

Full Itineraries

Galapagos Navigable Tour Aida Maria Yacht

Introduction



The Aida Maria Yacht can accommodate 16 passengers and in a combination of style and economy for cruises on the Galapagos Islands. Each of its double cabins has a private bathroom, air conditioning, and a large external deck to enjoy the Galapagos sun. The Aida Maria yacht began operations in 1997 offering tours in the Galapagos Islands as a yacht for charters as well as for individual travelers. Its design is based on efficiency and comfort, with large social areas and 8 double cabins; it provides a lot of comfort for your Galapagos cruise. It has all the facilities, air conditioning, hot water and a desalination plant that produces its own water all day.

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 Sebastian de Benalcazar N2-26 between Bolivar and Sucre, Quito - Ecuador

ITINERARY B

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS

Day 1 (Sunday)



SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

A.M. SAN CRISTOBAL AIRPORT

You will go from the airport straight back to the boat to show you to your accommodations.

P.M. BREEDING CENTER

In the afternoon will be the visit to the Interpretation Center in Puerto Baquerizo, the local branch of the Galapagos National Park Service, where your guide will explain the formation of the islands, how the flora and fauna arrived and were established in Galapagos, as well as visit the corrals where there are several species of giant tortoises under the care of the National Park Service. Return to the boat, dinner.

Day 2 (Monday)



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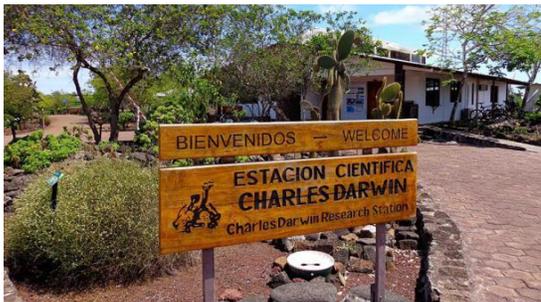
A.M. SANTA FE ISLAND

After breakfast on the yacht, you'll continue to Santa Fe Island. Upon arrival to the island, you'll be treated to a noisy welcome from the local Sea Lion colony. Following your naturalist guide on the island paths you'll reach Santa Fe's main attraction, a towering forest of giant cacti. Scattered around the cacti trees you'll see a number of the island's indigenous sun-seekers: marine and land iguanas, the rainbow-streaked lava lizards and, if you're lucky, land tortoises - the namesakes of the islands. After the walk you'll dive into the salty sea and snorkel in the company of Sea Lions, Lion Fish and Sea Turtles. Finally, you'll return to the yacht for lunch.

P.M. SOUTH PLAZA ISLAND

After lunch we'll navigate to Plazas Island, where a large colony of Sea Lions lounge daily in the equatorial sun. Plaza also boasts excellent examples of typical Galapagos native flora such as the towering cacti "trees" that form the principal diet for both the Land Iguanas and the Cactus Finch. Other birds that may flutter by include Lava Gulls, Yellow Warblers and Red-Billed Tropicbirds.

Day 3 (Tuesday)



SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

A.M. CHARLES DARWIN STATION

Charles Darwin Station. After breakfast you'll sail to Santa Cruz Island, where you'll visit the world-famous Charles Darwin Station, a non-profit institution that dedicates itself to studying and protecting the flora and fauna of the Galapagos. This is one of the best places to see land tortoises, including Lonesome George museum.

Then you'll visit the station's Tortoise Rearing Center. Here you can find baby, hand-sized tortoises, between the ages of one and five, and marvel at how they achieve such large sizes as adults (500 lbs. or more!). Galapagos tortoises are believed to have a lifespan of over 100 years, so the young ones have a long life ahead of them as long as they receive the protection they need. Aside from the Station headquarters, Santa Cruz Island is home to the

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largest town and economic center of the Galapagos, Puerto Ayora. In this portside town you can buy souvenirs (postcards, t-shirts, books, etc.) of the islands. Check out the unique Galapagos ceramic shop near the entrance of the Charles Darwin Station.

P.M. HIGHLANDS

After shopping in Puerto Ayora and lunch on the boat (guests may dine in town if they desire), you'll explore the highlands or "parte alta" of the island, which is a moisture-rich area with fertile volcanic soils. You'll learn about the vegetation and animal life of this zone, often strikingly different than that found at lower elevations and our best opportunity to find the famous giant tortoises in their natural habitat.

Darwin's Finches, Yellow Warblers, and other land birds will fly in and out of the moss-covered trees. From this high vantage point you'll be treated to beautiful views of the island. In the late afternoon you'll return to town. For those who wish to check out the nightlife, this is your chance; the boat will be docked in port most of the night. Return to the boat. Dinner.

Day 4 (Wednesday)



ISABELA ISLAND

A.M. SIERRA NEGRA VOLCANO

Your first visit in the morning will take place to Volcan Sierra Negra, will be a walk around 30 minutes to the lap of this famous volcano at Isabela Island. Volcan Sierra Negra is a large shield volcano at the South eastern end of Isabela Island in the Galapagos that rises to an altitude of 1124m. Also is considered one of the oldest Volcano at the Islands.

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P.M. HUMEDALES

In the afternoon after lunch, you will go to visit the humedales, which is a mangrove area with small brackish water lagoons that create the perfect environment for a small type of shrimp that serves as the food for the island's flamingos.

Back on board and night navigation to your next site.

Day 5 (Thursday)



ISABELA ISLAND

A.M. MORENO POINT

After night navigation you'll arrive to Punta Moreno on the west coast of Isabela, a dry landing on a lava field. The vegetation found in this area is sparse and concentrated mainly in the mangrove area and around the lakes. It should be noted that the three kinds of cacti are found here. The main attractions at Punta Moreno are the coastal lagoons amid black lava flows where there are several species of birds. Here you'll have a panoramic view of three of the most active volcanoes in the Galapagos, which are Sierra Negra, Cerro Azul of Isabela Island and La Cumbre of Fernandina Island.

P.M. ELIZABETH BAY

After lunch on board you'll continue on your way to Elizabeth bay, located on Isabela Island's west shore, which is an excellent spot for observing marine life. You'll motor past a few islands where you can usually see Galapagos Penguins; this is one of the best areas to take their photos. A colony of these magnificent birds inhabit a rocky islet at the entrance to Elizabeth Bay.

We'll let our boat drift through a small passage lined with mangroves and eventually emerge into an enclosed cove. We'll turn the motor off and look in the sheltered waters for Marine Turtles, Rays, Flightless Cormorants, Sea Lions, and, circling overhead, Galapagos Hawks.

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Day 6 (Friday)



A.M. ESPINOZA POINT (FERNANDINA ISLAND)

Punta Espinoza is a narrow ledge of lava and sand that extends from the base of the volcano to the sea. There is a vivid description from Captain Benjamin Morrell who witnessed and recorded an eruption of Fernandina in the 1820's that probably gave rise to the Point. In 1975, there was an uprising, about 90 cm, which is why the pier built for landing can only be used during high tide. Punta Espinoza is a place famous for its large colonies of Marine Iguanas as well as being the habitat of unique species like the Flightless Cormorant, the Galapagos Penguin, the Galapagos Hawk, and the Galapagos Snake, among others. It's an ideal place to observe the lava cactus (*Brachycerus Nesioticus*), which grow on young lava and survive with little water. Back on board for lunch and a short navigation to Punta Vicente Roca.

P.M. VICENTE ROCA POINT (ISABELA ISLAND)

During lunch time, we will start to navigate to Punta Vicente Roca on the northern tip of Isabela island, after a couple of hours we will arrive to this visitors place, the activity for the afternoon is snorkelling, Punta Vicente roca is home to sea lions, fur seals, penguins, turtles, flightless cormorants, so there is always the opportunity to find any of these animals in the water. The snorkel takes place along a wall of volcanic ash called tuff stone featuring amazing underwater volcanic formations including a small cave where in season it is possible to see sea turtles. After snorkeling we will come back on board and continue on our way to James island.

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Day 7 (Saturday)



SANTIAGO ISLAND

A.M. EGAS PORT

James Bay is a black sand beach located on the west side of James Bay and northwest of Santiago Island. South of the beach is Sugarloaf Volcano, which has deposits of volcanic tuff, the same that helped the formation of the black sand beach. The crater is just north of this site, it has a saltwater lagoon, which during the summer dry season becomes a salt mine. Between 1928 and 1930 was the first exploitation of salt; but the efforts did not last long. Then again in 1964 a new attempt was made that lasted for some time.

P.M. RABIDA ISLAND

After lunch on board we'll navigate to our next destination, Rabida.

Rábida Island consists of a red sand beach, a coastal lagoon behind the beach, and a loop trail. The approximate distance of the trail is 1.1 kilometers. The color of the rocks and sand on the beach is due to the very porous volcanic material, which with the help of environmental factors (rain, salt water and sea breeze), has acted as an oxidizing agent.

The main attraction of this spot is the red sand beach and scenery, aside from the vegetation of the arid zone and the presence of native and endemic species.

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Day 8 (Sunday)



A.M. NORTH SEYMOUR ISLAND

After an early breakfast you'll disembark at North Seymour Island. Here you will see Frigate Birds, the clownish Blue-Footed Booby, and of course the ubiquitous Sea Lions. With luck you'll witness the striking courtship display of the male Frigate Bird, in which he inflates a red balloon-like sac below his throat and struts his stuff for all of the young females. Seymour North, Plaza Sur, Plaza Norte, Baltra, northeastern Santa Cruz, Santa Fe and part of Española, were all formed by uprisings of underwater volcanic lavas. They were part of a volcanic lava table deposited in sheet form along cracks located on the ocean floor. The uprisings occurred sporadically and lasted more than a million years to reach its current level. All marine fossils found in the archipelago are found in these islands and the best example is the North Channel side of Baltra. The fossils date from the Pleistocene, and specifically in the case of Baltra, one can say that these volcanic tables were close to the surface about a million years ago.

P.M. BALTRA

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