

# Master the Galapagos, Galapagos Islands

## 7 Nights

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

**PLEASE NOTE:** Embarkation and disembarkation location is subject to change. Please check your booking details carefully.

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

Early embarkation is NOT possible due to the vessel 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 hotel 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.*

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

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.

## Itinerary Details

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

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**.

### Number of scheduled dives:

7 nights: up to 18

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 to see Giant Tortoises in the wild

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

**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:

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

### Days 3-6 (7 nights)

- Full breakfast and dive briefings
- Dives 1 and 2
- Lunch, relaxation and dive briefings
- Dives 3 and, where possible, dive 4
- Dinner

### Day 7 (7 nights)

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

**NOTE:** Dives between breakfast and lunch, and between lunch and dinner are conducted back-to-back, with a surface interval of 1 - 1 ½ hrs between them. Guests remain in their wetsuits on the dive deck during this time, and will be offered snacks and refreshments.

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

*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

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. 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 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 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 165 metres (490 ft) 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 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 to 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, 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!

### 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!

## 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.