



New and Noteworthy & Central America
8° 58' N 79° 31' W

The Panama Canal, Pearl Islands, and Darién Jungle: Tropical Wonders and Vibrant Cultures

Embark on our only Central American expedition that travels solely through Panama, connecting you more deeply with the region's wildlife, culture, and famed modern engineering marvel. Aboard the *National Geographic Quest*, transit the historic Panama Canal by day and by night. Learn about the country's indigenous and colonial history while visiting local communities and two UNESCO World Heritage sites. Encounter monkeys, iguanas, tropical birds, and more as you venture into lush rainforests, a wildlife refuge, and an important national park. In the surrounding turquoise waters, snorkel pristine coral reefs which shelter an array of colorful marine life.

From

\$ 7,389 / per person
Does not include flights



DATES

Jan and Dec



DURATION

8 Days



SHIPS

National Geographic Quest



STARTS AT

Panama
City,
Panama

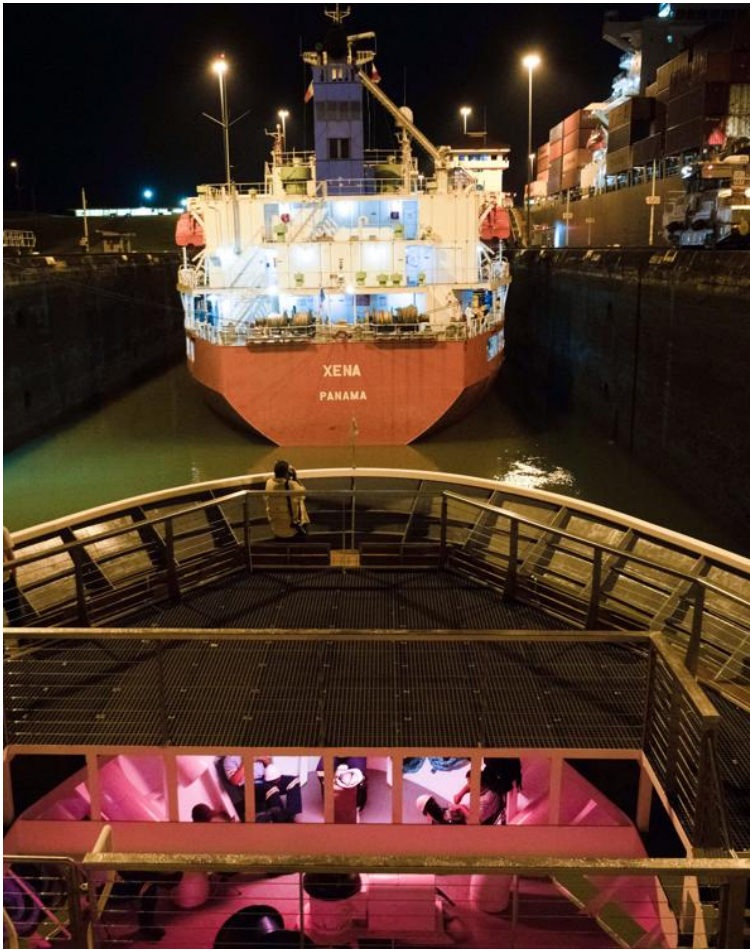


ENDS AT

Panama
City,
Panama

Highlights

- ★ Transit the legendary Panama Canal—plus enjoy an exclusive stop at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute’s Barro Colorado Island
- ★ Discover the storied Spanish architecture and fascinating pirate history of Portobelo, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- ★ Explore Isla Iguana Wildlife Refuge and spot sea turtles and black and green iguanas on the beach or while snorkeling offshore
- ★ Meet the indigenous Emberá people of Darién in Playa Muerto Village and learn about their customs, traditions, and deep reverence for their natural surroundings





Day by day

■ DAY 1

Panama City, Panama / Colón / Embark Ship

Upon arrival in Panama City this afternoon, transfer by land to Colón and embark the *National Geographic Quest*. Meet your expedition staff and enjoy a traditional Congo music and dance performance. Marvel at the coastline ahead as we sail to the historic port of Portobelo.

Arrival Time: Arrive by 12:00 p.m.

Arrival City: Panama City, Panama

Meals included: dinner

◇ DAY 2

Portobelo / Panama Canal Transit

This morning, explore the area on kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, Zodiac cruises upriver, or go for a snorkel. Portobelo is known for its Spanish colonial military architecture, which is designated collectively as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Visit several of the fortifications as well as the old Customs House, and hear the tales of Portobelo's rich pirate history. Later on, set sail for the Panama Canal. As cargo ships tend to pass through the canal during the day, we'll most likely begin our crossing at night, when the canal is dramatically lit. By special arrangement, *National Geographic Quest* will anchor in Gatún Lake near the Barro Colorado Nature Monument overnight.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 3

Gatún Lake / Panama Canal Transit

Today, choose hikes and Zodiac cruises at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute facility on Barro Colorado Island, or take a boat ride

to Gamboa, where the Chagres River meets the Panama Canal, and hike on the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center trails. This evening, continue through the complex lock system of the Canal and venture into the Gulf of Panama.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 4

Isla Iguana Wildlife Refuge / Pedasí

This morning, we arrive at Isla Iguana Wildlife Refuge. Once a US Army bombing range, this protected area is home to black and green iguanas, sea turtles, and several species of birds and tropical fish. There is time to enjoy the beach and snorkel. In the afternoon, visit the mainland for a Spanish heritage cultural experience in the town of Pedasí on the scenic Azuero Peninsula.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 5

Playa Muerto, Darién National Park

Playa Muerto village is located in Darién National Park, the largest protected area in Central America and a UNESCO World Heritage site which contains an exceptional array of habitats, from sandy beaches and mangroves to dense tropical forests teeming with wildlife. It is also home to the indigenous Emberá and Wounaan tribes. We'll be greeted by village leaders from the Emberá who will share their customs, traditions, and stories about their deep respect for their natural surroundings. Later on, enjoy short nature walks, go birding, or choose to join a longer hike into the rainforest in search of the elusive harpy eagle, one of the world's most powerful eagles.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAYS 6-7

Pearl Islands

Approximately 200 islands make up the idyllic Pearl Islands. Explore several of the islands in the archipelago, including Isla del Rey and Isla Pacheca, as you learn about the history of the native populations and eventually the Spaniards and African slaves who arrived for the pearl trade. Deep rainforests, lush rivers, white sandy beaches, and shallow reefs provide great opportunities for hiking, sea kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, Zodiac river cruises, beach activities, and snorkeling.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

■ DAY 8

Balboa / Disembark Ship / Panama City, Panama

After breakfast, disembark in Balboa and transfer to the airport in Panama City for your flight home.

Departure Time: Depart anytime after 2:30 p.m.

Departure City: Panama City, Panama

Meals included: breakfast

Southbound

Panama City, Panama → Panama City, Panama

2025 Departure Dates

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| 07 Dec | | |
|--------|--|--|

2026 Departure Dates

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| 09 Jan | | |
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Alternative Routes

Visit Expeditions.com for more information.

2025 Departure Dates

| |
|--------|
| 14 Dec |
|--------|

2026 Departure Dates

| |
|--------|
| 16 Jan |
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National Geographic Quest

Guests

100

Cabins

50

***National Geographic Quest*, built in 2017, is designed for sailing into fast-moving channels and shallow coves in pan-American waters.**

When she rolled out of Nichols Brothers shipyard and into the bay on Whidbey Island, the 100 guest *National Geographic Quest* became the third ship in the Lindblad fleet built at this storied Pacific Northwest shipyard. In the 1970s, Nichols Brothers built the twin ships *National Geographic Sea Bird* and *National Geographic Sea Lion*, which continue to sail the waters of the west coast of North America and Central America.

National Geographic Quest was purpose-built to explore the fast-moving channels and narrow straits of Alaska, along the coast of Costa Rica, and into the gray whale nursery lagoons of Baja, her design and engineering informed by our nearly 40 years of experience in these regions. Her twin boarding platforms, for example, were suggested by a veteran staffer. Enabling our team to load two Zodiacs at once means guests get off the ship quickly to take advantage of wildlife sightings and maximize exploring time.

Larger than her siblings *National Geographic Sea Bird* and *National Geographic Sea Lion*, *National Geographic Quest* has the same shallow draft, allowing her captain to navigate the same inner reaches and provide the same intimate, "insider" experiences in these charismatic regions. Modern, clean-lined, with large expanses of glass to keep you connected to the extraordinary views, *National Geographic Quest* enables you to see, do, and experience the best of her geographies.



Cabin Categories

Category 1

Main Deck: #301-306

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, two nightstands and two portholes, full length mirror, and reading lights.



Category 2

Main Deck: #307-315

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, two nightstands and two portholes, full length mirror, and reading lights.



Category 3

Upper Deck: #201-206

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, two nightstands, a large view window, full-length mirror, and reading lights.



Category 4

Upper Deck: #207-229

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, closet, two nightstands, full-length mirror, reading lights, sliding glass door, and a small, private balcony.



Note: Solo occupancy cabins are available in Categories 1 and 2 only. Third person rates are available in Category 5 cabins at one half the double occupancy rate.

Connecting Cabins via internal doorway access:

Main Deck: #312-314, #311-315, #306-307;
Upper Deck: #224-226, #225-227

Category 5

Observation Deck: #101-108 (SUITE)

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, large view windows, closet, two nightstands, full-length mirror, reading lights, a suite-sized expanded bathroom, writing desk, ample storage space, and a convertible sofa bed to accommodate a third person.



Observation Deck

Category 5



Lounge Deck



Upper Deck

Category 3

Category 4



Main Deck

Category 1

Category 2



Ship amenities

Public Areas

Reception; main dining area; global gallery; fitness center; lounge with full-service bar and state-of-the-art presentation facilities; observation deck; mudroom with lockers for expedition gear; partially-covered furnished sundeck; plus open access to the Bridge, the Captain, officers and on-duty wildlife spotters.

Meals

Meals are served in the dining room at a single seating with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Menus feature sustainable choices, local where possible.

Cabins

50 outside cabins. All cabins face outside with windows, private bathroom, and climate controls. Cabins are equipped with Wi-Fi, phone, multiple electrical and USB outlets, and phones. Luxury linens and pillows. Botanically inspired shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, and lotion are all available in cabin bathrooms, as well as an Expedition Essential Kit. Hair dryers, complimentary insulated water bottles and a National Geographic Atlas are also available in each cabin.

Expedition Equipment

A fleet of 8 Zodiacs, 24 kayaks, paddleboards; an ROV, hydrophone, splash-cam, underwater video camera, video microscope; snorkeling gear and wet suits for all guests (where applicable).

Special Features

Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor, undersea specialist and video chronicler. Internet access. Elevator. The design of the outside decks—with the perfect wildlife viewing platform. And the way the proximity of the Lounge to the deck gives you instant access to spontaneous sightings. Have your camera ready!

Wellness

A fitness center with elliptical, treadmill, weights, resistance bands; LEXspa treatment room, staffed by wellness specialists.



Self-Disinfecting Ships

ACT Clean Coat™ is a light-activated, self-disinfecting cleaning process that continuously breaks down viruses, bacteria, mold, and airborne allergens across all ship surfaces. Not only does this create a cleaner, healthier shipboard environment for guests and crew alike, but this non-toxic, chemical-free system also saves more than one million gallons of water each year in our cleaning procedures, and reduces our carbon footprint as well as the amount of plastic and waste in our supply chain.

Special Offers

SUITE EXCLUSIVES

Spacious living areas and incredible views immerse you in the beauty of your marine surroundings. Our new Suite Exclusives package helps make your voyage all the more memorable. [Learn more](#)

10% OFF BACK-TO-BACK VOYAGES

Save 10% on consecutive departures, applicable on voyage fares only and not valid on extensions or airfare. Valid for new bookings only, subject to availability, and may not be combined with other offers. Call for details.

SAVE 5% TRAVELING AS A GROUP

Save 5% when traveling as a group of eight or more people. Valid on voyage fares only and not applicable on extensions or airfare. Deposit, final payments, and cancellation policies for group travel vary from our regular policies. Valid for new bookings only, subject to availability, and may not be combined with other offers. Call for details.

BRINGING THE KIDS

We believe sharing an expedition with children is a life-enhancing experience. Take \$500 off for each child under the age of 18 on any departure. Not applicable on extensions or airfare. Call for details.

CELEBRATE LIFE'S MILESTONES

Celebrate a milestone with a group of eight or more and enjoy a special amenity package including: 5% savings on voyage fares, custom group photo, US\$150 shipboard credit for the group, and other special gifts. Milestone celebration to be communicated at time

of booking. Valid for new bookings only on select departures, subject to availability, not applicable on airfare or extensions, and may not be combined with other offers. Deposit, final payments, and cancellation policies for group travel vary from our regular policies. Call for details.

COMBINING OFFERS

Certain offers may be combinable, up to two savings opportunities, except where noted otherwise. For example, travel with a group of 8 or more on back-to-back expeditions, and take advantage of both savings.

Included in price

Excursions, hotels, and airport transfers, as indicated in itinerary; kayaks, Zodiac cruises, stand-up paddleboards, full complement of snorkeling gear, and glass-bottom boat rides, where relevant; guidance and expertise of expedition staff; all meals as indicated in itinerary; beer, wine, non-alcoholic beverages, hors d'oeuvres, and snacks; cocktails and spirits on select ships; park and site entrance fees, special access permits, and port taxes; 24-hour access to shared spaces, such as the lounges and fitness centers

Not included in price

Airfare (except flights when indicated as included), expedition extensions, additional hotel nights, and private transfers; travel protection plan, passport, visa, and immigration fees; laundry, spa treatments, scuba diving, Wi-Fi and phone services (except when indicated as included)

Travel protection plan

We strongly recommend our guests to take advantage of our Travel Protection Plan. This plan offers comprehensive coverage to protect you from cancellation fees, costs incurred due to trip delays/interruption, damage or loss of baggage, medical assistance, and evacuation during your travels. Our Travel Protection Plan is available for U.S. residents only, and may be purchased any time prior to final payment due date, Travel Protection premiums are non-refundable once plan is purchased. Learn more about our Travel Protection "Plus" Plan: <https://www.expeditions.com/terms-conditions/travel-protection-plan/>

Cancellation policy

Review our cancellation policy: <https://www.expeditions.com/cancellation-policy/>