



HERMES GALAPAGOS CRUISE ITINERARY

A+B+C+D

15d/14n Sun - Sun

DAY 1: BALTRA AIRPORT/ BACHAS BEACH (SUNDAY)

Baltra

You will be met by our guide and transferred to Hermes. We will then sail to Bachas Beach where our first exploration of the Galapagos begins. Bachas is a great introduction to the Galapagos. Here you can relax and swim in its crystalline waters. This site also gives visitors the opportunity to see frigatebirds, blue-footed boobies, and sea lions.

Bachas Beach Landing (PM)

Bachas Beach

Head to Bachas Beach where the sand is made of decomposed coral, making it soft and white, and a favorite site for nesting sea turtles. Spot abundant Sally Lightfoot crabs on the lava rocks along the water's edge -- these crabs will eat anything they can get their claws on! Trek to see a wide range of wildlife, including flamingos, hermit crabs, black necked stilts, and sea lions.

Snorkeling (Bachas Beach) (PM)

Go snorkeling or swimming right off the white sand beach of Las Bachas. Spot all sorts of marine wildlife in its shallow waters and tidal pools. Bachas is also one of the most important beaches for the green turtle as a nesting site.

DAY 2: TAGUS COVE / URBINA BAY (MONDAY)

After a long journey from the central part of the Galapagos, we will arrive to the pristine and remote West of the archipelago. Our visits today are Tagus Cove and Urbina Bay on the west of Isabela Island, where we will have our first encounters with flightless cormorants, penguins, giant tortoises and beautiful landscapes and amazing snorkeling opportunities.

Tagus Cove (AM)

Tagus Cove is located on the Northwestern coast of Isabela. It is a historical site visited by Charles Darwin in 1835, where graffiti has been carved into the rock walls by visitors over the past centuries. This spot has been frequented by whalers and pirates since the 1800s that used the area as anchorage. The name of the site dates back to 1814 when it was visited by a British ship, The Tagus, which had anchored there in search of giant tortoises to be used as food supply on the boat.



Here, we will admire a variety of seabirds, such as blue-footed booby, brown noddy, terns, flightless cormorant and Galapagos penguins depending on the season. Occasionally you might see woodpecker finches, the Galapagos hawk, the yellow warbler or a large-billed flycatcher. After a dry landing one, we can climb up the trail to visit Darwin 's Lake. The lake is located on the slopes of Darwin Volcano and is, surprisingly, a saltwater lake above sea level. Our naturalist guide will tell you what the different scientific theories for this occurrence are. Meanwhile, in our snorkeling there are chances to see sharks, turtles and sea stars. You may also see various types of colorful fish.

Urbina Bay (PM)

Urbina Bay is a fascinating visitor site that came to be as the shallow sea bottom uplifted in 1954 showing a large coral reef sticking up above sea level. Because of this, Urbina Bay is one of the newest features in the Galapagos. This visitor site is located west of Isabela and provides spectacular views of the Alcedo volcano. The long trail starts on the beach where a wet landing is made. In this location, you will likely see wild Galapagos Giant Tortoises and Galapagos Land Iguanas. As the trail circles back towards the shore line you'll come across colonies of the unique Galapagos Flightless Cormorant which lost its ability to fly. This is also a great spot for snorkeling, as you can come close to a Galapagos Penguin Colony and see Galapagos Marine Iguanas feeding underwater.

DAY 3: ESPINOZA POINT / VICENTE ROCA POINT (TUESDAY)

Today we visit the westernmost visitor site of the Galapagos, Espinoza Point in Fernandina Island. This island is also one of the most pristine on the archipelago as no foreign species have been introduced. On the afternoon, we will visit Vicente Roca Point, on Isabela Island, famous for its rich underwater sea life thanks to its location on the Bolivar Channel.

Espinoza Point (AM)

Espinoza Point on Fernandina Island is one of the most pristine islands in the world, with none of man's introduced species to date. From here we can see the island of Isabela across the Bolívar Channel, an area that boasts some of the highest diversity of endemic sea fauna in the Galapagos. Fernandina is the youngest of the Galapagos Islands and a visitor favorite.

Upon landing, check out the tidal pools where there is abundance of sea life, including small fish and mollusks. If we are lucky, a sea turtle or ray may be trapped in the pools. A little further ahead we will pass through some marine iguana burrows and sea lion colonies. The trail continues to where several flightless cormorants have their nests. This remarkable bird is only found in western Galapagos, and experts estimate that they may only be a few hundred individuals in total.



Vicente Roca Point (PM)

Vicente Roca Point has great deep-water snorkeling at one of the richest marine havens on Earth (Bolivar Channel). Vicente Roca Point is renowned for its Galápagos green turtles, which are very numerous on the bay. Although the spot is known for its high concentration of green turtles, sharks and rays can also be observed when underwater visibility is good. We take a dinghy ride along the coast to observe a great diversity of sea and coastal birds; Nazca and blue-footed boobies, brown pelicans, penguins, flightless cormorants. The emergence of cold water currents in this part of the Galapagos gives rise to an abundance of marine life. Our snorkeling will take us along the cliffs and offers the chance of exploring two shallow underwater caves with rich marine wildlife.

DAY 4: PUERTO EGAS / BUCCANEER COVE (WEDNESDAY)

Morning excursion to Puerto Egas to see the salt crater as well as a dark sand beach and tidal pools. Continue to Playa Espumilla, one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galápagos Islands, which boasts thick mangroves and flamingo and sea turtle nesting sites. Head to Buccaneer Cove to witness the towering cliff wall rock formations.

Santiago Island has seen its share of human activity from whalers and pirates over the years, and despite the introduction of goats to the island many years ago, the wildlife of Santiago has otherwise flourished and provides outstanding viewing opportunities. See marine iguanas, sea lions, fur seals, land and sea turtles, among others.

Puerto Egas Visit (AM)

Puerto Egas

Explore the shoreline of Puerto Egas, also known as James Bay. Spot a great number of shore birds and reptiles, the beach area is home to a plethora of wildlife.

Snorkeling (Puerto Egas) (AM)

Puerto Egas

Grab a snorkel and jump into the water right off the beach to explore Puerto Egas' interesting underwater world. See rays, turtles, and reef sharks while snorkeling. After, visit the large tidal pool area – marine iguanas and Sally Lightfoot crabs are everywhere.

Playa Espumilla Excursion (PM)

Playa Espumilla

Head to Playa Espumilla, one of the most idyllic beaches in the Galápagos Islands, which has thick mangroves and sea turtle nesting sites.

Buccaneer Cove Visit (PM)

Jump into the panga and cruise alongside high cliffs and rock formations on this visit to Buccaneer Cove, which was a favorite hideout for pirates looking to stock up their boats with food and water. Spot sea lions relaxing on the beach and sea birds nesting in the cove – there's lots to see at this site.



DAY 5: NORTH SEYMOUR / S. CRUZ HIGHLANDS (THURSDAY)

Baltra

Visit North Seymour for guided walks to observe birds and wildlife, including vast sea lion colonies. In the afternoon, enjoy the highlands. Visit a tortoise ranch and see some of the amazing volcanic formations on Santa Cruz.

North Seymour Island Visit (AM)

Have an amazing wildlife experience visiting North Seymour Island – this island is teeming with life! Follow trails to see all the action (you may need to give way to a passing sea lion or marine iguanas). See blue-footed booby nests where mating pairs perform their courtship dance. Head to a rocky shore to see flocks of pelicans having lunch in a dive bomb feeding frenzy, then turn inland to a large nesting site of magnificent frigate birds. These huge, dark acrobats have two-meter (6.5 ft) wingspans, and males, with their puffed-up scarlet throat sacks, sit precariously perched in low bushes to watch over their equally large chicks. Top off the excursion with a snorkel among sea lions and rays.

Santa Cruz Highlands Excursion (PM)

Santa Cruz Island

Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz and see the Galápagos giant tortoise in its natural surroundings. Explore the area and its incredible underground lava tunnels – some are more than 1km (.6 mi) long! Wander along the volcanic tubes and keep an eye out for the (mainly) nocturnal barn owls that sometimes roost here.

DAY 6. RÁBIDA ISLAND / BARTOLOMÉ ISLAND (FRIDAY)

This morning, we will have an excursion to Rábida, its unique reddish landscape, to see a lagoon and a sea lion colony. Continue to Bartolomé for a guided tour to see the dramatic volcanic features before hiking to a panoramic viewpoint.

Rabida Island Excursion (AM)

Rábida Island

Arrive at a red sand beach at Rábida. A short trail leads to a saltwater lagoon; another trail goes past the lagoon to the interior, where the revered palo santo trees grow. (When burned, its branches give off a pleasing aroma and ward off mosquitoes.) Back at the beach see prehistoric-looking pelicans nesting among low-lying bushes – it's a rare treat to watch parent pelicans return with gullets full of fish for the squawking youngsters.

Snorkeling (Isla Rábida) (AM)

Rábida Island

Take a panga ride from the beach to a cliff wall that drops off into the water to find one of the best deep-water snorkeling spots in the islands.



Bartolomé Island (PM)

Bartolomé Island

Hike to Bartolomé's summit for a stronger perspective of the islands' not-too-distant volcanic origins and enjoy a panoramic view – it's one of the best among the islands! See other Galápagos Islands in the distance as well as Pinnacle Rock, the island's famous towering landmark.

Snorkeling (Bartolomé Island) (PM)

Bartolomé Island

Take the opportunity to swim and snorkel around Pinnacle Rock, one of the most iconic volcanic rock formations on the islands. Home to Galápagos penguins, friendly sea lions, sea turtles, and a huge variety of fish, Bartolomé and its surrounding waters are a fantastic place to explore the natural wonders of the Galápagos.

DAY 7: ISLAS PLAZA / SANTA FÉ ISLAND (SATURDAY)

Land at South Plaza in the morning for wildlife spotting opportunities and a walk through the cactus forest. In the afternoon, take a guided walk around Santa Fé to observe wildlife and plentiful marine iguanas.

South Plaza Island Visit (AM)

South Plaza

Visit South Plaza, one of the smallest islands in the Galápagos, which has one of the largest populations of land iguanas. Walk along a path through a cactus forest and view a combination of dry and coastal vegetation on this lively island, home to a wide range of fauna, including incredible birdlife. Spot red-billed tropicbirds and indigenous swallow-tailed gulls resting on the cliffs, and sea lions playing in the waters.

Santa Fé Hiking (PM)

Santa Fé Island

Lace up your hiking boots to explore the island's flora and fauna. Trek toward the cliffs along the island's northern shore to see a forest of giant prickly pear cacti (Opuntia). See endemic land iguanas lounging in their favorite forest feasting on Opuntia pads and fruit.

DAY 8: PUNTA PITT / CERRO BRUJO (SUNDAY)

Morning landing at Punta Pitt on San Cristóbal Island to observe the marine iguanas and seabirds along the beach and enjoy a snorkeling excursion. In the afternoon, we land at Cerro Brujo to observe the sea lions, marine iguanas, and seabirds along the beach.



Punta Pitt Visit (AM)

Punta Pitt

Enjoy amazing wildlife watching and interesting geological formations on this fascinating expedition. Arrive at a quiet cove on the eastern tip of San Cristóbal to explore Punta Pitt. Made up of volcanic tuff substrate, it's the only site in the Galápagos where it's possible to see three species of boobies and two species of frigatebirds.

Snorkeling (Punta Pitt) (AM)

Punta Pitt

Snorkel around Punta Pitt Island and spot schools of fish swimming below. On the shore admire the nesting birds and sun bathing sea lions.

Cerro Brujo Visit (PM)

Cerro Brujo

Visit Cerro Brujo to explore its coastline, and look for wildlife on the beach, in the water, and in the air. Learn about the human and natural history of the area from the Galápagos CEO. Take a refreshing dip in the turquoise water, and head out on a short walk to a freshwater lagoon – a great place to see flamingos.

DAY 9: LOBOS ISLAND / TIJERETAS/INT. CENTER (MONDAY)

In the morning, visit Isla Lobos and be greeted by sea lions frolicking in the waves and a small colony of blue-footed boobies. In the afternoon, visit Tijeretas, a great viewpoint and our first wildlife encounter. Learn about the origins of the Galapagos at the Interpretation Center.

Isla Lobos Visit (AM)

Isla Lobos

Explore this tiny island by foot and boat for some great wildlife encounters. Take a panga ride to view the sea and shore birds nesting and feeding. Spot a small colony of blue-footed boobies as well as two species of sea lions.

Snorkelling (Isla Lobos) (AM)

Isla Lobos

Snorkel right off the beach at peaceful Isla Lobos, amid the families of sea lions and their inquisitive pups looking to play. Spot nesting frigate birds and the famous blue-footed boobies resting on the shore. Be sure to bring your camera to catch some snaps at this prime wildlife watching haven.



Interpretation Center Visit (PM)

San Cristóbal Island

Learn about the history of the Galápagos Islands from the very beginning of their volcanic origins through to today's conservation efforts. Tour the Human History exhibit to learn about the islands' discovery and colonization and discover the natural history and variety of flora and fauna that make the Galápagos so fascinating.

Tijeretas Hill (PM)

This hill bears its name thanks to the frigate birds or "Tijeretas" as this is how people locally call them. Here we will enjoy a great view of beautiful landscapes at the foot of a frigate bird nesting colony.

DAY 10: BAHÍA GARDNER / PUNTA SUÁREZ (TUESDAY)

Enjoy the day on Española Island, one of the oldest in the archipelago. Visit the white sandy beaches of Gardner Bay's and the bird colonies of Punta Suárez.

Arriving at Gardner Bay in the morning, spend the day exploring on shore and snorkeling at Gardner Island in the bay. After lunch, sail to the western side of the islands to Punta Suárez, known for its amazing bird colonies and home to the waved albatross (April and December).

Gardner Bay Visit (AM)

Bahía Gardner

Visit Gardner Bay's magnificent white sandy beach, home to sea lions and sea birds. Be sure to explore the beautiful turquoise water and its incredible sea life. Spot young sea lions and large schools of surprisingly big tropical fish, including yellow-tailed surgeonfish, king angelfish, and bump-head parrot fish.

Snorkelling (Gardner Bay) (AM)

Bahía Gardner

Head to Tortuga Rock and Gardner Bay for a spectacular snorkeling experience. Spot playful young sea lions and large schools of tropical fish, including yellow-tailed surgeonfish, king angelfish, and bump-head parrot fish. Look for white-tipped reef sharks napping on the bottom.

Punta Suárez Visit (PM)

Visit Punta Suárez, one of the richest wildlife landing sites in the Galápagos. Be greeted by surfing young sea lions on arrival. Head to the trail to find many species of nesting seabirds, and, if lucky, see the waved albatross. Follow the path up to a cliff for great views over the ocean and watch sea birds gliding in the wind.



DAY 11: CORMORANT POINT/POST OFFICE BAY (WEDNESDAY)

Land at Punta Cormorant on Floreana. Guided walks to observe the bird and wildlife and learn about natural history. Snorkeling excursion at Champion Islet. Visit Post Office Bay.

Punta Cormorant Visit (AM)

Floreana Island

Visit Punta Cormorant, the only landing site on Floreana Island, and discover two amazingly different beaches: one with green sand, colored by olivine crystals, and another with white sand particles known as 'Flour Beach'. Spend the afternoon observing flamingos and other shore birds feeding in the lagoon. Spot penguins and marine iguanas at the water's edge and explore the amazing lava tubes.

Snorkelling (Champion Islet) (AM)

Champion Islet

Jump on in and get up close and personal with the playful sea lion colony that resides in the waters off this tiny island. Keep an eye out for sea turtles, rays and colorful fish swimming by. There can be currents in this area, this activity should be done by strong swimmers only.

Post Office Bay Visit (PM)

Floreana Island

Visit Post Office Bay and learn about its unique history. In the late 18th century, English whaling vessels placed a barrel here to be used as a post office. Today, the box is used mainly by tourists, who may drop off and pick up unstamped letters to be carried too far destinations. Continue the tradition – leave a letter and take one to deliver (be sure it makes it to the correct location)

DAY 12: CHARLES DARWIN STATION/SANTA CRUZ HIGHLANDS (THURSDAY)

Disembark in Puerto Ayora and visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to see the giant Galápagos tortoises. In the afternoon enjoy another splendid and amazing visit of this wonderful Santa Cruz Island

Charles Darwin Research Station Visit (AM)

Visit Fausto Llerena Breeding Center, a great place to observe many species of tortoises and land iguanas in captivity. Brought back from the brink of extinction, see the famous Galápagos tortoise up close – a corral houses adult tortoises, and a nursery cares for the young until around age three when their shells have hardened.



This area also houses the Charles Darwin Research Station, a scientific organization initiated in 1964, which works to preserve the Galápagos' ecosystem through the conservation efforts of scientists, researchers, and volunteers. While the offices themselves are not open to visitors, the research station provides a study location for international scientists and environmental education for the local community.

Tortuga Bay Beach

Visit to one of the most famous beaches in Santa Cruz. Guided hike along a 45-minute trail. Visit to an unparalleled beach with white sand and the possibility of observing species such as: sea lions, marine iguanas, pelicans, seagulls, crabs, among others. We invite you to swim in this paradisiacal place, you are only allowed to swim in the mangrove swamp that is separated from the beach.

DAY 13: DRAGON HILL / CHINESE HAT (FRIDAY)

This morning, we visit Dragon Hill on the west coast of Santa Cruz to see land Iguanas and a saltwater lagoon frequented by flamingos and other species of birds. In the afternoon, the boat arrives at a small uniquely shaped island off the southern tip of Santiago called Chinese Hat. Here it is often possible to see Galápagos' penguins, and the marine life is fantastic for snorkeling. There is also a large sea lion colony as well as many marine iguanas that can be seen while walking amongst the volcanic scenery. Trek to see good views of the island's volcano.

Dragon Hill (AM)

Visit Cerro Dragón (Dragon Hill) for some prime birdwatching. Take a short walk from the beach to a hypersaline (saltier than the ocean) lagoon frequented by pink flamingos, common stilts, pintail ducks, and other species of birds. Pass through a Scalesia tree forest; endemic to the area, there are only 400 specimens of Scalesia trees left in the world.

Chinese Hat Visit (PM)

Explore Chinese Hat's beautiful landscape and spectacular white-coral sand beach followed by snorkeling with sea lions and penguins and swimming opportunities in the cove.

Snorkelling (Chinese Hat) (PM)

Chinese Hat

Snorkel right from the white-coral sand beach and come face to face with playful sea lions and large schools of tropical fish. Keep an eye out for marine iguanas and penguins too!



DAY 14: EL BARRANCO / DARWIN BAY (SATURDAY)

Today we will be visiting the beautiful and remote Genovesa Island. This northern island, famous for its red-footed colony, is a paradise for bird lovers. It is estimated that about 200,000 Red-footed boobies live on this island.

Prince Phillips's Steps (AM)

El Barranco or Prince Phillips's Steps as otherwise known, was named after a visit by the British Monarch in 1964. El Barranco's steep 81-foot stairway leads up to a high cliff-face that opens out onto the plateau surrounding Darwin Bay. Here an amazing view can be appreciated. Once at the top of the stairway we will meet Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, mockingbirds, and finches along the way of a palo santo trail. It will also be possible to see wedge-rumped storm petrels swarm and short-eared owls.

Darwin Bay (PM)

Darwin bay was formed by the collapse of the flooded caldera of Tower Island, another name used for Genovesa. After landing at a small sand and coral beach, it is easy to realize why this island is a bird lover's paradise. Among the bird species found here, the most common are swallow-tailed and lava gulls, mockingbirds, yellow-crowned night herons, lava herons, Galapagos doves and yellow warblers. We will continue on a short and flat trail to encounter red-footed booby and great frigatebird nests. We will visit a tidal lagoon where sea lions swim playfully, ending our path on a cliff with magnificent views of this remote part of the Galapagos.

DAY 15: BLACK TURTLE COVE (SUNDAY)

Baltra

Take a morning panga ride and look for marine life in Black Turtle Cove. Disembark at Baltra and fly back to Ecuador mainland.

Black Turtle Cove Excursion (AM)

Black Turtle Cove

Explore the mangroves by panga to find rich marine wildlife between the fresh and salt waters. Keep any eye out for manta rays and sea turtles in this tranquil ecosystem. Whitetip reef sharks can also be seen gliding by.