

Opuntia®

GALAPAGOS ECO JOURNEYS &
HOTELS

OPUNTIA MULTIACTIVE ADVENTURE, 7 DAYS



A premium active program that offers plentiful opportunities for incredibly close encounters with Galapagos wildlife. You will kayak through clear tropical waters with sea turtles, sharks, and sea lions; hike active volcanoes; snorkel waters alive with color and movement; and lay on sandy beaches next to sea lions and marine iguanas. Your journey will be led by a team of certified naturalist and adventure guides and supported by the highest quality adventure gear. Combined with the unequalled hospitality of the Opuntia Lodges, this tour adds up to the finest Galapagos adventure tour!

Effort: Moderate.

Activities: Sea Kayaking, Hiking, Mountain Biking, Snorkeling, and Wildlife Viewing

Opuntia Lodges: Casa Opuntia - San Cristobal; Angermeyer Waterfront Inn - Santa Cruz; Iguana Crossing - Isabela

Trip highlights:

- Sea kayak with sharks, marine iguanas, sea turtles, and sea lions
- Walk amongst giant Galapagos tortoises in the wild
- Snorkel with a variety of species of tropical fish, rays, and sharks (including possibly hammerheads)
- See Lonesome George, the last living giant tortoise of his subspecies
- Hike the rim of the 2nd largest volcano caldera in the world and discover extraordinary lava formations
- Exclusive mountain biking route on Isabela Island
- Relax on sandy beaches amongst sea lions and marine iguanas
- Every step, peddle, and paddle of your journey is expertly led by top-rated adventure and nature guides
- Enjoy the exceptional service, facilities, decor, privacy, and dining of the finest hotels in the Galapagos
- Support local communities through this sustainable program



DAY 1: ARRIVAL / INTERPRETATION CENTER / HIKE AND SNORKEL AT TIJERETAS

After a morning flight to San Cristobal Island, you are received at the airport and given a briefing over lunch at Casa Opuntia Hotel. We begin our journey at the Interpretation Center to learn about the Galapagos' unique wildlife, geology, history, and social dynamics. We then hike to Tijeretas along lava rock trails. Along the way, your naturalist guide will explain all about the Galapagos cotton, palo santo, acacia, and cacti you encounter. You will also spot blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, pelicans, herons, gulls, warblers, mockingbirds, and finches amongst the vegetation and sea cliffs. In addition to unique species, the hike provides marvelous views of the rugged coastline and the tranquil town of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno.



On the way back, we stop for a refreshing snorkel or swim at post-card worthy Carola Beach. Here, you will find sea turtles, sea lions, and marine iguanas. After a gorgeous sunset and dinner, we explore the friendly and laid-back town. We recommend you take a 5-minute walk from the hotel down the boardwalk to view the immense colony of endemic Galapagos sea lions. Overnight at Casa Opuntia Hotel. (L, D)

DAY 2: SEA KAYAK AND SNORKEL THE COAST, ISLA LOBOS AND KICKER ROCK



The morning is spent kayaking coastal bays and coves full of wildlife. You will see blue-footed boobies, frigate birds, sea lions, and sea turtles. Upon reaching Playa Ochoa, we head away from the coast and on to nearby Isla Lobos. Here we will snorkel with marine iguanas, sea lions, and countless reef fish. This site consistently proves to be the best sea lion encounter in the Galapagos.

We then head out towards the open sea to reach Kicker Rock, two breathtaking rock massifs (tuff cones) that jut out from the ocean. Above the waters, thousands of sea birds cling to its walls, and below millions of fish call the rock home. In the channel between the two rock walls, you will find some of the best snorkeling in the islands. You will likely see spotted eagle rays, golden rays, Galapagos sharks, starfish, clams, and fish of every shape, size, and color. If you are lucky, you may even see hammerhead sharks! After a full day exploring the seas, head back to Casa Opuntia for a gourmet dinner and a well-earned rest. (B, L, D)

DAY 3: MOUNTAIN BIKE THE COASTLINE / EXPLORE TINTORERAS ISLETS

After breakfast, we take a short plane ride over to Isabela Island. This is the largest island in the Galapagos and is still being formed by 6 shield volcanoes. Hence, Isabela is one of the most volcanically active spots on the planet.

This morning, we embark on the most scenically-varied bike ride in the Galapagos. Along our ride, we will visit El Muro de las Lagrimas (Wall of Tears). When Isabela was used as a penal colony, prisoners constructed a towering



wall of lava rocks for no other purpose than to keep them distracted from the madness of isolation. We continue along white sand beaches, mangroves, brackish lagoons, and a lava tube. The area is filled with giant tortoises and birdlife including flamingos.



After lunch, we explore Tintorerías, a set of small islets filled with hidden coves and beaches. Here, we will find the endemic Galapagos penguin as well as reef sharks, sea turtles, and sea lions. At the end of the day, retire to the gorgeous Hotel Iguana Crossing. Relax in its infinity pool, hot tub, or neighboring white sand beach. After a gourmet dinner, feel free to take a stroll down the seemingly endless beach or down the sand streets of this idyllic beach town. (B, L, D)

DAY 4: VOLCANO HIKING IN ISABELA'S HIGHLANDS

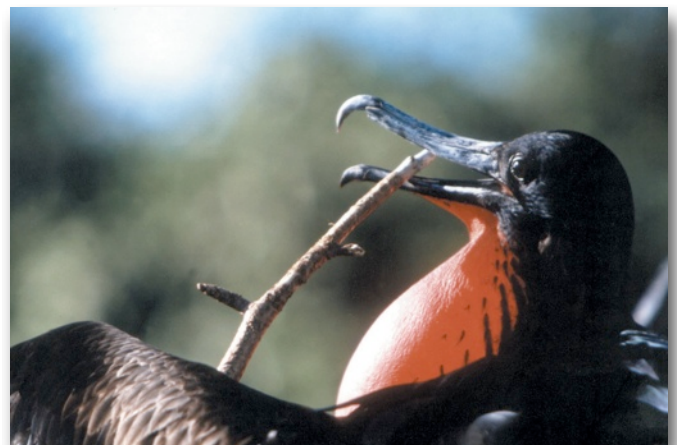
This morning, we drive up to the highlands until the road ends. Here, we do our daypacks and hike into a world of recent geological history. On the hike up, admire the incredible views of the surrounding volcanoes and sea.



However, when you arrive at the rim of Volcan Sierra Negra, your jaw will drop. This is the second largest active caldera on the planet. You will walk along the rim of this enormous 30 square mile crater, and if feeling energetic, continue your hike into the caldera of Volcan Chico. Volcan Chico is an otherworldly landscape with endless hues of oranges, reds, blacks, and yellows. Here, you can explore puffing fumaroles and spectacular lava formations. Spend your last afternoon in this lazy beach town relaxing on its stunning beaches and soaking up the island-life atmosphere. (B, L, D)

DAY 5: TORTOISES, PIRATES, LAVA TUNNELS, AND VOLCANIC SINKHOLES

After breakfast, take a speedboat to Santa Cruz Island. Along the way we may see whales and dolphins. Upon arrival, we head to El Chato in the Santa Cruz highlands to find the giant tortoise in its natural habitat. It is truly an honor to hike amongst these fascinating giants, who can live to be over 175 years old. You will also see pintail ducks, finches, frigate birds, egrets, and hopefully the vermilion flycatcher - a red jewel of a bird.



We will then explore some incredible lava tunnels in which pirates frequented and perhaps hid Inca gold. We then carry on to Los Gemelos, two deep volcanic sinkholes at the top of the island. We will hike through a forest of endemic scalesia trees, where we will be on the lookout for the short-eared owl. The trees are covered with ferns and epiphytes and exude an almost eerie feel.

In the late afternoon, we retire to the Angermeyer Waterfront Inn. Expect fine pampering at this first-class guesthouse privately nestled on the outskirts of town. The beautiful waterfront property offers magnificent views of the bay, coastline, and town. (B, L, D)



DAY 6: KAYAK IN LAVA WALL CHANNELS / HIKE TO TORTUGA BAY



This morning, we take to sea kayaks again to explore a different landscape, Punta Estrada and Divine Bay. We paddle through serene turquoise waters that meander through towering lava channel walls. Below the clear waters, you should be able to see rays and white-tipped reef sharks. You can also paddle right up to the fearless blue-footed boobies, lava gulls, herons, sally light-footed crabs, and marine iguanas perched along the cliffs.

After lunch, we take a 40 minute hike to Tortuga Bay through a unique dry forest. Along the hike, you will find many birds and interesting plants. When you reach the beach, you will hardly believe your eyes, as this is one of the most beautiful beaches in the Galapagos. Take time to

relax on its fine sands or in its turquoise waters. Return to Puerto Ayora to enjoy your last evening on the Galapagos. (B, L, D)

DAY 7: CHARLES DARWIN RESEARCH STATION / RETURN FLIGHT

After breakfast, we visit the Charles Darwin Research Station. Here, we learn about the ongoing conservation efforts on these enchanted islands. The Research Station rears endemic Galapagos plants, land iguanas, and giant Galapagos tortoises for educational, scientific, and conservation purposes. Here, we can compare the diverse evolutionary paths of the various giant tortoise subspecies from different islands. We will also meet Lonesome George, the only remaining member of the Santa Cruz subspecies.

After our visit, we transfer to Baltra Island for our return flight to the mainland. (B)



INCLUDED

Accommodations in the premium Opuntia Lodges; all meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner); adventure and safety equipment; professional bilingual Galapagos naturalist guide; professional English-speaking adventure guide; all sea, land, and inter-island air transportation.

Not included

Flights to and from Galapagos; Entrance fee to Galapagos National Park USD 100 p/p (subject to change); Galapagos transit card USD 10 p/p (subject to change); tips; hotel & restaurant beverages; personal expenses.

NOTE

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

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

BOAT TRAVEL TIME: 2 - 3 hrs

SMALL AIRCRAFT FLIGHT TIME: 50 min

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

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.