

## SOUTH PLAZA ISLAND

### First stop: Punta Carrión!

Rise and shine for an exciting day of exploration! Breakfast will be ready at **6:30 a.m.**, **providing you with ample time to enjoy a delicious breakfast buffet** before departing from the hotel. After you've eaten, grab all your essentials (camera, hat, sunscreen, etc.) and get ready to **head out from the hotel at approximately 8:15 a.m.**! It's around that time we'll begin heading to the town of Puerto Ayora, which is where we'll hop aboard a transfer bus that will take us on a **45-minute journey** up and over the island of Santa Cruz to the Itabaca Channel.

Once at the Channel, we will board the Sea Lion Yacht.

From the Itabaca Channel we'll begin heading to our first stop along the way (Punta Carrion), **with a sailing time of approximately 15 minutes**. Once we **arrive at Punta Carrion at around 10:10 a.m.**, we'll put on our snorkeling gear and jump in the water to begin our **snorkeling activity** that will last a little under an hour. Punta Carrion is a small bay that allows you to see a variety of fish, rays, and possibly even whitetip reef sharks!



### South Plaza Island Awaits!

Following that, we'll get back on board the Sea Lion Yacht and **continue on our way to South Plaza, arriving at approximately 12:05 p.m.** Once at South Plaza, we'll disembark from the Sea Lion Yacht and take a small dinghy (*panga*) boat to the edge of South Plaza, where we'll **perform a Dry Landing** to disembark from the *panga*. Once we're on South Plaza Island, we'll begin our walking excursion.

South Plaza is the southern half of two small crescent-shaped islands, both of which lie just a few hundred meters off the eastern coast of Santa Cruz Island. The northern island (aptly named North Plaza) is used for scientific purposes only. South Plaza is one of the smallest islands in the archipelago, but don't let size fool you – when it comes to flora and fauna, it is one of the richest islands in the archipelago. South Plaza is 426 feet (130 meters) long and is the result of an uplift of the oceanic floor, giving it a slanted tabletop quality.



Our walking excursion here makes for a colorful sight, too! The turquoise waters of the channel between both islands contrast brilliantly with the black lava rocks that frame their shorelines, these of which have been carpeted with green seaweed and are often peppered with fluorescent-orange Sally Lightfoot crabs. Further up the shore on South Plaza, a carpet of scarlet-colored *sesuvium* succulents serve as the groundcover for a grove of verdant, prickly-pear cactus. Yellow-gray **land iguanas** sit and crawl around under these cacti, waiting ever so patiently for their pears to drop and feast on them.

## FINCH BAY ECO HOTEL DAY BOAT EXCURSIONS

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The trail we'll take gradually heads up the slope of the island, leading us to the cliffs that overlook the ocean to the south, where swallow-tailed gulls nest. Red-billed tropicbirds, **Nazca**, and **blue-footed boobies** are also often found here, lazily gliding along the wind currents. This overlook also serves as a great place to occasionally spot large marine life, such as manta rays.

As we walk along the trail that runs parallel to the edge of the cliffs, we'll gradually begin to hear the sound of the surf as it rushes into and pounds an inlet over on the western corner of the island. It is at this inlet that we'll come upon a colony of bachelor **sea lions** that have made this place their home. Fun fact: the unique, reflective sheen found on many of the rocks throughout South Plaza are the result of sea lions having rubbed against them over the course of time, polishing them with the oils of their fur.



At South Plaza, you'll most likely be able to check off up to **6 of our BIG15 list of iconic species** in the Galapagos.

At the end of the walking excursion, we'll **head back to the Sea Lion Yacht at around 2:00 p.m.**, where we'll get to enjoy lunch as we admire the island we just visited from afar. At 2:40 p.m., we'll begin heading back to the Puerto Ayora docks, a journey that will take **approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes** and see us arriving there at around 4:20 p.m. Once there, we'll head back to the Finch Bay Galapagos Hotel.

**Hours spent at South Plaza: approx. 12:00 p.m. to 2:40 p.m.**