

fee of \$100 (unless it has been prepaid). A guide will meet you, help you collect your luggage, and escort you on a short bus ride to the harbour.

PM – North Seymour

This islet is one of most visited sites, and it is teeming with birdlife. An easy circular path takes you through the archipelago's most extensive colonies of blue-footed boobies and frigate birds. At the beginning of the breeding season, adult frigatebird-males blow up their vivid red pouches to impressive football-sized balloons. This is one of the few spots where you can compare the magnificent and the great frigatebird breeding next to each other.

Day 2 – Tuesday

AM – Bartolomé

The beautiful volcano islet of Bartolomé is among the youngest of the islands, and on a geological scale was just recently born out of fire. Although at first sight lifeless, Bartolomé offers some of the wildest landscapes and best panoramas in the entire archipelago. To enjoy the postcard view of the idyllic 'Pinnacle Bay' you have to climb the stairs to the viewpoint on top of the island (114m/375ft). Enter a dramatic world of threatening (though extinguished) nearby spatter cones, craters, and lightweight lava droplets that have been spewed out by fiery fountains. The Summit Trail is also ideal for witnessing how scanty pioneer vegetation such as lava cactus is struggling to take root in the bare virgin lava fields.

PM – Espumilla Beach, Buccaneer Cove

Espumilla Beach is an important breeding site for turtles, as it is no longer suffering from digging wild pigs. The turtles return year after year to bury their eggs into the cinnamon-coloured sand dunes. About two months later (roughly from February to August) the eggs hatch.

The beach ridge hides a mangle with two lagoons on the backside. A colony of American flamingos and aquatic birds used to be its main attraction, but after the climate phenomenon of El Niño, strong sedimentation altered the water environment, and now no longer provides their food.

Vegetation zones are very close by, providing great scenic contrasts. During the climb up a hill, you will be rewarded with a beautiful view of the transitions from sea to beach and from mangrove to a dry palo santo forest.

At nearby Buccaneers Cove, there is a great snorkelling opportunity.

Day 3 – Wednesday

AM – Puerto Egas (Santiago)

Puerto Egas is a black beach located at the west side of Santiago Island. Volcanic tuff deposits formed this special black sand beach and made it the main attraction of the Island. This site is called Puerto Egas because Hector Egas attempted to exploit the salt, which failed because the price of salt on the continent was very cheap.

PM – Rábida

Rábida Island is unique because of the red colour of the rocks and sand. The volcanic material on this island is very porous and external factors such as rain, saltwater and sea breeze have acted as an oxidising agent. A short walk along a trail leads us to a coastal lagoon behind the beach where we can observe land birds including finches, doves, yellow warblers and mockingbirds. Meanwhile at the lagoon there is a colony of flamingos.

Day 4 – Thursday

AM – Charles Darwin Research Station

Although the great majority of Galapagos visitors come here to observe and appreciate natural wonders, it is also interesting to learn how the protection and conservation of the islands are carried out. The main attractions are the National Park information centre, the Van Staelen Exhibition Hall, the Breeding and Rearing Centre for young tortoises, and adult Galapagos tortoises in captivity.

Transfer out to Baltra Airport (GPS)

Assisted by the naturalist guide and some crewmembers, the dinghy will bring you and your luggage to Baltra Airport, where we will take the shuttle back to the airport.