Costa Rica and the Panama Canal

Sailing the Panama Canal is an unforgettable experience that places you at the heart of one of history's greatest engineering triumphs. Aboard the *National Geographic Quest*, you'll enjoy privileged access—transiting the locks by both day and night—and benefit from a team of experts who illuminate every nuance of the crossing. Beyond the steel and stone of the canal, discover the vibrant tropical worlds of Costa Rica and Panama: snorkel colorful coral reefs, kayak along hidden shorelines and trek into lush rainforests filled with monkeys and colorful birdlife.

From
£4,754 / per person
Does not include flights

DATES
Jan, Feb, Mar, Nov and Dec

DURATION
8 Days

SHIPS
National Geographic Quest
National Geographic Venture

STARTS AT
San José, Costa Rica

→

ENDS AT
Panama City, Panama

Highlights

- Venture into remote wilderness: hike among monkeys, sloths, and tropical birds, and explore far from any inhabited places
- Transit the Panama Canal over two days to see it by day and in the coolness of night—plus an exclusive stop at the Smithsonian Research Institute
- Discover the wild rainforests surrounding Corcovado National Park, which *National Geographic* dubbed "the most biologically intense place on Earth"
- Explore idyllic islands, snorkel over a vibrant coral reef, and take a Zodiac cruise up a wild river

NICARAGUA
COSTA RICA
Puerto Caldera
San José
Colón
Panama City
Playa Blanca
PANAMA
Corcovado National Park
Isla Coiba
Gulf of Panama
mapbox
© Mapbox, © OpenStreetMap

Day by day

DAY 1

San José, Costa Rica / Puerto Caldera / Embark Ship

Arrive in San José this afternoon and transfer to Puerto Caldera, the main port for Costa Rica. This evening, embark the *National Geographic Quest* and set sail south on your Central American journey. You may opt to arrive early for a pre-voyage extension in the rainforests and reserves of Caño Negro . The extension adds five days before the expedition for incredible wildlife exploration on a glamping adventure.

Arrival Time: Arrive before 1:00 p.m. local time.
Arrival City: San José, Costa Rica

Meals included: dinner

DAY 2

Osa Conservation Area

Anchor off the Osa Peninsula to see some of the most pristine lowland rainforest on the Pacific coast. Conditions permitting, venture into Corcovado National Park, where you can swim in waterfall pools or trek through the rainforest for a chance to see four species of monkeys—howler, spider, squirrel and capuchin.

Alternatively, take Zodiacs into the forest, cruising along a jungle river that is shrouded by a thick canopy harboring iguanas, monkeys, myriad bird species and beautiful blue morpho butterflies.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAYS 3-4

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 and share with inspiring local families living in remote communities and working with cocoa, hearts of palm and sugar cane. Hike in mature rainforest, kayak in peaceful waters and explore by Zodiac, scanning the jungle treeline for a dazzling array of avifauna, including golden-hooded and Cherrie's tanagers, yellow-throated toucans, fiery-billed aracaris and crimson-fronted and orange-chinned parakeets. Take in a kaleidoscope of tropical color with bromeliads, heliconias and orchids set against the verdant green.

Go ashore on the western side of the bay in the pristine waters of Playa Blanca on the Osa Peninsula. By special arrangement, visit with the Latin American Sea Turtles (LAST) Association and hear presentations by the staff at LAST including a talk by the dedicated researchers working so hard to positively impact sea turtle conservation.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 5

Coiba National Park, Panama

The first stop in Panama this morning is at the remote Isla Coiba, one of the many islands of Coiba National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Once a penal colony, the island has long been protected and accessible by special permit only. Among its many endemic species are the Coiba Island agouti and the mantled howler monkey, as well as four varieties of sea turtle. Discover rich marine life while snorkeling or simply spend the afternoon exploring or relaxing on the beach.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 6

Gulf of Panama Islets / Panama Canal Transit

Today, explore the tiny islets of the Gulf of Panama by Zodiac. Here you might spot frigatebirds, brown pelicans, neotropical cormorants, and brown boobies. Set sail for the Panama Canal this afternoon. Stretching more than 50 miles, the canal was a colossal engineering feat completed in 1914. It is still traversed by some 14,000 ships every year. As cargo ships tend to pass through the canal during the day, the ship will most likely begin crossing at night, when the canal is dramatically lit.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 7

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 the mouth of the Chagres River and hike on the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center trails. This evening, continue through the complex lock system of the canal. 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

Colón / Panama City, Panama / Disembark Ship

Disembark in Colón 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 after 12:30 p.m. local time.

Departure City: Panama City, Panama

Meals included: breakfast

Eastbound

San José, Costa Rica → Panama City, Panama

2026 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

29 Nov				
27 Dec				

2027 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

10 Jan				
13 Feb	27 Feb			
13 Mar				
27 Nov				
16 Dec	30 Dec			

2028 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

18 Jan				
12 Feb				
02 Mar				

2029 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Venture*

20 Jan				
10 Feb				
03 Mar	24 Mar			

Alternative Routes

Visit Expeditions.com for more information.

2026 Departure Dates

20 Dec

2027 Departure Dates

03 Jan, 06 Feb, 20 Feb, 06 Mar, 20 Mar, 04 Dec, 23 Dec

2028 Departure Dates

06 Jan, 05 Feb, 19 Feb, 23 Mar

2029 Departure Dates

06 Jan, 27 Jan, 17 Feb, 10 Mar, 31 Mar

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.

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

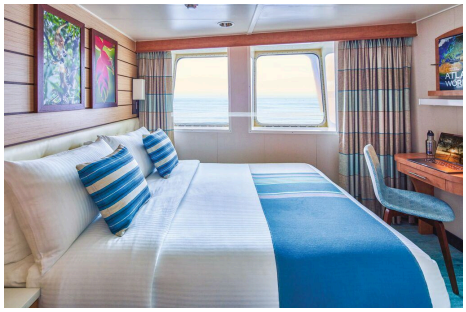
MAIN DECK **#307-315**

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.

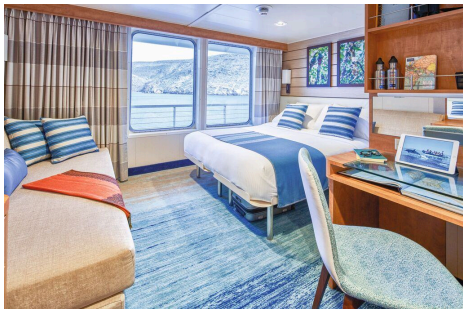
Connecting Cabins via internal doorway access:

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

Category 5

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

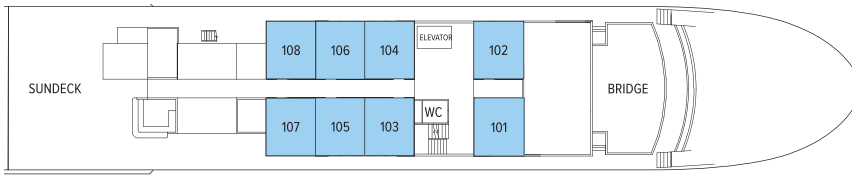
Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, large view windows, closet, two nightstands, full-length mirror, reading lights, a suite-sized expanded bathroom, writing desk, ample storage space and a convertible sofa bed to accommodate a third person.



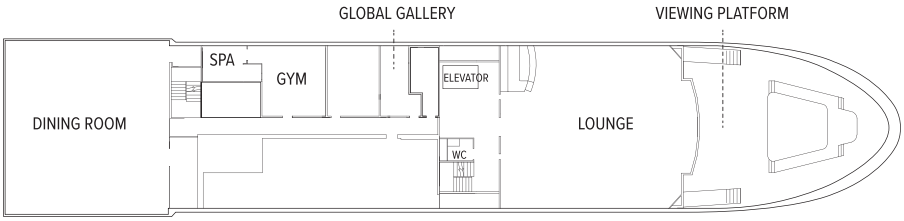
Deck Plans

Observation Deck

- Category 5



Lounge Deck

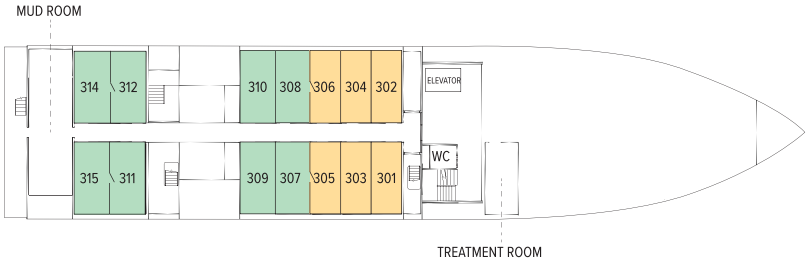


Upper Deck

- 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 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!

Wellness

A fitness center with elliptical, treadmill, weights, 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 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

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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.

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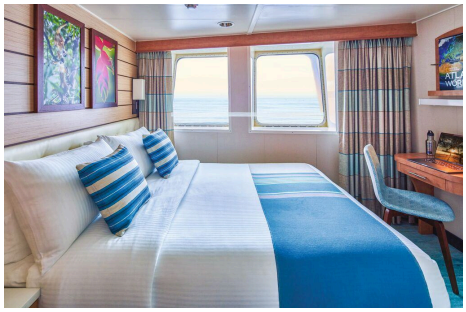

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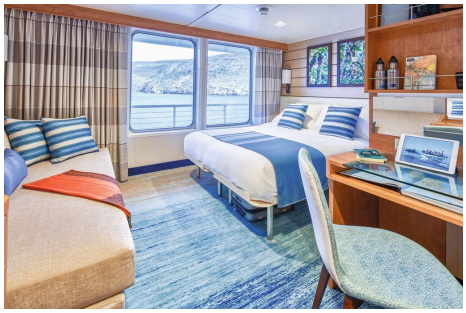
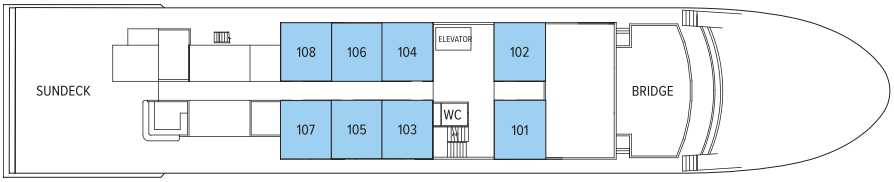


Deck Plans

Observation Deck

- Category 5



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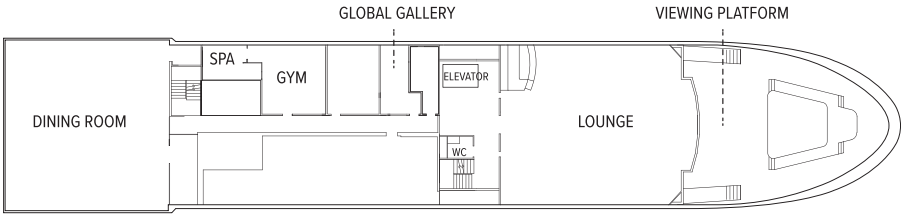
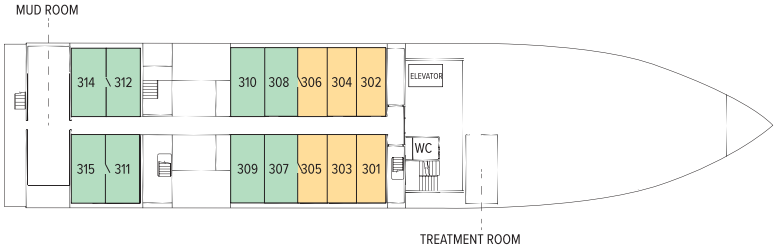


Upper Deck

- Category 3
- Category 4

Main Deck

- Category 1
- Category 2



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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**

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.

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.

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/