

EXPLORING ARENAL VOLCANO, PEARL ISLANDS, AND THE PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

Experience a wide breadth of Central American wonders on this dynamic voyage that pairs an inland exploration of Costa Rica's Arenal Volcano Area with a maritime adventure through the Panama Canal to Portobelo and the Pearl Islands. Zipline through tropical rainforests, search for a panoply of wildlife on hikes and Zodiac cruises, visit two UNESCO World Heritage sites, and snorkel crystalline waters fringed by pristine beaches. Along the way, naturalists and local guides will illuminate each day's discoveries--from colonial history to local conservation initiatives.



ITINERARY

Day 1 San José, Costa Rica / Arenal Volcano Area

Arrive in San Jose this afternoon and transfer to La Fortuna. This charming town in the northern highlands will be your base as you explore the surrounding areas and enjoy a sampling of Costa Rica's best wildlife areas and trails. Opt to arrive early for a pre-voyage wildlife and glamping extension in the rainforests and reserves of Caño Negro.

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

Meals Included: Dinner

Days 2-4 Arenal Volcano Area



Spend the first few days exploring the natural beauty of the Arenal Volcano Area. Once considered Costa Rica's most active volcano, this cone-shaped wonder (which has been dormant since 2010) looms large over the verdant hillsides that surround it, providing a stunning backdrop to your activities.

Highlights include ziplining over dramatic views of the volcano, lush jungles, and picturesque Lake Arenal; traversing suspension bridges for panoramic treetop vistas; searching for wildlife on the tropical forest floor; and taking a relaxing dip at the Ecotermales Hot Springs, which is heated by the natural energy surging from the nearby volcano.

You'll also visit land near La Fortuna, which was set aside to preserve the habitat for two- and three-toed sloths. Over 30 individuals of both species have been counted in the area. Your naturalists will share insights about the flora and the other fauna, including toucans, agoutis, tree frogs, and owls, which reside in this tropical rainforest. Lastly, marvel at the lush scenery of Pierella Ecological Gardens, a nature reserve and butterfly farm where iconic species like the Blue Morpho are sustainably raised on the property.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5 San José / Panama City, Panama / Colón / Embark Ship

Fly from San Jose to Panama City on our recommended group flight or on a flight selection of your own*. Transfer by land to Colon to embark the National Geographic Quest. Meet your expedition staff and marvel at the coastline ahead as you sail to the historic port of Portobelo.

*If you are not purchasing our recommended group flight, please get in touch with us to confirm your arrangements.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 Portobelo / Panama Canal Transit

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

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7 Gatún Lake / Panama Canal Transit

This morning, you have a choice of two activities: Hiking and Zodiac cruising around Barro Colorado Island, which is home to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, or a boat ride to Gamboa, where the Chagres River meets the Panama Canal, followed by a hike on the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center trails. This evening, continue through the complex lock system of the Canal and venture into the Pacific Ocean.



Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 Pearl Islands

Explore one of the approximately 200 islands that make up the idyllic Pearl Islands archipelago as you learn about the history of the native populations, and eventually the Spaniard colonizers and African slaves, who arrived for the pearl trade. Deep rainforests, lush rivers, white sandy beaches, and shallow reefs provide a memorable backdrop for beach activities and snorkeling.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 Balboa / Disembark Ship / Panama City, Panama

After breakfast, disembark in Balboa and transfer to the airport in Panama City for your flight home, or to begin a three-day Panama City extension.

Departure Time: Depart any time after 12:30 p.m.
Departure City: Panama City, Panama

Meals Included: Breakfast

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC QUEST

YOUR SHIP: National Geographic Quest

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

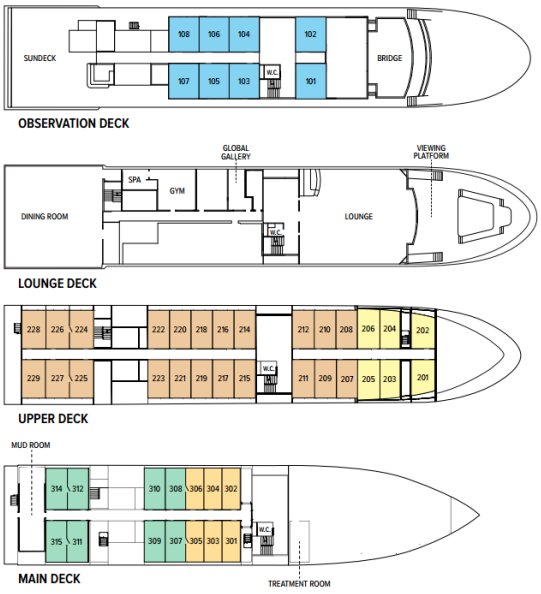
BUILT/REFURBISHED:



National Geographic Quest is a state-of-the-art, purpose-built expedition vessel made for exploring coastal waters, shallow coves, and fast-moving channels where wildlife congregate while sailing with the luxury of supreme comfort. Spacious cabins, open decks for wildlife viewing, and specialty tools for exploration make it the ideal platform for sailing in the remote areas of Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, Costa Rica, Panama, and Belize. Designed with decades of expedition experience in the region, _National Geographic Quest_ more than comfortably accommodates 100 guests in 50 cabins. Her twin expedition craft landing platform allow us to rapidly get on and off the ship to take advantage of wildlife sightings and to ensure we maximize our time off the ship exploring. Created with a shallow draft, _Quest_ draws only nine feet of water allowing her to sail into places where much larger ships cannot go.



INSIDE YOUR SHIP



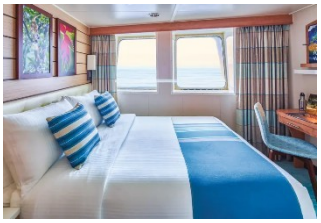
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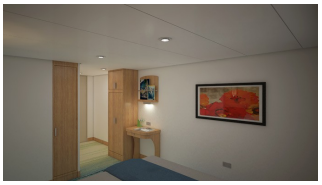
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