



CARIBBEAN SEA CHRONICLES: THE PANAMA CANAL TO ANTIGUA CRUISE

Transit the legendary Panama Canal to discover vibrant, tropical beauty in Panama and Colombia before sailing among over half a dozen gem-like islands in the Caribbean Sea. Become enriched in the multifaceted histories and cultures of each nation from Panama's Guna Yala archipelago to Colombia's Santa Marta, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Hike through volcanic landscapes in Montserrat, and kayak or snorkel in crystalline waters off Dominica and the Grenadines.



ITINERARY

DAY 1 Panama City, Panama / Balboa / Embark Ship

Arrive in Panama City and transfer to the Port of Balboa where we board the National Geographic Orion. This evening, we begin our transit of the Panama Canal to the Caribbean Sea.

Arrival Time: Arrive before 2:00 p.m. local time.

Arrival City: Panama City, Panama



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Meals Included: Dinner

[DAY 2 Gatun Lake / Barro Colorado / Panama Canal Transit](#)

After anchoring overnight in Panama Canal's vast Gatun Lake, we disembark at Barro Colorado in the morning (if permitting allows). This island was formed by the damming of the Chagres River to build the legendary canal. A visit to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute unveils initiatives to protect and study the extraordinary biodiversity of one of our planet's most studied tropical forests and site of National Geographic studies.

Later, choose between a hike into the jungle, a Zodiac cruise across the lake, or a boat ride to the mouth of the Chagres to explore the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center. In the evening, we begin our transit through the dramatically lit lock system of the legendary Panama Canal, 50 miles long and passage for some 14,000 ships annually.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

[DAY 3 Guna Yala Archipelago](#)

Wake up amidst the Guna Yala archipelago--known also as the San Blas Islands--a scattering of 368 white-sand isles off the northeast coast of Panama. Spend the day exploring this paradise where the Guna people still live as their ancestors did:

in thatched huts making ancient handicrafts such as molas, colorful panels of stitched fabric. Deeply committed to their culture, the Guna are admired as a politically autonomous community, where women make the rules and gender fluidity is celebrated.

In the afternoon, head offshore to explore the vibrant marine world of this breathtaking utopia by snorkel, kayak, and stand-up paddleboard.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

[DAY 4 Cispatá Bay / Sanguare Natural Reserve, Colombia](#)

Today we venture to Cispatá Bay, where we'll spend the morning among the most extensive area of mangroves on Colombia's Caribbean coast learning from local community guides who'll share their knowledge of the prolific wildlife. Participate in the release of rehabilitated, young caimans with Asocaiman, a local conservation group.

After lunch on board, we'll voyage to the Sanguare Natural Reserve. This former cattle ranch, now part of the national system of protected areas, offers great opportunities to explore on foot or by water. Learn about the conservation work being done as we explore the tropical dry forests, coastal lagoons, and sea grass beds. Set out on kayaks or paddleboards, or relax on the sand and sip a chilled refreshment.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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DAYS 5-6 Santa Marta / Tayrona National Park / At Sea

The oldest city in Colombia, Santa Marta is a historical gem. Considerably more laid back and intimate than Cartagena, the city's heritage is a blend of indigenous ethnic groups, Spanish colonial architecture, and modern history. A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage site since 1979, it is also the gateway to Tayrona National Park, which spans from the secluded beaches to one of the highest coastal mountain ranges in the world - the Sierra Nevada Santa Marta. Spend the day exploring the many options this magical region has to offer.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAYS 7-8 Bonaire, Caribbean Netherlands / At Sea

Today, we visit Slagbaai National Park, the first nature reserve established in the Dutch Caribbean in 1969. Encompassing the northern part of the island, this desert oasis is a sanctuary for many endemic species, including parrots, flamingos, and iguanas. The beaches within the park are important nesting grounds for all four species of sea turtles. We will also explore the National Marine Park surrounding the island, which was created to protect the narrow fringing reef and mangroves that are teeming with life.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAYS 9 Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Drive through the lush Arima Valley to the Asa Wright Nature Center, a mecca for nature lovers. We'll have a choice of trails to walk as we look for toucans, hummingbirds, tanagers, motmots, and butterflies. Or stay on the "birding veranda" and let the avifauna come to you. Later on, drive to the Caroni Swamp, where scarlet ibis return by the hundreds at dusk to roost--one of the world's great wildlife spectacles.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Bequia, the Grenadines

Anchor at tiny Bequia and explore the charming waterfront. Go snorkeling at a nearby reef, swim along palm-backed beaches, or visit a traditional model boat museum. In Port Elizabeth, browse the local market or find a cafe along the Belmont Walkway. This evening, set sail across St. Vincent Channel toward St. Lucia.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 Soufrière, St. Lucia

Arrive at St. Lucia and anchor under the island's iconic twin peaks, the Pitons, which rise dramatically above the sea. After exploring the fishing port of Soufriere, drive into St. Lucia's



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active volcanic crater and discover the otherworldly landscape of mud pools and sulfur springs. Located on the grounds of a former plantation, the Mamiku botanical gardens are alive with the sounds of birds and rush of Diamond Falls. Delve into the history of the grounds which spans the reign of Louis XIV, the War of the Brigands, and the freedom of the slaves over the British. Spend the afternoon at sea on the lookout for marine life.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12 Dominica

Spend the day exploring Dominica, known as "the nature island" for its spectacular beauty and many protected reserves. Hike through an enchanting rainforest with a panoply of wildlife. Join our historian in exploring the ruins of Fort Shirley, an 18th-century British garrison, and learn about Dominica's turbulent colonial history. Swim and snorkel in the clear warm waters or hop on a paddleboard to explore the island's volcanic reefs and nutrient-rich waters.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 Montserrat / Antigua, Antigua and Barbuda

Nicknamed the "emerald isle," this tiny volcanic island has lush green forests, high peaks, and black sand beaches. Montserrat is also known for the 1995 eruption of the Soufriere Hills

volcano that destroyed much of the island's southern portion and buried Plymouth, the capital. We'll visit the Volcano Observatory to learn what scientists continue to discover about the island. Then, hike the spectacular trails of the northern region, keeping an eye out for the beautiful Montserrat oriole.

This evening, be on deck to enjoy the kaleidoscopic sunset and mountainous backdrop of Montserrat as we set sail for Antigua, our final stop.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 14 Antigua / Disembark Ship

This morning, disembark and transfer to the airport for your return flight.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION

YOUR SHIP:	National Geographic Orion
VESSEL TYPE:	Luxury Expedition
LENGTH:	103 metres
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	102 (in 53 cabins)
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2003 / Refurbished 2014

Engineered for maximum comfort and safety, _Orion_ is equipped with the latest technology including large retractable stabilizers, sonar, radar, and an ice-strengthened hull. A shallow draft plus bow and stern thrusters provide the convenience of being able to maneuver close to shore. 14 Zodiacs ensure quick disembarkation and offer the ideal transport for up-close exploration. _National Geographic Orion_ meets strict specifications for environmental protection and the on board waste management systems meet the stringent Antarctic operational standards enabling us to travel to the most pristine environments. A host of advanced design features and technology ensures sustainable marine environmental practices. _National Geographic Orion_ accommodates 102 guests in 53 cabins, including several with balconies. She is spacious and modern, with a variety of public rooms that offer panoramic views of the passing landscape. Friendly and informal, _Orion_ fosters a welcoming atmosphere where like-minded guests share in exceptional experiences and enrichment. Her public rooms include a dramatic window-lined main lounge, as well as an observation lounge and library perched at the very top of the ship, with plentiful observation decks. The spacious lounge is

the heart of our expedition community, and is suited for spirited cocktail hours, informative presentations and our nightly tradition of Recap. In addition, a dedicated theater provides a unique setting for specialist presentations or films and slideshows. Both the main dining room and outside buffet easily accommodate all guests at once for open seating dining. On selected nights, weather permitting, our dining room menu is also available on the outside deck. While _Orion_ interiors are elegant, life aboard is always casual, with no need for formal clothing. And you'll find shipboard services like laundry, in-room cabled internet, and public-area wifi make packing and traveling more



convenient.



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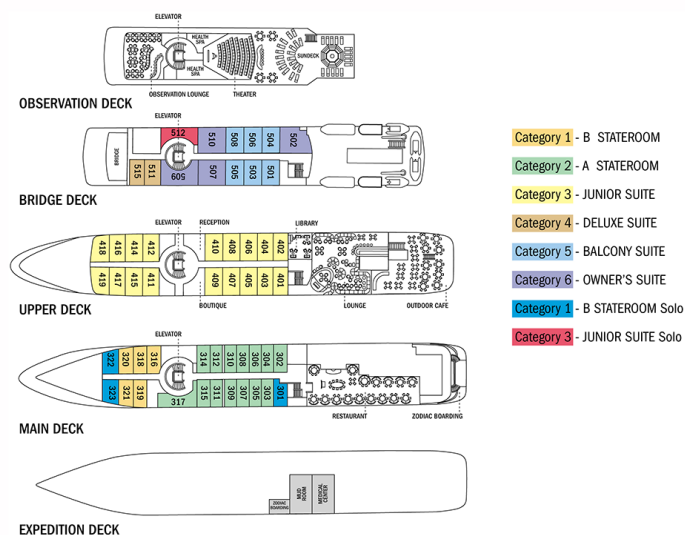
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