Epic Costa Rica and Panama

Tropical forests, volcanic highlands and remote Pacific islands set the stage for an expedition spanning the Panama Canal and the coasts of Panama and Costa Rica. Explore from every angle—cruising wildlife-rich waterways by Zodiac, paddling into sheltered bays and stepping ashore to follow forest trails. Snorkel in the rich waters of Coiba National Park, search for monkeys and tropical birds on the Osa Peninsula, and hike among the geothermal wonders of Rincón de la Vieja. Throughout the journey, expert naturalists illuminate the wildlife and ecosystems you encounter. Time spent with local families and visits highlighting artistic traditions and conservation efforts deepen your understanding of this richly varied region.

From
A$ 19,143 / per person
Does not include flights

DATES
Jan, Feb and Mar

DURATION
15 Days

SHIPS
National Geographic Venture

STARTS AT
Panama City, Panama

→

ENDS AT
San José, Costa Rica

Highlights

- Transit the Panama Canal over two days, with a specially arranged overnight anchorage in Gatún Lake and an opportunity to explore Barro Colorado Island, administered by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- Discover Pacific Panama's island habitats, watching for frigatebirds and brown boobies by Zodiac and snorkeling among marine life in UNESCO World Heritage-listed Coiba National Park
- Explore the Osa Peninsula's forests and waterways with expert naturalists, searching for howler and capuchin monkeys, yellow-throated toucans and blue morpho butterflies
- Venture into Bahía Santa Elena by Zodiac or kayak, and hike a trail created specifically for our expeditions along this protected stretch of Guanacaste's coast

NICARAGUA
Papagayo Peninsula
Hacienda El Viejo
Curú National Wildlife Refuge
San José
Gulf of Nicoya
Osa Peninsula
Corcovado National Park
Isla Coiba
Colón
Panama City
PANAMA
Isla Iguana
mapbox
© Mapbox, © OpenStreetMap

Day by day

DAY 1

Panama City, Panama / Colón / Embark Ship

Arrive in Panama City this afternoon and transfer to Colón to embark the *National Geographic Venture*. Set sail for the Panama Canal to transit this engineering marvel, likely after dark when the locks are dramatically illuminated. Completed in 1914, it stretches more than 50 miles, and approximately 14,000 vessels sail through it each year. By special arrangement, the ship anchors overnight in Gatún Lake near the Barro Colorado Nature Monument.

You may also choose to arrive three days early for an optional pre-voyage extension that explores Panama City and Fort San Lorenzo , built by the Spanish in the 1600s and now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Meals included: dinner

DAY 2

Gatún Lake/Panama Canal Transit

Disembark this morning at Barro Colorado, an island formed by the damming of the Chagres River to build the Panama Canal. Visit the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute to learn about efforts to understand and protect the extraordinary biodiversity of one of the planet's most extensively researched tropical forests—including studies supported by National Geographic. Alternatively, take a boat ride to the mouth of the Chagres to explore the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center trails. Later, the ship continues through the complex lock system of the canal at the Pedro Miguel and Miraflores Locks, descending to the Pacific Ocean.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 3

Gulf of Panama Islets

Today, explore the Gulf of Panama's tiny islets by Zodiac, watching for frigatebirds, brown pelicans, neotropical cormorants and brown boobies. Alternatively, land at Isla Iguana Wildlife Refuge (tides permitting), one of the most important marine and coastal protected areas along the Pacific coast of Panama. Here, you'll enjoy nature walks in dry tropical rainforests and your first snorkeling outing in the shallows off its white-sand beaches.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 4

Coiba National Park, Panama

Spend a full day at the remote Isla Coiba, a former penal colony within Coiba National Park—a UNESCO World Heritage site that's only accessible by special permit. Among its many endemic species are the Coiba Island agouti and the mantled howler monkey, as well as four varieties of sea turtle. Search for birds and other wildlife on nature walks and discover rich marine life while snorkeling. Other activities may include kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding or relaxing on the beach.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAYS 5-6

Golfo Dulce / Osa Peninsula

Enter the mangrove-fringed Golfo Dulce, along the southwestern edge of Costa Rica, as your nimble expedition ship takes you into the remote upper reaches of this placid bay. Head inland to meet with inspiring local families living in remote

communities and learn about their work with cocoa, hearts of palm and sugar cane.

Hike mature rainforest, kayak peaceful waters and explore by Zodiac, scanning the jungle tree line for a dazzling array of avifauna, including golden-hooded tanagers, toucans, Cherrie's tanagers, yellow-throated toucans, fiery-billed aracaris and crimson-fronted and orange-chinned parakeets. Take in a kaleidoscope of tropical color as bromeliads, heliconias and orchids brighten the verdant landscape. Enjoy a presentation by a researcher with the Latin American Sea Turtles (LAST) Association about the organization's efforts to protect sea turtles in the region.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 7

Osa Conservation Area

Anchor off the Osa Peninsula to explore one of the richest lowland rainforests on the Pacific coast. Conditions permitting, venture into Corcovado National Park to swim in waterfall pools or trek through the rainforest in search of howler, spider, squirrel and capuchin monkeys. Alternatively, cruise a jungle river on Zodiacs, watching for iguanas, monkeys, tropical birds and blue morpho butterflies beneath the forest canopy.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 8

Sarchi and Else Kientzler Gardens

Drive to the highlands of Costa Rica to explore artistic traditions in the small town of Sarchí, known for its handicrafts and colorful oxcarts. Once used to transport coffee and other goods, these decorated carts have become a national symbol. Visit nearby Else Kientzler Gardens to discover a rich collection of over 2,000 species of tropical plants, spread over 17 acres, with over two miles of nature paths. Enjoy lunch ashore before continuing your journey.

Today marks a transition, as some guests conclude their voyage while others embark to begin their adventure. Note: some staff may rotate, bringing fresh energy and expertise for the journey ahead.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 9

Gulf of Nicoya

Explore the Gulf of Nicoya, a vast, island-dotted estuary, where sheltered waters, forested islands and mangrove-lined shores sustain abundant marine and birdlife as well as traditional fishing communities. These extensive wetlands serve as vital nursery grounds for fish and crustaceans and offer a rich setting for discovering the region's wildlife, scenery and coastal culture.

Learn about efforts to restore mangrove habitat in areas once altered by sugarcane cultivation, shrimp farming and salt production. By reopening tidal channels and allowing native mangroves to regenerate naturally, large-scale projects have rehabilitated more than 700 acres—helping revive fisheries and wildlife habitat, protect important "blue carbon" ecosystems and engage local communities in their stewardship.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 10

Papagayo Peninsula

Drop anchor off the remote Papagayo Peninsula, where dramatic volcanic headlands shelter secluded beaches and quiet coves. Tropical dry forest blankets the landscape, providing habitat for howler monkeys, coatis, iguanas and abundant birdlife, while rocky reefs and rich marine life lie beneath the clear coastal waters.

Conditions permitting, explore Bahía Huevos, a protected bay edged by sandy beaches and

rainforest. Swim, snorkel or kayak in its sheltered waters; search for wildlife on a nature walk; or venture by Zodiac into nearby mangrove-lined waterways.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 11

Santa Rosa National Park / Guanacaste Conservation Area

Spend the day exploring Bahía Santa Elena, a protected marine area bordered by Santa Rosa National Park and the Guanacaste Conservation Area. Its striking, undeveloped shoreline provides important breeding habitat for dolphins, whales, sea turtles, whale sharks and rays. The *National Geographic Quest* and *National Geographic Venture* are the first and only expedition ships to anchor here since the park was established, and your visit supports the surrounding communities and the continued protection of this remote wilderness.

Explore by Zodiac or kayak, hike a trail created specifically for our expeditions and, conditions permitting, swim or snorkel in the bay. As you venture out, watch for great kiskadees, orange-fronted parakeets, mangrove hawks and colorful ringed kingfishers.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 12

Rincón de la Vieja National Park / Hacienda Guachipelin

Journey inland to Rincón de la Vieja National Park, part of the Guanacaste Conservation Area. Here, forests cloak the slopes of two active volcanoes, where bubbling mud pots, steaming vents and other geothermal features reveal the powerful forces shaping this mountainous landscape.

Choose from several ways to explore: Hike through a transition zone where tropical dry forest meets temperate cloud forest, watching for mantled howler monkeys and white-throated magpie-jays; swim beneath Las Chorreras Waterfall after a short forest walk; or soar through the canopy by zipline. Later, gather at Hacienda Guachipelin for a poolside lunch featuring fresh ceviche.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 13

Hacienda El Viejo Wetlands / Playas del Coco

With the ship anchored in Bahía Coco, travel inland to Hacienda El Viejo, a historic working hacienda and private wildlife refuge bordering Palo Verde National Park. Cruise the Tempisque River through one of Costa Rica's most important wetland ecosystems, watching for crocodiles, monkeys, iguanas and a remarkable variety of resident and migratory birds.

Discover the role of sugarcane in Guanacaste's rural heritage and follow the rum-making process from the extraction and cooking of fresh cane juice to fermentation, distillation and barrel aging. Conclude with a guided tasting before returning to the ship for lunch.

This afternoon, explore Playas del Coco, a former fishing village now known for its lively seaside atmosphere. Stroll the waterfront promenade and browse its restaurants, cafés and shops.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 14

Curú National Wildlife Refuge / Isla Tortuga

Explore Curú National Wildlife Refuge, Costa Rica's first private national wildlife reserve, set along the Nicoya Peninsula where the wetter forests of the south meet Guanacaste's drier landscapes. Follow

forest trails in search of white-faced capuchin monkeys, turquoise-browed motmots and scarlet macaws. With luck, spot the elusive northern tamandua, a primarily tree-dwelling member of the anteater family.

Return to the ship for lunch as you cruise toward the offshore islets collectively known as Isla Tortuga. Relax on a palm-fringed beach, then celebrate the finale of your Guanacaste adventure with refreshments and hors d'oeuvres ashore.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 15

Puerto Caldera / Disembark Ship / San José

Disembark in Puerto Caldera and drive to the airport in San José for your flight home.

Meals included: breakfast

Westbound

Panama City, Panama → San José, Costa Rica

2029 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Venture*

13 Jan				
03 Feb	24 Feb			
17 Mar				

Alternative Routes

Visit Expeditions.com for more information.

2029 Departure Dates

06 Jan, 27 Jan, 17 Feb, 10 Mar

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

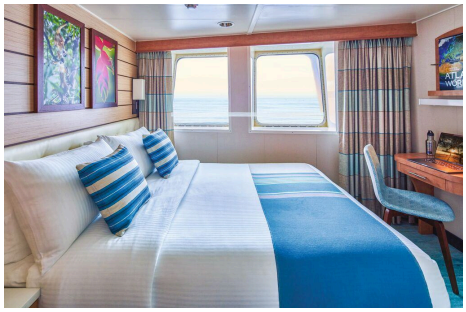
MAIN DECK **#307-315**

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.

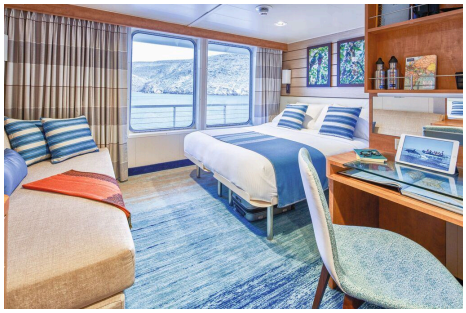
Connecting Cabins via internal doorway access:

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

Category 5

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

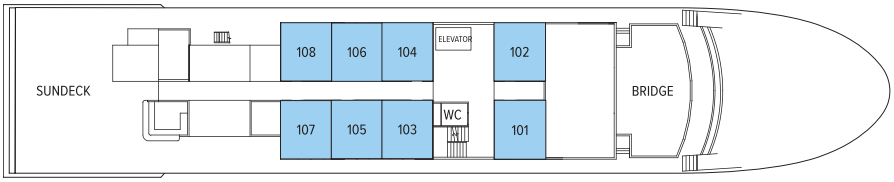
Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, large view windows, closet, two nightstands, full-length mirror, reading lights, a suite-sized expanded bathroom, writing desk, ample storage space, and a convertible sofa bed to accommodate a third person.



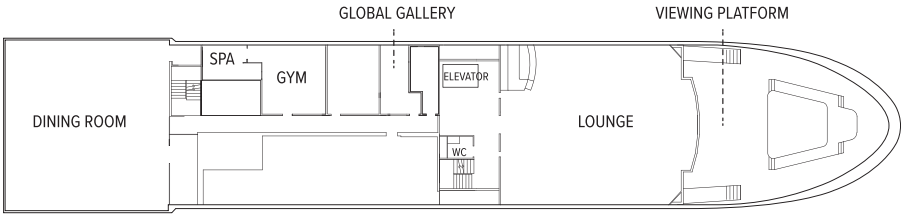
Deck Plans

Observation Deck

- Category 5



Lounge Deck

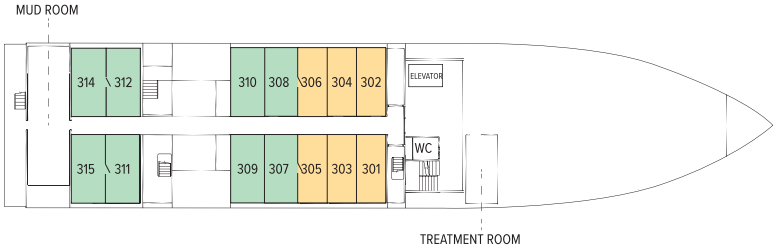


Upper Deck

- 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.

Special Offers

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.

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.

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.

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/