

## Galapagos Tortoises

The Galapagos Islands are home to giant tortoises that feed on green vegetation. Originally, tortoises lived only on Isabela Island and had dome-shaped carapaces, or shells (see figure 1). Isabela has a relatively wet climate and varied plant life.

Today tortoises are found on the other islands as well. On the small islands such as Española (Hood), there are tortoises that have a 'saddleback' carapace (see figure 2). The 'saddleback' carapace is elevated above the neck and flared above the hind feet. On the small islands the climate is drier and there is almost no ground vegetation. Prickly pear cactus (a major source of food and water for the 'saddleback' tortoises) has a tree-like form; the woody trunk holds fleshy green parts of the plant high off the ground.

Using the information provided here and the photos on the next page, write a detailed explanation of how you think tortoises with the 'saddleback' carapace came to be?

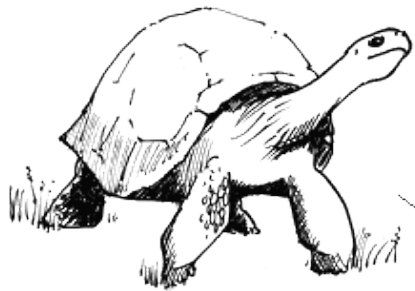


Figure 1: Domed Tortoise

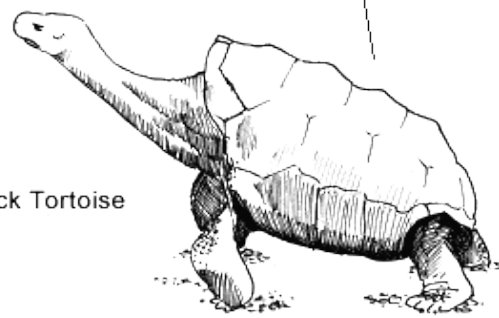


Figure 2: Saddleback Tortoise



Domed Tortoise



Saddleback Tortoise



Domed



Intermediate



Saddle Back