



12 Days Itinerary

LEISURE OPTION: Active Galapagos on the Samba - Island Diversity

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| Day 1 | Independent Transfer to Mama Cuchara Hotel
Mama Cuchara - Quito (2 Nights) |
| Day 2 | Quito City Day Tour 9:00 AM (7hr 30min) |
| Day 3 | Shared Transfer to Quito Airport
Santa Cruz Island: Highlands |
| Day 4 | Floreana Island |
| Day 5 | Española Island |
| Day 6 | San Cristobal Island |
| Day 7 | Santa Fe and Plazas Islands |
| Day 8 | Sombrero Chino and Bartolome Islands |
| Day 9 | Rabida and Santiago Islands |
| Day 10 | North Seymour & Puerto Ayora
Ikala Hotel |
| Day 11 | Free time in Puerto Ayora, Galapagos |

Day 1

Independent Transfer to Mama Cuchara Hotel

INDEPENDENT Transfer to Your Hotel, Mama Cuchara

Hotel Address: Vicente Rocafuerte E 3-250, Luis Chávez, Quito

Contact Number: +593 2 381 3400

Check-in time: After 2pm

NB. You will find a taxi stand conveniently located next to the Information Kiosk as you exit the Arrivals Area of the Quito airport. There is a flat rate of about \$25-\$35 for taxi transfers from the Quito airport to the city centre.

Please keep in mind that Quito's average temperatures range from 12 Celsius (53 Fahrenheit) at night to 24 Celsius (72 Fahrenheit) on sunny days. It is recommended to dress in layers while in the Andean Highlands and we suggest you bring a warm jacket if your arrival flight is on the night.

We can arrange a private transfer should you prefer that (about 3x the price of a taxi).



Mama Cuchara - Quito

+593 2 381 3400

Vicente Rocafuerte E 3-250, Luis Chávez
Quito

2:00 PM

Check In

2 Nights

CNH Tours welcomes you to your Active Galapagos Tour on the Samba! Your tour begins at check-in at the Mama Cuchara hotel.

Located in the Historic Center of Quito the best preserved and least altered historic center in Latin America according to UNESCO World Heritage Site Hotel Mama Cuchara enjoys an ideal location among the other hotels in the historic center. Within walking distance of Plaza de Santo Domingo, La Ronda, and many other historic attractions in the city.

Day 2



Quito City Day Tour

9:00 AM

Start Time

4:30 PM

End Time

7hr 30min

Duration

Meeting Point

Hotel lobby

After breakfast at the hotel, you'll get the chance to visit Quito's historic centre. The government of Ecuador and the City government have invested a lot over the past decade and transformed the old city centre into a delightful place to discover history and architecture, along with the opportunity to see Ecuadorians out and about in town. Historic Quito was inscribed onto the World Heritage list at the same time as Galapagos, in 1978 (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/2> for more details). If the morning's sky is particularly clear, we will arrange for a trip on the cable car up to Pichincha volcano, where you should be able to enjoy breathtaking views of the Quito valley below and surrounding snow capped volcanoes. Lunch is provided in a tasty local restaurant. You'll be back at the hotel in time for a quiet late afternoon. Free evening - local restaurants abound

Day 3

Shared Transfer to Quito Airport

Up early this morning! You will be heading out in a **shared transfer** at 5:00am to head to the Quito airport for your flight to Galapagos. In terms of clothing, Quito can be chilly in the mornings but it will be quite warm when you land in Galapagos - layers or a change of clothes are strongly suggested.

The hotel will provide you with a small boxed breakfast, but there are some great diners in the airport by the departure gates where you can get a typical Ecuadorian breakfast. We do recommend getting something to eat or snack to bring with you, as there is only a small snack served on the plane and it will be a while before you get onboard the Samba for lunch.

You'll be met at the airport by our local agent - he will ensure that you are taken care of and make it through the various steps to reach the boarding area.

Please dress comfortably/appropriately and consider bringing a small backpack with essentials you may need such as sunblock, a hat, rainwear, and a water bottle. You will be visiting the highlands of Santa Cruz as your first activity, **only embarking on the Samba in the late afternoon**. Small change (minimum of \$10) will also be required for your bus ticket, so please have some on hand.



Santa Cruz Island: Highlands

On arrival at Baltra airport, and after having passed through the formalities and recuperated any checked luggage, you will be met by your naturalist guide holding a sign saying "CNH Tours" and/or "Samba".

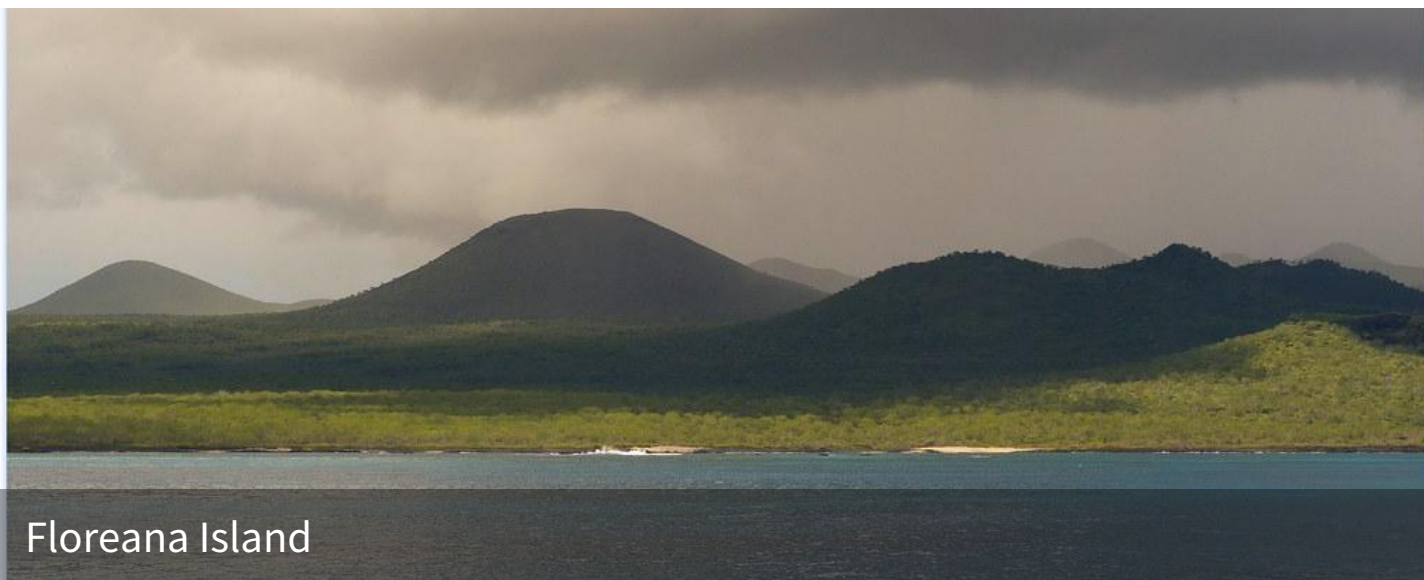
The journey will start with a short bus ride to the narrow channel that separates Baltra Island and Santa Cruz Island. Keep your eyes open for some land iguanas on Baltra - these had disappeared soon after the establishment of the World War II military base there, but have been painstakingly re-introduced since, and are now doing very well - particularly after the successful eradication of wild cats, which liked to dine on baby iguanas!

After the 3 minute ferry ride, we'll head up to the **Highlands** of Santa Cruz. At 1800 feet (550 metres), stopping at El Chato II for a highlands lunch. El Chato II (a private reserve) is a good place for a visit to the native highland forests - home of many Darwin's finches, mocking birds, vermillion flycatcher and a wonderful diversity of indigenous plants - including the peculiar looking scalesia trees, resembling giant broccoli. You'll also encounter the iconic giant tortoises and have the chance to walk among them. We'll continue on to Puerto Ayora, the biggest town in Galapagos where you'll have a chance to stroll around for about 45 minutes. At the end of the afternoon, you'll embark on the Samba, settle in and get underway.

Cabin Assignment:

Briefing for the next day's activities followed by dinner onboard.

Day 4



Floreana Island

AM: PUNTA CORMORANT / DEVIL'S CROWN
PM: BARONESS' LOOKOUT

Following a four-hour navigation from Puerto Ayora we will do a wet landing on a volcanic olivine beach. **Punta Cormorant** is located on the northern shore of Floreana and is the house of greater flamingos and sea turtles. On one side, the point is partially flooded with a brackish lagoon where flamingos occasionally feed. Whimbrels, herons and stilts are other common shore and migratory birds of the wetlands. On the other side sea turtles use every corner of a white sand beach to deliver their eggs. You often see stingrays and reef sharks from the shore and if you are lucky turtles ending basking.

Late that morning we will snorkel at one of the best spots in the world! **Devil's Crown** is a magical start to the Galápagos underwater experience.

To make absolutely sure you get a full day from sunrise to sun set, we will kayak/panga ride and climb at the **Baroness' lookout**. Navigating through a small set of islets with a sea lion colony, boobies and mangroves. Finally, following our ride we will start our short hike to the top of this eroded spatter cone to share the vivid obscurity of the human history of "Las Encantadas". A fantastic landscape decorated with little islands is the perfect setting to engage with the fascinating story of the Wittmer's, Doctor Ritter and Dora, and the famous Baroness and her three lovers. Charles, Floreana and Santa María are the official names of the Island that holds an overwhelming mystery of our human history.

Day 5



AM: PUNTA SUAREZ
PM: GARDNER BAY & GARDNER ISLAND

Hood is the oldest Galapagos Island, the Queen. Her Majesty has travelled 100 miles (160 km) away from the volcanic hotspot over which she was originally created; she sets an example of splendor and wisdom. When landing on her western tip, **Punta Suárez**, you'll be amazed at the most colourful marine iguanas in Galapagos, at the plentiful sea lions leisurely wandering around you, at blue-footed boobies and Sally light-foot crabs coating the rocks with their brilliant colours. The long walk leads you to one of the finest illustrations of ancient sea bird colonies on the planet. The endless cliff shaped by strong wave action and the force of the wind is the home of the only tropical albatross on Earth^[2]. This mythical elegant glider shares the precipice with many others sea birds like the tropicbirds, the swallow tailed gull and the Nazca booby.

Depending on weather conditions, either at the end of the morning or early in the afternoon, we'll snorkel or kayak around **Gardner Island**. Its calm waters and attractive landscape give you a great experience above and below the water line.

Located on the north coast of Española **Gardner Bay** beckons with its tranquil snow white sand beach. The fine grains of sand make perfect terrain for a soft walk and a late afternoon "zen" time by the sea... though you won't be alone, sea lions and Hood mockingbirds will keep us company. The mockingbirds here have the reputation for a certain cockiness. So, don't drop your camera lens cap - they may make off with it!

Day 6



San Cristobal Island

AM: PUNTA PITT

PM: ISLA LOBOS

On **Punta Pitt** we do a wet landing late in the afternoon to climb a tuff cone and enjoy the sunset. This is the point in Galapagos that is closest to mainland South America. Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, frigate birds and storm petrel nest in the area. The ochre color beach is perfect for a relaxing plunge after the walk and great for picture taking.

We navigate by a dramatic tuff cone formation, **Kicker Rock**. The eroded structure has vertical walls of over 450 feet and has great numbers of sea birds nesting and resting on it. We will circumnavigate the rock to admire its magnitude.

Lobos Island, located in the vicinity of the larger San Cristóbal Island, was named after the large colonies of sea lions that practically fill the entire area of the island. In addition to sea lions, there is also a small population of blue-footed boobies and common frigatebirds who nest around the saltbushes. This site also presents great opportunities for snorkeling, as the waters passing between Lobos Island and San Cristobal are calm and filled with marine life.



Santa Fe and Plazas Islands

AM: SANTA FE

PM: SOUTH PLAZA

A more picturesque inlet could not have been created by the world's best artist. The white sand floor of the seabed of **Barrington Bay** reflects the light, turning the calm waters turquoise. A small forest of gigantic prickly pear cactus grows on a peninsula that keeps the bay sheltered. Conditions are ideal for a large sea lion colony. Santa Fe is an ancient extinct volcano and it has been isolated from other islands long enough to have an endemic land dragon. Paler in color than its relatives, the Barrington land iguana has a primitive morphology. Galapagos Hawks, mocking birds, finches and endemic rice rats provide company to this yellowish monster.

A two-hour navigation north will take us to **South Plaza**. The dry landing transports you to a brilliant combination of life and colors. Land iguanas wandering through bright red carpet weed, Swallow tailed gulls nesting around the overhang tops and red-billed tropicbirds and shearwaters flying with dancing displays. Mind the pirates of the sky; they will strike if you drop your guard. This 13 acre (5 hectare) island is one of the best spots in the archipelago to see land iguanas and swallow-tailed gulls, both indigenous to the Galapagos. There are iguana nests scattered all over the hill. The sheer cliffs of the southern shore are a perfect bird habitat, making it an unparalleled bird observatory especially for swallow-tailed gulls, Audubon shearwaters, and red-billed tropicbirds. You'll also have the chance to spot the only marine - land iguana hybrids in the islands. Evolution in the making?

If we have enough time and good weather we will swim or snorkel in **Punta Carrion**. A great way to end an active day!



Sombrero Chino and Bartolome Islands

AM: SOMBRERO CHINO

PM: BARTOLOME

Named for its distinctive profile, Sombrero Chino (Chinese hat) is separated from Santiago island by a light-blue-green lagoon.

The island is the classic example of a place with a volcanic origin: The “land” is made of a few adjacent craters and very old, fragile pahoehoe lava flows. As a result, vegetation is just starting to take hold. Colourful carpetweed plants are scattered here and there.

The trail on the island runs from the landing site on the northern white-sand beach — where you may see penguins, sea lions and Sally Lightfoot crabs — to the rocky shore of the western part of the island. Here, you’ll enter a primeval world of volcanic rubble, sharp outcroppings, and lava formations. Marine iguanas wallow in tide pools and relish a spray of mist as the waves crash against the nearby rocks. From the top of the island, Galapagos hawks monitor their kingdom.

The lava fields here will break beneath your feet and are so fragile that the Galápagos National Park has deemed this site to be sensitive to the impact of tourism. Only small boats are allowed to make a stop. Because of the regulations, Sombrero Chino is one of the least visited sites in the Galápagos. This island is an unparalleled place *within* a unique archipelago. There is an opportunity to go snorkeling in the lagoon.

Bartolome Island offers an explosive volcanic landscape. You'll be climbing the longest staircase in Galapagos - taking up over 270 feet (80 metres) to admire the dramatic spatter cones and the expansive view of Pinnacle Rock that distinguishes Galapagos from other oceanic archipelagos. It's from this vantage point that one of the most iconic pictures of Galapagos is taken - with Pinnacle Rock in the background. Later, enjoy some down time on magical golden beaches where sea turtles nest (December to March), and/or go for a swim or snorkle near (or with!) penguins, sharks, giant rays and to explore the sunken lava tubes.



Rabida and Santiago Islands

AM: RABIDA

PM: JAMES BAY (Santiago Island)

Galapagos offers a diversity of geological formations without boundaries. The island of **Rábida** has lavas rich in iron and after millions of years of exposure to air they have turned it red. The rusted volcanic material has eroded to form a beautiful crimson sand beach, lovely for a walk. The protected shore provides excellent conditions for wildlife. Brown pelicans use the nearby saltbushes as a resting and nesting area. Hawks and mocking birds are common visitors of the lowlands. Furthermore, you'll find that snorkeling off the beach can be very exciting as sharks, rays and many colorful fish are often visible.

Following a two-hour sail northwest we will do a wet landing at **Puerto Egas** also known as **James Bay**. The magical shorelines of the west of James Island are a combination of tuff cone, lava flows and organic sand. A rocky coast with a very gentle slope is used by a great number of shore birds and reptiles. Oystercatchers, whimbrels, sanderlings, turnstones, tattlers and other waders are mixed with marine iguanas and bright painted crabs to feed by the rich littoral zone. Grand, partially collapsed lava tunnels house a Galapagos fur sea lion colony. The snorkel can be one of the best in the archipelago. Sea turtles feeding, parrot fishes, damsel fishes, white tipped reef sharks and many more... Charles Darwin spent most of his Galapagos land time near this spot.



North Seymour & Puerto Ayora

AM: NORTH SEYMOUR

PM: SANTA CRUZ AND PUERTO AYORA

Following a dry landing at sunrise we will walk amongst the largest blue-footed booby colony of the Islands. If breeding, you will enjoy their dancing and singing to find a mate. Not far from the dancers we'll spot great and magnificent frigate birds nesting. The males inflate their pouches to attract the ladies that fly above them. Swallow tailed gulls and tropicbirds decorate the large basaltic walls of the island.

We will be back on board for breakfast at 8:00 and we have to be ready to check out at 9:00.

After 8 very busy days on the Samba, take the time now to unwind a bit, find your land legs again and get to know the people side of Galapagos. Farmers, shop keepers, restaurant owners, mothers and fathers, children in school uniforms all trying to get by on this remote archipelago, so far from the rest of the world. These next two days will give you a chance to mingle, to see what life is all about in Galapagos - where we lived for 4 years.

Those of you staying on with the full CNH Tours Active Galapagos trip (the LEISURE option) will take the trip over the Puerto Ayora and check into your comfortable, well-located hotel. You'll have a free afternoon to explore this quirky town at your leisure. Why not see if you can catch a game of "Ecuavolley"?



Ikala Hotel

4:00 PM

8:00 AM

Protected from the sun, the Ikala Galapagos Hotel is surrounded by beautiful trees and gardens that create a fresh and natural environment that make the hotel an oasis in the center of the town of Santa Cruz. The hotel has an outdoor pool, bar, and La Terraza Restaurant where you can enjoy a delicious breakfast or private dinner overlooking the sea and enjoying the relaxing environment.

Day 11



Free time in Puerto Ayora, Galapagos

9am: Our guide meets group members who wish to enjoy an escorted excursion in the lobby of the hotel. Rest of group has a free day.

Here is [a list of options](#) and you'll have the services of a guide to help you out. You may want to just mosey around town - poke your head into different shops, check out the activity at the main pier, stop for a coffee or a cold drink, and spend a bit of time sourcing a suitable establishment for lunch.

6:45 pm: Our guide meets you in the lobby of the Hotel Ikala to go to your Farewell Galapagos dinner.

7pm: Farewell Dinner in the company of your land extension guide.

Return to Hotel Ikala.

Breakfast, Dinner.



Transfer to airport - flight to the continent

Sadly, this is the last day of your tour. After an early breakfast at Ikala Hotel, we will be departing for the Baltra Airport.

We'll take a ride back to Baltra, and board our flight to Quito. As you travel across Baltra Island one last time, try to spot a land iguana! You'll also be able to see the two Daphnes in the distance, from Baltra's airport. We should be arriving at Quito airport in the late afternoon/early evening, at which point the trip ends.

We hope that you leave with memories to last a lifetime!