

4-Hour Highlands in Santa Cruz Island



A very exciting trip to the humid and tropical forest, on the **Highlands of Santa Cruz, Galapagos Islands**. We spotted several dozens of **Giant Tortoises**, a symbol of this paradise. **Lava tunnels** of volcanic formation. Explore a natural reserve of Galapagos tortoises. Visit the **twin craters (Gemelos)** submerged in the terrain. Dive walking into old lava tunnels. Suitable tour to start your visit on the Islands. The ecological reserve allows visitors to observe **giant tortoises in the wild** during the dry season, as well as being a good place to observe **owls and Darwin's finches**.

Itinerary:

Climbing up to Santa Cruz Highlands (864 msl / 2,834 feet):

Covers the main highlights of Santa Cruz Island northern-area. If you have just arrived in the Galapagos Islands, this tour will serve as a transfer to Puerto Ayora, too. Since the spots we are going to visit are halfway from the Itabaca Channel to Puerto Ayora. Santa Cruz Island houses all the attractions will be visited. However, we can adapt to the schedules and preferences of tourists and organize it on the day or time that best suits them. These are the main points that are visited on the high part of Santa Cruz Island tour.

Observe Galapagos tortoises in their natural habitat:

Visit a private natural reserve on Santa Cruz Island where a large number of specimens of Galapagos giant tortoises live, specifically the endemic subspecies of Santa Cruz, in their natural habitat and in freedom. Upon entering the reserve, you will enjoy green trails surrounded by endemic vegetation such as milky plants, chandeliers and cactus. Along the way, you will encounter turtles. Inside the reserve, you can also enjoy a delicious lunch of typical Ecuadorian food and take photos with a turtle shell.

Explore the Lava Tunnels:

Lava Tunnels in Santa Cruz complement a visit to the Natural Reserve. These tunnels are natural formations from past volcanic eruptions. It is an impressive path created by nature of approximately 2,000 meters. It can only be accessed for security reasons up to approximately 250 meters. However, this tour is totally worth it. The natural cavern is impressive inside and a little humid, so it is recommended to wear hiking shoes and walk carefully as it can be a little dark despite the lighting that has been placed.

Be impressed with The Gemelos (Twins):

The Santa Cruz Gemelos are two craters that were formed when the Islands were active and had a lot of volcanic activity that generated several eruptions. The Twins are two large sinkholes with very green areas. It is not allowed to eat in this area since the seeds can fall into the crater and germinate, and it is not recommended to get too close to the edges of the crater. The view from this point is impressive and you can admire the large size of these craters where at some point millions of years ago there was lava. Besides, observe the forest and vegetation and see endemic birds flying freely.

At the end of the tour, we will transfer you to the hotel in Puerto Ayora so you can continue enjoying Santa Cruz Island visit.

It is recommended to take this tour just after the airport since it is on the road and this way you make better use of your time, since the Highlands is far from the center and a lot of time is usually wasted getting there.

It is important to bring hiking shoes, a sun hat, enough water and sunscreen. It is not allowed to touch the turtles and the mandatory distance must be maintained. The tour departures every day.

If weather conditions prevent the tour from taking place, it will be re-scheduled for another date during your stay, so you can enjoy the experience.

Due to the security regulations of the Puerto Ayora airport, in case of flight delays, the pick-up will take place on the Itabaca Channel.

The tour includes:

- Naturalist Guide (English/Spanish-speaking)
- Transportation **from Itabaca Channel**
- Activities according to the program

The tour doesn't include:

- Travel insurance
- Meals (Lunch)
- Tips and personal expenses
- Entrance fees for the visit places
- Lobito bus from the airport (Public/shared service)
- Optional activities

Check your flight does not land too late in Santa Cruz to be able to visit the places described.

***The tour is subject to change in case weather condition is not allowed or by Galapagos National Park Regulations, whit out prior notice.