

## 6 Days Galapagos and Darwin (MANGROVE ESSENTIALS II)

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### **DAY 1: Transfer In + Highlands + Charles Darwin Research Station**

Once you have arrived at Baltra Airport you will be taken to Santa Cruz with your guide. Here begins an introduction to the highlands. This lush part of the island is bountiful and green. You'll stop here for lunch at a local ranch. Afterwards, you will head to the Charles Darwin Research Station. It is a research facility that has an extensive collection of Galapagos plant life specimens carefully preserved and also acts as a biological research station and active breeding center operated by the Charles Darwin Foundation.

*(Meals: lunch and dinner)*

### **DAY 2: Transfer to Isabela Island + Tintorerías Islet + Wall of Tears**

We will board a yacht bound for Isabela Island, about two hours away. After arriving in Puerto Villamil, we will take another boat to visit the Tintorerías where white-tipped sharks can be seen, as well as the marine iguana and Galapagos penguins. We'll snorkel in the area observing tropical fish, sea turtles, and return to Puerto Villamil. In the afternoon we will visit the Wall of Tears in order to learn more about the history of the island, which was once home to a prison in the past. Our last visit will be to the breeding center of Isabela Tortoises then we will go back to your hotel at Iguana Crossing.

*(Meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner)*

### **DAY 3: Volcano Sierra Negra or Cape Rose Lava Tunnels**

**Important Note:** The island visits are not specified due to changing availability and climate conditions. You will visit either Sierra Negra or the Cape Rose lava tunnels.

Volcano Sierra Negra is an active volcano in the south of Isabela Island. A hike in this area will show you different types of vegetation and geological zones. If you reach the summit of Sierra Negra you can see petrified lava still present and its huge caldera.

The Cape Rose lava tunnels are a stunning work of nature's art. These tunnels were formed millions of years ago when rivers of lava swept across the island until they reached the shore. The cold water froze the superficial layer insulating the interior as lava continued to flow into the sea. When the eruption ended, a hollow structure was formed and the inner wall later broke, allowing water to come within, creating the tunnels. After this visit, we will head back to your hotel on Isabela Island at Iguana Crossing.

*(Meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner)*

### **DAY 4: Flamingo Lagoon + San Cristobal Breeding Center + Transfer to Santa Cruz**

En route to the San Cristobal Giant Tortoise Breeding Center, we will stop at a Galapagos flamingo lagoon. The lagoon was man-made after some years of mining, later it filled with both freshwater and saltwater from the wetlands. Here you can see flamingos feeding, as well as Galapagos ducks.

Just a short way away from the flamingo feeding site is the San Cristobal Breeding Center. Here Isabela Giant Tortoises are protected and bred in order to one day repopulate Isabela Island. Many different studies are done here, which have provided incredible knowledge and discoveries. After visiting the breeding center you will be transferred back to Santa Cruz Island and taken to your accommodations at Red Mangrove Eco Luxury Hotel.

### **DAY 5: Day Tour to Nearby Island**

**Important Note:** On day five of your program you will visit one of the various islands described below. The specific islands and visitor sites you will visit will be confirmed with your guide before

you are picked up in the morning for the day tour. The island visits are not specified beforehand due to changing availability and climate conditions.

*(Meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner)*

### **Bartholomew Island**

Bartholomew is an island surrounded by turquoise waters and beautiful beaches. It will take about 2 hours to arrive by boat. Upon arrival, the tour begins by climbing the boardwalk and staircase. When you reach the top you will see a spectacular landscape. Sullivan Bay and the famous Pinnacle Rock can be seen clearly from here.

The island is a now extinct volcano with a variety of red, orange, green, black and shiny volcanic formations. This is the perfect place to observe Galapagos penguins. Moreover, you can snorkel with sea turtles, sharks, white-tip reef sharks, tropical fish, sea lions and many other unique marine species. After lunch, you will visit Sullivan Bay. Here you can see some amazing lava formations, the product of a volcanic eruption in 1903. This is an excellent example of the typical forms and colors that contrast with older types of lava.

Also, take into account that Bartholomew Island is a breeding ground for green sea turtles. They come to the shores of the island to nest through the months of January and March every year. The tour on the island will end at approximately 5:00 pm and you will be transferred back to the hotel.

### **Santa Fe Island**

Santa Fe is one of the central islands in Galapagos surrounded by an incredible turquoise bay and usually hosts a large colony of sea lions. The island is protected by a natural barrier of rocks where sea lions like to gather. It will take about 40 minutes of navigation on the ocean to arrive by boat. When landing at the site you will discover a beautiful sandy beach, if you are lucky a colony of sea lions will be resting and enjoying the sun when you arrive!

Following the guide on one of the paths, you may find one of the endemic land iguanas found only on this island, the Santa Fe Iguana. Their main foods are the leaves and fruits of the large and thick cactuses, Palo Santo, which are also endemic to the island and are one of the major attractions. Crabs, night herons, sea iguanas, mockingbirds, and doves are seen frequently in this area. After the walk, lunch will be served on the boat. Afterwards, you'll have the opportunity to do some snorkeling. The bay is excellent for practicing this activity and is perfect to find species such as sea tortoises and stingrays. The tour ends at approximately 5:00 pm.

At this time you'll take a boat back to Santa Cruz, roughly 40 minutes and then you'll be transferred back to the Red Mangrove.

### **North Seymour and Bachas Beach**

You'll be picked up at the hotel and transferred to the Itabaca Channel to board the yacht that will take you to North Seymour Island. This place is great for hiking. There is a circular path about 2 miles long that crosses the interior of the island and allows you to explore the rocky coastal path. On this trail, you will be able to discover some of the largest seabird colonies in the Galapagos Islands.

Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to observe the nesting sites of blue-footed boobies and the bright and colorful frigatebirds that are visible throughout the year. These two species represent one of the biggest attractions of Galapagos. The male frigates inflate their red chest when they try to attract or draw attention to the females. These birds are also well known to steal food from the blue-footed boobies, and other bird species for that matter. Additionally, you cannot miss the funny ritual dance performed by the blue-footed boobies in order to win over a female mate, or how they find the perfect pebble and place it by the females feet as a gift.

After lunch, we will go snorkeling and hopefully find sea turtles, Galapagos sharks, and perhaps there will be sea lions playing around in the surf along the shore. After a few hours of this activity, we will visit Bachas Beach. At this beach, you can choose to rest and/or swim in the wonderful Galapagos waters. Tour will end at approximately 5:00 pm. Once more you will be transferred back to the Red Mangrove hotel afterward.

### **Plazas Island / Carrión Point**

After about 2 hours of navigation, you will finally arrive at Plazas Island. The first attraction to be seen are large colonies of sea lions. Then, just a few meters from the dock, a group of land iguanas can almost always be observed. The trail your guide will take you on goes through to the other side of the island, which is very small and rectangular. You will walk along a ravine sharing the path with land iguanas, some marine iguanas, and birds such as blue-footed and Nazca boobies, swallow-tailed gulls and tropical birds. Apart from this, frigatebirds and pelicans can be found within the area. Lunch will be served onboard the vessel.

Despite its small size, this island is the home of a large number of species. It is famous for its extraordinary flora, including attractive and beautiful trees and cactuses where a large colony of Galapagos land iguanas lives. Therefore, this island is very popular among local and foreign visitors. Depending on the season, the vegetation will change its color from bright green in the rainy season to orange and purple in the dry season. You cannot miss this spectacular landscape! The tour will end at approximately 5:00 pm. Afterwards, you'll be transferred to the hotel.

### **DAY 6: Transfer Out**

After a complete breakfast with the company of sea lions and various finches at the Red Mangrove, you will be transferred to the other side of Santa Cruz to board the ferry that will take you back to Baltra airport for your flight back to mainland Ecuador

**The Price of the program is in US dollars, per person in DBL occupancy:**

Room Category	1 pax	2 pax	3 - 5 pax	6 - 9 pax	10 - 16 pax	SGL Room Supplement (per pax) Rack Rates
Standard	\$ 8,410	\$ 5,502	\$ 4,875	\$ 4,331	\$ 4,037	\$ 984
Superior	\$ 8,529	\$ 5,556	\$ 4,929	\$ 4,387	\$ 4,092	\$ 1,046
Suite	\$ 10,072	\$ 6,267	\$ 5,640	\$ 5,096	\$	\$ 1873

**The price of the program includes:**

- Transfers in / out and to / from Baltra airport.
- Visits as specified within itinerary.
- Bilingual guide English / Spanish.
- Transportation throughout program.
- All meals
- Accommodation for 3 nights at Red Mangrove Eco Luxury Hotel (breakfast included) and 2 nights at Iguana Crossing or similar on Isabela Island.
- Snorkeling equipment for daily tours (face mask and snorkel).

**The price of the program does not include:**

- Galapagos flight ticket.
- Entrance to the GPS National Park (\$100).
- Ingala Transit Card (\$20).
- Lunch on the 6<sup>th</sup> day
- Drinks and alcoholic beverages
- Tips and personal expenses.
- Activities and services not specified within itinerary.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- Pickups for day tours are scheduled from 6:45 am to 7:30 am.
- The return or departure schedule of the tours is an estimated timeframe. There are no exact timetables due to weather, logistic, or park authorizations that could vary.

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(ADA-25/07/2019)