



## Samba 8 Day North Western

A European classic yacht and the best in her class. Although a little smaller than other yachts we work with (which is reflected in the price) the Samba is an excellent option and one of our favourite yachts. With a maximum of 14 guests on board she provides a very intimate encounter with nature. An ocean going vessel with a specially designed high bow and special stabilizing sail, this yacht is very tastefully decorated and lovingly kept by her owners, one of whom regularly guides on board the yacht (and is excellent) and has a great outdoor area for eating. The yacht has a great crew, is locally owned and operated in a very environmentally friendly as well as socially responsible way. This is an excellent 8 day itinerary visiting the pristine western part of the archipelago as well as the beautiful island of Genovesa.



**Day 1**      **Baltra**      Arrival at the airport in Galapagos.

**Santa Cruz - Bachas Beach** A beautiful white sandy beach punctuated by lava formations. The wonderfully soft sand here makes it a favourite site for nesting Sea Turtles. Here you will also see White Mangroves, one of the four mangrove species found in the Galapagos. There is a small coastal lagoon behind the sand dunes where Flamingos, Stilts, Pintail ducks and other water birds are regularly seen.

**Activities:** Walking along the beach, swimming, snorkelling.

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** Wet landing

**Highlights & Animals:** World War II remnants, Sally Lightfoot crabs, Hermit Crabs, Black Necked Stilts, Whimbrels, Flamingos, Sea Turtles



**Day 2 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 3

**Marchena Island** All the other yachts now trail back south after travelling to Genovesa, and the Samba is the only yacht that now travels west – northwest. The Galapagos National Park Service has granted the yacht permission to use Marchena's beautiful shoreline to snorkel, dinghy ride and kayak – you quite literally have this Island to yourselves and your fellow travellers on board the Samba.

The top of a large shield volcano, of which only the top 343 meters is above sea level, this is one of three small islands in the northern group of islands. The many young flows and phyroclastic cones on this island testify to considerable volcanic activity in the recent geological past, although there is only one known historic eruption which occurred in 1992. The island remains pristine, snorkelling and diving off this island are excellent, with great possibility of seeing dolphins here (though never guaranteed)

Punta Mejia is one of the best sites in Galapagos for snorkelling, the calm and deep blue water and the hostile topography of the location give the sensation of seeing the beginning of life on earth. In addition to great fish diversity, you often see rays, reef sharks and sea turtles. After lunch you navigate 45 minutes to Playa Negra, sometimes here you see bottle nosed dolphins or whales. After an early afternoon snorkel around a recently formed lava grotto where marine iguanas feed, you start your navigation west in one of the best areas in Galapagos for seeing whales or dolphins... though they are never guaranteed your guide and the crew will be working hard to spot them.



**Day 4 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.

**Punta Albemarle** This site at the remote northern tip of Isabela has the remains of a US World War II radar base. The main attraction here is a nesting site for Flightless Cormorants and a colony of the largest Marine Iguanas in Galapagos.

**Activities:** Snorkelling, dinghy ride & hike (0.5 mi / 0.8km)

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Sea Turtles, Marine Iguanas, Flightless Cormorants. Volcanic scenery. Snorkel: Tropical fish, Cormorants, Penguins.

**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 5 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.



**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



## Day 6

**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.

**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.

## Day 7

### Floreana - Asilo de la Paz

Some fascinating human history from the island to be seen here as well great views! You will drive up from the small town of Puerto Velasco Ibarra, up to the site which is a freshwater spring and the location of one of the pirate caves that was home also to some of the first human settlers in the islands, including Dr. Ritter and later the Wittmer family. On the way up you will stop to climb Cerro Aliera, where a good number of steps will take you up to a breath taking view and fantastic landscape.

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

**Difficulty:** Moderate/Difficult

**Type of Landing:** Dry landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Amazing views and fantastic landscape fascinating human history

### Floreana - La Loberia

A large colony of Galapagos Sea Lions, along the shoreline you will also have the chance to see marine iguanas, rays, sea turtles and sometimes sharks can be spotted and if you are lucky the chance to see Galapagos Penguins.

**Activities:** Snorkelling, dinghy ride

**Difficulty:** Easy/Moderate

**Type of Landing:** No landing

**Highlights & Animals:** Galapagos Sea Lions, marine iguanas, rays and sea turtles.



**Day 8 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.

After this final visit, you will be transferred to Baltra's airport for your flight back to the mainland, or you could continue your Galapagos adventure with a stay in 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 endeavour to have the best itinerary for you within these constraints.*



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