

## ESPAÑOLA

Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Sunrise: 0546 High tide: 1654 5.7 ft. /1.9 m

Sunset: 1756; Low tide: 1035 1.2 ft. /0.4

It seems that we have entered another world; one where iguanas bask on the rocky shorelines like sculpted dragons, where sea lions play, sleep and romp like pups, and where birds peck around our feet with no more fear than a barnyard flock. This is the world that Charles Darwin visited in 1835, and which shaped evolutionary science forever by inspiring his then novel concept of natural selection and survival of the fittest. During this full week we will see how each volcanic island, some young and still actively growing, others succumbing to the forces of erosion, has its own unique character. The wildlife and flora reflect these differences; each landing will bring its own special flavor.

Our first full day will be spent on the southeastern island of Española, formerly known as Hood. The morning will be spent visiting Gardner Bay, where we will stroll along a dazzling white beach among dozens of resting and cavorting sea lions. You may wander on your own, swim right off the beach or, if you are an experienced snorkeling enthusiast, and sea conditions permit, take a Zodiac to the small offshore islet of Gardner, where fish life abounds and we snorkel in deep water. This bay is a wonderful place for kayaking along the volcanic coastline.

In the afternoon we visit another part of the island and make a dry landing at Punta Suarez, one of the richest wildlife locations in Galapagos. Sea lions and marine iguanas will greet us here as we step ashore; further along the trail we will find blue footed and Nazca boobies, and perhaps endemic waved albatrosses as well as many other unique sea birds. While admiring these fascinating animals, please also take notice of the smaller denizens of this island: the lava lizards, mockingbirds and Darwin's finches are unique here and will therefore be replaced by different species on the other islands to come.

The trail is the most arduous one of the week, characterized by boulder hopping almost all the way (not recommended for people with balance problems) but the rewards are many, so we encourage you to give it a go. For those who are hiking, the trail leads through shrubbery and along the boulder strewn shore before we come to a breezy cliff edge where swallow-tailed gulls and many other seabirds soar on the wind. The length of the complete walk is about 1¾ miles/2.1 km. If the tide and swells are right, a powerful blowhole blasts misty fountains high into the air. We return through the center of the island, where albatrosses might be seen, but as we are away from the coastal breeze it could get very hot.

For those who wish to take a much shorter stroll (¼ mile/0.3 km) and spend time quietly observing rather than striking out on the long, rocky trail, we will arrange for one or more groups with their Naturalists to do just that.

## ESPAÑOLA, Sunday's Schedule

- 0600** Early morning coffee, fruit and snacks are available in the Lounge
- 0630** Join our wellness specialist for a stretching session on the Sun Deck
- 0700 -0800** Breakfast is served.
- 0800** Join us in the lounge for Snorkeling and kayaking briefing; please bring your snorkeling release form to the lounge, already signed-up (you find it in your cabin directory folder).
- 0915** Experienced, deep-water snorkelers depart for Gardner Islet; afterwards, brief stop by the ship to leave snorkeling gear on way to Gardner beach.
- 0930** Disembarkation (wet landing) for those of you who want to go to Gardner beach where we will have snorkeling tips for beginners and ample time to explore and wander.
- 1230 -1330** Lunch is served in the dining room.
- 1400** Join Ecologist, Conservationist and Author, Professor Carl Safina, in the lounge, for his presentation: "What Animals Think and Feel".
- 1500** Long hikers disembark for a dry landing at Punta Suárez (1¾ miles over stony, uneven terrain; wear hiking shoes, good balance is needed for this hike). **Natural History Emphasis groups** disembarks first, followed by **Photo Emphasis groups** (please gather at the reception).
- 1515** Disembarkation for those of you who would rather do a shorter walk (there are boulders as well, but it will be shorter and at a slower pace).
- 1900** Join us in the Lounge for cocktail time and the presentation of "Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic, Partners in Exploration", followed by our first Recap session and a briefing about tomorrow's activities.
- 1930** Dinner is served in the Dining Room.
- 2045** Join Photo Instructor Christian Saa in the lounge for iPhone Photography Introduction. **Nat Geo Global Explorer Ideas for Sunday (remember to use your field notebook!):**
- 1. Out in the Field:**  
Map the sounds (at the blowhole, in the afternoon, pag 16).  
Spot it: A bird that dives for food/an iguana sneezing/a sound like thunder/two different reptiles
  - 2. Story Telling Challenge:** Tell the story of a hike (using writing, drawing or photography).