



SAN CRISTÓBAL, GALAPAGOS TO SAN CRISTÓBAL, GALAPAGOS ITINERARY I

These islands were once a regular stop for pirates and whaling ships, but they're world-famous as the epicenter of evolution theory. Discover the Galapagos archipelago and see what so inspired Darwin. Silversea's expert team of local guides will guide you to watch sea lions at play, birds dancing and giant tortoises trudging along, completely unafraid of humans. Lava fields, fragrant forests and daily Zodiac cruises along scenic coastlines are also all on this voyage, as it onboard pampering, Silversea style.



ITINERARY

Day 1 San Cristóbal, Galapagos ECUADOR

Like so many of the islands in the Galapagos, San Cristobal is formed by dormant volcanoes. It lies to the east of the archipelago and is one of the oldest islands in the group. Approximately 8,000 people live on the island, making their living from tourism, fishing, in government offices, or off the rich volcanic soils with some limited farming existing in the



highlands. Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on the southwestern tip of the island is the capital city of the Galapagos Islands. A statue of Charles Darwin graces the harbor, marking one of the first places he likely stepped ashore in the 1830s.

Day 2 Prince Philips Step's, Genovesa ECUADOR & Darwin Bay, Genovesa ECUADOR

Genovesa is one of the northernmost islands of the archipelago. Genovesa's southern side of the shield volcano's crater collapsed and a protected bay known as Darwin Bay was formed. The island is often referred to as the "Bird Island" as the numbers and species of land and seabirds on Genovesa are quite extraordinary. There are two visitor sites, and Prince Philip's Steps give access to the flat plateau above the bay. Named after Prince Philip who visited the Galapagos on two occasions, the "steps" are mostly natural. The steep cliffs are home to Red-billed Tropicbirds, while Magnificent Frigatebirds, Nazca and Red-footed Boobies prefer the top. The plateau above Prince Philip's Steps has a palo santo forest and an extensive lava field. This is an area where one of the Galapagos' top predators, the Short-eared Owl, is hunting storm petrels. The Short-eared Owls are extremely well camouflaged and are not always easy to spot in between the rocks. At Genovesa Island the ship tucks into Darwin Bay, an ancient volcanic crater now flooded by the sea. Zodiacs land on a picturesque sandy beach where Galapagos sea lions often rest on the fine, white sand. Explorations along the shore may reveal marine iguanas looking like prehistoric dinosaurs in miniature. By heading inland a short distance visitors could encounter seabirds of all shapes and sizes nesting in the vegetation. Scores of immature Red-footed Boobies perch on branches within an arm's reach of the path. In addition, watch for Great Frigatebirds and Yellow-crowned Night Herons along the walk. There is also fantastic snorkeling in the

waters of Darwin Bay with the opportunity to see large schools of reef fish and brightly colored sea stars.

Day 3 North Seymour ECUADOR & Sullivan Bay (Santiago) ECUADOR

The landing at North Seymour Island is onto black lava rock. After a short climb, visitors arrive on the island's flat plateau where a number of sea lions nurse pups and frigatebirds nest. The island is dry, and so the predominant tree is the prickly pear cactus favored by the Galapagos land iguanas that live here in number. The undulating terrain is littered with red-brown volcanic boulders and large male Magnificent Frigatebirds can be seen inflating their vivid red gular sacs in hopes of impressing females flying overhead. At certain times of the year, pairs of Blue-footed Boobies dance here in a ritualized mating dance that reinforces their pair bond and shows off their vivid blue feet. The snorkeling here is well-known for schools of colorful creole wrasses and parrot fish. The lava fields of Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island will inevitably remind visitors of the surface of the moon. As brilliant red Sally Lightfoot crabs scuttle along the black volcanic shores, learn about the formation of the islands through geological forces from your guides. The lava flows here are just over one hundred years old and date back to 1897. The lava took on a rope-like appearance and geologists have adopted a Hawaiian word, pahoehoe, as the technical name for this kind of volcanic rock.

Day 4 Punta Mangle, Fernandina ECUADOR & Punta Moreno, Isabela ECUADOR

Among the impressive new lava fields of Fernandina Island hides a cove surrounded by mangroves. A rewarding place for bird-watching as the bay is the point where the land meets the sea, joining the two environments, with sea birds, shorebirds and land birds all in the same place. The different species of



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mangroves: Red, White and Black, have formed a root system that serves as a nursery for many species of fish, including juveniles' sharks and green sea turtles. Snorkeling is as rewarding with some unique sightings as Marine Iguanas feeding on algae, or flightless cormorants diving for their prey. Impressive Pahoehoe lava field that lies between two active volcanoes, Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul, on the south coast of Isabela Island. The rich waters of Cromwell Current wash the shores, and as a result, you can see the largest marine iguanas of the archipelago basking on the rocks, Flightless Cormorants and Galapagos Penguins diving for food. During the walk you will experience, as an oasis in a desert of lava, some coastal lagoons in the middle of the field, here you can find shorebirds such as White-cheeked Pintail Ducks, Black-necked Stilts and even sometimes Flamingos.

Day 5 Santa Cruz Highlands ECUADOR & Isla Santa Fé ECUADOR

Santa Cruz Island reaches a maximum altitude of 864 meters (2,835 ft) above sea level; at high altitudes, weather changes creating microclimates. The species of flora and fauna found near the shoreline are extremely different from those on the highlands. Life in the highlands is much easier due to the presence of fresh water, from the constant drizzle that happens during the dry season to heavy rains that occur during the wet season. Local people take advantage of this climate to cultivate a large number of crops and giant tortoises love this ideal weather to mate, feed and rest before their next long migration to the shorelines. This island is home to a reptile that exists nowhere else in the world: The Santa Fe Land Iguana. A beach covered by sea lions is the beginning of our adventure where sea lions' pups welcome the visitors with their naive curiosity. Then a rocky terrain will guide us to explore the island and the

view from the cliff becomes a reward by itself. View some of the tallest and the widest prickly pear cactus of the islands. Also know for beautiful snorkelling and kayaking.

Day 6 Gardner Bay, Española ECUADOR & Punta Suarez, Española ECUADOR

Located on the northern coast of Española, the turquoise colour water and white sandy beach stand out from far away. This beach is made out of pulverised shells and corals offers a sandy patch of up to 1 kilometre in length. Española is considered one of the oldest in the Galapagos and has thus developed species that are endemic. Along the coast of Gardner a subspecies of colourful Marine iguanas are living among Hood Mockingbirds. The apex predators Galapagos Hawks commonly visit the coastline and a couple of times a Giant tortoise has been seen here. Punta Suárez lies at the western point of Española, the oldest island in the Galápagos. Sheer cliffs provide superb thermals for seabirds and you may spot Swallow-tailed Gulls, Nazca Boobies and Blue-footed Boobies on the breeze. The largest seabird to nest in the Galapagos Islands is the Waved Albatross. These ocean wanderers can be seen seasonally here from April through December, when pairs reunite on Española, going through an elaborate pair-bonding display. Mockingbirds, doves, and occasional Galápagos Hawks can also be seen on the point, along with sea lions and colorful marine iguanas.

Day 7 Rodriguez Breeding Centre, San Cristóbal ECUADOR & Cerro Brujo, San Cristóbal ECUADOR

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highlands. Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on the southwestern tip of the island is the capital city of the Galapagos Islands. A statue of Charles Darwin graces the harbor, marking one of the first places he likely stepped ashore in the 1830s. An impressive tuff cone has been carved by erosion into an outstanding natural sculpture, being a resting place for marine birds such as blue-footed boobies and brown pelicans. One of the most beautiful white sand beaches of the Galapagos (swim or snorkel). View sea lions, sally light footed crabs, blue-footed boobies. Behind the dunes, you find a coastal lagoon, which was visited in the past by the locals to extract salt, today it is home to some shorebirds such as stilts and plovers.

Day 8 San Cristóbal, Galapagos ECUADOR

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Please Note:

The excursions are provided as a sample of what may be offered on this voyage and are subject to change.



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