

Tip Top II Eastern Itinerary 8-days



The Tip Top II is one of the newest catamarans in Galapagos, with great service and a very friendly crew, accommodating 16 passengers in 10 double cabins each with private shower and toilet. There is a bar, dining room, library, sundeck and diving platform. Just some of the luxuries you'll enjoy on the yacht's three decks are air conditioning, a TV, a VCR, a full sound system, an inviting dining room, a fully equipped bar, a library filled with a variety of reading materials, a spacious sundeck, and snorkelling equipment. This is a great itinerary visiting Central and Southern part of the archipelago, with a superb mix of Galapagos wildlife and excellent snorkelling including the spectacular island of Espanola.





Day 1 Baltra - Arrival at the airport in Galapagos

Upon arrival to the airport you will be met by your guide and will be taken to board the Tip Top II. Time for a safety briefing, checking into your cabins and then your first visit to Bachas on Santa Cruz Island.

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 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.

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.



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



Day 3 South Plaza

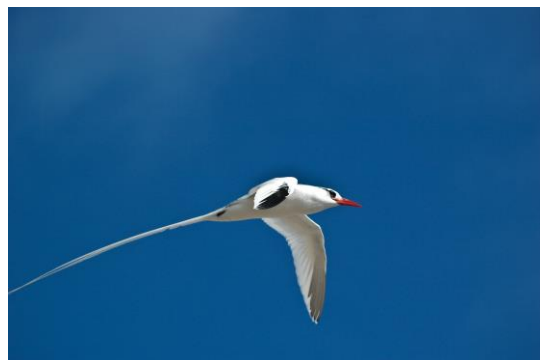
This is the best island for observing Land Iguanas, along with Cactus Finches, tropicbirds and sea lions. One of your first stops will be through a small “forest” of Prickly Pear Cactus. The walk along the sea cliffs is a wonderful experience, with Galapagos Shearwaters and Red-billed Tropicbirds gliding 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, 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 4 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



San Cristobal – Puerto Baquerizo and the Interpretation Centre

Puerto Baquerizo Moreno is home to a fantastic interpretation centre, which provides an excellent overview to the islands human history and the conservation work being done to protect it.

Activities: Easy hike (0.2 mi / 0.3 km)

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Dry landing

Highlights & Animals: Interesting information centre focused on the human history of the islands. Around the centre, finches, mockingbirds and endemic plants

San Cristobal – Cerro Brujo

The striking, eroded tuff cone was one of the first sites visited by Charles Darwin, it is has a beautiful white 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 by 'panga' or small dinghy where you can explore a tunnel that goes all the way through the eroded rock formation.

Activities: Hike, panga 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: nice tropical fish, anemones, sponge coral



San Cristobal - Leon Dormido

Sometimes called Kicker Rock, Leon Dormido is a huge rock formation that is the remains of an ash cone eroded by the sea, 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 & panga Ride

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: No landing

Highlights: Deep water snorkelling: Sharks, tropical fish, turtles, manta rays (occ.), hammerhead shark, spectacular rock formations, sea birds: Blue-footed Boobies, Nazca Boobies & frigatebirds. Second best place to snorkel in Galapagos.



Day 5 Floreana - Post Office Bay.

You will land on a beach and head to a spot where 18th century whalers placed a wooden barrel for use as an unofficial mail box. The custom continues to this day with Galapagos visitors. So, don't forget your postcards, and don't be surprised if the post card arrives to its destination before you even get home!

Possible Activities: Short hike (less than 0.6 mi / 1km) & snorkelling

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Wet landing

Highlights: Barrel Post Office, nice sandy 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.



Cormorant Point

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: Snorkelling & panga ride & hiking (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.



Day 6 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 the oldest. Numerous Sea Lions are seen here, plus hundreds of Marine Iguanas basking on the rocks. Española's Marine Iguanas are unlike other Galapagos Marine Iguanas thanks to their bright colouring, and the Lava Lizards are distinctive too.

Española is home to thousands of nesting seabirds all year, including Blue-footed Boobies, Nazca Boobies and Frigatebirds. Between late March and early 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.



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

Type of Landing: Dry Landing

Highlights & Animals: Hood 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, panga ride, kayaking, short hike (0.6 mi /1km)

Difficulty: Easy

Type of Landing: Wet landing

Highlights & Animals: White sandy beach, sea lions, mockingbirds. Snorkelling: colourful fish, sea lion nursery

Day 7 Santa Cruz Island



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.

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.

Day 8

Santa Cruz - Black Turtle Cove (Caleta Tortuga Negra)

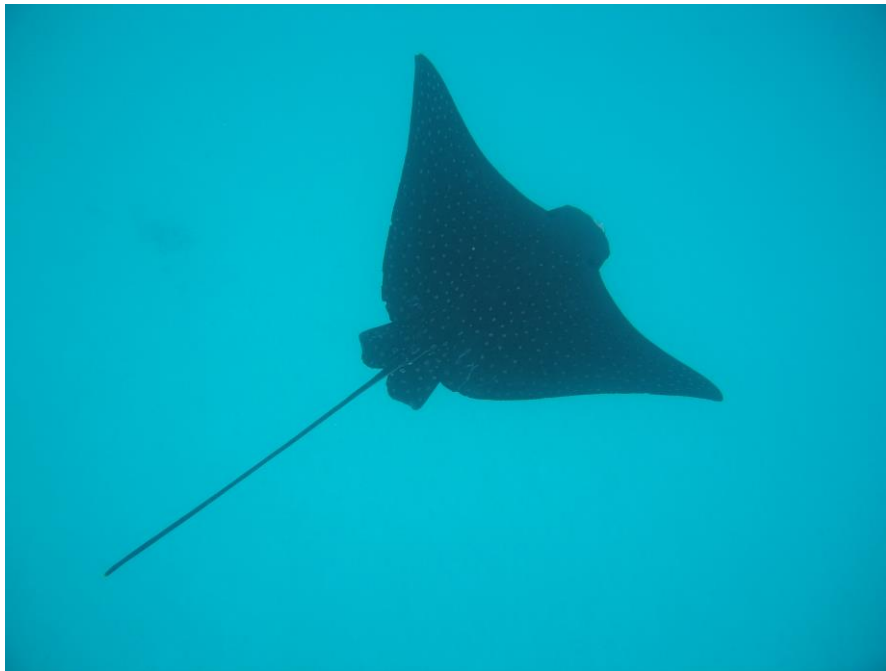
A beautiful mangrove lagoon on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island. The yacht anchors just outside the cove and you will enter on a dinghy, paddling through the calm waters of the lagoon, which is a resting site for Green Sea Turtles. A wonderfully quiet journey, through a beautiful and unique habitat. 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 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



An early morning visit, and shorter than other visits during the week (all yachts have a short early visit on their last morning) as after this you will be transferred to Baltra for your flight back to the mainland, or continue your adventure in Galapagos with an extension staying 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 endeavour to have the best itinerary for you within these constraints.*



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