



Darwin's Discoveries—the Galápagos Islands

7 NIGHTS | ROUNDTRIP GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR | MARCH-AUGUST; OCTOBER

INCLUDED HIGHLIGHTS

- UNESCO World Heritage Site, Galápagos Islands
- One night pre-cruise hotel stay at the riverfront *Wyndham Guayaquil*
- Six night Galápagos cruise aboard *La Pinta*
- Set foot on seven islands and islets
- Charles Darwin Research Center
- Nesting birds and wildlife in their natural habitat
- View marine life by snorkel, panga, and glass-bottom boat
- Certified guides escort small groups of 12
- Roundtrip air between Guayaquil and Galápagos

DAY 1 Guayaquil - Arrival

Welcome to Ecuador! Begin your journey in this port city known as the gateway to the Pacific. Your first stop is *Wyndham Guayaquil*, voted the #1 Hotel in Guayaquil on TripAdvisor and where you'll stay the night. This dazzling riverside hotel is a short walk to the vibrant Malecon 2000 boardwalk as well as historic Santa Ana Hill and its famous lighthouse. Explore the city sights on your own, relax at the rooftop pool, and get a good night's rest before your adventure.

DAY 2 Guayaquil / Isla Baltra - Embarkation / Isla Seymour Norte

Up and at 'em. Get an early start and travel to the legendary Galápagos Islands—UNESCO World Heritage Site. From Guayaquil, fly to Isla Baltra where your captain and crew welcome you aboard Yacht *La Pinta*. As Charles Darwin certainly was in 1835, you'll be awed by the unique beauty of the islands as you take your first exploratory steps on Isla Seymour Norte—home to Blue-footed boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds. Formed by volcanic uplift, the small island of scruffy vegetation is ideal nesting terrain. Get an up-close view of these birds' quirky characteristics by hike and panga ride. (BLD)

DAY 3 Isla Isabela / Isla Fernandina

Explore Punta Vicente Roca, a marine site of impressive geological formations, by panga—your guide helps with decoding the visible clues of the islands' fiery beginnings. Beyond the geology, spy winged residents including Blue-footed boobies and flightless cormorants. The wildly rocky coast with a partially sunken cave provides phenomenal conditions for a menagerie of fish and green sea turtles. If conditions allow, don your mask, fins, and snorkel and dive in for a close-up view! Later, stretch your legs on a guided walk experiencing one of the most pristine islands in the Galápagos, Isla Fernandina. The island's active volcano erupted as recently as 2009. Thousands of bright land iguanas reside here, and it's also a favorite haunt of Galápagos penguins. (BLD)

small ships, BIG adventures



DAY 4 Isla Isabela

Large in landmass and young at 1 million years old, Isla Isabela supports abundant wildlife and sea life. An Urbina Bay shore walk reveals large, colorful land iguanas and perhaps giant tortoises. Crossing from Urbina Bay to Tagus Cove, scan the water for whales and dolphins that frequent Bolivar Channel from one of *La Pinta's* spacious decks. At Tagus Cove—an otherworldly landscape of eroded tuff cones—there's a chance to snorkel, kayak, or ride a panga before hiking the backside of Darwin Crater to a saltwater lake. There'll be excellent opportunities for viewing penguins, Galápagos Hawks, cormorants, petrified rain (bits of lava that cooled quickly after contacting water), and old signatures from pirates and whalers etched into the rock. (BLD)

DAY 5 Isla Rabida / Isla Santa Cruz

Isla Rabida's unusual red beach is a favorite sunbathing spot for sea lions and marine iguanas. Go eye-to-eye with Blue-footed and Nazca Boobies, Yellow Warblers, several species of Darwin's Finches, and pelicans. The warm maroon-colored beach also makes a great jumping in spot for from-the-beach snorkeling. Or keep your eyes above the waterline, inspecting marine life from the glass-bottom boat. You'll have a birds-eye view from Isla Santa Cruz hiking Cerro Dragón—or, Dragon Hill—and enjoy a well-earned panorama of the western islands, the bay below you, and possibly even lounging land iguanas. (BLD)

DAY 6 Isla Santa Cruz

Today, it's all about the magnificent giant tortoise. Touring the Charles Darwin Research Station, you'll witness the exceptional conservation program where baby tortoises, "galapaguitos," are reared in protective captivity until they are old enough to safely repatriate back to their native areas. Embrace Galápagos conservation by learning about threats that still endanger this fragile ecosystem. After a lingering poolside lunch at the *Finch Bay Eco Hotel* (bring your swimsuit just in case), explore the misty, forested highlands and see the lumbering and charming tortoises in their natural habitat. You'll also have a chance to walk inside the island's famed lava tubes for a geological exploration of these remarkable volcanic channels. (BLD)

DAY 7 Isla Floreana

Your day will be chock-full of adventure, with opportunities to snorkel, hike, kayak, skiff, ride the glass-bottom boat, or simply relax on the beach. Send a note home from Post Office Bay, dropping your postcard in Isla Floreana's famous, historic barrel mailbox. Then take in the island's geologic history with a panga ride or kayak investigation of its maze of volcanic channels. A stop at Baroness Viewpoint provides the perfect vantage for a photo-op. A tale of two beaches, walk along the green olivine beach of Punta Cormorant to a brackish lagoon known to be a flamingo hideout, then on to a white-sand beach where green sea turtles come ashore to rest at night (BLD)

DAY 8 Isla Baltra / Guayaquil - Disembarkation

Your adventure of a lifetime aboard *La Pinta* concludes back on Isla Baltra. From here, transfer to the airport for your flight to Guayaquil—where you'll await your connecting flight home, or if you've opted for our Machu Picchu extension, your flight to Lima, Peru. (B)

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

Itineraries are guidelines; variations in itinerary and the order of days may occur to maximize your experience.

Passport required on this itinerary



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