



Day by day Description of sites visited with activity and level of difficulty

ITINERARY (B) <http://www.ecoventura.com/experience-itinerary-b-ecoventura-galapagos-cruise/>

**SUNDAY:** Upon arrival to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (SCY) on **SAN CRISTOBAL** Island, you are met at the airport and transferred by bus then Zodiac to the yacht anchored in the bay. After a welcome briefing and safety drill, a delicious buffet lunch is served on board. In the afternoon, travel to Cerro Colorado to visit **Centro de Crianza Jacinto Gordillo (La Galapaguera)** where the national park has established a breeding program for giant tortoises in their natural habitat. At the visitor center, learn about the origin and evolution of tortoises, as well as threats from introduced animals. Along the trail, watch for the San Cristobal mockingbird and Calandrinia plant, both endemic to this island. Return to the vessel for a briefing followed by our Captain's welcome cocktail party and dinner prepared by our chefs.

**MONDAY:** Spend the entire day on **Genovesa (TOWER)** Island, one of the most spectacular places in Galapagos for bird species. Land at **Prince Philip's Steps**, where red-footed boobies nest in palo santo trees, Nazca boobies nest near the trail, and storm petrels gather in large numbers in an open lava field. With luck, you may see the elusive short-eared owl. Return to the vessel for a BBQ lunch on the sun deck. Choose to explore the cliffs up close from a kayak or stand-up paddle board. Look for the red-billed tropic bird hiding in the crevices or snorkel in deeper water from the Zodiac. Land at **Darwin Bay**, a coral sand beach where swallow-tailed and lava gulls gather near the tide pools. Enter a forest of *Opuntia* cactus and mangroves where colonies of great frigate birds nest, the males inflating their red-throated pouches to attract females as they fly overhead. Choose to relax on the beach or swim with sea lions in these northern warmer waters. Return to the yacht for a briefing followed by dinner. Out on deck, the sky is illuminated with stars.

**TUESDAY:** Today we visit **Las Bachas**, (Spanish for barges) on the northern side of Santa Cruz. Explore the long stretch of a white sand beach and the interior lagoons populated by greater flamingo, then take the opportunity for some wonderful snorkeling from the beach. Return to the yacht for lunch. This afternoon, step shore on **Cerro Dragon** (Dragon Hill) for a majestic view of the bay and the island landscape covered in opuntia cactus, palo santo and muyuyo (*Cordia letea*). The trail also offers excellent opportunities to see Darwin's finches, Galapagos flycatchers, yellow warblers, Audubon shearwater, as well as the endemic land iguanas, that were once part of the Station's breeding program. In the saltwater lagoon, pink flamingos feed alongside other birds such as stilts, pintail ducks and sandpipers. After the briefing and dinner, we sail toward the western islands and cross the equator for the second time.

**WEDNESDAY:** This morning we visit **Punta Vicente Roca** on a Zodiac ride offering an incredible view of the tuff walls, where we can enter the wave-sculpted cave. There is an excellent chance to snorkel here and find penguins and sea turtles that frequent this area. During lunch, we sail through the Bolivar Chanel. Then take a seat on deck to view the dramatic scenery and watch for whales and dolphins riding the bow wave, and occasionally the Mola-Mola, an odd looking giant sun fish. Disembark at **Urbina Bay on ISABELA** Island, where four miles of coastal seabed were exposed due to a dramatic uplift during a volcanic eruption in 1954. See the remnants of coral skeletons, some of them waist-high, and keep an eye out for the very large and colorful Galapagos land iguanas, as well as marine iguanas, Darwin's finches, brown pelicans, flightless cormorants, and the occasional giant tortoise. Return to the vessel for briefing and dinner. A sky full of stars beckons to go on deck and observe the galaxy.

**THURSDAY:** This morning's stop is at **Punta Espinoza on FERNANDINA**, the youngest and most pristine Island in Galapagos, with no introduced animals. Recent lava flows formed by an active volcano stretch their way around the coast. Observe sea lion harems with resident bulls carefully guarding their territory, and hundreds

of marine Iguanas, the largest colony in Galapagos, basking in the sun along the rugged shoreline. Out on the point, the Flightless Cormorants build their nests close to shore since they lost their ability to fly. There is a chance to snorkel here with large sea turtles that frequent this area before returning to the ORIGIN for lunch. Go ashore on **Tagus Cove**, a favorite anchorage for pirates and whalers over the centuries. Sections of the rocky cliffs are covered with graffiti dating back to the 1800s. An uphill hike leads to a saltwater lagoon and a scenic overlook with a spectacular view of the ocean, lava fields and volcanic formations. Take advantage of the secluded cove and explore the shoreline by kayak or stand up paddle board in search of Galapagos penguins, boobies, pelicans and other seabirds. Return to the yacht for briefing and dinner as we cross the Equator for the last time and get a visit from King Neptune!

**FRIDAY:** This morning, disembark on **RABIDA (Jervis)**, a small Island considered the geographic center of Galapagos because its volcanic rocks are the most diversified in the archipelago. The dark red color of the beach comes from the high iron content in the volcanic stones. Follow the trail to a saltwater lagoon where greater flamingos migrate, keeping an eye out for marine iguanas, mockingbirds, yellow warblers and Darwin's finches. Afterwards, do not miss the opportunity to snorkel with a colony of sea lions and rays. Guests on the Eric & Letty visit **Puerto Egas on SANTIAGO (James) Island** stroll along the shoreline looking for octopus, starfish and other sea life caught in the tide pools. At low tide, catch a glimpse of marine iguanas as they feed on exposed green algae. Watch for great blue herons, lava herons, American oystercatchers and yellow-crowned night herons. The walk ends at the grottos, deep pools of clear water where we encounter fur sea lions once on the verge of extinction. Before returning to the yacht, there is a chance to snorkel from the beach. After lunch, take a seat on deck to view the dramatic landscape and dolphins that are often spotted here. Guests on the Origin have a Zodiac excursion at **Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove)** through a series of coves and inlets surrounded by mangroves. View pairs of mating sea turtles (Sept to Feb), white-tipped reef sharks and golden cow-nosed rays. We return to the vessel for the Captain's Farewell cocktail party and dinner as well as a special presentation by your guides.

**SATURDAY:** Disembark at **Puerto Ayora, SANTA CRUZ** Island, the social heart of the Galapagos, with a population of 24,000 humans. Travel by bus to the highlands, passing through all seven vegetation zones found in Galapagos. Visit Rancho El Manzanillo, a privately-owned hacienda where giant tortoises roam in their natural habitat. Stop at the lava tunnels, so large you can walk through them, and visit *Los Gemelos*, (The Twins), a pair of large craters. Return to the yacht for lunch on board. Guests on the Origin have lunch at the Royal Palm Hotel in the highlands. This afternoon, visit the **Centro de Crianza Fausto Llerena** (formerly Charles Darwin Research Station). Visit the tortoise corals and the breeding center with hatchlings and miniature tortoises that will be repatriated when grown. A new exhibit honoring Lonesome George, a worldwide icon of conservation as the last surviving tortoise from Pinta Island that tragically died of natural causes. We stop at a local chocolate shop to learn how high quality *Arriba cacao* is produced in Ecuador. Stroll through town to shop for souvenirs or stop at an internet café or museum to stimulate the local economy. Return to the yacht for dinner or, if you wish, remain ashore on your own at a local restaurant. Zodiac shuttles from the yachts to the main dock will be offered throughout the evening.

**SUNDAY:** This morning we disembark and travel by bus to **Cerro Tijeretas** (Frigatebird Hill), where you find nesting colonies of both species of frigate birds (Great and Magnificent), as well lava lizards, medium ground finch and San Cristobal mockingbird. Walk along the trail to Punta Carola for scenic views. Afterwards, we spend time in port before heading to the airport for your flight back to the mainland.

### **7 day/ 6 night cruise option (Sunday to Saturday)**

Passengers can disembark on Saturday in Baltra for a shorter, 6 night cruise.

#### **Itinerary B – Western/ Northern on 6-night option**

Sunday to Friday – Same as on 7 night itinerary

Saturday: Highlands of SANTA CRUZ (Indefatigable)

Transfer to Baltra airport from Puerto Ayora with guide

For passengers who disembark on Saturday and require a private transfer to the airport with a guide, there is an additional charge of \$50 per person or \$200 maximum. Departing passengers are transferred by private vehicle, accompanied by one of our guides or a local guide to the Itabaca canal, followed by a 10-minute ferry crossing, then a 15 minute bus ride to the Baltra airport for check in for your flight departing at 10AM or 1PM. Only when confirmed on the later flight will you have time to visit the tortoise reserve in the highlands. The return flight from Baltra will incur an additional fee of \$26 per person and is subject to availability and confirmation is requested at the time of booking. For passengers who disembark on Saturday and remain in Santa Cruz, there is no additional charge. You may disembark after breakfast, and we can provide transportation to the main dock by Zodiac. You will need to arrange for a transfer to your hotel through the hotel or take a taxi.

#### **Two-week itinerary back to back**

Book two consecutive weeks back to back for a comprehensive two-week itinerary and do not repeat the same sites twice.

#### **Itinerary B+A 15 days/ 2 week itinerary**

Sunday: La Loberia or El Junco Lake, SAN CRISTOBAL  
Interpretation Center, SAN CRISTOBAL

Thursday: Reserva Ecologica Cerro Mesa, SANTA CRUZ  
Tortuga Bay, SANTA CRUZ