

WILD GALÁPAGOS ESCAPE

ABOARD *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ISLANDER II*

12 DAYS | YEAR-ROUND SATURDAY DEPARTURES | BALTRA-SANTA CRUZ

Explore more of Darwin's islands on back-to-back voyages aboard the newest member of the fleet, *National Geographic Islander II*. With just 26 staterooms and suites, this elegant ship feels like a private yacht. Witness the iconic wildlife that sparked the theory of evolution; snorkel pristine, well-protected waters teeming with sea lions and sea turtles; and hike black-sand beaches and lush highlands. Our Galápagos expeditions are honed over more than 50 years experience of bringing guests to the Enchanted Isles, and each voyage is crafted to offer you a diverse perspective of the archipelago with multiple adventures daily on land and under water. Stay aboard for back-to-back voyages to see all the islands on this 12-day program—and save 10%. No single visitor site can be visited twice over a two-week period, so you will see something new every day.



DAY 1: Guayaquil or Quito, Ecuador

Welcome to Ecuador! Upon arrival in Guayaquil, transfer to the 44-room Hotel del Parque, a tranquil haven surrounded by lush gardens set in a lovingly restored 19th-century building along the river.*

DAY 2: Guayaquil or Quito / Baltra, Galápagos / Embark / Daphne Major

Morning: This morning, fly to Galápagos. You are welcomed by our naturalist staff at the Baltra Airport and will embark the *National Geographic Islander II* by Zodiac. Part of the magic of any Galápagos voyage is the varied nature of the terrain, wildlife, and experiences that each island offers, with each departure providing a well-considered balance. Welcome aboard!

Afternoon: Join fellow guests on deck as we circumnavigate Daphne Major, a small volcanic island off the coast of Santa Cruz Island where Peter and Rosemary Grant have conducted ground-breaking research into natural selection among Darwin's finches for decades. (B, L, D)

DAY 3: Bartolomé / Cerro Dragon, Santa Cruz

Morning: Climb the steps to the 360-foot summit of Bartolomé, a volcanic wonderland of spatter and scoria cones and tuff formations. Enjoy a stunning view of wind- and water-sculpted Pinnacle Rock and the surrounding vista of land and sea. Admire stark lava flows across the way on Santiago, the most recent eruption dating from 1897. Comb the golden-sand beach or immerse yourself among schools of multicolored reef fish. This is a spot where lucky snorkelers might encounter Galápagos penguins, one of the world's rarest penguins—incongruous in this equatorial setting.

Afternoon: Land on the beach for a hike through giant cactus and incense tree forests to reach Dragon Hill, habitat of the colorful Santa Cruz land iguanas, recently brought back from the brink of extinction. (B, L, D)

*You may also fly into the Ecuadorian capital of Quito instead of Guayaquil (all Galápagos flights originate in Quito). Ask your expedition specialist about this alternative flight path.

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DAY 4: Post Office Bay, Champion Islet & Punta Comorant, Floreana

Morning: Join the 19th-century tradition of leaving and taking letters from the barrel for hand delivery at Post Office Bay. Paddleboard and kayak along the coast at Baroness Lookout, named after the early settler and eccentric Eloise Bosquet de Wagner. Snorkel among sea lions and abundant fish, or cruise along the shore by Zodiac. Keep an eye out for the endangered Floreana mockingbird, now found only on these offshore islets.

Afternoon: See swallow-tailed gulls, Española mockingbirds, Nazca boobies and, seasonally, the world's only population of waved albatross at Punta Suarez, where we walk among vividly colored marine iguanas and breeding colonies of sea lions. Optional trails lead inland across iron-laden pillow basalt to the blowhole and seabird cliffs. (B, L, D)

DAY 5: Gardner Bay & Punta Suarez, Española

Morning: Explore the expanse of bright white sand at quiet Gardner Bay, where sea lions rest and play. Swim from the beach, snorkel along the offshore islets, kayak, or paddleboard.

Afternoon: See swallow-tailed gulls, Española mockingbirds, Nazca boobies and, seasonally, the world's only population of waved albatross at Punta Suarez, where we walk among vividly colored marine iguanas and breeding colonies of sea lions. (B, L, D)

DAY 6: Punta Pitt & Cerro Brujo, San Cristóbal / León Dormido (Kicker Rock)

Morning: Land on a small, sparkling beach at Punta Pitt for a hike up to a plateau where masked-, blue- and red-footed boobies all nest, and look for endemic Cristóbal mockingbirds, lava lizards, and other wildlife

Afternoon: Relax at the celebrated expanse of powdery white sand at Cerro Brujo, one of the most beautiful beaches in Galápagos. Join fellow guests on deck for a farewell cocktail. (B, L, D)

DAY 7: Canal Itabaca, Santa Cruz / Baltra / Playa Las Bachas, Santa Cruz

Morning: After breakfast this morning, join a private guided tour with other guests who are staying aboard for the next voyage. This is your opportunity to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and town of Puerto Ayora.

Afternoon: Rejoin the ship. Land on a beautiful beach of fine white sand to explore the lagoon on swimming and snorkeling excursions. Meet guests who have just arrived this evening at the welcome cocktail reception. (B, L, D)



DAY 8: South Plazas / Santa Fé Island

Morning: Sea lions greet us at South Plaza, an uplifted block carpeted in salt-loving succulents and teeming with wildlife, including a noisy group of bachelor sea lions and a population of land iguanas. Thread your way across the island through an impressive forest of cactus trees, and thrill at aerial displays of the nocturnal, cliff-nesting swallowtail gulls and red-tailed tropicbirds. This is a beautiful place to sit and take in the view.

Afternoon: Snorkel, paddleboard, and kayak in the secluded cove at Barrington Bay. On shore, a trail leads us through the largest cactus trees in Galápagos. The Santa Fe land iguana is found only on this island, where Galápagos hawks are also thriving once again. (B, L, D)

DAY 9: Sombrero Chino / Sullivan Bay, Santiago

Morning: Visit Sombrero Chino, one of a group of distinctively shaped small islets off Santiago. Keep a keen eye out for the Galápagos penguin, sometimes spotted along the coast.

Afternoon: Hike over the smooth pahoe-hoe lava and admire spatter cones, little miniature hornitos, and the wild riot of black lava at Sullivan Bay, the result an eruption recorded by passing buccaneers in 1897. (B, L, D)

DAY 10: Darwin Bay & Prince Philip's Steps, Genovesa

Morning: Sail north across the Equator to the remote northern realm of the Galápagos, bathed in warmer tropical waters and home to the red-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, swallow-tailed gulls, great frigates birds, and other nesting seabirds. Red-footed boobies and frigate birds of two species often perch in the low-lying shrubs behind the coral-strewn beach at Darwin Bay.

Afternoon: Kayak, paddleboard, snorkel, and cruise along the caldera walls, where we may see shy Galápagos fur seals. At Prince Phillip's Steps, follow a trail inland, where more seabirds nest—and where we might see short-eared owls hunt for storm petrels, which nest in astounding numbers in the field of broken lava. (B, L, D)



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DAY 11: Canal Itabaca, Santa Cruz, Galápagos / Disembark / Guayaquil or Quito, Ecuador
Morning: Disembark after breakfast. Journey by coach to the lush, green highlands, where we see giant Galápagos tortoises roaming wild at a local ranch.

Afternoon: Continue to Baltra and return by air to Guayaquil, where we transfer to the Hotel del Parque—or continue to Quito for an optional three-night extension. Flights arrive in Guayaquil by 5:00 p.m. and Quito by 7:00 p.m. Ask your expedition specialist for details. Transfer back to the airport the next day or take advantage of overnight flights. (B)

DAY 12: Guayaquil or Quito

Transfer to the airport after breakfast or relax at the hotel. Checkout is at 11:00 a.m. (B)

Extension

We offer a post-voyage extension to Quito and Otavalo.

Itinerary

In the Galápagos, no single site can be visited by the same ship more than once over a two-week period. The idea was developed in 2011, and Lindblad was the first voluntary adopter of this innovative new proposal by the Galápagos National Park, which aims to spread people out to allow for a more intimate experience. We have created an optimal balance during each week in terms of terrain and wildlife. If you wish to see all the sites, you could join for two weeks, but be assured there is no better week to experience Galápagos—just nuances for one week to the other. Itineraries are determined by the national park and subject to change.

Visit expeditions.com/expeditions/wild-galapagos-escape for more information about the voyage.

Visit expeditions.com/islanderii for more information about the ship.

For more information, call us at 1.800.397.3348 or contact your Travel Advisor.

