



GALAPAGOS BY LAND SHORTSTAY

Extension | 8 Days | Physical Level 2
Santa Cruz Island (7N)

Islands of mythical status, the isolated archipelago of Galapagos is home to some of the world's most unique and wondrous wildlife. 600 miles off of Ecuador's coast, it's been fascinating naturalists, biologists and travellers alike for centuries, including Charles Darwin, who formed his theory of evolution after visiting the islands in 1835. Now it's your turn. On this Galapagos experience you will be based on Santa Cruz Island, venturing out on day trips to explore the highlights of this magical archipelago.

TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodation
- Meals as stated
- English speaking guide
- Transportation and transfers as stated
- Return flights Quito to Baltra Island economy class
- Park entrance fees

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Galapagos Islands

Meals: L, D

Welcome to the Galapagos Islands! After departing from Seymour Airport on Baltra island, a swift 10-minute ride will take you to the ferry pier at Itabaca Channel, offering fantastic views of turquoise waters and serving as a natural boundary between Baltra and Santa Cruz islands. After a scenic 5-minute ferry journey across the channel, you'll arrive at the ferry pier on northern coast of Santa Cruz Island.



From here, your adventure continues as you make your way towards the highlands of Santa Cruz. Your exploration across the island begins with a stop for a short stroll at "Los Gemelos", the twin craters, for a unique perspective of the Galapagos' geological history.

After this stop, it's time to explore a reserve home to Galapagos giant tortoises which roam freely in their humid and forested highland habitat. These enormous and lumbering reptiles, responsible for the island's name, range between 250 and 300 kg and have lifespans of up to 200 years. Get ready to observe them up close, witnessing tortoises at different stages of their lives, with their ages ranging from decades to well over a century. Additionally, you'll have the opportunity to visit lava tunnels, formed by numerous eruptions that have shaped the island's landscape since its formation.

After your visit to the highlands, we continue our journey to the south side of the island, down to Puerto Ayora on the coast. From there, we'll head to the your hotel for check-in and some well-deserved relaxation.

Destination Information

Los Gemelos - Los Gemelos are sinkholes formed long ago during the island's volcanic activity that offer breathtaking views and rich birdlife, including Darwin's finches and vermillion flycatchers. Nestled amidst farmland and a native forest, these lush-green sinkholes offer a unique perspective of the Galapagos, revealing the island's geological history as remnants of its volcanic past and providing a captivating glimpse into the island's diverse ecosystems.

Santa Cruz Island - Santa Cruz Island is home to Puerto Ayora, the largest and most developed city in the Galapagos. This island has a lot to offer. With numerous visitor sites, easily accessible beaches, and remote highlands in the interior, Santa Cruz is an excellent starting point for adventurous pursuits. The most popular attraction is undoubtedly the Charles Darwin Station, which offers an impressive tortoise breeding area and interesting information on the conservation of the unique biosphere of the Galapagos.

Day 2: North Seymour Island

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, we will head to the town of Puerto Ayora and hop aboard a transfer bus to the Sea Lion Yacht. We will board the yacht and travel to the small yet gorgeous island of North Seymour where we will hop aboard our panga (type of dinghy or open boat) to perform a Dry Landing and disembark.



This island is packed with wildlife that surrounds visitors as they walk along the island's trails, you will also be able to observe the endemic land iguana, as well as its aquatic relative. We'll set sail and head over to Las Bachas Beach on Santa Cruz Island. Once we arrive at Las Bachas Beach, we'll perform a Wet Landing and disembark. Enjoy snorkeling, swimming or simply relax on the soft, white sand beach.

Lunch will be served onboard the yacht before we set sail and head back to Santa Cruz Island and transfer to our hotel.

Destination Information

North Seymour Island - North Seymour Island is a small island, measuring just 2 kilometers long and 1.5 kilometers wide. Nevertheless it is known for its abundant wildlife, including blue-footed boobies, frigatebirds with their striking red throat pouches, and land iguanas.

Day 3: Charles Darwin Station

Meals: B, L, D

Immerse yourself in a full-day expedition that combines the natural beauty of Tortuga Bay with the educational experience of the Charles Darwin Research Station.



Begin your day with a scenic walk to Tortuga Bay, a pristine beach renowned for its white sands which crumble beneath your feet, contrasting beautifully with the deep turquoise of the sea. Arriving at the beach, you'll be greeted by the breathtaking beauty of Playa Brava, known for its powerful waves and for being a fantastic place for sightings of iconic

Galapagos wildlife, such as herons, marine iguanas, and perhaps even playful sea lions basking in the sun along the shoreline. Alternatively, a short stroll from the end of Playa Brava lies Playa Mansa, a serene bay with calm waters perfect for swimming, kayaking and snorkeling. From here, you can observe marine species such as iguanas, sharks, turtles and rays from the shore.

After soaking up the sun at Tortuga Bay, you'll venture onward to the Charles Darwin Research Station, located at the eastern end of Puerto Ayora.

At the Charles Darwin Research Station, scientists and researchers work tirelessly to study the unique flora and fauna of the Galapagos Islands. During your visit, you'll have the opportunity to engage with knowledgeable guides who will provide insights into the evolutionary significance of

the Galapagos Islands and their fascinating history. You'll also have a guided tour of the tortoise breeding center, where you'll observe these majestic creatures up close in various stages of life, from hatchlings to adults, and learn about the conservation efforts aimed at protecting these animals and their habitats. We will then return to the hotel for an evening at leisure.

Destination Information

Tortuga Bay - Located on Ecuador's Santa Cruz Island, the beautiful Tortuga Bay features a long stretch of white sand beach, mangrove trees, beautiful turquoise waters and a 1.5-kilometre walkway. The bay is dotted with diverse fauna species, including sharks, marine iguanas, Galápagos tortoises, Galapagos crabs and pelicans. Tourists can look forward to activities such as kayaking, swimming and hiking. Excellent photo opportunities are also available.

Charles Darwin Research Station - The Charles Darwin Research Station is a biological research station operated by the Charles Darwin Foundation. It is located in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island and is a scientific center dedicated to the conservation and study of the Galápagos Islands' unique ecosystems. It plays a key role in research, environmental education, and species recovery programs

Day 4: South Plaza Island

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, we will head to the town of Puerto Ayora and hop aboard a transfer bus to the Sea Lion Yacht.

We will then sail towards our first stop, Punta Carrion. Once we arrive we'll put on our snorkeling gear and jump in the water to begin our snorkeling activity. Following that, we'll get back on board the Sea Lion Yacht and continue on our way to South Plaza Island.



Once at South Plaza, we'll disembark and take a small panga to perform a Dry Landing. Then enjoy a hike through the island's landscapes, admiring wildlife and geological features as you go.

Afterwards, return to the yacht where lunch will be waiting, and then sail back to Santa Cruz and return to your hotel.

Destination Information

Punta Carrion - Punta Carrion is a small bay that is home to a variety of fish, rays, and whitetip reef sharks.

South Plaza Island - South Plaza Island is a small but vibrant islet in the Galápagos, known for its dramatic cliffs, colorful ground vegetation, and diverse wildlife including land and hybrid iguanas, sea lions, and nesting seabirds. Despite its size—just 0.13 km²—it offers one of the most visually striking and ecologically rich experiences in the archipelago.

Day 5: Santa Fe Island

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, we will head over to the Puerto Ayora docks and board the Sea Lion Yacht.

Once we've boarded the yacht, we'll sail to the beautiful island of Santa Fe. On arrival we will perform a wet landing and then embark on an exciting wildlife walk, encountering sea lion harems and other unique wildlife along the way.



Afterwards, we will visit the area '*La Encañada*' for a chance to swim or go snorkeling using equipment provided.

Afterwards, return to the yacht where lunch will be waiting, and then sail back to Santa Cruz and return to your hotel.

Destination Information

Santa Fe Island - Santa Fe Island is one of the oldest and most beautiful islands in the Galápagos archipelago. It's a small, uninhabited island located southeast of Santa Cruz Island and accessible only by authorised boats.

Day 6: Divine Bay

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will embark on a half-day tour of Divine Bay.

Just a short walk from your hotel, you will find Divine Bay. Towering basalt cliffs on one side and lush mangrove forests on the other, this is the perfect place for nature enthusiasts seeking serenity and wildlife encounters.



As you venture into this tranquil corner of the Galapagos, you'll be greeted by a symphony of bird calls and the playful antics of sea lions basking in the sun. Keep your eyes peeled for the graceful movements of small egrets, blue-footed boobies, blue herons, brown pelicans, noddy terns, and lava gulls, as they adorn the landscape with their vibrant presence.

Then, dive into the crystal-clear waters of Divine Bay, where a vibrant underwater world awaits.

Afterwards, return to your hotel for the rest of the day at leisure.

Destination Information

Divine Bay – Divine Bay is a serene coastal gem on Santa Cruz Island in the Galápagos. You will find towering basalt cliffs on one side and lush mangrove forests on the other, with calm waters perfect for diving. This is the ideal place for nature enthusiasts seeking serenity and wildlife encounters.

Day 7: Bartolome Island

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, we will head to the town of Puerto Ayora and hop aboard a transfer bus to the Sea Lion Yacht. We will then board the yacht and set sail to Bartolome Island.

Once we've arrived at the island, we'll perform a dry landing and begin our walk up the wooden walkway and steps to reach the summit of the island's extinct volcanic cone.



We will then return to the panga and continue our journey with a lovely exploration of Bartolome's coastline to view more wildlife and fascinating features. Next visit Sullivan Bay, where you will disembark to explore the impressive lava fields on foot. Then, back on the yacht, sail to the iconic Pinnacle Rock for a snorkelling adventure.

Afterwards, return to the yacht where lunch will be waiting, and then sail back to Santa Cruz and return to your hotel.

Destination Information

Bartolomé Island - One of the most iconic and picturesque islands in the Galápagos archipelago, it's famous for its dramatic volcanic landscape and rich biodiversity.

Day 8: Fly to Quito

Meals: B

Today you be transferred back to Baltra airport for your return flight to Quito. Your arrangements end on arrival at Quito airport.



Updated: July 2025