

ECUADOR - WESTERN ISLANDS CRUISE | INTEGRITY



INTRODUCTION

Take an 8-day Galapagos Islands Cruise onboard the small ship expedition vessel, Integrity. You will sail the Western Islands and see a range of flora and fauna. From the Santa Cruz Highlands, home to giant tortoises who roam free in the wild to Cormorant Point, with green sands and the historic site of Post Office Bay


Embark on an exhilarating journey through the Galapagos Islands, starting with an encounter with giant tortoises in their lush natural habitat at the Santa Cruz Highlands. Marvel at the unique flora and fauna, including Darwin's finches and the elusive vermilion flycatcher. Delve into conservation efforts at the Charles Darwin Research Station before boarding your luxurious yacht for a week-long island exploration.

Experience the diverse landscapes and rich biodiversity of the Galapagos archipelago. From the olivine sands of Punta Cormorant to snorkelling adventures with playful sea lions at Champion Island, each day offers new discoveries. Explore historical sites at Post Office Bay and investigate the intriguing geological formations of Punta Moreno. Encounter marine life in the mangrove lagoons of Elizabeth Bay and witness the dramatic landscapes of Fernandina's Punta Espinosa.

Uncover the secrets of Tagus Cove's pirate history and immerse yourself in nature at Puerto Egas. Kayak through Buccaneer Cove and stroll along the red-sand beaches of Espumilla. Conclude your voyage at North Seymour, home to magnificent frigatebirds and Blue-Footed Boobies, before a serene farewell at Bachas Beach and Caleta Tortuga Negra. Enjoy a final breakfast onboard before bidding farewell to the Galapagos Islands at Baltra Island.

Check out some of the other itineraries onboard Integrity including: [7 Day Western Islands Cruise](#), [8 Day Eastern Islands Cruise](#) and [6 Day Eastern Islands Cruise](#)

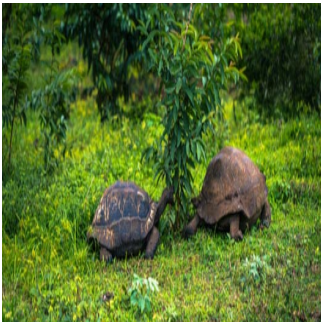
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TRIP CODE
ECIG8DW
DEPARTURE
Selected Saturdays
DURATION
8 Days
LOCATIONS
Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, South America


# ECUADOR - WESTERN ISLANDS CRUISE | INTEGRITY

## DAY 1: Highlands & Charles Darwin Research Station

Today, you arrive in the Galapagos Islands, where we'll facilitate a transfer from the airport in Baltra to the Santa Cruz Highlands. Here, you'll have a unique opportunity to witness the islands' most renowned reptile, the giant tortoises, in their natural habitat. It's a rare privilege to observe these endangered species freely roaming amidst the lush surroundings. The area boasts a diverse vegetation, including the endemic Scalesia Forest, home to an array of avian species such as Darwin's finches, notably the famed Woodpecker Finch. Keep an eye out for the elusive vermilion flycatcher, whose scarlet plumage contrasts beautifully with the emerald green forest. In the afternoon, our itinerary takes us to the Charles Darwin Research Station and Galápagos National Park headquarters. Here, you'll gain firsthand insight into the conservation and research endeavors undertaken in the islands. Witness several subspecies of adult tortoises and numerous hatchlings, and learn about the vital repatriation programs aimed at preserving various tortoise and iguana subspecies from extinction. Later in the afternoon, we'll board our yacht, INTEGRITY, for dinner and embark on our island cruise. You'll reside aboard the yacht, maximizing exploration time within the confines of park regulations. Each night, we'll set sail to our next destination, ensuring a seamless and immersive island-hopping experience.



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## DAY 2: Cormorant Point & Post Office Bay

Today, your journey begins with a visit to Punta Cormorant and Champion Island. Upon landing on a green, olivine sand beach adjacent to a sprawling lagoon, you'll likely spot feeding flamingos and other water birds. A brief hike through diverse plant communities leads to Flour Beach, a nesting ground for sea turtles and a playground for small rays in the surf. Next, snorkeling awaits at Champion Island, where curious sea lions abound, and if luck is on our side, we may catch a glimpse of the rare Floreana Mockingbird. In the afternoon, our exploration continues at Post Office Bay, Asilo de la Paz, and Black Beach. Our first stop is the iconic wooden barrel, serving as a mariner's "post office" since the 18th century, offering you the chance to participate in the timeless tradition of the "postmaster." We then venture into the Floreana Highlands to encounter a collection of tortoises and delve into the island's captivating human history at Wittmer Caves and one of the Galapagos' few freshwater springs. The day concludes with a leisurely walk on Black Beach followed by a barbecue onboard INTEGRITY.



### DAY 3: Punta Moreno & Elizabeth Bay

Today's adventure begins at Punta Moreno. As you step onto the gray lava flow at the base of Cerro Azul, you'll pass by cacti and other pioneering plants. This dynamic landscape is punctuated by numerous "oases" of brackish lagoons teeming with a diverse array of life, including flamingos, Paint-Billed Crakes, White-Cheeked Pintails, and Common Gallinules. In the afternoon, we'll explore Elizabeth Bay. Glide silently in our skiffs through the narrow channels of this mangrove lagoon, where a wealth of marine life awaits. Keep your eyes peeled for rays, Flightless Cormorants, penguins, pelicans, Lava herons, sea turtles, sea lions, Blue-Footed Boobies, and an abundance of fish and other species that thrive in this vital ecosystem.

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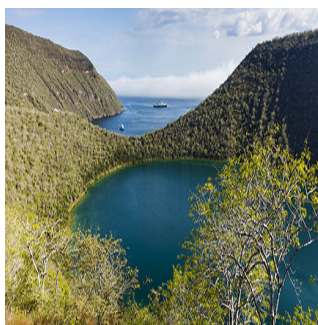
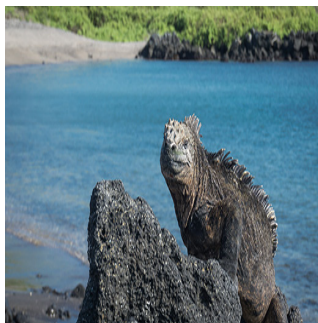
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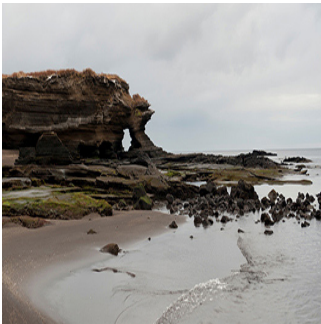




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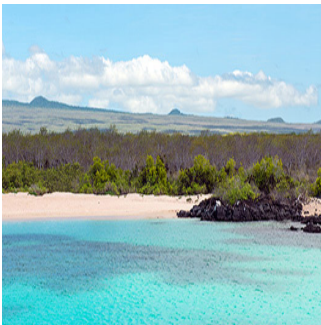
### DAY 6: Puerto Egas & Espumilla Beach

Today's exploration begins at Puerto Egas. Two separate trails offer diverse experiences: the first follows the coastline to the fur seal grottoes, a sanctuary for the elusive Galapagos Fur Seal. Here, amidst crags and swimming inlets, you'll encounter American Oystercatchers, marine iguanas, and ubiquitous sea lions. The second, less-traveled trail leads inland to a lagoon at the Salt Mine Volcano, home to flamingos and various bird species. In the afternoon, we visit Espumilla Beach and Buccaneer Cove. Espumilla boasts a red-sand beach and serves as a nesting site for sea turtles. An inland trail meanders past a small lagoon and into the arid zone, offering glimpses of Galapagos Hawks and other land birds against a picturesque backdrop. Meanwhile, snorkeling or kayaking at Buccaneer Cove may yield sightings of sea lions, fur seals, sea turtles, rays, sharks, pelagic fishes, and fascinating underwater geological formations.



### DAY 7: North Seymour & Bachas Beach

In the morning you will explore North Seymour, renowned for its flat terrain. The inland trail leads to the largest colony of Magnificent Frigatebirds in the Galapagos, alongside Blue-Footed Boobies and occasionally bush-climbing land iguanas. Along the coast, ample opportunities arise to observe sea lions and marine iguanas. Snorkelers can savor their final underwater experience in the channel between North Seymour and Mosquera, known for its captivating marine life. In the afternoon, we visit Bachas Beach and Caleta Tortuga Negra. Enjoy a tranquil morning at Bachas' pristine white sand beach, where two small lagoons occasionally host flamingos. The name "Bachas" stems from the remains of a barge that ran aground decades ago, leaving only a few rusty spines visible today. A silent skiff ride takes us to Caleta Tortuga Negra, a mangrove lagoon where sea turtles feed and mate in the calm waters. Here, encounters with sharks, rays, egrets, and Lava Herons are common. Caleta Tortuga Negra serves as a shark nursery, offering glimpses of very small sharks in the shallows. Conclude the day with a serene sunset aboard INTEGRITY.



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DAY 8: Disembarkation

This morning, we'll enjoy breakfast on board before disembarking at Baltra Island.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board a ship
Inclusions	<div> <b>INCLUSIONS</b>                      Accommodation in chosen cabin onboard the Integrity                      All Galapagos airport transfers to/from group flights                      All meals, complimentary soft drinks, house wine &amp; beer, coffee, tea, and juice                      Laundry service available                      Unlimited internet                      Complimentary use of wetsuits, masks, fins &amp; snorkels                      Complimentary use of eight 2-person sea-kayaks, where permitted by the National Park                 </div> <div> <b>EXCLUSIONS</b>                      Return airfares from mainland Ecuador (Group Flights: Cost: \$555 USD per person, please contact us for more details)                      Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee (US\$200 per person from Aug 2024 - Subject to change)                      Galapagos Transit Control Card (US\$20 per person - Subject to change)                      Mandatory travel insurance                      Premium wine and other spirits are available for purchase aboard (\$10-\$15 USD per glass)                      Gratuities for naturalist guides and yacht crew. Gratuities are always at the guest’s discretion; however, the recommended amounts are \$75-\$115 USD per guest for the naturalist guide and \$150-\$225 USD per guest for the yacht crew.                      Any extra personal expenses                      Pre or post cruise arrangements                      Passport or visa fees                 </div>
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)

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## SUSTAINABILITY