



Cachalote

8 Day – Fernandina



The Cachalote, a charming yacht that was originally designed and built in California in 1971 and was completely refurbished in 2002, the Cachalote has an excellent itinerary and works with very good naturalist guides. The teak interiors give a warm comfortable feel, open and well lit with panoramic windows. Good outdoor space with three ample wooden decks and each of the eight teak wood cabins is illuminated by the light of its two porthole windows. Crew are very friendly and helpful. 8 air conditioned double cabins all with air conditioning, private bathrooms and hot showers. Very good value for the quality of naturalists, itinerary and operation – trade-off is that all cabins are bunk beds with exception of 1 double bedded cabin.

This itinerary is great, visiting the western part of Galapagos with their pristine untouched quality, including Isabella and the Island of Fernandina. A great mixture of Galapagos wildlife, in particular marine life, in the form of Penguins, Flightless Cormorants, Marine Iguanas, Dolphins and whales. Fascinating geological landscapes and excellent snorkelling.



Day 1 Baltra

Arrival at the airport in Galapagos.

Santa Cruz – Highlands The highlands of Santa Cruz are home to fascinating geological features, like lava tubes and the twin sinkhole craters of Los Gemelos, which are home to some 300 different fern species as well as a forest of Scalesias, a relative of sunflowers. This is an excellent area to look for some elusive endemics like the Woodpecker Finch (one of only a few bird species in the world to use tools), Small Tree Finch, Vegetarian Finch and Galapagos Rail. The highlands of Santa Cruz are one of the best places to see Giant Tortoises in the wild.

Activities: Hike (0.9 mi / 1 ½ km)

Difficulty: Easy /moderate

Type of Landing:

Highlights & Animals: Pitt craters, Scalesia Forest, Darwin finches, Warblers, Flycatchers.



Santa Cruz - Charles Darwin Research Station The Charles Darwin Research Station offers a great chance to learn about the work being done to conserve and protect the islands wildlife. For some visitors (depending on the time of year) this is the only time to see Giant Tortoises and certainly the closest range opportunity. It is also a great chance to see the Tortoise Rearing Centre.

Activities: Walking

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Dry landing

Highlights & Animals: Giant Tortoises, Land and Marine Iguanas, Mockingbirds, Darwin Finches.

Day 2

Chinese Hat or Sombrero Chino

Located just off the southeast tip of James Island, this island owes its name to its shape. A truly beautiful island, surrounded by crystal clear waters, this is great location for Sea Lions. Perhaps more than any other site, this islet gives you a sense of Galapagos volcanic origins as the beautiful white beach gives way to an almost primeval landscape of volcanic rubble.

Activities: Hiking 0.4 mi. Snorkelling & Kayak.

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

Type of Landing: Wet landing

Highlights & Animals: Walk along the shore visiting a small colony of Galapagos Sea Lions. Penguins. Snorkel: Penguins, Reef sharks, Parrotfish, Puffers.



Rabida A red sandy beach with Sea Lions and nesting Brown Pelicans, which some afford a rare glimpse of chick feeding. There is a short walk inland which offers great views of the beach and lagoon. Years ago Flamingos were regularly seen at the salty lagoon, but nowadays this is a rare sight. Geologically Rabida is said to have the most diversified volcanic rocks of all the islands. It also provides a great opportunity to snorkel with Sea Lions and has a great diversity of near-shore and pelagic fish.

Activities: Wet landing. Hiking 0.5 mi. Kayak and Snorkelling

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Wet landing

Highlights & Animals: Red sand beach, coastal lagoon, Galapagos Sea Lions, Seasonal colony of Brown Pelicans, Galapagos Hawk. Snorkel: Sea Lions, Butterflyfish, Parrotfish, Eels.



Day 3

Isabela Measuring over 1800 square miles, and accounting for over half the land surface area in Galapagos, at about 80 miles in length, the seahorse shaped Isabela Island is the largest in the Galapagos. Isabela is formed from six separate volcanoes (Alcedo, Cerro Azul, Darwin, Ecuador, Sierra Negra and Wolf). Being the largest islands, it has many visitor sites, covering a large diversity of ecosystems, from barren lava flows to evergreen lush forests.

Puerto Villamil A small town on the southeast coast of Isabela. Various sites can be visited from here (detailed below) and next to the town are a number of lagoons where Flamingos Stilts and migratory shore birds are usually seen. The town enjoys one of the most beautiful beaches in the islands.

Las Tintoreras or Shark Reef Canal - Optional early morning visit - located on the other side of a small bay with completely calm turquoise waters, Las Tintoreras is a great place to see Sea Lions, Sea Turtles and Marine Iguanas as well as other Galapagos wildlife. This site gets its name thanks to a large lava crevice where, at low tide, white-tipped Reef Sharks are found resting or swimming. Most of the trail is lava, except for a white sand beach which is home to a small colony of Sea Lions and a nesting site for Marine Iguanas.

Activities: Hike (1 mi / 1,6 km) Snorkel, Dinghy ride

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Dry Landing

Highlights & Animals: Reef sharks, Penguins, Marine Iguanas, Sea Lions, Herons.



Sierra Negra Volcano This volcano on Isabella Island has one of the largest caldera's in the world measuring over 6 miles across. After a 30 min drive from the town, you will hike for 1 hour to get to the rim of the caldera and for a total of 4 hours (round trip) to Volcan Chico, a set of spatter and cinder cones created in 1979. Along the way you will usually see Vermillion Flycatchers, Galapagos Martins, and Galapagos Hawk. All along the way you will be rewarded with incredible panoramic views of Sierra Negra.

Activities: Hiking, horseback riding.

Difficulty: Moderate/Difficult

Type of Landing: Dry landing

Highlights & Animals: Large caldera, stunning views, Darwin finches, Galapagos hawks.

Isabela – (Villamil) – Tortoise Breeding Centre The Galapagos has 11 different species of Giant Tortoise of which five species are endemic to Isabela. A new breeding facility, built just outside of town by the Galapagos National Park Service is helping to increase the populations of these iconic endangered reptiles. Thanks to this breeding centre and the one located at the Charles Darwin Station in Santa Cruz, the populations of Tortoises, which were on a severe decline until the 80's, is now recovering and has reached over 30.000 throughout the islands.

Activities: Hike (1 mi / 1,6 km)

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Dry Landing

Highlights & Animals: Wetlands, salt and brackish lagoons on the way to the Breeding centre. Flamingos, Stilts, adult and baby Giant tortoises.



Day 4

Punta Moreno With dramatic seascapes and one of the best sunrise areas in the Galapagos, the visit to this site begins with a dinghy ride along the beautiful rocky shores where shore birds, Penguins, cormorants and herons can be spotted. The barren lava fields host a surprising amount of wildlife due to the presence of many sink holes which are home to Flamingos, Stilts and Pintail Ducks.

Activities: Hike (1.2 mi / 2km) Snorkelling, dinghy ride

Difficulty: Moderate/Difficult

Type of Landing: Dry landing

Highlights & Animals: Flamingos, Gallinules, Pintail ducks, Sea turtles, Reef sharks, Penguins.

Elizabeth Bay Located on the west coast of the Isabela, no landings are permitted here, but it makes for a beautiful dinghy ride. This is one of the best areas to see Galapagos Penguins as they prefer the cooler waters found on western Isabela. Flightless Cormorants and Marine Iguanas are common and often seen basking in the sun on rocks along the shore. As you then enter a narrow cove lined with large Red Mangrove trees, you will see Marine Turtles, Rays and shore birds.

Activities: Two-hour dinghy ride

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: No landing

Highlights & Animals: Mangrove forest, Sea Turtles, Penguins, Rays, Herons, Sea Lions.



Day 5

Urbina Bay In 1954, almost 4 miles of coastal seabed dramatically uplifted about 15 ft exposing the sea floor and killing thousands of fish and turtles. This then, vegetation has largely colonized the area but many signs of the uplifting can still be observed. This area is now a nesting site for Land Iguanas and occasionally, giant tortoises coming from the moist uplands. This is a good trail to see Darwin finches and it is not rare to see Galapagos Hawks

Activities: Snorkelling, dinghy ride & hike, 2 trails: short (0.6 mi / 1 km), long (1.9 mi / 3km)

Difficulty: Easy (short trail) / Difficult (long trail)

Type of Landing: Wet landing

Highlights & Animals: Land Iguanas (the biggest in Galapagos), Hawks, uplifted coral reef, Giant Tortoises. Snorkelling: Turtles, Rays, tropical fish

Tagus Cove The walk will take you up the slopes of the Darwin Volcano, along the edge of a salt water lagoon to a small hill from which you will see spectacular views of the northern lava fields of Isabela. Most of the fauna will be observed during a dinghy ride along the coast, with dramatic colours and beautiful tuff formations, Blue-footed Boobies, Penguins, Marine Iguanas, Pelicans and shorebirds.

Activities: Long uphill hike, Snorkelling, dinghy ride, Kayak.

Difficulty: Moderate

Type of Landing: Dry landing

Highlights & Animals: Darwin Finches, lowland native vegetation, beautiful landscapes, Penguins, Flightless Cormorants, Blue-footed boobies, Darwin Volcano & Lake

Day 6

Fernandina - Punta Espinosa Punta Espinosa, is a truly spectacular visitor site and a real highlight for any visitor to the Galapagos. A narrow strip of land extending out from the base of the Fernandina Volcano, it is home to the largest colonies of Marine Iguanas in the Galapagos. You will also have the chance to see Flightless Cormorants here, sea lions, and Galapagos Hawks often perch on the mangrove trees looking for prey. Along the coast, tidal pools provide a perfect environment for invertebrates and shorebirds, such as Oystercatchers, Plovers, Turnstones and Whimbrels.

Activities: Hike of approx (1.2 mi / 2 km). Snorkel.

Difficulty: Moderate

Type of Landing: Dry but sometimes slippery at low tide

Highlights & Animals: Sea Lion colony, Flightless Cormorant, vast numbers of Marine Iguanas, Sea Turtles, Sally-lightfoot Crabs, shorebirds, Herons. Snorkel: Penguins, Marine Iguanas feeding underwater, Cormorants, Sea turtles.



Isabela - Vicente Roca Point Beautiful volcanic scenery, amazing lava intrusions and huge sea cliff make this place one of the most scenic in the Galapagos. Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies sit along the cliffs whilst Flightless Cormorants stay along the shoreline and if you are lucky you will see Penguins in the water. The upwelling of cold water currents have created an abundance of marine life here, making for great snorkelling.

Activities: Dinghy ride, snorkel.

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: No landing

Highlights & Animals: Spectacular landscapes, Sea Turtles, Blue-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, Penguins, Flightless Cormorants. Snorkel: Sea turtles, Penguins, Gorgonians and other invertebrates.

Day 7

James – (Santiago) - James Bay (Puerto Egas) This was the island where Charles Darwin spent the majority of his land visits in Galapagos. At James Bay, the Fur Seal Grottos provide great chances to get close views of both Fur Seals and Galapagos Sea Lions in a series of rocky pools. This visit also provides some of the best opportunities for tide-pooling in the Galapagos, and chances to see shore birds such as Plovers, Sandpipers, Herons and Oystercatchers. The snorkel from the beach is excellent.

Activities: Snorkelling, hike (1.2 mi / 2km)

Difficulty: Easy /moderate

Type of Landing: Wet landing

Highlights: Galapagos Fur seals, Galapagos Sea Lions, tidal pools and “grottos”, Galapagos Hawk, Oystercatchers, Marine Iguanas, finches. Snorkelling: Reef Sharks, Turtles, Rays, nice underwater formations.



Bartolome Home to one of the most iconic scenery shots of Galapagos, this small island is located off the eastern shore of Santiago Island. The striking volcanic landscape looks almost lunar and provides a great introduction to the volcanic origins of the islands, with spatter cones and cinder cones some of which are eroded shaping striking formations like Pinnacle Rock. On the way to the top of Bartolome you will observe good examples of pioneering plants, including some beautiful strands of lava cactus. At sea level, this is a great place for swimming and snorkelling, if you are lucky with Galapagos Penguins.

Activities: Dinghy ride & snorkelling. Hike uphill (1.2 mi / 2 km)

Difficulty: Moderate/ difficult. Walk up to the top of volcano 114 meters, 375 wooden steps.

Type of Landing: Dry and wet landing

Highlights & Animals: Pinnacle rock, panoramic view, moonlike landscape, Penguins, pioneer plants, lava cactus. Snorkelling: Penguins, Reef Sharks, Rays great colourful fish.



Day 8

North Seymour A great variety of Galapagos wildlife is provided in the loop trail on this small island. The highlight of your visit here will be the largest colony of Magnificent and Great Frigatebirds in the Galapagos as well as a colony of Blue-footed Boobies. In addition there are Sea lions, Marine Iguanas, Lava Lizards, Swallow-Tailed Gulls, and a few secretive, but very large Land Iguanas.

Activities: Hiking(1.5 mi/2.2 km), Snorkelling & dinghy ride

Difficulty: Moderate/difficult

Type of Landing: Dry landing

Highlights & Animals: Land & Marine Iguanas, Frigatebirds, Blue-footed Boobies, Sea Lions, sea birds. Snorkelling: Rays, Reef Shark, fish, Garden Eels



From here you return to Baltra for your flight back to mainland Ecuador or you can extend your Galapagos trip with a stay on one of the inhabited islands.



Please note: *Itineraries are unlikely to change significantly but are subject to change. Weather, wildlife breeding, instructions from the Galapagos National Park, specific abilities and interests of passengers as well as operational matters may cause your guide or captain to change the times or nature of your visits. Your guide will always endeavor to have the best itinerary for you within these constraints.*



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