

Description

Deluxe Galapagos Island Hopping Programme – Isabela Island with Scalesia Lodge and Santa Cruz Island with the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel

Now, get the best of both worlds by exploring an active volcano in the Galapagos Islands, together with day trips to rewarding visitor sites of the National Park & Marine Reserve. The **Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel** (*Beachfront* on Santa Cruz Island) joins forces with **Scalesia Lodge** (*Highlands* of Isabela Island) and develops a stunning week-long program in the Galapagos including inter-island flights, day trips on board Yacht Sea Lion, “glamping” in luxury tents up in the highlands of Isabela Island, and visits to remote places that no other “island hopping” trip will ever experience. Get ready for one of the most highly anticipated voyages in the Galapagos.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 - ISABELA	(-/L/D)
Day 2 - SIERRA NEGRA VOLCANO / TINTORERAS / WALL OF TEARS (depending on the weekday)	(B/L/D)
Day 3 - SIERRA NEGRA VOLCANO / TINTORERAS / WALL OF TEARS (depending on the weekday)	(B/L/D)
Day 4 - -- SANTA CRUZ: HIGHLANDS ARRIVAL DAY VISIT (Arrival day visit to the highlands of Santa Cruz to see giant tortoises and eat lunch at a local restaurant)	(B/L/-)
Day 5 – ISLAND YACHT EXPLORATION (Depending on the weekday and availability, guests will visit North Seymour, Bartolome, South Plaza, or Santa Fe)	(B/L/-)
Day 6 – FULL DAY EXPLORATION (Depending on the weekday and availability, guests will visit Tortuga Bay and the Charles Darwin Research Station or Divine Bay and the Charles Darwin Research Station)	(B/L/-)
Day 7 - ISLAND YACHT EXPLORATION (Depending on the weekday and availability, guests will visit North Seymour, Bartolome, South Plaza, or Santa Fe)	(B/L/-)
Day 8 - TRANSFER OUT TO BALTRA AIRPORT	(B/-/-)



ITINERARY DESCRIPTION

Read on for a sample itinerary. Please note that the order of visits or specific visitor sites may change depending on the day of operation and yacht availability.



Day 1: From Ecuador's mainland off to the Galapagos Islands and onward to Isabela Island by inter-island flight.

Fly from Ecuador's mainland to the Galapagos Islands (Baltra Island) and take a very scenic inter-island flight to Isabela Island. Please note that inter-island flights limit passengers' check-in luggage to 10 kg (22 lb). If needed, it is possible to send excess luggage directly to the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel, where you will arrive on DAY 4. Check in at Scalesia Lodge and eat lunch before heading out on your first afternoon of discovery. Get to know the youngest side of the archipelago while exploring the rewarding visitor sites of the National Park, wetland lagoons, and the giant tortoise-breeding centre. Wrap up your day at the stunning white beach of Puerto Villamil before returning to the Lodge for dinner.

Day 2 and 3 each include one of the following programmes, depending on the weekday:

- Sierra Negra volcano and beach-combing.
- Tintoreras islets and wetlands.
- Wall Of Tears and beach-combing.

Enjoy an early breakfast before setting out to explore Isabela Island. Depending on the weekday and availability, guests will enjoy one of these full-day features:

Sierra Negra Volcano. Walk along the rim of Galapagos' largest caldera – one of the largest in the world – and see recent volcanic activity (last eruption in 2005) and the resulting fascinating formations. A light snack will be provided along the way while lunch is served back at the lodge. Wildlife focuses on the Darwin finches, flycatchers, mockingbirds, and occasionally the Galapagos hawk and rail. Stroll the beach at Puerto Villamil or rest in the afternoon.



Tintoreras Islets. After breakfast, we will drive down to the wharf of Puerto Villamil and board the bay cruiser to explore the maze of reefs and islets off the shores of Isabela. The visit includes a dry landing and a short walk over volcanic terrain (730 m/0.5 mi total distance).

Relevant wildlife includes boobies, herons, penguins, marine iguanas and the white tipped reef sharks in the nearby lava crevasses. Bring your bathing suit as you will enjoy snorkelling in the shallow reefs. Lunch at Scalesia and later in the day, we can explore the wetlands of coastal Isabela. Sunsets at Puerto Villamil are spectacular!

Wall of Tears. A rare combination of human and natural history. A splendid coastal trail combines two segments: wend through mangroves and brackish lagoons (1.3 km/0.8 mi) and the arid palo santo forest until we reach the Wall of Tears (an additional 2.2 km/1.4 mi each way). This trail is mostly a flat dirt road (pedestrian and bikes only). Wildlife include coastal Darwin finches, doves, stilts, ducks, flamingos, herons and giant tortoises.



Afternoons include the magical sunsets from the Beach of Puerto Villamil. Dinner and overnight at Scalesia Lodge.

Day 4: Santa Cruz Highlands Arrival Day Visit

After breakfast, Scalesia Lodge's staff will bring us back to Puerto Villamil's airport. A short but interesting flight

will bring us back to Baltra. Your guide will lead you across the Itabaca Channel to Santa Cruz Island. The day's visit includes a brief exploration of Los Gemelos, a natural volcanic formation in the upper end of the windward side of the island. Surrounded by a forest of high growing endemic daisies, this area is home to some of the most elusive land birds of Galapagos. Then we will visit the Tortoise Reserve, impressive lava tunnels and enjoy lunch at a restaurant in the highlands. In the afternoon, you will reach Puerto Ayora's only pedestrian neighbourhood, Punta Estrada, where the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel is located. Check-in and enjoy the hotel's beachfront facilities. Dinner is up to you: choose the hotel's signature cuisine or one of the many options in town. Overnight at the Finch Bay.



Day 5: Enjoy 1 of these 4 full-day yacht explorations (depending on the weekday and availability):

- North Seymour
- Bartolome island
- South Plaza Island
- Santa Fe Island

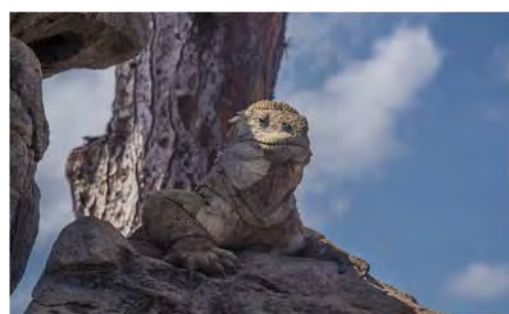
Full-day island yacht exploration:



North Seymour. Start the day with the Finch Bay's generous breakfast, featuring local and international favourites, before leaving for Itabaca Channel, 42 km (26 mi) away on the north shore of Santa Cruz. Board the Sea Lion yacht. Your day includes a dry landing and a 1.5 km/1 mi walk over a mixture of sand and rounded boulders. Be amazed by land and marine iguanas, Nazca- and blue-footed boobies, frigates, sea lions and fur seals. The other highlight is Las Bachas, a stunning white beach with dreamy small brackish lagoons, home to various waders, such as plovers, stilts and flamingos. You have a chance to

swim or snorkel here.

Santa Fe. After breakfast, we will board the Sea Lion yacht minutes away from the hotel at Academy Bay. The yacht will cruise to Santa Fe, an impressive volcanic island 17 nautical miles away from Puerto Ayora. After a wet landing on a fantastic white sandy beach amongst basking sea lions, we walk along a rocky terrain to find the island's highlight: the endemic Santa Fe land iguana patiently waiting under the enormous giant cacti for falling fruits and pads. Other relevant species today are pelicans, boobies and the archipelago's top predator, the Galapagos hawk. Return to the yacht and enjoy one of Galapagos best snorkelling sites. Lunch on board the Sea Lion yacht. Upon the cruise back to Puerto Ayora, we scan the sea surface for pelagic birds and whales.



Bartolome. The day begins with the Finch Bay's tempting breakfast buffet before setting out for a 42 km (26 mi) drive to Itabaca Channel on the north shore of Santa Cruz, where we board the Sea Lion yacht. A 21-nautical mile sailing stretch is well worth its length. Dolphins or whales are often seen in these waters. A dry landing marks the start of the 1.5 km/1 mi walk. Much of the trail is over a wooden boardwalk with a staircase of 366 steps. There are several observation platforms on the way up to the summit of Bartolome (150 masl/ 492 ft above sea level).

Once atop, you will enjoy one of Galapagos' most famous views: the tilted pinnacle rock, the golden beach of Bartolome and the impressive lava fields of Santiago Island. Upon descending back to the coast, you will have a chance to scan the volcanic shore, in search of flashy Sally Lightfoot crabs and Galapagos penguins, before enjoying a soothing dip at the beach. Lunch on board and a brief exploration of nearby Sullivan Bay before sailing back to the Itabaca Channel for the drive back to the hotel.

South Plaza. After breakfast, you will board the Sea Lion yacht (depending on the day, it could be moored in Itabaca Channel or in Academy



Bay). Your day includes 2 highlights. One of them, the snorkelling/swimming site known as Punta Carrion, has a name that startles some English speakers, but in this case, it's merely a reference to a family name. And just 8 nautical miles away, South Plaza Island shocks visitors with the sheer volume of amazing wildlife that greets them right upon arrival: dozens of frolicking sea lion pups, patrolling alpha male sea lions, basking marine and land iguanas, stunning red crabs and various Darwin finches await. The trail is over 1.5 km/1 mi long, over rounded boulders.



All full-day yacht explorations end with a return to the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel where you will enjoy the sunset from its beachfront facilities. Don't forget to try one of our signature cocktails as you watch the sun go down over the Pacific Ocean. Dinner is up to you: choose the hotel's top cuisine or one of the many options in town. Overnight at the Finch Bay.

Day 6: Full Day Exploration

Depending on the weekday and availability, guests will visit either Tortuga Bay and the Charles Darwin Research Station or Divine Bay and the Charles Darwin Research Station

Santa Cruz Coastal Exploration & Charles Darwin Research Station and Tortoise Breeding Facilities:



After breakfast, we leave for **Tortuga Bay**, voted Ecuador's best beach. We walk from Puerto Ayora's western border, 2 km/1.3 mi along a fairly flat and straight paved path, where we explore and understand more about the arid zone's deciduous forest and its inhabitants. First, we arrive to Playa Brava, a stunning 1 km (0.6 mi) long snow-white beach, a seasonal nesting site for the green sea turtles. A few minutes further, we reach Playa Mansa, a secluded natural mangrove cove, with clear and tranquil waters, ideal for swimming, snorkelling, paddling on tandem kayaks, or simply enjoying the landscape from the shade of a mangrove. We will board a small yacht to sail back to The hotel's dock at

Academy Bay. Lunch at the Finch Bay. For the afternoon, the grand finale includes strolling around the **Charles Darwin Research Station** where the highlight is the conservation program for the iconic giant tortoises.

Divine Bay and Charles Darwin Research Station

Just a short distance away from Academy Bay and the bustle of Puerto Ayora lies the quiet and wildlife-rich Divine Bay. Named after one of the islands' first settlers, this cove is protected from the swells by natural volcanic reefs on one side, by a gallery of mangrove trees on the other, and by cliffs created eons ago by the uplift of the lava plateau. The whole provides a wonderful natural shelter for wildlife. Beneath the sea, sea turtles graze on sea weed, hundreds of reef fish species swim about the lava crevices, and young reef sharks and rays employ the brackish streams as havens from large predators while they mature. A refreshing short walk (0.5 km / 0.3 mi) takes us to "Playa de los Perros" (Dog Beach) for a view of marine iguanas in their nesting sites and white tipped reef sharks. We will also explore the coast on the pangas. And for those who like to snorkel, there is a chance to explore a calm, but active, sector of the cove. Lunch at the Finch Bay before heading out on an afternoon excursion to the world-renowned Charles Darwin Research Station where we will have the opportunity to learn about the giant tortoise-rearing programme and visit the tortoises in person. Dinner is up to you: choose the hotel's top cuisine or one of the many options in town. Overnight at the Finch Bay.

Note: The expedition team may decide to reverse the day's programme, based on the tides, in order to maximise guests' experience.

(B/L/-)

Day 7: Enjoy another 1 of the 4 full-day yacht explorations described on Day 5, depending on the weekday and availability:

- North Seymour
- Bartolome island
- South Plaza Island
- Santa Fe island



Return to the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel for a relaxing afternoon and evening. Tonight is another opportunity to try the Finch Bay's elegant Galapagos cuisine or make your way into town for dinner. Overnight at the Finch Bay.

Day 8: Transfer out to Baltra airport

Itineraries:

Itineraries are subject to change without notice. The sequence of visits might be altered depending on arrival of flights to Baltra or Isabela Islands, yacht availability, National Park requirements, weather conditions, or other unexpected circumstances beyond our control.

IMPORTANT BAGGAGE NOTES:

If necessary, please separate luggage for the first 3 nights at Scalesia Lodge, since the inter-island flight luggage restriction is half the weight permitted by regular commercial flights to Galapagos:

- ❖ **FLIGHTS TO GALAPAGOS: 23 kg (50 lb) for checked bags, 8 kg (17 lb) for carry-on**
- ❖ **INTER-ISLAND FLIGHTS: 9 kg (20 lb) for checked bags** (airline allows an additional 5 lb/pax at US\$ 2.00 per pound) and **2.3 kg (5 lb) allowance for carry-on** /pax.

Upon arrival in Baltra, Scalesia Lodge staff will collect the luggage for transfer to the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel. On DAY 4, upon check in, you will find this luggage in your room.

Recommendations:

Packing List

- 1 small backpack
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sneakers (trainers) with rubber soles
- Shorts
- Long pants
- T-shirts
- Long and short sleeved shirts
- Wind breaker
- Bathing suit (+wetsuit for snorkelling in colder months, April-December)
- Hat or cap
- Sunblock and repellent
- Sunglasses
- Binoculars
- Camera & video recorder
- Any medicine you may be taking
- Book/Notebook
- Flashlight (torch) and batteries
- Sandals for wet landings
- Plastic bags to protect cameras, binoculars, film, etc. from rain

Not Included

- * Air transportation to / from Galapagos and airport taxes (subject to change without previous notice)
- * Galapagos National Park entrance fee (US\$ 100.00 subject to change without previous notice)
- * Migration Control Card (US\$ 20.00 subject to change without previous notice)
- * Municipal fee to Puerto Villamil (US\$ 10.00 subject to change without previous notice)
- * Meals not mentioned in programme itinerary
- * Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
- * Gratuities
- * Gifts and additional items
- * Optional multisport activities (sea kayaks, diving, mountainbiking)
- * Travel insurance
- * Laundry service
- * Any item not mentioned previously

Included

- Inter-island flights and local Galapagos transfers
- Overnights in hotels, guided excursions and all meals described in programme itinerary
- Snorkelling gear at Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel and on the Sea Lion yacht
- Rubber boots and rain ponchos at Scalesia Lodge
- Wi-Fi (limited and intermittent broadband only due to Galapagos' poor satellite connection)