The Panama Canal, Pearl Islands and Darién Jungle

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
£4,580 / per person
Does not include flights

DATES
Jan, Mar and Dec

DURATION
8 Days

SHIPS
National Geographic Venture
National Geographic Quest

STARTS AT
Colón, Panama

→

ENDS AT
Balboa, 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
- Meet the indigenous Emberá people of Darién in Playa Muerto Village and learn about their customs, traditions and deep reverence for their natural surroundings
- Sea kayak, hike, Zodiac cruise and snorkel in the tranquil Pearl Islands, a network of 200 islands known for turquoise waters, white-sand beaches and an enduring connection to the pearl trade

10°
10°
80°
80°
Portobelo
Colón
Gatún Lake
Panama City
NAMA
Pearl Islands
Punta Patiño
Playa Muerto
mapbox
© Mapbox, © OpenStreetMap

Day by day

■ DAY 1

Panama City, Panama / Colón / Embark Ship

Arrive in Panama City, the capital of Panama this afternoon and transfer to Colón to embark the *National Geographic Quest* this evening. Meet your expedition staff and enjoy a traditional Congo music and dance performance. You may opt for a culturally-immersive pre-voyage extension in Panama City and San Lorenzo , a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site.

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, you'll most likely begin your 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

◇ DAYS 4-5

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 6

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. The park 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. You'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

◇ DAY 7

Punta Patiño Nature Reserve

This morning, explore the historically important town of Portobelo, located on the northern coast of the isthmus of Panama. 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. During your visit, enjoy a Congo dance presentation, deeply rooted in the traditions of the Afro-Panamanian community, holding great historical significance.

Later on, set sail for the Panama Canal. As cargo ships tend to pass through the canal during the day, you'll most likely begin your 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 8

Balboa / Disembark Ship / Panama City, Panama

Disembark in Balboa and transfer to the airport in Panama City for flights home. Ask your expedition specialist about enjoying a culturally-immersive post-voyage extension in Panama City and San Lorenzo , a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site.

Departure Time: Depart anytime after 2:30 p.m.
Departure City: Panama City, Panama

Meals included: breakfast

Southbound

Colón, Panama → Balboa, Panama

2026 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

06 Dec				

2028 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

09 Mar				

Aboard *National Geographic Venture*

09 Dec	23 Dec			

Alternative Routes

Visit Expeditions.com for more information.

2026 Departure Dates

13 Dec

2027 Departure Dates

29 Jan

2028 Departure Dates

29 Jan, 16 Mar, 02 Dec, 16 Dec, 30 Dec

National Geographic Venture

GUESTS	CABINS
100	50

The *National Geographic Venture* is a state-of-the-art expedition ship ideal for discovering remote locations in domestic waters.

Following the build of *National Geographic Quest* at Nichols Brothers shipyard, her sister ship, *National Geographic Venture*, floated into the bay on Whidbey Island, Washington, becoming the 4th ship in the Lindblad fleet built at this storied 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 Venture, like much of the wildlife she follows, is migratory. She follows the seasons from Alaska, along the coast of British Columbia, up the Columbia and Snake Rivers and along the Baja California coast. In each region, her design innovations were informed by 50+ years of expedition expertise to ensure extraordinary discoveries. *National Geographic Venture*'s shallow draft enables her to provide intimate 'insider' experiences of the charismatic regions we explore.

Like her sister ship *National Geographic Quest*, *National Geographic Venture* has dual boarding platforms. Enabling our team to load two Zodiacs at once means guests get off ship quickly to take advantage of wildlife sightings and maximize exploring time. Modern and clean-lined, with large expanses of glass to keep you connected to the extraordinary views, *National Geographic Venture* 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

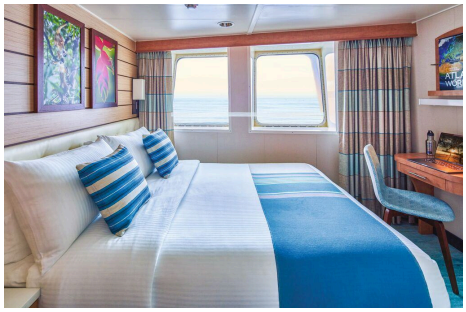
MAIN DECK **#307-315**

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.

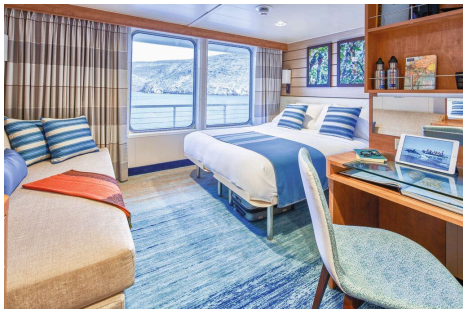
Connecting Cabins via internal doorway access:

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

Category 5

OBSERVATION DECK **#101-108 (SUITE)**

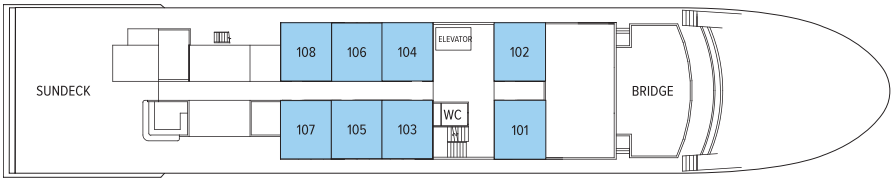
Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, large view windows, closet, two nightstands, full-length mirror, reading lights, a suite-sized expanded bathroom, writing desk, ample storage space, and a convertible sofa bed to accommodate a third person.



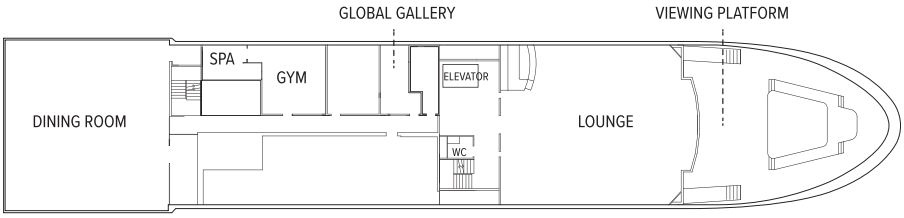
Deck Plans

Observation Deck

- Category 5



Lounge Deck

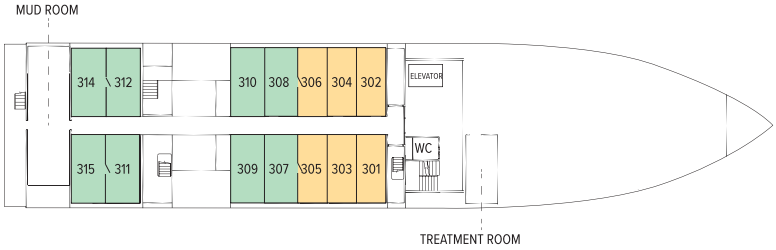


Upper Deck

- 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

Internet access. Elevator. The design of the outside decks—with the perfect wildlife viewing platform. 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 and resistance bands; LEXspa treatment room, staffed by wellness specialists.

Self-Disinfecting Ships

ACT Clean CoatTM 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.

National Geographic Quest

GUESTS	CABINS
100	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.

National Geographic Quest's shallow draft allows her captain to navigate the same inner reaches and provide 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.

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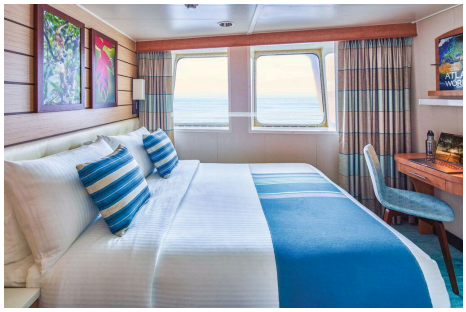

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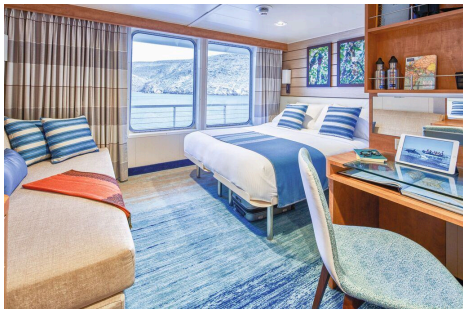
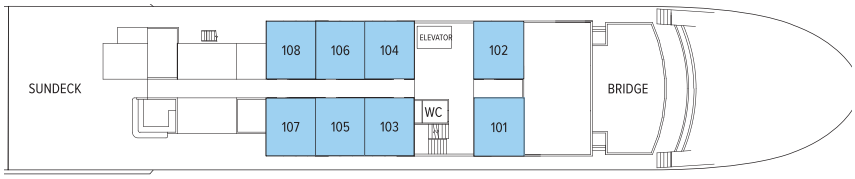


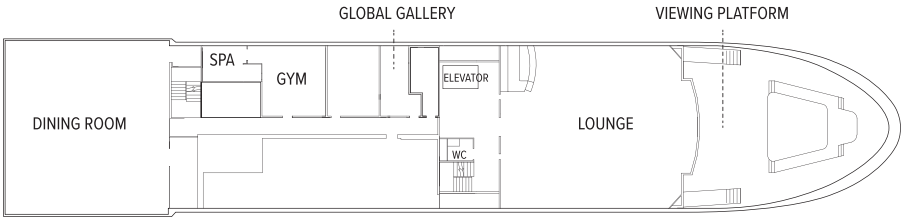
Deck Plans

Observation Deck

- Category 5



Lounge Deck

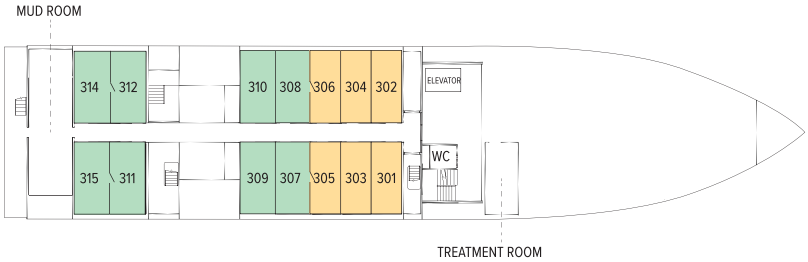


Upper Deck

- Category 3
- Category 4

Main Deck

- Category 1
- Category 2



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Expedition Equipment

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

Special Features

National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions 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!

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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**

SAVE 5% TRAVELING AS A GROUP

Save 5% when traveling as a group of 8 or more people. Valid for new bookings only on select departures, subject to availability, not applicable on extensions, and may not be combined with other offers. 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.

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

All accommodations aboard ship or in hotels per itinerary; all meals as indicated in the itinerary, both aboard and onshore; beer, wine, cocktails, liquors and spirits aboard the ship (except certain premium brands which are available for purchase); hors d'oeuvres, 24-hour access to snacks, premium coffees and teas, non-alcoholic beverages, and filtered water; excursions and airport transfers to and from recommended flights, as indicated in the itinerary; exploration tools curated to destination, such as Zodiacs, stand-up paddleboards, kayaks, snorkeling equipment (including wetsuits, masks, and fins); guidance and company of our leading expedition staff; assistance by the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic certified photo instructor; access to the OM System Photo Gear Locker; presentations by expedition staff and expert guest speakers; complimentary reusable water bottle; onboard physician consultations; morning stretch classes and 24-hour access to exercise equipment; 24-hour access to lounges, observation decks, library, and other shared spaces; basic WiFi, park and site entrance fees, special access permits, and port taxes. Unused services or items included in our programs are non-refundable.

NOT INCLUDED IN PRICE

Airfare (except flights when indicated as included); pre- and post-expedition extensions; additional hotel nights (except when indicated as included); crew gratuities; private transfers; laundry, spa treatments, travel protection plans; and passport, visa, and immigration fees.

Additional costs associated with medical services outside onboard physician consultation.

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/