

GALÁPAGOS

Natural History and Evolution of Galápagos Fauna

MAR 452/452L (4 credits)

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Tentative Travel Dates: June 1-11 | Estimated Travel Fee: \$6,600

DAY 1 | Fly to Quito, Ecuador

Fly from Boston to Quito, Ecuador. Escorted to hotel upon arrival.

DAY 2 | Otavalo market and indigenous culture

After breakfast, receive a brief orientation, then visit the town of Otavalo and the famous Otavalo market. The Otavaleños are a trader community by tradition, and are known worldwide for their wonderful work on textiles and tapestries. Visit Peguche, where textiles are still woven using shuttle looms. Taste the flavors of the Andean cuisine while enjoying lunch prepared with typical ingredients and products from the Ecuadorian highlands. After lunch, continue to Cotacachi, a multicultural city famous for producing high quality handmade leather goods that include wallets, purses, and jackets. In the afternoon, return to Quito.

DAY 3 | Fly to Galápagos Islands, board yacht

Fly from mainland Ecuador to Baltra. After boarding M/C Tip Top II, attend first orientation and have a light snack. After lunch, disembark on Mosquera Islet, a reef of rocks and coral and a white sand beach. Observe colonies of sea lions, Brown Pelicans, Blue-footed Boobies, and Sally Lightfoot crabs. Each night during the cruise there will be an orientation to discuss the events of the day and the next day's plans.

DAY 4 | Galápagos: Sullivan Bay & Rábida Island

After breakfast, go ashore at Sullivan Bay on Santiago Island, a perfect place to get a feel for the volcanic origin of the islands. Look for new plant growth among the two distinct types of lava, pahoehoe and a'a. Return to the boat for lunch, followed by an excursion on Rábida Island, distinguished by its red sand beaches. Observe marine iguanas, sea lions, Blue-footed Boobies, Masked Boobies, and Brown Pelicans. Walk to a small saltwater lagoon to see Galápagos Flamingos.

Sample Itinerary

DAY 5 | Galápagos: Fernandina Island & Elizabeth Bay

After breakfast, visit Espinosa Point on Fernandina Island to observe a large colony of sea lions, marine iguanas, Flightless Cormorants, and clumps of lava cactus. In the afternoon, take a panga boat ride around the islets of Elizabeth Bay to look for marine iguanas, marine turtles, seabirds, shorebirds, herons, Galápagos Penguins, and Blue-footed Boobies. Attend an orientation to learn about conservation efforts to protect the islands.

DAY 6 | Galápagos: Isabela Island & Tagus Cove

After breakfast, disembark on Isabela Island at Urbina Bay, a coral area at the base of Alcedo Volcano with land iguanas, Flightless Cormorants, and giant tortoises. Return to the yacht for lunch. In the afternoon, take a panga ride around Tagus Cove, located between the shoulders of two volcanic craters, which protect it from the open sea. Observe marine iguanas, sea lions, and a variety of birds, including Galápagos Penguins, Flightless Cormorants, and Blue-footed Boobies.

DAY 7 | Galápagos: James Bay & Bartolomé Island

After breakfast, land at James Bay (Puerto Egas) on Santiago Island to walk and observe sponges, snails, hermit crabs, a variety of shore birds, barnacles, the endemic four-eyed blenny, marine iguanas, and sea lions. Visit Bartolomé Island in the afternoon to hike to the summit. During the hike, it's possible to observe colonies of marine iguanas and lava lizards, and on the summit see an impressive view of the surrounding islands, including the eroded tuff cone of Pinnacle Rock, one of the most iconic sights in the archipelago.

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DAY 8 | Galápagos: Chinese Hat & Santa Cruz Island

After breakfast, land on Chinese Hat (Sombrero Chino), a small island off the coast of Santiago Island. Observe Galápagos Penguins, eagle rays, sea lions, and marine iguanas from the rocky shoreline. In the afternoon, land at Dragon Hill on Santa Cruz Island, and see land iguanas and walk to a hypersaline lagoon (saltier than the ocean) to observe flamingos, Common Stilts, White-cheeked Pintails, and other bird species.

DAY 9 | Galápagos: Santa Cruz Island & Charles Darwin Research Center

After breakfast, disembark and take the bus to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island for a visit to the native forests and the Twin Craters, two formations that were created when surface material collapsed due to underground fissures. Visit a local farm to see giant tortoises in the wild and have lunch. Return to Puerto Ayora. Visit the Fausto Llerena Breeding Center and Interpretation Center inside the Charles Darwin Research Station. Return to the yacht for dinner and nightly orientation.

DAY 10 | Galápagos: North Seymour Island, Return to Quito, Ecuador

After breakfast, take an early morning walk along the coast and the interior of North Seymour Island, a low, flat island that was uplifted from the sea by underground seismic activity. Observe Blue-footed Boobies, which nest from May to November, as well as marine iguanas, pelicans, frigatebirds, shore birds, sea lions, and the endemic palo santo trees. Return to the yacht and navigate to the pier. Disembark at 9 am. Board bus for transfer directly to the airport. A small snack will be served on the flight. Enjoy the afternoon in Quito at leisure before gathering for a farewell dinner at the hotel in the evening.

DAY 11 | Fly to Boston

Transfer to airport for flight to Boston.



* Cruise itineraries are subject to change without prior notice due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. weather) or at the discretion of the captain, guide, or the Galápagos National Park.

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