

# Wildlife Galapagos Beagle Galapagos Cruise



First class sail boat - unique two week itinerary - choose to join for one or two weeks - outside dining - comprehensive itinerary - lots of deck space - locally owned - excellent sustainability credentials

Explore the Galapagos on board one of the best loved sail boats in the Islands.

Beagle's two-week itinerary is amongst the most comprehensive of all the Galapagos boats.

Choose to board for one or two weeks.

Owner operated for a relaxed family atmosphere on board.

Just thirteen passengers make it a particularly good choice for charters and groups of friends or families.

This is a Pura *handpicked* holiday with an activity level of *low* and a comfort rating of *first*.



The first class yacht Beagle



**"The boat was better than we expected. We had a fabulous guide and our companions were terrific. The crew was courteous and helpful. The trip of a lifetime." John P.**

## Holiday Itinerary

### Day 01 | Santa Cruz | **sea turtles**

Remember that this cruise itinerary can either be read as a full two-week itinerary or you can choose to join it for just one week, from day 01-08 (North-West Islands) or day 08-15 (South Central Islands).

Beagle's start day is a Tuesday.

For one week trips we would generally advise going for the former.



Fly to the Galapagos early this morning, a flight of around three hours since the islands are some 600 miles offshore.

When you arrive in the islands, you pay the national park entrance fee before heading down to the dock to board your boat.

After lunch, set sail the short distance to Bachas beach on Santa Cruz island.

This coral sand beach is a nesting site for green

turtles between November and March.

It is also a great place to spot birdlife and to swim and snorkel.

Set off sailing out towards Genovesa Island this evening.

Your boat has seven cabins, all with private bathrooms and air conditioning.

Cabins are generally small, you are unlikely to spend much time in them other than to sleep.

You have a crew of five plus a grade II or III naturalist guide with you at all times.

Please note that the wildlife and activities described below are based on personal experience of a May trip around the islands.

They are an accurate and typical representation of the itinerary but we can't guarantee weather conditions or wildlife. Precise itineraries are subject to change according to weather conditions and instructions from the National Park. (b,l,d)

### Day 02 | Genovesa | **bird island**

Tower Island is basically formed by what remains of a submerged volcanic crater.

Being so remote, it is one of the less visited islands and therefore has some of the most abundant birdlife.

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This morning starts at Prince Philip's Steps where you climb to a plateau passing red-footed boobies, and possibly short-eared owls.

After the walk you can paddle a kayak along the craggy shore if you like. This afternoon you move around to Darwin Bay, a coral sand beach which is home to many frigate birds.

After the walk, you can swim in the relatively warm northern waters with sea lions. (b,l,d)

### Day 03 | Santiago | fur seals

Land at Puerto Egas this morning on the island of Santiago.

Walk along the coastline to see Galapagos fur seal basking in pools along the shoreline. The water here is improbably pretty.

Because you are walking on lava, this is one of the places in the islands where you have a degree of freedom to wander.

Return to the beach for some great snorkeling. Here you might be swimming with white-tipped sharks, sea turtles, sea lions and a colourful variety of fish.

After lunch you set off on the longest navigation of the week, all the way around the top of Isabela island.

Sit back, relax and read or look for whales and dolphins as you travel. (b,l,d)

### Day 04 | Fernandina | marine iguanas

Visit the shores of one of the world's most active volcanic islands, Fernandina, to walk amongst the flightless cormorants, sea lions and marine iguanas.

Walk to the jagged lava of Punta Espinosa to see marine iguanas warming themselves on the lava.



Fernandina Island: a marine iguana pile-up.

You may well need to watch where you are treading as there are lots and lots of them piled up against each other for warmth.

Cross to Isabela island to visit Punta Vicente Roca.

The entire area lies on the flank of the 600m Ecuador Volcano where two turquoise coves form a bay protected from the ocean swells.

Explore the cliffs by panga to see blue-footed boobies and flightless cormorants.

There is an upswell of cold water currents here which means great marine life and therefore excellent snorkeling.

One cove is only accessible from the sea by way of an underwater passage.

The passage opens to calm waters where sea lions like to laze on the beach having traveled along the underwater route. (b,l,d)

### Day 05 | Isabela | giant tortoises

Travel the short distance south to Tagus Cove.

Here you walk up to a volcanic caldera for great views of the northern part of Isabela.

This afternoon is spent in Urbina bay where you look for giant tortoises in the wild. You will almost certainly see land iguanas along the way.

Return to the beach to swim or snorkel directly offshore possibly with rays, sea turtles and sharks.

For those of you less inclined to swim, you can take time to simply relax on the beach. (b,l,d)



Isabela Island: blue footed boobies on the rocks

### Day 06 | Isabela | lava and penguins

Start today in the pangas as you explore the coastline of Elizabeth bay.

First stop is a couple of small rocky outcrops where you should see your first penguins, living alongside marine iguanas and blue-footed boobies.

Carry on in-shore to a series of mangrove rimmed lagoons.

Cut off the engines as you drift in the silence of the late afternoon looking for sea turtles, sharks and penguins in this unusual setting.

Travel south to Punta Moreno, a stretch of land which has existed for only about 50 years.

There is very still little sign of life on these fairly new flows although a couple of isolated lagoons are now home to some vegetation and birdlife.



A tiny Galapagos penguin on the Mariela Islands

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Isabela Island: a friendly sea turtle.

Pass flightless cormorants on your way back to the boat.

Make your way directly to a nearby stretch of shore where you snorkel. (b,l,d)

### Day 07 | Isabela | Puerto Villamil

Land in the small town of Puerto Villamil this morning – the only inhabited part of Isabela Island.

Travel into the highlands to walk on the ; *Volcan Chico* side of the Sierra Negra volcano.

Up here you should see lots of bird life, including short eared owls.

The views are wonderful.

This afternoon drop down to the town and enjoy exploring this small and remote settlement.

There are lagoons nearby which are filled with birdlife. The beach in town is very popular with surfers and swimmers.

Finally, you can visit the 'Wall of Tears' the only remnant of a particularly notorious penal colony which was here between 1946 and 1959.

The wall was basically erected and dismantled to keep the prisoners occupied. (b,l,d)

### Day 08 | Santa Cruz | giant tortoises

For anyone travelling home today, cross the highlands back to Baltra for the flight back to the mainland.

Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about their breeding, conservation and education programs.

Walk amongst giant land tortoises in the extensive enclosures of the centre.

Meet 'Not-So-Lonesome George', long thought to be the last of the Pinta Island giant tortoise sub-species but now apparently.

After lunch, drive up to the Santa Cruz highlands to see giant tortoises in the 'wild'.

Really this is a farmer who has created a network of trails on his land where you will usually find giant tortoises.

Interesting but probably the most crowded part of your time in the Galapagos and the most stage-managed.

Visit some very pretty rock formations and walk through the mature vegetation of the highlands – this is likely to be the most greenery you see all week. (b,l,d)

### Day 09 | Floreana | snorkel and walk

After breakfast, land at Punta Cormorant to walk across Floreana island. Enjoy the somewhat incongruous sight of flamingoes feeding in a lagoon just inland.

Carry on along a good path to a very pretty sandy beach where you can spot rays and sea turtles.

Return to the boat mid-morning to get ready to go snorkeling in the distinctive Devil's Crown crater.

Swim through pretty coral formations and teeming marine life. You should see sea lions and lots of fish.

With luck you will see sharks – on a good day you might see hammerheads here.

Travel the short distance around the island to land at Post Office Bay. Here the old sailors' postal system still functions. You leave your letter in a barrel but not before taking out mail bound for your home port.

This way, all letters are slowly distributed around the world for free.

Walk down into a deep lava tunnel for a close look at the geology of these young islands.

This evening is the longest single navigation of your cruise as you make your way between Floreana and Isabela Islands.

It is worth bearing in mind that on this stretch particularly there can be a fair amount of swell.

The movement of the boat and noise are obviously greater during navigation.

If you are worried that this will be an issue, we can recommend the most suitable boats for you. (b,l,d)

### Day 10 | Espanola | seabirds and sea lions

Walk to the rugged cliffs of Punta Suarez to see a spectacular blow-hole.

Along the way you should see a broad spectrum of birdlife, including blue-footed boobies, Galapagos hawks and albatrosses.

Snorkel in the nearby bay where you might get to swim with sea lions. This afternoon land on 'sea lion beach'.



A proud sea lion on Espanola Island

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You can snorkel if you like but really it's just a lovely swimming beach.

All along the sand are sea lions basking in the sun. Wander along the beach and enjoy watching them play in the surf. (b,l,d)

### **Day 11** | *San Cristobal* | **giant tortoises**

Land at La Galapaguera beach this morning. The walk here is the longest of your visit at around 11km, taking around four hours.

It is one of the best places to see giant tortoises in the wild. You are also likely to see mockingbirds and lava lizards along the way.

At the end of your walk, cool off with a swim or snorkel off the beach.

After lunch, head to the sea lion colony of Isla Lobos which you explore by boat. (b,l,d)

### **Day 12** | *Santa Fé* | **land iguanas**

Santa Fé is one of the oldest Galapagos Islands and one of the few that is not volcanically active.

There is no fresh water on the island so it has been relatively undisturbed by human activity.

Walk a fairly strenuous trail up to the 'highlands' (200m at their highest) to look for the bright yellow Santa Fe land iguana with their distinctive spiked backs.

On the island you can also see frigate birds, Galapagos hawks. Off the beaches snorkel with manta rays, sea turtles, sea lions.

Santa Fe has one of the most beautiful coves of all the visitor sites in the Galapagos.

It is a turquoise lagoon protected by a peninsula that extends from the shore.

After your hike, swim in the calm waters of the bay or snorkel in the company of sea lions around the base of the rocks.

This afternoon carry on to North Plaza island to walk a short trail.

The southern, lower edge of the island is home to land iguanas and female and baby sea lions.

The uplifted northern edge forms a cliff which is home to lots of sea birds. (b,l,d)

### **Day 13** | *Seymour Norte* | **frigate birds**

This small island is packed with blue-footed boobies and frigate birds.



Waiting for a lift to snorkel at Pinnacle Rock

It is the only place you can see great and magnificent frigate birds nesting side by side. There is also a large colony of land iguanas and sea lions who like to surf.

Sail round to the small, barren outcrop of Isla Bartolomé.

Walk to the top of the island on a wooden walkway for beautiful views across the eastern Galapagos Islands. Head back down the hill to snorkel around the base of the emblematic Pinnacle Rock.

The visibility here is amongst the best of the week. You might be lucky and swim with penguins and sharks.

Certainly the channels and rock formations underwater make for a beautiful snorkeling environment. (b,l,d)

### **Day 14** | *Sombrero Chino* | **penguins**

Land this morning on the tiny island of *Sombrero Chino* (Chinese Hat).

This island is only visited by small vessels because the lava is fragile.

Explore the lava tunnels of the interior before dropping into the water to snorkel with sea lions and penguins.

This afternoon you moor up in Black Turtle Cove to paddle through mangroves in the afternoon light.

Observe the delicate marine life in the cove before returning to the Beagle for your farewell dinner. (b,l,d)

### **Day 15** | *travel* | **fly home**

Transfer to the airport at Baltra for your flight back to the mainland. (b)



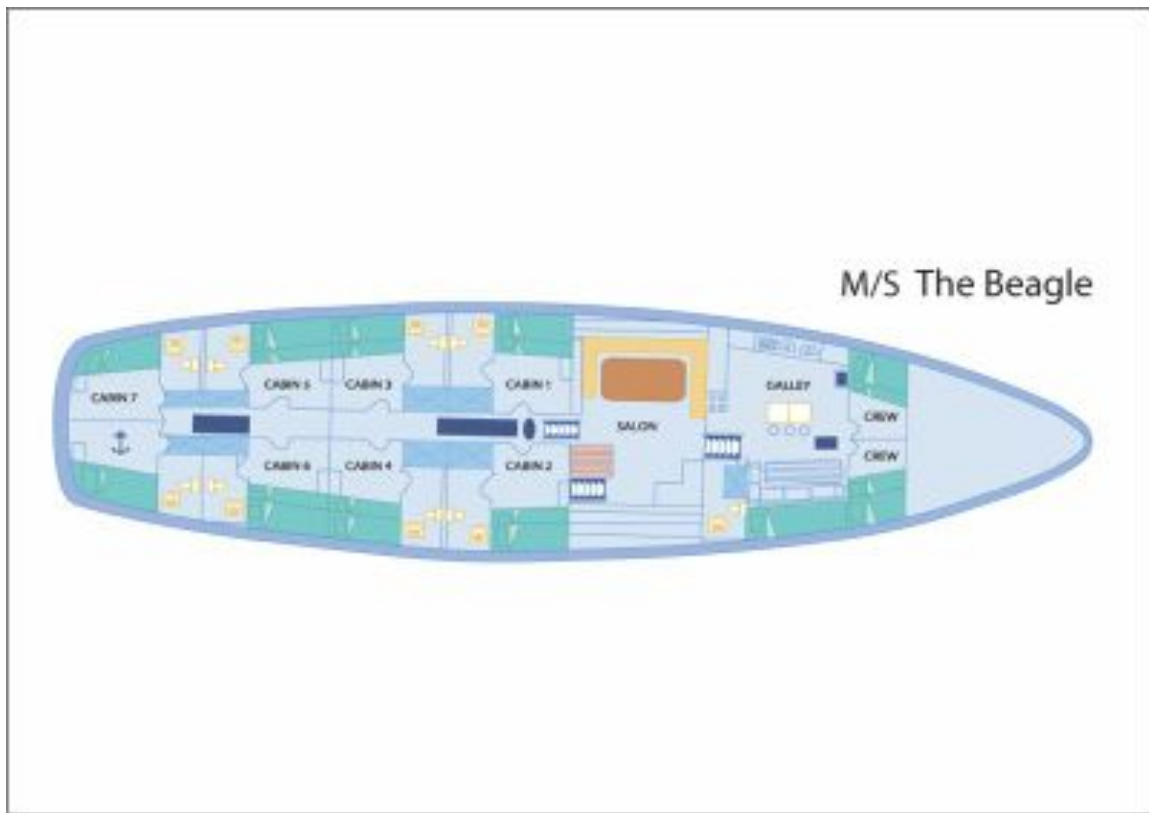
A pup on Espanola.

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*Dining outside on the rear deck is a popular option.*



*The spacious forward deck of Beagle.*



*The sails go up only occasionally but it is a pretty sight.*

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## Holiday Information

### Pura's opinion

The Beagle is possibly the most charming small boat in the Galapagos. People fall in love with the Beagle quite easily - very pretty, lots of space and great crew. In fact she is owner operated (Augusto was born on Floreana Island) which tends to give her a very warm, familial atmosphere.

As of 2009, Beagle offers two distinct seven night itineraries which can be combined to create the most comprehensive wildlife experience available in the Galapagos today.

### Accommodation

The six main cabins (numbers 1 - 6) are fairly small, below decks towards the centre or back of the boat. All have porthole, private bath, single upper, small double lower bunks. Small clothes hanging area and shelf.

Cabin 7 is smaller, at the back with single upper and lower bunks - this is generally sold as single occupancy which is why the boat accommodates thirteen. It is sometimes sold as a double at a slight discount.

Charters can be for either 12 or 13 people.

The communal areas are large and very comfortable with plenty of different seating areas including the interior salon/dining room.

Outside you have an open air dining area, a good sized forward deck, plenty of comfortable seating on the rear deck and then a topmost area where you can relax.

In short, there are plenty of bolt holes if you want to have time to be quiet and relax as well as plenty of places for you to be sociable.

### Noise

You should be aware that on any small boat you will have noise from generators and from the engine when travelling.

### Stability

Being a sail boat, you will get movement in the water. This will be most noticeable between July and October in the more exposed waters of the south west of the archipelago.

### Itinerary

The itinerary is unusual in that it works as either a seven or fourteen night proposition.

The two itineraries are *North West Islands* and the *South Central Islands*. Each runs every other week.

If you are going on Beagle for just seven nights then we would normally recommend you take the North West Islands route. This combines the western side of Isabela with Genovesa Island, unusual in a seven night trip.

### How active?

In the Galapagos, wildlife viewing is the main activity. There is some gentle walking and snorkeling.

There are days on this itinerary which involve longer walks, particularly on the *South Central Islands* itinerary. You can always sit out these excursions but really the Beagle is a good choice for someone who enjoys being active.

### How responsible?

Pura Aventura is passionate about the places it visits. The Beagle is owned and operated by Augusto Cruz and Georgina Marten Cruz.

Augusto was born on the island of Floreana in the south of the Galapagos archipelago and has worked on boats in the islands since 1977. Georgina, born in Dorset, has lived in Ecuador since 1973. She moved to the islands in 1980 to work as a naturalist guide.

The Beagle endeavours to use locally produced goods and services, maintaining its main offices in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island. The Beagle has been awarded the Smart Voyager certificate, which is granted to tourist operations after careful inspection of their adherence to sound conservation practices.

### When should I go?

In the Galapagos, wildlife viewing is excellent year round. Weather and sea conditions do vary somewhat through the year: September is the coolest and choppiest-sea month. From October onwards the weather warms up and the waters calm down until the hottest, calmest-sea month of February.

### Not based in the UK?

We are very happy to discuss your requirements if you are not travelling to and from the UK.

Please call us on **+44 1273 676712** between 9am and 6:30pm GMT weekdays.

### How do I book?

We need to check availability for Galapagos boats before taking your booking. Once you have the proposal and decide you would like to go ahead then please call in with the following:

- Full names
- Address
- Contact telephone numbers & email
- Deposit of 15%

Deposits can be paid by card, cheque or bank transfer, whichever suits you best (the balance of your holiday is due 60 days prior to travel).

We send you a confirmation email detailing all of the services agreed between us. We ask you to check through all of this carefully and sign off on the holiday.

### Prices & departures

2012	Tuesdays   <b>us\$3,320pp per week</b>
Price includes	7 night Galapagos cruise with all meals, excursions and guiding while on board.
Not included	Galapagos park entrance fee (us\$110); flights to the Galapagos; personal expenses; tips; Ecuador airport tax.

Prices per person based on two sharing. Prices quoted in US dollars but payment is made in pounds sterling at a rate set at time of payment. Please reconfirm prices at time of booking.

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## A year in the Galapagos

### January

Beginning of the rainy season. Land birds start nesting, generally after the first rain. On Hood (Española) Island adult marine iguanas become brightly colored (green/red/black). The green sea turtles arrive at beaches to lay eggs. Land iguanas mate on Isabela Island. Both water and air temperatures rise and stay warm until June. Ideal time for snorkeling.

### February

On Floreana Island flamingos start nesting in greater numbers. Marine iguanas nest on Santa Cruz Island. Peak nesting season for the Galapagos dove. Breeding season begins for black-tailed pintail ducks. End of nesting season for Nazca (masked) boobies on Hood islands. The highest water temperature reaches 25C (77F) temperatures remain high until April. Penguins move from Bartolomé Island to follow the cool waters back to the west.

### March

Height of the rainy season (this does not mean it rains everyday). Sporadic tropical rains, intense sun and hot climate. Air temperature can reach up to 30C (86F) high humidity. Warm waters excellent for snorkelers. Penguins still active in the water next to tropical fish! Deep surge from the northern currents on some shores, wet landings at places like Puerto Egas, Gardner Bay, Bartolomé can sometimes be a challenge. Marine iguanas nest on Fernandina. March 21st, the beginning of the summer equinox signals the arrival of the waved albatross to Española. Punta Vicente Roca (Isabela) can be an amazing site.

### April

Massive arrival of waved albatrosses at Española, amazing courtship starts. Eggs of green sea turtles begin to hatch. Eggs of land iguanas hatch on Isabela. End of hatching season for the giant tortoises. While the rains have ended, the islands continue to be quite green. Good visibility in the water for snorkelers.

### May

North Seymour's blue-footed boobies begin their courtship. Sea turtles are still hatching on Gardner Bay, Punta Cormorant and Puerto Egas. Most of marine iguanas' eggs hatch from nests on Santa Cruz. Palo santo trees begin to shed their foliage. Waved albatross on Española start laying their eggs. Ban-rumped storm petrels begin their first nesting period.

### June

Beginning of the cold (garúa) season. Giant tortoises migrate to the lowlands on Santa Cruz island for the nesting season. South east trade winds return. Currents become a bit stronger. Seas pick up in surge and wave action. Male frigatebirds show off their red pouches on North Seymour. Southern migrating birds stop in the Galapagos on their journey north. Some groups of Humpback whales migrate up to equatorial latitudes along the coast of Ecuador reach Galapagos.

### July

Sea bird communities are very active (breeding), specially the Blue footed boobies on Española. Flightless cormorants perform beautiful courtship rituals and nesting activities on Fernandina. American oystercatchers nest along the shores of Puerto Egas

(Santiago Island). Lava lizards initiate mating rituals until November. Cetaceans (whales & dolphins) are more likely to be observed, specially off the western coast of Isabela. Great month to see the four stages of nesting in Blue footed boobies: eggs, chicks, juveniles and sub-adults. Water temperature around 21C (68F).

### August

Galapagos hawks court on Española and Santiago. Nazca (masked) boobies and Swallow-tailed gulls nest on Genovesa Island. The temperature of the ocean drops to 18C (64F), this varies according to the geographic zones among the islands. Migrant shore birds start to arrive. Giant tortoises return to the highlands of Santa Cruz. Oceans are quite choppy, currents at the strongest levels, surge can be expected along the shores that face west or south. Popping season of sea lions has started. Western and central islands are common places for such sightings.

### September

The air temperature reaches its lowest levels (19C-66F). Galapagos Penguins active around Bartolomé. Snorkelers can swim with penguins active at the surface or torpedo-like while underwater. Sea lions are very active. Females have reached estrus stage, and so harem-gathering males are constantly barking and fighting. Shore fighting is common. Most intense sea lion activity on western and central islands. Most species of sea birds remain quite active at their nesting sites.

### October

Lava herons start nesting until March. The Galapagos Fur Sea lions begin their mating period. Blue footed boobies raise chicks all over Española and Punta Vicente Roca (Isabela). Giant tortoises are still laying eggs. Days are not always sunny. Garúa can be expected in most locations, except the western islands where most days have a misty start but after few hours of daylight it burns off. Sunrises in the west can be quite beautiful as the garúa covers only certain locations of the western volcanoes. Summits are clear, but low-lying fog covers the shoreline.

### November

Popping of sea lions continues. Sea lions are sexually active on the eastern part of the archipelago. Breeding season for the brown noddies. Some species of jellyfish can be seen around the islands. The Genus Physalia is commonly seen floating around Gardner and Tortuga Islets. Some can also be seen stranded on the shores of Flour Beach (Floreana). Band-rumped storm petrels begin their second nesting period. Seas are calm. South east trade winds decrease, generally great weather. Water temperatures rising and good visibility for snorkelers. Sea lion pups (specially at Champion Islet) play aqua-aerobics next to snorkelers. Most pups here are curious enough to nibble at fins of snorkelers.

### December

Giant tortoise eggs begin to hatch. Green sea turtles display their mating behavior. The rainy season begins, all of the plants of the dry zone produce leaves. Galapagos becomes "green". The first young waved albatrosses fledge. Great weather.

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