

# NVT Galapagos Land Tour Generic

We recommend exploring the archipelago by boat as the 16 pax cruise ship, typical of the islands are well managed, bring all the equipment and always include a naturalist guide. And most importantly a visit by boat minimizes visitors' impact on island and marine ecosystems.

Choose 4 or 7 days on the boat;  
Choose northern or southern islands;

Weather will be very warm during the day; usually strong sunshine but expect occasional storms.

Swim and/or Snorkel in designated areas only. Equipment available on board but you may prefer to bring your own.

All meals included on board.

## Itinerary for 3 Nights Cruise:

### Fly to Ecuador

Quito in the High Sierras or Guayaquil along the coast.

Take a national flight 2 - 3 hours to the islands - 600 miles

Boat tours start on select days. Flights are arranged by the boat captains so all passengers are on board at the same time.

Each stop is carefully arranged so as not to crowd the destinations or upset the wildlife with too many tourists.

### Fly Saturday morning to the Islands.

#### Saturday

Tour the highlands of **Santa Cruz**:

Travel with English speaking guide by bus from airport in Puerto Ayora to the highlands that are a deep green, contrasting beautifully with much of the dry, lower islands. The dominant vegetation in the highlands is the *Scalesia* trees, creating the lush color. The lava tubes, over half a mile long, are underground and walking through them is a unique, surreal experience.

**Highlights:** Lava tunnels, wild tortoises, tortoise breeding center.

Activities: Hike (1.5 mi/ 2 ½ km) Difficulty: Moderate (long)

#### [Lava Tunnels](#)

The lava tunnels on Santa Cruz were formed as the outer skin of molten lava solidified but the liquid magma inside continued flowing, leaving behind a series of empty tubes. Visitors can walk through these underground channels, often more than a kilometer in length, and may have the opportunity to glimpse barn owls here.

**Highlights:** Barn owls, finches Activities: Walking - Difficulty: Easy

### Cerro Mesa

At 490m above sea level, Cerro Mesa provides an impressive view of the archipelago. It is an excellent location to observe numerous endemic plants as well as up to 7 subspecies of finch and the vermillion flycatcher. The area is characterized by a persistent drizzle ('la garúa') that falls horizontally throughout 8 months of the year. The west side features the largest crater on Santa Cruz.

**Highlights:** Spectacular views, finches, vermillion flycatcher, crater

Activities: Walking, bird watching - Difficulty: Easy

### The Garrapatero Beach

Situated on the northern side of Santa Cruz, El Garrapatero is a gorgeous sandy beach surrounded by mangroves. A fresh water lake behind the beach is home to flamingos, herons, stilts and other shore birds. The beautiful turquoise waters provide a good opportunity for swimming and snorkeling.

**Highlights:** Gorgeous white sand beach, flamingos, herons, grebes, stilts

Activities: Swimming, snorkeling, kayaking - Difficulty: Easy

## **Sunday**

### - Plazas Island

This small island with steep cliffs was formed by rising lava and is now covered by *Opuntia* cacti. It is also home to one of the largest sea lion colonies as well as colorful yellow and red land iguanas. The most characteristic plant is the *Sesuvium*. During the rainy season its color is a greenish to yellowish tone and in the dry season (end of June through January) a bright red.

**Highlights:** Land iguanas, sea lion colony, Audubon's shearwaters, swallow-tailed gulls, Nazca boobies, amazing landscape with cliffs

Activities: Hike 1.5 miles Type of Landing: Dry landing Difficulty: Moderate

## **Monday**

Day tour by Yacht

### - Bartholomew

Home of the famous Pinnacle Rock, Bartholomew consists of an extinct volcano with a variety of red, orange, black and even green volcanic formations. A trail of stairs leads to the summit of the volcano, boasting one of the best views of the islands. The beach is perfect for snorkeling and possible sightings of the Galapagos penguin.

**Highlights:** Pinnacle Rock, panoramic view, moonlike landscape, penguins, pioneer plants, lava cactus; snorkeling, reef sharks, rays, and great colorful fish.

Activities: Dinghy ride, snorkeling & hiking (1.25 mi/ 2km)

Type of Landing: Dry and wet landings

Difficulty: Moderate/difficult. Walk up to the top of volcano 114 meters, 375 wooden steps

## **Tuesday**

### **Morning**

Transfer from hotel in Puerto Ayora to the Baltra Airport is included.

While in Ecuador consider exploring different sections of the country - each a unique ecosystem, and yet the distances are usually quite reasonable. Roads are much improved. English speaking naturalist guides are well trained and very proud of their professional reputations.