

Galapagos Multi Islands 6 Days, 5 Nights

As part of this exclusive program you will visit three different Galapagos Islands, where you will spend time with the unique wildlife the islands are rightly famous for: the sea lions, the world renowned giant tortoises, the marine iguanas, the blue footed boobies, and much, much more. Galapagos is also one of the planet's few World Heritage Marine Reserves. This is truly a matchless environment.

We will split the group in two smaller groups. Each group will do different itineraries, that are the same activities included in both options, but in different order: **ITINERARY A & ITINERARY B.**

ITINERARY A

Day 1: January 10, 2016. Arrival on Baltra, transfer to Floreana

Arrival on Baltra: The tiny island of Baltra was a military base during the Second World War and has been the Galapagos' principal airport for many years. The good news is that to protect the local environment the airport has been rebuilt, this time using the most advanced environmental techniques to reduce emissions and energy use. This is the first ecological airport in the world.

At the airport you will be met by our expert local guide who will give you useful background information before we transfer to Santa Cruz which involves public transport (no private vehicles permitted) overland to the Itabaca Channel and a short crossing on the public ferry. Now our journey really begins, with a visit to the impressive Los Gemelos craters and a look at the highland Galapagos tortoises.

At mid day we enjoy a tasty specially prepared boxed lunch en route to the town of Puerto Ayora where our private speed boat will be waiting to take us on a two hour ride to the island of Floreana.

FLOREANA

This peaceful island is home to the Galapagos' smallest population, only 150 people, and is also the least developed and most natural of the four inhabited islands. Once a pirates' lair, Floreana was the first inhabited island in the Galapagos and descendants of the original population still live here together with the mysterious tales and legends that surround their ancestors.

On Floreana we will be hiking, learning about the fascinating history of the local people, and seeing some of the Galapagos special wildlife (giant tortoises, frigate birds, Darwin's finches, sea lions, and petrels).

We check in at our lodge overlooking the Galapagos' most beautiful and secluded bay. After that we will walk for 30 minutes towards La Loberia (a sea lion breeding ground) and then for our first marine encounter, snorkeling and swimming in the warm bright water with sea turtles, sea lions, spectacular rays and lots of shimmering fishes

In the afternoon we return to the lodge for a nice warm shower and dinner in the village.

Night Activity (weather permitting): star gazing

Overnight stay in Lava Lodge

Meals: boxL, D

Day 2: January 11, 2016. Exploring the Floreana Highlands

After breakfast we leave to explore the Floreana highlands on our open-air bus (chiva), an unbeatable, historic, and comfortable way to see the island.

On the way our Naturalist Guide will point out the wildlife and give us an idea of the colorful history of some of Floreana's first inhabitants, such as the Wittmers (whose descendents still live on the Island), the 'Baroness', and the pirates that once visited here. They will also tell you about the "Enigma of Floreana", involving the mysterious deaths of several of the Island's inhabitants, a riddle that has never been solved.

After driving into the highlands, we reach Asilo de la Paz (Peace Haven) where our hike begins. We walk up to this historic site, explore pirate caves, and visit the freshwater spring that provides water for the entire Island. Along the way, you can expect to see giant tortoises lumbering around in the vegetation or even on the trail. We leave Asilo de Paz walking down through a rural area where the local people grow produce for their own consumption: this is a fascinating example about how these island people survived in this remote place and over the years were able to develop an understanding of the local environment and now work to preserve their unique agricultural knowledge. Once back on the coast we will be able to watch the extraordinary behavior of the frigate birds who 'dance' as they wash their salty wings in the fresh water. With a little bit of luck, we may be able to see males puffing up the red pouches on their chests in an attempt to attract females.

From La Primavera we continue by Chiva down towards Las Palmas, where the Island's first permanent inhabitant, the eccentric Dr Ritter, lived and is buried. Arriving in 1926, this German physician believed that with a combination of exercise and the right vegetarian diet he would live to be 150 years old. He didn't, but his story is one of the many strange episodes that still abound on the island. On the way we will see spectacular views of the Floreana shoreline, and on arrival sit down to a special BBQ.

In the afternoon, back at the lodge, we do more marine exploration, snorkeling, kayaking and stand up paddling, SUP, our newest water activity. It is lots of fun, so come and learn how to walk on water.

Overnight stay in Lava Lodge

Meals: B, L, D

Day 3: January 12, 2016. Galapagos in Miniature

Today we take an early morning speed boat and transfer to Isabela Island where we will check into our hotel.

Our Isabela adventure begins with a tour of the Tintoreras, a group of small islands near the village of Puerto Villamil, that are named after the white tipped 'Tintoreras' reef sharks that swim in these calm waters. A Galapagos in miniature on the Tintoreras you will see almost all of the archipelago's iconic wildlife: white tipped sharks, sea lions, turtles, rays, penguins, and of course pelicans and blue footed boobies. You will have a chance to snorkel in the bay – and don't be surprised if some of the penguins or sea lions jump in to play alongside you in the water.

In the afternoon we walk from our hotel to the local giant tortoise-breeding center and on the way we may catch a glimpse of pink flamingos feeding in a lake. Once at the Center our guides will explain the process of breeding and then releasing into the wild these giant slow moving creatures whose Spanish name (meaning saddle) gave the Islands their present title. The breeding center is an important conservation tool and it is here that the islands' giant tortoise population is presently recovering.

Accommodation at Albermarle hotel (ocean view rooms) *or similar*

Meals: B, L, D

Day 4: January 13, 2016. Hiking day!

Volcanic eruptions created all the islands in the Galapagos, and you will get to see this geologic process first-hand as we explore Isabela, one of the youngest and most volcanically-active islands of the archipelago..

We have the whole day to explore the Isabela highlands, and we start by hiking up to the crater of the Sierra Negra volcano, and then to the rim of the Volcan Chico. This fascinating walk usually begins with some morning fog and drizzle which sometimes persists in the shadow of the volcano, adding to its mysterious character. But when we reach the rim of the Sierra Negra crater, the second largest in the world after the Ngorongoro in Tanzania, you will see why it has been worthwhile. The crater is so large, and the views so expansive, that photos don't even do it justice, but you should bring your binoculars and camera anyway!

Later, as we head towards Volcan Chico, you may get the feeling you are walking on Mars, but while the landscape appears desolate, a closer look reveals small lizards, scurrying about amongst the rocks.

After Volcan Chico under the shade of a lovely "jaboncillo" tree we enjoy a well prepared picnic lunch with the chance to enjoy some spectacular views over the central and northern parts of Isabela Island. In the distance, you will be able to see Fernandina, Pinzon and Santa Cruz Islands. We then head back down to complete our day of hiking (16 km in total) and relax on the beaches of Puerto Villamil.

Accommodation at Albermarle hotel (ocean view rooms) *or similar*

Meals: B, boxL, D

Day 5: January 14, 2016. Land of Tortoises

Today we start early, catching our speedboat in the morning and heading to Santa Cruz Island. From May to November, a flight is recommended rather than transfer by speedboat due to the possibility of rough seas.

When we arrive at Santa Cruz, we will enjoy a hearty breakfast close to the docks before heading up to the highlands for a busy day of multi sport activities.

We drive to an off-the-beaten-path area of Santa Cruz Island, and when we reach a high point on the road we switch to mountain bikes for a long downhill glide on freshly paved roads to Garrapatero Beach. On the ride, we will pass small farms and enjoy views of the ocean and the distant islands.

Once we are on the beach at Garrapatero we may see a few local families, but few, if any, tourists. We will paddle the bay in sit-on-top sea kayaks, enjoying our last day on the water in the Galapagos, while looking for sharks, rays, turtles, and sea birds. Later we will have a specially prepared lunch before heading back to Puerto Ayora and our next adventure.

Once back in the town, you will have the option of staying and shopping for souvenirs, or (if time allows) walking the 3 km boardwalk to Tortuga Bay, and checking out one of the largest and most beautiful beaches in the Galapagos. At Tortuga Bay you can walk on the beach, swim, or even snorkel a bit more.

Tonight we stay in Santa Cruz' largest town, the small picturesque port of Puerto Ayora. Although it has the largest population in the Galapagos, Puerto Ayora is still a small, intimate place where you will find friendly local bars, shops, and restaurants, as well as places to stroll along the water's edge. There is everything you need for a mellow night in the Galapagos.

Accommodation at Angermeyer Waterfront inn (standard rooms) *or Mainao (standard rooms)*

Meals: B, boxL, D

Day 6: January 15, 2016.

Day 7: After a morning visit to the Charles Darwin Research Center, we transfer to Baltra for our return flight back to mainland Ecuador. Of course, if you've fallen in love with these 'enchanted' isles - many people do - you can decide to extend your stay for a few days. There's lots of scuba diving and naturalist day trips you can take to explore some of the other fascinating Galapagos islands.

Meals: B

ITINERARY B

Day 1: January 10, 2016. Arrival on Baltra, transfer to Isabela

Arrival on Baltra: The tiny island of Baltra was a military base during the Second World War and has been the Galapagos' principal airport for many years. The good news is that to protect the local environment the airport has been rebuilt, this time using the most advanced environmental techniques to reduce emissions and energy use. This is the first ecological airport in the world.

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At mid day we enjoy a tasty specially prepared boxed lunch en route to the town of Puerto Ayora where the public speed boat will be waiting to take us on a two hour ride to the island of Isabela.

After some time to settle into your rooms on our beach front hotel our journey will begin with a relaxing walk on the 1.2km boardwalk to the Giant Tortoise Breeding Center where the endangered giant tortoise population of the Galapagos Islands is presently recovering.

On our way we will pass by three lagoons where we will likely see Flamingos! Once at the centre a guided tour will be provided of the several large areas where turtles of different ages are being raised before being released into the wild. High quality interpretative materials will be available. We will have the option to either walk to the Centre and back via the boardwalk, or for those who prefer, be dropped off by car at the Centre and walk back along the boardwalk and enjoy the sunset on our way back.

Accommodation at Albermarle hotel (ocean view rooms) *or similar*

Meals: boxL, D

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At mid day transfer to dock in Isabela where our private speed boat will be waiting to take us on a two hour ride to the island of Floreana.

FLOREANA

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Meals: B

INCLUDED:

- * Accommodation in hotels as mentioned in the itinerary
- * All meals as per itinerary
- * All means of transportation land and sea described on the itinerary
- * Transfers and guided activities

NOT INCLUDED:

- * Roundtrip flight to Galapagos
- * Galapagos entrance fee and Transit Card
- * Tips for guides and staff

- * International airport tax
- * Alcoholic beverages
- * Personal expenses
- * Evacuation or medical expenses