY

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