

**M/C ATHALA II 5 – NORTH & WEST**



**SATURDAY ARRIVAL**

- Arrival at the airport in Baltra & transfer to the dock
- Check-in to your cabin
- Introductory briefing & safety drill
- Lunch
- Panga ride to Mosquera Island
- 18:00 Back on board
- 19:30 Briefing on Sunday's program
- 20:00 Welcome cocktail
- 20:15 Dinner



Mosquera Islet: This tiny islet is actually home to a huge population of sea lions and is also home to many shorebirds. While at Mosquera, keep your eyes peeled as there are occasional reports of dolphins and orcas. **Difficulty level: Easy**

**SUNDAY**

- 06:30 Wake up call
- 06:45 Breakfast
- 07:30 Dry landing at Sullivan Bay for hike and snorkel
- 10:30 Back on board
- 12:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Wet landing on Bartolome Island for shallow water or deep water snorkeling
- 16:30 Back on board
- 17:00 Dry landing on Bartolome for hike or panga ride
- 18:00 Back on board
- 19:30 Briefing on Monday's program
- 20:00 Dinner



Sullivan Bay is known for its spectacular volcanic formations, relatively young pahoehoe lava flows, and unique geological scenery. Sullivan's relatively recent volcanic activity, few plants have been able to take root here, much less be successful, so pay particular interest to the low-lying pioneer plant known locally as "mollugo" as well as the lava cactus. **Difficulty level**

Bartolome is a small island that has two visitor sites. At the first site, you can snorkel around Pinnacle Rock, where penguins are usually seen. Then, it's back on board for a quick change of clothes followed by a short dinghy ride to a dry landing for a climb to the highest point on the island. On the way up, you will encounter different volcanic formations, including spatter and tuff cones, lava flow and lava tubes. From the summit you will have a wonderful view of Sullivan Bay. For those not interested in the hike, there is the option of a panga ride. Usual fauna and flora also includes sea lions, pioneer plants, reef sharks, rays and colorful reef fish. **Difficulty Level: Moderate. Walk up 375 low-grade stairs to top of volcano at a slow to moderate pace.**



## **MONDAY**

- 06:45 Wake up call
- 7:00 Breakfast
- 8:00 Wet or dry landing at Punta Albemarle
- 10:00 Kayak and/or Panga Ride at Punta Albemarle
- 11:30 Back on board
- 12:00 Lunch
- 15:00 Dry landing at Tagus Cove, Isabela Island for power hike, panga ride or kayaking
- 17:00 Back on board
- 19:30 Briefing on Tuesday's program
- 20:00 Dinner



Punta Albemarle is located on Isabela Island's remote northern tip and after a long time of being closed off to visitors, it is now open again but only for a handful of cruise yachts. Punta Albemarle was used as a radar base by the U.S. during World War II. The waters in this region are very productive allowing for excellent chances for seeing whales in the area not to mention nesting cormorants and also the largest marine iguanas in the entire archipelago. **Difficulty level: Easy to moderate: Moderate.**



Tagus Cove was historically used as an anchoring place for pirates, buccaneers and whalers. Here you will see the names of hundreds of ships painted on the high ridges (a practice now forbidden). On the hike, the trail goes through an area of vegetation and the volcanic landscape of Darwin volcano. At the top of the trail, you will enjoy an incredible view of the whole cove and Darwin Lake.



The brisk “power-hike” is followed by kayaking or a panga ride, where you will have the opportunity to see a large number of blue-footed boobies perched on the ledges of the cliffs, as well as marine iguanas, penguins, brown pelicans, brown noddly terns and swallow-tailed gulls. While exploring the channel between Fernandina and Isabela Islands, we sometimes encounter dolphins and whales. **Difficulty level: Easy to Difficult (panga ride is easy, hike up to lake can be strenuous for some)**

## **TUESDAY**

06:30 Wake up call  
06:45 Breakfast  
07:30 Dry landing at Punta Espinoza, Fernandina Island  
10:30 Snorkeling at Punta Espinoza  
11:30 Back on board  
12:00 Lunch  
15:30 Panga ride along Punta Vicente Roca or deep water snorkeling  
17:30 Back on board  
19:30 Briefing on Wednesday’s program  
20:00 Dinner

Fernandina Island is one of the most pristine ecosystems in the entire world and also one of the most dynamic. La Cumbre Volcano last erupted in April 2009, and also dominates the landscape, with lava fields stretching towards the ocean from its base. Punta Espinoza is a narrow piece of land where some of the most unique Galapagos species can be seen, including the flightless cormorant, Galapagos snakes, marine iguanas, penguins and the Galapagos hawk. **Difficulty level: Moderate**





Punta Vicente Roca is a wonderful snorkeling site, where you can usually see turtles as well as all kinds of fish. For those who do not snorkel, a panga ride will give you the opportunity to study some of the Galapagos' spectacular geological rock formations. Nazca boobies, pelicans, swallow-tailed gulls, marine iguanas, flightless cormorants and penguins are often seen in the area. **Difficulty level: Easy to moderate**

### WEDNESDAY

- 6:30 Wake up call
- 06:45 Breakfast
- 07:30 Wet landing at Puerto Egas, Santiago Island
- 09:00 Swimming and snorkeling from the beach
- 11:00 Back on board
- 12:00 Lunch
- 15:00 Wet landing at Espumilla Beach for hike, panga ride, swimming or snorkeling
- 18:00 Back on board
- 19:30 Briefing on Thursday's program
- 20:00 Dinner



Puerto Egas (James Bay) is located on the northwest side of Santiago Island. The landing is on a black beach with eroded rock formations in the background. The trail crosses the dry interior, where the remains of a salt mining enterprise can still be seen, and then continues along the coast. Tidal pools are home to a variety of invertebrate organisms, including sea urchins, octopus and starfish. You will also see marine iguanas, finches, oyster catchers and possibly the Galapagos Hawk. The trail leads to the Fur Sea Lion Grottos, one of the only places in the islands where these unique animals can be seen.

After the walk, you will have time to swim or snorkel off the beach, where you will see sea lions, fish and maybe some turtles, rays and maybe some reef sharks. **Difficulty level: Easy to Moderate.**

The Espumilla Beach visitor site is on the northern coast of Santiago Island in James Bay. This is a wet landing. The main attractions here are a Palo Santo forest, beach and the landscape. The Palo Santo forest at Espumilla has some of the tallest specimens of the species in the entire archipelago. Also look out for the Galapagos Hawk as well as Darwin's finches. The beach is an important site for nesting marine turtles. **Difficulty level: Easy**





**THURSDAY**

06:45 Wake up call

07:00 Breakfast & disembark. Transfer from yacht to Puerto Ayora via panga. Then transfer to Charles Darwin Research Station accompanied by a guide. After a quick yet informative visit to the CDRS, escorted transfer to Baltra airport for departure back to the mainland.