



# Galápagos

The land of Darwin aboard the M.Y. Cormorant

**June 17 – June 26, 2022**

Cost per person is \$8,499

Single supplement is \$3,299 per person

*Reserve your space today!*

[conservation@houstonzoo.org](mailto:conservation@houstonzoo.org)

Walk in the footsteps of Charles Darwin on a trip to the Galápagos Islands with Terra Incognita Ecotours. This is home to some of the most interesting and accessible wildlife in the world. You will swim and snorkel with sea lions and sea turtles, come within inches of blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas, magnificent frigatebirds, and the giant tortoises in the wild. Watch the dance of the waved albatross, and experience the diversity of the legendary finches, and so much more.

**This is an ecotour that will make a difference to you and to the places we visit.**

We will donate to the important wildlife saving efforts of Galápagos Conservation.



We will employ local people.



We will use locally owned and operated lodges and outfitters.



We will use local goods and services.

# Itinerary



B = Breakfast

L = Lunch

D = Dinner



**Day 1** - Friday, June 17, 2022

## Home to Quito, Ecuador

*Overnight in Hotel Patio Andaluz, Quito*

Plan to arrive anytime today in Quito, where you will be met and transferred to the charming Hotel Patio Andaluz in the colonial city of Quito, which is located in the highlands of the Ecuadorian Andes. Get to know your fellow explorers as we enjoy our Welcome Dinner this evening.

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**D**

**Day 2** - Saturday, June 18, 2022

## Quito to Isla Santa Cruz, Galápagos

*Overnight on board M.Y. Cormorant*

This morning we drive back to the International Airport for the flight to the Galápagos Islands. After passing through immigration and baggage claim, we will be met by the M.Y. Cormorant staff and transferred to the yacht. You will be shown to your cabin where you will have some time to settle in before lunch and a welcome briefing. In the afternoon, we visit Bachas Beach located on the north shore of Santa Cruz, a great beach for swimming. One of the few remnants of the U.S. World War II presence in the Galápagos, a floating pier, can still be seen here. You may see flamingos, Sally Lightfoot crabs, hermit crabs, black-necked stilts, and whimbrels. Sea turtles also nest on this beach.

In the afternoon, you will visit “Fausto Llerena” Tortoise Breeding Center in Puerto Ayora, where giant tortoises are bred in captivity. After visiting the tortoise breeding center, you board your vessel and receive your welcome briefing.

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**B L D**



**Day 3** - Sunday, June 19, 2022

### **Isabella Island**

*Overnight on board M.Y. Cormorant*

In the morning, we will visit the Tintoreras Islet, located a short distance from Puerto Villamil, this area is home to a great variety of wildlife, including white-tip reef sharks, Galápagos penguins, marine turtles and sea lions. One of its beaches surrounded by mangroves, is one of the few sites where marine iguanas can reproduce successfully.

Then we will next visit the Sierra Negra Volcano, which is the largest basaltic caldera in the Galápagos with a diameter of 6.2 miles (10 km). The site offers impressive views and the opportunity to observe up to seven species of finches and a rich display of vegetation. The north side of the caldera provides evidence of its most recent volcanic activity in 2005.

This afternoon we visit the Wetlands of Isabela Island located just outside of Puerto Villamil. They consist of lagoons, swamps, and mangroves and are home to a variety of unique bird species such as common stilts, whimbrels, white-cheeked pintails, and gallinules. The Wetlands can be visited on foot via a path through the swamps.

We end our busy first day on Isabela Island with a late afternoon visit to Arnaldo Tupiza Breeding Center which is located about one mile (1.5 km) from Puerto Villamil. Here, tortoise populations from South Isabela, Sierra Negra Volcano, Cerro Azul, Cazuela, Cinco Cerros, Roca Union, San Pedro, Tables and Cerro Paloma have been bred in captivity. In total there are 330 juvenile and adult tortoises.

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**B L D**





**Day 4** - Monday, June 20, 2022

### **Isabella Island**

*Overnight on board M.Y. Cormorant*

A second full day to explore Isabella Island we start at Moreno Point located southwest of Elizabeth Bay. Here a dry landing onto what was once flowing lava is possible. The lava has left craters in its wake which formed crystal tide pools. By looking into the pools, you can peer into another world as the marine life drifts by your window. In the brackish pools of this area, you may see pink flamingos, white-cheeked pintails, and common gallinules. If you look carefully into the pools, you may see white-tip reef sharks and some sea turtles.

This afternoon after lunch aboard, we explore Elizabeth Bay which is located on the east coast of Isabela Island. The bay contains many islets, which can be visited by dinghy. Penguins and blue-footed boobies can be spotted on the rocky islets. With an abundance of marine life and clear water, the area is perfect for snorkeling and viewing schools of colorful fish, sea lions, and perhaps even sharks.

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**B L D**

**Day 5** - Tuesday, June 21, 2022

### **Isabella to Fernandina Island**

*Overnight on board M.Y. Cormorant*

In the morning, we cross the Bolivar Channel that divides Isabela and Fernandina Islands, you will land at Espinoza Point, and after walking past a colony of marine iguanas and a group of sea lions, you will reach the island's highlight: the flightless cormorant nesting site. This area also provides a great opportunity to see the Galápagos hawk.

This afternoon we will visit Vicente Roca Point, comprised of two separate coves, Vicente Roca Point is a large bay with spectacular sea life. Keep an eye out for seahorses, sea turtles, and the strange yet fascinating Mola mola (or sun fish) while you snorkel.

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**B L D**



**Day 6** - Wednesday, June 22, 2022

### **Santiago Island**

*Overnight on board M.Y. Cormorant*

We have moved further along in our journey and today we visit Santiago Island, beginning our adventure at Egas Port, also known as James Bay, on Santiago Island is home to the curious Galápagos hawks and quick-footed Galápagos lava lizards. The trail leads to the coastline with gorgeous tide pools and grottos full of fauna. Here the Galápagos furseals bathe in the sun. This is also a great snorkeling site.

This afternoon at Espumilla Beach marine iguanas lounge and the Sally Lightfoot crabs attract the hunting herons performing the dance of predator and prey right before your eyes. Snorkeling is highly recommended as you could come face to face with an octopus, moray eel, shark and a variety of other species of tropical fish.

We end our day today at Buccaneer Cove which is a testament to the fact that Santiago Island was once a refuge for British buccaneers. These pirates would anchor in the protected bay to make repairs and stock up on tortoise meat among other things. The steep cliffs, where hundreds of seabirds perch in front of the dark red sand beach, are a magnificent sight.

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**B L D**

**Day 7** - Thursday, June 23, 2022

### **Bartholomew Island and Santiago Island**

*Overnight on board M.Y. Cormorant*

Today we head to Bartholomew Island where the famous Pinnacle Rock is found. Bartholomew consists of an extinct volcano with a variety of red, orange, black and even green volcanic formations. (made famous in the movie “Master and Commander”). We will take a trail of stairs to the summit of the volcano (about 30 or 40 minutes) where you will enjoy one of the best views of the islands! You will also visit a small, beautiful beach surrounded by the only vegetation found on this barren island. The beach is perfect for snorkeling where you may even see and swim with Galápagos penguins.

You will later visit Sullivan Bay located on the southeast part of Santiago. This place is interesting for its geology because the area is covered by lava flows. This place has elevations in the form of small volcanoes formed by the lava flows.

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**B L D**



**Day 8** - Friday, June 24, 2022

### **Santiago and Santa Cruz Islands**

*Overnight on board M.Y. Cormorant*

In the morning, you will visit the famous Chinese Hat, this small islet is located near the southeast coast of Santiago Island. Its name comes from the distinct shape of the islet's summit. Chinese Islet is a great location to view many geological formations such as lava tunnels and lava flows. Some of the lava flows were formed underwater and subsequently raised above sea level. The presence of coral heads on the lava flow indicates this phenomenon.

After repositioning the boat and lunch aboard, we visit Dragon Hill which is located in northwestern Santa Cruz Island and consists of a 1,600 m long trail that runs through three different environments. The beach is very rocky. At high tide it's a nice place for snorkeling. At this visiting site you can find vegetation of the typical intertidal zone and dry zone.

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**B L D**

**Day 9** - Saturday, June 25, 2022

### **North Seymour Island and Baltra Airport to Quito, Ecuador**

*Farewell Dinner & overnight in Hotel Patio Andaluz, Quito*

We may have saved the best for last! Our morning excursion takes us to North Seymour Island where you may see Galápagos sea lions, blue-footed boobies, and magnificent frigate birds which are abundant on this island. North Seymour was formed by a series of submarine lava flows containing layers of sediment that were uplifted by tectonic activity. The island is characterized by its arid vegetation zone.

After this final visit, you will be transferred to the Baltra airport in time for the flight back to the mainland. We are met on arrival at the Quito airport and transferred back to the charming Hotel Patio Andaluz where our adventure began!

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**B L D**



**Day 10** - Sunday, June 26, 2022

**Santiago and Santa Cruz Islands**

After breakfast you can schedule your flight home at any convenient time today. We include a transfer to the International Airport according to your flight time.

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**B**



**Included:**

- Yacht accommodations in double/twin cabins with private bathroom
- All meals as listed (3 daily meals and 2 snacks)
- Guide services (Spanish / English)
- WiFi on board the boat
- Basic snorkeling gear
- Domestic Air Ticket (Quito – San Cristobal / Baltra - Quito)
- Galápagos entrance fee.

**Not included:**

- International Airfare to Quito
- Vaccinations and/or medications
- Alcoholic drinks
- Phone calls
- Laundry or other items of a personal nature
- Tips, gratuities or personal expenses





## About our boat

### M.Y. Cormorant

The Cormorant Motor Yacht was specifically designed and built to cruise the Galápagos. M.Y. Cormorant offers 8 cabins and ample social areas including a superb sundeck with a large jacuzzi.



**Twin Cabin**



**Double Cabin**



**Dining Room**



**Sundeck**