



## Cachalote

8 Day – Tower



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 excellent and one of the few yachts that visits Espanola and Genovesa in an 8 day cruise. This itinerary is particularly good in the months April through November when the Waved Albatross are on Espanola.



## 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

**South Plaza** is the best island for observing Land Iguanas, along with Cactus Finches, Tropic Birds and Sea Lions. One of your first stops will be through a small “forest” of Prickly Pear Cactus. The walk along the sea cliffs is a wonderful experience, with Galapagos Shearwaters and Red-billed Tropicbirds gliding by. Towards the end of the walk is a bachelor Sea Lion colony, with a battle-scarred collection of old bulls in various states of recuperation or total retirement!

**Activities:** Hike (1.5 mi / 2 ½ km)

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Land Iguanas, Sea Lion colony, Galapagos Shearwaters, Swallow-tailed Gulls, Nazca Boobies, amazing landscape with cliffs



**Santa Fe** This is the oldest of the Galapagos islands. Its paradisiacal bay offers great possibilities to swim and snorkel in crystal clear waters. A hike inland offers a great chance to see a species of Land Iguanas (*Conolophus pallidus*) which is endemic to Santa Fe Island. In the same area you'll also see a forest of giant prickly pear cactus. After your visit you can swim and snorkel both inside and outside the bay.

**Activities:** Hiking, Snorkel

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights:** Santa Fe Land Iguanas, Sea Lion colony, Galapagos hawks, Mockingbirds, giant prickly pear cactus (the tallest in Galapagos). Snorkel: Sea Lions, Reef Sharks, Parrotfish, Surgeonfish.



### Day 3

**San Cristobal – Cerro Brujo** This striking eroded tuff cone was one of the first sites visited by Charles Darwin. It has a beautiful coral sand beach where you can take a leisurely walk (depending on time of year) visited by Brown Pelicans, Blue-footed Boobies, and Swallow Tail Gulls as well as Marine Iguanas and Sea Lions. The beauty of this dramatic area can also be explored from the dingy, exploring caves and looking for sea birds.

**Activities:** Hike along the beach (1 mi / 1.6 km), dinghy ride, snorkelling & kayaking

**Difficulty:** Easy walk along the beach

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Beautiful rock formations, Sea Lions, shore birds, Land birds: Finches and Mockingbirds, snorkelling: Sea Lions, nice tropical fish, anemones.



**San Cristobal - El Junco Lake** Driving up to the highlands of San Cristobal, you take a narrow road up the sides of an extinct volcano and at the summit you are treated to a spectacular view of the El Junco Lagoon. Rainwater and condensation have collected in the caldera for hundreds of years, creating this haven for Frigatebirds. Travelling up here gives you a glimpse of the island's many zones and their eco-systems within the island (you need good shoes and a jacket for this visit!).

**Activities:** Uphill hike (1 mi / 1.6 km)

**Difficulty:** Easy/moderate

**Type of Landing:** No landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Interesting hike to see the only permanent lake of the entire Galapagos. Views of the lake, endemic highland vegetation, Darwin Finches.



## Day 4

### Española (Hood)

This island is one of the highlights of any visit to Galapagos. Espanola is the southernmost island in the Galapagos, and is also one of the oldest. Numerous Sea Lions are seen here, plus hundreds of Marine Iguanas basking on the rocks. Espanola's Marine Iguanas are unlike other Galapagos Marine Iguanas thanks to their bright colouring.

Espanola is home to thousands of nesting seabirds all year, including Blue-footed Boobies, Nazca Boobies and Frigatebirds. Between late March and December the Waved Albatross, perhaps the most spectacular of Galapagos birds, returns to Espanola by the thousands to perform their amazing mating dance and produce the next generation. Almost the entire population breeds on this island during this time, and they spend the rest of the year at sea.

**Punta Suárez** Regarding the amount of wildlife, this one of the best trails in the whole islands. Despite the difficult terrain, the walk is an absolute marvel, as from the beginning to the end you will see large quantities of Sea Lions, Marine Iguanas, Blue-footed and Nazca boobies, gulls, Galapagos Hawks and during most of the year, Waved Albatross. There are spectacular views of flying birds from the cliffs.

**Activities:** Hike (1.9 mi / 3 km)

**Difficulty:** Difficult, rocky terrain.

**Type of Landing:** Dry Landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Española Mockingbird, Nazca Boobies, Waved Albatross, Red-billed tropicbirds, lava lizards, Galapagos Hawk, Blue-footed Boobies, blow hole, amazing landscape.



## Gardner Bay

This beautiful bay is nestled between Gardner islet and the beautiful coral sand beach in Española. You will visit a spectacular white sand beach, home to one of the largest Sea Lion colonies in the islands, where you can also see endemic Española Mockingbirds and with some luck, Galapagos Hawks.

**Activities:** Snorkelling and kayaking. Short hike along the beach (0.6 mi / 1km)

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights & Animals:** White sandy beach, Sea Lion colony, Mockingbirds Galapagos Hawks. Snorkelling: colourful fish, Sea Lion nursery.



## Day 5

**Floreana - Punta Cormorant** At Punta Cormorant you will walk on an olivine beach (a mineral known for its olive-green quality, that is found in meteorites, the moon and mars as well as on earth), visit a large lagoon where Great Flamingos sometimes nest, and walk over to Flour Beach, a beautiful white sandy beach to look for Green Sea Turtle nests.

**Activities:** Hike (1.2 mi/2km)

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights and Animals:** An easy walk along a coastal lagoon where Flamingos are often found, along with Stilts and Ducks. White sand beach.



**Floreana - Post Office Bay** The famous Post Office Bay is where people leave their mail to be picked up and delivered by others in the “post office” barrel—a time-honoured tradition begun by whalers more than two hundreds of years ago.

**Activities:** Short hike (less than 0.2 mi / 0.3km), lava tunnel & snorkelling

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights:** Barrel Post Office, lava tunnel inland (difficult access), nice sandy beach

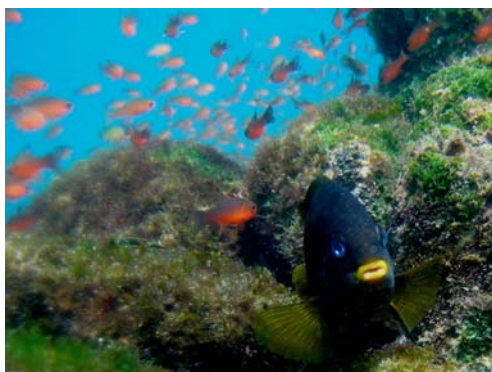
**Day 6 Santa Cruz – Cerro Dragon or Dragon Hill** After a dry landing, the walk will take you along the edge of a salt water lagoon behind the beach where you can often see Flamingos, Pintail Ducks, Common Stilts and other bird species. A short walk inland, offers a great view of the bay and a nesting site for Land Iguanas, many of which were repatriated back to Cerro Dragon by the Charles Darwin Research Station, after their near-extinction due to feral dogs and cats.

**Activities:** Hiking 1.5 mi. Snorkelling

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Coastal lagoon with variety of water birds: Herons, Stilts, Pintail Ducks, Oystercatchers, Flamingos. Giant Cactus, Land Iguanas, Darwin Finches, Mockingbirds. Snorkel: Parrotfish, Puffers, Snappers, Sea Turtles.



**Santiago – Sullivan Bay** This site is of great geological interest and is located southeast of Santiago Island. Sullivan Bay offers a rare look at a recently formed lava-field. Located on the eastern coast of James Island, just across from Bartolome, this lava field is thought to have been created in eruptions that took place around 1890.

**Activities:** Hike (1.3 mi / 2 km) swimming and snorkelling

**Difficulty:** Moderate.

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing at the rocky shore and a wet landing at the white sand beach

**Highlights & Animals:** Pahoehoe lava flows, which has hardened in accordion-style formation. Small glass-like bubbles of lava can be found, called “hornitos”. Penguins in the coastline.



## Day 7

- **Genovesa (Tower)** A highlight of any visit to the Galapagos, a truly beautiful island thanks to the richness of its birdlife. Located in the northeast portion of Galapagos, the island is an outpost for many seabirds (as is Espanola in the South). Interestingly there are no land reptiles here and only very small Marine Iguanas, due to direction of ocean currents which apparently would not have carried terrestrial animals here. You will visit the following sites.

**Genovesa - Darwin Bay** This bay is actually the caldera of an extinct, partially eroded volcano, with the surrounding cliffs forming the inner portion of the rim. You will land on a coral beach, and will immediately be struck by the amount of birdlife. The trail is loaded with Great Frigatebirds (mating season from February to May), Red-footed Boobies nesting in the mangroves, Swallow-tailed Gulls, Lava Gulls, Yellow-Crowned Night Herons. Your trail takes you past a beautiful tide pool area Herons try to catch small fish.





**Activities:** Hike (0.9 mi / 1 ½ km), snorkelling, kayaking & dinghy ride

**Difficulty:** Easy/moderate

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing.

**Highlights:** Nazca Boobies, Red- footed Boobies, Great Frigatebirds, Swallow-tailed Gulls, mangroves, coral pebbles beach. Snorkelling: rays, colourful reef fish and Hammerhead Sharks

**El Barranco or Prince Philip's Steps** The tour begins with a great dinghy (small dingy) ride along the base of the cliffs where you see Red-billed Tropicbirds trying to make a precise landing in their nest. Squadrons of Frigatebirds are seen flying back and forth, whilst Red-footed Boobies perch on branches of Palo Santo trees which seemingly grow out of the cliffs. Once you arrive on land and climb to the cliff-top, you enter an area where nesting Nazca Boobies and Great Frigatebirds are found. It is also a great place to see Galapagos Doves and Vampire Finches (Sharp-beaked Ground finches)...ask your guide for the full story on the name! You will also see a large colony of Storm Petrels which attracts Short-Eared Owls, often observed stalking at these small sea birds, even during the day.

**Activities:** Hike (0.9 mi / 1 ½ km)

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Type of Landing:** Dry, difficult landing

**Highlights:** Red-footed Boobies, Great frigatebirds, Short-eared Owls, Storm-petrels, Galapagos Doves, Darwin Finches.



## Day 8

**Santa Cruz - Black Turtle Cove (Caleta Tortuga Negra)** A beautiful mangrove lagoon on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island. The yacht anchors just outside the cove and you will enter on a dinghy, paddling through the calm waters of the lagoon, which is a resting site for Green Sea Turtles. A wonderfully quiet journey, through a beautiful and unique habitat. With good luck as well as Marine Turtles you will see different types of Sharks and schools of Golden and Eagle Rays swimming just below the surface, whilst Yellow Warblers singing from above.

**Activities:** Boat tour in a lagoon, wildlife observation.

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** No landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Lagoon surrounded by mangroves. Sharks, Rays, Sea Turtles, Pelicans and Blue-footed boobies



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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