

LUXURY TENTED CAMP 5D/4N

As part of this exclusive program, you will visit two Galapagos Islands, where you will spend time with the unique wildlife the islands are rightly famous for: the sea lions, the world renowned giant tortoises, the marine iguanas, the blue footed boobies, and much, much more. Galapagos is also one of the planet's few World Heritage Marine Reserves. This is truly a matchless environment.

Santa Cruz. On Santa Cruz you can relax and soak up the atmosphere at the charming eco-luxury tented camp – one of the first in Latin America – follows the African safari tradition in which guests enjoy total comfort under canvas while experiencing nature in its purest form.

Explore lava tunnels and rock fissures, and snorkel with sharks and shoals of brilliantly hued fish.

The highlands have a lot to offer. You will explore huge tunnels and strange sunken areas formed by the volcanic activity the islands are famous for, while on the surface are farms where you can see the world famous Giant Tortoises in their natural habitat.

Isabela: Isabela is not only the largest but the most volcanically active island in the chain; four times the size of the next largest island, it has only 20% of the archipelago's population. This is where you will be able to get a close look at and understand a little more about the very source of the Galapagos Islands. You will see five active volcanoes and hike into the second largest volcanic crater in the world, Sierra Negra, a truly awe-inspiring site.

The archipelago's famous wildlife is also all here on Isabela: the giant tortoises that gave the Galapagos island their name, sharks, marine iguanas, sea lions, manta rays, boobies, as well as penguins and flamingoes (this is the only place in the world where you can see both at the same time). And for good measure the island is also home to the Galapagos most extensive wetlands - recognized by the United Nations as a globally significant site.

Scalesia Lodge is luxury lodge based on an African safari concept, where guests sleep under canvas allowing them to be fully immersed with the natural world. Nestled within 16 hectares of magnificent Scalesia forest, it offers incredible views of the coast of Isabela Island and out onto the Pacific Ocean.

Day 1: Arrival on Baltra. Visit to Lava Tunnels

Arrival on Baltra: The tiny island of Baltra was a military base during the Second World War and has been the Galapagos' principal airport for many years. The good news is that to protect the local environment the airport has been rebuilt, this time using the most advanced environmental techniques to reduce emissions and energy use. This is the first ecological airport in the world.

At the airport you will be met by our expert local guide who will give you useful background information before we transfer to Santa Cruz which involves private transportation to the Channel, overland to the Itabaca Channel and a short crossing on the public ferry (shared service). Now our journey really begins, with a visit to the impressive Lava Tunnels a look at the highland Galapagos tortoises.

Enjoy a tasty lunch and drive to Galapagos Safari Camp.

After lunch, get ready for kayaking! Drive to Itabaca Channel.

Itabaca is a narrow and calm body of water, where you can expect to see **many sea birds** including blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, and brown pelicans. From the kayak you might see sea lions and green sea turtles. You will have also the option to snorkel on this excursion – which means you may be able to swim with both the sea lions and green sea turtles along with the numerous tropical fish.

The coastlines of both islands are beautiful – one (Santa Cruz) with mangroves and the other (Baltra) with rugged cliffs.

Overnight at Galapagos Safari Camp. The tented Camp borders the Galapagos National Park in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island's "transition zone", close to the tortoise reserve. The 55-hectare farm is on a ridge with magnificent views over the Pacific Ocean, as well as the western & northern islands of Isabela, Santiago, Pinzón, Baltra, Rábida, Guy Fawkes & Daphne.

The luxury tents located below the main lodge. Erected on wooden platforms, they are composed of three layers: one to protect against the sun, another against the rain and an inner canvas shell. Inside they are spacious (27m²), and their custom-made furniture was designed with comfort, practicality and elegance in mind. Twin beds can be joined to become one queen bed; and there are cupboards, a writing desk and a fan/heater for temperature control. A sofa bed can be added for children under 12. The en suite bathrooms are tastefully designed with hot power showers and flush toilets. All the tents have a large balcony with a hammock and chairs from which to take in the wonderful view.

Meals: L, D

Day 2: Galapagos National Park and Marine Reserve Exploration

After breakfast, transfer to the dock to join our highly-qualified, bilingual naturalist staff for *day-trips* to nearby islands. This tour is in a sharing basis with a group up to 16 people.

These licensed day trips are an alternative way to reach some of the most spectacular islands in the Galápagos. Some visitor sites are reachable on the inhabited islands, but these are few-and-far between and arguably not as spectacular as the ones we can reach aboard the yacht.

We operate set departures aboard yachts to different official park visitor sites. These include the wildlife-rich North Seymour, iconic Bartolomé, the wildly rugged South Plaza, and the beautiful Santa Fé (*subject to availability and according to the day of the week the tour is booked*).

All of our trips include time to enjoy some snorkelling – one of the highlights of any Galápagos experience – whether at the same island, or at a nearby site. [See below schedules of Daily Yacht Tour.](#)**

Overnight stay in Galapagos Safari Camp

Meals: B, L, D

*** Daily excursions by yacht are subject to change due to climatic or oceanic conditions, regulations of the Galápagos National Park and always taking in consideration our guest's safety and well-being.*

Day 3: Galapagos in Miniature

Today we take an early morning flight to Isabela Island.

Our Isabela adventure begins with a tour of the Tintoreras, a group of small islands near the village of Puerto Villamil, that are named after the white tipped 'Tintoreras' reef sharks that swim in these calm waters. A Galapagos in miniature on the Tintoreras you will see almost all of the archipelago's iconic wildlife: white tipped sharks, sea lions, turtles, rays, penguins, and of course pelicans and blue footed boobies. You will have a chance to snorkel in the bay – and don't be surprised if some of the penguins or sea lions jump in to play alongside you in the water.

In the afternoon we walk from our hotel to the local giant tortoise-breeding center and on the way we may catch a glimpse of pink flamingos feeding in a lake. Once at the Center our guides will explain the process of breeding and then releasing into the wild these giant slow moving creatures whose Spanish name (meaning saddle) gave the Islands their present title. The breeding center is an important conservation tool and it is here that the islands' giant tortoise population is presently recovering.

At the end of the day, drive to highlands of Isabela to the tented camp, check in at the hotel.

Accommodation at Scalesia Lodge; luxury tents all of which are beautifully furnished in a clean and contemporary style to reflect your serene surroundings. All of the tents are complete with their own en-suite bathroom filled with all of the amenities you will need throughout your stay. From the comfort of your tent you will be able to relax in the evenings with a sundowner in awe of the stunning vistas of the Galapagos Islands including the highlands and coastal areas.

Meals: B, L, D

Day 4: Hiking day!

Volcanic eruptions created all the islands in the Galapagos, and you will get to see this geologic process first-hand as we explore Isabela, one of the youngest and most volcanically-active islands of the archipelago..

We have the whole day to explore the Isabela highlands, and we start by hiking up to the crater of the Sierra Negra volcano, and then to the rim of the Volcan Chico. This fascinating walk usually begins with some morning fog and drizzle which sometimes persists in the shadow of the volcano, adding to its mysterious character. But when we reach the rim of the Sierra Negra crater, the second largest in the world after the Ngorongoro in Tanzania, you will see why it has been worthwhile. The crater is so large, and the views so expansive, that photos don't even do it justice, but you should bring your binoculars and camera anyway!

Later, as we head towards Volcan Chico, you may get the feeling you are walking on Mars, but while the landscape appears desolate, a closer look reveals small lizards, scurrying about amongst the rocks.

After Volcan Chico under the shade of a lovely "jaboncillo" tree we enjoy a well prepared picnic lunch with the chance to enjoy some spectacular views over the central and northern parts of Isabela Island. In the distance, you will be able to see Fernandina, Pinzon and Santa Cruz Islands. We then head back down to complete our day of hiking (16 km in total) and relax on the beaches of Puerto Villamil.

Accommodation at Scalesia Lodge

Meals: B, BL, D

Day 5: Back to Baltra and flight to continent.

Today we start early, catching our flight in the morning and heading to Baltra Island for our return flight back to mainland Ecuador.

Meals: B

*****Galapagos Daily Yacht Tours (Day 2)***

Monday: North Seymour Island

AM: North Seymour, Island was lifted from the ocean floor by a seismic event, and its origins as a seabed give the island its low, flat profile. Cliffs only a few meters high form the shoreline, where swallow-tailed gulls sit perched in ledges. A tiny forest of silver-grey Palo Santo trees

stand just above the landing, usually without leaves, waiting for the rain to bring them into bloom.

This island is teeming with life! You might have to give way to a passing sea lion or marine iguana; blue-footed booby nests sit beside the trail where mating pairs perform their courtship dance. Further along, the rocky shore displays white sand, and large flocks of pelicans mass for a dive-bomb feeding frenzy, rendering a tableau for us from ages long past. The trail turns inland to reveal the largest nesting site in the Galapagos of the “magnificent frigate bird.” These huge, dark acrobats have two-meter wingspans, and males, with puffed up scarlet throat sacks, sit precariously perched in low bushes to watch over their equally large chicks. This is a walking excursion and involves an even rocky terrain. Dry landing.

PM: Las Bachas beach, a sandy white-coral beach that is a major egg-laying site for sea turtles. On the shore, there are many marine iguanas and in the lagoon, flamingos are commonly seen. This beach is also a good place for swimming and snorkeling. Best time for a walk along the beach or just relax and enjoy the magnificence Galapagos Islands. Wet landing

Tuesday & Friday: South Plaza Island

Today, we include two visitor sites: South Plaza and Punta Carrión, a perfect combination since aquatic activities are not allowed at South Plaza so we snorkel at Punta Carrión. On Tuesdays, we travel by land across Santa Cruz to the Itabaca Channel and snorkel at Punta Carrión in the morning, returning to Puerto Ayora and the hotel’s dock in the afternoon. On Fridays, we embark the yacht directly from the hotel’s dock in Puerto Ayora, but return by bus over Santa Cruz Island from the Itabaca Channel in the afternoon.

Punta Carrión, at the north-eastern tip of Santa Cruz Island, boasts both shallow reefs, mangroves, and exposure to rich upwellings to the east. As a result, it’s an ideal snorkelling site with plenty of reef fish as well as occasional sea lions and sharks.

South Plaza is a small island full of fascinating wildlife, both along its shore and along its dramatic, wind-swept cliffs: sea lions, land iguanas, swallow-tailed gulls, Opuntia cacti and vegetation that changes colours according to the season.

Our guides will seek out the best site along the cliffs for an enjoyable snorkel. Back on board, we continue sailing round the eastern coast of Santa Cruz until we reach a group of islets and rocks: South and North Plaza are twin, crescent-shaped islands. While the northern twin remains accessible only for scientists, South Plaza is one of Galápagos most impressive visiting sites.

Only 130 meters wide (426 feet), it was formed from uplifted seabed, giving it a tilted table top aspect. Our landing is in the channel between North and South Plaza, where the island slopes

down toward the water. The approach makes for a lavishly colourful sight! The turquoise waters of the channel contrast brilliantly with the white sand and black lava of the shoreline. The rocks have grown thick with green seaweed in places, speckled with bright orange “Sally light foot” crabs. Further up the shore, a carpet of scarlet Sesuvium succulents serves as groundcover for a grove of luminescent green prickly-pear cactus. Yellow-grey land iguanas sit beneath these, waiting patiently for pears to drop.

The trail gradually follows the tilt of the island to the cliffs that overlook the ocean to the south, where swallow-tailed gulls nest. Red-billed tropic birds, masked and blue-footed boobies ride the gusty currents. The overlook is a great place for spotting large marine life, including manta rays. Surf pounds an inlet at the western corner of the island, where a colony of bachelor sea lions make their home, accounting for the surprising surface of the rocks, polished by the oils of their fur.

This is a walking excursion and involves uneven rocky terrain, Dry landing, Snorkelling.

Wednesday & Thursday: Santa Fe Island

Santa Fe offers one of the more beautiful and sheltered coves in the archipelago. Its turquoise lagoon is protected by a peninsula of tiny islets forming an ideal anchorage. The island lies to the southeast of Santa Cruz within sight of Puerto Ayora. Like North Seymour, Santa Fe has been uplifted, and you can see where underwater lava once cooled off (pillow lava). To get there, the Sea Lion Yacht departs from Academy Bay in Puerto Ayora, yards from the Finch Bay hotel’s dock.

A wet landing on a sandy white beach brings us into contact with one of the many sea lion harems. Bulls vie for the right to be Beach Master, while smaller males masquerade as females and make stealthy mating moves. Galápagos hawks are often easily approached, perched atop salt bushes.

The giant prickly pear cactus found here live up to their name, with tree-sized trunks! Our goal is to spot one of the large species of land iguana, native to Santa Fe. Beige to chocolate brown in colour with dragon-like spines, these huge iguanas truly resemble dinosaurs.

An indigenous species of rice rat also inhabits the thickets, and lucky hikers can spot harmless Galápagos snakes. After the hike, there is nothing more inviting than a swim in the calm waters of the bay, a great snorkelling opportunity with diverse marine life.

This is a walking excursion and involves uneven rocky terrain. The yacht both sails from, and returns to, the dock in Puerto Ayora.

Saturday: Bartolome Island

After an invigorating breakfast we leave the hotel, cross Academy Bay by boat, and board our bus in Puerto Ayora. In order to shorten travel distance and save considerable time (Bartolomé is the furthest island the hotel's yacht visits), we will cross 42 km to the Itabaca Channel on the north shore, where the Sea Lion Yacht awaits us. This way, all that is left to sail is 21 Nautical miles (39Km/24miles) to Bartolomé Island.

Bartolomé is famous for Pinnacle Rock, a towering spearheaded obelisk that rises from the ocean's edge and is the best known landmark in the islands.

Galápagos penguins —the only species of penguin found north of the equator — waddle precariously along narrow volcanic ledges at its base. Sea lions snooze on rocky platforms, ready to slide into the water to play with passing snorkelers. Just below the surface, shoals of tropical fish dodge in and out of the rocks past urchins, sea stars and anemones. A perfectly-crescent-shaped, pink-and-white sandy beach lies just to the east of the pinnacle. Sea turtles use the beach as a nesting site and can sometimes be found wading in the shallow water near the shore, or resting in the sand to recover from the arduous task of digging nests, laying eggs and covering them over. We snorkel from this beach following a wet landing.

Penguins dot the nearby rocks of the other landing site, less than a kilometer along the eastern shore. Here the submerged walls of a tiny volcanic crater give the impression of a fountain pool. A dry landing here leads to a 600-metre (2,000-foot) pathway complete with stairs and boardwalks leading to Bartolomé's summit. The route is not difficult and presents a museum of volcanology: a site left untouched after its last eruption, where cones stand in various stages of erosion and lava tubes form bobsled-like runs from the summit. At the top you will be rewarded with spectacular views of Santiago Island and James Bay to the west, and far below, Pinnacle Rock and our beach, where the crystal blue waters of the bay cradle our yacht.

We return to the Itabaca Channel, board our bus, and travel over the island back to the hotel.

Sunday: North Seymour Island

North Seymour was lifted from the ocean floor by a seismic event, and its origins as a seabed give the island its low, flat profile. Cliffs only a few meters high form the shoreline, where swallow-tailed gulls sit among the ledges and rocks. A tiny forest of silver-grey Palo Santo trees stand just above the landing, usually without leaves, waiting for the rains to burst into bloom.

This island is teeming with life! You might have to give way to a passing sea lion or marine iguana; blue-footed booby nests sit beside the trail where mating pairs perform their courtship dance. Further along, the rocky shore is interspersed with white sand, while large flocks of pelicans mass for a dive-bomb feeding-frenzy, painting a tableau from ages long past for us. The trail turns inland to reveal the largest nesting site in the Galapagos of the "magnificent frigate bird." These huge, dark acrobats have two-meter (6-foot) wingspans, and males, with

puffed up scarlet throat sacks, sit precariously perched in low bushes to watch over their equally large chicks. This is a walking excursion and involves uneven rocky terrain. Dry landing.

In the afternoon, we visit Las Bachas beach. After WWII, US military barges were beached and abandoned here. Locals referred to the beach as the barges beach, a name that morphed to "bachas". Today it is an important nesting area for the east Pacific green sea turtle. Located on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, it is a glorious white beach, with several brackish lagoons only a few steps away from the sea. These lagoons are the feeding grounds of various wading birds, from stilts to flamingos. Fantastic snorkeling, swimming, or simply enjoying the white soft beach.

After the visits, the yacht sails to Itabaca channel, from where we cross by bus faster over Santa Cruz Island to reach the hotel.