

NATURAL PARADISE YACHT

ITINERARY 4 D / 3 N

Day 1 (Saturday) Arrive to Galapagos

AM: Arrive to Galapagos

You will arrive at Baltra Island in the morning. After passing through immigration and baggage claim, you will be met by a Natural Paradise staff member and transferred to the yacht. You will be shown to your cabin where you will have some time to settle in before lunch and a welcome briefing.

In the afternoon you will head to the *highlands*. Accessible by bus from Puerto Ayora, the highlands of Santa Cruz are a deep green which contrast beautifully with the dry, lower part of the islands.

The predominant vegetation in the highlands is Scalesia trees which create a lush green forest. The lava tunnels, over half a mile long, are underground and walking through them is a unique, surreal experience.

PM Fausto Llerena Breeding Center

Then, you will visit Fausto Llerena Breeding Center in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, where giant tortoises are bred in captivity; this is home to tortoises ranging from 3-inches (new hatchlings) to 4-feet long when adults. Subspecies of the giant tortoises interact with one another, and many of the older tortoises are accustomed to humans stretching out their heads for a photo opportunity. The babies are kept until they are about four years-old and are strong enough to survive on their own.

Day 2 (Sunday) **GENOVESA ISLAND**

In the morning, you will visit El Barranco which is also known as Prince Phillip's Steps. It is a steep, rocky path that leads up a high cliff rock face. A marvelous view can be appreciated from here. This site is also home to Palo Santo vegetation as well as red footed boobies, short-eared owls, Galapagos storm petrels, and Galapagos doves.

In the afternoon, you will visit the white-sand coral beach of Darwin Bay which includes a half mile trail (0,75km) that winds through mangroves filled with land birds. Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, and swallow-tailed gulls, which can easily be spotted here. Further down the path we'll find tidal pools where sea lions swim playfully. At the end is a spectacular view of a cliff.

Day 3 (Monday) SANTIAGO ISLAND

The morning visit is to Espumilla Beach where marine iguanas lounge and the Sally Lightfoot crabs attract the hunting herons performing the dance of predator and prey right before your eyes.

Snorkeling is highly recommended as you could come face to face with an octopus, moray eel, shark and a variety of other species of tropical fish.

In the afternoon, you will go to Egas Port, also known as James Bay, on Santiago Island which is home to the curious Galapagos hawks and quick-footed Galapagos lava lizards. The trail leads to the coastline with gorgeous tide pools and grottos full of fauna. Here the Galapagos fur seals bathe in the sun. This is also a great snorkeling site.

Day 4 (Tuesday) Santa Cruz Island – Baltra Airport

Morning's visit is to Bachas Beach, which is located on the north shore of Santa Cruz which is a beach for swimming. One of the few remnants of the U.S. World War II presence in the Galapagos, a floating pier, can be seen here. You may see flamingos, Sally Lightfoot crabs, hermit crabs, black-necked stilts, and whimbrels. Sea turtles also nest on the beach.

After this final visit, you will be transferred to the Baltra airport in time for your flight back to the mainland.

ITINERARY 5 D / 4 N

Day 1 (Tuesday) Arrive San Cristobal Island – Kicker Rock

Morning flight from Quito or Guayaquil to San Cristobal, Galapagos Islands.

You will arrive at San Cristobal Island in the morning. After passing through immigration and baggage claim, you will be met by a Natural Paradise staff member and transferred to the yacht. You will be shown to your cabin where you will have some time to settle in before lunch and a welcome briefing.

In the afternoon, you will visit Kicker Rock. This striking rock formation is located a couple hours off the western shore of San Cristobal. Jutting out of the water, the rocks stand vertically at hundreds of feet above the ocean divided by a small channel. Although there are no landing areas, kayaking and snorkeling allow visitors to spot a variety of marine life.

Day 2 (Wednesday) North Seymour – South Plazas

In North Seymour you may see Galapagos sea lions, blue-footed boobies, and magnificent frigate birds which are abundant on this island. North Seymour was formed by a series of

submarine lava flows containing layers of sediment that were uplifted by tectonic activity. The island is characterized by its arid vegetation zone.

In the afternoon, you will visit South Plaza Island. This small island with steep cliffs was formed by rising lava and is now covered by *Opuntia* cacti. It is also home to one of the largest sea lion colonies as well as colorful yellow and red land iguanas. The most characteristic plant is the *Sesuvium*. During the rainy season its color is a greenish to yellowish tone and in the dry season (end of June through January) a bright red.

Day 3 (Thursday) Rabida & Bartholomew Islands

In the afternoon you will visit Rabida Island which is one of the most colorful and volcanically varied islands in the archipelago, as well as a great snorkeling site. We will start on Rabida's famous red/ maroon sand beach, and after an easy hike, you will arrive to a stunning view point to enjoy the amazing landscapes. The island is a birdwatcher's delight. Some of the rarest species are in abundance such as nine varieties of finches, large-billed flycatchers, Galapagos hawks and brown pelicans. In the afternoon, you will head to Bartholomew Island where the famous Pinnacle Rock is found.

Bartholomew consists of an extinct volcano with a variety of red, orange, black and even green volcanic formations. We will take a trail of stairs to the summit of the volcano (about 30 or 40 minutes) where you will enjoy one of the best views of the islands! You will also visit a small, beautiful beach surrounded by the only vegetation found on this barren island. The beach is perfect for snorkeling where you may even see and swim with Galapagos penguins.

Day 4 (Friday) Santiago Island – Dragon Hill

In the morning, you will visit Sullivan Bay located on the southeast part of Santiago. This place is interesting for its geology because the area is covered by lava flows. This place has elevations in the form of small volcanoes formed by the lava flows.

In the afternoon you will visit **Dragon Hill** on Santa Cruz. The visitors' site at Dragon Hill is located on the northwestern part of Santa Cruz Island and consists of a trail that runs through three different environments although it is only slightly less than a mile long (1,600 meters). The beach is very rocky.

At high tide it's a nice place for snorkeling. At this Dragon Hill you can find vegetation typical of the intertidal and dry zones.

Day 5 (Saturday) Twin Craters – Baltra Airport

In the morning you will visit the Twin Craters, located opposite to each other on both sides of the road leading from Puerto Ayora to Baltra. The name is only figurative; not real craters, these formations were created by the collapse of surface material in underground fissures and chambers. The view is breathtaking.

After this final visit, you will be transferred to Baltra airport in time for your flight back to the mainland.

Sullivan