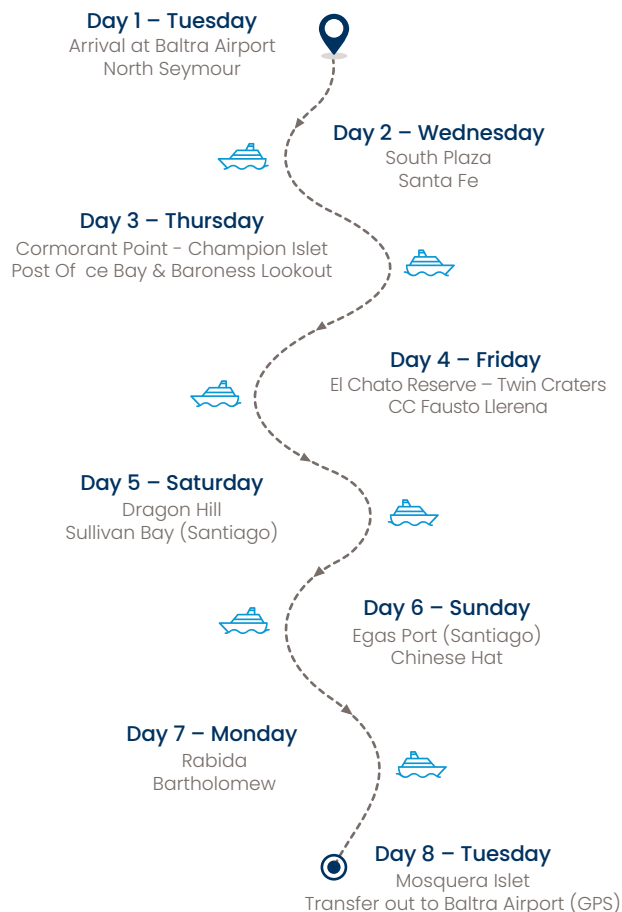




ITINERARY B | 8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS
Tuesday to Tuesday

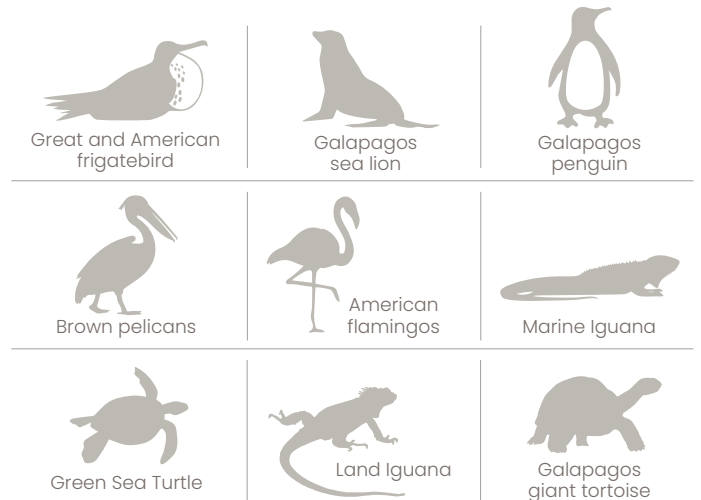


ROUTE



Our 8-day naturalist itinerary aboard M/Y Aqua is the opportunity of a lifetime! Visiting incredible sites such as Dragon Hill, Sullivan Bay, magical Isabela island, and more, your stay in the Galapagos Island will be more than complete. Share our love for all the incredible wildlife inhabiting the islands with us!

HIGH CHANCE OF SPOTTING:



DAY 1 - TUESDAY

AM - Baltra Airport

Upon arrival at Seymour Ecological Airport, a check-up is carried out first, to ensure that no foreign plant or animal species are introduced into the islands. Furthermore, your TCC (Transit Control Card) is stamped; this must be kept safe during your trip, as it has to be presented again on your return flight. In addition, entrance to the Galapagos National Park is due for entry (US \$100), if this has not yet been paid. Your guide will meet you at the airport, assist you with the luggage and accompany you on the short bus ride. Here you will climb aboard the M/Y Aqua! After greeting the crew and the captain, your cabins will be assigned to you and then you will enjoy your first lunch on-board.

PM - North Seymour

This islet is one of most visited sites, and it is teeming with birdlife. An easy circular path takes you through the archipelago's most extensive colonies of blue-footed boobies and frigate birds. At the beginning of the breeding season, adult frigate bird-males blow up their vivid red pouches to impressive football-sized balloons. This is one of the few spots where you can compare the magnificent and the great frigate bird breeding next to each other.



DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY

AM - South Plazas

South Plaza is located at the east of Santa Cruz Island, and forms part of two islands known as Islas Plazas. Despite its small size, some of the most interesting and outstanding species of the Galapagos are found here. The Plazas land iguanas are smaller than their relatives found on other islands. There are several hybrid iguanas, a result of crossing a male marine iguana and a female land iguana; they are unique, recognisable at first glance by their black/grey color, with a land iguana's crest, but face and tail of the marine iguana. The large population of iguanas is due to the presence of tuna, their favourite food. Swallow-tailed gulls nesting in the rugged cliffs are seen along with other seabirds such as Audubon shearwaters, red-billed tropicbirds, frigate birds and brown pelicans.

PM - Santa Fe

Located in the south-eastern part of the Galapagos, this island was formed from an uplift rather than being of volcanic origin, which is why it is mostly flat. There are some theories which claim that this could be the oldest island in the Archipelago. Santa Fe is home to a number of endemic species like the Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos snake, Galapagos mockingbird, rice rats and one of the two species of lands iguanas of the islands.

After disembarking into the beautiful and clear waters you will be in contact with one of the many sea lion colonies.

Along the trail, many salt bushes can be seen as well as the giant prickly pear cactus - gigantism is a characteristic of oceanic islands. There are many possibilities to snorkel with playful sea lions and tropical fish.

DAY 3 – THURSDAY

AM – Cormorant Point

The peninsula of Cormorant Point forms the extreme north cape of Floreana, which formed from smaller volcanic cones, covered by tropical dry forest (palo santo). At the landing beach, you will be welcomed by a small Galapagos sea lion colony. The green sand on this beach contains a high percentage of glassy olivine crystals which have been blown out by the surrounding tuff cones. The 'flour sand' beach on the southern side of the peninsula is made up of even finer white coral sand which feels very smooth on the feet.

Parrotfish have pulverised it, grinding the calcareous skeletons of living coral. You can spot schools of stingrays who love the sandy bottom to hide themselves. During the first months of the year, Pacific green turtles come ashore to bury their eggs.

PM – Post Office Bay & Baroness Lookout

Post Office Bay is one out of three nearby visitor's sites on Floreana's northern coast. Bring your postcards and post them in the peculiar barrel on this historic site. The barrel commemorates an improvised mail service that was set up for communication between British 16th century whalers and poachers



DAY 4 – FRIDAY

AM – El Chato Reserve – Twin Craters

The native scalesia forest of El Chato Tortoise Reserve is the best place to search for Galapagos giant tortoises in their most authentic setting! Despite the interesting breeding centers – where you are guaranteed to find tortoises in their corrals – there is nothing better than to observe them in their wild environment. Though it can be quite moist and muddy, your visit may turn into an adventurous quest when they have left silently their favourite pond.

The Cráteres Gemelos (Twin Craters) are found on either side of the road leading to Puerto Ayora. These impressive formations are not really volcanic craters and were formed by magma domes, which hardened on the outside while the lava continued flowing inside, leaving huge and empty magma chambers that eventually collapsed, leaving two large holes. The craters lie within lush a Scalesia cloud forest, a high-altitude plant species that are endemic to the Galapagos. This area is also home to the Carpenter Finch, which uses tools to search for food. There may also be opportunities to see the Pajaro Brujo (vermillion flycatcher), a small red-breasted bird.

PM – CC Fausto Llerena

A tour at Fausto Llerena Breeding Center you can see the tortoises of Española Island, ending in the tortoise exhibit corral. Tortoises of this corral are accustomed to humans; it is an excellent spot to be photographed with them!.

DAY 5 – SATURDAY

AM – Dragon Hill (Santa Cruz)

The visitor site at Dragon Hill has been open to visitors since 1993. This site is located in northwestern Santa Cruz Island and consists of a trail that leads to a hyper-saline lagoon behind the beach, frequently visited by flamingos, pintail ducks and other species of birds. This site has been re-populated with land iguanas from Seymour, Isabela and Santa Cruz island. There is a short walk to the hill, which offers a beautiful view of the bay.

PM – Sullivan Bay (Santiago)

The arrival in Sullivan Bay is like a moon landing. The desolate, sprawling fields seem to be mostly lifeless, but this island, which is particularly popular among photographers, still offers a lot to see.

There is even some life! Green sea turtles burrow in the small white sand beach, where you can also find crabs, blue herons and oystercatchers.



DAY 6 – SUNDAY

AM – Egas Port

We will have a “wet-landing” and take an easy walk along trails and on the beautiful shoreline of the black-sand beach, where you can see birds, sea lions, Sally Lightfoot Crabs, marine iguanas and Galapagos Fur Seal. During the walk you will be able to see some of Darwin’s finches, yellow warblers and many other beautiful and unique animals!.

PM – Chinese Hat Islet (Santiago)

Chinese Hat is a 52m/170ft high volcanic cone, forming another islet right off the rocky coast of Santiago, where a small colony of Galapagos penguins have settled. Approaching Chinese Hat from the north, you will understand the meaning of the name. This is an excellent place to learn more about volcanoes, lava bombs and lava tunnels.

You will arrive just in time to witness how this barren islet is colonised by pioneer species that have begun to sprout! Beautiful beaches of white coral sand and holes in the eroding lava fields are filled up with lava sand, which enables rooting. Galapagos sea lions and countless marine iguanas contribute to fertilisation, and altogether create many favourable options for newcomers, such as saltbush and the sesuvium carpet.

DAY 7 – MONDAY

AM – Rabida Island

After a 'wet landing' on the remarkable red beach of Rabida, there are two short guided hikes. Oxidised iron particles give the rocks and sand their rusty colour. The beach wall holds a shallow green-fringed lagoon; this oasis is the most fertile place on the otherwise arid islet, which is overgrown with leaf-dropping palo santo trees. The salty pool attracts all kind of aquatic birds, like pintails and sometimes American flamingos. Between the evergreen foliage of the surrounding mangrove bushes many species of songbirds hide and breed. One of the most outstanding attractions is the major breeding colony of brown pelicans, the only ones in the world that plunge-dive.

PM – Bartholomew Island

The beautiful volcano islet of Bartholomew is among the youngest of the islands, and on a geological scale was just recently born out of fire. Although at first sight lifeless, Bartolomé offers some of the wildest landscapes and best panoramas of the entire archipelago. To enjoy the postcard view of the idyllic 'Pinnacle Bay' you have to climb the stairs to the viewpoint on top of the island (114m/375ft). Enter a dramatic world of threatening (though extinguished) nearby spatter cones, craters, and lightweight lava droplets that have been spewed out by fiery fountains. The Summit Trail is also ideal for witnessing how scanty pioneer vegetation such as lava cactus struggles to take root in the bare virgin lava fields.



DAY 8 – TUESDAY

AM – Mosquera

Though close neighbours, Mosquera and North Seymour offer a very different experience; diverging habitats attract different residents. While North Seymour contains large breeding colonies of boobies and frigate birds, Mosquera stands out as one of the largest concentrations of Galapagos sea lions in the entire archipelago. It's also one of the few spots inside the National Park where you can stroll around freely, without being restricted to a trail.

Galapagos sea lions are real beach lovers and Mosquera offers beautiful white coral sand beaches contrasting with the azure coloured water. This islet is just a few metres higher than a sandbank and doesn't complicate their landing, and they can roll relaxed in the surf. For fishing they just have to enter the Itabaca Channel, which is a sort of natural place in which lots of marine life and schools of fish are concentrated.

Transfer out to Baltra Airport (GPS)

It's time to say goodbye to Galapagos! It's been a pleasure accompanying you on this unique trip and hope to see you again very soon! Assisted by the naturalist guide and some crew members, the dinghy will bring you and your luggage to the Seymour Ecological Airport, where we will take the shuttle back to the airport. In case you have booked your trip for a longer stay with us, we would be welcoming any potential new fellow passengers to the yacht, and continue our trip to the next visiting site!



AQUA