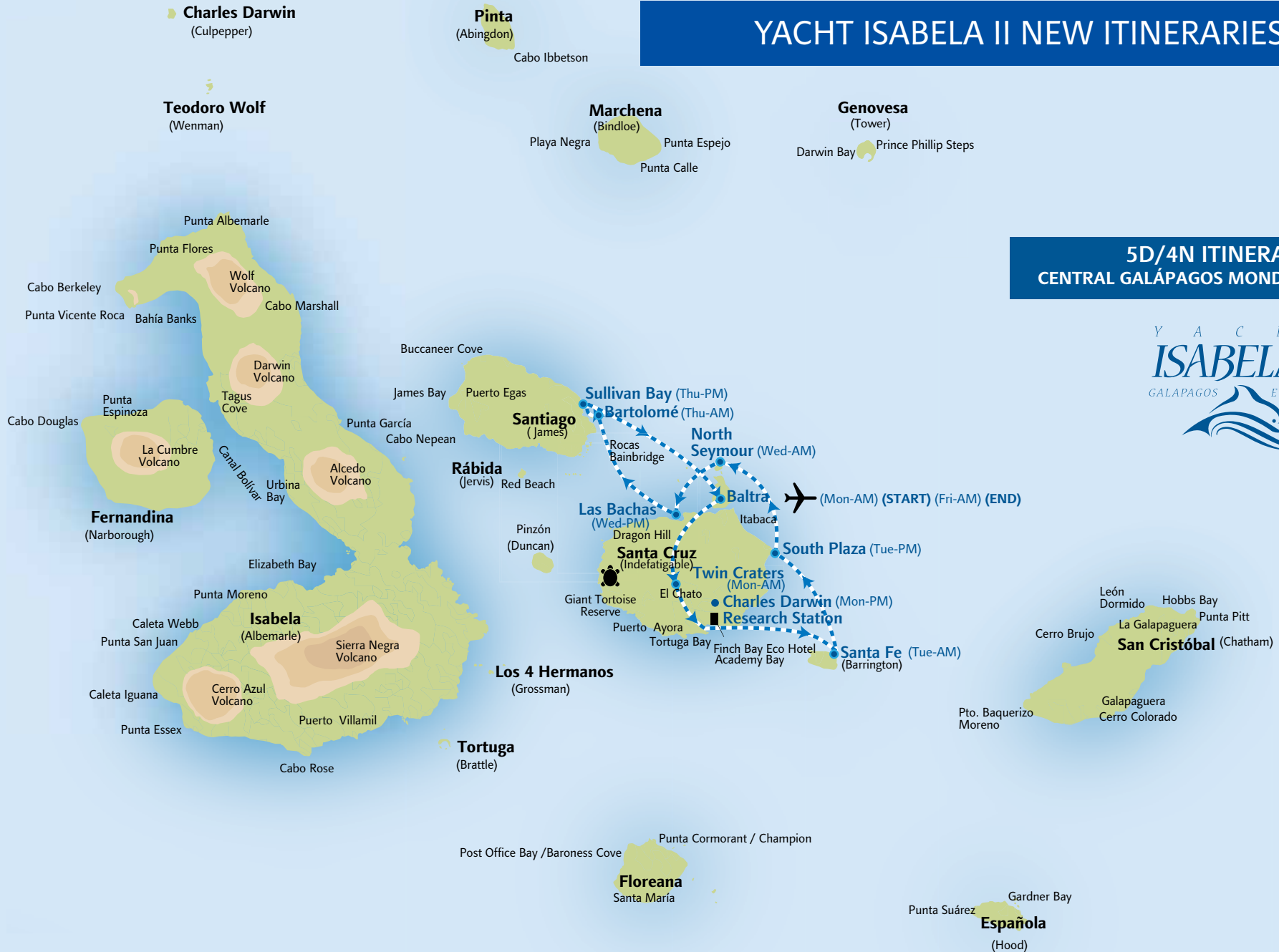


YACHT ISABELA II NEW ITINERARIES 2012

5D/4N ITINERARY CENTRAL GALÁPAGOS MONDAY TO FRIDAY



CENTRAL ISLANDS GALÁPAGOS ITINERARY

Monday to Friday – 5 days /4 nights
Effective from 20th January 2012

MONDAY

Los Gemelos – Twin Craters (Santa Cruz Island)

Arrival at Baltra Airport and transfer to the Itabaca Channel to take a ferry across to Santa Cruz Island. A 30-minute bus ride to the impressive site known as Los Gemelos (The Twins). These are a series of geological sink holes. Be impressed by the Scalesia forest, consisting of endemic daisies that took the niche of trees, growing to spectacular sizes, and now home to several species of endemic birds, such as the rare woodpecker finch, one of the world's few tool-using species. We visit the nearby Tortoise reserve, where most of the year we see the giant tortoises in the wild. Lunch at a local restaurant, and then continue to Puerto Ayora.

Puerto Ayora and the Charles Darwin Research Station

Afternoon visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station and the giant tortoise pens, including tortoise celebrities like "Lonesome George" within an impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest home to many land birds. These are the headquarters of scientific investigation, conservation and the National Park administration. Late afternoon stroll along the main street of Puerto Ayora before embarking on Yacht Isabela II. Expedition plan for Tuesday, Captain's welcome cocktail and dinner.

TUESDAY

Santa Fe Island

After breakfast, a wet landing on a sandy white beach with many sea lion harems. Bulls vie for the right to be "Beach Master", while smaller males masquerading as females make stealthy mating moves. Galápagos hawks are often easily observed, perched atop salt bushes. The giant prickly pear cactus found here live up to their name with tree-sized trunks! The endemic land iguana, unique to this island, may be spotted during the afternoon walk. Snorkelling, kayaking and/or swimming from the beach rounds off the rewarding experience. Lunch on board.

South Plaza Island

Disembark (dry landing) in the channel between North and South Plaza Islands, where the island tilts toward the water, the approach makes for a lavishly colourful sight! The turquoise waters of the channel contrast brilliantly with the white sand and black lava of the shoreline. The rocks have grown thick with green seaweed in places, speckled with bright orange 'Sally Lightfoot' crabs. Further up the shore a carpet of scarlet sesuvium succulents serves as groundcover for a grove of luminescent green prickly-pear cactus. Yellow-grey land iguanas sit beneath these, waiting patiently for pears to drop. Along the coastline one finds sea lion colonies, while frigates, swallow-tailed gulls and shearwaters glide playing with the thermals that form along the cliffs of this small but amazing island. Wednesday's expedition plan and dinner.





WEDNESDAY

North Seymour Island

The morning starts with a dry landing for a view of the coast and the interior of North Seymour Island, one of the few uplifted islands in the Galápagos Archipelago. The trail leads guests to explore colonies of blue footed boobies, magnificent frigate birds, and swallowtail gulls. The sandy shore teems with Galápagos sea lions and marine iguanas. Vegetation is made up of cacti, palo santo (torchwood) trees and salt bushes. Advanced snorkelling near the cliffs is possible after the walk. Lunch on board.

Las Bachas (Santa Cruz Island)

After WWII, US military barges were beached and abandoned here. Locals referred to the beach as the barges beach, a name that morphed to “bachas”. Today it is an important nesting area for the east Pacific green sea turtle. Located on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island, it is a glorious white beach, with several brackish lagoons only a few steps away from the sea. These lagoons are the feeding grounds of various wading birds, from stilts to flamingos. Swimming and/or snorkelling from the beach. Thursday’s expedition plan and dinner.

THURSDAY

Bartolomé Island

Disembark at Bartolomé Island (dry landing) for a hike to the summit. A great way to start the day! This is a steep climb up a wooden staircase with handrails and several resting and observation stops; the view from the top is worth the effort. Following the walk, a dinghy ride around colossal Pinnacle Rock, is rewarding, followed by time to enjoy the beach (wet landing) and some snorkelling, with possible Galápagos penguin sightings. Guests can also ride on the glass-bottom boat for great views of the underwater world. Lunch on board.

Sullivan Bay (James Island)

After lunch, board the panga for the short trip to the landing site at Sullivan Bay on the east coast of Santiago. Wet landing on a white coral sand beach and begin the walk over lava that flowed less than 100 years ago. This is the perfect place to see and feel the volcanic origin of Galápagos and learn first-hand the initial steps of pioneering plants and animals over recently produced volcanic ground. Memorable scenes of the film Master and Commander where shot at these two locations.

Farewell cocktail and departure briefing before dinner.

FRIDAY

Baltra Island

After breakfast, departure to the port and airport to take the flight back to the mainland.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Itineraries and programs are subject to change without previous notice due mainly to readjustment of the National Park policies and regulations, weather conditions, seasonal changes or safety reasons.

- Dry landing: guests step from the dinghy onto rocks or a dock.
- Wet landing: as the dinghy edges onto a sandy beach, guests step into knee-deep water and wade ashore