

Cruise B West (Thu – Mon)

5 days / 4 nights

Thursday -- Day 1

AM – Baltra Airport

Departing 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 ^{M/V} Galapagos Legend.

PM – 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 hike / 1-hour beach snorkeling

Friday – Day 2

AM – Egas Port (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: 2 hour 15 min hike / 1 hour 30 min beach snorkeling

PM – Rabida Island

Lying at the heart of the archipelago this dramatic island, with its distinctive red-sand beach, is home to sea lions, mockingbirds, finches, endemic Galapagos doves and vermilion flycatchers. A walk takes us through a forest of *palo santo* and cacti to a beautiful overview of the bay. Snorkeling here can be excellent, often with large schools of black-striped salemas, sea lions and the ubiquitous turtles.

Highlights: Incredible landscape, Brown pelicans, nesting spots of seabirds, red sandy beach.

Disembarking: wet landing

Physical Condition: low

Type of terrain: sandy & grabble

Activities: 45 min kayaking / 1 hour bottom-glass boat or 1 hour deep or beach snorkeling / 1 hour 15 min hike

Saturday -- 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-terns, 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 glass-bottom boat / 1 hour deep water snorkeling

Sunday -- Day 4

AM – 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 / 45 min glass-bottom boat or 45 min deep snorkeling

PM – 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 glass-bottom boat or 1 hour deep snorkeling / 1 hour 15 min dinghy ride

Monday -- 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, tree & ground Darwin finches.

Disembarking: dry landing

Physical Condition: low

Type of terrain: flat & muddy

Activities: 1 hour 30 min bus ride / 1 hour 30 min visit

Baltra Airport

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