

Wildlife Wonders of The Galápagos Islands

Wildlife Tour

The Galápagos Islands are legendary for their unique wildlife. Numerous species of giant tortoises, endemic marine iguanas, unique sea lions, tropical penguins and even albatrosses call the archipelago home. The local plant life is also astonishingly varied, from cacti and succulents to cloudforest. And the underwater world offers some of the best snorkelling and diving opportunities in the entire Pacific, from colourful reef fishes, playful sea lions and the unique sight of marine iguanas grazing underwater on algae and seaweed.

97% of this astonishing archipelago is conserved and home to one of the highest concentrations of unique plant and animal species found anywhere on Earth. But what really separates the Galápagos Islands apart is the fact that the evolution of the wildlife took place in isolation from terrestrial predators, so that many of the native animals show little fear of mankind, allowing for exceptional photographic opportunities.

This expedition takes you to many of the very best wildlife sites of the Galápagos Islands to come face to face with some of the archipelago's most iconic wildlife!

This unique trip includes exclusive opportunities to **volunteer** to feed giant tortoises. These **volunteer activities** support local conservation projects and enable you to gain access to see amazing conservation work in action and observe wildlife up close and personal in a way that regular tourists cannot (we go behind the scenes!)

COST: US \$4,750 per person

DURATION: 13 days / 12 nights.

START POINT: Puerto Baquerizo, San Cristóbal Island (airport code SCY)

END POINT: Baltra, Santa Cruz Island (airport code GPS)

DATES: **Trip 1:** Sunday April 5th to Friday April 17th, 2026

Trip 2: Sunday April 19th to Friday May 1st, 2026

Only 10 week days (working days) are needed. You can fly out on a Friday night / Saturday morning at the start of the trip, and return home on the Friday at the end (and recover from flights over the weekend).

BESPOKE TOUR: If you do not wish to join a group tour, we can customise a private trip to suit your dates and interests. Please email us for details.

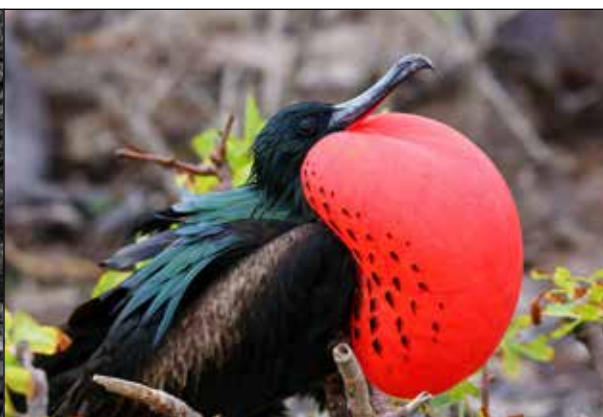
Email sales@redfernadventures.com for more information and to make bookings.

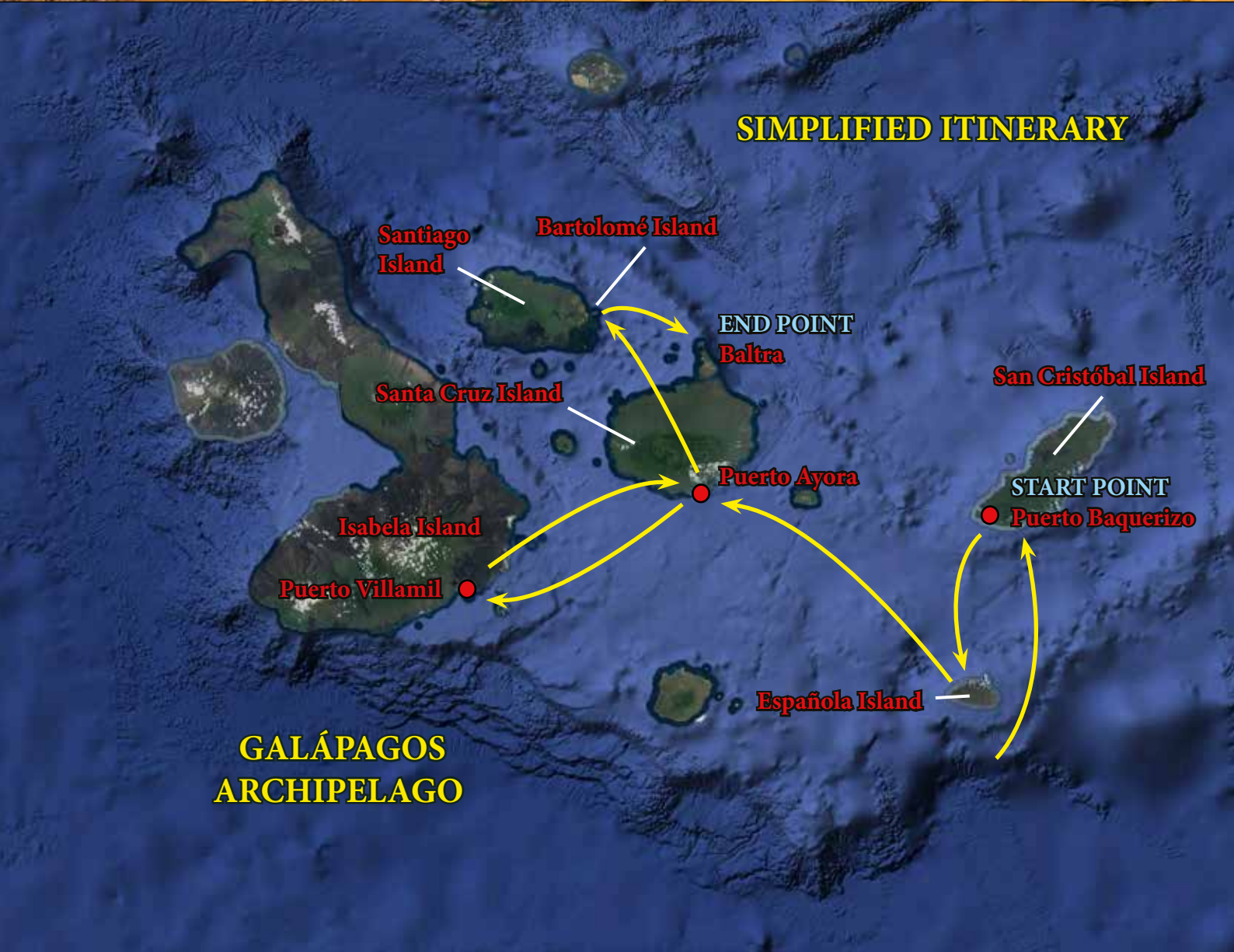
Getting There:

Multiple daily flights fly from Guayaquil (airport code GYE) and Quito (UIO), Ecuador to/from San Cristóbal Island (SCY). These can be easily booked online, for example, with www.skyscanner.net

We recommend travelling via Guayaquil. We suggest you arrive in Guayaquil one day before your trip begins so you can recover from your international flights. There is a nice Holiday Inn very close to Guayaquil airport (less than 500 m from the terminal). A taxi costs US \$5 or a free shuttle bus can be organised with the hotel.

Flights from Baltra (airport code GPS) connect out to Guayaquil (airport code GYE) and Quito (UIO).





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Please see a promo video for this expedition: <https://youtu.be/CseiqE2twqk>

Day 1: Arrive on San Cristóbal Island

Pick up from the airport and transport to Royal Galápagos Inn in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno (the main town on San Cristóbal Island). Note: there are no “chain” hotels in the Galapagos. All hotels are locally run and family owned. Royal Galápagos Inn is really nice, well located with excellent restaurants nearby.

Check into hotel, late lunch and orientation walk along the waterfront of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno to spot marine iguanas, frigate birds, Sally lightfoot crabs (*Grapsus grapsus*), and visit a sea lion beach (right at the centre of town) where approximately 50-200 Galápagos sea lions (*Zalophus wolfebaeki*) are usually present.

Towards sunset, walk to Playa Mann beach. We have the option of snorkelling in the tropical waters (we advise you to bring your own snorkel, mask and fins, however these can be rented or bought locally at extra cost). Sea lions play in the waters. We can often literally swim with them. Excellent beach for seeing the sunset. Then dinner in a local hotel (awesome cocktails). Overnight in a local boutique hotel.



Day 2: Circumnavigate San Cristóbal Island by boat and visit key sites

Breakfast and early departure for a “360 boat tour” around San Cristóbal Island to visit following locations:

1. **Land at Rosa Blanca Beach** - excellent bird watching opportunities (blue footed boobies, brown pelican) and often sea turtles and (harmless) white tipped reef sharks. Sea lions often play with us underwater.
2. **Bahia Sardina** - snorkelling to see shoals of fish and (often) sea lions swimming underwater. Rest on the beach and relax.
3. **Sport fishing close to Punta Pitt** (often catch tuna or wahoo and have sushi lunch), pass Pitt Island (see from the boat; blue footed boobies, red footed boobies, masked boobies, red billed tropic birds and other bird species). Visit Cerro Brujo (spectacular rock arch).
4. **Visit the iconic Kicker Rocker** (a spectacular offshore rock stack) to snorkel to see reef fish, rays, sharks, sea turtles and dramatic scenery. Sometimes humpbacks, dolphins and orca are sighted too. Fingers crossed for highlight - scalloped hammerhead sharks (harmless but spectacular!)

Note: depending upon weather and wind direction, the boat team may reverse the order of sites.

Return back to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno by approx 4:30 pm. Dinner in a restaurant in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. Overnight in a local boutique hotel.



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Day 3: Giant Tortoises Volunteer Project

A really special day that centres on volunteer activities at a San Cristóbal giant tortoise breeding centre to support conservation work and to see the tortoises up close and personal (which the public cannot normally do). We go behind the scenes with the manager and muck in to help look after the tortoises!

We collect otoy plants which they like to eat, we help clean their water ponds so they have fresh water, work in the plant nursery to help grow their food plants, and feed baby tortoises.

We enjoy a pick nick lunch on Puerto Chino (a beautiful white sand beach) for a swim in the water (often there are marine iguanas swimming). We then return back via El Juncto (a volcano crater). It is an easy 15 minute walk to the crater edge. The crater lake contained within is one of the only sources of permanent freshwater, and we can watch frigatebirds frequently wash in and drink from the crater lake.

We return back to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno around 4 pm. A recommended activity is to visit the main sea lion beach in town around sunset. Dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight in a local boutique hotel.



Day 4: Explore Española Island

We have a 6 am start today to begin a full day trip to Española Island (one of the wildlife highlights of the Galápagos Islands). We land and take a guided tour by a professional, local naturalist guide. This is a special island home to waved albatrosses, an endemic subspecies of marine iguana and Galápagos sea lions. We may also see masked boobies (usually large numbers), a spectacular blow hole, Galápagos hawks and terrestrial lava lizards. We have the option to visit beautiful, pristine beaches to snorkel (recommended), before returning to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno. Dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight in a local boutique hotel.



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Day 5: Isla Lobos

We have a relaxed morning. Those that would like to can take part in a volunteer sea lion count with conservationists (see the sea lions up close). Other options include visiting the beautiful beaches and souvenir shopping. Or booking an extra snorkel tour with one of the many operators in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno.

After lunch, we undertake an afternoon boat tour to Isla Lobos. We land on the island and walk along trails to observe nesting blue footed boobies and spectacular frigatebirds (we usually see them with inflated pouches and doing their amazing courtship dance and eerie sounds). We undertake a trek (approx 1 km) across the island, then transfer to Playa Ochoa nearby to snorkel and relax on one of the most beautiful beaches of the Galápagos Islands. Dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight in a local hotel.



Day 6: Journey to Santa Cruz Island

A 7 am boat departure to Santa Cruz Island, landing at Puerto Ayora at 9 am. We have a late breakfast / early lunch and check into our hotel, La Peregrina (a lovely hotel set amongst a green, leafy garden, but in an excellent location near to the main waterfront and close to the main restaurants).

We then drive to Los Gemelos (spectacular, collapsed lava chambers) and walk through the beautiful misty forests and enjoy the dramatic scenery. We then transfer to the Primicias Ranch to see explore impressive lava tunnels (walking around 800 m through one of the massive lava tubes). We then have a private guided walk amongst wild giant tortoises (an endemic species of domed tortoise, unique to Santa Cruz Island) - the population includes exceptionally large, impressive and aged specimens.

We return to Puerto Ayora for a late lunch and walk to the Charles Darwin Foundation to visit the research centre, several small museums and exhibits, a breeding programme to see five different giant tortoise species from across the archipelago, and we can stroll along beautiful coastal paths that are home to extensive numbers of marine iguanas, lava lizards and other wildlife. A highlight at the Charles Darwin Foundation is seeing “Lonesome George” (the preserved specimen of a species of Galápagos Tortoise that recently became extinct).

We have dinner at a beautiful restaurant overlooking the water in Puerto Ayora. Overnight in a local hotel.



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Day 7: Journey to Isabella Island

After breakfast, we undertake a 45 minute walk to Tortuga Bay Beach (a massive white sand beach) to see brown pelicans, marine iguanas and ghost crabs. The beach is spectacular and we may see the iguanas swimming. Very often, there are baby hammerhead sharks (harmless) swimming close to the mangroves. We return to Puerto Ayora for lunch.

We catch a boat at 3 pm to Puerto Villamil, Isabella Island, arriving at approx. 5 pm. As we arrive, we look out for endemic Galapagos penguins and flightless cormorants. We check into our hotel, Casita de la Playa (a beautiful, beach-side hotel) and take a walk to see a Flamingo Lagoon before sunset. We should see several flamingos wading. Dinner in a beach front restaurant. Dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight in a local boutique hotel.

Note: Isabela Island is absolutely beautiful. It is much more laid back than the rest of the Galapagos. Isabela is the largest island in the archipelago, but is home to just 2,000 people. Puerto Villamil is set on a beautiful beach, and has a really nice, relaxed, beach-town atmosphere. The beach front is dotted with fantastic beach restaurants and bars. It is a wonderful place to relax and explore. See Photos below.



Puerto Villamil, Isabella Island



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Day 8: Undertake Los Tunneles Snorkelling Tour

Today is dedicated to exploring Isabella Island - the youngest isle of the Galápagos Archipelago.

We are picked up at 7 am from our hotel and transfer to boats to visit Los Tunneles, a spectacular volcanic landscape of lava tunnels and arches on the coast of Isabella Island.

There are several options to swim and snorkel. Highlights include exploring shallow waters home to lots of sea turtles, sea horses, white tipped reef sharks, spotted eagle rays and countless reef fish species. This is an **exceptional** diving location. The guides usually take us to an underwater cave where we can see many reef sharks resting. Sea turtles are very abundant - we typically see 30+ sea turtles on the Los Tunneles tour!

We then transfer to an area of volcanic columns and arches, to see nesting areas of blue footed boobies. Galápagos penguin (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) are often present on the rocks along the coast and we can glimpse them up close and personal (approaching while snorkelling, and observing from the water).

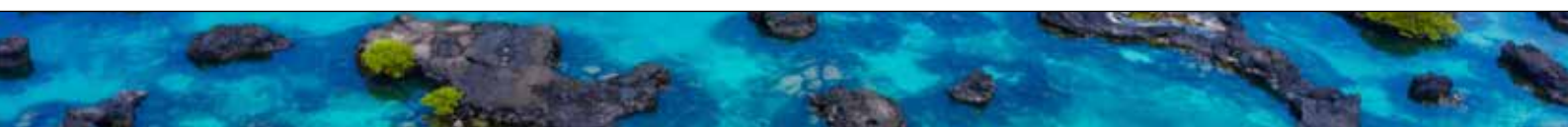
We then transfer to shore to explore a spectacular landscape of lava bridges and unique cacti groves. Darwin's finches, Galápagos hawks and Galápagos doves may be sighted.

We return back to Puerto Villamil by around 1 pm and have a late lunch.

Those that would like to can undertake an afternoon walk to the Wall of Tears (el Muro de las Lágrimas), built by prisoners when the island was a penal colony. This is a really nice walk, and we are likely to see many marine iguanas and wild giant tortoises (a different species from all of the tortoises we have seen so far).

If anyone is tired and does not want to walk, our hotel is situated on a gorgeous beach for relaxing and enjoying.

Dinner in a beach front restaurant. Overnight in a local boutique hotel.



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Day 9: Trek to the Sulphur Volcano

After breakfast, we drive up the slopes of the vast Sierra Negra volcano massif to the enormous caldera rim. We drive along the rim to the jump off point. Then trek down a path into the caldera and across to a series of sulphur fumeroles within (approx 2.5 km walk, around 1 hour each way). The steaming sulphur vents are spectacular and set amongst the solidified lava flows. We explore the site of old sulphur mines and the breath-taking landscapes of lava formations. We then return back to the caldera rim and the vehicles. The lava landscape is unforgettable.

Note: Bring sturdy walking shoes, sunscreen, a water bottle, a hat and sunglasses for today! The lava rocks are very sharp - do not wear sandals.

We return for lunch, then during the afternoon, we can relax on one of Isabella's beautiful beaches, or walk to Concha del Perla for excellent snorkelling opportunities (home to extensive reef fish populations, rays and turtles). Also a little down time for souvenir shopping and exploring Puerto Villamil. Watch sunset from a beautiful beach close to our accommodation.

Dinner in a beach front restaurant. Overnight in a local boutique hotel.



Day 10: Return to Santa Cruz and visit Las Grietas

An early start to catch a 7 am boat to return to Santa Cruz (arriving around 10 am). On arrival, we check back into La Peregrina hotel and have lunch.

During the afternoon, we catch a water taxi from the port to visit Las Grietas - or "the Cracks of Galápagos". Three crystal clear pools lie in a picturesque setting, sandwiched in a crevasse between high volcanic walls. The water is crystal clear and emerald green. Locals and tourists alike flock here to cool off while enjoying the spectacular view. We often see giant tortoises in the area, and frequently visitors swim with sea lions, (harmless) reef sharks, extensive schools of large fish and sometimes even turtles! Las Grietas is ruggedly beautiful and an unforgettable experience.

We have dinner in Puerto Ayora (many excellent restaurant options). Overnight in a local boutique hotel.



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Day 11: Bartolomé and Santiago Islands

One of the highlights of the entire trip. We have a early start and journey by boat to Bartolomé Island (arguably the most spectacular island of the Galapagos). We undertake a boat tour around the island spotting seabirds, marine iguanas and sea lions. We then walk to the top of the peak on Bartolomé Island (approx 30 minutes) for a breath-taking view. We then descend and transfer to adjacent Santiago Island via the spectacular Pinnacle Rock. At Santiago Island we explore an unbelievable, black landscape of solidified lava. The rippled shapes of the solidified stone are breath-taking. We visit a beach for snorkelling in the afternoon (playful sea lions are frequent visitors and often interact underwater). We return back to Puerto Ayora in the afternoon.

We have dinner in Puerto Ayora (many excellent restaurant options). Overnight in a local boutique hotel.

Bartolomé Island Viewpoint and Santiago Lava Fields



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Day 12: Santa Cruz Island

We have a relaxed final full day. We undertake transfer to Playa Alemanes (a beautiful white sand beach) for a morning on the sand. The beach is close a nesting area of marine iguanas that usually rest on the beach. There is excellent snorkelling in the shallow waters. We return back to Puerto Ayora for lunch and any final souvenir shopping. Dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight in a local boutique hotel.

Optional dinner upgrade: for our final night, we have the option to dine in a really special restaurant set inside a lava tunnel. We enjoy a completely unique evening exploring the cavernous lava tunnel and a beautiful dinner underground in the lava tube! A perfect final evening to our trip!



Day 13: Departure from Baltra Airport

After breakfast, we transfer to Baltra Airport (airport code GPS) for our departing flight! Along the road, we may have a final glimpse of wild giant tortoises!



Please see a promo video for this expedition: <https://youtu.be/CseiqE2twqk>

INCLUDED:

- All entrance tickets and permits to visit national parks, including all local guide fees.
- All accommodation, food, and soft drinks.
- All ground transportation.
- All domestic flights.
- Professional tour leader.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Alcohol (participants purchase direct).
- Tips for local guides (optional).
- Optional update to dinner in lava tunnel restaurant on final evening (see Day 12).

