GALAPAGOS LAND TOUR: OCEANO PROGRAM

Visiting: ***San Cristobal, Santa Cruz, Isabela Island + Navigable Island Site***

8 DAYS | **7 NIGHTS**

CODE: OP003

** Hotels depend on the category you choose – see alternatives bellow **
Hotels are subject to availability

DAY-BY-DAY TRIP ITINERARY

DEAR TRAVELER:

Please take the time to read thoroughly the following itinerary as many important details and recommendations about the program are explained here. If you should have any questions or concerns after reading this itinerary, please do not hesitate in contacting one of our travel specialists, we will gladly provide you with further information and make any recommendations to make your trip the most suitable possible.

Day 1 Arrive in **San Cristobal Is**: Interpretation Center / Tijeretas snorkel - Playa Carola

*You can arrive to the Galapagos Islands only by flight from either Quito or Guayaquil (air ticket not included). Our guide will be waiting for you at the airport on **San Cristobal Island** where **the tour will begin**. From the airport we ride for the hotel to check-in and get comfortable. After checking in, you will eat lunch in a local restaurant that serves "menu of the day" style lunches (not a la carte). After lunch we will visit the **San Cristobal Interpretation Center** where the guide will explain how the Galapagos Islands were formed, the evolution of species, the migration of the animals, and the human settlements within the Galapagos.*

*After visiting the Interpretation Center, we make our way to "**Cerro Tijeretas**", or "Frigate Hill". Here you can have a close up with the Galapagos marine life and do some snorkeling. Colorful fish species, starfish, sea urchins inhabit the crystal clear waters in this area. The afternoon continues with a visit to **Playa Carola**, where you will have time to enjoy the beautiful beach before returning to the hotel to rest and eat dinner (at the local specified restaurant).*

*Accommodations in Santa Cristóbal Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.*

Day 2 **San Cristóbal Island**: The Highlands + Progreso (**OR** choose between OPTIONS **A** or **B**)

***STANDARD ITINERARY** - The Highlands "El Progreso"*

*After breakfast the day begins with a short bus or truck ride (depending on the size of the tour group) to visit the **Highlands of San Cristobal**. Along the way we will make a stop at the **Mirador de la***

Soledad *where you may enjoy a magnificent view of the island. Afterwards we will make our way to the* ***Laguna del Junco****, the only freshwater lagoon in San Cristobal, and also where frigate birds come to wash their wings. We will then make a short stop at* ***Playa de Puerto Chino*** *before eating a lunch in the Highlands. On the way back you will pass* by the spot where *the island's locals cultivate their food and the famous Galapagos Coffee. We will then arrive at the hotel to rest and eat dinner at a local restaurant specified by the guide.*

**** OR** pick one of the **OPTIONS** below ****

NOTE*: The following options are subject to availability and last minute changes.* ***OPTION B*** *has an additional cost per person. Please, let us know what you prefer beforehand so we can arrange the excursion and advice on availability.*

OPTION A – *Isla Lobos + Playa Ochoa **

**** Note:*** *navigation to this spot is subject to availability*

The short navigation towards Isla Lobos will begin after breakfast around 9:00 am. Los Lobos is a small islet separated from the main by a narrow channel. In this site you can find nesting blue-footed boobies (according to season) and, of course, a large colony of sea lions that rest and play on rocky shores. Many birds inhabit the place such as frigates, brown pelicans, lava gulls, common boobies, yellow warblers and finches. The snorkeling in the clear waters of the channel is unforgettable; it is perhaps the best site to swim side-by-side with sea lions. A stop will be made afterwards at Playa Ochoa to relax at the beach and enjoy the great view. We return to Puerto Baquerizo between 2:30 - 3 PM. After a rest, you will have dinner in the restaurant specified by the guide.

OPTION B – *Kicker Rock + Beach Time **

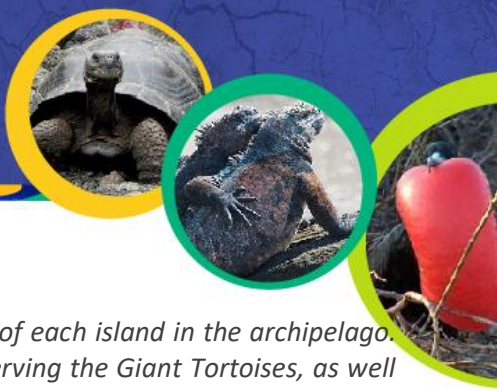
**** Note:*** *extra cost per person, ask us for more info – spot subject to availability*

This site is also knows as Sleeping Lion or "León Dormido". Getting to this spot takes 1h of navigation in a speedboat. The first stop will be right before Kicker Rock (going down of Cerro Tijeretas) for some fine swimming and snorkeling. Kicker Rock itself is considered one of the most outstanding snorkeling sites in the Galapagos. The excursion consists of two snorkel immersions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon after lunch. A Box Lunch will be served in the boat, as these parts of the islands are inhabited. Afterwards, we will make our way towards a deserted beach to observe wildlife and relax. We will head back to the boat and return to San Cristobal. Return time to Puerto Baquerizo is scheduled around 4pm. After a rest, you will have dinner in the restaurant specified by the guide.

Accommodations in Santa Cristóbal Island in the ***hotel class of your choice****.*

Day 3 Transfer to **Santa Cruz Is**. / Charles Darwin Station / Highlands (Tortoises)

At 6:00 a.m. get ready to go to the dock (wake-up at 5:00 AM). We will take the ***Public speedboat****, which leaves at 7:00 a.m. (subject to change), to Puerto Ayora (2 hour estimated travel time). Upon arrival and after breakfast, the guide will have indicated the hour to meet to begin the visit to the* ***Charles Darwin***



***Research Station**, home to a large a variety of Giant Tortoise representing of each island in the archipelago. We will also listen about the ongoing conservation efforts directed at preserving the Giant Tortoises, as well as the environment of the archipelago as a whole. After this, make a short visit to the **Art Galleries of Puerto Ayora** and then eat lunch.*

*In the afternoon we make our way to the **Highlands of Santa Cruz.** Here you may observe the famous **Giant Tortoises** in their natural environment, which also known as **Galapagos,** and from where the name of the Islands derive. Also catch sight of the famous Galapagos Finches, Bird Wizards, as well as endemic vegetation such as Escelacias forests and Matazarnos. After this encounter with the Giant Tortoises, return to Puerto Ayora for lunch.*

*Accommodations in Santa Cruz Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.*

Day 4 — ***Full Day Navigable Tour*** to: *Plazas Is.* **OR** *Seymour Is* **OR** *Santa Fe Is* **OR** *Bartolomé Is.**

**** NOTE:** You may choose **ONE** of these navigable sites.*

Depending on the dates and/or navigable site chosen, pick-up from the hotel will be early in the morning (either 5 or 8 AM) to take you to the small vessel (16 passenger capacity) at the embarkation point (either Puerto Ayora dock or Itabaca Channel). The destination will be to any of these islands, all of these sites are inhabited and offer a unique close-up with wildlife and endemic vegetation.

*The destination can be **Santa Fe, South Plazas, North Seymour or Bartolomé**. The activities will include hiking, snorkeling, swimming and breathtaking sightseeing. After land and sea excursions, we will return back to the hotel in Santa Cruz where you can relax and later on have dinner at the specified restaurant.*

IMPORTANT NOTE!!

*You may choose **ONE** of the navigable sites above. However, the visits to these are regulated by the Galapagos National Park and are subject to availability. Let us know which site you'd like better. **We will advise on availability** and arrange your trip as best as possible. **In case none** of the sites are available, an alternative itinerary will be used and a discount applied.*

*Accommodations in Santa Cruz Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.*

Day 5 — Tortuga Bay Beach / Transfer o **Isabela Island**

*In the morning the guide will indicate the meeting time for a 45-minute trip to the beautiful **white sand beach** called **Tortuga Bay**. This is one of the most beautiful beaches in the Galapagos; here we can enjoy at the white sand beach and observe pelicans, fish, sea iguanas and other species of wildlife. Return to the hotel to rest. Dinner will be served at a local restaurant indicated by the guide.*

*After lunch we will begin the journey from **Puerto Ayora to Isabela Island** at 2:00pm (subject to change) via **public speedboat** (approx. travel time 2 ½ to 3 hrs.) A guide will be waiting for you in Puerto Villamil and then lead you to check in at the hotel. At the Isabela Island dock, one of our representatives will pick you up to transfer you to the hotel of your choice. On the way to the hotel you will be given instructions for dinner and other activities for the day and the following days.*

*Accommodations in Isabela Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.*

Day 6 **Isabela Island**:
OPTION 1: Hike Sierra Negra + Chico Volcanoes
***OPTION 2**: Full Day: Visit* Cabo Rosa aka. Tuneles **(extra cost – please ask us)**

OPTION 1: *Early in the morning (8:00 am), after breakfast, get ready for the **Sierra Negra Volcano hike** (comfortable clothes, walking shoes and a light rain jacket are recommended). Make sure your camera is stored in waterproof bags, wear some sunscreen, bring water, and a hat! Yourself will prepare your box lunch at the hotel with the foodstuff of your choice. We will then travel approximately 45 minutes by truck or bus to begin the 12 km hike (approx. 4 hours). The hike is long in terms of distance, but not very difficult as the inclines and declines are quite gradual. (**There is an option to ride horses for an additional cost, if interested please let us know beforehand).** Sierra Negra Volcano has the second largest crater in the world, measuring approximately 6 miles in diameter and 300 feet deep. We will then reach **Volcan Chico**, which should provide a spectacular view of the islands.*

Enjoy the afternoon at leisure to explore at your own pace and discover the wonders this natural paradise has to offer.

OPTION 2: **(extra cost – please ask us for more info)**

***There are two departure times for this tour**, one at 08:00 am with return time at 13:00 pm approx., and one at 11:00 am, with return time at 16:00 pm. approx. The chosen departure time for your tour might vary; hence, you will be notified on the departure time for this day trip on the night before the tour.*

***Cabo Rosa aka. Los Tuneles._** is perhaps one of the most beautiful sights in the archipelago. Continuous volcanic eruptions petrified into tunnel-like lava formations right in the middle of the sea, and crystal clear turquoise water allows an amazing view of marine vegetation and playful sea lions. The tour begins early at 8:00am via speedboat and the first stop is a small islet in the middle of the ocean, home to pelicans, blue-footed boobies, and sea lions. **Finados** snorkeling site is the next stop, where you can swim next to sea turtles, **Tintoreras** sharks (endemic to the islands), trumpet fish and surgeonfish. With some luck, eagle and golden rays will come to this site too. Getting to Los **Tuneles** will take around 1 ½ - 2 hrs. Once there, the speedboat will navigate through various spots in and around the Lava Tunnels. Here you get the chance to do some more snorkeling and enjoy some short walks while observing the landscape and wildlife inhabiting the area. **A box lunch** on board will be provided for this day. Dinner will be served at the local specified restaurant.*

*Accommodations in Isabela Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.*

Day 7 **Isabela Island**: Tintoreras Islet snorkel / Humedales Hike (Giant Tortoise Center)

*After breakfasts, get ready to visit to **Tintoreras Islet**. First we will make our way to the dock of Puerto Villamil in order to embark on small speedboats (12 passenger capacity). After a short ride (approx. 20 min.) we will arrive at Tintoreras Islet. The name of the islet derives from the **sharks** that inhabit in the waters surrounding the islet, the famous white-tipped fins Tintorera Sharks. The islet is one of the most fascinating places on Isabela Island. **Galapagos sea lions**, **marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, Sally Lightfoot Crabs, sea turtles, pelicans**, and **Galapagos Penguins** can all be found in this site. It is also one of main breeding sites for marine iguanas, and a great spot to get a close-up with them. After a hike around the islet, we will get back on the boat and cool off by snorkeling in the waters nearby. Swimming next to multicolor fish, starfish, sea urchins, and with luck **manta rays, sharks, and sea lions** is a major highlight in this excursion. After a fascinating experience we will return to the hotel for lunch.*

*In the afternoon we you visit the **Giant Tortoise Breeding Center** of Isabela. Here you can observe a variety of species of giant tortoises. You will also hear how this center has successfully breed and raise the giant tortoises to preserve many endangered subspecies. Afterwards, we will visit the **Wall of Tears (Muro de las Lagrimas)**. Between 1946 and 1959 Isabela Island was used as a penal colony by the Ecuadorian government, and the prisoners were obligated to construct this wall out of the sharp and hard volcanic rocks. The wall is 100 meters long and 7 meters high, and the name is derived from the arduous and painful nature of the conditions in which the prisoners were forced to work. On the way back we will make a visit to a **Lava Tunnel** near the Wall- Visits to **Mirador Orchilla, Estero de Isabela,** and **Playa del Amor** are also programmed.*
We will then return to the hotel to rest before heading to dinner at a local specified restaurant.

*Accommodations in Isabela Island in the **hotel class of your choice**.*

Day 8 Transfer out **Baltra Airport** (Visit "The Twins" on way out) / Goodbye Galapagos!

*On the final day we recommend waking up at 5:00 am to have enough time to get ready for the transfer-out from **Isabela to Puerto Ayora**. We will take the **public speedboat**, which leaves from the dock at 6:00 am (subject to change); we will arrive in Puerto Ayora after approximately 2.5 hours depending on the tide. We will then have breakfast and soon depart for **Baltra Airport** where you will catch your return flight to either Quito or Guayaquil. On the way out, depending on the departure time of your air tickets. We might stop to visit the **Twin Craters** in the highlands of Santa Cruz.*

***** NOTE:** Itinerary subject to change without prior warning depending on seasonal changes, weather conditions, and adjustments in policies set by the Galapagos National Park, and other unforeseen circumstances that may arise.*

IMPORTANT REMARKS:

- **HOTEL SELECTION:** The hotel selection depends on the category of hotel that you choose. Once you choose the hotel class of preference, we will specify to you which hotels are available for the dates of your trip. Hotels are categorized in the following classes: **Economy Class**, **Tourist Class**, **Tourist Superior Class**, and **First Class**. All the hotels we work with have been chosen after a careful and close inspection by one of our team members. Nature Galapagos & Ecuador is the proud owner of the *Hotel San Vicente Galapagos* (Tourist Class), and *La Laguna Galapagos* (Tourist Superior Class), both located on Isabela Island and for both the quality of service can be assured.

- **AIRFARE NOT INCLUDED:** The price of the tour does not include air tickets. We will gladly help your with the booking of the ticket from Quito or Guayaquil to Galapagos. You may also book the flights on your own if cheaper. PLEASE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT, which islands you, will arrive and leave from, and if you choose to book your own flight please try to book your arrival in the morning (before 11am) and your departure in the afternoon (12 pm or after) so that you don't miss any part of the tour. You can book your flight either through TAME, AEROGAL, LAN, or TAME (recommended).

- **RESTAURANTS:** We work with both hotel and local restaurants alike for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. This also depends on the chosen hotel class, as some hotels have restaurant services, **in which case food will be served on the hotel restaurant.** Meals are served in the "meal of the day" style. In case food is not served at the hotel, the guide will specify the chosen restaurant **(no transfers to and from the restaurants to the hotels are included in the cost of the program. However, distances are all at a minimum walking distance in Galapagos).**

- **LUNCH AND DINNER** during our tours consist on the meal of the day (not a la carte). Most provisions are bought in form the mainland to Galapagos; hence, a limited variety of food can be found. If you require vegetarian meals, let us know ahead of time so we can make all arrangements necessary within the possibilities.

- **GUIDES:** We organize excursion with local naturalist guides for each island (and sometimes for each activity). The guides will accompany you throughout all excursions, give explanations of the islands (flora and fauna) and coordinate the activities each day. Regarding lunch and dinner, the guide will specify the restaurant designated but he will not accompany you during this time. The guide's activities will start and end with each daily excursion. The guide will not go with you on the speedboats between islands either. The guides are certified by the Galapagos National Park - if you feel that their guidance does not meet your expectations, feel free to leave a complaint at the National Park Direction to help improve the quality of service in the islands.

- **PUBLIC SPEEDBOATS:** We recommend that you take a seasickness pill before each ride between islands if you are prone to seasickness. It is also recommended that you carry small plastic bags with you in case of seasickness. The speedboats are not completely covered so please make sure that valuable objects and electronics are stored in a plastic bag. The **guide will not go with you on the speedboats** but a new guide will greet you on the other side. There are no services onboard as the speedboat space is limited and the journey is relatively short. A water taxi ride is sometimes required (depending on the tide) from the dock to the speedboat; the cost is **1 USD**

per person and **per ride**. Please, make sure you bring cash in small denominations in case this expense is needed. ***This is a Public service out of our control.***

- **SCHEDULE OF EXCURSIONS:** The schedule of the excursions will be coordinated and determined locally through the guide and those responsible for the operations. The guide will indicate what time each activity will start. The transfers between islands on the public speedboats are the only activities that have fixed departure times.

INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS

THE RATE INCLUDES:

- ✓ Accommodation in selected class hotels and rooms
- ✓ All meals (breakfast – lunch – dinner)
- ✓ All land and sea transportation within the Galapagos during the program
- ✓ Bilingual naturalist guides for each island and all activities
- ✓ Excursions and visits during the program
- ✓ Snorkeling Equipment (mask, fins, tube)
- ✓ Transfer-in from San Cristobal Airport
- ✓ Transfer San Cristóbal – Santa Cruz (Puerto Ayora) by public speedboat
- ✓ Transfer Puerto Ayora – Isabela – Puerto Ayora by public speedboat
- ✓ Transfer Baltra – Puerto Ayora – Baltra (by truck or by bus depending on group size)

THE RATE EXCLUDES:

- × Air Ticket
- × Galapagos National Park Entry Fee - $200.00 US pp.
- × Isabela Dock Fee - $10.00 US pp.
- × Migratory Control Card - $20.00 US
- × Transportation Itabaca Channel – Baltra Airport - **USD 5,00 per person** – ***Day 8*** *(subject to change).*
- × Extra cost for alternative excursion on **Day 2** (OPTION B)
- × Water taxi from dock to speedboat (San Cristóbal, Isabela and Santa Cruz Islands - depending on the tide) - **$ 1.00 US per person per ride**
- × Cost of the transfer between the hotels and the restaurants designated for the meals in each island
- × Soft-drinks and alcoholic beverages
- × Tips.

Note: Ask about rates with full meals or breakfast only.