



Galaxy 6 days B

Galaxy is a beautiful motor yacht, launched in 2007, excellent crew, good food and very spacious and comfortable interiors. Run by a local company with a very good reputation and has first rate naturalists on board it has been one of our favourite yachts in recent years. The yacht is relatively fast, which means less time navigating than slower yachts. The cabins are all spacious with comfortable lower beds and in general very good value for the quality of service and comfort afforded.

In this cruise, you visit the western part of Galapagos with their pristine untouched quality, including Isabela 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: Pit craters, Scalesia Forest, Darwin finches, Warblers, Flycatchers.



Day 2

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 island, it has many visitor sites, covering a large diversity of ecosystems, from barren lava flows to evergreen lush forests.

Las Tintoreras or Shark Reef Canal

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.



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.



The Wetlands & The Wall of tears

The wetlands of Isabela Island are located just outside of Puerto Villamil. The Wetlands consist of lagoons, swamps and mangroves and are home to a variety of unique bird species such as Black-necked Stilts, Whimbrels, White-cheeked Pintail Ducks, Gallinules and other shore birds. The Wetlands can easily be reached on foot or bicycle via beautiful trails that wind through the swamps.

Ecuador established a penal colony in Isabela between 1945 and 1959. During this period, prisoners shipped from the mainland were treated brutally and forced to build a wall, stone by stone, in isolation, only to be asked to tear it down again and start over. This now historical site towering at 20 feet (6m) took the lives of hundreds during its construction and remains as a vivid reminder of a dark past.

Activities: Hiking (various short trails, each less than 1mi / 1.6km)

Difficulty: Moderate

Type of Landing: Dry Landing

Highlights & Animals: Reef Sharks, Flamingos, Herons, coves, large mangrove trees, coastal lagoons, Marine Iguanas, Giant Tortoises.

Day 3

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 (1.3 mi / 2.1 km) Snorkelling, dinghy ride

Difficulty: Moderate/Difficult

Type of Landing: Dry landing

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



Elizabeth Bay

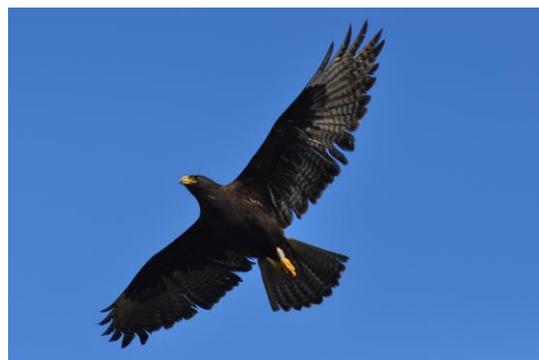
Located on the west coast of the Isabela, no landings are permitted here, but it makes for a beautiful dinghy ride. This is one of the best areas to see Galapagos Penguins as they prefer the cooler waters found on western Isabela. Flightless Cormorants and Marine Iguanas are common and often seen basking 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 4

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.



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 (1.1 mi / 1.8 km), Snorkelling, dinghy ride, Kayaking.

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 5 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.



James (Santiago) – Playa Espumilla

This tawny beach is a favourite nesting ground of Green Sea Turtles. There is a trail going inland with some very large Palo Santo trees where a number of land birds can be seen, including the Vermillion Flycatcher, the Galapagos Dove, Darwin Finches and Galapagos Mockingbirds. The beautiful sandy beach is a great place to swim and has some great mangrove areas.

Activities: Hiking (1 mi- 1,6km), Snorkelling and swimming at the beach

Difficulty: Easy / Moderate

Type of Landing: Wet landing

Highlights: Lowland Forest, Galapagos Hawk, Darwin Finches. Snorkelling

Day 6

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 – 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: Walk

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.

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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