

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS

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Do something extraordinary.....

Multi-sports adventure • Galapagos 7 Days • 6 Nights • Various Dates • £1,875

Discover the southern Islands of the Galapagos Archipelago on an active adventure that will deliver the most extraordinary in this world-class naturalist haven. The Galapagos multi-activity adventure is a land tour that combines daily active excursions with first class hotels. As you kayak, mountain bike, trek or snorkel you will experience incredible close encounters with sea lions, iguanas, giant tortoises, boobies, rays, a myriad of tropical fish and even sharks. This is a socially and environmentally responsible tour that provides many benefits to local island communities. Learn and enjoy from top adventure and naturalist guides that will immerse you in the realm of natural history and evolution.

Itinerary

DAY 1: TRANSFER AND HIKE IN FRIGATE HILL AND SNORKEL IN DARWIN BAY

We board a morning flight from Quito to San Cristobal Island. Once we arrive we have a welcome lunch and briefing before the adventure begins. We will hike out of town and visit the San Cristóbal Interpretation Center, for a general understanding about island formation, volcanoes, evolution and natural history. We continue on to explore a unique dry forest and will be able to identify cacti, acacia, palo santo, galapagos cotton and more as we hike towards Frigate Hill along trails of lava rock featuring splendid views of the coastline and Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. This will be a good time to enjoy our first encounters with local wildlife, since the hill is often visited by such Galapagos wildlife such as the magnificent and great frigate birds, blue footed boobies, brown pelicans, gulls, herons and lots of land birds including Darwin finches, warblers and mockingbirds. We return to Carola Beach with splendid views of the coastline for swimming and a perfect sunset. The rest of the evening is free to explore town & choose where to dine. (L)

DAY 2: SEA KAYAK AND SNORKEL IN ISLA LOBOS AND LEON DORMIDO-SAN CRISTOBAL

We slip into our ocean kayaks and spend the morning paddling along the coast, going north exploring bays and coves full of local wildlife - including Darwin Bay, the site of the first landing of the HMS Beagle. The route is home to colonies of sea lions, marine turtles, blue-footed boobies, and frigate birds. Once we reach Playa Ochoa, we continue on to nearby Isla Lobos on the lookout for marine iguanas and sea lions. This is a fantastic snorkeling site where we are nearly guaranteed to enjoy one of the best sea lion encounters in the entire archipelago. We continue on to Leon Dormido, the jagged remains of an old tuff cone whose flanks are home to thousands of sea birds. Leon Dormido is an exceptional snorkeling and diving site frequented by Galapagos sharks, eagle and golden rays as well as dozens of species of tropical fish, clams, starfish, and marine invertebrates. With a little luck, we may also swim with hammerhead and white-tipped sharks! In the afternoon we return to our hotel for our last evening in San Cristobal Island. (B L)

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DAY 3: MOUNTAIN BIKE AND EXPLORE TINTORERAS – ISABELA

In the morning we board a small plane for an inter-island flight from San Cristobal to Isabela island. Isabela is the largest Island in the archipelago, formed by 6 shield volcanoes - Alcedo, Cerro Azul, Darwin, Ecuador, Sierra Negra and Wolf. All of these volcanoes except one remain active, making this island one of the most volcanically active places on earth. When we arrive we set up our mountain bikes to explore the beautiful coastline for its scenery and wildlife treasures. We begin with a visit to El Muro de las Lágrimas which means Wall of Tears, a historic site that dates back between 1946 and 1959 when Isabela Island was used as a penal colony. The wall was built with lava blocks and had no other purpose than that of keeping prisoners busy from the madness of isolation. We continue riding along the coast as we explore expansive white sand beaches, mangroves and brackish lagoons. This area is filled with birdlife such as American oyster catchers, herons, flamingos, finches and many shore birds, as well as sea lions and marine iguanas. In the afternoon we take our ocean kayaks and paddle out to Tintoreras, a set of small Islets within Isabela bay. The Islets are filled with wildlife and are home to the Galapagos Penguin, the only penguin that lives in equatorial region. We will also see sharks, marine turtles, sea lions and much more wildlife as we explore its many small coves and beaches. (B L D)

DAY 4: VOLCANO DISCOVERY HIKE IN THE ISABELA HIGHLANDS

From Puerto Villamil, we drive to the Isabela highlands up to where the road ends. Here we prepare our day packs and walk into a world of recent geological history. We walk on dirt trails until we arrive to the rim of the Sierra Negra volcano. Sierra Negra is an active volcano which last erupted in October 2005. We explore along the rim of the huge 6x5 mile-wide (9x8 kilometer) lava-filled crater. We may also get views to the other Isabela volcanoes and the Perry Isthmus and beyond. Depending on conditions we may continue our hike all the way to Volcano Chico, an incredible area that offers puffing fumaroles and extraordinary lava formations, great examples of the dramatic geological events that have forged the Galápagos Islands over millennia. In the afternoon, we return to Puerto Villamil for our last afternoon in its exotic white beaches. (B, L, D)

DAY 5: HIKE WITH THE GIANT TORTOISE AND EXPLORE LOS GEMELOS

In the morning we embark in a fast boat from Isabela to Santa Cruz Islands. Once we arrive, we transfer to El Chato reserve in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island which is the natural habitat of the incredible Galapagos tortoise. We hike in this reserve to learn about these lumbering giants. We also come across highland wildlife such as pintail ducks, egrets, flycatchers, finches, and frigate birds bathing in freshwater lakes. We also walk into and explore some amazing volcanic tunnels that were created by hot flowing lava. As we walk in these underground geological formations we revive tales of buccaneers hiding Inca gold. We continue to Los Gemelos, two volcanic craters near the top of the Island. We walk around these deep craters through a beautiful Scalesia forest covered with epiphytes and ferns. In this habitat we may see the short-eared owl, one of the two owls that live in the Islands. We return to town and the afternoon. This evening is free to explore the night life of Santa Cruz. (B L)

DAY 6: SEA KAYAK IN SANTA CRUZ & HIKE TO TORTUGA BAY

In the morning we take to our sea kayaks and paddle around Divine Bay and Punta Estrada, through calm turquoise waters that wind through high-walled lava channels. Within the channels, white-tipped sharks and rays tour beneath the clear water, while colonies of blue-footed boobies, tropic birds, herons, crabs and marine iguanas perch along the jagged cliffs. In the afternoon, we hike to Tortuga Bay, a beautiful white sand beach area, nesting site to thousands of marine turtles. This trail is 3½ miles (6 kilometers) long and crosses through a dry forest lava habitat home to hundreds of iguanas. We return to Puerto Ayora to spend the evening at leisure in the Galapagos' most populous town. (B L)

DAY 7: TRANSFER TO BALTRA ISLAND & AIRPORT

In the morning we visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about conservation and management effort in the archipelago. We will also get to meet Lonesome George, the last giant tortoise of his species and the efforts maintained to try to save it from extinction. We finally transfer to Baltra Island for our airport connection back to the continent. (B)

INCLUDED: Accommodation in standard and tourist superior hotels, meals as described, adventure and protective equipment, professional English speaking guide, land and sea transportation.

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NOT INCLUDED: Airfare to/from Galapagos, Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee, beverages in restaurants, dinners in San Cristobal - Santa Cruz Islands, tips.

IMPORTANT: This itinerary is subject to change without notice due to seasonal changes, last minute weather conditions and adjustment of Galapagos National Park policy.

Additional Information

BOAT TRAVEL TIME 2 hrs

SMALL AIRCRAFT FLIGHT TIME 50 min

PADDLE, HIKING, OR ACTIVITY DURATION 2 to 4 hours per activity each day

SEASON All year

ALTITUDE 0 - 3,700 ft (1,124 meters) above sea level

AVERAGE TEMPERATURES December to May: 80°F to 90°F / 25°C to 30°C. June to September: 60°F to 70°F / 15°C to 20°C. October to December: 70°F to 80°F / 15°C to 25°C.

WATER TEMPERATURE The waters of the Galapagos Islands are a unique mixture of warm and cold water, ranging between 65°F and 85°F.

SUGGESTED ITEMS TO PACK Hiking shoes, water sandals, rain jacket, flashlight, water bottle, non-cotton trekking gear, sun block, hat, and mosquito repellent.

Expedition Schedule

We have the following scheduled trips, if these don't fit in with your dates, let us know and we will try and accommodate you :

6th – 12th September 2011

11th – 17th October 2011

18th – 24th October 2011

15th - 21st November 2011

11th – 17th December 2011

17th – 23rd December

29th Dec – 4th Jan 2012

8th – 14th January 2012

24th Feb – 1st March 2012

5th – 11th March 2012

22nd – 28th April 2012

10th – 16th May 2012

6th – 12th June 2012

18th – 24th June 2012

15th – 21st July 2012

4th – 10th August 2012

3rd – 9th September 2012

2nd – 8th October 2012

6th – 12th November 2012

20th – 26th November 2012

25th – 31st December 2012