



# Grand Daphne



# GRAND DAPHNE 5 DAYS ITINERARY

Day

Activities

1

## ARRIVAL TO BALTRA & SANTA CRUZ: HIGHLANDS

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 can be time consuming.

You are met in the arrival's hall by the cruise guide, and then transferred to our boat, the Grand Daphne, anchored a short distance away. Once on board you will be assigned your cabins, meet the crew members and get to know your naturalist guide and fellow travelers over a delicious lunch.

Then you visit the San Cristobal Interpretation Centre. The center brings the history and geography of the archipelago to life, from its volcanic origins to the present day. The human history exhibit offers an insight into the discovery and colonization of the Galapagos and all the problems the islands face today is also explored. This is a great place to get a complete overview of the Galapagos.



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## SANTA FE ISLAND & SOUTH PLAZAS ISLAND

Santa Fe is home to one of the biggest colonies of sea lions, and these ones are very eager for swimming partners! It's a lovely place to take a dip, as it offers a dense concentration of wildlife, and it is a fantastic place to see many of the Galapagos residents in one relatively small area. Expect to see Galapagos hawks, land iguanas, a variety of finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, sea lions, marine turtles, frigate birds, Galapagos doves and lava lizards. It's a naturally beautiful island as well with one of the most attractive coves in the archipelago and the jade-green waters are ideal for snorkeling. Our trail follows the coast into the opuntia forest, where we see Santa Fe's trees – the largest in the Galapagos.

Hiking into the island you can see a forest of giant cacti and Palo Santo trees. Once back at the beach we have free time to snorkel in the jade green water. Playful sea lion pups and fluorescent fish make for fascinating company.

In the afternoon, after lunch, you sail towards a small island, Plaza Sur (or South Plaza) is nonetheless a place of great beauty where we get close to sea lions and on to trails past one of the Galapagos' largest land iguana populations, resting amid cacti and volcanic landscapes colored bright red and green by sea-purslanes. The island's rugged southern cliffs are excellent places to spot tropicbirds and swallow-tailed gulls, as well as 'the Gentlemen's Club' – a gathering of male sea lions either too young or too old to be 'beach masters'!



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## GENOVESA ISLAND: PRINCE PHILIP'S STEPS & DARWIN BAY

It takes us an overnight sail to reach Genovesa Island, the archipelago's north-eastern outpost, but it is undeniably worth the voyage. Dolphins are often spotted in the waters around Genovesa while the island itself is one of abundant beauty, with varying landscapes and wonderful wildlife. It is also a paradise for all bird lovers, with all three kinds of boobies, including the rare red-footed booby, and of course the blue footed booby and Nazca booby, as well as numerous other species such as tropicbirds and frigate birds.

Walking the steep path known as Prince Philip's Steps get us into the heart of the seabird rookeries, with birds overhead and nesting among the cliffs. On the island's rocky plains we look out for storm petrels. Genovesa is the only place in the world where they can be seen flying during the day. Afterwards, cool off with a snorkel!

Darwin Beach is another superb site with large breeding colonies of seabirds and frigates and other birds such as lava herons, swallow-tailed gulls, mockingbirds and, hopefully, vampire finches. During the walk we will pass by tide pools with playful sea lions and diamond stingrays. The island's magnificent marine life also makes for spectacular snorkeling and with the chance of encountering manta rays, sharks, turtles and moray eels along with many types of fishes.



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## **SANTIAGO ISLAND: SULLIVAN BAY & RABIDA ISLAND**

Sailing back to the center of the Archipelago, you reach the eastern part of Santiago Island's also known as James Island. You will visit Sullivan Bay, where we take a walk on Pahoehoe lava that was created by an eruption that occurred in 1897 and witness the plants that have grown on the site since that last eruption. Hopefully we may see some marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, sea lions, finches, turtles, sharks and penguins. On our walk here, our guide will recount to us the geological history of the islands.

After lunch you head to Rabida Island, which is famously known for its gorgeous red sandy beach (due to the rusting of iron) and is one of the most striking islands in the entire archipelago. 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. Here we will find great opuntia cactus forest which suggests previous existence of land iguanas as well as possibly Galapagos hawks, mockingbirds, doves, finches and lava lizards. There is also an opportunity for snorkeling in a place where sea stars, damsels, gobies and surgeon fish are numerous.



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## SANTA CRUZ ISLAND: BLACK TURTLE COVE & BALTRA AIRPORT

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.

The boat will be anchored near Itabaca Channel, from where we take a panga ride to explore Caleta Tortuga Negra (Black Turtle Cove) – a red mangrove wetland on the north shore of Isla Santa Cruz. We paddle among the cove's peaceful waters to experience the underwater riches of these waters. It's a breeding area for green turtles, so it is not uncommon to see them mating. There is also abundant bird life, such as the yellow warbler and lava heron. It is also a nursery for golden cow-nose rays, eagle rays and Galapagos sharks.

Sadly, all good things must come to an end and we say farewell to the Galapagos Islands. We head to the airport for our mid-morning flight back to Quito or Guayaquil.





## Inclusions:

- ✓ Meals: From lunch on day 1, until breakfast on the final day
- ✓ Accommodation with private bathroom
- ✓ Excursions as listed in the itinerary, with a certified naturalist bilingual guide (Spanish/English)
- ✓ Snorkel equipment \*Depending on the cruise
- ✓ Drinking water, tea, coffee, snacks.
- ✓ Bus ticket Baltra Airport / Itabaca Channel - \$ 5 pp \* Depending on the cruise

## Exclusions:

- ✗ Entrance fees Galapagos: Galapagos National Park \$100pp (subject to change). Galapagos transit control card \$20pp (subject to change), Isabel docking fee \$15pp \*Depending on cruise. Santa Cruz Highland Tortoises ranch \$5 \* depending on the cruise. Bus ticket Baltra Airport / Itabaca Channel - \$5 \* depending on the cruise
- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Quito/Guayaquil - Galapagos - Quito/Guayaquil
- ✗ Airport transfers in Quito or Guayaquil
- ✗ Singles supplement \*Depending on the cruise
- ✗ Alcoholic beverages & colas (there is a bar on board)
- ✗ Tips for guides and crew
- ✗ Any other personal expenses.



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