



Santa Cruz Express

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Visit: Santa Cruz Island - Highlands - Lava Tunnels

Detailed Itinerary

Day 01: DAY 1: TRANSFER IN TO SANTA CRUZ ISLAND - HIGHLANDS - LAVA TUNNELS

Upon arrival to Baltra Airport, a representative will be waiting to welcome you to Galapagos. They will assist you with a short transfer to cross the Itabaca Channel from Baltra Island to Santa Cruz Island. Once on Santa Cruz Island, you will begin your way to the highlands of Santa Cruz. This area, in contrast to the coastal areas, has lush vegetation and forest due to the humidity in the higher elevations. Along the way to the highlands you will stop at the “Los Gemelos”, or twin craters. The Gemelos are in fact not craters, but

magma domes that have collapsed, leaving two deep and wide holes located to the side of the road. After this stop the transfer continues to its destination in the highlands at a local ranch. Here you will enjoy a lunch made from local produce and will have the opportunity to see the emblematic giant tortoises of Galapagos in their natural habitat. This is also a great place to see the ground finch of Santa Cruz which populates these forests, along with the vermilion flycatcher or the yellow warbler. After lunch, the tour will allow you to explore iconic lava tunnels while learning more about the volcanic origin of the islands. After this, you will be transferred to the small town of Puerto Ayora to check into your hotel. You then have the freedom to rest or do some exploring on your own until the next morning's pick up for the navigable tour. Meals: Lunch Activities: Hiking + Birdwatching + Wildlife Observation Accommodation: Selected Hotel Difficulty: Easy Type of Tour: Shared Landing Type: Dry landing Transportation: 1.5 hours in total with transfer to highlands and transfer to hotel afterwards.

Day 02: DAY 2 & DAY 3: NAVIGABLE TOURS

These two days you will be offered navigable tours to some of the island nearby Santa Cruz. These tours are subject to availability. If not available, a similar day tour with open space will be offered. You will be picked up and dropped off at the hotel of your preference from our selected hotels. The available options that will operate are the following: **BARTOLOME ISLAND** Early in the morning you will be transferred to Baltra Island to board a speedboat for the navigation to Bartolome Island + Sullivan Bay near Santiago Island. Upon arrival you will hike up a specially built boardwalk that will provide views of a spectacular landscape of two beautiful bays that join to form a crescent. There is also a great view of the iconic Pinnacle Rock, a massive black lava formation that has eroded over time. Afterwards, snorkeling will be done at a coral beach where sea turtles, white-tipped reef sharks, tropical fish, sea lions and many other marine species can be found. This is also a perfect area to observe Galapagos penguins, the only penguin species found north of the Equator, endemic to the Galapagos. Meals: Breakfast at hotel and lunch on board boat Activities: Snorkeling + Hiking + Birdwatching + Wildlife Observation Accommodation: Selected Hotel Difficulty: Easy to Moderate Type of Tour: Shared Landing Type: Dry landing on Bartolome / Wet landing at Sullivan Bay Transportation: Early departure time between 5:30 and 6:00 am. Transfer from hotel to Itabaca Channel – 45 minutes. Return transfer in the afternoon from Itabaca Channel to selected hotel. Tour Duration: 8 to 12 hours. **NORTH SEYMOUR ISLAND** You will be transferred to the Itabaca Channel to take a speedboat to North Seymour Island where a 2-mile hike takes you through some of the largest seabird colonies in Galapagos along a rocky coast and within the interior of the island. You'll find blue-footed boobies and frigate birds nesting throughout the year, as well as land iguanas and lazy sea lions here and there. This tour is combined with a visit to Las Bachas beach either at the beginning or after the North Seymour visit. Located on the northern coast of Santa Cruz Island, this quiet little beach is the perfect spot to unwind. It got its name during World War II when the American army abandoned its barges. Two of those barges found their way to the shore of the Galápagos. The locals couldn't quite wrap their heads around the word "barge" and called them "bacha" instead. This pristine white-sand beach is known for its incredible wildlife. Home to flamingos, Sally

Lightfoot crabs, and countless birds, this is a nature lover's paradise. It is also one of the most important sea turtle nesting sites on Santa Cruz Island. It is also a good idea to wear water shoes if you want to go exploring because there are a few spots with sharp rocks. The waves are gentle here, making snorkeling very enjoyable. You may spot sea turtles and many colorful, tropical fish along the rocky surfaces below. Meals: Breakfast at selected hotel and lunch on boat Activities: Snorkeling + Hiking + Birdwatching + Wildlife Observation Accommodation: Selected Hotel Difficulty: Easy to Moderate Type of Tour: Shared Landing Type: Dry landing North Seymour / Wet landing at Bachas Beach Transportation: Early departure time between 6:45 and 7:30 am. Transfer from hotel to Itabaca Channel – 45 minutes. Return transfer in the afternoon from Itabaca Channel to selected hotel. Tour Duration: About 8 hours. **SOUTH PLAZAS & CARRION POINT** On speedboat you will arrive to South Plazas Island, located to the east of Santa Cruz. South Plazas was formed by lava pushed upwards from the bottom of the ocean and is bordered by a steep embankment. The island is home to a vast amount of diversity and concentration of wildlife. When you disembark, you may see the small dock occupied by sea lions. Once on the island the tour will continue through a small forest of prickly pear cacti with yellow flowers where land iguanas wait for the fruit and flowers to fall to the ground to eat. Your guide will explain the significance of the land iguanas and their relationship to the island. When the top of the cliff is reached along the trail you will then be in the best location to observe swallow-tailed gulls, red-billed tropic birds, frigate birds, and pelicans in flight. On the eastern end of the island is a colony of male sea lions who can often be found in a struggle to become the beach master. This tour is combined with a visit to Carrion Point. Carrion Point provides opportunities to see various sea birds nesting on the rock cliffs. In addition, Carrion Point creates a sheltered lagoon with beautiful, turquoise water. During this visit you may be able to snorkel and see a variety of fish, rays and perhaps the harmless white-tip reef sharks. The point is on the north coast of Santa Cruz Island. Meals: Breakfast at selected hotel and lunch on boat Activities: Snorkeling- Hiking – Birdwatching – Wildlife Observation Accommodation: Selected Hotel Difficulty: Easy to Moderate Type of Tour: Shared Landing Type: Dry Landing Transportation: Early departure time between 6:45 and 7:30 am. Transfer from hotel to Itabaca Channel – 45 minutes. Return transfer in the afternoon from Itabaca Channel to selected hotel. Duration of Tour: About 8 hours

Day 03: DAY 4: TRANSFER TO AIRPORT

After breakfast, you will have some free time depending on when your flight departs back to mainland Ecuador. As a suggestion you could visit the Charles Darwin Research Station or take a walk on main street in Puerto Ayora for some last-minute window shopping or witness the catch of the day at the fish market. At the specific time noted within your voucher you will be picked up by a representative and transferred back to the Itabaca Channel to return to Baltra Island. You will be assisted back to the airport in order to check-in for your departing flight back to Ecuador mainland. Meals: Breakfast Transportation: Departure depends on your departing flight time. Transfer from hotel to Itabaca Channel – 45 minutes. Ferry ride across the channel and transportation to the airport.

Inclusion

• Accommodations according to your preference • Transfers and ground transportation with assistance • Snorkeling equipment (fins, snorkel, and mask) • Kayak equipment (paddles, life jacket, kayaks • All excursions within itinerary • Certified Galapagos National Park Bilingual Naturalist Guide • Bus Tickets: Baltra Airport - Itabaca Channel - Baltra Airport

Exclusion

• Galapagos Park Entrance fee • Tourist Transit Card • Alcoholic Beverages/Additional drinks • Wet suit • Travel Insurance • Personal Expenses • Tipping/Gratuities

Note

HOTELS - Mainao (Standard) or similar Upgrade to higher category hotels is available on request Cost for Galapagos Park Entrance fee & Tourist Transit Card is available on request **IMPORTANT NOTES**

*Activities within this itinerary are subject to change due to Galapagos National Park decisions made by park authorities, new regulations, weather changes, and/or guide decisions regarding safety. *Due to a recent increase in volcanic activity near Sierra Negra volcano on Isabela Island, certain areas of Sierra Negra may be declared off limits to visitors. *In order to further protect the environment of the Galapagos Islands, the Ecuadorian Government has declared a ban against all use of plastic bags, plastic straws, and polyethylene containers. Therefore, all passengers visiting the islands will not be permitted to enter with these products. This measure will be in effect beginning May of 2018. We thank you for helping us protect the pristine Galapagos ecosystem. Duration: 4 Days / 3 Nights Tour Begins At: Baltra Airport Tour Ends At: Baltra Airport **SPECIAL REMINDERS** • Keep a distance of at least 2 meters between yourself and the wildlife. • Do not touch the wildlife. • Do not bring any food or drink other than water onto the visitor sites. • Do not feed the wildlife. • Always stay with your guide during the visits. • Always stay on the trail or walking path. • Do not leave any trash or other belongings on the island. • Do not use the flash on your camera when taking pictures of the wildlife. **PACKING LIST** • Hiking Boots for Sierra Negra • Water Shoes • Sunglasses • Sunscreen 75+ • Hat • *Lightweight and quick drying long-sleeved shirts or t-shirts • *Lightweight and quick drying shorts or pants in light colors • Bathing suit • Camera (waterproof camera also recommended) • Reusable Water bottle **Special Note:** Bright colored clothing can attract unwanted animals and insects, such as wasps as the bright colors look like flowers to these animals. Try to pack light colored clothing such as beige, white, brown, or grey.

Tour Dates & Pricing

