

Cruise D South (Wed – Sun)

5 days / 4 nights

Wednesday -- Day 1

AM – San Cristobal Airport

Departure from Quito or Guayaquil to San Cristobal in a 2:30-hour flight. Arriving in Galapagos, passengers are picked up at the airport by our naturalist guides and taken to the pier to board the Coral I or Coral II.

PM – Interpretation Center (San Cristobal Island)

The interpretation center is full of interesting information and offers the perfect overview to the formation of Galapagos, its significance in the world, threats and conservation efforts.

Highlights: Learn about the history of the islands, San Cristobal mockingbirds.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: path

Activities: 1 hour visit / 1 hour hike

Thursday -- Day 2

AM – Cerro Brujo (San Cristobal Island)

From our dinghy ride, as we head to shore, we are first humbled by the immensity of the stunning cliffs of 'Sorcerer's Hill'. We can enjoy simply sharing the beach with sea lions, snorkeling from shore or take a walk to a hidden lagoon where we might spot black-necked stilts, ruddy turnstones, whimbrels and white-cheeked pintails.

Highlights: extensive marine wildlife.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: sandy

Activities: 1 hour hike / 1 hour beach snorkeling

PM – Punta Pitt (San Cristobal Island)

Sea lions will greet us as we land on the beach and prepare for our climb to a high point on the steep eroded tuff cone. This is the only place in the islands where we will enjoy the chance to see all three of the booby species in the same place. The red-foots will be perched on the *Cordia lutea* and small trees, the Nazca's on the ground near the cliff edge while the blue-foots will be a little further inland. Frigatebirds will be all around and the views are breathtaking.

Highlights: Magnificent viewpoints, colony of sea lions, 3 booby species and 2 frigatebirds.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical condition: medium

Type of terrain: rocky

Activities: 2 hours hike / 1 hour beach snorkeling or 45 min kayaking

Friday -- Day 3

AM – Punta Suarez (Española Island)

One of the highlight visits of the trip. Punta Suarez seems to have everything - a naturalist's paradise. A slew of marine iguanas and sea lions greet us at the landing site from where our walk continues with close encounters of boobies, endemic lizards, gulls and even a dramatic blow hole. The oldest extant island in the archipelago it is our only opportunity to commune with the endemic waved albatross during their breeding season between April and December. With luck, we can watch their complex courtship display.

Highlights: Large colony of waved albatross, Nazca & Blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas, viewpoint from the blowhole.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical condition: high

Type of terrain: rocky

Activities: 2 hours hike

PM – Gardner Bay, Osborn or Gardner Islets (Española Island)

One of the most stunning beaches in all of Galapagos. The long, white, sandy beach, lapped by turquoise waters is home to a colony of Galapagos sea lions, indifferent to the humans that walk amongst them. The Hood mockingbirds, endemic to this particular island, will be eager to inspect the visitors and satisfy their innate curiosity. Darwin's finches may also join the throng including the reclusive warbler finch. We can also snorkel here from the beach, in the shallows of the bay.

Highlights: Hood mockingbird, sea lions, marine turtles, marine wildlife.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: sandy

Activities: 1 hour beach snorkeling

Saturday -- Day 4

AM – Punta Cormoran / Devil's Crown (Floreana Island)

On arriving, the observant visitor will notice that olivine, a volcanic crystal, has proffered a subtle green hue on the dark beach. Our walk takes us past island-endemic *Scalesia* plants to a large, shallow, lagoon often inhabited by a variable number of shockingly pink greater flamingoes. We continue through a forest of *palo santo* trees to arrive at a powdery white beach, a nesting area of green turtles. As we paddle barefoot in the shallow water we will spot diamond stingrays and white-tipped reef sharks. This coral-sand beach marks the end of our trail, and we head back to the olivine beach we landed on, to swim or snorkel amongst sea turtles, reef fish, sea lions and, on a good day, white-tipped reef sharks. A small colony of penguins resides on Floreana and can sometimes be observed as well.

One of the favorite snorkeling sites in the islands. Devil's Crown, an eroded volcanic cone, is home to an abundance of fish and marine animals. We will swim with big schools of yellow-tailed surgeonfish, salemas and creole fish and with luck may spot turtles, spotted eagle rays, parrotfish, and even hammerhead sharks! The jagged 'crown' is a roosting area for boobies, noddies, tropicbirds, and frigates.

Highlights: White & black mangrove, flamingoes, sea lions and sea turtles. / Sting rays, white-tipped shark, and colorful fish.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: sandy & flat

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

PM – Post Office (Floreana Island)

A very short walk from the beach leads us to the famous Post Office Barrel. Claimed to have been first setup in 1793 by Captain James Colnett it remains the oldest functioning 'post office' in the Pacific. The system was that whalers and fur sealers would leave addressed letters in the barrel to be picked up by homeward bound colleagues. In the spirit of maintaining tradition visitors today will often take letters and hand-deliver them in their home countries.

Highlights: Darwin finches, green Pacific turtles, historical place since 1793.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: sandy & rocky

Activities: 30 min hike / 1 hour beach snorkeling

Sunday -- Day 5

AM – 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, lava tubes, scalesia forest, Chato Reserve.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical condition: low

Type of terrain: flat & muddy

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

Baltra Airport

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