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TOURS

Mainland Ecuador &
Galápagos Islands

GALAPAGOS ITINERARY



**GALAVEN - 8 DAYS
ITINERARY B**

TUESDAY - TUESDAY

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1

MORNING FLIGHT FROM QUITO OR GUAYAQUIL TO SAN CRISTOBAL PUERTO CHINO OR BREDDING CENTER JACINTO GORDILLO

Assistance at the airport by our representative for your Galapagos flight. You will arrive at San Cristobal Island in the morning. After passing through immigration and baggage claim you will be met by Galaven staff 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 we will visit Puerto Chino located (15,2 miles / 24.5 km) away from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno and a few miles from the Breeding Centre Cerro Colorado, this walk takes approximately 30 to the beach. "Jacinto Gordillo" Breeding Center. This is a new visitor site in the northeast part of San Cristobal Island and can now be reached in roughly one hour by road from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. In the Breeding Center, you will be able to admire the hatchling turtles from their birth until they are 120 days old when the grown turtles are taken to their natural habit.

DAY 2

SANTA FE & SOUTH PLAZA ISLANDS

Our morning visit is to the Santa Fe Island (Barrington), which is home to the small picturesque bay and anchorage on the island's northeast coast. The bay has two visitor trails, one leading to a scenic viewpoint atop a cliff, and the other spanning from a small beach to a tall prickly pear cactus forest.

In the afternoon, you will head to 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.

ISLANDS

- San Cristobal Island
- Santa Fe Island
- Santa Cruz Island
- Isabela Island
- Fernandina Island
- Santiago Island
- North Seymour

SUMMARY

Delve into the archipelago's natural and human history during this 8-day Galapagos itinerary onboard the Galaven yacht. See giant tortoises up close at the Charles Darwin Research Station, then venture into the lush Santa Cruz highlands to the twin craters of Los Gemelos. Spend time exploring the crystal tidal pools of Punta Moreno and go snorkeling in the marine species-rich waters of Punta Vicente Roca.

CONTACT US

- **PBX:** +59323237330
- **Toll Free Line:** +1 833 2632636E
- **Email:**
contact@andandotours.com
- **Website:**
www.visitgalapagos.travel



SIERRA NEGRA

ISABELA ISLAND

DAY 3 **CHARLES DARWIN STATION & TWIN CRATERS**

This day you can know Charles Darwin Research Station; this is home to turtles ranging from 3-inches (new hatchlings) to 4-feet long. Sub-species of turtles interact with one another and many of the older turtles are accustomed to humans, stretching out their heads for a pet. The babies are kept until they are about four years old and strong enough to survive on their own.

The afternoon visit is a site called Los Gemelos (The Twins). Los Gemelos wait for you at the end of a short hike. These sinkholes are often referred to as craters, though the term is only descriptive, not literal. They were created by the collapse of surface material in underground fissures and chambers. The endemic *Scalesia* Forest surrounds the site, where you may see Vermillion Flycatchers, Shorteared Owls, and finches.

DAY 4 **SIERRA NEGRA & THE WALL OF TEARS**

The morning visit will head to Sierra Negra Volcano that boasts the largest basaltic caldera in Galapagos at 9 x 10km. The site offers impressive views and the opportunity to observe up to 7 species of finch and a rich display of vegetation. The north side of the caldera provides evidence of its most recent volcanic activity in 2005.

The afternoon will consist of a visit to The Wall of Tears (El Muro de las Lágrimas), (65-feet / 25-meters) high and an important piece of island history. A penal colony existed on Isabella from 1945-1959, and the prisoners were forced to build the wall, stone by stone, while in isolation from the rest of the world. Thousands died in its construction. Many claim to feel the heavy energy of this historical site, and locals claim to hear cries in the wind.

DAY 5 **MORENO POINT & URBINA BAY**

In the morning we will visit Moreno Point, located south west of Elizabeth Bay. Here, a dry landing onto what was once flowing lava is possible. The lava has left craters in its wake, which formed crystal tide pools. By looking into the pools, you can peer into another world, as the marine life drifts by your window. In the brackish pools of this area, you may see pink flamingos, White-Cheeked Pintails, and Common Gallinules. If you look carefully into the pools you may see whitetip reef sharks and some sea turtles. In the afternoon, we will land at Urbina Bay which presents some fascinating geological formations. In 1954, an uplift from the sea formed the bay; which has been characterized by the resulting terrestrial coral reef ever since. Expect to see stingrays and sea turtles swimming near the surface of the water, along with Flightless Cormorants, pelicans, and marine iguanas. You will be dazzled by the breathtaking view of the Alcedo Volcano.

DAY 6 **ESPINOSA POINT & ISABELA ISLAND -VICENTE ROCA POINT**

In the morning we will visit Fernandina Island: No foreign species have ever invaded this island and therefore it is one of the world's most pristine island ecosystems. Fernandina is the youngest island in Galapagos. Access to this site is extremely restricted by the Galapagos National Park and you will be one of those very lucky visitors. The volcano "La Cumbre" dominates the landscape with lava fields reaching the ocean. Crossing the Bolivar Channel that divides Isabela and Fernandina Islands we will land at Espinosa Point, and after walking past a colony of marine iguanas and a group of sealions, reach the island's highlight: the Flightless Cormorant nesting site. This area provides a great opportunity to see the Galapagos Hawk.

In the afternoon, we will head Isabela Island: The largest in the archipelago, this Seahorse shaped island is also one of the youngest and most volcanically active.

The morning visit is to Vicente Roca Point. Comprised of two separate coves, this site is a large bay with spectacular sea life. Keep an eye out for seahorses, sea turtles, and the strange yet fascinating Mola-mola (or sunfish).

DAY 7 **ESPUMILLA BEACH OR BUCCANEER COVE & BARTOLOME ISLANDS**

Our morning visit is to visit 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 find yourself face to face with an octopus, moray eel, shark, or a variety of other species of tropical fish.

In the afternoon we will head for Bartholomew Island, home of the famous Pinnacle Rock. 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 the Galapagos penguins.

DAY 8 **NORTH SEYMOUR & DEPARTURE**

North Seymour Island, the island was formed by a series of submarine lava containing layers of sediment that were uplifted by tectonic activity. The island is characterized by its arid vegetation zone. Galapagos sea lions, blue-footed boobies and magnificent frigate birds are abundant on North Seymour Island. After this final visit, you will be transferred to Baltra's airport in time to catch your flight back to the mainland.