ECUADOR - 8 DAY WESTERN ITINERARY (B) | GALAXY STELLA



TRIP CODE
ECGASB8
DEPARTURE
Selected Wednesdays
DURATION
8 Days
LOCATIONS
Ecuador, Galapagos Islands

INTRODUCTION

This journey takes you through the western and central Galapagos, an area known for dramatic volcanic scenery and some of the richest wildlife viewing in the archipelago. From your first steps on Santa Cruz, you will move between highland forests, mangrove channels and rugged lava coastlines, each offering a different perspective on how life has adapted to these islands. As you travel through Isabela and Fernandina, you will see some of the region's most iconic species in their natural settings, including marine iguanas, penguins, flightless cormorants and giant tortoises.

Across the week, you will explore a mix of landing sites and sheltered bays, giving you time to walk, snorkel and observe wildlife from the water. Locations such as Moreno Point, Espinoza Point, Tagus Cove and BartolomÃ© highlight the geological forces that shaped the islands, while places like Buccaneer Cove, Chinese Hat and Black Turtle Cove offer calm conditions ideal for spotting sea turtles, rays and reef sharks. With a steady rhythm of guided activities and time to enjoy the landscapes from the vessel, this itinerary offers a comprehensive look at the western side of the Galapagos and is well suited to travellers who want a strong balance of wildlife, scenery and exploration.

ITINERARY

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DAY 1: Arrive Galapagos Islands

Welcome to Galapagos! Upon arrival at Baltra Airport, your naturalist guide will greet you and assist with the transfer to Itabaca Channel. This initial journey offers your first connection with the archipelago as you take a short ferry ride to Santa Cruz Island. Along the way, observe Baltra's arid landscape and learn about its history as a former U.S. WWII airbase. This is just the beginning of the many fascinating stories awaiting you on your adventure. In the afternoon, enjoy a scenic journey into the lush highlands of Santa Cruz. Walk through a reserve where you may spot giant tortoises,some weighing over 600 pounds, grazing peacefully. Observe endemic birds such as finches and flycatchers. If included in your itinerary, explore a lava tunnel, a fascinating remnant of the volcanic forces that shaped these islands.



DAY 2: Tintoreras & Isabela Wetlands

Located close to Puerto Villamil, Tintoreras is a small islet teeming with wildlife. Its shores are filled with sunbathing marine iguanas and resting sea lions. In its shallow channels, rays and sea turtles glide gracefully, while reef sharks, locally known as "Tintoreras" patrol the area. Herons and gulls are frequent visitors, and with some luck, you might spot a Galapagos penguin, as a few individuals inhabit the region. This site offers a perfect glimpse into Isabela's rich natural heritage. In the afternoon, immerse yourself in Isabela's wetlands, a crucial ecosystem for Galapagos' biodiversity. Walk along trails through mangroves and saline lagoons, where pink flamingos, blue-billed ducks, and other aquatic birds thrive. This natural sanctuary showcases the island's remarkable wildlife. Conclude your day at the Interpretation Center, where you'll gain insight into Galapagos' natural and human history, its conservation challenges, and the ongoing efforts to protect this UNESCO World Heritage Site.



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DAY 3: Moreno Point & Mangle Point

Start your day exploring Moreno Point, a stunning volcanic landscape that appears barren but is brimming with life. Venture inland to discover brackish lagoons, home to flamingos, gallinules, ducks, and herons. Along the rugged coast, spot Galapagos penguins, flightless cormorants, marine iguanas, and blue-footed boobies. Sea lions and oystercatchers are also frequent visitors, making this site a remarkable showcase of how life thrives even in Galapagos' harshest environments. This afternoon embark on an expedition at Mangle Point, an ecological paradise on the untouched Fernandina Island. This site is a biodiversity haven where mangrove forests provide a crucial habitat for many marine species. As your boat glides through crystal-clear waters, observe sea turtles weaving through the mangrove roots and rays resting on the sandy bottom. This location offers a rare opportunity to connect with nature, experiencing firsthand the intricate symbiosis between the mangrove ecosystem and marine life.



DAY 4: Espinoza Point & Tagus Cove

Espinoza Point is a true natural wonder, set at the base of the most active volcano in Galapagos. As you step ashore, you'll be greeted by the largest colony of marine iguanas basking on black volcanic rocks. Sea lions lounge on the beach while their pups explore tide pools. Flightless cormorants patrol the shoreline, and in the mangroves, Galapagos hawks scan for prey. Blessed with cold, plankton-rich waters, this area teems with life—herons, oystercatchers, pelicans, and sea turtles all thrive in this untouched habitat. Tagus Cove is steeped in history, once visited by Charles Darwin during his Galapagos exploration. A scenic trail winds through dry Palo Santo forests, where Darwin's finches and mockingbirds can be spotted. At the top, breathtaking views of Lake Darwin and Isabela's towering volcanoes await. A boat tour along the shore provides a chance to observe Galapagos penguins, flightless cormorants, marine iguanas, and the elusive Galapagos martin, one of the rarest and most endangered birds in the archipelago.



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DAY 5: Buccaneer's Cove & Egas Port

Known as a hideout for pirates and buccaneers in the 17th and 18th centuries, Buccaneer Cove is a site steeped in history and natural beauty. Here, sailors hid their treasures and gathered fresh water and tortoises for long voyages. Today, this stunning landscape of cliffs and rock formations is home to diverse wildlife. While there is no trail, a dinghy ride allows you to explore the cove, admire its dramatic scenery, and observe seabirds and other species that inhabit this legendary Galapagos site. Puerto Egas is a fascinating destination where history and wildlife intertwine. While there is no actual port, remnants of 1960s colonization attempts still stand. The coastal trail is teeming with marine iguanas basking in the sun and sea lions resting on the rocks. Herons, oystercatchers, and shorebirds complete this thriving ecosystem. Towards the end of the trail, the grottos are home to a small colony of the elusive Galapagos fur seal. Additionally, land iguanas were reintroduced to the island in 2019 after over a century of absence.



DAY 6: Bartolome & Sullivan Island

Bartolome is one of the most iconic islands in Galapagos, renowned for its dramatic volcanic landscape and the famous Pinnacle Rock. Nestled beside a peach-colored sand beach, this island is one of the few places where you can spot penguins without traveling to remote Isabela and Fernandina. The hike to the summit offers breathtaking views of a lunar-like terrain dotted with volcanic cones, with stunning panoramas of Sullivan Bay and Pinnacle Rock. From the top, the vast beauty of the archipelago unfolds before you, creating a truly unforgettable experience. Walking through Sullivan Bay is a fascinating journey into the volcanic origins of the Galapagos Islands. The trail crosses a vast Pahoehoe lava flow, showcasing unique textures that reveal the story of past eruptions. While the terrain may seem desolate at first, a closer look unveils pioneer plants, scurrying lava lizards, and small birds adapted to this extreme environment. Along the shore, the stark landscape is brightened by the presence of penguins, pelicans, and oystercatchers, adding a vibrant contrast to the stunning volcanic scenery.



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DAY 7: Chinese Hat & Dragon Hill

Named for its distinctive cone shape, Chinese Hat is a small islet separated from Santiago by a narrow channel, forming one of Galapagos' most picturesque bays. Its turquoise waters, coral-sand beaches, and volcanic rocks create a stunning landscape. A coastal trail leads you through a sea lion colony, while on the lava rocks, you may spot penguins resting. This site perfectly blends breathtaking scenery with Galapagos' remarkable wildlife, making for an unforgettable experience. Located on Santa Cruz's northern coast, Dragon Hill is the only place on the island where land iguanas roam freely. Once near extinction in the 70s and 80s, their population has successfully rebounded. As you explore this unique ecosystem, you'll also spot a saltwater lagoon where flamingos, ducks, and shorebirds often gather.



DAY 8: Black Turtle Cove & Departure

This morning set off on a dinghy tour through Black Turtle Cove, a shallow-water haven surrounded by lush mangroves. This sanctuary is home to sea turtles, reef sharks, and various species of rays. It also serves as a crucial breeding ground for turtles and sharks. Watch herons, boobies, and pelicans hunt among schools of anchovies. Though there's no landing, the incredible wildlife seen from the boat offers an up-close and unforgettable experience. Your Galapagos adventure comes to an end. Today, you will be transferred to Baltra Airport, where your National Park naturalist guide will assist you with final details before your flight back to mainland Ecuador. As you bid farewell to this paradise, take with you the unforgettable memories of one of the world's most extraordinary destinations.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin On Board the Yacht

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Inclusions	**INCLUSIONS** Airport assistance Transfers in Galapagos Accommodation in double cabin All meals during the cruise One Naturalist Bilingual Guide All visits and excursions according to the itinerary Snorkel Gear (mask, tube and fins) Kayaks, paddle boards Unlimited purified water, coffee and tea Wetsuits Soft Drinks Galapagos airport Vip Lounge Jacuzzi, Fire Pit, BBQ zone **EXCLUSIONS** International flights Alcoholic drinks Tips and gratuities Personal expenses Travel insurance (highly recommended) Additional services not indicated Galapagos National Park Entrance fee (USD$200 per person, subject to change) Galapagos Transit Control Card (USD$20 per person, subject to change) Any items not mentioned as included
Difficulty Rating	2 (Light Adventure)
Single Surcharge	A single supplement surcharge may apply and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.
Notes	Prices are based on per person, twin share. Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time. All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice. Kayaking and water based activities are subject to weather conditions.
Price Dependent upon	Departure date, fuel surcharges, cabin category, currency fluctuations, seasonality and availability.

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SUSTAINABILITY

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