

Wildlife Galapagos Samba Galapagos Cruise



Samba yacht - superior tourist class sail boat - fourteen passengers - expert guide - comprehensive itinerary - great crew - locally owned - sustainably run – choose to cruise for one or two weeks

Explore the unique Galapagos Islands on board one of the Galapagos islands' most charming small sail boats.

Enjoy a great 14-night route around islands or one of two distinct seven night routes.

Walk, swim, snorkel and sea kayak to get close to the islands' wonderful and varied wildlife.

Sail with a naturalist guide trained by the Galapagos National Park authority.

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



Your superior tourist class yacht Samba.



"The crew of 'Samba' were excellent and the guide – Juan – was outstanding. We were very well looked after and felt we were ahead of the game compared to all of the other boats around." Richard K.

Holiday Itinerary

Day 01 | Santa Cruz | **giant tortoises**

Samba's start day is a Tuesday. You can join the cruise from:

Day 01 to day 08 (seven nights, route A)

Day 08 to day 15 (seven nights, route B)

Day 01 to day 15 (14 nights)



Samba offers a 14 night cruise which is described below.

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 the drive up to the Santa Cruz highlands to see giant tortoises.

Walk around an estate following a network of trails where you will usually find giant tortoises.

Visit some very pretty rock formations and walk through the mature vegetation of the highlands.

Later on, visit the Charles Darwin Research Station today to learn about their breeding, conservation and education programs.

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

Meet 'Lonesome George', long thought to be the last of the Pinta Island giant tortoise sub-species but now enjoying something of a purple patch since they found him a mate.

At the end of the day, head down to the dock to board your boat.

Here we describe the itinerary and services of the 14 passenger superior tourist class motor sailor, Samba. 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.

Questions? Ready to book? Call us on **01273 676 712**

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Santa Cruz Island: a giant tortoise having lunch.



Espanola Island: nesting waved albatross.



Isabela Island: a friendly sea turtle.



Fernandina Island: a marine iguana sunbathing.

They are a typical representation of the itinerary but we can't guarantee weather conditions or wildlife.

Precise itineraries are subject to change according to weather conditions. (b,l,d)

Day 02 | 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 some 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. (b,l,d)

Day 03 | Espanola | **seabirds and sea lions**

Start today with a landing on 'sea lion beach'. This is your first chance to get into the water – you can snorkel or swim off the beach.

All along the sand are sea lions basking in the sun.

Wander along the beach and enjoy watching them play in the surf.

Return for lunch on board and an hour or so navigation to the next landing site on the west of the island.

Mid-afternoon snorkeling excursion to the nearby bay where you might get to swim with 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. (b,l,d)

Day 04 | San Cristobal | **frigate birds**

Sea Lion Island is about an hour north of San Cristóbal and home to a large colony of sea lions.

Enjoy a panga ride amongst the sea lions as they play in the waters around you.

This island is also a great place for snorkelling.

Punta Pitt is a colourful place with its different types of lava and diverse vegetation.

Arguably the most spectacular visitor site on San Cristobal, it is home to a diverse range of species such as sea lions, lava lizards, marine iguanas, frigate birds, pelicans and boobies.

In fact, Punta Pitt is the only place where you can see three species of boobies nesting in the same area.

There is a beautiful golden sand beach here. (b,l,d)

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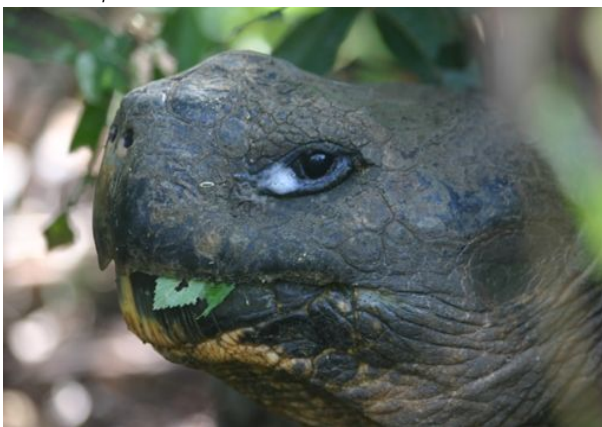


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A cutie on Espanola Island.



Santa Cruz Island: a giant tortoise having lunch.



Nesting albatross.



Isabela Island: a friendly sea turtle.

Day 05 | 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.

Formed by an uplift in the earth's crust, rather than a volcano, Santa Fé is relatively flat compared to some of its neighbours.

See endemic species of land iguana, lava lizards and sea lions. You may also see frigate birds and Galapagos hawks.

The sheltered cove here is really quite beautiful, and offers some great snorkeling and swimming with manta rays, sea turtles, sea lions.

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

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. (b,l,d)

Day 06 | Bartolomé | snorkel and views

Carry on around the island to the small, barren outcrop of Isla Bartolomé.

Walk up to the top of the island on a wooden walkway for beautiful views across the 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 and you might be lucky enough to swim with penguins and sharks.

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

Day 07 | Rabida | fur seals and snorkel

Visit the island of Rabida, where the unusual coloured sand makes the beach look red from a distance.

Mangroves border a saltwater lagoon here, a popular resting place for flocks of pelicans. Enjoy the opportunity to snorkel from the beach.

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. (b,l,d)

Day 08 | Santa Cruz | change-over

Today is a transition day so some 7-night guests may leave and others join you.

Once the change over happens, head over to land at Bachas beach on Santa Cruz Island.

This very pretty 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 to snorkel. (b,l,d)

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Walking up Bartolomé island



Waiting to snorkel at Pinnacle Rock



Sally Lightfoot crab on lava

Day 09 | Genovesa | seabirds and owls

Land at Darwin Bay which is the largest tropical seabird colony on the planet.

The site is populated by frigate birds, red-footed boobies, Darwin's finches, doves, mocking birds and Nazca boobies.

Genovesa 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.

Land at Prince Philip's Steps where you climb a steep path to a plateau passing red-footed boobies, and possibly short-eared owls. (b,l,d)

Day 10 | Marchena | sharks and rays

Marchena is the largest island in the Galapagos with no visitor sites. There is no topsoil on the island, no freshwater, just a single active volcano.

It is, however, a great place to snorkel, kayak and ride the zodiac.

Samba is currently the only boat with permission to visit so this is a really special and peaceful place.

Punta Mejía is one of the best sites in the Archipelago to snorkel. The calm and clear deep blue waters of the north west coast are home to a great diversity of fish, rays, reef sharks and sea turtles.

Snorkel around recently formed lava caves where marine iguanas feed as you explore the area around Playa Negra on the remote Marchena Island. (b,l,d)

Day 11 | Isabela | lava and turtles

Land on the most northerly point of Isabela Island, Punta Albemarle. During the Second World War there was a US radar station here in order to prevent any Japanese attacks on the Panama Canal.

Visit the remains of the outpost where nowadays the only inhabitants are flightless cormorants and marine iguanas.

Punta Vicente Roca is an amazing geological site which lies almost on the equator. It is an outstanding example on how the Islands were formed and how the forces of change have transformed the landscape and shaped the wildlife.

Explore the dramatic coastline in zodiacs as you look for wildlife both above and below the water. When the waters are calm enough the snorkeling is great as the walls of the tuff cones are full of colorful invertebrates and rich algae which sea turtles love to eat. (b,l,d)

Day 12 | Fernandina | marine iguanas

Visit the youngest of the Galapagos Islands, Fernandina.

Here you walk to the jagged lava of Punta Espinosa to see marine iguanas warming themselves on the lava. 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.

Walk on Isabela to see if you can see 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.

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Fernandina Island: a marine iguana sunbathing.



Galapagos lizard.



The mating dance of the Blue Footed Boobie.

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

Day 13 | Isabela | **turtles and penguins**

Land at 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 lava fields although a couple of isolated lagoons are now home to some vegetation and birdlife.

Pass flightless cormorants on your way back to the boat.

Make your way directly to a nearby stretch of shore where you snorkel.

Get into the zodiacs (small boats) to explore the coastline around Urbina Bay.

First stop is a couple of small rocky outcrops where you should see 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. (b,l,d)

Day 14 | Isabela | **turtles and penguins**

Explore the harbour bay by boat as you travel to the small island of Tintoreras.

Apart from the ever-present sea lions and pelicans, you will see a colony of the tiny Galapagos penguin.

Walk across surreal lava landscapes to a huge iguana colony. The mangrove-lined beaches are also home to sea lions.

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

Travel into the highlands of Isabela above the town of Puerto Vilamil to walk on the *Volcan Chico* side of the Sierra Negra volcano which has one of the largest craters in the world.

Up here you should see lots of bird life, including short-eared owls. The views are also wonderful. (b,l,d)

Day 15 | travel | **leave the islands**

Get up early this morning to paddle through mangroves in the dawn light. Observe the delicate marine life in the sheltered cove before returning to the boat for breakfast.

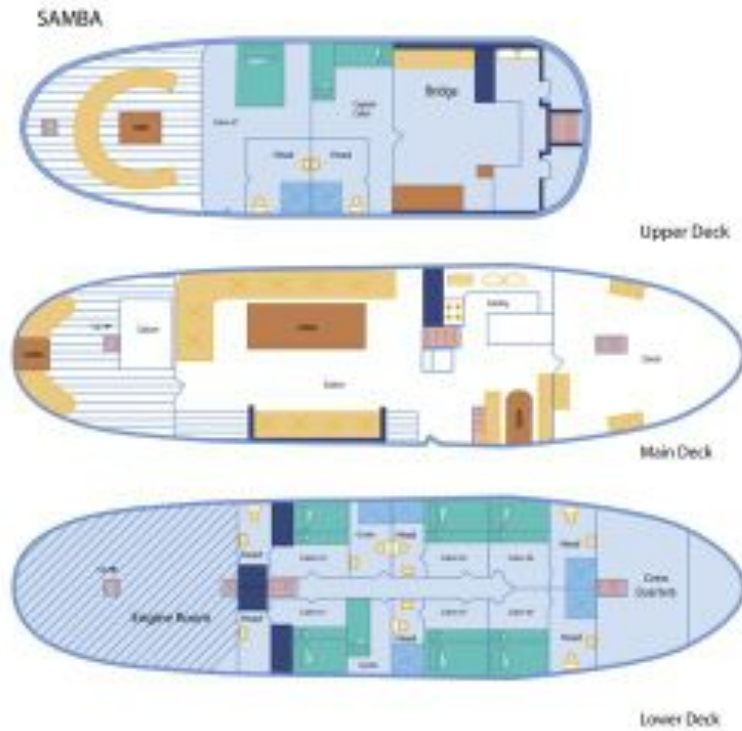
Disembark in Baltra at around 8am. (b)

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Dine inside or outside on board Samba.



Samba moored in Puerto Ayora harbour.



The front deck of Samba is a lovely spot for sunbathing

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Holiday Information

Pura's opinion

Samba is a sweet little boat. Classed as tourist superior you won't actually notice any difference in the size of cabins, the quality of guides and itinerary compared to many of our first class sail boats.

Samba is very good value assuming you stay in cabins 1 through 6. If you get cabin 7 then good becomes great value.

Feedback from our clients on Samba is invariably very good indeed.

Star rating

Samba is a tourist superior class motor sail boat. Think of Samba as the bottom end of first class and that's probably a fairer reflection of the overall quality of the experience.

Accommodation

Seven cabins accommodating fourteen people.

Cabin 7 is one of the best value in the Galapagos Islands. It is relatively very large, up on the top deck next to the captain's cabin/bridge. You have a double bed and lots of light. You have to go quite a long way up in price to find a boat with cabins this large.

Cabins 1 & 2 are closest to the engine room so noise levels will be greater though these two cabins are slightly larger than the others below decks.

Cabins 3 - 6 are pretty much identical, small with nothing by way of floor space but the beds are a good width (3ft single beds) and full length so sleeping is very comfortable. At a squeeze you could sleep two in the bottom bunk as the hull curves to give you a bit more room.

The outside spaces are well divided with a front deck for sunbathing, a lower shaded seating area on the back deck and above that, a full outside seating/dining area. So there is a good deal of flexibility in the arrangement of the space.

Noise

You should be aware that on any small boat you will have noise from generators and from the engine when travelling. Even sail boats travel under motor. Cabins 1 and 2 are closest to the engine room.

Stability

Being a sail boat, you will get movement in the water though Samba has a relatively flat keel. Movement will be most noticeable between July and October in the more exposed waters of the south west.

Note that cabin 7, being on the top deck, will roll more than cabins below decks.

Boat specification

Length on deck: 22m/73ft

Boat width (beam): 4.5m/15ft

Average speed: 9 knots

Crew: 5 plus one guide

How active?

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

Conditions underfoot in the Galapagos can sometimes be rough as the islands are volcanic.

You should therefore be prepared for some walking over uneven terrain. You can always opt out of excursions.

How responsible?

Pura Aventura is passionate about the places it visits.

To help preserve the integrity of these destinations we:

- Keep groups small to minimise environmental impact.
- Work directly with local businesses and organisations to directly benefit local economies.
- Work with local guides so that our holidays are more interesting for clients and more beneficial locally.
- Make payment to suppliers before our clients arrive.

The boat owners and most of the crew come from the islands which makes the enterprise sustainable.

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

Dates & prices	Tuesdays us\$2,850pp per week
Price includes	8 day 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.

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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