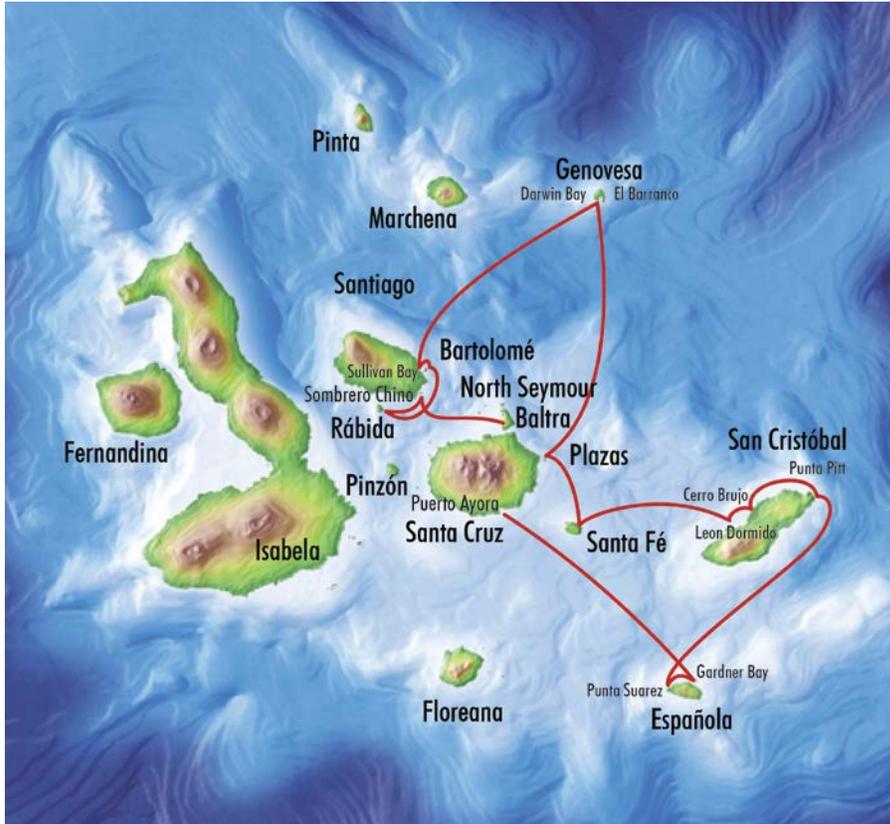


## MV Integrity – Eastern Route

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### Saturday: Baltra and Santa Cruz

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AM — Santa Cruz Highlands — Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz Island for a special opportunity to view the islands' most famous reptile: the giant tortoises in their wild habitat. What a privilege to see an endangered species roving in this lush environment! The vegetation of the area includes the Scalesia Forest (an endemic giant daisy tree) and birds such as the vermilion flycatcher will delight everyone with its scarlet feathers against an emerald green forest. Look for Darwin's finches (most of them from the tree-finch group), particularly the famous Woodpecker Finch.

PM — Charles Darwin Research Station and boarding yacht — We will visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and Galápagos National Park headquarters to learn first hand

of the conservation and research efforts in the islands. There, you'll see several subspecies of adult tortoises, lots of hatchlings, and learn of the repatriation programs that are saving several subspecies of tortoises and iguanas from extinction. Later In the afternoon, we will board our

yacht, Integrity, for dinner and set sail on our Island cruise. We will live aboard the yacht and spend as much time exploring the islands as park rules permit. Each night, we'll travel on to the next destination.

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## Sunday: Española Island

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AM — Gardner Bay — We'll stroll along a magnificent white sand beach where sea lions lounge, marine turtles nest, and the curious Española mockingbirds follow our every footstep. We can take a brief swim on the beach or wait for an amazing snorkel in the company of schools of colorful fish, turtles, sea lions, and possibly small sharks along the underwater cliffs of Gardener-by-Española, a small satellite islet.



PM — Punta Suárez — This is one of the Galapagos' most famed visitor sites. You'll be dazzled by spectacular cliff views of pounding surf and seemingly unlimited populations of an amazing variety of seabirds. Brightly colored marine iguanas and the largest lava lizards of Galapagos frequent the coastline and rest on the trail. From the cliff top you'll watch a blowhole spray water 30 meters in the air. Española is the only island where you'll see waved albatrosses and possibly observe their fascinating mating dance.

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## Monday: San Cristóbal Island

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AM — Punta Pitt — Disembarking onto the small beach, visitors are confronted by the strong stench and cacophony of barking sea lions. This is a bachelor colony, and most are exhausted from fighting and mating. A steep gully leads up the cliff to a breeding ground for Boobies of all three varieties: Red-footed, Blue-footed and Nazca. It's the only place in the Galapagos where you can see all three species nesting together. Two species of frigatebirds are also present, as are Swallow-tailed Gulls and Storm Petrels. The view of sea lions from the top of the cliff over the beach is magnificent, as are the contours of the barren, wind-eroded peaks of the island. The trail across the Punta Pitt site offers a closer look at the hardy vegetation that manages to thrive in this volcanic wasteland. From Saltbush and spiny shrubs next to the beach the trail leads up to an area of Palo Santo trees, big yellow-green shrubs, tiny cacti and, in the dry season, carpets of red Vesuvius.

PM — Cerro Brujo & Kicker Rock — A short panga ride along the cliffs of Cerro Brujo will be followed by a visit to the lovely coral sand beach, frequented by waders and migrant birds. Snorkelers will see an amazing array of sea life at Kicker Rock, often including manta rays, sea turtles, and sharks. Non-snorkelers will enjoy a close cruise around dramatic Non-snorkelers will enjoy a cruise around the base of dramatic Kicker Rock, a 500 m vertical tuff cone. The orange glow on the rock at sunset is one of the more dramatic sights in all of Galapagos.



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## Tuesday: Santa Fé and South Plaza Islands

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AM — Santa Fé — After landing on a white beach usually covered with sea lions, we'll walk into a giant *Opuntia* cactus grove where we'll have the opportunity to see the endemic land iguanas. The land visit will be followed by snorkeling and/or kayaking in the turquoise waters of the bay, full of sea lions, rays, urchins, eels, and fish of all colors.

PM — South Plaza — We will see another species of Galapagos land iguana as well as cactus finches. Both North and South Plazas were formed by geological uplift and tilt to the north, with cliffs on their southern coasts. On small islands like this, terrestrial and marine species interact more than on the larger

islands, and the occasional hybrid iguana (land and marine) with its "zebra-like" stripes can often be observed. The south-facing cliffs swarm with a myriad of bird species. Bachelor sea lions climb steep cliffs in the late afternoon to spend nights away from the larger dominant bulls.

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## Wednesday: Genovesa Island

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AM — Darwin Beach — At the north side of Darwin Bay, this beach was formed by the rim of a sunken crater. Red mangroves along the hiking trail provide habitat for yellow warblers, yellow-crowned night herons, and pintail ducks. The highlight of this site is the incredible abundance of Red-footed Boobies, Great Frigatebirds, Swallow-tailed Gulls, and Yellow-crowned Night Herons. Although the most abundant booby in the islands, this is one of the few places visitors can observe Red-footed Boobies.

PM — Prince Phillip's Steps — While riding in a panga along the base of the eastern cliffs of Darwin Bay, we'll scour the cliff crevices for all kinds of animal life. We'll come to a rockfall that forms a natural staircase up the cliffs, known as Prince Phillip's Steps or the "Stairway to Seabird Heaven." We'll walk through massive colonies of Red-footed and Nazca Boobies and an extraordinary Palo Santo forest on the way to a lava ridge where thousands of Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels dart about while Short-eared Owls stalk them for prey.

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## Thursday: Santiago and Bartolomé Islands

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AM — Sullivan Bay (Santiago) — We'll walk across a recent lava flow and view its beautiful structural characteristics. Formed in the second half of the 19th Century, the flow is too young for much plant or animal life. It is the lava itself and the contrasting black *pahoehoe* flow and the

reddish-yellow tuff cones that are the stars of this visit. The colors and shapes of the lava are fantastic for photos.

PM — Bartolomé — Arguably the most recognized landmark in Galapagos, Pinnacle Rock juts straight out of Bartolomé's northern bay. Snorkeling in the bay provides visitors with a chance to swim with Galapagos Penguins. Climbing up the 600-m trail to the top of the island provides spectacular views of Pinnacle Rock, Santiago Island, and Daphne Major and Minor.

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### Friday: Rábida and Sombrero Chino Islands

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AM — Rábida — We'll land at Red Beach where wading birds and ghost crabs dot the sand. Behind the beach is a saltwater lagoon where Pintail ducks and Common Stilts are frequently seen along with a group of bachelor sea lions. Brown pelicans nest in the nearby salt brush. A short trail inland provides a chance to observe finches, Galapagos Doves, Yellow Warblers, and mockingbirds, as well as the occasional snake.

PM — Sombrero Chino — The turquoise waters near Sombrero Chino provide one of our best opportunities to see Galapagos Penguins. A panga ride in search of wildlife is followed by a snorkel that often includes sharks, sea lions, penguins, and rays. We will land at a beautiful white sand beach for a short walk along a trail that meanders over varying types of lava.

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### Saturday: Baltra Island

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AM — We'll have breakfast on board Integrity, then disembark at Baltra Island.

