



place where the Earth's crust is being melted from below by a mantle plume, creating volcanoes.

The oldest islands were formed between 5 million and 10 million years ago. Youngest islands are still being formed, with the most recent volcanic eruption in April 2009.

## Baltra (South Seymour)

Baltra, also known as South Seymour, is located at the north of Santa Cruz Island. It is the home of the archipelago's main airport and it is famous because it was built during the Second World War by the U.S. navy.

### The Starting Point of the Adventure

Baltra is a dry island, surrounded by reefs and some beaches. It has very interesting vegetation, such as Cactus *Opuntia* and other small trees. The island doesn't have a big hotel infrastructure nor touristic locations. However, this is the place where touristic programs receive their local and foreign visitors to begin the adventure exploring the islands.



### Public Transportation



In this island you will be able to find private and public transportation. It is used to take the tourist to Puerto Ayora. The ride lasts approximately 45 minutes. While on this trip, you will see amazing vegetation changes.

### **Clear water**

During your trip to Baltra, you will be able to observe a great variety of amazing sea animals in the clear water river that separates Baltra from Santa Cruz. There you will find species like sea lions, birds and other several and exotic fauna unique to the Galapagos.

In Baltra, you will also be able to find several places that are ideal to surfing and scuba diving. Just hop aboard de Nemo II cruise to enjoy all what the Galapagos has to offer. It'll surely be an unforgettable experience.

## **Seymour**

Seymour is a wonderful Galapagos island where you can admire beautiful frigate birds and the nest of the little blue footed boobies. The trees are filled by male frigates inflating their red skin to catch the female's attention. It's a spectacle of nature you don't want to miss.



## **See Them Up Close**

When you get there, step with care, the fauna in this place is not frightened by humans, which is great because it'll give you the opportunity to see gorgeous and rare birds up close, but at the same time, you have to be careful not to destroy their nests, they are placed everywhere.

## **Walking Through the Island**

Once you get to the island, there's a round road that will take you through the island to a gorgeous rocky seashore where silver-blue waves crash. You will also find a highly recommended diving site. There you will have the opportunity to see hammer fishes, garden eels, tropical fishes, sea lions, the Pacific green marine turtle and many more astonishing and unique species.

## **Non Stop Adventure**

Once you hope on your luxury cruise and get to the Seymour Island, there will be many activities for you to do. You can take long walks all over the beach, during which you will surely interact with a lot of animals and gorgeous views. In the island you can also go snorkeling and scuba diving. This is also an active place where you can find exiting clubs and bars to spend the night and enjoy the local cuisine in the island's several restaurants.

## **Santa Cruz: Highlands**

Santa Cruz is one of the beautiful islands you can visit during your luxury cruise aboard the Nemo II. It's the second biggest island in the Galapagos and it's located at the center of the whole islands.

The Highlands of the island has an exuberant vegetation, great leafy trees and tasty edible fruit. Read along and you will find information about the places you cannot miss to see during your time in Santa Cruz Highlands.



### **Los Gemelos**

The first place you should visit is "Los Gemelos" (The Twins). Those are a pair of craters formed by cavings, one of each side of the road, hence the name. There you will be able to see a wide variety of birds, like owls, cliff swallows and finches. There's also the famous Scalesia forest, famous for the great variety of plants found there that are unique to the Galapagos.

### **Primicias Ranch**

This should be your second stop during your time exploring the Island. Primicias is a private ranch and it the natural habitat in which world famous giant turtles live. They prefer the higher parts of the islands, where the weather is cooler and humid. That way, they can easily find more food and enough water. Close to this place, there are lava tunnels that once were rivers in which hot lava used to run.

### **Puerto Ayora**

At only 20 minutes of the island by foot, there's Puerto Ayora, a city of approximately 20.000



people where the offices of the Galapagos National Park Administration are located. It's a great place to visit.

## Santa Cruz: Charles Darwin Station

The Charles Darwin Station is located in Puerto Ayora, on the Santa Cruz Island. It is famous for the captive breeding of giant turtles. These famous turtles are called Galapagos and they live for approximately 150 years. The station was created in 1964 and it's a place you definitively will love.

In the Charles Darwin Station, there is a Natural History Interpretation Center that manages educational programs at the service of the Galapagos National Park. This station is also an operation center for foreign scientists that go to the island to conduct special research.



### Non-Profit Organization

The Charles Darwin Station is a non-profit international research organization dedicated to the conservation of Galapagos ecosystems and it provides knowledge and the support to ensure the island's biodiversity conservation through and complementary actions. The Station is committed to give the necessary information to the island's habitants to ensure

that they understand the importance of taking care of the conservation of a place that is the home of countless flora and fauna completely unique to the Galapagos.

### **People Working For the Nature**

There are around 200 people working for the station, among scientists, teachers, research students and volunteers. The 90% of the people that work there are Ecuadorians. Moreover, the Charles Darwin works up-close with schools, fishermen, farmers, artisans, municipal councils, touristic companies and with the Galapagos National Park. All this with the hope that locals and visitors realize the importance of the islands' conservation.

When you visit this place, you will be able to see frigates, sea lions, blues footed boobies among many others. You will learn about them and the nature that surrounds them. Don't miss the opportunity to live this wonderful experience.

### **Santa Cruz: Las Bachas Beach**

A real paradise is Las Bachas Beach. If you want to enjoy viewing sea turtles, flamingoes and many more birds, this is your beach. If you want to enjoy a day full of fun, swimming at clear waters and relaxing at white sands, this is your beach. If you want to enjoy being told some stories, this is your beach. Las Bachas Beach is really interesting, read and see why.



### Information tips about Las Bachas Beach

- It is located from the Santa Cruz coast, to the northeast. It is to the west of the Black Turtle Cove. Las Bachas are two beaches that form 1km long.
- Pacific green sea turtles have chosen it as one of the major nesting of Santa Cruz Island. Stilts, flamingoes, hermit crabs, iguanas, whimbrels, and other aquatic and migratory birds can be seen there, too.
- The name comes from a World War II fact: American soldiers left two discarded barges at the beach, and they remained there for a long time. As you may imagine, the name is originated from the word "barges" and its mispronunciation by the first Spanish speakers that settled there.
- You can land, swim and walk around the beach, but you cannot stay or touch anywhere.
- Las Bachas is made of decomposed coral. That is the reason why it is so white and pure.

This beach has so many views to enjoy, but also has a big part of history getting rotten and disappearing by the salty wind. Come and discover it before it goes away forever!

### Santa Cruz: El Chato Tortoise Reserve

La Caseta and El Chato are the two ways to enter a wonderful place: El Chato Tortoise Reserve, in Santa Cruz Island. This site offers you the opportunity of viewing giant tortoises closely, apart from enjoying lots of vegetation. There are some private farms in which you may enjoy the traditional dishes from the area. You can arrive there by Salasaca Town, too.





### Information tips about El Chato Tortoise Reserve

- El Chato is located in Santa Cruz, in the highlands. It is a free reserve; it has big forests, a pond and a trail from Santa Rosa Town, 22 kilometers from Puerto Ayora.
- It is a place where you will find many giant tortoises in the wild, enjoying the water pools or nesting, but you can also enjoy viewing many birds fly: Darwin finches, flycatchers, spot short-eared owls or mockingbirds. You could have luck and see Galapagos rails.
- The best year period to visit the reserve is during the dry season. You will see more animals and the ground will not be muddy, there are fewer risks.
- You can walk, ride a horse, watch birds and enjoy the views, but there are no near beaches to swim or dive. Some private farms surround the reserve and they serve you food; some of them even let you get inside and explore them to find more tortoises.
- It is important not to get far from the guide: this is a big place and you could get lost. Be careful and plan your journey.

El Chato Tortoise Reserve is a beautiful place to enjoy peace and nature. Tortoises are protected by the rangers who work there, so when you go, remember to protect them too!

**Isabela: Moreno Point**

Moreno Point is a visit place where it's not permitted to land. It is used only to take small speedboat trips to observe the wildlife unique to this place. It's a bay that is located in front of the narrowest site of the Isabela Island: the Perry isthmus, where there's a water entry that has basically formed a bay within a bay, with calmed waters that are protected and surrounded by mangle which makes it a perfect place for sea turtles. It's truly a spectacle of nature.



## Flora

Moreno Point is famous because it's the natural habitat of giant opuntia cactus, Palo Santo trees, carob trees and lichens. These and many more species of flora of breathtaking beauty surround the island.

## Fauna

This place, as well as all islands of the Galapagos, has a wide variety of wonderful animal species such as: herons, mallards, frigates, pelicans, white-cheeked Pintails, cormorants, among many other beautiful animals roaming around for you to see.



## Things of Interest

- Photography: This Galapagos Island gives photographers the wonderful opportunity to capture through their lens birds that won't fly away or hide due to their presence. This is great both for professionals and for those who just want a nice memory of what they saw.
- Landscape watching: This place has a wonderful view to the Alcedo volcanoes, Sierra Negra and Cerro Azul. There you can observe an amazing landscape that will show you a desolated view with impressive lava flows from eruptions that happened years ago.

Don't miss the chance to visit this amazing place during your trip, it will be an experience you'll never forget.

## Isabela: Urbina Bay

Urbina Bay is located on the west side of the Isabela Island in Alcedo volcano. The landing spot is in a little wet beach of black sand, this can be difficult when there are strong waves. The road begins from the beach, it's round and open and due to that, it is possible to walk outside the path suggested by the Galapagos National Park. It's a great place to explore.





## **Fauna**

In Urbina Bay you will see a lot of Darwin's finches, but the place's main attraction are probably the reptiles. This because when going to this part of the island, you're surely going to see land iguanas that are bigger than those you would find in other islands. You would also find wild Galapagos turtles.

## **Flora**

In Urbina Bay there's a wide variety of vegetation for you to see, such as the Palo Santo trees, chamomile and mumuyos. However, there's one plant that stands out: the beautiful Darwin's cotton flowers, unique to the Galapagos.

## **Things of Interest**

- Land visit zone: There's a land tour that begins on the bay's beach where you disembark at the beginning of the trip.
- Another thing of interest is that one night in 1954 the whole bay was lifted 5 meters due to tectonic forces. As a consequence of this sudden rise, the animals that live there, such as coral reefs, sea urchins, lobsters and others died.

This is an interesting place you cannot miss to visit while on your cruise, there are many beautiful things to see and interesting facts to learn.

## **Isabela: Las Tintoreras Islets**

Isabela Island has the biggest land territory of Galapagos Islands, and the best possibilities of finding almost many of the things you can find here and there in the other smaller islands. Las Tintoreras is one of these places in which you can see beautiful white-tipped reef sharks and iguana nests, it is a set of small islets with quiet turquoise waters.

### **Information tips about Las Tintoreras Islets**

- It is located from a short distance of Puerto Villamil (ten minutes by panga). There are two beaches, some crevasses and a short trail.
- Many kinds of exotic animals live there: white-tipped reef sharks, marine iguanas, marine turtles, herons, Galapagos penguins, sea lions, rays, starfish and more.
- Its name comes from the local Spanish word for an above mentioned kind of shark: the white-tipped reef sharks.

- Landing in Las Tintoreras is possible during high or low tide, but there is a panga ride around the islets. Swimming is not always allowed, because it alters certain animals that rest there during the day, escaping from nocturnal sharks. The behavior of sea lion colonies may be altered, too. Snorkeling is risky only in some places where the sharks meet in groups, ask your guide.
- The second beach, which is full of button and white mangroves, is a favorite ground for marine iguanas to nest and reproduce, as well as some other parts of these islets.

Las Tintoreras is a must-go place. If your trip has to be full of stories, you will take many after you visit it. For example you will be amazed at how many iguanas nest there, or maybe you will see sharks swimming around, just like "Jaws"!

## Isabela: Calera

Calera is a spot in Isabela Island where many ships and boats arrive: it is very near from "El Embarcadero" pier, and that pier is the only way to get to Calera. Once you are there, you can enjoy the different views it offers, as well as the iguanas and sea lions nesting. Snorkeling is not forbidden, but you must ask your guide where to practice it.

### Information tips about Calera

- Calera is located near "El Embarcadero" pier, in Isabela Island. You can take a dinghy from that pier and the trip takes five minutes. It has a 200-meter trail, and most of the place is an intertidal area.
- Former Isabela settlers needed some things from Calera: among those materials sand, stones and lime were the most used. They took these materials to prepare them and build their houses or fix their boats. These materials remain there as a way to preserve history.
- Calera is very similar to Las Tintoreras Islet in characteristics such as flora and fauna, but also in landscapes. You can find there turquoise waters and a huge marine wildlife.
- You will find many sea lions, sea turtles, rays, marine iguanas and other species. There are some endemic plants, and you can also find mangroves.
- Snorkeling is allowed, but you must ask your guide where: many boats, ships and fishnets pass the landing area very close. Snorkel when the tide is low, be careful.

Calera has some stories, because it is a place from which many settlers took some materials to build their primitive houses. Remember you can snorkel there, but check where to do it!

## Isabela: Tagus Cove

Tagus Cove is located to the west of the Darwin volcano in Isabela Island. It once was the favorite place for pirates and whalers. Because of that there's a traditions that has stand since that age: the naming of ships. At the beginning of the walk, on the way up, after the stairway, there's a little cove where you can find inscriptions from the 1800s.



### **Tagus Cove**

The name of the place, came from an English war ship that went to the island looking for Galapagos turtles to eat in 1814. The path of the walk leads to the inside, bordering the Darwin lake. During the walk, you can observe different land birds and the characteristic vegetation of the arid zone. At the end, you will see the lava fields from Darwin volcano.

### **Darwin Lake**

The Darwin Lake is salt water and it is approximately 29ft deep and it doesn't have any fishes or other kind of special life. The lake is inside a cone. Due to the explosive eruptions that must have had taken place in the place, the substrate has a lot of different sized volcanic rocks.

### **Recommendations**



- Be very careful upon landing, there are usually very strong waves.
- Aside from a land trip, a speedboat one can also be a very interesting experience. However, the speedboat has to keep a distance from the birds, specially the penguins. They get easily scared by noise.
- Take care of the zone, don't throw any garbage.
- Have a great time exploring this place on the duration of you trip to the islands.

## Isabela: Arnaldo Tupiza Tortoise Breeding Center

1.5 kilometers from Puerto Villamil connect you to Arnaldo Tupiza Tortoise Breeding Center. Many tortoise species from South Isabela have been reproduced from 1994 to preserve their lives from a near extinction. More than 300 tortoises live in captivity, but safe from hunters and other dangers such as food competitions or the attempts for surviving.

### Information tips about "Arnaldo Tupiza" Breeding Center

- From all the islands that form Galapagos, Isabela is the only one that has many tortoise species at the same place: the Breeding Center.
- Surrounding it, you can find many plants and some animals such as marine iguanas or flamingoes. You can also find introduced wasps, so don't wear bright colors such as yellow or orange.
- There you will be able to see the stages a tortoise goes through: from becoming an egg, then a hatchling, a juvenile and finally growing up as an adult.
- Tortoises stay in captivity here because they are vulnerable to many attacks from themselves for food, from other animals to save their own lives and from the not-so-sapiens human beings who hunt them, sometimes to have an exotic prize and other times to eat them or keep them captive in other places around the world. When they are independent enough, they are freed to live in the wild.
- 4 Galapagos males and 2 Galapagos females are the only survivors from Cerro Paloma tortoise population: one of these females is infertile; the other one had 9 breed saviors in 1998.

Tortoises in the Breeding Center are treated as kings and queens. They are prehistoric animals that live in peace, trying to survive like most of us do. When coming here, remember they are endangered! Treat them with respect!

## Isabela: Elizabeth Bay

Elizabeth Bay is one of the few places from Galapagos Archipelago in which landing is forbidden. This happens because there is not a single place to stay in, and also to preserve the natural species of plants and animals living there. However, you can swim and play some water sports as a gift. Animals will be happy to welcome you to this water paradise.

### **Information tips about Elizabeth Bay**

- It is located on the east coast of Isabela. Formed from the union of Sierra Negra and Alcedo volcanoes, Elizabeth Bay has many islets or small islands, called Mariela islets.
- This place can be reached only by dinghies or pangas. You are not allowed to land in Elizabeth Bay, so get ready to stay in the panga for some hours!
- Due to the crystalline bay waters, many animal species can be found here, having food and shelter: rays, sea turtles, herons, sea lions, many schools of fish and others. Sometimes you can see some Galapagos whales from this bay. The Mariela islets have Galapagos penguins and blue-footed boobies.
- There is a unique mangrove forest in the whole Galapagos Archipelago, and it is located exactly here, in Elizabeth Bay. It is the narrowest place in Isabela.
- This the perfect place for water sport lovers, especially those who practice diving and snorkeling.

You won't regret, it will be a bunch of fun while having peace on a ride with many natural views and quiet waters. As you can play some water sports and share with some animals such as the sea lions, we promise you won't want to come back!

## **Isabela: Sierra Negra**

Sierra Negra (or "Black Mountain"), located inside Isabela Island, is a volcano known for being one of the most active volcanoes in Galapagos Islands. Cerro Azul and Alcedo are the closest volcanoes to it, and it is difficult to be aged, because its surface is covered by recent lavas. The same happens to its neighboring volcanoes. Discover more here.

### **Information tips about Sierra Negra**

- It is located at the south eastern end of Isabela Island. It has an altitude of 1,124 m.
- Sierra Negra is a shield volcano: that means it is formed mostly from fluid lava flows, and its large size resembles a warrior's shield. Its last eruption was on October 22nd, 2005 until October 30th, 2005.
- Sierra Negra could be, according to some studies of volume and eruption rates, circa 535,000 years old.

- You can find people (on the volcano's southern shore) and agriculture and fishing on the eastern side. A species of Galapagos giant tortoises (*C. n. guentheri*) also live here, but they are endangered due to hunting and other causes.
- There is a huge fumarolic area called Volcán de Azufre (it means "Sulfur Volcano"). "Fumarolic" comes from "fumarole", or the smoke volcanoes emit. The sulfur volcano is one of the world places where sulfur flows are.

Sierra Negra is a great place to explore not only for being the house of giant tortoises, but also for its historical eruptions. Imagine you could experience an eruption; it would be great for your memories! Take the challenge!

## Isabela: Los Humedales

Out of Puerto Villamil, in Isabela Island, there is a green paradise. The Wetlands (Los Humedales, exact Spanish translation) is a place full of sandy beaches, mangroves, lagoon swamps and many bird, flora and fauna species. The place is also a trail of 6 km long, and from there you can see the bay, some volcanoes and Puerto Villamil town.

### Information tips about Los Humedales

- These wetlands are located at the south of Isabela Island, and they form a trail of 6 km.
- This place is one of the most important mangroves in Galapagos Islands. The reason is that The Wetlands and the mangroves help preserving the island biodiversity.
- Some tracks form the whole place: Cemetery, La Playita, Pozas Verdes, Tunis Bay, Playa del Amor, Estero Tunnel, Poza Escondida, Poza Redonda, El Estero, Cerro Orchilla and The Wall of Tears (a wall built from 1946 to 1959, from prisoners of the former Isabela penal colony. One of the punishments there was to build that wall, and many prisoners died while doing it).
- Many species depend on these wetlands to survive. They serve as a nest point for green turtles and are one of the main places where Galapagos penguins feed from. Flamingoes, oystercatchers, gallinulas, ghost crabs and some other species (mostly shore birds) also have a home there.
- Coastal and marine wetlands can be found in Isabela Island. These specific wetlands are coastal mangroves, also lagoons. You can find a lava field here, too.

Would you like to know more? Why Los Humedales is an important place for Galapagos Islands? Come with us!

## Fernandina: Espinoza Point



Espinoza Point is located in the Fernandina Island, the youngest of the Galapagos' archipelago and the most volcanically active. It has an incredible combination of aridity and amazing wildlife. Due to the fact that it doesn't have any introduced mammals, Fernandina has a unique environment with the biggest density of marine iguanas and the sea lions share their habitat with crabs and hawks. This is a place you will surely enjoy during your cruise trip.



### **One of the Biggest Islands**

Espinoza Point is a narrow stream of lava and sand that extends from the base of the volcano to the sea. This is the Galapagos' third biggest island and it got its name thanks to King Ferdinand the Catholic who funded Columbus travels. This place is famous for its huge marine iguanas' colonies who reunite in large numbers. It is also very popular due to the fact that it is the home of rare and unique species like the flightless cormorant, the Galapagos penguin, the Galapagos sparrow hawk, the Galapagos snake, among others.

### **The Ideal Place to Observe**

This is an ideal place to observe lava cactuses, the ones that grow on young lava and survive with little water. The last Fernandina eruption took place in May 2005 and it lasted 3

days. In Espinoza Point, you will also be able to observe one of earth's most active volcanos. There's a part of Tagus Cove that goes through Espinoza Point and it's known like the place where the biggest endemic marine iguana's gatherings take place.

## Santiago: Egas Port

Egas Port, also known as James South Bay, is located at the northwestern side of Santiago Island. It is a fascinating place to visit due to the great volcanic activity it had in the past. This place is one of the most famous on the Galapagos archipelago. It has a beautiful black sand beach where you can see gorgeous ruins.



### Salt water

Egas Port was once used for the salt exploitation, which was taken in huge amounts. At the south of the beach, there's the Pan de Azúcar Volcano, which has volcano tuff deposits, the same that have contributed to the formation of the black sand beach. The crater has a salt water lagoon which dries in summer and turns into a salt mine. Egas Port receives its name due to the last salt exploitation made by Héctor Egas' company, which failed because the price of salt in the continent was too cheap and it didn't justify an exploitation

in the Galapagos.

### **What to Do**

The tourist can take walks along the coast above a stream of ash lava covered by coast vegetation, where sparrow hawks, land doves, lava lizards, finches, mockingbirds and a huge amount of crabs can be usually found.

During your time in Egas Port, you can go skin diving and swim with the Galapagos' seals. That way you will be able to see a great variety of rare and beautiful fishes. It's a great island to visit during your cruise trip through the Galapagos. There's apart of Tagus Cove that goes through Espinoza Point and it's known like the place where the biggest endemic marine iguana's gatherings take place.

## **Santiago: Buccaneers Cove**

One of the most famous traits of Santiago are its landscapes of volcanic origin. It is completely uninhabited and it is not suited for crops. It's also known as San Salvador Island, in honor of the first island discovered by Columbus.

It is a great place to see due to the fact that it had a great volcanic activity in the past and because of that, it's especially interesting for those who love geology and volcanoes. There are many places to visit in this island, and one of the most famous is the Buccaneers Cove.





### **Pirates Safe Haven**

Buccaneers Cove, located in the Santiago Island, got its name due to the fact that it used to be a safe haven for pirates, whalers and sailors during the XVIII and XIX century. The sailors used to take their boats there to clean them and to get supplies back in the day. Nowadays, it's a touristic site that has an impressive view to cliffs made of tuff formations and a dark reddish-purple sand beach.

### **Passing through Buccaneers Cove**

This is an amazing and historical place you have to visit during your cruise trip through the Galapagos. The field you will travel through during your visit to Buccaneers Cove varies from plane to steep and the duration of it is of 1 hour walking through the gorgeous island, 1 hour snorkeling in deep waters and half an hour in a speedboat ride. You will be also able to see astonishing rock formations all throughout the Cove.

## **Santiago: Espumilla Beach**

Espumilla beach, a place located in Santiago, is a place with lots of stories. It had two main lagoons, but one of them had some alterations due to a phenomenon called El Niño. These alterations caused the disappearance of an important colony of flamingoes. Sometimes landing can be difficult, but do not worry: when arriving, you'll enjoy every single thing.

### **Information tips about Espumilla Beach**

- It is located on the northern coast of Santiago Island, in James Bay.
- It is a popular site where you can see moray eels, marine iguanas, sharks, octopi and the reddish-orange sally lightfoot crabs (which attract herons and provoke a particular dance).
- Wading birds like flamingoes, pintail ducks and stilts have nested there, but their colonies have been reduced due to a meteorological phenomenon that has caused many disasters in the world, El Niño. It attacked one of its lagoons in the '80s and it wouldn't ever be the same place.
- If you practice snorkeling, try to find rays at the sandy bottom. You could also have the opportunity of watching a baby turtle hatching! (They hatch in the upper dunes, be careful)
- Espumilla beach has a unique type of sand: it is white, really soft and the texture on your feet will be amazing. The waters are really quiet and the vegetation is vividly green!

Even when there is not so much to do as in the other places, you will get amazed with Espumilla beach. You can swim and practice snorkeling here, if you want to enjoy more. But this is a quiet site to relax and just forget your daily duties.

## **Rabida Island**

This is a Galapagos island famous for the bright red color of its rocks and sand, which is that way due to the iron oxide that forms them. It's a beautiful place where you can sometimes see flamingos in a salt water lagoon near the beach, where pelicans and boobies build their nests.

In the Rabida Island, there's a place to dive and swim alongside sea lions, sharks, stingrays and dolphins. The one that can be seen the most is the bottlenose dolphin and with a bit of luck, you can also see the other two species: the spinner and the common dolphin.



## What to Do

The Island has a zigzag path in which you will be walking through opuntia cactuses and Palo Santo trees that also cover the top of the island's volcano. There, you can enjoy of a wonderful view and see the most rare and amazing flora and fauna.

At a short distance at the top of the road, there's an ideal place to take some great pictures of the clear water and the volcanos peaks. There's also de salt water lagoon, where you can see huge pink flamingo colonies, up to nine different Darwin finches species, Galapagos hawks, white-cheek ducks, sea lions, penguins and brown pelicans.

In the Rabida Island you will be able to take astonishing pictures of the flora, fauna and landscapes. You can also go snorkeling, diving and hiking. To visit this island is to live a once in a life time experience, enjoy!

## Sullivan Bay

Sullivan Bay is a site of great geological interest. It is located at the south-east side of the Santiago Island and the landing in here can be made both in the rocky shore (dry landing) and in the white sand beach (wet landing). It takes approximately an hour and a half to complete the entire path.





### **Geological Marvel**

The area is covered by solidified and wave shaped lava flows. It was very active during the last 25 years of the XIX century. The Sullivan lava was formed in 1897. It's a young flow geologically speaking.

At the beginning of the walk you will be able to find the molds of some trees, and in the surroundings of the volcano, you can see a lot of interesting vegetation. The amazing lava formations of Sullivan Bay attract the attention of thousands of students and scientist that come to visit it.

The Sullivan Bay's famous lava is known as Panoehoe, which is Hawaiian for string. It gets this name due to the fact that when the lava cools down after an eruption over the surfaces materials, it causes them to join creating the shape of a string or a rope.

### **Time to swim**

At the end of the walk through the famous lava cape of Sullivan Bay, you will be able to enjoy a nice dip on a clear blue water and white sand beach located at the edge of the lava stream. There, you can also go snorkeling and after this adventure, you can go back to your cruise and relax.

## Genovesa: Prince Phillips Steps

The Prince Phillips Steps are located at the south of the Genovesa Island, a bird Paradise. It is formed by the remaining edges of a big crater that is almost completely submerged nowadays. You can access it through a gap located at the feet of the volcano. Read along and find out more about this cruise ship destination in the amazing Galapagos. The island attracts a huge amount of birds from the ocean that go there to nest and reproduce, among this birds, there are: the big frigates, blue footed boobies, seagulls and the petrels.



### The Path

The visiting spot of the Prince Phillips Steps is located at the south part of the Darwin Bay in Genovesa. The path is above a volcanic rock road and it can be made in approximately 2 hours. This is the youngest area from a geological point of view. The cliffs, located in the south, are formed by a fragile lava. The natural erosion that has occur due to the lava flows have turn the place into the ideal swallow nesting spot.

### Swallows

You can see two different sea swallow species that make their nests in the lava holes and cavities. One is the wooden petrel that feeds during the night and the other one is the Galapagos petrel that does its activities during the day. This last one is a specie unique to the island. There are a lot of different and interesting animals to see during the path, make sure to visit this astonishing island.

## Genovesa: Darwin Bay

The Darwin Bay is formed by a crater, it's almost a perfect circle. It's located in the Genovesa Island, to the north of the Galapagos Archipelago. The Bay is an anchorage place. It's the perfect place for the breeding of some Galapagos species such as: red footed boobies, masked boobies, owls, lava seagulls, swallow-tailed seagulls, swallows and the smallest sub-species of iguanas of the islands. Don't miss the chance to visit it during your trip on board the cruise.



### Small but Interesting

Genovesa is a small and plane island that has a xerophytic vegetation. It's the ideal place



for ornithologist due to the abundance of birds it holds. The Darwin Bay is one of the most interesting places in the Galapagos for those who love nature. It has a 1500 meters, a part of the path is done walking through coral sand and the other one on dry lava flows.

### **Always Something to Do or See**

At the end of the path, there's a white sand beach full of sea lions and huge and amazing birds of different species. During the walk, you will be able to see the nesting colonies of the common frigate, the Nazca booby and the swallow-tailed seagull. This the biggest nesting colony in the Galapagos for this bird. There are also other interesting bird species for you to see.

In the Darwin Bay you can go diving through the inner or outer wall. It's a great opportunity to see up close some of earth's most beautiful animals and some that are unique to the Galapagos.

## **Genovesa: El Barranco**

Genovesaisland, also known as "Tower Island", has two important places to visit: Darwin Bay and El Barranco. Darwin Bay has its name due to Charles Darwin, who visited Galapagos Island and made it popular for the many uncommon species it has. About El Barranco, or "Prince Phillip's Steps"... Why that name, "Prince Phillip's Steps"? Where is this place? What is important about it? Keep reading.



### Information tips about El Barranco

- Its name in English, “Prince Phillip's Steps”, comes from a visit that Prince Phillip did in 1965. Its name in Spanish comes from the cliffs inside the place.
- Located at the south of Genovesa Island, you can enter this place by trespassing the feet of its volcano rock road. Yes, El Barranco is formed by a volcano crater, nowadays submerged on the sea. It takes two hours to get there.
- It is a bird heaven, as all Galapagos Islands. It attracts many birds from the ocean: they nest and reproduce there.
- Birds, however, are not the only animals you can see: the most popular animals you can see are Galapagos sea lions and marine iguanas. Frigatebirds, Galapagos doves, Nazca boobies, Galapagos petrels and seagulls are the most seen birds.
- Some birds nest in the volcanoes due to the lava flows. For that reason there is natural erosion: it allows them to nest.

You will enjoy going to El Barranco, a.k.a. Prince Phillip's Steps with us, because you will see many spectacles you wouldn't imagine -such as the volcano remainings and how some of the birds nest exactly in the craters!

## Daphne Islands

The Daphne Islands (Major and Minor) are two little volcanic islands. Daphne Major is made of a tuff crater, it doesn't have any trees on its surface and its coastline elevates 120 meters from the sea level. It is right at the north of Santa Cruz's main island.

It's one of the most famous Galapagos Islands due to the fact that a couple of scientists of Princeton University (The Grants) have been going to the island for 30 years now to study the birds, especially the boobies. As a result, they have been able to observe evolutionary processes. This gained them and the location worldwide recognition.



### Flora

In the Daphne Island you will surely see a lot of interesting vegetation, but the one that stands out the most is the Palo Santo tree, endemic to the Galapagos Islands of Daphne, North Seymour and Baltra.

### Fauna

The blue footed booby nest in the interior of the craters, the masked booby does its nest at



the sides of the cone and at the borders of the crater. There's also the tropical bird that nest inside of the cliffs cavities and the Darwin finches.

### **Birdwatchers Paradise**

The Daphne Islands main attraction is the nesting of the various species of birds. It's the ideal place for those you enjoy watching birds. During the path, you will have the opportunity to not only see up close rare and unique species in their natural habitat, but to take gorgeous pictures of them to last you a life time of memories.

## **Santa Cruz: Bachas Beach**

Bachas is the most important beach to see sea turtles, flamingos and migratory birds. Aside from all that, it's truly a gorgeous place, its clear blue waters will invite you to swim and relax under the sun.



### **Barge**

Bachas Beach is located to the northeast of the Santa Cruz coast. Its name comes from the

word "barge". The name dates since the Second World War, time in which the American army left two barges in the beach. The first settlers couldn't pronounce the name correctly and so they started calling it "Bachas". In the beach right next to Bacha, you can find the remains of a floating pier that the American soldiers left.

### **Turtle and bird watching**

The place is composed of two beaches that have a total extension of approximately 1 kilometer. It's a white sand beach, deserted and very quaint. There you will be able to observe flamingos and other birds.

The Beach represents of the most important nesting spots for sea turtles within the Santa Cruz Island. To observe the sea turtles in their natural habitat is really one of the most wonderful experiences you can have while on you cruise trip to the Galapagos.

### **Other Activities**

Bachas is also a very popular place to practice skin diving, to swim, to take speedboat rides and to simply walk through the marvelous beach. This is a wonderful beach to go, relax and enjoy of some quality family time. It's a great place to visit due to its calmed air and variety of natural sites.

## **San Cristóbal: Brujo Hill**

Brujo Hill is a beautiful white coral beach where you can got to swim and observe birds and sea lions. Moreover, you will be also able to practice skin diving. The beach is located to the north coast of the San Cristóbal Island. Around the beach you can see sea birds like the blue footed booby, Nazca booby, heron, frigates and coast birds.

Brujo Hill is a tuff cone that has gone through erosion and it's composed in several parts of lava. This is one of the most beautiful white coral beaches in San Cristóbal. This is particularly famous because it was the first coast Charles Darwin ever stood foot upon in 1835.



### See the Fauna Up Close

In this fascinating lava landscape, you can see boobies, seagulls and pelicans. The protected bay is very famous because of the young sea turtles and because there you can swim and scuba dive alongside those amazing animals.

When speaking of fauna, the most attractive ones are the Chatham mockingbird and the San Cristóbal lava lizard. Both species are unique to the island and cannot be seen in any other place within the Galapagos.

You can also find canaries, the Galapagos chiffchaffs and with a little luck, you can also find a brujo bird (an endemic subspecies of the island). This zone belongs to the arid zone, the vegetation covers the whole path, where you can find species like Palo Santo trees, among many others.

The beach is very special for those who like a quiet and relaxed time. The white beach and clear water make the perfect combination to rest.

### San Cristóbal: Kicker Rock

The Kicker Rock Islet is the remaining of an Antique volcanic cone. Its waters are the favorite of those who are submarine swimming professionals and also of scuba divers that get to go

as deep as 100 meters in their immersions. It's a great place to visit, read along and find more information about it.

It has two vertical walls with a gap in the center that makes a paradise for sharks and other fish species like barracudas and rainbow fishes. The walls have amazing colors and to go there is to surely have sightings of amazing marine fauna, including octopuses, and many sharks like the hammer shark, the grey reef, white-tip shark and the Galapagos shark.



## **Magnificent Sea**

You can also find other sea creatures like turtles, stingrays and sea lions. The access to this magnificent place is restricted. This due to the fact that the island is still virgin and it's also the home of many exotic species. When it comes to birds, there are: red-chest royal frigates, they show their gorgeous color in contrast to the deep blue of the ocean. There are also hundreds of blue footed boobies who rest in little caves.

## **What to Do**

In kicker Rock you can go to the Obelisk, it's a rock shaped like an obelisk that emerges from the sea and the rest of the island. You can also go diving next to majestic sea lions that



go to Kicker Rock to rest. Moreover, there are little walks through the place. Don't miss the chance to live this wonderful experience.

## San Cristóbal: Lobos Island

This is a little islet located 10km to the Northeast of the Baquerizo Moreno Port in the San Cristóbal Island. It gets its name (Wolf) because it's the home of several sea wolves' species that revolve in the beach.

The Lobos Island is small and calmed. It's divided by a canal from de San Cristóbal Island. It has a coast vegetation of plants that tolerate salt water and on top of them, you will be able to see little colonies of common frigates.



### Fascinating Animals

In the island there are also sea wolves, blue footed boobies and a gorgeous natural breakwater. In Lobos Island you will not only see amazing animals, but there's also other botanical, ecological and recreational attractions.

It has an 850 meters path and you will need about an hour to do it. While on the walk, you will pass an arid vegetation zone, volcanic floor and a sand zone. In this island you will be

able to see two interesting animals: the sea wolf and the South American fur seal. In Lobos Island you can also observe marine iguanas, Chatham lava lizards, East Galapagos snake and blue footed boobies among many other fascinating creatures.

### **Speedboat Vs. Skin Diving**

During your time in the island, you can take a speedboat ride in which you will surely be able to see brown pelicans and several seashore birds. While if you prefer to go skin diving, you will be surrounded by young sea wolves, stingrays and sea turtles.

## **San Cristóbal: Pitt Point**

If you want to discover the only place in which two species of birds and their subspecies can be found simultaneously, you must visit Punta Pitt. Pitt Point, as it is known in English, is a place in San Cristobal Island made of volcanic tuff, and the species are protected by an experimented staff from non-native animals –such as cats and rats- that could endanger them.

### **Information tips about Pitt Point**

- Pitt Point is located on a far shore from San Cristóbal, to the eastern end. It has a trail and an islet, Pitt Islet. The trail has an olivine beach and a route that takes you to a volcanic hill.
- Vegetation is very rich here: you can find some kinds of shrubs, saltbush, cacti, Palo Santo trees, and some more. The landscapes are pretty.
- You will find the two existent types of frigatebirds: swallow-tailed gulls and storm petrels. This is the only site you can also find the three existent types of booby birds: red-footed, Nazca and blue-footed boobies. It is a sea lion colony, and you can find endemic species like the lava lizard.
- You can dive here: if you know how to dive, you will find many schools of fish such as snappers, Galapago grunts, jacks and maybe some diving boobies or whale sharks.
- Pitt Point is made of volcanic tuff and erosion has made a part due to the strong winds.

Pitt Point is a place full of beautiful species apart from the abovementioned. If you dive, you will find more beautifulness, but you will be doubtful whether the best views are on the surface or underwater. This is a must-go spot!

## **San Cristóbal: Pitt Islet**

Pitt Islet is pretty near to Pitt Point, in San Cristobal Island. It shares similar characteristics with Kicker Rock and Pitt Point about activities and species that can be seen. It's a small place,

but it's great to visit because you will find the three subspecies of boobies and the two subspecies of frigatebirds. Turtles nest here, and it is a great place to practice snorkeling.

### **Information tips about Pitt Islet**

- Pitt Islet is located very near Pitt Point, in San Cristobal. You can go by boat, it is a very fast journey from Pitt Point.
- It is very similar to Kicker Rock in some aspects such as the marine species that inhabit both places and the activities you can do there. Pitt Islet is not a coral reef.
- As in Pitt Point, frigatebirds and boobies can be found in all of their subspecies: swallow-tailed gulls and storm petrels for frigatebirds; and the red-footed, Nazca and blue-footed boobies. Many other species live, feed and nest here, such as the red-billed tropic bird. Turtles, sea lions and stingrays can be found, too.
- Snorkeling, swimming and diving are allowed activities. You will see a huge diversity of fish schools. You don't have to be experimented to dive in these waters, but you must know how to swim to enjoy the activity.

Pitt Islet is a small place, but it is full of biodiversity! You can dive here just as in Pitt Point, and discover a new world under the sea. Or you can rest on the surface, watching the many birds that fly showing their beautiful colors.

## **Española: Suarez Point**

Suarez Point is located to the western coast of the Española Island, the oldest island in the archipelago which is approximately five million years old. It's one of the Galapagos' most attractive and popular places. Make sure to visit it while on your cruise trip.



### **Albatrosses Haven**

In Suarez Point you can see an iguana sub-species of bright green and red colors, these are endemic of Española. Furthermore, this island is the only place in the entire world where the albatross makes its nest.

A great part of the island is covered by lava rocks. Española has a high percentage of endemic species because it's isolated from the rest of the islands. This due to the fact that the species that inhabit Española don't share a genetic flow with species from other islands.

### **Touristic Attraction**

Suarez Point is one of the Galapagos' most important touristic attractions because it holds one of the most impressive and sorted sea birds species of the Galapagos. In this island, there's a walk for tourists of 3km. While you walk along this path, you will be able to find and admire blue footed boobies and albatrosses.

You will be also able to see marine iguanas, who shine red and turquoise during mating season. A variety of mockingbirds, lava lizards, Darwin finches, lava seagulls, white-tailed seagulls, blue footed boobies, albatrosses, finches, sea wolves and crabs. It's the ideal place to take pictures of this amazing animals and of the gorgeous landscapes you'll see along the way, don't forget to bring your camera.



## Española: Gardner Bay

Gardner Bay is located at the east of the Española Island in the Galapagos archipelago. It's a white coral beach filled with sea wolves. It's the ideal place to go swimming and for skin diving. This not only guaranty a fun and relaxing time in the white sand and clear water of the Bay, but it will also give you the chance to see several marine species up close. This Bay is composed by two beaches that, because of their location in the Española Island are the perfect place to observe the albatrosses while they make their fantastic mating rituals and nest from April to December.



### **The Main Attraction**

The Gardner Bay's main attraction is the sea wolves' colony that lives on the beach, especially during their mating season. While on the beautiful Bay you will have the opportunity to walk among this fantastic creatures. Furthermore, you will be also able to go swimming in the clear and warm waters or if you prefer, you can go diving in the bay.

### **Variety**

In Gardner Bay you will also find a great amount of both local and migratory birds: the Galapagos dove and Darwin finches among other species. There are three different kinds of Darwin finches in this bay. Furthermore, the bay is the nesting location for green sea turtles.

One of the most commonly made activities on the bay is the skin diving. Around the little islets you will be able to find several places to do this activity and find amazing marine life.

## Española: Osborn Islet

One of the oldest islands in Galapagos Archipelago is Española Island, which is also one of the best islands for birdwatching. Better known in English as "Hood Island", Española Island has two main sites to visit: Gardner Bay and Suarez Point (Punta Suárez). But there is also a place that not so many know and is full of natural views and animal species: Osborn Islet. It is one of the least known places in Galapagos Islands, but if you love snorkeling you will have lots of fun!

### Information tips about Osborn Islet

- Osborn Islet is located to the southeast of Gardner Bay, nearby Española Island. You will get there by panga (dinghy) and there are no trails or main attractions, only the panoramic views or the many species that inhabit the place.
- The islet was named after Henry Fairfield Osborn, a true lover of nature and species. William Beebe worked for him and named the islet after traveling to discover Galapagos.
- There are many different schools of fish and many sea species, such as parrot fish, sea lions, butterfly fish, corals, green pencil urchins and many other colorful fish.
- You are not allowed to land, but you can swim and practice snorkeling due to the many species that live there. You must be an experimented open water diver to stay underwater.

Osborn Islet is a small place, but you can snorkel around many sea lions that want to meet you. Remember you must know very well swimming and diving to access these activities!

## Floreana: Cormorant Point

Cormorant Point's visiting landing spot is located to the north coast of the Floreana Island. The Path is a walk of approximately 720 meters. The path passes through a lagoon, several watching spot from where you can take astonishing pictures of the landscape and a soft sand beach where you will be able to relax and enjoy a nice time in the island.



### **Beauty All Around**

In the previously mentioned lagoon, you can find a considerable population of gorgeous flamingos and in the beach, you will see a nesting area for sea turtles. Furthermore, at all stages of the path, you will be able to see and marvel at the amazing vegetation you will see all around you.

In Cormorant Point there are two plant species that are unique to the place: *Scalesia vellosa* and *Leocarpus pinaffitidus*. This makes the place very attractive for those who study plants.

### **Landing Beach**

The landing beach has a great amount of olivine crystals, which gives it a greenish color. These crystals have been dragged by the wind of tuff cones located close by. The crystal was formed when the magma was still under earth and it's composed of magnesium, iron and silica.

Close by the landing spot, there's a place that is perfect for diving. It's important to be careful with where you step at the beginning of the white sand beach because you could disturb the female turtles and their nests. In these beach, there are also stingrays that you will be able to see up close. It'll be a wonderful experience.



## Floreana: Champion Islet

The Floreana Island became famous worldwide when three different groups of people that came from Europe decided to live there. Champion is an Islet located in the Floreana Island at the Galapagos archipelago.

The access to Champion Islet is restricted. There are no humans living there and the only people that are allowed to land in the Islet are scientists. This due to the fact that the land has suffer greatly over human hands in the previous years and as a way to preserve the endemic gorgeous nature, certain areas are completely sheltered.



### Speedboat Ride

The Floreana mockingbird is the bird species that has been affected the most of the human disturbs in the habitat. Because of that, the walking access to these places is completely forbidden. However, you can take speedboat rides and have the opportunity to see this beautiful little creature on its natural habitat.

Champion Islet is famous for its mockingbird reserves. However, this is not the only bird you will see. As well as other Galapagos' Islands, Champion has a great variety of birds to watch like the Red-billed Tropicbird and Darwin finches.



## Vegetation and Sea

The main attraction of the Champion Islet is the mockingbird and other amazing birds. However, the zone has as well vegetation of breathtaking beauty and interest. Such as: giant opuntia cactus mixed with a bush vegetation of croton scouleri and others. On the sea, you will be able to see beautiful dolphin just swimming all around without getting disturbed by the boats. It'll be a truly unique experience.

## Floreana: Post Office Bay

Post Office Bay is a historic location that remind us of the whalers time, when they used to go to the Galapagos to get some fresh water and take turtle meat with them. The story goes that on this place, the captain of some whaling boat placed a barrel in the XVIII century so that those who passed through the island, left their mails and took with them the ones that had their destination.



## Bonding Tradition

Nowadays, this tradition continues with the tourists that visit the Galapagos. To take part in this fun and historic tradition, remember to take a postcard with you when you land on the bay for your family or friends. It doesn't need a stamp and in return, all you have to do is take one or several cards that have an address close to you and deliver them.

In Post Office Bay you will also be able to see the remains of a colonization intent led by the Norwegians at the beginning of the XX century who built a fish cannery on the bay.

### **Lava Tunnel**

Other Post Office Bay attraction is the lava tunnel. It gets formed when the lava gets cold to the sides and in the base but the material on the center of it keeps flowing downwards. Eventually that lava, still liquid, finds an escape and flows to the exterior leaving a hollow cavity.

It's a great island to visit, just remember not to use sunscreen with strong odors nor clothes with bright colors. Those may call the attention of some introduced wasps that live in the island. Take part on the nice Post Office Bay tradition, pass the mail along.

## **Floreana: Cormorant Point**

Cormorant Point is the right place to see one of the largest flamingo colonies: if you love these pink inhabitants, you will faint from the emotion of looking at a bunch of them. Two beaches, one so different from the other, will be there for your entertainment. Cormorant Point is the spot for many perfect photos due to its many views: you won't have enough battery for your camera!

### **Information tips about Cormorant Point**

- Flamingoes can be seen at the lagoon, and a nesting point for sea turtles in at the beach. There are some endemic species, and also stingrays, stilts, hermit crabs, pencil sea urchins and white-checked pintails. Sea turtles nest here from December to May.
- Cormorant Point is located on the north coast of Floreana Island. It has a flamingo lagoon, a path and two beaches.
- The origin of its name is not from the animal as there are no cormorants: it was named after a ship from the US.
- Swimming is not allowed. Try not to step on the places where rays are supposed to be, or on the turtle nesting spots. You can land and practice snorkeling.
- "Four Sand Beach" is composed by white polished coral sand, which makes the texture really soft and nice. "Green Beach" color –and name- is originated by olivine crystals (magnesium-iron volcanic silicates) inside the sand: the underground magma helped forming the crystals, and they have been expelled by the wind.

Cormorant Point is one of the best places to watch how flamingoes neck-dance to the rhythm of the waters, looking for shrimps or simply hanging on. It is also a good place to have a rest with the many views. What are you waiting for?

## Floreana: The Devil's Crown

You may already know that most places in Galapagos Islands allow you to practice snorkeling. Well, La Corona del Diablo is, if not the best, one of the best places to do it! The Devil's Crown is a volcanic crater which has suffered erosion from the waves. There is also a coral reef that attracts many marine species, and many sites to take a shot.

### Information tips about The Devil's Crown

- The Devil's Crown is located off the northern coast of Floreana Island. It has a set of rocks and a coral reef.
- The coral reef hides underneath the waters a big variety of species: eagle rays, white-tipped sharks, several kinds of fish schools (balloon fish, King Angel fish, hawkfish...) turtles, hammerhead sharks, and more. Bring an underwater camera, you cannot miss this natural show!
- The origin of its name comes from the round shape that its set of rocks has. It is also a little dangerous for amateur snorkelers, and the experimented ones may find it quite entertaining –but still dangerous-.
- Landing is the red-light activity here, it is not allowed. But snorkeling is the green-light activity: if you are a good swimmer and snorkeling is your passion, get ready and bring the best gears with you. The waters are strong, be careful.
- This place is founded on the remaining rocks of a volcano.

The Devil's Crown is just the opposite to its name reference: you will feel not in hell, but in heaven, when you discover the underwater treasures. Remember to get ready: adventure in this place could have a high price if not!

## Santa Fe: South Plaza

At the northeast on the great Santa Cruz Island, there's South Plaza. It is approximately 2km long and it stands right in front of its twin islet, North Plaza. The islets are divided by a 100 meters wide clear stream of water. While the distance they have through the stream that separates them is not long, both islands still developed and hold different flora and fauna species, which is part of their individual appeal.

The North Plaza doesn't admit any visitors, but on the other hand, you are able to fully

explore South Plaza, which is one of the most recommended cruise ship tours destination. Don't miss the opportunity to walk through this amazing islet during your trip to the Galapagos.



### **Red Land**

In South Plaza you will find that the land in many places is red. This due to the vegetables that cover it. This vegetable is the food of yellow iguanas that live there alongside sea lions, seagulls and many other birds that fly above the cliff. While you're there, you will be also able to see the nests of the swallow-tailed seagulls.

### **Close to the Fauna**

One of the South Plaza's main attractions is the fact that you can be close to the local fauna without having to worry of frightening them. This islet hasn't had much human interaction and because of it, the animals are not bothered by the presence of humans. That will give you the opportunity to take some astonishing pictures of the amazing fauna, even some that are endemic to the place.

## **Black Turtle Cove**



To the northeast of the Santa Cruz Island there's the Black Turtle Cove. It's known for having a huge mangroves extension. This is one of the places where several marine species reproduce, such as the black and green sea turtles. Here you can see three different kinds of sharks: the black-tip shark, the Galapagos shark and the famous blue shark. In some occasion you can also see stingrays. Read along and find out more about this amazing place.

### **Speedboat Ride**

You cannot land on Black Turtle Cove, to explore it, a speedboat ride will be necessary. From there, you will have the opportunity to take amazing pictures of exotic animals in their natural habitat. Those will be memories you will have with you forever to remember this amazing trip.



### **Mangrove Lagoon**

The mangroves by them self are gorgeous, diverse and dense. They have different ages and they look different. Black Turtle Cove is famous because it has three different mangrove

species within its territory. They have different colors and when they get hit by the warmth of the tropical sun, the sparkle and dazzle those who look at them with their spectacle.

### **Mangrove Lagoon**

As it was said before, the green sea turtles come to Black Turtle Cove during their mating season. This tends to happen in January and by February, the turtles make their nest and lay from 50 up to 200 eggs. Unfortunately, this turtle is on the list of endangered species due to the amount of predators that stand between them and the water. To see this journey is truly an amazing experience.

### **Santa Fe**

In the middle of the Galapagos archipelago, we find Santa Fe Island which is also called Barrington Island after Admiral Samuel Barrington. Even when it's a small island (9m<sup>2</sup>) it is one of the oldest; volcanic rocks of about 4 million years old have been discovered. Therefore, visitors will have the chance to step on ancient ground while exploring its rich vegetation which is characterized by Palo Santo trees, brush, and a large variety of the cactus *Opuntia echios*.



### **Home to several species!**

Santa Fe is not only rich in vegetation, it's also home to a great variety of seabirds (Swallow-tailed gull), mammals (Sea lions) and reptiles (Lava Lizards) Visitors will be surrounded by unique species since most of these animals are only found in the Galapagos islands.

Barrington Bay is the location of the wet site landing, right on the northeastern side of the island. Sea lions can be spotted on the beaches in the bay, and of course, colorful lizards and seabirds.

### **Visitors will feel in another world!**

Escaping the daily life, visitors will feel as if they were in another world where only vegetation and animals live. This island, as many of the Galapagos Islands, remains as untouched as possible. Visitors will be surrounded by nature's voice: the waves coming to shore, sealions' barks, the wind wiping around everyone. Therefore, be ready to forget about the world outside this catching, amazing island.

This island also offers breath-taking sights and the feeling of pure nature at its finest.

## **South Plaza**

The east coast of Santa Cruz is home to a small island called South Plaza. It has an area of 0.13 km and a maximum altitude of 23 meters. In despite of its small terrain, it is known for its amazing flora and for its large number of species.





### **A very interesting origin**

The formation of this island is rather fascinating since it was formed by lava streaming up from the bottom of the ocean. Visitors will get the opportunity to enjoy the amazing sights from the top of the steep banks, making their experience memorable and unique but the adventure doesn't end there! Visitors will also be able to observe a great number of birds such as nesting Red-billed, tropicbirds and swallow-tailed Gulls while taking a look at the large pear cactus trees (*Opuntia echios*) and of course the big colony of Galapagos Land Iguanas. The uniqueness and beauty of these species will amaze visitors.

Unlike many other touristic islands in this world, South Plaza is kept in its most natural way possible –as the rest of the Galapagos islands- which will give visitors the exclusive chance to delight in nature in its purest state.

### **Interesting fact**

The *Sesuvium* ground vegetation changes its color depending on the season! It can be intense green in the rainy season to purple and orange in the dry season. So, visitors will enjoy colorful sights of vegetation. South Plaza is the right place to enjoy beautiful sights, rich vegetation and a great number of species.



## Bartolome

Off the east coast of Santiago Island, we find a volcanic islet called 'Bartolome' it is considered one of the "younger" islands in the Galápagos archipelago. Why does it have that name? Well, this island is named after Sir Bartholomew James Sullivan, a famous naturalist and friend of Charles Darwin, Sir Bartholomew James Sullivan.

### **Bartolome has a lot to offer!**

Including its gorgeous landscapes and the interesting, colorful variety of volcanic formations since this island is an extinct volcano; visitors will be in awe in front of such natural spectacle. And there's more! Bartolome has a volcanic cone (easy to climb) that will give visitors great views of the other islands. And let's not forget the iconic Pinnacle Rock which is very characteristic of the Galapagos archipelago.



It offers two visitor sites. At the first one, swimming and snorkeling around Pinnacle Rock are highly recommended because the underwater world is absolutely impressive. Snorkelers may have some amazing, uncommon company like marine turtles, penguins, white-tipped reef sharks, and other tropical fish.

Galápagos penguins are often spotted around, and they are the only penguins found in tropical area in Latin America. There is also a small cave behind Pinnacle Rock is home to a breeding colony. Seasonally, Bartolomé is the location for the mating and nesting for the green turtles. Luckily, visitors may have a look at this nature's spectacle.

### **Many activities to do!**

Swimming, snorkeling, climbing and sight-seeing in Bartolome may leave visitors breathless but in the best way possible!

## **Chinese Hat**

As its uncommon name says, this island is shaped in the form of an old Chinese man's hat. There's a cone rising out of the clear Galapagos water. It is one of the most emblematic and most recognizable island in the Galapagos archipelago and it's easy to see why with its distinctive shape. Visitors are usually fascinated by this unique island's form. Even when it's one of the smallest islands, it has a wonderful visitor site where visitors can delight in memorable views.

Like most Galapagos Islands, its origin is volcanic which is the reason for its particular shape.



**Have a wonderful, memorable time at this distinctive shaped island!**

Chinese hat is proximate to Santiago Island and boats tends to anchor in the stunning blue channel. The visitor trail begins at a splendid beach: The path continues past a colony of endemic Galapagos sea lions before walking by a lava field. Visitors will have the chance to see the American Oystercatcher (a bird with a particular orange beak) lava lizards and at the end, enjoy a sublime view off a cliff, looking down at the waves crashing into shore.

Even when it has a good location, this island receives fewer visitors than other Galapagos sites. Why? Because it's semi-protected by the Park service. Since it's small, it's highly vulnerable to visitors, and access is limited to a few visitor ships in order to protect the unique ecosystem. And of course, [Nemo II](#) is one of the only ships permitted to visit!

## Dragon Hill

Going to the northwest of the island of Santa Cruz, we find Dragon hill. The reason for its interesting name comes from way back in 1975, because it was one of the only places on Santa Cruz where Land iguanas were in healthy condition. The preservation of these lands iguanas has been going for decades, in fact, there are no dogs in this area in an attempt to

protect the iguanas from being attacked.

Dragon hill consists of a path along three different environments in just 1,600 m in length. Therefore, the variety of this small but rich in nature place will have visitors in awe during their visit.

In the lagoons in this site, there is shrimp (*Artemia salina*) which serves as food for flamingos; and depending on the season is more abundant so the population of these birds is larger. However, in very rainy seasons these lagoons become very sweet causing the crustacean populations to decrease and resulting in shorebirds scarcity as well.

### **The right place to snorkel!**

Containing a rocky beach, it's a good place to snorkel at high tide. Why? Visitors will get to see the beautiful reefs and marine life. Typical vegetation of the intertidal zone and dry area can be found. So, while enjoying the land iguanas' favorite place for centuries, visitors can see flamingoes and other shorebirds. You can also delight in the marine world when snorkeling there.

Dragon hill combines decades of Land iguanas preservation with splendid landscapes and rocky surfaces to have a great time while snorkeling.

## **Mosquera Islet**

With its privileged location between the islands of North Seymour and Baltra, it has one of the largest populations of sea lions. It consist of a reef of rocks, an amazing white sand beach and corals. In most of his territory there is base of lava rocks (As result of the lava uprising)with the exception on the southwest side where the landing takes place.

Visitors will have the opportunity to see several species of shorebirds, sea lions and lava gulls. Sometimes, Orca whales are seen praying on the sea lion colony, giving the feeling of being in the most natural environment around and also giving visitors the chance to enjoy this natural feeding ritual in close.

This beautiful islet counts with two visitor sites:

### **Land Visitor Sites, Join the sea lions' playground!**

There is a stunning beach on Mosquera where Galapagos Marine Iguanas are easy to spot and that's not all! Visitors can also see blue footed boobies and sally light food crabs. Swimming off the beach, you can have a wonderful time snorkeling, delighting in the variety of the marine world. There's a highchance snorkelers will have some unique



company: The numerous sea lions who live at this Island!

### **Marine Visitor Sites**

This islet also counts with a scuba diving site with a maximum depth of 30m, currents are usually mild. This site is distinguished for the playful sea lions that come and play during the dive. The area is also home to turtles, sharks, rays, tropical fish and barracudas.