

THE PANAMA CANAL, PEARL ISLANDS AND DARIEN JUNGLE SMALL SHIP CRUISE

Embark on our only Central American expedition that travels solely through Panama, connecting you more deeply with the region's wildlife, culture and famed modern engineering marvel. Aboard the National Geographic Quest, transit the historic Panama Canal by day and by night. Learn about the country's indigenous and colonial history while visiting local communities and two UNESCO World Heritage sites. Encounter monkeys, iguanas, tropical birds and more as you venture into lush rainforests, a wildlife refuge and an important national park. In the surrounding turquoise waters, snorkel pristine coral reefs which shelter an array of colorful marine life.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Panama City, Panama / Colón / Embark Ship

Arrive in Panama City, the capital of Panama this afternoon and transfer to Port Balboa to embark the _National Geographic Quest_ this evening. You may opt for a culturally-immersive pre-voyage extension in Panama City and San Lorenzo, a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site. Later on, you'll enter the Panama Canal at the Gatun Locks.

Arrival Time: Arrive by 12:00 p.m.
Arrival City: Panama City, Panama

Day 2 Portobelo / Panama Canal Transit



This morning, arrive along the coast of the Darien Province. Punta Patiño Nature Reserve is Panama's largest private nature reserve and boasts a rich tapestry of habitats that foster biodiversity. Today you will reach the local beaches by Zodiac. Overhead, search for a variety of birds including mangrove hawks, laughing falcons and roseate spoonbills, or, by land, look for crab-eating raccoons and crocodiles. Additional opportunities may be available to walk the beach, kayak in the shallow bay or continue to explore by Zodiac.

Day 3 Gatún Lake / Panama Canal Transit

Today, choose hikes and Zodiac cruises at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute facility on Barro Colorado Island, or take a boat ride to Gamboa, where the Chagres River meets the Panama Canal, and hike on the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center trails. This evening, continue through the complex lock system of the Canal and venture into the Gulf of Panama.

Day 4-5 Pearl Islands

Approximately 200 islands make up the idyllic Pearl Islands. Explore several of the islands in the archipelago, including Isla del Rey and Isla Pacheca, as you learn about the history of the native populations and eventually the Spaniards and African slaves who arrived for the pearl trade. Deep rainforests, lush rivers, white sandy beaches and shallow reefs provide great opportunities for hiking, sea kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, Zodiac river cruises, beach activities and snorkeling.

Day 6 Playa Muerto, Darién National Park

Playa Muerto village is located in Darien National Park, the largest protected area in Central America and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The park contains an exceptional array of habitats, from sandy beaches and mangroves to dense tropical forests teeming with wildlife. It is also home to the indigenous Embera and Wounaan tribes. You'll be greeted by village leaders from the Embera who will share their customs, traditions and stories about their deep respect for their natural surroundings. Later on, enjoy short nature walks, go birding or choose to join a longer hike into the rainforest in search of the elusive harpy eagle, one of the world's most powerful eagles.

Day 7 Punta Patiño Nature Reserve

This morning, explore the historically important town of Portobelo, located on the northern coast of the isthmus of Panama. Portobelo is known for its Spanish colonial military architecture, which is designated collectively as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Visit several of the fortifications as well as the old Customs House and hear the tales of Portobelo's rich pirate history. During your visit, enjoy a Congo dance presentation, deeply rooted in the traditions of the Afro-Panamanian community, holding great historical significance.

Later on, set sail for the Panama Canal. As cargo ships tend to pass through the canal during the day, you'll most likely begin your crossing at night, when the canal is dramatically lit. By special arrangement, National Geographic Quest will anchor in Gatun Lake near the Barro Colorado Nature Monument overnight.

Day 8 Balboa / Disembark Ship / Panama City, Panama

After breakfast, disembark in Colon and transfer to the airport in Panama City for your flight home. Ask your expedition specialist about enjoying a culturally-immersive post-voyage extension in Panama City and San Lorenzo, a UNESCO-designated World



Heritage Site.

Departure Time: Depart anytime after 2:30 p.m.
Departure City: Panama City, Panama

Please note:
Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC QUEST

YOUR SHIP: National Geographic Quest

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

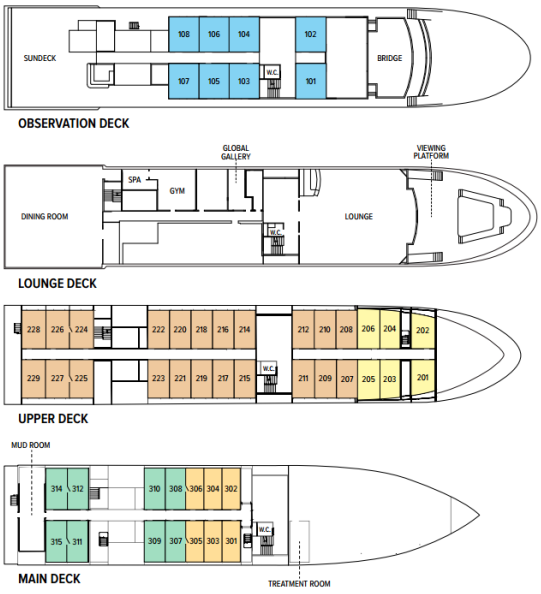
BUILT/REFURBISHED:



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



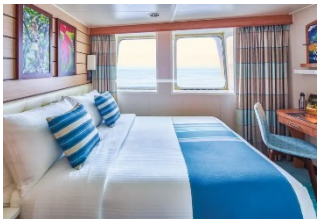
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Category 02



Category 03



Category 04



Category 05





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