



## **GALAPAGOS WILDLIFE DISCOVERY 5 DAYS**

**Effort:** Easy to moderate

**Activities:** Wildlife interaction, hiking, snorkeling, swimming, and relaxing on the beach.

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Traversing three islands in only five days, this tour offers a top Galapagos land-based experience that highlights the best of San Cristobal, Isabela, and Santa Cruz, each with its own distinct personality and wildlife. Experience the unique evolutionary paths of endemic species as you move between islands quickly and comfortably. No other five-day tour includes this many locations and activities. Hike through gorgeous environments, swim and relax on pristine tropical beaches, and snorkel with incredible sea life in turquoise waters.

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### **TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Follow Darwin's footsteps to meet the endemic wildlife of the Galapagos
- Snorkel pristine waters, including the best spot for sea lion encounters in the world
- Enjoy hikes through a wide variety of environments and ecosystems
- Relax in style on gorgeous tropical beaches accompanied by marine iguanas
- Trust in our top-rated guides to make every activity interesting, fun and safe
- Protect the environment – we value sustainable practices in all aspects of our tours
- Support the local economy and get in touch with the local vibe with our land-based tours
- Flow between islands and activities with minimal transit time and maximum contact

### DAY 1: INTERPRETATION CENTER, HIKE AND SNORKEL TIJERETAS

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After a morning flight from the mainland to San Cristobal Island, we continue to our hotel for an energizing lunch, introductions, and a short overview of our trip. Our Galapagos adventure starts with a visit to the local Interpretation Center where we learn about the unique wildlife, geology, natural history, and social dynamics of the Galapagos.

Now that we know a little more about the islands we make our way to our first stop, Frigate Hill, where we might spot many of the unique avian species of the Galapagos. As we hike over natural lava rock trails our guides tell us all about the Galapagos cotton, palo santo, acacia, and cacti surrounding us, as well as blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, pelicans, herons, gulls, warblers, mockingbirds and finches that we spot in the vegetation and sea cliffs. In addition to the diverse wildlife, this walking tour provides marvelous views of the rugged coastline and the town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno below us.

During the return trip we stop at beautiful Carola Beach for a dip, where we snorkel and swim with sea turtles and sea lions while enjoying a lovely sunset on the beach. We return to the hotel for a gourmet seafood dinner after which you can set out to explore the friendly, laid-back town and visit the colony of endemic Galapagos sea lions next door. (L, D).



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### DAY 2: SNORKEL THE NORTHERN COAST OF SAN CRISTOBAL

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Today we explore the northern coast. We either visit Leon Dormido (Kicker Rock) or Punta Pitt. The visiting site depends on the week day and the Galapagos National Park regulations. On our exploration trip we make sure to search the nearby coves and cliffs for sea turtles, sea lions, frigate birds, blue-footed boobies, and Nazca boobies. Here we have the chance to get up close and personal with sea lions in their favorite playground. As we snorkel, we might see eagle rays, golden rays, Galapagos sharks, starfish, clams, and thousands of tropical fish. If we're lucky, we may even come across hammerhead sharks.

As the sun sets on our day under the waves, we return to the hotel to for a relaxed evening. (B, L, D).



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### DAY 3: DISCOVER ISABELA'S BEACHES, LAGOONS, AND SNORKEL TINTORERAS

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In the morning, we take a short inter-island flight to Isabela island, the largest island in the Galapagos. It's constantly changing and evolving due to the six shield volcanoes, rendering it one of the most volcanically active spots on the planet. After a short small aircraft flight we settle into our hotel.

We then set out on a one-of-a-kind hike that will take us through an incredible variety of coastal ecosystems, along the way we spot giant tortoises, flamingos, and other wildlife as we pass through white sand beaches, the alluring poison apple forest, a gaping lava tube, dark mangroves and brackish lagoons.

After a nourishing lunch we set out to explore Tintoreras, a group of small islets filled with hidden coves and isolated beaches. Here we find the endemic Galapagos penguin, as well as reef sharks, sea turtles and sea lions. At the end of the day, we retire to our hotel.

We finish the evening with a delicious dinner and an optional stroll down the expansive beach and the sand streets of idyllic Puerto Villamil. (B, L, D).



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### DAY 4: EXPLORE THE SANTA CRUZ HIGHLANDS

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Early in the morning, we board a speed boat or internal flight to Santa Cruz Island. Along the way we keep an eye out for whales and dolphins in the ocean around us. After checking in we head to El Chato nature reserve in the Santa Cruz highlands, home to the Galapagos giant tortoise. It is an honor to hike among these fascinating, gentle giants, who on average live to be over 175 years old. El Chato is also home to many pintail ducks, finches, frigate birds, egrets and the beautiful vermilion flycatcher.

Our hike continues through some incredible lava tunnels created by flowing magma. Legend has it that the buccaneers who once frequented the Galapagos used these deep caves to hide Inca gold plundered from Spanish ships! After some pirate stories from our guides we head up to Los Gemelos, a pair of deep volcanic sinkholes at the high point of Santa Cruz. The path takes us through a forest of endemic *Scalesia* trees covered in ferns and epiphytes where we'll keep a lookout for the resident short-eared owl.

If there is enough time we may visit the Charles Darwin Research Station where local scientists rear endemic plants and animals for educational, scientific, and conservation purposes. We'll learn about the ongoing conservation efforts to protect the future of the Galapagos.

In the late afternoon, we get ready to celebrate our once-in-a-lifetime trip with a delicious farewell dinner. We soak up the ambiance of our last night in the Galapagos with magnificent views of the brightly-lit ships in the bay and the town beyond. (B, L, D)



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### DAY 5: TRANSFER OUT

Finally, it's time bid a fond farewell as we transfer to Baltra Island for our return flight to the mainland. (B).

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED	NOTE
<p>Accommodations, all meals as listed (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner), bilingual Galapagos naturalist guide, all sea, land, and inter-island air transportation.</p>	<p>Flights to and from Galapagos, entrance fee to Galapagos National Park, Galapagos transit card, tips, hotel &amp; restaurant beverages.</p>	<p>This itinerary is subject to change without notice due to seasonal changes, inclement weather conditions, and adjustments of Galapagos National Park policy.</p> <p>The Weight restriction per person for the Inner Island flight from San Cristobal to Isabela is 25 pounds in one piece of luggage.</p>

#### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**BOAT TRAVEL TIME:** Two hours

**SMALL AIRCRAFT FLIGHT TIME:** 45 minutes approx.

**SEASON:** Year-round

**ALTITUDE:** 0 – 3,688 feet (1,124 meters) above sea level

**WEATHER:** During the warm season from January to May, air temperature is around 77 to 83 F (25 to 28 C) at sea level. During the cool season from June to December, air temperature is around 70 to 75 F (21 to 24 C) at sea level. Temperature decreases with altitude.

**WATER TEMPERATURE:** During the warm season from January to May, water temperature hovers around 77 F (25 C). During the cool season from June to December, average water temperature is about 72 F (22 C). Water temperature also varies significantly by location.

**SUGGESTED ITEMS TO PACK:** Walking shoes, rain jacket, water bottle, non-cotton trekking clothes, sunblock, sun hat, and repellent.

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