



LAT-135 – GALAPAGOS ISLAND HOPPING EXPERIENCE

SAN CRISTOBAL AND SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS

Five Days / Four Nights

Daily Departures

ITINERARY

DAY 01: QUITO OR GUAYAQUIL TO GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

Today you fly to the magical Galapagos Islands! We will meet you at your selected hotel in Quito or Guayaquil and transfer to the airport for your flight to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal Island). Upon landing at the airport in San Cristobal, you will go thru an inspection to ensure that no foreign plant or animal species are introduced on the islands.

Our guide will be waiting for you at the arrivals area to transfer you to the hotel in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. After dropping off your luggage, you will enjoy lunch at a restaurant, followed by a visit to the Interpretation Center, where photos, historic documents and maquettes will help you understand the seriousness and complexity of preserving the fragile Galapagos ecosystems.



Next, you will ascend Frigatebird hill, located right behind the center, to marvel at the panoramic views of the rugged coastline. These wooded hilltops are one of the rare places where both Magnificent and Great frigatebirds form a breeding colony together.

From there you will descend to Carola point, a secluded natural beach and popular surf location, where you might opt for your first refreshing swim in the Galapagos seas, maybe accompanied by playful baby sea lions. Transfer back to hotel.

Meals: Lunch

Overnight accommodation at selected hotel

DAY 02: SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

KICKER ROCK

Today you will embark on a shared navigable tour to Kicker Rock, an impressive natural sculpture that rises from the ocean at the northeast coast of San Cristobal Island. From the side it has the shape of a giant shoe upside down with the tower as a high heel (hence its name Kicker Rock). In its longitudinal direction, it rather resembles a sleeping lion (which explains its Spanish name Leon Dormido).

Plunge into this chilly tropical aquarium, carefully overseen by your guide on the boat. The surge around hauls you into the wide channel between the tower and the main formation of Kicker Rock, an area teeming with rarely seen marine life. While floating between its high walls, a bright day may offer dazzling views down to the bottom.

Before and after your swim, you might also enjoy the plentiful presence of seabirds that nest and breed in the edges of Kicker Rock. Galapagos shearwaters, red-billed tropicbirds, blue-footed and Nazca boobies are a regular sight.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch

Overnight accommodation at selected hotel

DAY 03: SAN CRISTOBAL / SAN CRUZ ISLAND

PUERTO AYORA, CHARLES DARWIN RESEARCH STATION & TORTUGA BAY

In the morning after breakfast, we will take a public speedboat at the dock in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, to Puerto Ayora in Santa Cruz Island. Upon arrival, you will be transferred to your hotel to drop your luggage and refresh, before starting your tour.

We Will first visit the Darwin Research Station, named after the British naturalist who developed his Theory of Evolution after visitings these islands in 1835. Besides working as a NGO, this institution hosts the headquarters of the Galapagos National Park Service, from which biological research and conservation management are directed. You will be taken on an educational stroll where the most memorable part will be the successful breeding centre of Galapagos giant tortoises.

At this time, you have time for lunch (not included), and afterwards we will hike through a tropical dry forest towards Tortuga Bay. Named one of the world's most beautiful beaches by Condé Nast magazine, Tortuga Bay is a beautiful, gigantic, perfectly preserved white sand bay, named after the fact that it is a favorite nesting site for the black turtle and marine iguana. It is a great place for birdwatching and sunbathing.



Swimming in the first, large beach is NOT recommended although experienced local surfers ride its giant waves and make it look easy. The second recreational beach further along the way is a better idea, as it is protected by rocks and sheltered by evergreen red mangroves. It is an excellent place to cool down and snorkel! Return to hotel.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight accommodation at selected hotel

DAY 04: SANTA CRUZ

DAY TOUR TO A NEARBY ISLAND (BARTOLOME, NORTH SEYMOUR, OR SOUTH PLAZA ISLETS)

Today you join a day tour onboard a comfortable boat to an exotic destination, options being Bartolomé, North Seymour or South Plaza islets. Destination is selected by the tour operator based on daily availability. Roundtrip transportation, lunch, snorkel gear and bilingual assistance are included.

The first destination option is Bartolomé, characterised for the iconic pinnacle that majestically rises from its turquoise bay. You will have the opportunity to snorkel around it, encountering sea turtles, several species of reef sharks, and colourful reef fish. Another fun highlight here is climbing the 350 steps to the summit of the islet, to get a 360 degree overview of an otherworldly landscape. The hiking route crosses paths with lava lizards, Galapagos hawks and racer snakes.

The second option is North Seymour, a flat islet explored on a circular trail that crosses right through the largest colonies of Magnificent and Great frigatebirds, recognized for having the largest wingspan in the animal kingdom, as well as for the impressive red pouch that males inflate on their chests to attract females. Next, at the contiguous Seymour Channel (one of the Galapagos' top deep-water snorkelling locations), you will be able to drift in mild to moderate currents amidst plunge-diving blue-footed boobies, brown pelicans, sea lions, and even hammerhead sharks!

Finally, South Plaza might be today's' destination. While landing there, a barking Galapagos sea lion bull may block the jetty for a loud welcome to his beach and rookery. This islet breaths a rare jurassic ambience, with it's psychedelic reddish flora and giant Opuntia cacti providing food and shelter for thousands of endemic marine and Barrington iguanas. You will also be able to swim over a reef of boulders that attracts an amazing variety of marine life.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch

Overnight accommodation at selected hotel

DAY 05: DEPART GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

After breakfast, our guide will transfer you to Baltra airport for your flight to Quito or Guayaquil.



TOUR RATES INCLUDE:

Transfer from hotel in Quito or Guayaquil to airport. Transfer from San Cristobal airport to hotel.

Two nights hotel accommodation in selected hotel – San Cristobal Island: Hotel Opuntia (First Class) or Hotel Blue Marlin Standard

Two nights hotel accommodations in selected hotel – Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz Island: Hotel Ikala (First Class) or Hotel Fiesta (Standard)

Daily tours in San Cristobal and Santa Cruz as indicated in itinerary.

One-way shared transfer from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno to Puerto Ayora by public speed boat

Meals: As indicated in itinerary

NOT INCLUDED:

International air between USA airports and Quito or Guayaquil.

Local round trip air between Quito or Guayaquil and Galapagos airports (San Cristobal & Baltra)

Transit Control Card (TCC) \$20.00 per person (subject to change) to be purchased at the airport in Quito or Guayaquil the day of departure to Galapagos.

Galapagos National Park fee \$100 per person (subject to change) to be paid at the Galapagos airport upon arrival.

Travel Insurance

Land services, tours, hotels and meals not indicated in itinerary. Expenses of personal nature.

Gratuities to guides, crews, porters