

WESTERN GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

SAN CRISTOBAL TO BALTRA, GALAPAGOS



The Western Islands are home to the only active volcanoes in the archipelago and are known both for their spectacular volcanic landscapes and penguin spotting: over 95% of the Galápagos penguins live in these islands. It's also the only area to see the endemic flightless cormorant. Other key sites include Post Office Bay with its human history and Punta Vicente Roca with some of the best snorkelling in the archipelago.

Route Map -



DATES 2018 – | Sep. 13, 27 | Oct. 11, 25 | Nov. 08, 22 | Dec. 06, 20

2019: | Jan. 05, 19 | Feb. 02, 16 | Mar. 02, 16, 30 | Apr. 13, 27 | May 11, 25 | Jun. 08, 22 | Jul. 06, 20 | Aug. 03, 17, 31 | Sep. 28 | Oct. 12, 26 | Nov. 09, 23 | Dec. 07, 21

DURATION: 10 DAYS/9 NIGHTS

EMBARK: SAN CRISTOBAL,
GALAPAGOS

DISEMBARK: BALTRA, GALAPAGOS

SHIP: SILVER GALAPAGOS
FROM: \$6,300

EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk across spectacular lava fields
- Explore tidal pools, lush mangroves and scalesia forests
- See giant tortoises, pelicans and the largest colony of marine iguanas
- Snorkel with green sea turtles, penguins, sea lions and manta rays
- Hike through fragrant forests of Palo Santo “Incense” trees
- Watch for a unique species of flightless cormorant
- Visit one of the most volcanically active places on Earth
- See wild flamingos (in season) and nesting sea turtles
- Photograph iconic Pinnacle Rock

ITINERARY

Day 1 – FRI - Arrive Quito, Ecuador.

Meet and transfer to your included JW Marriott hotel. Arrive earlier to explore more of this wonderful, diverse country. Visit the Amazon region and stay at a fabulous wildlife center. See the colorful birds of Ecuador’s Cloud Forest near Quito. We can make all the arrangements for you.

Day 2 – SAT – Embark Silver Galapagos.

You will be transferred to the Quito airport for your included flight to San Cristobal and the *Silver Galapagos*. After settling in and attending a mandatory safety drill we will be setting sail. This afternoon you will be introduced to your Expedition Team.

During the late afternoon Silver Galapagos will circumnavigate Kicker Rock. We will be looking for frigatebirds, Swallow-tailed Gulls and Nazca Boobies. The geological formation and its impressive height can best be seen from the ship and conditions permitting we will be able to observe one of the most beautiful sunsets of the Galapagos Islands.

Day 3 – SUN – Bartolomé, Playa Espumilla

Our ship anchors in sight of the volcanic moonscape of Isla Bartolomé, at Sullivan Bay. Zodiacs bring guests ashore to ascend a boardwalk of 388 steps. The climber’s ultimate reward is one of the most beautiful panoramas in all of the Galapagos Islands – the view towards Pinnacle Rock with black, volcanic cones of

Baltra, Daphne Major and Daphne Minor in the distance.

Playa Espumilla is located on the northwestern side of Santiago Island and is home to a variety of wildlife including nesting green sea turtles, and plentiful birds such as flamingos, White-cheeked Pintails, Yellow Warblers, Galapagos Hawks, Whimbrels, and American Oystercatchers. Zodiacs will land you at the center of the white-sand beach to join a trail that passes by a seasonal lagoon hosting a variety of bird life. The trail then leads inland to a fragrant Palo Santo (incense tree) forest before looping back to the beach in a lazy circuit past the mangrove-fringed lagoon, where you can watch shorebirds work the mudflats for their dinner.



Day 4 – MON – Punta Vicente Roca, Punta Espinoza

From our anchorage Zodiacs set out to cruise beneath the imposing volcanic coastline. The cliffs support endemic Flightless Cormorants, Galapagos fur seals, Blue-footed Boobies, and marine iguanas. The waters below hold scores of Eastern Pacific green sea turtles swimming all around the Zodiacs. If conditions allow, fortunate snorkelers will have an opportunity to swim with eagle rays, Galapagos sea lions, Galapagos Penguins, and schools of small tuna.

With the gentle slopes of La Cumbre volcano in the distance, the low, lava-forged coast of Punta Espinoza on Fernandina Island is a spectacular sight. Hundreds of marine iguanas rest on the black rock of recent lava flows absorbing heat from the stone and defending their territories against one another. Galapagos sea lions and their pups also take shelter here, resting on the beach and playing in the shallow tide pools sprinkled along the coast.

Day 5 — TUE - Tagus Cove, Elizabeth Bay

Tagus Cove is a sheltered area southwest of Volcán Darwin on Isabela Island. The protected waters of this cove are home to sea turtles, marine iguanas, Flightless Cormorants and Galapagos Penguins. In addition, the cove has offered safe anchorage to visiting ships through the ages. Here you can choose to kayak, snorkel or head ashore to discover centuries-old names of vessels that were painted or carved onto the rock near the landing site. You may hike through the forest of Palo Santo trees to access the upper reaches of a volcanic cone. Watch for several species of Darwin finches and curious mockingbirds as you ascend. From the track's high point the panoramic view is spectacular.

The tranquil inlets of Elizabeth Bay are the perfect spot for a Zodiac cruise. In the easternmost embayment lies a hidden inlet. Our nimble Zodiacs can enter this small cove to look for sea turtles, rays and even sharks.

Day 6 — WED - Isla Champion, Post Office Bay, Punta Cormorant

Isla Champion is a small islet off Floreana Island's northeast coast. To cruise by it reveals a bare, rocky island without much allure, but to enter the infinitely blue waters around this small landmass is to discover a spectacular underwater realm. The visibility is generally impressive and thanks to this water clarity snorkelers often spot reef sharks patrolling the reef wall, cruising Pacific green turtles, and playful Galapagos sea lions.

Post Office Bay is steeped in history and received its name thanks to a post box that was placed ashore before 1813. Ships that were visiting the Galapagos on multi-year voyages would leave letters here to be collected and delivered by vessels on their way home. Visitors today can keep the tradition alive by leaving their own postcards in the post box (now a barrel) and looking for any they can deliver by hand back at home. The bay itself offers kayaking along the shore and into Mystery Bay, snorkeling, swimming and relaxing on the beach.

Floreana Island's northernmost point is called Punta Cormorant – named after the British naval vessel HMS Cormorant and dating back to the late 19th century. From the landing beach a short track leads to a shallow lagoon that is famous for its flamingos. The brilliantly pink birds skim the salty waters for shrimp and tend to chicks on the nest. The trail then scales a low hillside through scattered Palo Santo trees to reveal an idyllic white-sand beach on the other side of the point.

Day 7 — Cerro Dragón, Las Bachas

Cerro Dragón's land iguanas once played an important part in a conservation program headed by the Charles Darwin Foundation and the Galapagos National Park. When the reptiles' numbers declined in the 1970s, some animals were taken to breed in captivity and were released back into undeveloped areas. Today, we see the success of this program firsthand at Cerro Dragón. Walk inland on a trail past small saltwater lagoons that periodically feature flamingos, to see the reintroduced animals. In a periodic local phenomenon, during rainier times the salinity in the lagoons drops with the inflow of freshwater.

On the northern shore of Santa Cruz stretch the Las Bachas beaches. The two beaches together span a full kilometer. A short track leads visitors inland towards a shallow pond with the opportunity to spot flamingos, migratory birds in season, and scavenging shorebirds. On our visit to Las Bachas there will be the chance to swim from one of the two sandy beaches and to look for sea turtles that use Las Bachas as one of their major nesting sites in the islands.

Day 8 — The Twins, Puerto Ayora, Charles Darwin Research Station

Los Gemelos are twin sinkholes, one on either side of the road running from Puerto Ayora to the north side of the island. The mammoth scale of the landmarks often elicits exclamations of wonder from visitors at first sight. The vertical walls of the sinkholes fall deep into the ground covered in a veil of greenery hiding the bottom of the pit. Walk along the craters' edges before stopping at Rancho El Manzanillo to see giant Santa Cruz tortoises in the wild. On the ranch swap walking shoes for knee-high rubber boots and wade out in to the green fields to come close to majestic giant tortoises.

Silver Galapagos will anchor in front of Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz, where the prestigious Charles Darwin Research Station is located. In addition to these star species, throughout the station there are huge prickly pear cactus trees being fed upon by the pretty Galapagos Cactus Finch.

Day 10 — Baltra - Disembark

Following breakfast, disembark Silver Galapagos for your return flight from Baltra Airport to Guayaquil and connect with your flight home, or to other adventures in Ecuador, Peru, or other South American attractions.



SILVER GALAPAGOS

GUESTS: 100

The Galápagos All-Inclusive Experience Includes:

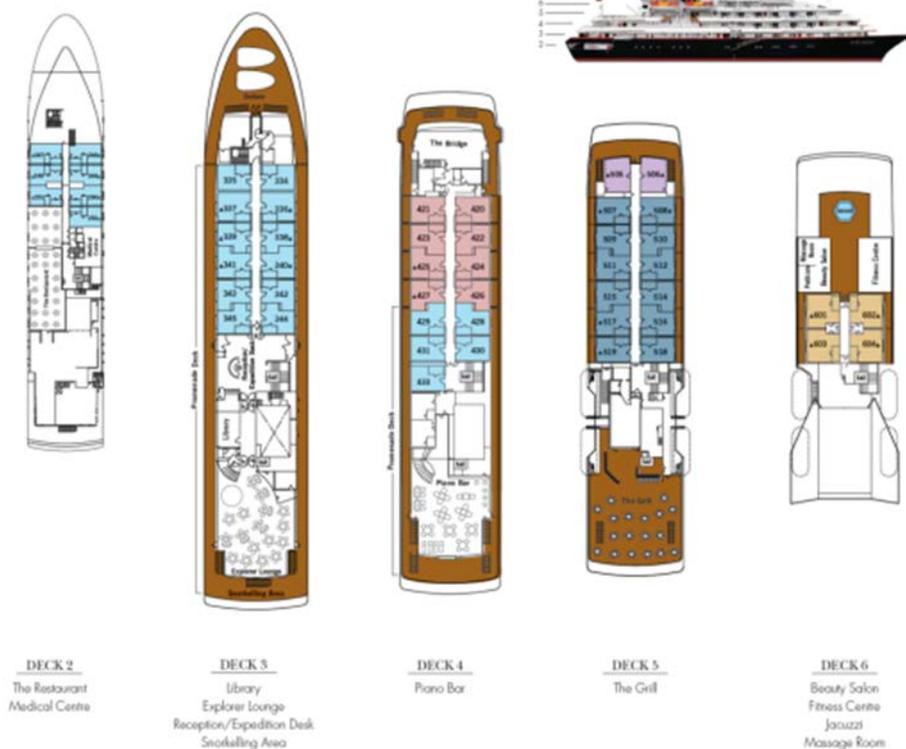
Flights between Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands; Transfers; Two pre- and one post- Hotel*; National Park fees; Personalized service – the best crew-to-guest ratio in expedition cruising; Butler service in every suite; Open-seating dining options; Beverages in-suite and throughout the ship – select wines, premium spirits, specialty coffees and soft drinks, plus your own tailored mini-bar; In-suite dining and room service – available from 06:00 to 23:00; Enrichment lectures by a highly qualified Expeditions Team; Guided Zodiac, land and sea tours, and shoreside activities led by the Expeditions Team

PLUS-

Gratuities always included in your fare
Low Cost Economy Air – \$199 Economy RT Air (East Coast Gateways) and \$299 Economy RT Air (West Coast Gateways).

*For guests with flights after 10 pm

Silver Galapagos – DECK PLAN



Reservations & Information
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