

Master the Galapagos, Galápagos Islands

7 Nights and 10 Nights Itinerary

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

PLEASE NOTE: Embarkation and disembarkation locations are subject to change. Please check your booking details carefully.

*Embarkation in San Cristóbal is based on the arrival time of LATAM flight LA1419.

Early embarkation is NOT possible; the vessel operates on a same-day turnaround so the crew will be busy restocking and preparing the boat up until the designated embarkation time.

Transfers between San Cristóbal Airport or local hotel and Galápagos Master on embarkation and disembarkation days are included in the liveboard price. Domestic flights are not included

Important information about diving in the Galápagos

Scuba diving in the Galápagos 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 them **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
- Experience in strong currents and nitrox certification is strongly recommended.

Any guests who do not have the mandatory certification and minimum number of dives may be advised to pay for a private dive guide or 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.

PLEASE NOTE: *We are unable to offer any diving certification courses on Galápagos Master.*

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

Itinerary Details

Our Galápagos itineraries involve some long-distance cruising and, while we endeavour to ensure the number of scheduled dives indicated below is fulfilled, bad weather and other factors can hinder the boat's ability to reach a specified dive site in good time and may impact the number of dives possible.

Number of scheduled dives:

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

To allow our guests to explore the Galápagos 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 to see Giant Tortoises in the wild

Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day except when afternoon land tours are offered. Due to the strength of currents, the last dive of the day must be made with plenty of daylight to ensure the safety of all divers. Therefore, there are **no night dives**.

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 let us know before you arrive.

PLEASE NOTE: Morning dives between breakfast and lunch, and afternoon dives between lunch and dinner are conducted back-to-back with a surface interval of 1-1 ½ hrs between the two dives. All guests remain on the dive deck and in their wetsuits during this time and will be offered snacks and refreshments.

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

Day 1: Embarkation is 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:

- Full breakfast followed by dive briefings
- Dives 1 and 2
- Lunch
- *Afternoon land tour* of North Seymour Island
- Dinner

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

- Full breakfast followed by dive briefings
- Dives 1 and 2
- Lunch and relaxation followed by dive briefing(s)
- Dive 3 and, where possible, dive 4
- Dinner

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

- Full breakfast followed by dive briefings
- Dives 1 and 2
- Lunch
- *Afternoon land tour* of Santa Cruz Highlands and Puerto Ayora Town
- Dinner

Disembarkation Day: Breakfast on board followed by disembarkation no later than 08.30. Depending on your flight departure time, you may have a few hours to fill before your transfer to San Cristóbal Airport; you can visit the Interpretation Center, which is a 10-minute walk from the pier, do some last-minute shopping, or relax in a local cafe.

While we wish to show you the best diving possible, the safety of all on board is paramount. In the unlikely event we are unable to reach a specified dive site, we always do our best to offer diving at alternative locations. Following are descriptions of the dive sites that we may visit.

On 7-night itineraries, we usually plan 3 days at Darwin & Wolf and on 10-night itineraries we typically schedule 4 days at these famed islands. However, weather and sea conditions will play a factor in determining the number of days and dives at these locations.

San Cristóbal Island

After boarding at San Cristóbal, all diving guests on board Galápagos Master will carry out a check 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 Galápagos, including white tip reef sharks but also the occasional hammerhead and Galápagos 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 a mild to medium strength 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. The average depth is 18m (60ft) and a medium-strength 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 at Wolf Island, 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 Galápagos 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) and usually good visibility. However, care must be taken in the shallow water where waves crash up against the reef.

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

Hat Island - another spot with a milder current, this reef provides sightings of numerous colourful fish species and an average depth of 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 165 metres (490 ft) above sea level was named in honour of naturalist Charles Darwin. It is amongst the smallest islands within the Galápagos 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 Galápagos 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 bottlenose dolphins make for a thrilling time spent here. Whale sharks may also be seen between May and November.

Sadly, on 18th May 2021, the top part of the iconic arch rock formation collapsed due to natural erosion but the pillars remain standing, and the surrounding dive site is still accessible with no effect on the marine life that has always delighted divers who have been lucky enough to visit before.

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, flatworms 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!

Roca Redonda

This underwater volcano, with its bubbling streams of natural gas (fumaroles), plays home to schools of hammerhead sharks and barracuda. Other commonly sighted marine life include Galápagos 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, Galápagos 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!

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 to just 3m (10ft) providing an ideal spot to end your dive playing with the sea lions.

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