



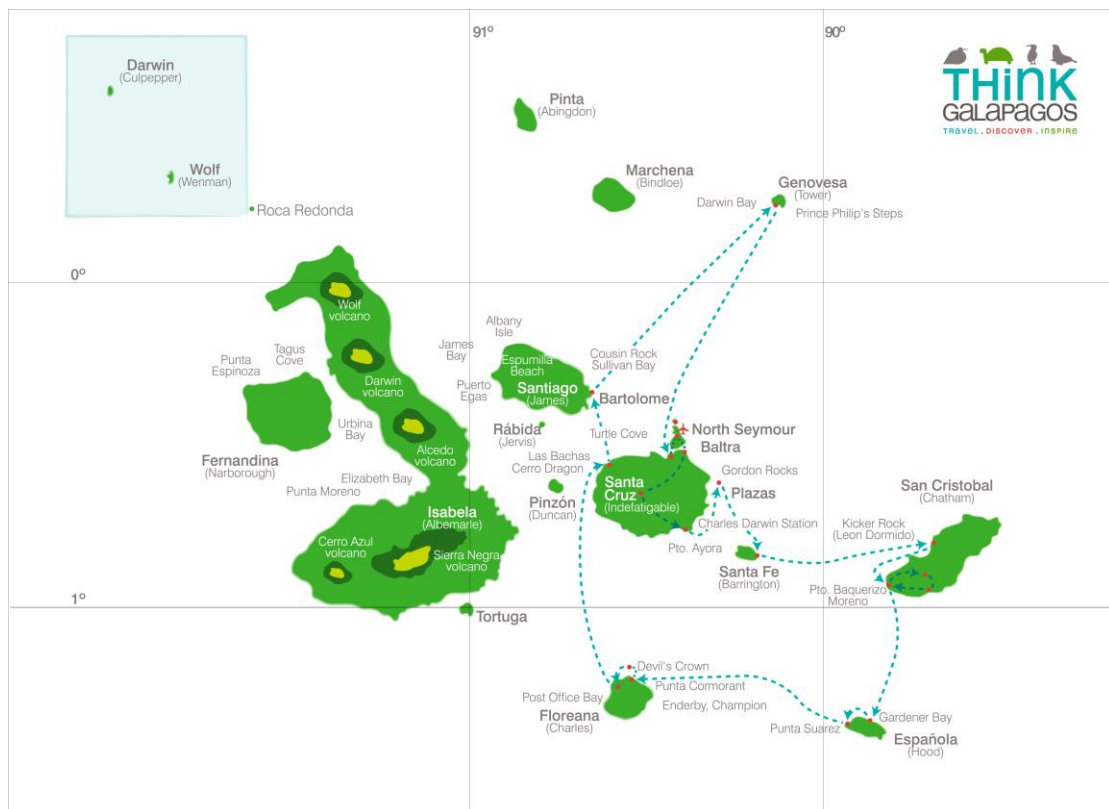
Cachalote Explorer

8 Days – Genovesa and Espanola



A charming and comfortable First-Class yacht Cachalote Explorer was originally a fishing boat built in 1988 in Vancouver, Canada. Converted to a passenger yacht back in 2017 Cachalote was brought to Galapagos the following year and has been a firm favourite of ours since then! With a capacity of up to 16 guests it is operated by a very good local company with a fantastic itinerary and works with excellent naturalist guides. Crew are very friendly and helpful. Eight cabins all with air conditioning, private bathrooms and hot showers. Built for the rough waters of the Canadian West Coast this will provide a smoother than normal ride for boats of this size in Galapagos.





Your Itinerary

One of the best itineraries possible, particularly from April through November – as it includes both Genovesa and Española, the remote outpost islands for seabirds with a superb mix of islands and Galapagos wildlife, and fascinating geological scenery, with pristine white beaches and great snorkeling.

Day 1 Baltra

Arrival at the airport in Galapagos. Once you have collected your luggage and paid your Galapagos National Park entrance fee as you exit the airport you will be met by your crew and guide from the Cachalote and you will head across to Santa Cruz Island for your first visits

A hint on what to wear for today is that it is good to have full shoes on for this afternoons visit as it can get muddy and sometimes ants!

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: Pit craters, Scalesia Forest, Darwin finches, Warblers, Flycatchers.



You will have lunch up on the highlands of Santa Cruz before you head down to the town of Puerto Ayora where the yacht is docked for your afternoon visit.



Santa Cruz - Charles Darwin Research Station

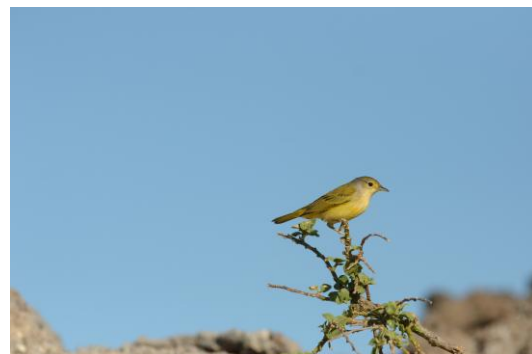
The Charles Darwin Research Station offers a great chance to learn about the work being done to conserve and protect the islands wildlife. For some visitors (depending on the time of year) this is the only time to see Giant Tortoises and certainly the closest range opportunity. It is also a great chance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

Activities: Walking (1.2 mi. / 2 km)

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Dry landing

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



Santa Cruz - Puerto Ayora

Some time to explore the town a little before you head over to board the yacht. Puerto Ayora is the economic centre of the Galapagos Islands. Virtually all the yachts visit Puerto Ayora anchoring in Academy Bay. Here you will find several gift and souvenir shops, with some art and craft galleries. This also provides a good opportunity to purchase any toiletry items you may have forgotten!

Day 2 South Plaza

This is the best island for observing Land Iguanas, along with Cactus Finches, Tropicbirds 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 (0.8 mi / 1.2 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, Snorkelling

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-tailed Gulls as well as Marine Iguanas and Sea Lions. The beauty of this dramatic area can also be explored from the dinghy, 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 - Leon Dormido

Sometimes called Kicker Rock, Leon Dormido is a huge rock formation near the coast of San Cristobal, an eroded cinder cone with two vertical rocks rising over 150 meters from the ocean, and a favourite spot for tropicbirds along with Great and

Magnificent Frigatebirds. You will visit this site by boat and it is a great spot for snorkelling.

Activities: Snorkelling & dinghy ride

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: No landing

Highlights: Deep water snorkelling: Sharks, tropical fish, turtles, Manta Rays, hammerhead shark, spectacular rock formations, sea birds: Blue-footed Boobies, Nazca Boobies & frigatebirds.



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 since the last ice age, creating this haven for frigatebirds. Travelling up here gives you a glimpse of the island's many vegetation 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.



San Cristobal – Galapaguera Cerro Colorado

Located in the south east of San Cristobal, this area is home to giant tortoise corral, where tortoises are kept in near-natural conditions. The site has been developed to help restore the Giant Tortoise population of the island (which was badly impacted by whalers in past centuries) and provides a great chance to see these magnificent giants up close in a natural habitat with paths covering an area of 900 meters. You will also have great chances of seeing the San Cristobal Mockingbird, Woodpecker Finch and Large and Small Tree Finches here. It is also one of the few places that you can see the delicate *Calandrinia galapagosa*, a critically endangered plant endemic to San Cristobal.

Activities: Short hike (less than 0.6 mi / 1 km).

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: No landing

Highlights: Dry vegetation of lowlands. Giant Tortoises, San Cristobal Mockingbird, Darwin Finches

Day 4 Española (Hood)

This island is one of the highlights of any visit to Galapagos. Española 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. Española 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 Española 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.



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.

Punta Suárez

Regarding the amount of wildlife, this is 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 (1.2 mi / 2 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.

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 Greater Flamingos sometimes nest, and walk over to Flour Beach, a beautiful white sandy beach to look for Green Sea Turtle nests.

Activities: Hike (0.7 mi / 1.2km)

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 – Devil's Crown One of the highlights of this area is snorkelling at Devil's Crown, a partially submerged crater teeming with Parrotfish, Wrasse, Surgeonfish, and Damselfish among many other varieties of tropical fish.

Activities: Snorkel

Difficulty: Moderate. Strong current

Type of Landing: No landing

Highlights and Animals: One of the best snorkelling sites in the islands, but a strong current can be a challenge for very inexperienced divers. Sea lions, reef sharks, sea turtles, hammerhead sharks, rays, many fish.



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 hundred 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, 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 mi./ 1.6km) 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 (0.9 mi / 1.5 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 Española 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

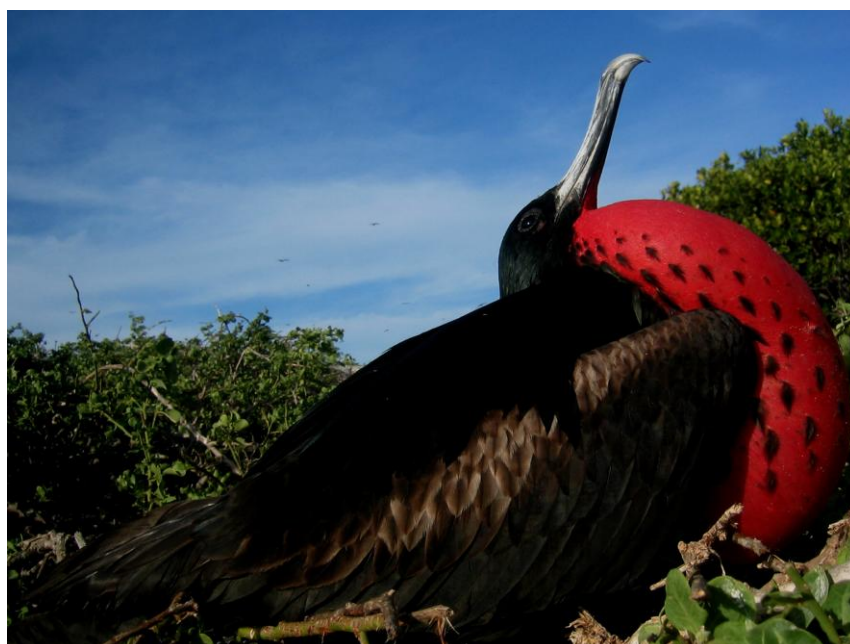
This bay is actually the caldera of an extinct, partially eroded volcano, with the surrounding cliffs forming the inner portion of the rim. You will land on a coral beach, and will immediately be struck by the amount of birdlife. The trail is loaded with Great Frigatebirds (mating season from February 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 where 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 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

You will have an early start this morning, and the visit will be a relatively short one as the yacht must then return to Baltra where the cruise will end in time for guests to take their connecting flight back to mainland Ecuador.

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 sing 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



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.*

