

Chinese Hat Island, Galápagos, Ecuador

A cone-shaped volcanic islet between Santiago and Bartolomé, Chinese Hat rewards small-ship passengers with calm snorkeling channels, lazing sea lions, and a surreal lava-tube trail — all in under three hours.

 Tender / Wet Landing

 Typical call: 2-3 hrs

 USD (US Dollar)

 Spanish

 National Park — small ships only

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____

Arrive: _____

All aboard: _____

Excursion: _____

Notes: _____

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Wet landing by panga (tender) onto white coral-sand beach; no pier

Best For: Snorkeling with reef sharks & sea lions, volcanic geology, wildlife photography

Walk to center: No settlement — visitor trail only (~400 m loop)

Don't Miss: Snorkeling the channel between Sombrero Chino and Santiago Island

 Getting around:  Rideshare  not available

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Lava Trail & Wildlife Walk** — A 400-meter loop across volcanic lava fields and pillow lava formations, passing Galápagos sea lion colonies, marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs...
 - Channel Snorkeling** — The calm, deep channel between Sombrero Chino and Santiago Island is one of the Galápagos's best snorkel spots.
- Geology & Volcanic Formations** — Chinese Hat's distinctive cone shape is pure volcanic geology.
 - Penguin & Rare Wildlife Spotting** — Galápagos penguins occasionally perch on rocks near the islet or appear underwater during snorkeling — a bucket-list encounter.

BEST WALKS

- Sombrero Chino Loop Trail** 0.4 km · 45-60 min · Easy-Moderate · Guide required — The official Galápagos National Park trail loops from the landing beach across volcanic lava fields, past sea lion haul-outs and marine iguana basking areas, through...

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Wear water shoes or sturdy sandals — the wet landing and rough aa-lava trail will tear up bare feet. Water shoes do double duty for snorkeling entry.
- Don't panic about the sharks — whitetip reef sharks in the channel are common and non-aggressive. They'll swim right past you. It's a highlight, not a hazard.
- Two-metre rule is real — Galápagos National Park guides enforce the 2-meter (6 ft) wildlife distance rule strictly. Sea lions may approach you; don't move toward them.
- Sun protection is non-negotiable — the equatorial sun is brutal, especially on the open lava field. Hat, reef-safe SPF 50+, and a rash guard for snorkeling.
- Small ships only — if you're booked on a large cruise ship, this site won't be on your itinerary. Chinese Hat is exclusive to small expedition yachts and cruise vessels with ≤100 passengers.
- No money needed ashore — there is nothing to buy on the island. Make sure your Galápagos park fee (\$200 USD for adults) is paid before arrival, usually handled through your cruise operator.

Chinese Hat Island, Galápagos, Ecuador — Port Map

cruiseports.org

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



- Sombrero**
1 Chino Coastal Trail A short trail across a spatter-cone lava field and coral-sand beach where Galapagos sea lions haul out.
- P** Cruise port / terminal

- Sombrero**
2 Chino Snorkel Site The clear, calm channel between the islet and Santiago Island, known for white-tipped reef sharks and occasional Galapagos penguins.