



# CATAMARAN ARCHIPELL I

## ITINERARY B - MONDAY TO THURSDAY

### 4D / 3N - DAY BY DAY PROGRAM

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#### DAY 1: MONDAY

##### AM - ARRIVAL AT SEYMOUR ECOLOGICAL AIRPORT (GPS)

Upon arrival at the Seymour Ecological Airport, travelers pass through an airport inspection point to make sure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands, and to pay the park entrance 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 harbor.

##### PM - NORTH SEYMOUR

You will start with your first excursion to North Seymour. It is located slightly to the north of Baltra. It is a low, flat island, formed as a result of submarine lava formation uplift. Covered with low vegetation, it contains the largest colony of Magnificent Frigate birds in the Galapagos. There is also a large population of blue-footed boobies that perform an amusing courtship dance when nesting conditions are right. It really is one of the highlights of this island.



#### DAY 2 - TUESDAY

##### AM - PRINCE PHILIP'S STEPS (GENOVESA)

Before landing, you will make an inflatable dinghy-ride along the eastern arm of the caldera. While we approach, the massive 25 m / 80 ft high walls become overwhelming. Sometimes, a Galapagos fur seal is resting or a seabird is nesting on one of the ledges at the base.

Then, you have to hike and overcome the steep stairs from the landing dock to a bush of palo santo shrubs on top. Red-footed boobies gratefully use these scarce nesting-places; so that they don't have to nest on the rocky ground.

On arriving at the seaside of the rim, the bushes open up and you can enjoy wide views, a strong sea breeze and the amazing flying skills of uncountable seabirds. Following the exposed seaside rim, you will first pass the Nazca boobies and finally reach the extensive storm petrel nesting places, where you might be lucky to spot the well-camouflaged short-eared owl hunting for them on foot!.

##### PM - DARWIN BAY (GENOVESA)

Inside the submerged caldera of Genovesa lies Darwin Bay, with a diameter of more than 1,5 km / 1 mi and it is almost 200 m / 650 ft deep. The small area will surprise you repeatedly, walking along a coral sand beach, crossing barren lava formations and creeks, passing tidal pools, shrubs and further ahead following the top of some cliffs. With this peaceful surrounding, every single species has occupied its own ecological niche (or habitat) without disturbing others.

## **DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY**

### **AM - BARTOLOME**

The beautiful volcano islet of Bartolome is among the youngest of the islands, and on a geological scale was just recently born out of fire. Although at first sight lifeless, Bartolome 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 to witness how scanty pioneer vegetation such as lava cactus is struggling to take root in the bare virgin lava fields.

### **PM - SULLIVAN BAY (SANTIAGO)**

Setting foot at the lava stream covering Sullivan Bay is like landing on the moon. The desolate, stretched-out fields seem mostly lifeless, but there is plenty to see on this highly popular site amongst photographers. Pacific green turtles seasonally bury eggs in the tiny white sand beach, where you may also encounter crabs, a strayed blue heron or an oystercatcher. On the lava flow, only sparse pioneer vegetation such as lava cacti and carpetweed are able to grow. You might encounter a lava lizard, locusts or a small snake-species (Galapagos racer).

## **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 done. The main attractions are the National Park information center, the Van Staelen Exhibition Hall, the Breeding and Rearing Center for young tortoises, and adult Galapagos tortoises in captivity.

### **PM - TRANSFER OUT TO SEYMOUR ECOLOGICAL AIRPORT (GPS)**

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