

# Opuntia®

GALAPAGOS ECO JOURNEYS &  
HOTELS

## OPUNTIA TWO ISLANDS WILDLIFE NATURALIST TOUR, 5 DAYS



*Live the natural wonders of Galapagos in only five days! This fabulous trip shares the most humbling and memorable wildlife experiences as you trek around active volcanoes in the giant tortoise natural habitat and relax with sea lions on white sand beaches. Our activities also include snorkeling in one of the world's most incredible marine reserves. First-class guides and the comfort and privacy of the Opuntia Hotels make this soft active tour one of our best!*

**Effort:** Easy to Moderate

**Activities:** Wildlife Encounters, Hiking, Snorkeling

**Lodging:** Our Opuntia hotels in the Galapagos Islands are: Iguana Crossing in Isabela Island and Angermeyer Waterfront Inn in Santa Cruz Island.

### **Trip highlights:**

- Snorkel with Galapagos penguins, sharks, rays, and tropical fish.
- Learn about evolution as you meet finches, mockingbirds, boobies, penguins, endemic plants giant tortoises, land iguanas, and marine iguanas.
- Meet Lonesome George, the last living giant tortoise of his subspecies.
- Hike to the world's second largest volcano caldera to see incredible lava formations.
- Trek through an endemic forest of scalesia trees, long-lost relative of daisy flowers!
- Relax on sandy beaches amongst sea lions and marine iguanas .
- Every step of your journey is expertly led by the most experienced naturalist guides.
- Enjoy the exceptional service, eco-friendly facilities, décor, privacy, and gourmet dining at the best waterfront hotels in the Galapagos.



## DAY 1: EXPLORE TINTORERAS ISLETS ON ISABELA ISLAND

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Isabela Island, the largest in the Galapagos archipelago, was formed by six volcanoes: Alcedo, Cerro Azul, Darwin, Ecuador, Sierra Negra and Wolf. Five of these remain active, making this island one of the most volcanically active places on earth. This is a spectacular island and one of the youngest in the Galapagos. Isabela is known for its incredibly paradisiacal white sand beaches.

After a welcome lunch, we head to “Las Tintoreras”, a set of small islets within Isabela bay. The islets are home to the Galapagos penguin - the only one of his species found in the northern hemisphere. As we explore the many small idyllic beaches and coves, you should spot sharks, sea lions, sea turtles and rays!. At the end of the day, unwind in Puerto Villamil, the island’s lazy beach town known for its flamingos and sand

streets and join us for a fusion dinner of exotic and international flavors. Overnight at our Isabela boutique hotel, Iguana Crossing. (L, D)

## DAY 2: HIKE SIERRA NEGRA VOLCANO ON ISABELA ISLAND

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We prepare our daypacks and take a walk into a breathtaking world of recent geological and natural history. We hike to the highlands of Isabela Island until we arrive at the rim of Sierra Negra volcano, an active caldera that last erupted in October 2005. We tread along the rim of this colossal 6x5 mile-wide (9x8 km) lava-filled crater. We continue our daring hike into the caldera of Volcan Chico. Here we explore incredible lava formations and puffing fumaroles! Endless hues of reds, blacks, oranges and yellows make this an otherworldly landscape. Late afternoon, we retire to our wonderful Isabela Island hotel, Iguana Crossing, to relax in its infinity pool, hot tub, or neighboring white sand beach. After a fusion gourmet dinner we highly recommend a stroll down the beach or along the sand streets of this idyllic lazy town. Overnight at Iguana Crossing. (B, L, D)



## DAY 3: EXPLORE ISABELA'S COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

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We begin our hike on miles of exotic white sand beach and continue onto trails that range from mangroves, lava tunnels, a shady and wonderful smelling poison apple forest and finish with the territory of hundreds of Galapagos tortoises. Along the way, we may spot Isabela mangrove finches, American oystercatchers, herons, and flamingos, as well as numerous marine iguanas!

We arrive to a stunning lookout point, before we continue on to the “Wall of Tears” - a historic site that dates back to the time when Isabela was used as a penal colony. The prisoners built the wall with lava blocks and had no other purpose than to keep them distracted



from the madness of isolation. The afternoon finds us walking through a mangrove forest to Concha y Perla bay, where clear and refreshing waters are perfect for snorkeling. Gourmet dinner and overnight stay at Iguana Crossing. (B, L, D)

## DAY 4: TORTOISES, LAVA TUNNELS, PIRATES, AND ENDEMIC FORESTS IN SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

We travel by speedboat from Isabela to Santa Cruz Island. On our way we must lookout for dolphins and whales! We arrive and check into our exclusive and eco-friendly hotel, Angermeyer Waterfront Inn. We immediately head to “El Chato” reserve in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island, the natural habitat of the incredible Galapagos Tortoise. We explore the reserve and discover these lumbering gentle giants. We come across highland wildlife such as pintail ducks, egrets, flycatchers, finches, and frigate birds bathing in freshwater lakes. We also explore some amazing volcanic tunnels created by hot flowing lava. As we walk through 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 find the short-eared owl, one of the two owls that live on the islands. Enjoy a farewell candlelight dinner this evening as you wrap up your adventure in one of the most magical places on earth. Overnight at our Santa Cruz hotel, Angermeyer Waterfront Inn. (B, L, D)



## DAY 5: VISIT CHARLES DARWIN RESEARCH STATION AND RETURN FLIGHT



Following our passion for nature and sustainable environments, we visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, where we learn about conservation and its ongoing management efforts in the Galapagos Islands. We also meet Lonesome George, the last giant tortoise of the Pinta subspecies. We transfer by vehicle to Baltra Island for our airport connection back to the continent. (B)



**INCLUDED**

Our tour offers accommodations in the premium Opuntia hotels; all meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner); professional bilingual Galapagos naturalist guide; all sea, land, and inter-island air transportation.

**NOT INCLUDED**

Our tour does NOT include 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 Galapagos tour 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 to 3 hours

**SMALL AIRCRAFT FLIGHT TIME:** 30 minutes

**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:** Walking shoes, water sandals, rain jacket, flashlight, water bottle, non-cotton trekking gear, sun block, hat, and mosquito repellent.

