

Cruise C East (Sun – Wed)

4 days / 3 nights

Sunday -- Day 1

AM – Baltra Airport

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

PM – Charles Darwin Research Station (Santa Cruz Island)

Once home to the famous Lonesome George, the last tortoise of the Pinta race, the breeding and relocation center is named in honor of his long-time guardian. The center is set in the Galapagos National Park Service where various interpretative buildings are available to visit. The grounds, with large stands of native vegetation, are one of the better places to spot some of the seldom seen Darwin's finches such as the woodpecker, cactus and vegetarian finches.

Highlights: Giant tortoises, Darwin finches, prickly-pear cactus, Interpretation Center.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: flat

Activities: 1 hour 45 min bus ride round trip / 1 hour 30 min hike and visit

Monday -- Day 2

AM – Mosquera Islet

This tiny, low lying islet, covered in coral sand, is set between North and South Seymour Islands. It is home to a group of sea lions that come to laze on the soft white sand. It is a good spot to observe shorebirds as well as herons, lava gulls and boobies. Snorkeling or diving here one can often see sharks, rays and barracudas.

Highlights: White sandy beach, large colony of sea lions.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: sandy

Activities: 1 hour 15 min hike / 1 hour beach snorkeling

PM – North Seymour Island

This flat, uplifted, island is an important spot to see both magnificent and great frigatebird males courting the females by clicking, bill-clapping, shuddering and flapping their wings, all while showing off their grossly inflated, bright red, gular pouch. We will also likely see courting blue-footed boobies displaying their unique feet while `dancing´ to a prospective mate. Sea lions, swallow-tailed gulls, crashing surf and distant views of the Daphne Islands top off a great visit.

Highlights: Two species of frigatebirds: magnificent & great, swallow-tailed gulls, nesting colony of blue-footed boobies.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical condition: medium

Type of terrain: rocky & sandy

Activities: 1 hour 30 min hike / 1 hour deep water snorkeling

Tuesday -- Day 3

AM – Santa Fe Island

After a fabulous snorkel in the turquoise waters of the protected bay we may have enjoyed time with sea lions, turtles, reef sharks and spotted eagle rays. Landing onto a sandy beach we are

immediately distracted by the abundant sea lions there with us. We begin a walk past a forest of island-endemic giant *Opuntia* cacti. Here we search for another island-endemic the Santa Fe land iguana, paler than its cousins on other islands. Galapagos hawks and even endemic rice rats are also things to look out for.

Highlights: Endemic Santa Fe land iguana, Galapagos hawk, mockingbirds, sea lions.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical condition: medium

Type of terrain: rocky

Activities: 1-hour hike / 45 min kayaking / 1-hour deep snorkeling

PM – South Plaza Islet

Sea lions, swallow-tailed gulls and land iguanas are all present at the landing site. The small island is covered with a carpet of a red succulent studded with *Opuntia* cacti. At the cliff edge, we spend time watching birds fly past at eye level in the up draught. These include, frigatebirds, flocks of Galapagos shearwaters and of particular note, flights of displaying red-billed tropicbirds. Back at sea level, we once again encounter land iguanas, some of which have hybridized with their resident marine cousins.

Highlights: Large colony of sea lions, endemic cactus forest, land & marine iguanas, Nazca & blue-footed boobies, swallow-tailed gulls.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical condition: medium

Type of terrain: rocky

Activities: 2 hours hike

Wednesday -- Day 4

AM – Kicker Rock Circumnavigation & Cerro Colorado Tortoise Reserve (San Cristobal Island)

Kicker Rock can be seen directly from the vessel. In the sea northeast of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno is this ancient and eroded volcanic tuff lava named Leon Dormido or Kicker Rock it is formed by two rocks approximately 148 m, named for its resemblance of a sleeping lion. It serves as home to many of the typical Galapagos sea animals, such as birds, sea lions, blue and Nazca boobies and frigate. With rare sightings of swallow turtle gulls, tropic birds, and pelicans.

Highlights: Seabirds, sea lions, Blue and Nazca boobies & frigatebirds.

Disembarking: –

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: –

Activities: 1-hour dinghy ride

Cerro Colorado is a dry landing. In the moist highlands of San Cristobal, we will visit the giant tortoise breeding center “La Galapaguera” to witness the most iconic creature of the archipelago in its various life stages. The tortoises wander in a semi-natural habitat which lends itself to good photographic opportunities. The aim of the reserve is to help restore populations of the threatened San Cristobal tortoise back into the wild. In town, there are shops to purchase local handicrafts and souvenirs.

Highlights: Giant tortoises in semi-captivity, beautiful landscape on bus ride to La Galapaguera, miconia plant zone.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical condition: medium

Type of terrain: sandy

Activities: 1 hour 30 min bus ride round-trip / 1 hour visit

San Cristobal Airport

After the visit, guests will be transferred to San Cristobal Airport for their return flight to Guayaquil or Quito.