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PUNTARENAS TO VALPARAISO - 21 DAY COSTA RICA, PERU & CHILE LUXURY EXPEDITION

Costa Rica is rich in natural wealth, having more than 500,000 species of animals, including slow-moving sloths, noisy howler monkeys and brilliant scarlet macaws. This is a region blessed by Mother Nature. Leaving from Puntarenas, Costa Rica, sail south along the coast to Chile, stopping off in Ecuador and Peru to explore their rich ancient cultures, before arriving in Valparaiso. Join our team of experts who will educate and inspire you.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Pre Cruise

Day 2 Puntarenas

Puntarenas sits on a spit of land parallel to the coast of PitaHaya. The mud and soil brought down to the ocean by the Barranca River and the action of some of the smaller rivers to the north of Puntarenas have led to a tongue of sand known by 1722 as Puerto de Arenas (Harbor of Sands). Were it not for a very narrow stretch of land known as “La Angostura” the city would be an island. The city of almost 100,000 inhabitants is the capital to the province of the same name, which hugs most of Costa Rica’s Pacific coast. Connected by road to San Jose, the country’s capital, Puntarenas is used by Costa Rican’s to cross by ferry over to the Nicoya Peninsula which is part of the Puntarenas Province and by cruise ships as a gateway to visit the various national parks in the interior. Puntarenas still is Costa Rica’s most important fishing port, while cargo is handled some 15 kilometers southwest on the mainland at Puerto Caldera, a port created in the 1980s. To cater to visitors, the beach area has been remodeled and the Paseo de los Turistas runs parallel to the beach with many seafood restaurant, cafes and bars.

Day 3 Playa Panama

Costa Rica has an international reputation for its success in conserving and presenting its natural treasures. This success has been achieved by both National Parks and private individuals. Excellent examples of these can be accessed from the small tourist settlement of Playa Panama. Playa Panama is



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a low-key beach resort. Palo Verde National Park protects both a significant wetlands and rare dry tropical forests. The Park varies dramatically with the seasons but is always captivating. During the May to November wet season the floodplain of the Tempisque River expands to create extensive marshes. As the December to April dry season progresses, water shrinks to isolated pools, concentrating wildlife. At any time of the year, birds to see include the Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Black-crowned Night Heron, Anhinga, and the Snail Kite with the extra-long hook on its beak for the extraction of molluscs from their shells (escargot anyone?). Jabiru Storks and Great Curassows are spectacular rarities to seek. Other fauna includes American Crocodiles, fresh-water turtles, Iguanas and White-nosed Coatis. In Costa Rica, some private estates have developed conservation principles for their businesses. They combine farming, and value adding to the farm produce, with providing wildlife refuges. This satisfies the owners' interests in flora and fauna and provides additional revenue from tourists attracted to the nature. And who could argue against combining wildlife with a little local rum production?

Day 4 Herradura

Flora and fauna draw many people to Costa Rica and Herradura provides access to two natural gems. Herradura is a coastal town evolving into a tourist destination. Nearby are Carara National Park with an incredible biodiversity of plants and wildlife, and Pura Vida Gardens with its spectacular floral attractions. What makes Carara National Park special is that it protects a transition zone between high rainfall tropical rainforest and tropical dry forest. Combined with altitudinal variation and river wetlands, this creates a wide variety of habitats for different plants and animals. For example, 400

species of birds have been seen in the Park—a huge number. Not all are seen each visit but perhaps you may spot outstanding birds like motmots and trogons in the trees, or the Giant Tinamou walking on the ground. Everyone wants to see a Scarlet Macaw. White-faced Capuchin monkeys and Mantled Howler Monkeys can be active in the trees. Carara comes from the Indian word for crocodile and large specimens of the American Crocodile can be seen here (safely). At the other end of the size scale are colourful poison dart frogs. Pura Vida translates to 'pure life' but in Costa Rica it has become a common expression for enjoying life. Pura Vida Gardens reflects that joy of living. High on the mountains near Herradura, the Gardens present an abundance of botanical splendours. Trails lead visitors past waterfalls and amongst 400 varieties of flowers and lush tropical plants from Costa Rica and beyond. Pura Vida!

Day 5 Golfo Dulce

Wild, scenic and incredibly bio-diverse, Golfo Dulce is not on most tourists itineraries. The name, says it all, Golfo Dulce or sweet gulf, in English. After a well justified visit to the Golfo Dulce, located in the South Pacific region of Costa Rica, and adjacent to the Osa Peninsula, visitors will be delighted and perplexed, wondering why they would ever leave this wonderland. Several coastal hamlets reside along this enchanting gulf, namely Puerto Jiménez, Golfito, Zancudo and Pavones, as well as the Piedras Blancas National Park. This is one stop on the itinerary that won't soon be forgotten. Easily one of the wettest and most humid sections in the country, Golfo Dulce and the southwest can receive more than 200 inches (500 cm) of rainfall per year. This assures the surrounding area will be thriving with wild and plant life, perfect for aspiring



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adventurers. Surrounded by Corcovado National Park to the southwest, and Costa Rica's mainland to the northeast, Golfo Dulce serves up a large platter of entertainment for all who visit. Sprouting along the edges of the Golfo Dulce are mangroves and estuaries full of wildlife. Explore these ecosystems crowded with crocodiles, river otters, waterfowl, monkeys and much more. Fed by the Coto Colorado River, the Coto River Swamps are an excellent choice for discovering these uncanny wetlands and the secrets that lay within.

Days 6 - 7 Isla Del Coco

Found in the Pacific Ocean, approximately 550 kilometres southwest of Costa Rica, lies a little uninhabited island called Isla del Coco - Cocos Island. Uninhabited by humans that is - because the wildlife that lives above and below the water are extraordinary to say the least. The island was designated a National Park in 1978, and a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997 as it is the only island in the eastern Pacific with a tropical rainforest. It was also shortlisted as one of the seven wonders of the natural world (although sadly lost out on making the final podium). The island has garnered many fans over the years, including Jacques Cousteau who said it was his favourite place. With such a heady reputation, it is unsurprising then that the island's flora and fauna is second to none. The island's ornithological population is vast and diverse. Seabirds such as Brown boobies, Red-footed Boobies and Great Frigatebirds favour the island, while three endemic species (Cocos Cuckoo, Cocos flycatcher and the Cocos finch) all call it home. Underwater life is just as rich: divers consider Cocos as nirvana for its white-tip reef, whale and hammerheads sharks, rays, tuna and dolphins, as well as 300 kinds of fish. Although not quite as famous as Darwin's neighbouring Galapagos Islands, Isla del

Cocos can call many of its species both evolutionary and endemic. However, unlike the Galapagos, Isla del Coco has predators in the shape of rats, goats and pigs, introduced here by hunters and pirates years ago.

Day 8 Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 9 Puerto Lopez

Fishing is the dominant enterprise in Puerto Lopez, which also provides access to nearby highlights. Dry tropical forests and scrub, with Opuntia cactus, Algaroba trees, Kapok trees, and Palo Santo trees, grow in this region of Ecuador. Machalilla National Park protects one of the last stands of dry forest and scrub remaining after centuries of farming activity. The fauna also benefits from protection. People have lived in the area for a long time. Villages of the pre-Columbian Manteño civilization flourished from 850 to 1600 CE (AD). They traded vegetables and valuable Spondyles (Thorny Oyster) shells to the Incas. Their ruins include a solar calendar used to time ceremonies on the summer and winter solstice. The descendants still live here today. Agriculture of the region includes bananas, sugarcane and the ivory nut palm that produces the hard creamy tagua nut, known as vegetable ivory. Another key tree is the Torquilla Palm. Fibre from the stems of the fronds is used to make the famed Panama hats. Panama hats, also called Torquilla hats were not invented in Panama. They originated here. Appreciating the lightness, style and quality of the hats, Panama imported



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them. They were popular during the building of the canal. The hat became so identifiable with Panama that the name Panama Hat developed and stuck. The weaving of the hats in Ecuador is so skilled and culturally focused it has been inscribed by UNESCO on the List of Intangible Heritage of Mankind. We can take our hats off to them.

Day 10 Day at sea

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Day 11 Salaverry

Ancient cultures and magical ruins wait to be discovered along Peru's compelling western coastline. With the Andes rising nearby, and the deep blue Pacific's waves lapping against its sun-parched shores, this is a unique and inspiring place, where wonders from yesteryear exhibit amazing geometric patterns and stylised artwork. Salaverry welcomes you ashore close to Trujillo, Peru's second-largest city, set in a land scattered with impressive ruins and archaeological treasures left by ancient civilisations. Sugarcane, pineapple and asparagus grow in the fertile Moche Valley, and this area is sprinkled with immense, impressive ruins from the Moche and Chimu cultures. The sprawling Chan Chan Ruins are all that's left of a mighty, pre-Columbian city, moulded from sand and mud. The city rose between 900 and 1470, and was the capital of the Chimor empire. One of the largest adobe cities in the world - and the biggest of the Americas - it would eventually fall to decline after the Incas conquered it. The temple of Huaca del Dragón is also

close by, rising as a small pyramid, embossed with relief patterns of fire-breathing dragons and animals. South of the Moche River the remains of the Huaca del Sol y la Luna temples loom, built to honour the sun, moon and heavens by the Moche civilization. Trujillo itself is splashed with colonial colour and soaring palm trees, and there are plenty of cathedrals and museums to explore. You'll want to taste traditional Huanchaco ceviche while you're here, soft prawns or sea bass combined with spicy red chillies and a tangy squeeze of lime.

Day 12 Lima (Callao)

Splashing colour and culture into the arid Peruvian landscape, Lima is a city bedecked with grand colonial splendour. Founded in 1535, this sprawling capital enjoys a breezy oceanfront location and forms one of the world's largest desert cities. A place of sharp contrasts, almost 10 million people are packed into the city, occupying vastly different living conditions. Visit for an unfiltered experience of this richly layered place of ancient history, colonial relics and dazzling flavours. Rising from the misty blanket of the garua - a persistent fog that cloaks Lima during winter - you'll find one of South America's most culturally vibrant cities. The former capital of the Spanish colonists - head to Plaza de Armas to immerse yourself in the heart of the old city. The Basilica Cathedral of Lima watches over Plaza Mayor - listen out for the stomps of boots outside, as the pomp and ceremony of the Changing of the Guards draws crowds to the Government Palace. The history of this area runs much deeper, however, and pre-Colombian cities and temples emerge from the dusty earth nearby. Grand museums showcase unearthed treasures from the extraordinary civilisations who built vast mud adobe cities across Peru's coastline, and incredible settlements in the country's valleys and mountains. The Barranco district is



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Lima's artsy area, and you can walk from modern art galleries to see the local muse, the Bridge of Sighs. This wooden bridge is an artist's favourite, and one of the city's most romantic spots. Afterwards, sample some of Lima's cuisine, and the zingy flavours of spicy, lime-marinated fish ceviche. So revered in these parts, ceviche even has its own national day on June 28th. Sipping a Pisco Sour is the perfect way to round off your visit to this engrossing, multi-layered city.

Day 13 Paracas

The port city of Paracas is blessed with magnificent natural beauty and rich historical importance, offerings inviting beaches, ideal weather and pleasant scenery – a combination that draws visitors throughout the year. The shores of the Paracas Peninsula and waters of the bay teem with wildlife and have been declared a national reserve. Condors frequently can be seen gliding on the sea winds or perched on the cliffs; pink flamingos often rest here on their migratory flights. The complex interaction between wind and ocean, sun and land has transformed this region into a kind of moonscape under an equatorial sun. Another reason for travellers to come to this area is its proximity to the famous and mysterious Nazca Lines. Visible from the air, these strange markings stretch for miles on a large barren plain and have bewildered archaeologists, historians and mathematicians since their discovery over a century ago. The earliest Andean people found shelter here. The Paracas culture was known for fine weavings in geometrical designs and vibrant colours, which have been preserved for thousands of years by the dry climate. Some of the finest examples are in museums in Lima. The town of Ica is Peru's finest wine centre, as well as home to the fiery brandy-derived beverage known as Pisco. The surrounding area features oases with springs considered to have medicinal cures.

Pier Information The ship is scheduled to dock at Port of Paracas, about a 45-minute drive from Ica. There are no passenger facilities at the pier. Shopping opportunities are limited; some souvenirs can be found at the museum in Ica. A bottle of Peruvian Pisco (grape brandy) makes a nice memento. The local currency is the nuevo sol. Cuisine Seafood is highly recommended, however, we recommend you dine only in the hotel restaurants in Peru's southern region. Be sure to sample the national drink pisco sour and the area's excellent wines. Always drink bottled water and avoid ice cubes.

Other Sites The Bay of Paracas is sheltered by the Paracas peninsula, noted as one of the best marine reserves in the world. This is also a popular resort area thanks to its beautiful bay, beaches and dependable warm weather. Facilities include swimming pools, tennis courts, miniature golf and a good restaurant. For those who are looking for a little adventure dune buggies are available. Local boat trips can be booked to the Ballestas Islands but be aware that commentary is given in Spanish. Private arrangements for independent sightseeing are limited in this port as cars have to come from Lima. Please submit your request to the Tour Office early in the cruise.

Day 14 Day at sea

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Day 15 Arica

Arica is Chile's northernmost city and the capital of the Region of Arica and Parinacota. Its 240,000 inhabitants make up



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almost 98% of the region's population. With an average temperature of 18 degrees Celsius Arica is known as the "city of eternal spring". Although it is within the Atacama Desert, one of the driest places in the world, and several years can pass before it rains in the city, a fertile river valley dissects it. Fruit and vegetables are produced there and Arica is famous for its olives. Arica's port had been important for the Spanish Empire since 1545 when silver was brought down to the coast from Potosi (Bolivia) -this attracted English and Dutch pirates which looted Arica on several occasions. Today the port serves as a free port for goods from landlocked Bolivia. Arica belonged to Peru until 1880, when Chilean troops took the "El Morro" hill above the port during the War of the Pacific. It is possible to walk up to the giant flagpole and small military museum on the hill, from where there are excellent views across the city, port and valley. Attractions in or near Arica include the Museum of Azapa dedicated to the Chinchorro culture with the oldest mummies in the world going back 7,000 years, several beaches and three buildings said to have been designed by Eiffel.

Day 16 Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 17 Antofagasta

If archaeological zones, landscaped plazas and well, giant hands, are your travel cup of tea then look no further than Antofagasta. Set between the Pacific Ocean and the mountains, the city is Chile's second most populated place, and by far the

largest in the northern region. Once the country's primary export port, notably for minerals including nitrate and later, silver, today Antofagasta is still the country's centre for mineral mining. Antofagasta was once part of Bolivia, and only became Chilean in 1904 after it was captured in the War of the Pacific. Under the subsequent treaty, Chile agreed to construct a rail link to Bolivia in return for the city. Today the city still enjoys relative stress free travel to La Paz, through some of the most scenic and spectacular landscapes in the world. The railway link, which extended south as well as north, naturally brought colossal growth, expansion which is still continuing today. In recent years, Antofagasta has seen high rise hotels and buildings sprout up amid the jumble of old-fashioned plazas, former Railway Stations, and wooden-fronted Victorian and Georgian buildings that can be found along the Barrio Histórico. The city borders the arid Atacama Desert, aka the world's driest place. As if the lunar like landscape was not enough, the aforementioned "Hand of the Desert", an 11-metre tall sculpture of a hand reaching up to the stars is located about 60 km from Antofagasta, and is surely a must for anyone who is interested in alien experiences.

Day 18 Isla Pan de Azúcar

Isla Pan de Azucar is the largest of several rock formations of highly metamorphosed sandstone and mudstone in front of a small ranger station at Caleta Pan de Azucar within the Pan de Azucar National Park. The national park of 43754 hectares straddles two of Chile's regions, but just 1.1 square kilometers are formed by Isla Pan de Azucar, the neighboring Las Chatas islets and Las Mariposas (Butterfly) rocks. To protect the South American sea lions and elusive marine otters seen on the island and islets, the park does not permit landings. Ships are not



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allowed to anchor either and even Zodiacs cruising along the shores need to be accompanied by local boats. During a Zodiac cruise several bird species including Humboldt Penguins, Inca Terns, Kelp Gulls, Peruvian Boobies, as well as Peruvian Pelicans, Peruvian Diving-Petrels, Red-legged Cormorants, and Turkey Vultures might be seen closer.

Day 19 Coquimbo

The name Coquimbo is derived from a native Diaguita word meaning 'place of calm waters'. In fact, Charles Darwin had noted that the town was 'remarkable for nothing but its extreme quietness'. Since then, Coquimbo has developed into a bustling port and the region's major commercial and industrial centre from which minerals, fish products and fruits are exported. Used during the colonial period as a port for La Serena, Coquimbo attracted attention from English pirates, including Sir Francis Drake, who visited in 1578. Visitors enjoy strolling around the town, admiring some of the elaborate woodwork handcrafted on buildings by early British and American settlers. These wooden buildings are among Chile's most interesting historical structures. Out of town, the area offers some fine beaches in a desert-like setting. Coquimbo serves as a gateway to the popular resort town of La Serena and trips farther into the Elqui Valley, known as the production centre for Chile's national drink, pisco sour. The valley is also home to several international observatories that take advantage of the region's exceptional atmospheric conditions.

Day 20 Valparaiso

Since time immemorial Valparaiso has inspired writers, poets, musicians and artists alike. If the city is still a little rough around the edges, this only adds to its bohemian ambience; the architecture, style, street art, nightlife, and live music scenes of

Valparaiso are some of the best in the world. Add colourful cliff-top homes to the mix and you'll soon see why Valparaiso is many people's favourite Chilean city. The city was founded in 1536 by Spanish conquistador Juan de Saavedra, who named the city after his birthplace. Many of the colonial buildings he implemented are still standing today, despite the rain, wind, fire and several earthquakes (one of which almost levelled the city in 1906). Quirky architecture also abounds; poetry lovers and amateur architects will no doubt want to make the 45 km trip south to Chilean poet laureate (and Nobel Prize winner) Pablo Neruda's ship-shaped house and museum for a taste of the extraordinary. The city and region are also extremely well known for their love of good food and wine. The vineyards of the nearby Casablanca Valley - first planted in the early 1980s - have earned worldwide recognition in a relatively short space of time. However, Chile's viticulture history does date back much farther than that. De Saavedra brought grape vines on his voyage to South America in order to make his own wine and this led to a new grape brandy being created, Pisco. Today give any Chilean a Pisco and wherever they are in the world, they will be home.

Day 21 Post Cruise

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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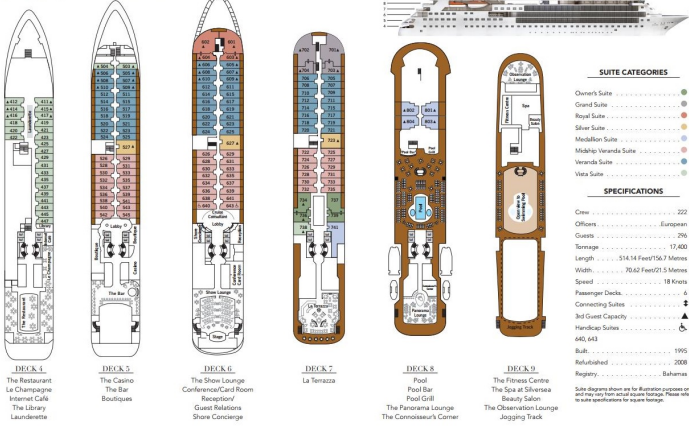


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