



KICKER ROCK (LEÓN DORMIDO)

GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

Investigating Endemic Wildlife & Geological Formations

Texas Association of Biology Teachers

June 19-29, 2024



The Galápagos have long intrigued outsiders with their endemic flora and fauna, geological activity, and unusual terrain. Accompanied by an onboard naturalist guide, this small-group cruise expedition offers a front-row seat for exploring the eastern islands. Stunning formations like saw-toothed Kicker Rock and Cerro Brujo, volcanic calderas, sandy beaches, and teeming lagoons play host to iconic wildlife like red- and blue-footed Boobies, turtles and tortoises, iguanas, and more. With no fear of human predation, many creatures can be approached at close range; you can even swim with the sea lions. Also examine the archipelago's sparse but dramatic human history, from 18th century whalers and pirates to its role in World War II and present-day inhabitants.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the *Opuntia* cactus forest on South Plaza Island and observe colonies of land iguanas.
- Learn about important conservation efforts at the Charles Darwin Research Station's tortoise breeding center.
- Walk along the lava beds of Española Island, one of the best places in the world to see the waved albatross.
- Come face-to-face with sea lions, turtles, sharks, rays, and colorful fish while snorkeling at Champion Islet.
- Take part in a centuries-old tradition by leaving a postcard in the barrel at Post Office Bay.



M/C TIP TOP II



OPUNTIA CACTUS

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

JUNE 19 - QUITO

Upon arrival in Quito, after clearing customs and immigration, you will be met and escorted to your hotel. Arrival into Quito should be on a Wednesday for the Friday cruise departure. *Overnight at San Jose de Puenbo.*

JUNE 20 - QUITO

After breakfast, take a city tour of Quito, Ecuador's capital. Surrounded by volcanoes, Quito is a unique city that boasts one of the largest and best-preserved colonial centers in America, earning it recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Also travel north of the city to the equator and the Middle of the World Monument. Please note: You may substitute the city tour and monument visit with a full day excursion to Otavalo market, Cotopaxi National Park, Antisana Reserve, or Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve for an additional cost. Before dinner, attend a lecture, "Introduction to Geology of the Galápagos Islands." *Overnight at San Jose de Puenbo. (BLD)*

JUNE 21 - GALÁPAGOS

Fly from mainland Ecuador to Baltra. Transfer to the dock and board M/C Tip Top II or V, attend your first orientation, and have a light snack. Disembark and visit a flamingo lagoon at Playa Las Bachas, a beach that was used by the U.S. Army during World War II. (The name "Bachas" refers to two U.S. barges that were left here.) Attend an evening presentation on the origin and evolution of

the Galápagos Islands, and enjoy a welcome cocktail with the entire crew, followed by dinner. Each day there will be a briefing about the next day's activities, and time for optional swimming, snorkeling and/or kayaking. *Overnight aboard Tip Top II. (BLD)*

JUNE 22 - GALÁPAGOS

Today go for a panga boat ride, landing at Prince Philip's Steps (El Barranco) on Genovesa Island to walk and observe the interesting lives of the birds here. Look for Nazca and red-footed boobies, Galápagos doves, Swallow-tailed gulls, and the Galápagos short-eared owl. Return to the yacht for lunch, then visit Darwin Bay, home to frigatebirds, herons, mockingbirds, boobies, shorebirds, turtles, marine iguanas, and more. Have dinner on the boat, and later attend an evening orientation to learn about conservation efforts to protect the islands. *Overnight aboard Tip Top II. (BLD)*



LAND IGUANA BY DAIN VAN SCHOYCK

JUNE 23- GALÁPAGOS

After breakfast, go ashore at South Plaza Island, where a walk through an *Opuntia* cactus forest allows you to observe land iguanas and many species of tropical birds. Return to the yacht for lunch, and then sail to Santa Fé Island for the chance to see a different species of land iguana, endemic only to this island. *Overnight aboard Tip Top II. (BLD)*

JUNE 24 - GALÁPAGOS

After breakfast, disembark and take the bus to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island for a visit to the lush, green *Scalesia* forests in El Chato Reserve. Visit a farm to have lunch and search for giant tortoises in the wild. Next, head to the town of Puerto Ayora and visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and Fausto Llerena Breeding Center. Learn about the station's important conservation and education work, and see some of the tortoises that are being raised for reintroduction into the wild. Return to the yacht for dinner and your nightly orientation. *Overnight aboard Tip Top II. (BLD)*

JUNE 25 - GALÁPAGOS

After breakfast, disembark at Floreana Island and walk to Baroness Viewpoint, named after the Baroness Eloise von Wagner who once lived here. Enjoy the beautiful landscape and observe the ruins of her house. Continue to Post Office Bay. In the 18th century, whalers placed a wooden barrel here to use as an informal post office, and today, visitors continue the tradition by leaving their own postcards in the barrel. Return to the yacht for lunch. In the afternoon, visit Cormorant Point for a short walk to the island's Flamingo Lagoon. Continue walking to a beach known as La Picona to observe sea turtles and their spawning grounds. Afterwards, go snorkeling at nearby Champion Islet, considered one of the best snorkeling sites in the islands, and look for tropical fish, moray eels, starfish, sharks, sea turtles, and sea lions. *Overnight aboard Tip Top II. (BLD)*

JUNE 26 - GALÁPAGOS

After breakfast, visit Punta Suárez on Española Island to walk along lava beds and observe unique

colonies of marine birds. From April to December, this is one of the best places in the world to see the Waved Albatross, which nests primarily on this island. After lunch aboard the yacht, land at Gardner Bay for a walk on the beach to observe sea lions, which inhabit the beach in great quantities during the breeding season. Then, take a panga ride around Osborn Islet and the islets of Gardner. *Overnight aboard Tip Top II. (BLD)*

JUNE 27 - GALÁPAGOS

Have breakfast onboard, then disembark at Baquerizo Moreno Port on San Cristóbal Island and drive to the Jacinto Gordillo Breeding Center to learn about the tortoise reproductive process and the programs to help maintain the species. Take the bus back to port for a visit to the Interpretation Center, which tells the story of the geological and human history of the islands and their conservation. After lunch, visit Cerro Brujo to walk on a white sand beach and observe sea lions, brown pelicans, marine iguanas, and blue-footed boobies. Later sail around Kicker Rock (León Dormido), a massive tuff rock that juts almost 500 feet above the ocean surface and serves as a nesting place for many sea birds. *Overnight aboard Tip Top II. (BLD)*



BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY BY REINIER MUNGUÍA

JUNE 28 - QUITO

Take one last boat ride this morning around Black Turtle Cove, a series of coves and islets surrounded by mangroves, where you can observe white-tipped reef sharks, marine turtles, spotted eagle rays, and yellow cow-nosed rays. Return to the boat and disembark on the pier to take the bus directly to the airport in Baltra for your flight to Quito. A snack will be served on the flight. This afternoon is at leisure before the farewell dinner at the hotel this evening. *Overnight at San Jose de Puembo.. (BD)*

JUNE 29 11 - DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for your flight home. (B)

**Important note: Cruise itineraries are subject to change without prior notice due to various factors including, but not limited to: safety, weather, unforeseen circumstances, or at the discretion of the Captain, Guide, or the Galápagos National Park.*

LAND PRICING

\$5,625 based on a group of 15

\$6,650 based on a group of 12

Price is based on a group of 15 and includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, flights within Ecuador (Quito-Baltra-San Cristobal-Quito), private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, Galápagos National Park fee, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$1,000 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 180 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payment is due at 180 days prior to departure

TO ENROLL VISIT:

<https://holbrook.travel/tabt-gp24>

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Alton Biggs, TABT
altonb@ix.netcom.com
(903)886-2240

or

Lisa Palmese-Graubard, Holbrook
lisa@holbrooktravel.com
800-451-7111



GALÁPAGOS GIANT TORTOISE BY JILL RICHMOND



GALÁPAGOS SEA LION BY LINDSAY TAULBEE



ACTIVITY LEVEL

4

MODERATE-STRENUOUS

WHAT TO EXPECT

This expedition cruise has a natural history focus, visiting approximately six islands (based on local conditions) to observe the archipelago's geological, topographical, and biological diversity. You'll also delve into Ecuador's cultural heritage with a choice of tours from Quito. Explore by boat and small panga craft, making wet and dry landings and stopping to walk, hike, swim, snorkel, kayak, and ride dinghies. Walks and hikes traverse sandy beaches and dirt paths that can be rocky, dusty or uneven. Your hike to Bartolomé viewpoint features more than 90 stairs. Between November and April temperatures range between 86°–92°F; with waters between 72°–80°F and mostly calm seas. From May to October temperatures range between 78°–84°F, with frequent drizzling garúa rain; and water temperatures between 64°–70°F and occasionally rough seas. There is one roundtrip flight between the mainland and Galápagos. The order of activities and islands visited may change based on local conditions.

