



GALÁPAGOS TORTOISE BY LAURA HARE

GALÁPAGOS

A Family Adventure aboard M/V Coral I or II

11 DAYS | Choose your dates

Explore the incredible diversity of the Galápagos Islands on this 11-day trip of a lifetime. Travel the islands of the archipelago to encounter sea lion colonies on Fernandina, wander amid the colorful plant life of Urbina Bay, and experience an incredible underwater world off the coast of Isabela. Discover biodiversity that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. From Blue-footed Boobies and Flightless Cormorants to sea turtles and marine iguanas, the Galápagos Islands hold new and exciting sights every step of the way.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Observe the Galápagos' captivating wildlife like giant tortoises, Blue-footed Boobies, marine iguanas, and Darwin's finches.
- Explore lava fields, volcanic formations, and other geological wonders.
- Snorkel with sea lions, penguins, colorful fish, and gentle white-tipped reef sharks.
- View Pinnacle Rock, one of the most recognizable landmarks in the archipelago.
- See the black sands of Urbina Bay contrast with the crystal blue waters of the Pacific.



PHOTO BY ERIC LINDBERG



DRAGON HILL BY REINIER MUNGUIA

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - QUITO

Today you will be met outside of baggage claim at Quito International Airport by our representative and transferred to your hotel for overnight. Located 9,350 feet above sea level and surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes, Quito is the second highest capital city in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The old town is an area of preserved colonial churches, monasteries, museums, and white-washed buildings with red-tiled roofs, while the modern city reflects a vibrant, rapidly growing Latin American center of commerce, replete with high rises and bustling sidewalks. *Overnight at Sheraton Quito Hotel or similar.*

DAY 2 - QUITO

Today you have your choice of activities. Options include a city tour of Quito with a visit to the Middle of the World Monument or a guided tour to Mindo cloud forest, Cotopaxi Volcano, Otavalo market, or Antisana Volcano. *Overnight at Sheraton Quito Hotel or similar. (BL)*

DAY 3 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning you will be escorted to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos Islands. Note that there is a 44-pound weight limit on the internal flights; please pack accordingly. Upon arrival you will be met by your naturalist guide and transferred to the vessel. Once on board, receive safety instructions and cruise information. Casual, comfortable clothing is recommended for the cruise, including bathing gear and a good windbreaker. After setting sail, your first stop is at the Fausto Llerena Breeding Center on Santa Cruz Island to learn about their breeding programs for Galápagos giant tortoises and land iguanas. This is where the famous Lonesome George, the last surviving specimen of Pinta Island, lived for decades. The center is managed by Galápagos National Park staff in collaboration with scientists from the Charles Darwin Research Station. Eggs taken from Pinzón, Santiago, and Santa Cruz islands hatch without the danger of introduced species. After artificial incubation, the “galapaguitos” (newborn tortoises) are reared until the age of 5, when they are returned to their

native habitats. Since the 1970s, more than 2,000 specimens have been released. In addition, the Darwin Station conducts botanical research, works on several scientific projects, and provides environmental education to local communities, schools, and tourists. If time permits, you may be able to visit the town of Puerto Ayora. *Overnight aboard M/V Coral I or II. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning visit Dragon Hill on Santa Cruz Island. On the trail, pass typical dry zone vegetation, important nesting grounds for endemic land iguanas, and a brackish lagoon where you may see flamingos. Arrive at Dragon Hill, which offers lovely views of the anchored boats and neighboring islands. The forest here is also home to mockingbirds, Darwin’s finches, Yellow Warblers, and Galápagos Doves. This afternoon land on Bartolomé Island, home to the volcanic cone known as Pinnacle Rock, one of the most recognizable spots in the Galápagos. View the island’s moon-like landscapes as you climb the Summit Trail past lava tube formations, spatter cones, and the remains of two types of hardened lava: a’ a and pahoehoe. The natural life on the island includes tiquilia and spurge plants, various cactus species, lava lizards, and Blue-footed Boobies. You’ll have the chance to see Galápagos penguins, schools of fish, white-tipped reef sharks, sea turtles, and more during a snorkeling excursion. *Overnight aboard M/V Coral I or II. (BLD)*



SEA LIONS BY LAURIE MCLAUGHLIN

DAY 5 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning land on Rábida (Jervis) Island. Rábida is one of the most diverse in terms of volcanic activity because it lies at the very heart of the archipelago's volcanic origin. In this deep red beach, surrounded by cliffs and steep slopes of volcanic cinder cones, it is not uncommon to find nesting colonies of Brown Pelicans, as well as nine species of Darwin's finches, fur seals, and Nazca Boobies. Snorkel off the coast, where marine life is particularly active and colorful. This afternoon visit Bachas Beach, on the north side of Santa Cruz. Behind the beach lie two small flamingo ponds with iguanas, coastal birds, Darwin's finches, mockingbirds, and gulls, as well as interesting native vegetation, red and black mangroves, and salt bushes. This beach is one of the main nesting sites of sea turtles in the Galápagos. A female can lay eggs three or four times per season with an average of 70 eggs each. Also find the remains of barges that sank long ago, once property of the United States Navy when it operated an airbase on Baltra Island during World War II. Local people modified the word barges to "bachas," hence the beach's name. *Overnight aboard M/V Coral I or II. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning anchor at the entrance to Black Turtle Cove, a mangrove lagoon on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, and enter the cove by dinghy or panga, turning off the motor to explore some of the smaller passageways with your guide. This is a great place to see large schools of golden rays, green sea turtles, white-tipped reef sharks, Galápagos sharks, Lava Herons, Yellow Warblers, and a variety of other bird species. This afternoon visit Eden Islet or Bahía Ballena on Santa Cruz Island. Off the western coast of Santa Cruz, Eden Islet offers opportunities to see Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies, reef sharks, and banks of endemic bream fish, either from the dinghy or while snorkeling. At Bahía Ballena, or Whale Bay, you'll find a beautiful greenish sand cove at the base of Dragon Hill on the west coast of Santa Cruz Island. The beach contains a large amount of volcanic olivine crystals, formed when the magma was still underground. A small tortoise population from Pinzón Island lives in the area, probably left by whalers or previous inhabitants. There is the opportunity to see marine iguanas and sea birds, followed by snorkeling. *Overnight aboard M/V Coral I or II. (BLD)*



NAZCA BOOBY BY DAIN VAN SCHOYCK

DAY 7 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning visit Vicente Roca Point on Isabela Island. This promontory was created from the remains of a tuff cone, with two protected turquoise coves on either side. One of them, the Bolívar Channel, is one of the richest marine ecosystems on Earth. This place is only accessible by water, with great opportunities for deep-water snorkeling. In this part of the Galápagos, the upwelling of cold water currents from the west offers an abundant plankton supply for marine life like red-lipped batfish, seahorses, frogfish, nudibranchs, octopus, and the mola-mola or sunfish. It is common to observe dolphin pods, sea lion rafts, and tuna banks feeding. The sheer cliffs provide the perfect setting for dinghy rides along the coast, observing a great diversity of sea birds. Noddies, Brown Pelicans, Galápagos Penguins, Flightless Cormorants, and Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies are often seen feeding all at

once in these waters during cold season (May-December). Whale watching is also common while navigating. This afternoon land on Espinosa Point on Fernandina Island. From here, it's possible to admire a wide view of Isabela Island across the Bolívar Channel, and the largest, most primitive-looking subspecies of marine iguanas mingle with sea lions and Sally Lightfoot crabs. Encounter Flightless Cormorants at their nesting sites, Galápagos Penguins, and the "king" of predators on the islands, the Galápagos Hawk. Pahoehoe and a'a lava formations cover the majority of the terrain, making vegetation scarce inland, with the exception of a few lava cacti. *Overnight aboard M/V Coral I or II. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - GALÁPAGOS

Begin the day with a wet landing on Urbina Bay (Isabela Island), a volcanic "black" beach. (Note the landing may be difficult due to the tide.) Depending on the season, find giant tortoises, land iguanas, and the unusual Flightless Cormorant. After a short walk inland, enjoy time to snorkel, and yet another chance to swim with sea turtles, sea lions, and countless tropical fish. Urbina Bay features a wide variety of plant life that changes depending on the season. Observe the beautiful colors of plants that attract different insects, birds, and reptiles.

Explore the uplifted coral reef that resulted from volcanic activity in 1954, with a spectacular view of Alcedo Volcano. This afternoon navigate from Urbina to Tagus Cove on Isabela Island, watching for whales along the way (May-December), and learn about the eruption of the five volcanoes that formed Isabela, the Galápagos' largest island. Hike to Darwin's saltwater crater lake and enjoy excellent views of lava fields and volcanic formations. This is a great site to see land birds such as the Galápagos Hawk, ground and tree finches, Large-billed Flycatchers, and Yellow Warblers. The name Tagus Cove comes from the British ship Tagus, which anchored here in 1814 searching for tortoises as a food supply.

Notice the graffiti, believed to have been left by 19th century pirates and a curious reminder of an intriguing past. Later, view a variety of seabirds during a dinghy ride along the shoreline, such as Blue-footed Boobies, Brown Noddies, terns, Flightless Cormorants, and depending on the season, a large number of Galápagos Penguins. At just 14 inches tall, they are among the smallest in the world and the only penguin species in the world whose range extends into the Northern Hemisphere along the equator. Finally, have the option to go deep-water snorkeling. *Overnight aboard M/V Coral I or II. (BLD)*

DAY 9 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning land at Egas Port/James Bay on Santiago Island. This is a historically important site. In 1683 the British buccaneer William Ambrose Cowley named the location James Bay, and it became an anchor base to collect water, tortoises, and salt from the crater salt-lake. On the black volcanic sandy beach, the remains of salt mines can still be seen. Charles Darwin also visited this place, in 1835. The first part of the trail is composed of volcanic ash (eroded tuff), and the other half is made up of volcanic basaltic rock on the shoreline, creating the best tidal pool area in the Galápagos. Here, populations of fur seals and Sally

Lightfoot crabs thrive. The unique layered terrain of Santiago's shores is truly striking and is home to a variety of resident and migrant birds, including the Galápagos Hawk and Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. Snorkeling is a highlight; watch for lobsters, starfish, octopuses, squids, and marine iguanas on algae beds. Santiago is one of the few places where Galápagos fur seals (actually a kind of sea lion) can easily be found. This afternoon land on Sullivan Bay (Santiago Island). This site is of important geologic interest. It features extensive, relatively young pahoehoe lava flows formed during the last quarter of the 19th century. In the middle of the lava flows, older reddish-yellow tuff cones appear. Mollugo plants with their yellow-to-orange whorled leaves usually grow out of the fissures. Walking on the solidified lava gives the impression of being on another planet. Tree molds indicate that large plants grew in small crevices, until the lava flows of past eruptions burned down the flora of the island. *Overnight aboard M/V Coral I or II. (BLD)*

DAY 10 - QUITO

Today journey to the Santa Cruz highlands to visit the private farm Primicias (El Chato) and see giant tortoises in their natural habitat. The road to the reserve is a great place to view the contrasts in the island's ecosystems. The road goes from the coast through the agricultural zone and straight up to the dense humid forests, and is one of the best places to observe land birds. Tree and ground finches, Vermilion Flycatchers, Paint-billed Crakes, and Cattle Egrets inhabit the area. Often, tortoises are also seen on the way, wandering through pastures in the paddocks. This afternoon, transfer to the airport for your return flight to Quito. Upon arrival in Quito you will be met by our representative and transfer to the hotel for overnight. *Overnight at Sheraton Quito Hotel or similar. (B)*

DAY 11 - DEPARTURE

This morning you will be met in the reception of your hotel and transferred to the international airport for your flight back to the US. (B)

Maximum weight limit on all Galapagos flights are 44 pounds per person.

PROGRAM PRICING

Standard cabin: \$5,135 per person

Standard Plus cabin: \$6,047 per person

Jr. Suites also available

Prices are based on double occupancy. Price includes hotel accommodations, hotel taxes, transfers and tours with meals as mentioned, cruise with meals and tours mentioned, internal flights (Quito/Baltra/Quito), Galápagos National Park fees and INGALA Tax, and fuel surcharge.

Price does not include international airfare, airport taxes, gratuities, meals not indicated, alcoholic beverages, wet suit rental, optional activities, and items of a personal nature.

Valid for travel in 2017.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$300 per person deposit is due upon booking. Final payments are due no later than 61 days prior to departure. Cancellations received 151 days or more prior to departure are refundable less a \$100 per person processing fee. Cancellations received more than 61 days before departure may be partially refundable less a \$100 fee. Cancellations received 60 days or less prior to departure are non-refundable. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.



SALLY LIGHTFOOT CRABS BY DAIN VAN SCHOYCK



LAVA CACTUS BY HARVEY BARRISON

