

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 E

6 DAYS / 5 NIGHTS

Day 1 (Thursday)



A.M. BALTRA

P.M. HIGHLANDS OF SANTA CRUZ

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.

Day 2 (Friday)



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FLOREANA ISLAND

When you wake up and look out your porthole on Day 6 you will see Floreana, one of the greenest islands in the archipelago. Ask your guide to tell you about its mysterious history laden with rumors a murderous baronesses, blackmail, and dubious disappearances.

A.M. POST OFFICE BAY

Your first stop is Post Office Bay, where the islands' original post office (really only a wooden barrel) was established in 1793. The current system still functions as it did three centuries ago: Visitors drop off unstamped letters and postcards AND pick-up whatever mail they can hand deliver themselves when they return home! (Try it, it actually works!).

P.M. CORMORANT POINT (ESPAÑOLA ISLAND)

Back on the yacht and after lunch you'll skirt the island's coast until you arrive at La Corona del Diablo (the Devil's Crown), an old volcanic crater that offers some of the most spectacular snorkeling in the Galapagos. This is a great spot for seeing the wide array of tropical fish, many endemic to the islands, including purple sea stars and spiky sea urchins. The crater's most thrilling undersea creatures, however, are the white-tipped sharks. As with most of the creatures in the Galapagos they are unperturbed by your presence, so you can swim in their company freely and fearlessly.

P.M. DEVIL'S CROWN (ESPAÑOLA ISLAND)

After returning to the boat you will visit Punta Cormorant, where you'll follow a footpath to a lagoon inhabited by flaming-pink flamingos. You will also pass by a white sand beach, a Sea Turtle nesting area and a great spot for watching sea birds and sea rays.

Day 3 (Saturday)



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ESPAÑOLA ISLAND

A.M. SUAREZ POINT

Espanola is one of the most magical of all the islands. It is a place where the animals reign supreme and we humans are merely guests. As your dingy brings you to shore you'll see Sea Lion pups sunbathing with Marine Iguanas and Blue Footed Boobies nesting in between, and nearby may be a Galapagos Hawk. If it is Booby mating season watch the bonded pairs do the infamous Booby dance (if it's not mating season, ask your guide to demonstrate - after all it's their job to teach you about the local fauna!).

As you follow the footpath around the island, you will pass hundreds of Blue Footed Booby nesting sites including one colony of masked boobies.

There is a good chance you'll see the thief-like Frigate Bird (which has the habit of stealing other birds' food), as well as the stunning Red-Billed Tropicbird and the nocturnal Swallow-Tailed Gull. If it is the right time of the year (mid-April to December) you'll also encounter the giant Waved Albatross. Apart from a few pairs that breed on Isla de Plata, off the Ecuadorian mainland, all of the world's 12,000 Waved Albatross breed on Espanola Island. At the end of the breeding season, the entire population leaves the island and heads out to sea, where they spend years without touching land; four or five years may pass before the fledglings return to Espanola.

As you make your way around the island you'll pass by El Soplador, a giant blowhole that explodes to heights reaching 25 feet. In the nearby tide pools you can often find lounging sea lions enjoying the blowhole's misty spray.

P.M. GARDNER GAY

Following lunch on board the yacht, you'll visit Garner Bay, a great place for sunbathing, swimming and snorkeling. Lionfish, Flycatchers, and Galapagos Hawks will keep you company as you relax under the rays of the evening sun. Dinner on the yacht completes your day.

Day 4 (Sunday)



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SAN CRISTOBAL ISLAND

A.M. LOBOS ISLAND

On your last day of visiting the Galapagos you'll arrive early in the morning to San Cristobal, the capital of the Galapagos. The first site will be Isla Lobos, a very small islet made of volcanic rocks that gets its name from the colony of Sea Lions (Lobo de Mar in Spanish) that live there. Here you can observe the behavior and interaction of Sea Lions living in a small community. Before taking the flight back to the mainland you will have some time to visit the town on your own for last minute shopping or people watching in the Galapagos.

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 5 (Monday)



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

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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 6 (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.

P.M. BALTRA

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