



PANAMA & COSTA RICA BY SEA: THE NATURAL WONDERS OF CENTRAL AMERICA — WITH SMITHSONIAN JOURNEYS

In alliance with Smithsonian Journeys. This cruise is part of a collection of PONANT voyages that are specially-tailored for English-speaking travelers who want to engage with the world. In addition to the usual elements of the PONANT experience, the listed price for these voyages includes transfers to and from the ship, talks and discussions aboard ship by world class experts, and a shore excursion or activity in each port of call that encourages guests to embrace the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the local environment and culture. Discover Panama and Costa Rica with PONANT on this splendid 8-day cruise aboard Le Champlain, which explores the region's abundant natural splendours, local indigenous communities, and the modern marvel of the Panama Canal. Your journey in Central America will start along the white sands and translucent waters of Holandes Cayes, one of the coral islets of Panama's San Blas Islands. Spend a day in this tropical paradise and enjoy the opportunity to swim and snorkel. Members of the Guna community call these islands home, and you may encounter them along the beach. After a daytime sailing from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean through the world-famous Panama Canal, Le Champlain calls in Fuerte Amador for an exploration of Panama City's Old Quarter and of the region's fantastic biodiversity at the superb Frank Gehry-designed Biomuseo. Here, you will also visit the Punta Culebra Nature Center at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), a fascinating, open-air museum dedicated to marine science and conservation. On a specially arranged tour guided by Smithsonian staff, hear about the latest studies, observe marine species up close, and explore the unique flora and fauna of the



tropical dry forest. Your ship calls next in the remote and magnificent Darien National Park. This little corner of paradise is a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to a remarkably diverse range of plants and wildlife. Rocky coastlines, mangroves, swamps, and tropical rainforests abound and offer a feast for photographers. Here, meet members of the local Embera community. Your final call will be in Quepos, Costa Rica, gateway to the spectacular Manuel Antonio National Park, where you will encounter myriad tropical flora and fantastic fauna, including sloths, the noisy howler monkey, the white-faced capuchin, and the tiny squirrel monkey. The combination of forest and ocean also provides a special opportunity to observe both terrestrial and sea birds--toucans, pelicans, hummingbirds, terns



, and more.

ITINERARY

Day 1 COLÓN

Colon is the second largest city in Panama, at the Caribbean entrance of the Panama Canal. Colon is today an important port, and the free trade zone created in 1953 contributed greatly to the development of the city. Colon was founded in 1850 by Americans working on the Panama railroad connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts through the isthmus of Panama; the city rapidly overshadowed the older Caribbean ports of Panama when the canal opened.

Day 2 SAN BLAS ISLANDS

Located on the north-east coast of Panama, the San Blas archipelago is a string of coral islands in the heart of the Caribbean Sea. More than 300 islands and cays cover an area of 300 square kilometres offering travellers a multitude of treasures. Sheltered behind a long coral reef, the San Blas Islands are full of enchanting anchorages. The long sandy white beaches bound by crystal-clear waters will allow you to relax and enjoy incredible marine fauna before engaging with the Kunas Indian community. Still subsisting on hunting and fishing, they will welcome you in their villages of bamboo houses gathered near the beaches.

Day 3 CROSSING THE PANAMA CANAL

Aboard your ship, experience something unique, that has inspired the imagination of numerous adventurers in the 20th century: sailing the Panama Canal. Its construction started in 1880 under the direction of Ferdinand de Lesseps. Abandoned then resumed, this marvel of engineering was completed by the United States and opened in 1914. The canal crosses the Isthmus of Panama and links the Atlantic to the Pacific.



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Including three levels of locks and by raising ships to the level of Lake Gatun, almost as if the water was a lift, it allows them to avoid having to round Cape Horn.

Day 4 FUERTE AMADOR, FLAMENCO ISLAND

An artificial peninsula situated at the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal, Fuerte Amador is the gateway to several noteworthy sites. Right near there, the impressive Miraflores Locks are a shining example of the engineering feats deployed during the construction of the Panama Canal. Further north, in villages nestling amid dense vegetation, lives the Embera tribe, guardian of the forest and of the Chagres River. This proud people have successfully preserved their traditions and their ancestral way of life, which predate the colonisation of the region by the Spanish.

Day 5 PLAYA MUERTO, DARIEN NATIONAL PARK

The most remote and least developed region of Panama, the province of Darien is an unspoilt land with an extremely rich variety of flora and fauna. Listed by UNESCO as World Heritage, Darien National Park offers its extraordinary scenery of rocky coastlines, mountain ranges, mangroves, rivers and creeks. Discover Playa Muerto, a tiny coastal village home to the Emberas Amerindian community. You will visit the village, attend traditional songs and dances of the locals, and admire beautiful local craft.

Day 6 AT SEA

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also

be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 7 QUEPOS

Quepos makes for a charming stop-off on the Pacific coast, just next-door to the famous Manuel Antonio National Park, an untouched tropical natural reserve lined with white sandy beaches. The town's seafront is an opportunity to stroll through market stalls touting pineapples and bananas in the shade of the manchineel trees. In this coastal town criss-crossed with tree-lined streets in bloom, admire the houses and their incredible sculpted balconies. Enjoy a spot of shopping in the many traditional boutiques: pick up some handmade cotton clothing, ceramics embellished with Costa Rican designs and home decor pieces in hand-painted wood.

Day 8 PUNTARENAS

The capital of the eponymous province, Puntarenas is sometimes called "the pearl of the Pacific", for its unique charm. It sits on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, along the Gulf of Nicoya, lined with long expanses of wild natural environments. Further inland, among the countless natural wonders to be found in the generous rainforest of the Costa Rica's national parks, Poas and Arena volcanoes towers up in all their majestic glory. In this luxuriant natural setting, Costa Rica protects one of the planet's richest biodiversity: monkeys, sloths, tropical birds, iguanas, crocodiles, waterfalls, canyons,



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and more than ten thousand species of tropical plants.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: LE BELLOT

YOUR SHIP: Le Bellot

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

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Featuring innovative and environmentally-friendly equipment, elegantly designed staterooms, spacious suites with large windows, and lounge areas that open onto the outside, this new limited-capacity yacht boasting just 92 staterooms and suites will offer you a truly unique cruising experience. As the first ship in a new series, Le Bellot will embody the unique atmosphere of a subtle blend of exploration, refinement, intimacy and comfort. Aboard this ship that flies the French flag, you will experience the incomparable pleasure of an intimate cruise, with the possibility of exploring an ever-increasing range of destinations in an ethnic-chic ambiance with luxury service. Experience a luxurious setting where the accent is on authenticity and passion for travel. **RESTAURANTS** As it is an essential part of French culture, gastronomy will naturally have pride of place aboard this new ship. To the back of Deck 4, you will find a 260 m² panoramic restaurant which can accommodate all of our passengers in a single sitting. Designed differently to that on our other ships, this dining area, which opens onto the outside, will have a buffet of salads, desserts and cheeses at your disposal. Our discreet and attentive crew will provide table service for hot meals. In a relaxed atmosphere, an outdoor grill on Deck 3 will

serve grilled meats with a variety of salads and desserts. **PUBLIC AREAS** Le Bellot has many common areas that are designed and equipped to meet all of your needs while preserving the intimacy of each passenger. A 140 m² reception area includes: A reception/concierge desk, An excursions desk, The ship's administrative services, The sales office, manned by our Guest Relations Officer, Our 50 m² boutique which sells clothing, jewellery, beauty products, postcards and various accessories, Toilets accessible to passengers with reduced mobility. A new hydraulic platform with adjustable height provides: Easier boarding than on any other cruise ship, Easier Zodiac embarkation and disembarkation for expeditions, Easier access to the sea for swimming and practising various water sports such as kayaking or paddle-boarding. A pool deck offering: A pool with a panoramic view, equipped with a counter-current swimming system, A pleasant solarium, An outdoor bar and lounge with armchairs and sofas. A 200 m² main lounge which can accommodate all of our passengers to share convivial moments and to host activities organised during the day or evening. Lastly, a theatre that seats 188, equipped with: The latest sound and lighting technology, A LED wall as the stage backdrop, for the projection of high-resolution images and videos. Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant

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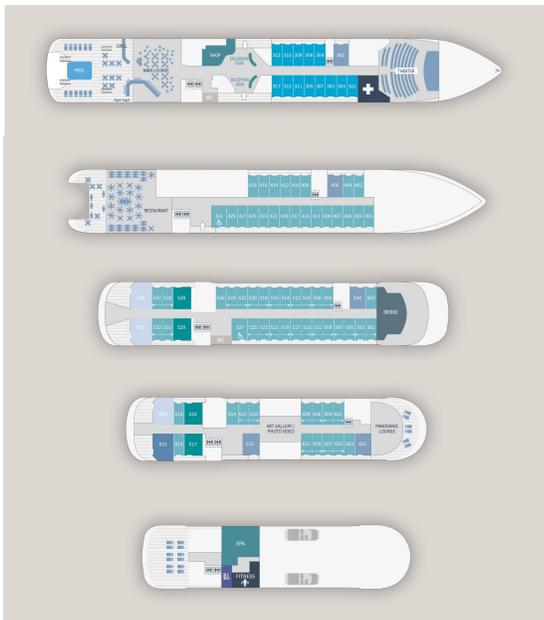
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