

# M/Y ERIC Itinerary "B"

## M / Y Eric, Flamingo & Lety Itinerary - B



## M/Y Eric – Itinerary B

### SUNDAY

Upon arrival to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, **SAN CRISTOBAL** Island, our crew is waiting at the airport to escort you to your anchored yacht.

After the welcome briefing, buffet lunch and safety drill, we travel by bus into the interior of San Cristobal to visit **LA GALAPAGUERA CERRO COLORADO**, a site where the National Park has established a breeding program for the tortoises and set up an information center for visitors. Along the trail, we find the San Cristobal (Chatham) mockingbird and Calandrinia plant, both endemic to this island.

Here, you will see the terrestrial tortoises living in their natural habitat but also learn about their origin, evolution and threats by introduced animals.

This evening, the guides hold a briefing followed by the Captain's welcome cocktail.

# M/Y ERIC

## Itinerary "B"

### MONDAY

This morning we have a wet-landing on **Darwin Bay**, a coral sand beach where swallow-tailed and lava gulls gather near the tide pools. Enter a forest of *Optuntia* cactus and mangroves where colonies of great frigate birds nest. The males inflate their red-throated pouches to attract females as they fly overhead. The trail leads through a rich inter tidal zone where we find a wide diversity of wildlife. After the walk, we can swim and snorkel from the beach with sea lions in these northern warmer waters.



After lunch, take a *siesta* or borrow a book from our library and lounge on deck.



This afternoon, we spend the entire day on **TOWER** (Genovesa), considered to be one of the most spectacular Islands in Galapagos for bird species. This morning, we have a dry landing at **Prince Philip's Steps**. Red-footed boobies nest here in Palo Santo trees and Nazca (formerly masked) boobies nest near the trail. In an open lava field, we find storm petrels in large numbers. If you are lucky, we will see the elusive short-eared owl. After the walk, our kayaks are available to paddle along the shoreline. Look for the beautiful red-billed tropic bird usually found in the crevices.

We set sail early to motor to the western Islands during the briefing followed by dinner.

### TUESDAY

Today we visit **Las Bachas**, which is the Spanish translation for "barges". There is a long stretch of a soft white sand beach and interior lagoons where we find the Greater Flamingo. There is also a wonderful chance to snorkel here from the beach. At **Black Turtle Cove aka Caleta Tortuga Negra** we have a zodiac ride through a series of coves and inlets surrounded by mangroves. Here you can view pairs of mating sea turtles (Sept to Feb), white-tipped reef sharks and golden cow-nosed rays.

This afternoon we explore **CERRO DRAGON (Dragon Hill)** on the north end of Santa Cruz Island. Follow a footpath to endemic land iguanas. Once part of the Darwin Station's breeding program, these repatriated iguanas display orange-yellowish skin with large spines along their backs. Walk quietly to keep from startling the pink flamingos that feed in the salt water lagoon. Along the trail, keep your eyes open for Darwin's Finches and Yellow Warblers.

### WEDNESDAY

This morning, we have a semi-wet landing at **Punta Espinoza, FERNANDINA**, the youngest and most pristine Island in Galapagos. Recent lava flows formed by an active volcano stretch their way around the coast. Hundreds of marine iguanas, the largest colony in Galapagos, bask in the sun along the rugged shoreline. Observe sea lion harems with resident bulls carefully guarding their territory. Flightless Cormorants build their nest on the point and Galapagos Hawks fly overhead. After lunch, we cross the Bolivar Chanel where often whales and dolphins ride the bow wave.



We disembark at **Urbina Bay, ISABELA**, where we find four miles of its coastal seabed, with marine life exposed due to a dramatic uplift in 1954 when the volcano erupted. The marine remnants of coral skeletons, some of them waist-high, are visited after a wet landing on the beach. Urbina is home to the very large and colorful Galapagos land iguanas, occasionally giant tortoises, Darwin Finches. Brown Pelicans and Flightless Cormorants also nest here. Giant Marine Iguanas are seen along the coast. You may encounter penguins while snorkeling here. At **Punta Vicente Roca**, a Zodiac ride offers an incredible view of the tuff walls, we can enter the wave-sculpted cave and find sea turtle who

# M/Y ERIC

## Itinerary "B"

frequent this area. You may spot the dorsal fin of a Mola Mola, an odd looking giant sun fish. Return to the yacht for briefing and dinner.

After the briefing and dinner, a sky full of stars beckons to go out on deck and observe the galaxy.

### THURSDAY

We visit **Elizabeth Bay, ISABELA** by zodiac starting with a visit to a secluded cove, lined with large red mangrove trees. Here, turtles, rays, and shore birds can be seen. We motor to the rocky islets known as "Las Marielas", where a colony of nesting Penguins, Flightless Cormorants and giant Marine Iguanas are found. Isabela was created when six volcanoes flowed together and formed the largest Island in Galapagos.



We have a dry landing at **Tagus Cove**, located on the western Island of **ISABELA** and a favorite anchorage for pirates and whalers over the centuries. Old graffiti dating back to the 1800's is written on the rocky cliffs. Explore the Coves by Zodiac or kayak to find Galapagos Penguins, Boobies, Pelicans and other seabirds. An uphill hike brings us to a salt-water lagoon, a scenic overlook with a spectacular view of the ocean, lava fields and volcanic formations. An excellent snorkeling site is offered from the zodiac or take out a Kayak and explore the shoreline. After dinner, a sky full of stars beckons to go on deck and observe the galaxy while crossing the equator for the last time

### FRIDAY

This morning, we have a wet landing at **Puerto Egas, SANTIAGO (James)**. Stroll along the shoreline looking for octopus, starfish and other sea life caught in the tide pools. At low tide, catch a glimpse of marine iguanas as they feed on exposed green algae. Watch for great blue herons, lava herons, American oystercatchers and yellow-crowned night herons.



Our walk ends at the grottos, deep pools of clear water where we encounter fur sea lions once on the verge of extinction. Before returning to the yacht, there is a snorkeling opportunity with loads of tropical fish. As an alternative, you may use the kayaks to explore the marine life without getting wet.

This afternoon, we disembark on **RABIDA ISLAND (Jervis)**, located off James Island. Rabida sports the most diversified volcanic rocks of all the islands and is considered the geographic center of Galapagos. The dark red sand beach originated from the erosion of volcanic stones. Follow a trail that leads to a salt-water lagoon, and hopefully observe Greater Flamingos as they feed. Brown Pelicans nest in the mangroves at the far side of the lagoon.

After the walk, there is a good snorkeling opportunity

### SATURDAY

Travel by bus to the **highlands** of **SANTA CRUZ** Island. The scenery gradually changes as we wind our way through all seven vegetation zones found in Galapagos. Here, we visit the tortoise reserve at one of the private farms in the highlands where we encounter giant tortoises in their natural habitat. We visit *Los Gemelos*, Spanish for "The Twins", a pair of large pit craters where we find the bright red male vermilion flycatcher. We stop at "the tunnels", the largest lava tubes found in Galapagos.

Afternoon visit the **Charles Darwin Research Station**. We visit all three tortoise corals and the breeding center with new hatchlings and miniature tortoises not yet ready to be repatriated. Scientists from all over the globe



# M/Y ERIC

## Itinerary "B"

work at the station and conduct biological research from anatomy to zoology. We also visit the Van Straelen Hall where there are exhibits and a short video presentation. Visitors can see the pen of Lonesome George, the last surviving member of the Pinta Island subspecies.

### **SUNDAY**

This morning, we drop anchor in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, **SAN CRISTOBAL**. We visit the Interpretation Center opened in 1999. Here we gain a more complete understanding of the natural and human history of the Islands. Afterwards, we head straight to the airport for our flight back to the mainland departing SCY at 12PM on Aerogal37.