

WILD GALÁPAGOS ESCAPE ABOARD *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ISLANDER II*

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

Explore more of Darwin's islands on this back-to-back voyage 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 frequented by 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: Baltra / Playa Las Bachas, Santa Cruz

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: Land on a beautiful beach of fine white sand, where naturalists introduce us to the islands on a walk to shallow lagoon frequented by shorebirds. Take your first dip in the Pacific and try out the snorkeling equipment you'll use for the remainder of the expedition. (B, L, D)

DAY 3: 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)

*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: 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 pahoehoe 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 5: 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 red-footed boobies, Nazca boobies, swallow-tailed gulls, great frigates birds, and other nesting seabirds. Spot some of these species perched 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)

DAY 6: Canal Itabaca, Santa Cruz / Caleta Tortuga Negra, Santa Cruz

Morning: After breakfast this morning, join a private guided tour with other guests who are staying aboard for the next voyage.

Afternoon: Rejoin the ship and, later this afternoon, join a Zodiac cruise of Calata Tortuga Negra, a spectacular mangrove-lined cove teeming with marine life on Santa Cruz Island. Look for green turtles, sharks, and schools of golden and eagle rays. Meet guests who have just arrived this evening at the welcome cocktail. (B, L, D)



DAY 7: Puerto Ayora & Highlands, Santa Cruz

Morning: Call at Puerto Ayora, headquarters of both the Galápagos National Park and Charles Darwin Research Station. Tour the giant tortoise breeding corrals, a pioneering effort, and visit the research station before continuing to town.

Afternoon: Head to the lush, green highlands to see giant tortoises roaming in the wild, and have lunch at a local ranch dedicated to conservation. (B, L, D)

DAY 8: North Seymour / Rábida

Morning: On this wildlife-rich island, follow coastal trails past groups of Galápagos sea lions and marine iguanas, before heading inland through a silvery forest of palo santo to colonies of magnificent and great frigatebirds, blue-footed boobies, and other seabirds. See land iguanas clambering over rocks in search of cactus and other flowers. Look for swallow-tailed gulls, noddly terns, red-billed tropic birds, and Galápagos fur seals on the rocky walls of this small island, created by geological uplift rather than lava flows.

Afternoon: Land on a red-sand beach on this volcanically varied island, where we explore inland. We may see flamingos feeding in a brackish lagoon and clownish brown pelicans entertaining us from their nests. Here is your chance to snorkel or explore by kayak or paddleboard. (B, L, D)

DAY 9: Punta Vicente Roca, Isabela / Punta Espinosa, Fernandina

Morning: Awaken in the remote western archipelago, haunt of whalers and pirates of yore. Board Zodiacs for a cruise along the wildly eroded volcanic shores of Isabela, a towering island formed of six great shield volcanoes that make up two-thirds of the land area in Galápagos. Snorkel and Zodiac along the coast, where we might see green turtles, fur seals, and even penguins. Keep an eye out for whales and dolphins—the waters here in the west are rich.

Afternoon: Hike over impressive lava past tide pools where young sea lions play and the strange flightless cormorant nests. One of the most active oceanic volcanoes in the world, Fernandina is the youngest and most pristine island in Galápagos. Later back aboard, join fellow travelers on deck to celebrate crossing the Equator. (B, L, D)

DAY 10: Playa Espumilla & Buccaneer's Cove, Santiago / Puerto Egas, Santiago

Morning: Explore a dense coastal forest at Playa Espumilla, filled with mangroves and home to Galápagos hawks and other land birds. Or stroll along the wide beach early this morning. After breakfast, swim, snorkel, kayak, and paddleboard along the spectacular coast of Buccaneer's Cove, a secluded atelier where pirates once careened their ships. Darwin camped here during his time on the islands.

Afternoon: After lunch, explore tide pools and look for fur seals sheltered in quiet grottos of black basalt at Puerto Egas, where you see evidence of an old salt mine and other human history. Swim and snorkel from the beach, which is frequented by sea lions and marine iguanas. (B, L, D)



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DAY 11: Baltra, Galápagos / Disembark / Guayaquil or Quito, Ecuador

Disembark after breakfast and transfer to Balta for the flight back to the mainland. Transfer to the Hotel del Parque on arrival—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. Some flights depart during the overnight hours. (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.

