

## Cruise B West (Wed – Sun)

5 days / 4 nights

### Wednesday -- Day 1

#### AM – Baltra Airport

Departing from Quito or Guayaquil to Baltra Island in a 2:30-hour flight. Upon arrival, passengers are picked up at the airport by our naturalist guides and taken on a ten-minute bus drive to the pier to board the **Coral I** or **Coral II**.

#### PM – Highlands Tortoise Reserve (Santa Cruz Island)

In the central highlands of Santa Cruz Island, we have our best opportunity to interact at close quarters with totally wild, Galapagos giant tortoises. A short walk among these huge, 600lb reptiles will also offer the chance for more highland species, especially several species of the famed finches.

**Highlights:** Giant tortoises, tree & ground Darwin finches.

**Disembarking:** dry landing

**Physical condition:** low

**Type of terrain:** flat

**Activities:** 1 hour 30 min bus ride roundtrip / 1 hour hike

### Thursday -- Day 2

#### AM – Punta Vicente Roca (Isabela Island)

This is a spectacular visitor site, surrounded by immense cliffs of the eroded volcano. Studded with resting sea birds such as brown noddies and Nazca boobies, we will enjoy them in close proximity from our dinghies. Snorkeling here is superb, with certain species of fish only found in the west of the archipelago. We also have a very real chance of swimming with penguins and potentially a plethora of green turtles.

**Highlights:** one of the richest marine havens, marine turtles, sunfish, rays, landscapes, seabirds, blue-footed boobies, frigatebirds, flightless cormorants.

**Disembarking:** –

**Physical condition:** low / high

**Type of terrain:** –

**Activities:** 1 hour 15 min dinghy ride / 1 hour deep water snorkeling

#### PM – Punta Espinosa (Fernandina Island)

The youngest island of Galapagos and one of the most pristine in the world. Fernandina is simply the 'marine iguana capital of the world', This desolate volcanic backdrop is home to a huge concentration of these enigmatic reptiles. Incongruously, sharing the same shoreline, we can find the diminutive Galapagos penguins. Here we also have the exciting opportunity to snorkel with marine iguanas feeding underwater, penguins, turtles and the bizarre, endemic, flightless cormorants.

**Highlights:** Largest colony of marine iguanas, whales (seasonal), pahoehoe and AA lava formations, endemic lava cactus.

**Disembarking:** dry landing

**Physical condition:** medium

**Type of terrain:** rocky & lava

**Activities:** 1 hour 45 min hike / 1 hour deep water snorkeling

### Friday -- Day 3

#### AM – Urbina Bay (Isabela Island)

At the far end of a long, level hike we arrive at a strange phenomenon where large blocks of coral lie completely exposed after a dramatic geological uplift in 1954. Located at the western base of Alcedo Volcano we hope to run into a few very impressive land iguanas as well as some of the volcano's endemic Galapagos giant tortoises during the wet season.

**Highlights:** land iguanas, giant tortoises, seabirds, flightless cormorants.

**Disembarking:** wet landing

**Physical condition:** low

**Type of terrain:** flat

**Activities:** 1 hour 45 min hike / 1 hour beach snorkeling

## PM – Tagus Cove (Isabela Island)

A well-known hideout and deep-water anchorage in the days of pirates, Tagus Cove was also one of the few sites visited by Charles Darwin and the HMS Beagle in 1835. A beautiful hike leads us past an overview of Darwin Lake and on to a stunning volcanic landscape revealing Isabela island's dramatic northern volcanoes. Once back at sea level the perfect activity is to snorkel along a submerged wall with turtles, lots of fish, penguins and potentially flightless cormorants. You might even be tempted by a dinghy ride or kayak!

**Highlights:** Pirates' history, calm waters, seabirds, blue-footed boobies, Brown noddies, flightless cormorants, Galapagos penguin (seasonal), marine iguanas.

**Disembarking:** dry landing

**Physical condition:** medium

**Type of terrain:** steep & eroded tuff

**Activities:** 1 hour hike / 45 min dinghy ride / 45 min kayaking / 1 hour deep water snorkeling

## Saturday -- Day 4

### AM – Puerto Egas (Santiago Island)

The black volcanic sand sets this landing apart from most. It is best known for the dramatic shoreline where we meet a host of species that chose to live between land and sea. Particular among these are the endemic Galapagos fur seals which maintain a small colony at the end of our walk. Other species of note include American oystercatchers, sea lions, waders, herons, lava lizards and even Galapagos hawks. An optional visit takes us to an abandoned salt mine famous in its day for supplying salt to mainland Ecuador.

**Highlights:** Landscape comprised of tuff cone, volcanic ash, and petrified lava flows, Galapagos fur seal.

**Disembarking:** wet landing

**Physical condition:** medium

**Type of terrain:** flat & semi-rocky

**Activities:** 1 hour 45 min hike / 1 hour deep water snorkeling

### PM – Sullivan Bay (Santiago Island)

Although, when viewed from the sea, the site does not look especially interesting visitors are always totally enthralled by the amazing beds of *pahoehoe* lava from the recent flow on the island. It is a landscape and macro photographer's dream. The importance of pioneer plants such as the tiny *Mollugo* will be discussed as we hike over the lava. After our land visit we can enjoy a refreshing snorkel in the company of sea lions, turtles and rays.

**Highlights:** Walk on lava flows, pahoehoe, great geological place, penguins.

**Disembarking:** dry landing

**Physical condition:** demanding

**Type of terrain:** flat volcanic lava

**Activities:** 1 hour 30 min hike / 1 hour snorkeling or beach time

## Sunday -- Day 5

### AM – Bachas Beach (Santa Cruz Island)

Named for some wrecked World War II barges whose ribs are still visible in the sand this visitor site offers a lovely walk along the shore and a visit to a lagoon behind the high tide line with wading birds, marine iguanas and sometimes even flamingoes. The two beaches are also favorite nesting sites for green turtles which often leave tractor-like tracks in the sand.

**Highlights:** One of the main nesting sites of sea turtles, flamingoes, snorkeling to see sharks, rays.

**Disembarking:** wet landing

**Physical condition:** low

**Type of terrain:** sandy

**Activities:** 1-hour hike / beach time

### Baltra Airport

After the visit, passengers will be transferred to the airport for their return flight to Guayaquil or Quito.