



STUDENTS AT PUERTO EGAS, SANTIAGO ISLAND BY RANDY MOORE

GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

Exploring Darwin's "Living Laboratory"

10 DAYS | Choose your dates

About this trip

Explore Charles Darwin's "Living Laboratory of Evolution" on this informative small-group cruise aboard M/Y Bonita. The dramatic lava-formed landscapes of the geologically younger western islands are the perfect backdrop for witnessing terrestrial and marine creatures, like Darwin's finches and Flightless Cormorants, that have developed special adaptations to their surroundings. As you make your way from one island to the next, learn about the threats to these fragile ecosystems and the work being done to protect them. You'll come away with a deeper understanding and appreciation for this extraordinary place and its people.

Educational Connections



Interdisciplinary
Studies



Biology



Earth
Science



Adventure
Learning

What's included?

- Internal flights
- Galápagos National Park fee
- Bilingual local guides
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation with driver
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting

Your students will...

- Hike through three different habitats at Dragon Hill, named for the abundant resident land iguanas, and enjoy scenic views of the surrounding islands.
- Visit Los Humedales, where the sheltered sandy beaches, rocky shores, and mangroves provide a nursery for young marine animals.
- Take a panga boat ride along Isabela Island's rocky shores to Elizabeth Bay, a notable Galápagos Penguin breeding site.
- Walk the trails at the base of Alcedo Volcano, a great place to observe land iguanas, hawks, and tortoises.
- Learn about the history of human habitation on the islands, from 19th century pirates to modern-day conservationists.

Please note: This itinerary is subject to change without prior notice due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. weather) or at the discretion of the captain, guide, or the Galápagos National Park.



Itinerary

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - GUAYAQUIL

Upon arrival at the José Joaquín De Olmedo International Airport, transfer to the hotel for overnight. Most flights arrive late evening. *Overnight at Unipark Hotel.*

DAY 2 - GUAYAQUIL

This morning, have a leisurely breakfast and then explore the area during a walk to Parque Seminario (known as the “Iguana Park”) and the Malecón waterfront. Have lunch along the Malecón before continuing to Santa Ana Hill for a bird’s-eye view of the city. Walk back to the hotel. Enjoy time to relax before dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Unipark Hotel. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - GALÁPAGOS

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for a mid-morning flight to Baltra Island. Upon arrival, board the Bonita yacht. (Please note cruises start on Sunday.) After getting settled and having lunch aboard the boat, your first visit is to Dragon Hill on the northwestern coast of Santa Cruz Island. This site consists of a mile-long trail running through three different environments. In 1975, it was one of the only places on Santa Cruz Island where healthy land iguanas (*Conolophus subcristatus*) could be found. That same year, the Galápagos National Park and the Charles Darwin Foundation initiated

a program to conserve land iguanas. Look for flamingos in the lagoons; at certain times of the year, the shrimp they feed on are more abundant and the flamingo population increases. Return to the ship for dinner. *Overnight aboard M/Y Bonita. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - GALÁPAGOS

This morning visit Espumilla Beach and Bucanero Cove on Santiago Island. The main attractions include palo santo wood, the beach, and the stunning landscape; the beach is a very important site for nesting sea turtles. At one time, invasive pigs were the main predator of tortoise eggs; the pigs were later eradicated with the creation of the Isabela Project. Have lunch back on the boat, and then visit



Egas Port, known for its beautiful black sand beach. Further south is the Pan de Azúcar Volcano, whose volcanic deposits have contributed to the beach's formation. The crater of this volcano contains a saltwater lake that dries up during hot weather. Between 1928 and 1930, explorations to develop a salt mine were carried out, but it was decided that a mine was not feasible. The workers' use of endemic woods also damaged the environment, and the development was scrapped. *Overnight aboard M/Y Bonita. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - GALÁPAGOS

Today explore Vicente Roca Point on Isabela Island. This site is a large bay composed of two separate coves, with spectacular sea life. Keep an eye out for seahorses, sea turtles, and the strange-yet-fascinating ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*). This afternoon, visit Fernandina Island's Espinoza Point. Fernandina is the third largest island in the archipelago and is famous for its large colonies of marine iguanas, which nest from January to June. It's also home to the endemic Flightless Cormorant, the Galápagos Penguin, and Galápagos snakes, and it's the only island that doesn't have any mammals. From Espinoza Point, admire the beauty of Fernandina Island and its volcano, which last erupted in 2005. *Overnight aboard M/Y Bonita. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - GALÁPAGOS

Continue exploring Isabela Island today. Begin at Urbina Bay, located at the base of Alcedo Volcano between Elizabeth Bay and Tagus Cove. Hike along the two-mile trail, a great place to observe land iguanas, hawks, and tortoises. It's also possible to see red and blue lobsters here. This afternoon, visit Tagus Cove, to the west of Darwin Volcano. While walking, note the rocks marked by inscriptions and graffiti, some dating back to 19th century pirates. From here, you can see Darwin Lake, a saltwater lake approximately 27 feet deep. The lake contains no fish, but it's very common to see a variety of bird species. *Overnight aboard M/Y Bonita. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - GALÁPAGOS

Today disembark at Moreno Point near Elizabeth Bay on the west coast of Isabela Island. A plethora of birds can be seen on a dinghy ride along the rocky shores or during a hike along a path that leads through lava rocks to tide pools and mangroves. In the tide pools, green sea turtles or white-tipped reef sharks can be seen. After lunch, take a panga boat ride around Elizabeth Bay, one of the island's breeding sites for penguins. Located on the west coast of Isabela, Elizabeth Point is a marine visitor site. Also visit a red mangrove cove, where Brown Pelicans, Flightless Cormorants, spotted eagle rays, golden rays, and sea lions are often seen. *Overnight aboard M/Y Bonita. (BLD)*



GALÁPAGOS PENGUIN BY JILL RICHMOND

DAY 8 - GALÁPAGOS

Continue exploring the riches of Isabela with a visit to Las Tintoreras. Located in the bay of Puerto Villamil, these small islets are surrounded by calm, turquoise waters. An easy trail takes you through great landscapes with interesting fauna; look for large numbers of marine iguanas basking in the sun, lava lizards, herons, gulls, and sea lions. In the coves, it's easy to find sea turtles, rays, and even penguins. Among the many inlets and channels on the coast, white-tipped reef sharks ("tintoreras" in Spanish) are sometimes seen. Following the excursion, return to the boat and sail to your next destination. This afternoon, visit Los Humedales, one of Isabela's hidden gems. "Humedales" translates to wetlands, and this area is characterized by sandy beaches, rocky shores, and mangroves, which have an extremely important role in the Galápagos as they provide a nursery for young marine animals and a nesting site for birds. Many birds can be seen along the trails, such as the American Flamingo, Whimbrel, Osprey, Wilson's Phalarope, Short-billed Dowitcher, Common Tern, Blue-winged Teal, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, and Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers. You can also observe young giant tortoises from the Isabela

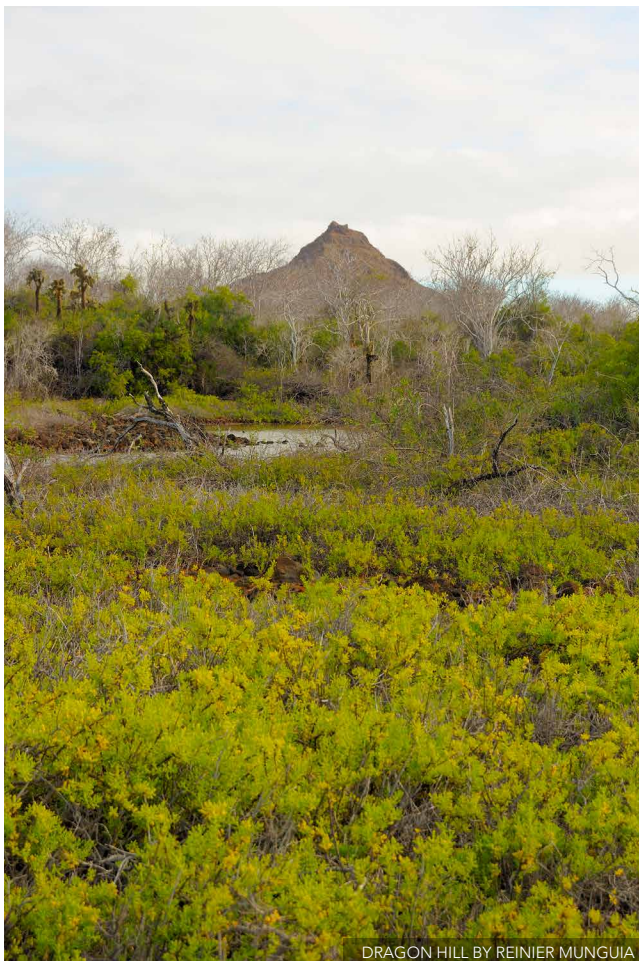
Breeding Center. *Overnight aboard M/Y Bonita.*
(BLD)

DAY 9 - GUAYAQUIL

After breakfast, return to Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island and visit the Charles Darwin Research Station. Take a private bus to the entrance of the breeding center, where you will see tortoises and land iguanas in captivity. This center is the main breeding site on the islands. Animals that were in danger of extinction on the various islands are maintained in captivity. Thanks to the dedicated work of several institutions, some species are being saved. Prior to his death in 2012, this was also the home of Lonesome George, the famous last survivor of the giant tortoise species found on Pinta Island. Transfer to the airport for your flight back to Guayaquil. There will be time to rest and have dinner at the hotel before departing on your international flight home. (Most flights depart late at night or very early morning.) *Overnight at Unipark Hotel.* (BLD)

DAY 10 - DEPART

Arrive home following your overnight flight.



DRAGON HILL BY REINIER MUNGUIA

Land pricing

\$3,995 (15 participants + 1 leader)

\$4,385 (14 participants + 2 leaders)

\$4,750 (10 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, Galápagos National Park fee, internal flights (Guayaquil-Baltra-Guayaquil), private in-country transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

Travel protection

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

The fine print

A \$350 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 150 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Non-refundable final payment is due at 95 days prior to departure.

More from Holbrook

Holbrook was founded on the principle that travel fosters a greater understanding of our world's cultural and natural treasures and that these experiences allow individuals to become agents for global change. We hope that your experiences in the Galápagos Islands will remain with you forever and will challenge you to make a difference in the world we share!

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