

A-LA-CARTE ACTIVITY MENU ON SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

Add one or more of these individual experiences to your pre- or post-cruise active extension:

TOUR OF THE FARM (2.5 HOURS BY FOOT)

GSC has a circuit that takes you up two natural volcanic formations and viewpoints, where you'll appreciate much of the native flora of the area, including scalesia, guayabillo, and palo santo, and get acquainted with the finches, warblers, fly-catchers, Galapagos Doves, and with any luck, the Galapagos Rail. Afterwards, visit the barn owls' cave where you might spot them in their natural habitat. For a more hands-on experience, you have the

option of planting a tree, one of our initiatives to continue reforesting the land with endemic species, and giving you the satisfaction of making a physical contribution to this fragile environment.

EXPLORING THE TORTOISE RESERVE (2-4 HOURS)

In addition to visiting the lava tunnels and the ponds, where you can observe giant tortoises, explore "El Chato," or one of the working farms in the area. You can visit their various plantations and spot giant tortoises during the excursion. Walk, mountain bike, or drive to a wonderful point with expansive views of the southern part of the island.

THE TWIN CRATERS (2 HOURS)

This walk takes you around part of the rim of a couple of craters in the highlands. This is a good opportunity to observe the vermillion flycatcher and endemic flora. There are shorter trails if you prefer.



LAVA JAVA ORGANIC COFFEE PLANTATION TOUR (2 HOURS)

Our neighbor Scott Henderson is an American who has lived in the Galapagos for many years. He worked for Conservation International and married a Galapagos native. Scott purchased an abandoned highland farm many years ago and found a neglected coffee plantation, which turned out to be of very high quality. Scott turned his plantation into a flagship project on sustainable farming practices, where he helps locals grow coffee alongside endemic plants, and keeps the market for such crops local.

A visit to “Lava Java” and meeting Scott is an insightful, educational experience encompassing local economics, land conservation, and sustainable community farming initiatives – plus a chance to drink

some sublime coffee. This visit can be made by vehicle for a quarter-day excursion or in combination with biking in the highlands.

PUERTO AYORA AND THE CHARLES DARWIN STATION (HALF A DAY)

Discover the vibrant town of Puerto Ayora, including the ceramic garden, and tour the renowned Charles Darwin Research Station.

NATURALIST WALK (ALL DAY BUT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO SHORTER SEGMENTS)

Spend the day walking with your guide. An uphill 5 km trail to Media Luna begins at the village of Bellavista, where you walk through the Miconia zone, a virtual monoculture of Miconia Robinsonia over the hillside—a fantastic success story after the near-destruction of this habitat by the invasive



Quinine tree. There is a variety of ferns, including the lovely Galapagos Tree Fern.

From there you continue another 3 km up hill to Puntudo, a pointy volcanic cone, or to the highest point on the island. You go a further 3 km to Cerro Crocker (864 mts). Ornithologists and bird watchers will take pleasure in this area; a sharp eye might catch several interesting species such as rails, finches and petrels.

EXPLORING THE EAST (ALL DAY BUT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO SEGMENTS)

In the morning you drive to the eastern part of the island. At 490mts. above sea level, Cerro Mesa offers dramatic views, has the largest crater on Santa Cruz and numerous endemic plants as well as finches and the Vermillion Flycatcher.

After lunch you visit the

Garrapatero pristine beach where the contrast of mangroves, black lava, white sand and turquoise water, in addition to the busy coastal bird life and the small pink flamingo lagoon is sensational. Kayaking and mountain biking are available upon prior request.

TORTUGA BAY (HALF A DAY OR FULL DAY)

You can spend as long as you want enjoying Tortuga Bay, a two-kilometer white sand beach ideal for walking and surfing. The trail to get there gives an opportunity to explore the arid zone without struggling over broken lava. Alongside some very impressive cacti, there are other interesting arid zone plants. At the far end of the bay there is a large, calm mangrove lagoon, rich in wildlife and perfect for resting and swimming.

