

Galapagos Islands Land-based Tour

Itinerary dates: October 24 - 31, 2018

Tour Escort: Beth Whitman

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the **magic of the Galapagos Islands** on this land-based tour
- Unlike boat-based trips, this tour allows time for exploring the islands, hiking and being active in addition to viewing wildlife by kayak, snorkeling, SUPing as well as from the boat
- Learn about the islands from our **English-speaking local naturalist guide**
- See a wide range of fauna, including **blue-footed boobies, sea lions, pelicans, giant tortoises, white tipped reef sharks** and much more
- Overnight in **wonderful and comfortable accommodations**
- Meet locals whose descendants were among the **first inhabitants** of the islands
- Returning WanderTours participants receive a **5% discount on land cost**

The adventure starts on October 24 upon arrival in Quito. Consider arriving a day or two early in case of flight delays, to explore Quito on your own and to shake off jet lag. We can book additional nights at the hotel for you.

ITINERARY

Day 1

Wednesday, October 24, 2018 – Quito

Meals: n/a

Upon arrival in Quito, you'll be met by our driver and taken to the hotel.

Overnight in Quito at [Swissotel](#) or similar.

Day 2

Thursday, October 25, 2018 – Quito – Baltra Island – Santa Cruz Island

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, the group will transfer to the airport in Quito for our flight to **Baltra Island**, the gateway to the Galapagos Islands.

Before departing the airport, we'll visit a **private VIP lounge** to change into swimwear and/or warm weather clothes, put on sunscreen and grab a cool drink before heading to the Itabaca Channel. Here, we'll **explore the turquoise waters** that teem with wildlife.

There will be a number of options for you to enjoy the area—you may **swim, kayak, snorkel** or make use of the **standup paddle boards** (SUP). If you prefer, you can stay on board the boat and enjoy the wildlife from there. No matter your mode of viewing, we'll see **blue-footed boobies, sea lions, brown pelicans, herons** and (non-aggressive) **white tipped reef sharks**.

The waters flow beside **red mangrove forests** along lava rock cliffs and are **stunningly clear**. We may spend 1.5 - 2 hours on the water depending on how much wildlife is out for viewing.

From the Itabaca Channel, we'll head by boat to the island of **Santa Cruz** to a private reserve where the famous **giant tortoises** are found in the wild.

After lunch at the reserve, we'll drive to our **tented camp**, perched **high on a hillside** overlooking the ocean and surrounded by forest and roaming giant tortoises. On a clear night, we'll be able to see a **star-filled sky**.

After a delicious dinner together at the main lodge, we'll have the opportunity to take a short walk to the **lava tubes** for a drink at the Lava Lounge!

Overnight on Santa Cruz Island at [Galapagos Magic](#) or similar.

Day 3

Friday, October 26, 2018 – Santa Cruz Island

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we'll head off via speed boat from Santa Cruz to one of the **nearby national parks**—South Plaza (subject to change based on the boat's schedule). In the morning, we'll be able to **snorkel in the calm waters** of Punta Carrión where we'll see a wide variety of **tropical fish** and possibly **white tipped reef sharks** that rest on the sandy bottom.

In the afternoon, we'll land on South Plazas where we'll be greeted by a **colony of sea lions!** After lunch, we'll walk the trail that takes us gradually toward the southern cliff of the island. Here, we'll see nesting **swallow-tailed gulls** and several types of **tropical birds** including Nazca and blue-footed boobies.

Dinner and overnight on Santa Cruz Island at [Galapagos Magic](#) or similar.

Day 4

Saturday, October 27, 2018 – Santa Cruz Island – Floreana Island

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll depart for **Floreana Island** on a two-hour speedboat trip. Floreana is home to the smallest population (just 150!) of the four inhabited islands. It is therefore the **least developed** and most natural of them all.

Upon arrival, we'll take an **open-air chiva bus** to our lodge, which overlooks one of the **most beautiful and secluded bays of the Galapagos**. Here we'll meet a descendant of the original residents of the island, **Claudio Cruz**. Claudio will have lots of stories to share about the island's history!

Once settled in, we can walk, kayak or SUP to nearby **Black Beach for exquisite snorkeling**. We'll then walk to a nearby restaurant that's part of an initiative to help **support the local community**.

In the afternoon, we'll set out again across the bay to explore **La Loberia**, a **sea lion breeding ground**. There we can snorkel and/or swim with **sea turtles, sea lions, rays** and **many tropical fish**. Alternately, you can walk on the beach to La Loberia. We'll return to the lodge in the afternoon to wash up and enjoy a spectacular sunset and then head to dinner in the small village.

Overnight on Floreana Island at the [Lava Lodge](#) or similar.



HIGHLIGHT! The original **descendants** of this, the first inhabited island, **still live here!** Once a pirate's hideout, many legends and stories exist about the area's first residents and we'll get to hear about them firsthand.

Day 5

Sunday, October 28, 2018 – Floreana Island

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll leave the lodge in our chiva to **explore the highlands**. Once we reach **Asilo de la Paz** (Peace Haven), we'll begin an easy **half-day hike**.

During the hike, we'll visit **pirate caves** as well as freshwater springs. We'll walk through land the locals cultivate to this day and see **giant tortoises** and **frigate birds**.

We'll head back to the lodge for a **barbecue lunch** featuring **traditional recipes** (including vegetarian fare) from the Cruz family. The afternoon will be free for **snorkeling, kayaking, SUPing** or **relaxing**.



HIGHLIGHT! During today's hike, we'll make our way through rural areas where the locals farm the land. This is how they have survived over the years on this **extremely remote place**.

Day 6

Monday, October 29, 2018 – Floreana Island – Isabela Island

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we'll take an early morning speedboat ride to Isabela Island.

Our adventure begins with a tour of the local **giant tortoise breeding center**. Along the way, we may see some **pink flamingos!** We continue touring after lunch and head to **Tintoreras**, a small group of islands near Puerto Villamil.

We'll see nearly all the iconic wildlife the Galapagos are known for, including **white tipped sharks, turtles, sea lions, penguins, rays, pelicans** and **blue-footed boobies**. We'll have time to snorkel in the bay where sea lions and penguins are known to play alongside snorkelers.

Dinner and overnight on Isabela Island at [Isamar](#) or similar.

Day 7

Tuesday, October 30, 2018 – Isabela Island

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

For those interested, today includes a full day of hiking on Isabela, one of the youngest and most volcanically active of the islands.

We'll be in the highlands of the island, but we'll start out by hiking up the **crater of the Sierra Negra volcano** and then on the rim of the **Volcan Chico**. We may have fog and light rain in the morning but we may still see a wide range of birds, including hawks, finches, flycatchers and short-eared owls.

The Sierra Negra crater is the **second largest crater** in the world after the Ngorongoro in Tanzania and is a feast for the eyes. The walk to Volcan Chico feels like you're walking on the moon with its **alien landscape**, but will reward us with views as well as lava tubes and fumaroles.

We'll have lunch on the rim before heading back down to **relax on the beach** after approximately 10 miles of hiking today.

* For those not interested in hiking for the day, you'll visit the **Wall of Tears** in the morning and in the afternoon, have a swim at **Concha y Perla**.

Dinner and overnight on Isabela Island at [Isamar](#) or similar.

Day 8

Wednesday, October 31, 2018 – Isabela – Baltra Island

Meals: Breakfast

This morning after breakfast, we'll take the speed boat back to Santa Cruz and then transfer to Baltra for our flights home or to your next destination.

**** Itinerary subject to change without notice.**