

## Description Islands

Six hundred miles off of the coast of Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands straddle the equator, a unique world of tortoises weighing up to 500 pounds, arctic penguins, fun loving seals, pink flamingos and blue footed-bobies. Everyone knows, of course, that it was this archipelago that provided Charles Darwin with the living laboratory that he used to develop his famous Theory of Evolution in the 19th century.

The Galapagos are made up of 13 main islands, 6 small islands and 42 islets. The capital is Puerto Baquerizo, found on the west side of San Cristobal Island. However the largest and better know community is Puerto Ayora on the islands of SANTA CRUZ, the home to the Charles Darwin Station. The majority of yacht operator's work out of Puerto Ayora and the majority of cruises start here or directly to the north of Santa Cruz Island. A small community exists also at Puerto Velasco Ibarra on FLOREANA.



### **1. Baltra Island (AIRPORT)**

It was a North American airbase. From here you will either catch a five minute bus ride to the dock or embark your yacht or you'll take a bus to the south of the island, a ten minute journey to the channel that separates Baltra and Santa Cruz. Here a ten minute boat ride brings you to the northern most point on Santa Cruz where a bus will take you across the island arriving forty five minutes later in Puerto Ayora.

## 2. San Cristobal Island (CHATHAM) (second airport)

Home to the capital and administrative centre of the Galapagos Islands, Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, situated on the western side of the island. The two main visitor sites here are Kicker Rock and Isla Lobos. On approach to Puerto Baquerizo it is not unusual to see a school of dolphins swimming alongside your yacht.

## 3. Espanola Island

The two visitor sites are Punta Suarez on the western tip and Gardner Bay on the eastern side. The former offers its visitors spectacular 30 m high cliffs inhabited by numerous birds; masked boobies, Galapagos doves, Hood mocking birds, the cactus and warbler finches and waved albatrosses. Walking on the edge of the cliffs permits a spectacular view of the blowhole, a tunnel connected with the sea that spurts a shower of water 15 to 30 m, high. You will also see sea lions and marine iguanas basking in the sun, and the largest lava lizard in the Galapagos. Gardner Bay offers a fantastic golden beach and fabulous snorkelling.



## 4. Rabida Island (JERVIS)

A small island just 2 Km in width and 400 meters at its highest point, located to the South of Santiago Island. Rabida is known for its unusual red coloured beaches. The vegetation consists mainly of Opuntia Cactus, Palo Santo trees and scrubby bushes. Upon your wet landing you will probably see various sea lions and after a short hike you will reach the lagoon to see flamingos and pelicans.

## 5. South Plaza Island

Located directly east of Santa Cruz Island this is the smallest of the 13 large islands at 1 Km by 130 meters. After a dry landing your hike will take you from the shore which is usually covered in sea lions to the other side of the island to see the land iguanas. On your return, you may see various marine iguanas.



## 6. Santa Fe Island (BARRINGTON)

This may well be the oldest island in the Galapagos. You will anchor at one of the most beautiful and most sheltered bays in the archipelago, and some of the best snorkelling is here, with its crystal clear and shallow waters. Certainly one of the best locations for swimming with sea lions and for a glimpse of the Galapagos. Other animals present are the Galapagos hawk, owls, frigates, pelicans, manta rays and mockingbirds.



## 7. Santa Cruz Island (INDEFATIGABLE)

The central island in the Galapagos and home of the main port, Puerto Ayora and Charles Darwin Research Station. The largest town in Galapagos hosts numerous hotels, restaurants, shops, etc. A 2 Km walk will bring you to one of the best beaches in the Galapagos: Tortuga Bay. Trips can be made to the Parte Alta, behind Puerto Ayora to visit the incredible lava tunnels, the tortoise reserve at Bellavista and the Gemelos, two twin craters. A paved road now



crosses the island connecting the port with the main airport in the archipelago, on the island of Baltra. A five minute boat crossing between Baltra and Santa Cruz completes the bus journey.

### **8. North Seymour Island**

Located directly to the north of Baltra Islands , Seymour is famous for its colony of frigates found on this island are blue footed boobies, land iguanas , swallow tailed gulls, pelicans and red billed tropic birds.



### **9. Floreana Island (SANTA MARIA)**

The best known site on this island is Post Office Bay where in the past sailors used to leave and receive their letters in a barrel to be delivered by other sailors coming or going to Europe and North America. Close to Post Office Bay is the place where the first families arrived to live in the Galapagos your guide will explain the history and mystery of this story. Your next visit will be to Punta Cormorant, a green olivine beach to see sea lions and a short walk past a lagoon to see flamingos and finally onto a white beach, whose sand is as fine as talcum powder, that's a good chance to see rays, sea turtles and ghost and sally light food crabs. After lunch, you will have a chance to snorkel at Devil s Crown, an old imploded volcano just off the coast of the main island. As soon as you get in the water, look down! This will be your best chance to see a shark. There is no need to swim as the strong current will pull you all the way round to the other side seeing on your way a great variety of multi-coloured reef fish and playful sea lions.

### **10. Isabela Island (ALBERMALE)**

The largest island in the Galapagos Archipelago and is over 100 km long and extremely narrow. Six volcanoes are found on Isabela, of which two are over 1.700 meters: Wolf and Cerro Azul. The most commonly visited sites are Punta Garcia, Volcano Alcedo, Tagus Cove, Urbina Bay, some of the species observed are: blue footed boobies, flightless cormorant, Galapagos penguins and marine iguanas and turtles.



### **11. Fernandina Island (NARBOROUGH)**

Located on the western side of Isabela Island, it is one of the most volcanically active. The main volcano is 1.500 meters high with a diameter of 6.5 km and a depth of about 800 meters. Punta Espinoza is visited to see the black lava rock, mangroves, a variety of herons, yellow warblers, pelicans, frigates, the mangrove finch, petrels, shearwaters and marine iguanas.

### **12. Bartolome Island**

This is probably the most photographed island in the Galapagos due to its 350 foot high summit and fabulous 360 view, which is reached after a 60 meter hike. From this site you can admire a fabulous view of the surrounding islands. The best view is that of the PINNACLE ROCK rising 70 meters from the cove below where your yacht is probably anchored. The main attractions are a small colony of Galapagos penguins and sea lions, both found in the cove where you will make a wet landing. Behind the beach can be found the red and white mangrove, salt bush, morning glory and the prickly pear cactuses. Other animals that may be seen here are the great blue heron and possibly sea turtles as they lay their eggs from January to March.

### **13. Santiago Island (JAMES)**

Located to the north-west of Santa Cruz Island. It is famous for its earlier human use, such as attempts to mine salt and its natural resources; a flamingo lagoon, lava flows at Sullivan Bay and fur seal grottos, to name a few. James Bay is the most visited point on the west side of the island for its salt crater (Puerto Egas, Sugarloaf Volcano (450 m), fur seal grottos and Espumilla Beach with its flamingo lagoon. On the east side of Santiago you will visit Sullivan Bay, famous for its conical volcano and for the study of various types of lava rock, some of which are as young as 90 years.

### **14. Genovesa Island (TOWER ISLAND)**

A small island (10.5 km) in the shape of a horseshoe the interior bay is an old imploded volcano. A wet landing on Darwin Bay beach starts your tour with colonies of frigates, red footed and masked boobies. Just behind the beach, one sees inland tide pools and outcrops of black rock and salt bushes, frequented by feeding wandering tattlers, turnstones, lava gulls and fiddler crabs. Flying around the cliffs one may see swallow tailed gulls, and on the beach a yellow warbler. Your second visit will be to Prince Phillip s Steps on the southern tip of Genovesa.

This is the major breeding ground for the tree loving red footed booby and the ground masked booby, whose breeding season is from September to July. This is also home to four species of finches: the large ground finch, the sharp beaked ground finch, the large cactus finch and the warbler finch .Genovesa is also home to the Galapagos dove. Time permitting you will snorkel in the afternoon on the western side of Darwin Bay



## ACADEMY BAY - SANTA CRUZ ISLAND



**1. LOBERIA:** A small Island located at 2 miles of distance, where the Sea lions are, which are very curious and like to swim with people. At the bottom of the sea a great variety of invertebrates and fishes can be observed through the glasses with to sea lions. Coast Ride for interpretation of the marine birds, marine iguanas, and basaltic formations.

**2. SHARK CHANNEL:** Fissure formed by swelling of the magma chamber, white tipped. Reef sharks like to sleep on the bottom, which are totally harmless. Among the lava rocks we find ocean birds nesting.

**3. THE LOVE CHANNEL:** Another fissure, fantastic for photography, exceptional scenic beauty.

**4. FRANKLINS BAY:** Marine turtles, golden rays, eagle rays, Mangrove zone, where pelicans and herons nest depending on the time of the year.

**5. LAS GRIETAS:** 15 Minutes walk over lava rocks, where you can see Darwin finches, coast and lagoon birds, endemic and native vegetation. Las Grietas are the continuation of the sharks and love channel, only further in land, where the water is less salty. Here you can do cliff drives and swimming.

**6. THE DOGS BEACH:** This is an optional walk named after the great amount of dog crabs found there together with the biggest marine iguanas of Santa Cruz Island.





**LIST OF ANIMALS:**

- **LAND AND AIR:** Blue footed-bobies, masked boobies, pelicans, frigate birds, herons, shearwaters, crabs, sea gulls, finches, mockingbirds, etc.
- **SEA:** Sea lions, sharks, marine turtles, marine iguanas, rays, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, coral algae, giant and blue eyes damsels, parrot fishes, hogfishes, sergeant mayors, angel fish, Creole fish, surgeon fish, blenny, streamer hogfish, etc.