

## The Northern Isles Galapagos Island Discovery

*5 days / 4 nights' exploration of the Northern Galapagos Islands  
on the M/V Santa Cruz*



### **Day 1 (Sunday): Arrive Quito**

You will be met on arrival at Quito airport and transferred to your hotel in the city centre, the Casona de la Ronda.

Depending on the arrival time of your flight, we can arrange a city tour for you. Contact us for suggestions.

### ***La Casona de la Ronda***

*La Casona de la Ronda is a boutique hotel set in an 18th-century home in Quito's historic centre.*

*The rooms are beautifully made up with dark wooden furnishings and parquet floors. They feature wide windows with shutters to allow in lots of natural light, and open onto a central courtyard ringed by wooden balustrades. A cooked breakfast is served each morning in the courtyard, or in the indoor lounge/café area.*

### **Your Financial Protection**

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

## Day 2 (Monday): Fly to the Galapagos Islands and sail to Santa Cruz Island

Depart Quito on the morning flight to Baltra Island. On arrival, transfer to the dock and board the M/V Santa Cruz, your home for the next four nights. After a safety briefing and check-in, lunch will be served on board while you sail to Santa Cruz Island, located in the heart of the Galapagos archipelago.

Arriving at the port of Las Bachas, on the northern shore of the island, disembark for an afternoon of swimming and snorkelling off the white sands coral beach. Just steps from the beach is a lagoon where you may see flamingo, stilts, pintail ducks and migratory birds as well as the ubiquitous Sally Lightfoot crabs. Depending on the time of year, you may even see turtles nesting on the beach.



Return to the Santa Cruz for dinner and overnight.

## Day 3 (Tuesday): Santiago Island

Today will see you explore Santiago, a beautiful island of tall peaks. These peaks provide the perfect high ground for the wonderfully varied marine birdlife that fishes in the waters of the Galapagos, with residents of Santiago including the heron, egret, frigate bird, stilt, petrel and shearwater, amongst many others. Santiago Island also has a curious history. In an earlier era, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was also a hideout and resting point for pirates, and in 1835, it was the second island visited by Charles Darwin's and his crew on the HMS Beagle.



Your first stop of the day is Buccaneer Cove, where you will learn more about Santiago's pirate history, while also having the opportunity to spot sea birds, sea lions and see some of the area's incredible rock formations from a panga (a small fishing boat)

In the afternoon, you visit Puerto Egas, named after Hector Egas, the owner of a salt extraction company who mined the crater here in the 1960s. After disembarking the ship, you head inland on a short walk to visit a Galapagos fur seal colony. The

rocky coastline at Egas Port provides the perfect amount of shade for these seals. While at Egas Port you will also have the chance to swim and snorkel – sea turtles are often found in the waters around the port.

## Day 4 (Wednesday): Rabida and Bartolome Islands

Continuing your cruise around Santiago Island you arrive at the small satellite island of Rabida. Due to iron in the lava from a collection of small volcanic craters, Rabida has a distinctive red

colour. Exploring the island on foot, you'll have the chance to learn more about its unique geology and fascinating wildlife.

The birdlife on Rabida Island is fantastic. Depending on the time of year you may see flamingos, nesting brown pelicans, blue-footed and Nazca boobies, pintail ducks, Galapagos doves, mockingbirds and nine species of finch. From the beach you can snorkel or alternatively take a trip on the glass-bottomed boat.



From Rabida Island your cruise continues circling Santiago to arrive at Bartolome Island, located just off the east coast of Santiago. Keep a lookout for dolphins along way, as they are not uncommonly sighted around Santiago's eastern shores.

Bartolome Island is home to the Galapagos' most iconic site – Pinnacle Rock. On arrival you will have time for swimming and snorkelling, and glass-bottom boat trips. The waters around the base of Pinnacle Rock are a habitat for sea lions, white-tipped and black-tipped sharks, rays, octopus and the Galapagos penguin. From the coast at Pinnacle Rock you can then hike the short distance to the summit of the island for fantastic views of the archipelago and the famous Pinnacle itself. This is a moderately steep climb aided by a wooden staircase, resting platforms and handrails – the view from the top is worth the effort!



The day ends with a tour of the rugged and volcanic shoreline by panga boat.

## Day 5 (Thursday): Genovesa Island

Located in the far north-eastern reaches of the Galapagos archipelago, Genovesa Island is a partially collapsed caldera with a distinctive horse-shoe shaped bay, Darwin Bay.

On arrival at Prince Philip's Steps you have a steep but short climb to a flat, rocky plateau that is home to large colonies of Nazca and red-footed boobies, great frigate birds and storm petrels. For anyone not wanting to do the climb there is the chance to sea kayak or take a trip on the glass-bottom boat.

In the afternoon, continue to Darwin Bay where you can go swimming and snorkelling; often sea lions are spotted playing in the waters of the bay. You also have a short walk to see more of the birdlife on the island, including frigate birds, gulls, herons, finches and mockingbirds; it is no wonder that Genovesa Island has recently become known as 'Bird Island'!

## **Day 6 (Friday): Baltra Island**

Arriving this morning at the northern shore of Santa Cruz Island, you disembark your ship for the last time. While your luggage is transported to Baltra you will head inland to the lush highland forests of Galapagos daisies, orchids and bromeliads, which are home to two species of giant tortoises. You will visit the Tortoise Reserve before transferring back to Baltra airport for your flight to Quito.

On arrival at Quito airport, you will be met and transferred to your hotel, the Casona de la Ronda, with the rest of the day at leisure to explore the city.



## **Day 7 (Saturday): Departure**

You will be transferred to the airport in time for your onward flight.

\*\*\* For some excursions passengers will be split into two groups, with each group doing a different excursion, then swapping around. This means there is no overcrowding at sites, yet everyone still manages to participate in all activities.

## Your Vessel

The M/V Santa Cruz is a large expedition vessel with five decks offering ample space for relaxing and observing the passing scenery. There is a dining room, lounge and library, bar, sun terrace, hot tubs and a games room onboard.

The Santa Cruz has an average ratio of 11 guests per guide when on expedition. Onboard the ship, the experienced naturalist guides welcome you to informative talks in the library, covering topics such as the geology, biology and history of Galapagos Islands.

The Santa Cruz has a glass-bottom boat for observing underwater wildlife. Complementary wet suits, kayaks and snorkelling gear are available to borrow, and free Wi-Fi is included (although it can be intermittent). The ship has 50 cabins to accommodate a maximum of 90 guests. Cabins are spacious, with a large picture window and en suite shower room. They are available in single, twin, double or twin configuration, and many are interconnecting, perfect for families.



### Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is **£3,475 per person**, based on two travellers in a shared twin cabin. For more information, or to enquire about a tailor-made holiday incorporating part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

#### Includes:

- Accommodation in twin cabin
- Bed & breakfast basis on the mainland, full board on the cruise
- Staff as outlined above on cruise
- Entrance fees to all sights mentioned in itinerary
- Airport transfers
- Return flights from the mainland to the Galapagos

#### Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Galapagos National Park admission fee (\$100 per person)
- Transit Control Card for Galapagos (\$20 per person)
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Drinks