

Master the Galapagos, Galapagos Islands

Itinerary - 7 Nights and 10 Nights

- **Embarkation: Puerto Baquerizo, San Cristobal at 14:00***
- **Disembarkation: Puerto Baquerizo, San Cristobal at 08:30**

*Monday and Thursday embarkation is based on the arrival of flight AV 1630. Saturday embarkation is based on flight AV 1636 schedules.

Early embarkation is NOT possible due to the vessels operating on a same day turnaround which means the crew will be busy restocking and preparing the boat up until the designated embarkation time.

Transfers between San Cristobal Airport or local hotels and Galapagos Master on embarkation and disembarkation days are included in the liveboard price.

Important information about diving in the Galapagos

Diving in the Galapagos can be challenging, even for experienced divers. There are often tough conditions with strong currents and reduced visibility due to an influx of nutrients at certain dive sites which make the diving unsuitable for entry level divers or those who have not dived in similar conditions before.

- **Mandatory, minimum certification:** PADI Advanced Open Water, or equivalent
- **Minimum number of logged dives:** 50

Any guests who do not have the mandatory certification and experience for these itineraries may be denied participation in some or all dives during the liveboard.

If our diving crew feels that you do not have the relevant skills or experience to dive the more challenging sites safely they may stipulate that you sit out some dives.

Due to the strength of currents the last dive of the day must be made with plenty of daylight to ensure your safety and that of your fellow divers. Therefore, there are no night dives offered.

Water temperature ranges from 21-30°C (70-86°F) between December and May, but will drop to an average of 16-24°C (60-75°F) between June and November. Thermoclines are to be

expected and divers are advised to bring suitable thermal protection. We also advise the use of gloves, both to help keep you warm in the cooler temperatures, but also to reduce the chance of stings or cuts in the event you need to hold on tight in the strong currents.

Participation in this liveboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions.

Itinerary Details

These itineraries involve some long distance travel and, whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled, bad weather can hinder the boat's ability to reach a specified dive site in good time.

Number of scheduled dives:

- 7 nights: up to 18
- 10 nights: up to 27

To allow our guests to explore the Galapagos to its fullest, we organise two island tours as part of the itinerary:

- North Seymour Island where we watch iguanas, blue-footed boobies and other bird and land life.
- Highlands of Santa Cruz – Charles Darwin Station to visit the giant land tortoise

Your Cruise Director will schedule 3 or 4 dives per day except on the days when land tours are offered when there will only be 2 dives scheduled in the morning.

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

Day 1: Embarkation between 14:00 and 14:30 followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings and lunch. There will usually be a shallow check dive scheduled in the afternoon.

Day 2:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch
- Afternoon land tour of North Seymour Island
- Dinner

Days 3-6 (7 nights) or Days 3-9 (10 nights)

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 3
- Snack relaxation period, briefing & Dive 4, where possible
- Dinner

Day 7 (7 nights) / Day 10 (10 nights):

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch
- Afternoon land tour to Charles Darwin Station and Puerto Ayora Town
- Dinner

Disembarkation Day: After breakfast and disembarkation no later than 08.30 we will organise a visit to the Interpretation Center in San Cristobal before transfer to the airport, or your hotel.

Safety and dive briefings are generally conducted in English but can also be given in Spanish, if required. If you or any of your group do not speak or understand English or Spanish, please contact us.

During our 7-night itineraries we usually plan for 3 days at Darwin & Wolf, whilst for our 10-night itineraries we typically schedule 4 days of diving at these famed islands. However, weather and sea conditions will play a factor in determining the number of days and dives we are able to spend at these locations.

While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, the safety of all on board remains paramount. In the unlikely event we are unable to reach a specified dive site; we always do our best in offering diving at alternative locations.

We provide surface marker buoys free of charge to all divers to assist in case of separation.

The following is a description of the dive sites that we may visit during your liveaboard.

San Cristóbal Island

After boarding at San Cristóbal, all diving guests on board Galapagos Master will carry out a check out dive. Carried out in a sheltered bay in an excellent shallow spot, at a max depth of 9m (30ft), this will allow you to check your dive gear but also become acquainted with some of the local marine life.

Santa Cruz Island

Punta Carrion

This boulder strewn reef provides a superb introduction to some of the larger pelagics we expect to see in the Galapagos, including white tip reef sharks but also the occasional hammerhead and Galapagos shark. Sea lions are ever-present and there is the opportunity for some macro critter spotting with sightings of neon nudibranchs. The wall has an average depth of 15m (50ft) and mild- medium current is to be expected.

North Seymour

Situated off the northern tip of Baltra Island, this site provides a stunning drift with sightings of white tip reef sharks, turtles, eagle rays and moray eels. Average depth 18m (60ft) medium current is to be expected.

Mosquera

Located in between the islands of Baltra and North Seymour, this white sandy islet is not only home to a sea lion colony, but also supports a myriad of marine life; from manta rays and bonitos to Peruvian grunts and fields of garden eels. Occasionally, schools of hammerhead sharks may be seen here. Average depth 20m (70ft) with a typically mild current expected.

Wolf Island

Named after the German geologist, Theodor Wolf, this extinct volcano reaches 253m (780ft) above sea level and lies some 160km (100 miles) northwest of Isabela Island. Land visits are not permitted however bird life, including red-footed boobies and vampire finch, may be spotted from the boat.

For our dives here we choose from a selection of reefs and walls, most having typically medium to strong currents where the use of gloves is advised. Schooling pelagics are the main draw with sightings of hammerheads, white tips and Galapagos sharks at each site. During the season (May – November) whale sharks may also be seen here. Divers should also be on the lookout for red-lipped batfish, barracudas, moray eels and dolphins.

El Durrumbe (the Landslide) - average depth is 20m (70ft).

La Ventana (the Window) – a shallow lagoon leading down to a pinnacle and then out along the reef wall - average depth 15m (50ft).

La Banana - Wall dive with an average depth of 9m (30ft) – can have strong currents.

Punta Shark Bay - Reef dive with an average depth of 20m (70ft), typically good visibility, however care must be taken in the shallow water where waves crash up against the reef.

Anchorage - The reef, with typically very mild current, provides a good spot for a sunset dive, average depth 18m (60ft).

Hat Island - another spot with milder current, this reef provides sightings of numerous colourful fish species, average depth 20m (70ft).

Pinaculos (The Pinnacle) - known for its strong currents and speedy drift along the reef at an average depth of 20m (70ft), the site is excellent for shark spotting and the many cracks & crevices in the wall provide extra interest.

Darwin Island

This extinct volcano reaching 165m (490ft) above sea level was named in honour of naturalist Charles Darwin. It is amongst the smallest islands within the Galapagos Archipelago and like Wolf Island, land visits are not permitted.

Perhaps the most famed dive site is "**Darwin's Arch**" which provides an amazing drift dive along the wall at an average depth of just 9m. Medium to strong currents are to be expected but bring large numbers of hammerheads, black tips, silky and Galapagos sharks with them. Schools of jacks are a common sight, along with turtles, angelfish and moray eels. Occasional sightings of tiger sharks, manta rays and bottle nose dolphins make for a thrilling time spent here. Whale sharks may also be seen between May and November.

Fernandina Island

Cape Douglas

Situated on the northwest point of Fernandina Island, this wall dive, with an average depth of 20m (70ft), offers something truly spectacular and is now famed for the feeding marine iguanas that congregate here along with sea lions, fur seals and speedy penguins!

Isabela Island

Punta Vicente Roca

Alternatively known as "**The Ice Box**", due to its chilling thermoclines, this point off the northwest coast of Isabela Island offers a wall drift dive, along which mola mola can be spotted. The occasional Port Jackson shark may also be seen as well as the endemic Camotillo (White spotted sand bass). Punta Vicente Roca is also a fantastic place to spot Pacific seahorses, frogfish, octopus, nudibranchs, flat worms and a variety of sponges. We stick to a maximum depth of 30m (100ft) with an average of 18m (60ft) while enjoying some milder currents!

Punta Albermale

Drifting along this wall on the north of Isabela Island, we stay at an average depth of 25m (85ft) to see manta rays, hammerheads, turtles, schools of barracuda and tuna.

Roca Redonda

This underwater volcano, with its bubbling streams of natural gas (fumaroles) plays home to schools hammerheads sharks and barracuda. Other commonly sighted marine life include Galapagos sharks which typically come close to divers during safety stops, as well as manta rays, silky sharks and some beautiful green/blue nudibranchs. With typically strong, changeable currents and some down currents, the diving here is challenging, though with an average depth of 18m (60ft).

Cabo Marshall

The craggy volcanic walls are covered with black coral bushes and the sheer variety of marine life is astounding. Sightings of manta, mobula and cownose rays are to be expected during the warm season (November – May). Meanwhile, shark varieties include scalloped hammerhead, Galapagos and white tips. Schools of chevron barracuda and black striped salema are regular visitors along with yellowfin tuna and big eye jacks. And let's not forget the sea lions and turtles!

Tagos Cove

On the west side of Isabela Island, opposite Fernandina Island, this shallow reef is an excellent late afternoon dive, where we have the opportunity to find seahorses, frogfish and long nosed hawk fish.

Santiago Island

Cousin's Rock

One of the most photographically productive dives of the region, Cousin's Rock is formed of coral covered rock and lava flow. Sea fans, hydroid bushes, red sponges and small hard corals encrust ledges and overhangs, sheltering hawkfish, nudibranchs, frogfish and seahorses. Plenty of larger visitors are also seen here, including giant manta and mobula rays, spotted eagle rays and hammerhead sharks. The wall drops beyond 30m (100ft) but rises up shallow to just 3m (10ft) providing an ideal spot to end your dive playing with the sea lions.

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveboards.com who will be pleased to assist and advise you.