

# Best reasons to snorkel the Galapagos Islands

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Are you planning to go to the Galapagos Islands soon or is it in your bucket list? If so, we would like to share with you 7 reasons for snorkeling in the Galapagos Islands. What a great experience it is snorkeling the turquoise water of this volcanic archipelago.

Ecuador created the Galapagos Marine Reserve in March 1998 as a way to preserve the South Pacific Ocean surrounding the Islands. It is 590 feet deep and encompasses 2,587 square miles. As one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world, the Galapagos is home to 400 species of fish, of which more than 10% are endemic to the archipelago making the designation as one of the largest protected areas in the world.

The Galapagos marine life is still being researched according to the Charles Darwin Foundation; so, the species count is always growing. Even though new discoveries are being made all the time, the species count is very high when compared to other Pacific Islands.

Snorkeling is an ideal way to connect visitors with the impressive and unique underwater world that is the Galapagos. Whether on a cruise ship or day tour or even a hotel on land, snorkeling is available. Expert naturalist guides assist everyone, so all can participate – from expert swimmers to non-swimmers. Life vests are available to assure the safety of all snorkelers.

Make the most of your visit to the Galapagos Islands and don't miss the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of its marine life, unique in the world!

Here are our Top 7 Reasons to Snorkel the Galapagos Islands

## 1. Watch a marine iguana feeding underwater

One of the characteristics of the Galapagos Islands is the way that wildlife has adapted to the harsh conditions of the archipelago. Charles Darwin studied the wildlife of the Galapagos to develop his Theory of Evolution. Now you can experience it too!



Marine iguanas have adapted to feed underwater by eating the algae and aquatic plants. This is one of the

fewest marine species of iguanas worldwide. What fun to watch the iguana eating the algae underwater right in front of your eyes.

This iguana species has very sharp and long claws that help them to grab the rock while they are eating. Then you can watch them sunbathing after being underwater because they can swim deep in the sea very fast and agile while on land they are quiet, sneezing off the excess of salt and moving their head when you approach them.

Watching a marine iguana underwater is something indescribable, and the emotion it evokes in snorkelers is an important reason for snorkeling in the Galapagos archipelago.

## **2. Swimming with the sea turtles**

Many people think the giant tortoise as the symbol for the Galapagos Islands – and, don't worry, one of the must-dos in many cruises and tours are visiting the breeding centers or farms where giant tortoises are developed. However, very few travelers think about the archipelago as the home of sea turtles.



If you are snorkeling, don't let the turtles scare you. Watching them underwater in slow motion is surreal. What a thrill to watch them swim nonchalantly in front of you without being disturbed by their swimming partner!

## **3. Colorful fish, rare sea stars, and corals will blow your mind**

The underwater world in the Galapagos is as rich as the land. Many types of fishes and corals blow your mind without a doubt. The minute you strap on your mask and snorkel and put your face in the water, a whole new and colorful world unfolds around you.



Some of the most colorful species that you will see while you are snorkeling are the King Angelfish with its turquoise blue and yellow that change depending on the light. Areas that you can find them are North Seymour and Floreana.

The Parrotfish is another fish that will probably catch your eyes while you are underwater. Some of the types of parrotfish that you may find within the archipelago are the blue-chin parrotfish, the azure parrotfish, the bicolor parrotfish, and the bumphead parrotfish.

There are also a wide variety of sea stars and corals that enhance and beautify the underwater world of the Galapagos Islands, like this chocolate chip sea star because of its black spots covering its pale yellow body.

## **4. Swim among sharks with no worries**

The adrenaline that invades you when you see a shark while you are snorkeling is unique. You won't recognize at first if its happiness or fear. Being among sharks is just surreal, but a rule of thumb, in this case, is never come to close to them, chase them, or to try to touch them. Even though they are not going to attack you; it's essential to give them their space.



Which types of sharks you can find in Galapagos? This is probably one of the most common question that shark lovers have.

One of the sharks most wanted to watch is the hammerhead shark, but there is also the Galapagos shark that often reaches 9.8 ft (3 m). This endangered species of shark is known to be very curious, it often approaches boats and divers, but rarely means a danger to humans with the needed protection and care. You are more likely to find the Galapagos shark near to reefs and rocky islets as Kicker Rock.

There is also the white tipped reef shark or Tintorera in Spanish. If you visit Isabela Island, there is a canal that this species uses for resting so you can watch them quietly without snorkeling. However, you can easily find them while you are snorkeling, and don't worry because they are smaller than their Galapagos cousin species.

## **5. Manta Rays look-like flying fish**

Another beautiful marine species is the manta ray. Watching them moving their fins underwater as wings among the deep blue of the ocean or close to the sandy floor is unbelievable. The deep blue and turquoise will frame the manta ray body as a surreal picture that you can photograph in your mind, on a waterproof camera or GoPro.



## **6. Play with sea lions**

One of the most common species that you can find in the Galapagos Islands, not only snorkeling but also inland, maybe sleeping on a bench, are the Sea Lions. These playful but territorial mammals commonly try to play with you underwater. They will come close to you, and they will try to let you catch them as a way of play with you. Nonetheless, remember that you can't touch or chase them, so just enjoy them while they move around you.



Don't worry if you won't see them underwater once you are snorkeling for the first time the Galapagos sea, you will have plenty of opportunities to find them.

## **7. Rare species that only the western islands can offer you when you are snorkeling**

Some of the most iconic wildlife species are the flightless cormorant and the Galapagos penguin. Both of them can be found in the western part of Isabela Island and Santiago Island. Even though you can see them on the rocky and volcanic land of many sites in those areas, the most impressive and unique way to discover them is underwater.



Have you ever imagine watching a bird swimming in front of you or seeing a tiny penguin passing in front of you like a torpedo? If your answer is no, Galapagos can provide that opportunity - with a bit of luck!

The flightless cormorant is the only cormorant species that cannot fly, so they swim to find their dinner. The Galapagos penguin is the second smallest penguin in the world and the only tropical species. Both of these species are unique and rare.

Watching either of them underwater will make your trip 1000% worth it!

By Marcel Perkins from [latintrails.com](https://www.latintrails.com)

