

**FINCH BAY 5 DAY PROGRAM**  
**DECEMBER 24 TO 28-2014**

**Wednesday**

**Santa Cruz Island**

Upon arrival to the airport at Baltra Island, we go across the Itabaca Channel, to Santa Cruz Island where a bus takes us to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island for a visit to the Giant Tortoises Reserve in their natural habitat, a once in a lifetime experience! . Box lunch is provided and then on to the Finch Bay Eco Hotel to enjoy its multiple attractions: pool, the white coral beach in front of the hotel and rest on your hammock. In the evening, dinner includes the delicacies of local and international gastronomy, one of the main reasons people choose the Finch Bay Hotel.



**Yacht Excursions to nearby islands:**

**Thursday**

**Santa Fe Island (yacht excursion)**

A short trek leads through woods of Opuntia cacti and Palo Santo trees. Land iguanas (endemic to Santa Fe), lava lizards and colonies of sea lions can be observed. There is opportunity to swim and snorkel.

Santa Fe offers one of the more beautiful and sheltered coves in the islands. Its turquoise lagoon is protected by a peninsula of tiny islets forming an ideal anchorage. The island lies to the southeast of Santa Cruz within sight of Puerto Ayora. Like North Seymour, Santa Fe has been uplifted seismically, and you can see underwater lava formations. A wet landing in a sandy white beach brings us into contact with one of the many sea lion harems. Bulls vie for the right to be Beach Master, while smaller males masquerade as females, intent on making stealthy mating moves. Galápagos hawks are often easily approached, perched atop salt bushes. The giant prickly pear cactus found here live up to their name, with tree-sized trunks! Our goal is to spot one of the large species of land iguana native to Santa Fe. Beige to chocolate brown in color with dragon-like spines, these huge iguanas truly resemble dinosaurs. An indigenous species of rice rat also inhabits the thickest, and lucky hikers can spot harmless Galápagos snakes. After the hike, there is nothing more inviting than a swim in the calm waters of the bay.

- Wet landing: as the dinghy edges onto a sandy beach, guests step into 20 cm (7.9 in) deep water and wade ashore.



## Friday

### Plaza Island (yacht Excursion)

This small island is teeming with wildlife, sea side and along the cliffs: sea lions, land iguanas, swallow-tailed gulls, red-billed tropic bird, Opuntia cacti and vegetation that changes colors with the seasons.

This is the southern partner of two small crescent-shaped islands that lie just a few hundred meters off the east coast of Santa Cruz. The northern island is used for scientific purposes only. South Plaza is one of the smallest yet richest islands in the archipelago. Only 130 meters wide (426 feet), it was formed from uplifted seabed, giving it a tilted tabletop quality. Our landing is in the channel between North and

South Plaza, where the island slopes down toward the water. The approach makes for a lavishly colorful sight! The turquoise waters of the channel contrast brilliantly with the white sand and black lava of the shoreline. The rocks have grown thick with green seaweed in places, speckled with bright orange "Sally light foot" crabs. Further up the shore a carpet of scarlet sesuvium succulents serves as groundcover for a grove of luminescent green prickly-pear cactus. Yellow-gray land iguanas sit beneath, waiting patiently for pears to drop. The trail gradually follows the tilt of the island to the cliffs that overlook the ocean to the south, where swallow-tailed gulls nest. Red-billed tropic birds, Nazca and blue-footed boobies ride the windy currents. The overlook is a great place for spotting large marine life, including manta rays. Surf pounds an inlet at the western corner of the island, where a colony of sea lion bachelors make their home, accounting for the surface of the rocks, polished by the oils of their fur.

The guide will find the right spot to snorkel, on Punta Carrion, which is a small bay where we can snorkel from the boat to see a variety of fish, rays and possibly white tip reef sharks.



● **Dry landing:** guests step from the dinghy onto rocks or a dock.

***Time table for reference only, please reconfirm information at front desk or with your local guide.***

- 06h30 Breakfast is ready
- 07h45 Departure from the Finch Bay Eco Hotel
- 16h00 Arrival back at Municipal dock

## **Saturday**

### **Bartolomé Island (yacht Excursion)**

The trail is a fairly steep climb on wooden steps to the summit, worth the effort, as there is a spectacular view of the Galapagos scenery from above. Interesting lava formations and tuff cones can be observed. Sea lions and penguins swim in the vicinity of Pinnacle Rock. Enjoy snorkeling or swimming from the beach.

Bartolomé is famous for Pinnacle Rock, a towering spearheaded obelisk that rises from the ocean's edge and is the best known landmark in the islands. Galápagos penguins—the only species of penguin found north of the equator—walk precariously along narrow volcanic ledges at its base. Sea lions snooze on rocky platforms, ready to slide into the water to play with passing snorkelers. Just below the surface, shoals of tropical fish dodge in and out of the rocks past urchins, sea stars and anemones. A perfectly crescent, pink-and-white sandy beach lies just to the east of the pinnacle. Sea turtles use the beach as a nesting site and can sometimes be found wading in the shallow water near the shore, or resting in the sand to recover from the arduous task of digging nests, laying eggs and covering them over. Penguins dot the nearby rocks of the next landing site, less than a kilometer along the eastern shore. Here the submerged walls of a tiny volcanic crater give the impression of a fountain pool. The



first dry landing is the entrance to a 600-meter (2000-foot) pathway complete with stairs and boardwalks leading to Bartolome's summit. The route is not difficult and presents a museum of vulcanology; a site left untouched after its last eruption, where cones stand in various stages of erosion and lava tubes form bobsled-like runs from the summit. At the top you will be rewarded with spectacular views of Santiago Island and James Bay to the west, and far below, Pinnacle Rock and our beach, where the crystal blue waters of the bay cradle your yacht.

- **Dry landing:** guests step from the dinghy onto rocks or a dock.
- **Wet landing:** as the dinghy edges onto a sandy beach, guests step into 20 cm (7.9 in) deep water and wade ashore.

***Time table for reference only, please reconfirm information at front desk or with your local guide.***

- 06h15 Breakfast is ready
- 07h00 Departure from the Finch Bay Eco Hotel
- 17h45 Arrival back at Municipal dock

### **Sunday**

We leave the hotel early in the morning for a visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station, and the giant tortoise pens within an impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest home to many land birds. These are the headquarters of scientific investigation, conservation and the National Park administration. Then we make a stop at the Twin Pit Craters, great depressions of volcanic material, formed by a long process of slow sinking of the ground, where exceptional Scalesia trees, ferns, mosses and orchids can be seen in the surroundings.

After this visit, we proceed directly to the airport, overland transfer to the airport in Baltra to take the flight back to the continent. Please check carefully that all your belongings have been packed and don't leave anything in the hotel, Have a nice trip!

### **Package Includes:**

- Transfer in /out*
- 4-night accommodation*
- All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)*
- 3 full-day excursions*
- Guided visit to Charles Darwin Research Station*
- Facilities: Pool, Beach-front access, internet access Wi-Fi.*
- Taxes Included*
- Internet access Wi-Fi*



**Not Included:**

- Air ticket to/from Galápagos
- Entrance fee to Galapagos National Park (US\$ 100 per person subject to change without notice)
- Transit Control Card for Galapagos (US\$ 10 per person subject to change without notice)
- Personal expenses
- Beverages and bar consumption
- Gratuities, tips.
- Sea kayaks
- \*Additional activities or multisport

**Important Notes:**

- Yachts excursions to the nearby islands are subject to availability.
- Daily excursions by yacht are subject to change due to climatic or oceanic conditions, regulations of the Galápagos National Park and always taking in consideration our guest's safety and well-being.
- Due to operational reasons, we cannot always confirm which of the two islands guests will visit on Thursdays. But if they or you have a particular request to visit either North Seymour or Santa Fe, we will do our best to accommodate that wish.
- \*At extra cost to be considered: Many options for multisport activities are available for those guests not wishing to take a yacht excursion to visit nearby islands, please ask for further information at hotel front desk, featuring:

- Excursions on mountain bike
- Introduction to diving (Discover Scuba Diving)
- Snorkelling
- Hikes to Tortuga Bay or Las Grietas
- Sea Kayaking
- Stargazing and much more...

**For the best possible experience we recommend:**

- Before departure, a bountiful buffet breakfast will be ready.
- For the excursions, please take solar protection, cap or hat.
- Bathing suit, long-sleeved shirt, snorkeling gear.
- Cameras or camcorder
- Appropriate shoes for wet landing and hikes on lava terrain (sneakers or similar) with rubber soles.



- Lunch is served on board the yacht.*
- Bottle for water*
- Upon return, there will be time to relax in the hotel's surroundings before dinner.*

**Finch Bay Hotel Services and Facilities featuring:**

- Private Yacht Sea Finch available for daily tours* [More info click here](#)
- Private Yacht Sea Lion available for daily tours* [More info click here](#)
- Kids all ages welcome*
- On-site activities available(snorkeling, kayaking, bike rentals, hiking and more)*
- Wifi Internet*
- Pool (our special guests are local birds like herons, ducks and finches)* *Restaurant/Bar*
- Airport pick up and drop off available (at extra cost when is not part of packages)*
- A/C*
- Hammocks on porch/balcony of rooms*
- Beachfront access*
- Breakfast buffet included (Some of the plates you can find include: bacon, sausage, pancakes, waffles, fresh fruit juices, toast, eggs, cheeses, omelet*