



GALAPAGOS EXPLORER: CENTRAL ISLANDS (GRAND QUEEN BEATRIZ)

Spot bright, bizarre and beautiful wildlife on this exciting adventure through the Galapagos Islands. As we fly from Quito to the Galapagos Islands, located in the equatorial water of the Pacific Ocean, we suddenly find ourselves in a very different world. As we board our vessel, the M.Y. Grand Queen Beatriz, and follow in the footsteps of Charles Darwin, we start to encounter nature at its finest. This is indeed the Galapagos journey with something for everyone. Is this trip right for you? Although we don't ask travellers to complete a Physical Participation Form for this trip, we do ask that you read through the trip notes carefully to ensure that this trip is right for you. You'll need to feel comfortable with the included activities and with moving about the boat. The cabins and communal areas of the boat are spread over four decks, and the steps between the decks are steep. You will be entering and exiting a Zodiac boat (panga) during wet and dry landings and when returning from snorkelling. Although the waters we sail are usually calm, there are times when the sea can get rough and choppy. Steady sea legs (and a sturdy stomach) are needed when walking around the boat during bad weather. Rain or shine, your trusty crew will always be on hand to assist you. A typical yacht/boat for sixteen travellers is equipped with eight cabins each with en-suites. They are designed to maximise living area space, so sleeping quarters can be a bit cramped. That being said, the adventure and exhilaration of an authentic Galapagos trip more than makes up for any discomfort. While at sea and when exploring the islands, you may be exposed to the sun for large parts of the day. It's important to use sun protection and drink plenty of water. Please note that while there is an itinerary in place, some

changes may occur due to the weather or because of direction from the local authorities. This can happen with little notice so please be prepared for potential modifications to the route or activities. A sense of humour and flexibility will ensure you have a fun, relaxing trip through this beautiful part of the world no matter what happens. All of our Galapagos tours begin and end in Quito which is located approximately 2850 metres above sea level so you may experience some



altitude sickness.

ITINERARY

Day 1: (Tue) Arrive in Quito and transfer to hotel.

On arrival at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day will be at your leisure. A welcome meeting will be held in the evening at either 5pm or 6 pm when you meet others travelling



with you on your cruise to the Galapagos Islands. Please check with hotel reception or check the reception notice boards for the time and place of the meeting for your trip. As today is an arrival day, you can arrive at any time as there are no activities planned until this important meeting. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early so you're able to attend. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). Quito sits at high altitude under the towering Pichincha volcano. It is a beautiful city, arguably one of the most beautiful in South America. The city stretches along the valley and is surrounded by the Andes. The Old Town of Quito is awash with history, with more than 30 churches to explore, and a number of fascinating museums. La Compania de Jesus is considered to be the most beautiful and ornate churches in the Americas. The city's oldest street, Calle La Ronda, is well worth exploring. As this trip spends very little time in Quito, we recommend you spend a few extra days before or after your trip to experience all the city has to offer. You may even wish to explore further beyond the city and visit Otavalo, Cotopaxi, the Cloud Forest or the Equatorial Monument. Special Information Quito is located at 2850 metres above sea level. At this altitude you may experience some of the milder effects of altitude sickness, such as dizziness, insomnia and a shortness of breath. If so, we recommend you avoid any strenuous activity. Please see the "Medical & Health Information" section for more details.

Day 2: Baltra - Charles Darwin Research Station

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos Islands. Please note the pick-up time will usually be as early as 4:30 am (a boxed breakfast will be provided), as the airport is a one-hour drive away and you must

allow for delays and check-in times. (Your tour leader will confirm this time with you at the Welcome Meeting on Day 1). A US\$20 per person transit card is payable on departure at Quito Airport and a US\$100 per person national park entry fee is payable on arrival on the islands. Please have cash on hand for these transactions as credit cards are not accepted. The flight to the Galapagos will make one stop in Guayaquil to pick up other passengers. (Total flight time is about 3.5 hours). On arrival in the Galapagos, you will be met in the arrival hall of the airport (look out for 'Grand Queen Beatriz' signs) by a transfer guide and transferred to our motor yacht - 'M.Y. Grand Queen Beatriz', anchored on the other side of Isla Santa Cruz. Our transfer guide will take you on an airport public bus for a short distance (5 minute drive) to where you board a public ferry across the Itabaca Channel. The ferry crossing takes only 7 minutes. (Please note that all public transportation costs are included). Once you reach Santa Cruz Island, a private bus you board a private bus for a 45-minute drive to Puerto Ayora, the main port of the island. Here, there will be two dinghies to transport you and your fellow travellers to the 'M.Y. Grand Queen Beatriz'. Once on board, cabins will be assigned and there will be a welcome briefing and safety drill. You will then get to meet our crew members and get to know your naturalist guide while enjoying a delicious lunch. Your first stop in the afternoon is Santa Cruz, the second largest island in the Galapagos. The small town of Puerto Ayora is the economic centre of the archipelago, and home to the Charles Darwin Research Station. As well as undertaking vital conservation work, the station also makes for interesting exploration and offers the best opportunities for close encounters with giant tortoises. You will also observe baby tortoises and land iguanas. Estimated travel time/distance: Puerto Ayora to North Seymour: 4 hours (35



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nautical miles) Special Information Today is predominately a long travel day with an early morning start. Your first activity on the islands will not commence until after lunch. The airline we use to and from the Galapagos islands will provide a small snack but because it is such a long travel day we recommend that you carry your own snacks as well. The snacks they do provide are not gluten free, so if you require a gluten free diet, please ensure you carry your own. Please also keep in mind that the Galapagos has strict quarantine regulations in regards to bringing food onto the islands with many fruits and vegetables being on the restricted list. There will be time after check-in and before departure to buy snacks.

Day 3: North Seymour - Isla Mosquera

Today you will take a morning excursion to North Seymour which is one of the most visited islands in the Galapagos. The trail on North Seymour crosses inland through the island and then explores the rocky coast. Along the way the trail passes colonies of blue footed boobies and frigate birds. The magnificent frigate bird, a large black bird with a long wingspan, and a hooked beak, is extremely fast and has excellent vision. Frigate birds are known for the large red pouch on their necks. During mating season the males throw back their heads, inflate the pouch (sometimes to the size of a soccer ball), and shake trying to capture the attention of female frigates. Boobies and frigates have an interesting relationship. Sharing the same nesting area on North Seymour, blue-footed boobies nest on the ground making their nests from the twigs of the palo santos trees, while the frigate birds nests just above them in the saltbushes. Your walk is followed by snorkelling where you will find a great variety of fish and possibly white-tipped reef sharks, rays and sea lions. After lunch you will visit the small sandy island of Mosquera, a

relaxing, picturesque stop situated between Isla Baltra and North Seymour. Along the rocks and in the tide pool, Sally Lightfoot crabs (red lava crabs) scamper back and forth, skipping across small pools of water in search of food. These crabs with their bright red shell tops and blue under shells are stunning against the black lava. The island also has a very large colony of sea lions as well as a sizeable resident brown pelican population. Depending on the tides and visibility, you may have a chance to go snorkelling here. Estimated travel time/distance: North Seymour to Isla Baltra: 4 hours (35 nautical miles) Isla Baltra to Caleta Tortuga: 1 hour (7 nautical miles)

Day 4: Black Turtle Cove - Cerro Dragon.

Today you will take a morning excursion on a 'panga' to Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) - a red mangrove wetland on the north shore of Isla Santa Cruz. You will paddle among the cove's peaceful waters, for your first taste of the underwater riches of this region - it's a wonderful place to see green turtle and is a nursery for golden cow-nose rays, eagle rays and Galapagos sharks. There is also abundant birdlife, such as the yellow warbler and lava heron. This is also a breeding area for turtles, so it is not uncommon to see them mating. In the afternoon, cruise over for a walk on Cerro Dragon (Dragon Hill) this afternoon - one of the best places to see land iguanas in the islands. From our dry landing we walk to a brackish lagoon frequented by lagoon birds including stilts, pintail ducks, sandpipers, sanderlings and occasionally flamingos. Further inland, the trail offers a beautiful view of the bay and the western area of the archipelago. This area is a nesting site for land iguanas, which is constantly monitored and assisted by the Charles Darwin Research Station. The arid-zone vegetation makes for a rewarding location for birdwatching with Darwin's



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finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, the endemic Galapagos flycatcher and yellow warblers all regulars here. The path can be challenging but you will be well-rewarded with a spectacular view of the bay! Estimated travel time/distance: Caleta Tortuga Negra to Cerro Dragon: 2 hours (12 nautical miles) Cerro Dragon to Sombrero Chino: 1.5 hours (9 nautical miles)

Day 5: Isla Rabida - Sombrero Chino

Sombrero Chino is a small islet located near the south-east coast of Santiago. It's shaped like a Chinese hat (Sombrero Chino) when seen from afar, and is geologically fascinating, with many lava tubes leading from the cone to the coast. We approach Sombrero Chino via a beautiful crescent-shaped, sandy beach that is home to sea lions and Sally Lightfoot crabs. Opposite Sombrero Chino, on the rocky shoreline of nearby Santiago, Galapagos penguins are often seen. We follow a trail that circles the cove and passes through a sea lion colony and innumerable marine iguanas. The cove also offers some great snorkelling opportunities, hopefully with penguins and sharks. Isla Rabida, also known as Jervis Island, is a tiny island sitting roughly five kilometres south of Santiago and is one of the most striking of the archipelago. Introduced species were eradicated in 1971, meaning that the indigenous wildlife has now been returned to a state of splendid isolation. Additionally, volcanic activity here has produced vivid, fantastical colours, not least the beaches of red sand and cliffs of scarlet. From the shore, the trail leads through to what is one of the finest lagoons in the Galapagos for viewing flamingos. Rabida is also a wonderful place to spot nesting pelicans. Elsewhere, pintail ducks, marine iguanas and sea lions are all present. There is an opportunity for snorkelling in a place where sea stars, damsels, gobbies and surgeon fish are numerous. Estimated travel time/distance:

Sombrero Chino to Isla Rabida: 1 hour (7 nautical miles) Isla Rabida to Bachas Beach: 1 hour (7 nautical miles)

Day 6: Las Bachas - Baltra - Quito

As flights to the mainland from Galapagos depart mid morning, it is an early start for our last morning on the islands. Depending on the time of our flight, our time spent on this final excursion could be limited. As you will be leaving the boat this morning, please remember that if you have enjoyed the services provided by your guide and crew, a tip would be very much appreciated by them. As a guideline we recommend each passenger consider US\$15 per day for the crew and US\$10 per day for your guide. You can leave tips in envelopes that are placed in your cabin on the last day of your journey. Today you will take an early morning excursion to Las Bachas, which was so named after the barges abandoned by the American Navy here in the 1940s. The sandy, white beaches of Las Bachas on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island are a nesting site for the Pacific green turtle, and marine iguanas are also commonly seen. The sand here is particularly white and soft as it is made of decomposed coral. The rocks provide great snorkelling and are the perfect habitat for the Sally Lightfoot crabs, which are plentiful on the island. A saltwater lagoon near the beach is home to flamingo and whimbrel, and look out too for great blue herons. This is your final excursion before you return to the airport in Isla Baltra for your flight back to Quito. The flight will stopover in Guayaquil to drop off/pick up new passengers. Upon arrival in Quito Airport (approx. 4pm) you will be transferred back to your hotel for an overnight stay. Our local representative may stop by at your hotel this evening to get your feedback on your Galapagos experience. Estimated travel times/distance: Queen Beatriz to Isla Baltra: 15 mins Flight time Isla Baltra to Quito: approx 3.5



hours (including transit in Guayaquil) Transfer Quito Airport to Hotel: 1 hour (depending on traffic) Special Information Today is predominately a long travel day with an early morning start. There will be a short morning activity before our mid-morning flight back to the mainland. The flight back to Quito is not due to arrive until late afternoon getting back to the hotel in time for an optional final group dinner.

Day 7: End Quito (Mon).

Your Galapagos adventure will come to an end today after breakfast. There are no activities planned for the final day so you are able to depart the accommodation at any time. There are many fascinating things to do in and around Quito, so please speak to our customer service representative about any optional activities that might be of interest. They can also assist you in booking a departure transfer to the airport.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: GRAND QUEEN BEATRIZ

YOUR SHIP:	Grand Queen Beatriz
VESSEL TYPE:	Yacht
LENGTH:	30.20 metres
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	16
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2018

Welcome aboard our Queen Bea! Experience the 'Enchanted Islands' in our new custom-built yacht, the Grand Queen Beatriz. Custom built, with a stylish modern design, ensuite bathrooms, outward-facing windows in all cabins (and private balconies in some), and a jacuzzi on the sundeck, the 'Grand Queen Bea' will be one of the newest boats operating in the Galapagos. Facilities - All meals while on board, Sun deck and spa, Indoor and outdoor bar, TV/Lounge, Onboard gift shop Equipment - Snorkelling equipment, Wetsuits, Beach towels Accessibility - Stairs connect each deck, there is no elevator



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