

PANAMA AND COSTA RICA: CROSSING THE CANAL CRUISE

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' Crossing the Canal Stretching 65 kilometres (40 miles) from shoreline to shoreline, the Panama Canal slices through one of the world's most captivating isthmuses. Join us for a remarkable crossing as we navigate the locks and lakes of this engineering marvel. Beyond the canal, we journey into the heartland of Central America's wildlife-rich rainforests and waterways and meet its warm and welcoming people. This voyage blends the marvels of human ingenuity with the wonders of the natural world in a region where wildlife, culture, and biodiversity combine to create the ultimate travel experience.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive Panama City

Welcome to Panama City. On arrival at Panama City airport make your way to the Arrivals Hall to meet our representative, followed by a transfer to our group hotel. At the hotel, visit our hospitality desk in the lobby to meet our team who will provide you with useful information regarding pre-embarkation procedures and about your time in Panama City. You will also receive cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and your cabin number on the ship.

This evening offers time to relax in preparation for our journey.



Accommodation: Panama City Hotel

Day 2 Panama City

This morning, we join a local guide to stroll the cobbled streets of Casco Viejo, Panama City's historic 'Old Town'. Colonial facades, vibrant plazas, and centuries-old churches tell stories of Spanish conquests and marauding pirates, as the tour winds through this UNESCO-listed gem, where the aroma of Panamanian coffee mingles with the sweet scent of hojaldres, a sugary fried treat, from the districts open-air cafes. Our tour leads to the Museo del Canal Interoceanico de Panama, a beautifully restored building that chronicles the epic saga of the Panama Canal. Inside, exhibits trace its tumultuous history, from failed French ambitions to American triumph, and its profound impact on global commerce.

Choose to return to the hotel, or linger longer, to explore further at your own pace. This evening, we gather at a Welcome reception to meet our host and fellow travellers.

Accommodation: Panama City Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Welcome reception (drinks and canapes)

Day 3 Miraflores Locks – Embarkation Colon (Port: Colon)

Departing Panama City, we stop en route to boarding our own engineering marvel, at the Miraflores Locks - a testament to the ingenuity that transformed global shipping. Built on a site chosen for its elevation and proximity to the Pacific, the Miraflores Locks allow gravity-fed chambers to manage sea level differences, making them an indispensable facet of the canal. This extensive lock system lifts and lowers ships up to 16 metres (52.5 feet) using massive concrete chambers and sluice gates that control water flow. Constructed in the early 20th century, they were engineered with precision to handle vessels of varying sizes, using hydraulics and gravity rather than pumps. Without them, the Canal simply couldn't operate, with ships being unable to cross the hilly terrain and freshwater lakes that separate the oceans.

The Miraflores Visitors Center offers a compelling insight into the strategic and mechanical core of the Panama Canal. Our visit begins with an award-winning IMAX documentary that highlights the Canal's global significance and the formidable engineering challenges overcome during its construction. Afterwards, we move to the observation terraces on the ground and first floors, where we watch vessels as they are raised and lowered through the locks in an intricate process that showcases the Canal's precision and power.

With our curiosity piqued by our visit, we board the Sylvia Earle at the port of Colon ready to experience our own Panama Canal transit firsthand tomorrow.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner onboard

Day 4 Crossing the Panama Canal

Today we experience one of the most extraordinary engineering achievements in history, on a daytime crossing of the Panama Canal from Colon to Balboa.

After an initial French attempt to build the canal, the United States completed it in 1914, transforming global shipping. Before its existence, vessels had to sail up to 15,000 kilometres

(9,300 miles) around Cape Horn -- a journey that could add up to 15 days of travel time. With the canal in place, ships could slip through the Isthmus of Panama in a matter of hours, dramatically improving trade logistics. But behind the brilliance, construction was gruelling and dangerous. During the American phase alone, over 40,000 workers laboured through treacherous terrain and battled tropical diseases. The toll was staggering with more than 25,000 people dying over the entire period of construction.

Today, approximately 11,500 ships pass through the Panama Canal annually, with many designed to fit the dimensions of its original locks--a testament to its enduring influence on global shipping. Today, our own Sylvia Earle makes the iconic transit across the Isthmus, accompanied by expert commentary from a local canal specialist, offering insight into every stage of the journey and the remarkable engineering behind it.

Day 5 Balboa / Fuerte Amador, Panama (Port: Balboa / Fuerte Amador)

We offer two distinctly different 'Your Choice' experiences this morning. Choose to immerse yourself in the culture of the Embera people, or ride in a tramway high in the tropical forest canopy, before we sail west to Costa Rica, late afternoon.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Embera village visit

Our journey takes us on land and river today, when we visit an Embera village on a journey into the heart of Panama's indigenous heritage. Nestled deep within the rainforest, the community lives in stilted wooden homes with thatched roofs, surrounded by lush greenery. The Embera people maintain a lifestyle closely tied to nature, fishing in nearby rivers, cultivating crops like yucca and plantains, and crafting baskets and carvings from local materials. Their lives are guided by ancestral knowledge, passed down through oral storytelling, music, and dance. Children learn through observation and participation, while elders serve as cultural guardians. The village operates with a strong sense of cooperation and respect, where decisions are made collectively and traditions are honoured. We are welcomed to the village not just as guests, but as students, invited to learn about a way of life that values simplicity, sustainability, and a deep connection to the land.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Treetop rainforest experience

Board an aerial tram for a fascinating ride through Panama's rainforest canopy, revealing a world few get to see from the ground. The tram travels around 600 meters (approximately 1,970 feet) through the jungle, rising gradually above the forest floor, passing towering trees like the kapok and Panama tree, tangled vines, and bursts of orchids. Wildlife sightings are common, with howler monkeys, toucans, and sloths often appearing among the branches. The ride is guided as an audio feed, making this a fascinating journey for nature lovers. The tram is smooth, quiet, and ideal for anyone wanting a close-up rainforest experience without having to hike.

Day 6 At Sea

Enjoy a day at sea, as we sail into the Pacific Ocean. There's time to unwind, attend a presentation, or simply enjoy the sunset on the horizon as we sail from Panama to Costa Rica.



Day 7 Golfo Dulce, Costa Rica (Port: Golfito)

Tucked between the Osa Peninsula and the southern mainland, Golfo Dulce is a deep, sheltered gulf where rainforest spills into the sea. It's one of the only tropical fjords in the world, and its calm waters are a magnet for marine life, from dolphins and sea turtles to migrating humpback whales. Scarlet macaws flash overhead, mangroves fringe the shore, and the forest hums with life. Unlike busier coastal spots, Golfo Dulce feels untouched, quiet, wild, and deeply alive. Whether you're paddling, walking nearby trails or joining a boat cruise of the bay, it's a place that invites you to slow down and look closer.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Golfo Dulce's Waterworld

From August to December, the warm waters of Golfo Dulce welcome southern humpback whales arriving from Antarctica to give birth and care for their young. October is an ideal time to witness mothers and calves swimming together, practicing breaching, and communicating through deep, resonant calls, accompanied by resident dolphins darting through the waves.

Golfo Dulce is one of the few places on Earth where northern and southern humpbacks overlap, though the southern whales dominate this season. As we head out on the water, we'll be keeping our eyes peeled for these majestic creatures, hoping to catch a glimpse of a tail slap or a calf learning to leap. It's a quiet, awe-inspiring moment in one of Costa Rica's most biodiverse marine environments.

Option 2 - Morning Experience: The Wild Heart of Golfo Dulce

Step into the rainforest and experience the living, breathing heart of Costa Rica. With over half the country covered in tropical forest, this trail walk offers a glimpse into one of the most biodiverse places in the Americas. As you follow your guide along shaded paths, you'll learn how the rainforest supports everything from towering trees to tiny orchids.

In the Golfo Dulce region, wildlife is spotted high in the forest canopy. Listen for howler monkeys in the treetops, spot colourful frogs near the forest floor, and watch for flashes of toucans, parrots, or even a macaw overhead. The trail winds through a landscape shaped by water, sunlight, and time, offering quiet moments and unexpected encounters. This trail walk is perfect for nature lovers, an opportunity to slow down, look closely, and connect with the rhythms of the rainforest.

Option 3 - Morning Experience: Golfo Dulce by Kayak

Kayaking in Golfo Dulce offers a peaceful way to explore one of Costa Rica's most biodiverse marine environments. Whether gliding across the open bay or weaving through narrow mangrove channels, the experience is quiet, slow-paced, and deeply immersive.

The stillness is part of the magic--especially in the mangroves, where silence allows you to observe wildlife without disturbing it. Birds perch overhead, fish ripple beneath the surface, and crabs scuttle along tangled roots. In the bay, you might spot dolphins, sea turtles, or rays gliding through the clear water.



This region is rich in life, and paddling at water level offers a unique perspective on the ecosystems that thrive here. It's not just about movement--it's about noticing, listening, and being one with nature.

Day 8 Quepos, Costa Rica (Tender port: Quepos)

The lively coastal town of Quepos, nestled on Costa Rica's central Pacific coast, welcomes us today with three 'Your Choice' experiences on offer. Just minutes from the renowned Manuel Antonio National Park, Quepos is a gateway to unique wildlife encounters. Nearby mangrove forests play a vital role in Costa Rica's fragile ecosystem, offering shelter to countless species and helping protect the coastline. Add to this the efforts of local farmers who are putting sustainable practices to good use, and you'll discover a region rich in nature, culture, and character.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: The Mighty Mangrove

Gliding through the mangrove forests near Quepos, feels like entering a hidden world shaped by tides and time, as the mangroves grow where rivers meet the ocean, creating a rich, ever-changing environment that supports everything from crabs and caimans to monkeys and spoonbills. These coastal forests, especially around Damas Island, are home to an extraordinary mix of land and sea life.

The tangled roots of red, black, and white mangrove trees do more than look surreal--they hold the coastline together, protect against storms, and provide shelter for young marine life. Costa Rica's Pacific coast is lined with mangroves, covering over 40,000 hectares. These forests are not only beautiful but essential: they clean the water, store carbon, and support local fisheries.

As you explore the winding estuary channels, your guide will explain how this part of the forest plays an essential role. Birds perch in the canopy, fish dart below the surface of the water, and the roots form a maze of life. Our boat journey provides us with a living classroom. Quiet, wild, and full of surprises.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Manuel Antonio National Park - Guided Rainforest Trail

Established in 1972, Manuel Antonio National Park is one of Costa Rica's most ecologically diverse protected areas, and the place to visit when in Quepos. On a guided walk, we explore national park trails through tropical forest, where the focus loops between elusive wildlife to the rich plant life. Towering trees like espavel and guacimo form the canopy, while ferns, vines, and flowering plants crowd the understory. Guides point out medicinal plants, epiphytes like bromeliads and orchids, and explain how different species interact within the ecosystem. Because many animals hide high in the trees or blend into their surroundings, guides often carry scopes to spot sloths, monkeys, or birds tucked away in the foliage. This walk offers a chance to slow down and appreciate the complexity of the forest from the ground up, with the opportunity to glimpse some of Costa Rica's unique wildlife.



Option 3 - Half-day experience: A Costa Rican chocolate story

Step into the lush countryside near Quepos for a sensory journey through Costa Rica's most iconic crops; chocolate, vanilla, and coffee. Set on a private ranch, this immersive tour invites you to explore how these beloved ingredients are grown, harvested, and transformed, with a guided walk through the gardens, where cacao pods ripen on trees, vanilla vines climb and coffee plants thrive in the tropical climate. Our guide explains how each crop is cultivated sustainably while we discover the traditional methods used to process them into the rich flavours enjoyed around the world. After exploring the gardens and learning about the plants, sit down to a fresh farm-to-table lunch made with local produce. It's a delicious way to connect with the land and the people who care for it.

Day 9 Disembark Puntarenas - San José

Disembark and head to Hacienda Doka, nestled in Costa Rica's fertile Central Valley, for an immersive coffee experience that blends tradition, taste, and storytelling. Costa Rica's coffee is world-renowned, not just for its smooth, balanced flavour, but for the deep cultural roots it holds in the country's identity and economy. At the plantation, we follow its journey through the growth cycle, harvest, and roasting process. Along the way, we explore different coffee plant varieties and learn how Costa Rica's unique climate and volcanic soil contribute to its high-quality beans. A coffee and chocolate tasting adds a delicious end to our tour, before we tuck into a traditional buffet lunch, offering a taste of local flavours.

We continue to San Jose for our overnight stay.

Accommodation: San Jose Hotel (or similar)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 10 Depart San José

After breakfast, farewell your fellow travellers and board your share service transfer to San Jose airport for your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: SYLVIA EARLE

YOUR SHIP: **Sylvia Earle**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Sylvia Earle made her inaugural cruise in 2022; she honours the highly accomplished marine biologist, oceanographer and explorer, Sylvia Earle. As the first female chief scientist of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and named by Time Magazine as its first Hero for the Planet in 1998 - this vessel pays tribute to Sylvia's long standing conservation efforts for marine protected areas and ocean wildlife. Sylvia Earle will be actively involved in the development of her namesake. The streamlined Ulstein X-BOW® cuts through the swell so you feel fewer vibrations and disturbances, and makes quicker transits through waves. It also helps reduce fuel consumption by up to 60%^. Experience the Glass Atrium Lounge inside the bow, featuring huge windows and superb views to the front of the ship. In between landings, enjoy the heated saltwater open air swimming pool and jacuzzis on board the Sylvia Earle and watch the world go by, or experience our gym, sauna or enjoy a massage (additional cost) in the Wellness centre. Sylvia Earle carries many Zodiacs, which you can board via four dedicated, sea-level launching platforms. These platforms make boarding the Zodiacs as quick, efficient and safe as possible, minimising wait times and getting you closer to the action for longer. Dining One of the most important parts of any expedition is the food! Whatever adventures the day holds, you will be fuelled-up with hearty meals and delicious morning/afternoon teas cooked by our onboard chefs. Meals are a great time to soak up the expedition camaraderie in our open seating dining area. Share stories with your fellow travellers and ask our expedition team questions that may have come up during the day. Tea, coffee and snacks are available 24 hours a day, and our chefs offer different menu options and courses for each meal. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild. We also invite you to join your captain and expedition team for informal Captain's Welcome and Farewell drinks, with complimentary beverages and cocktail appetisers, followed by a 3 course meal. Responsible Travel We believe that preserving and protecting the environment is of the utmost importance and this is reflected in several features of the Sylvia Earle. The Sylvia Earle will boast one of the lowest polluting marine engines in the world due to low energy consumption, high fuel-efficiency and a streamlined design to deliver an 80% reduction in emissions. The ship can also utilise virtual anchoring to hold its position using a combination of GPS, steering technology, propellers and thrusters. This protects the sea floor and minimises the damage caused by conventional anchors. Compared to Tier





1 engines.

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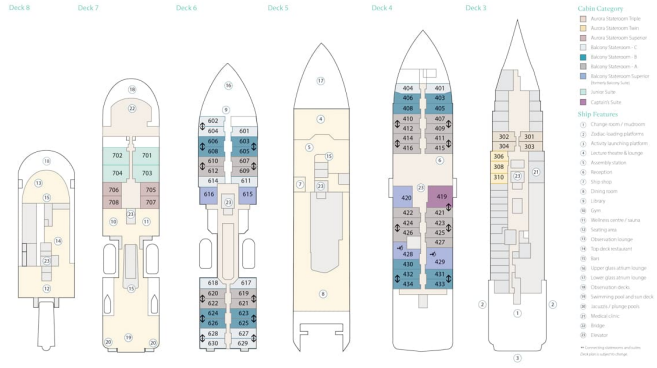
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP

The *Sylvia Earle* Deck Plan



Aurora Stateroom Superior



Aurora Stateroom Triple Share



Balcony Stateroom Category A



Balcony Stateroom Category B



Balcony Stateroom Category C



Balcony Stateroom Superior



Captain's Suite



Junior Suite





PRICING

01-Oct-2027 to 10-Oct-2027

Aurora Stateroom Triple Share	£8698 GBP pp
Junior Suite	£14298 GBP pp
Balcony Stateroom Category B	£10298 GBP pp
Aurora Stateroom Superior	£9498 GBP pp
Captain's Suite	£16348 GBP pp
Balcony Stateroom Superior	£12048 GBP pp
Balcony Stateroom Category A	£11048 GBP pp
Balcony Stateroom Category C	£9748 GBP pp