

# The Panama Canal, Pearl Islands and Darién Jungle

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.

From  
**\$ 6,150** / per person  
 Does not include flights

 <b>DATES</b> Jan, Mar, Nov and Dec	 <b>DURATION</b> 8 Days
 <b>SHIPS</b> <i>National Geographic Quest</i>	
 <b>STARTS AT</b> Balboa, Panama	→  <b>ENDS AT</b> Colón, Panama

## Highlights

- ★ Transit the legendary Panama Canal—plus enjoy an exclusive stop at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute’s Barro Colorado Island
- ★ Discover the storied Spanish architecture and fascinating pirate history of Portobelo, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- ★ Meet the indigenous Emberá people of Darién in Playa Muerto Village and learn about their customs, traditions and deep reverence for their natural surroundings
- ★ Sea kayak, hike, Zodiac cruise and snorkel in the tranquil Pearl Islands, a network of 200 islands known for turquoise waters, white-sand beaches and an enduring connection to the pearl trade





## Day by day

### ■ DAY 1

#### Panama City, Panama / Balboa / 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

Meals included: dinner

### ◇ DAY 2

#### Punta Patiño Nature Reserve

This morning, arrive along the coast of the Darién 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.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

### ◇ DAY 3

#### Playa Muerto, Darién National Park

Playa Muerto village is located in Darién 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 Emberá and Wounaan tribes. You'll be greeted by village leaders from the Emberá 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, which is one of the world's most powerful eagles.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

### ◇ DAYS 4-5

#### Pearl Islands / Panama Canal Transit

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. 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 Gatún Lake near Barro Colorado Nature Monument overnight.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

### ◇ DAY 6

#### 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.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

## ◇ DAY 7

### Portobelo

This morning, explore the area on kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, Zodiac cruises upriver or go for a snorkel. In the early afternoon, you'll be greeted in town by Congo music and a traditional dance performance. Portobelo is known for its Spanish colonial military architecture, which collectively is designated 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. The ship will remain anchored into the evening, allowing you to enjoy the sunset in the bay of Portobelo as you recap the highlights of your expedition.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

## ■ DAY 8

### Colón / Disembark Ship / Panama City, Panama

After breakfast, disembark in Colón 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

Meals included: breakfast

### Northbound

Balboa, Panama → Colón, Panama

#### 2026 Departure Dates

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

13 Dec				
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#### 2027 Departure Dates

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

29 Jan				
05 Nov				

#### 2028 Departure Dates

Aboard *National Geographic Quest*

29 Jan				
16 Mar				

### Alternative Routes

Visit [Expeditions.com](http://Expeditions.com) for more information.

#### 2026 Departure Dates

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06 Dec

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#### 2028 Departure Dates

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09 Mar

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## ***National Geographic Quest***

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<b>Guests</b> 100	<b>Cabins</b> 50
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***National Geographic Quest*, built in 2017, is designed for sailing into fast-moving channels and shallow coves in pan-American waters.**

When she rolled out of Nichols Brothers shipyard and into the bay on Whidbey Island, the 100 guest *National Geographic Quest* became the third ship in the Lindblad fleet built at this storied Pacific Northwest shipyard. In the 1970s, Nichols Brothers built the twin ships *National Geographic Sea Bird* and *National Geographic Sea Lion*, which continue to sail the waters of the west coast of North America and Central America.

*National Geographic Quest* was purpose-built to explore the fast-moving channels and narrow straits of Alaska, along the coast of Costa Rica, and into the gray whale nursery lagoons of Baja, her design and engineering informed by our nearly 40 years of experience in these regions. Her twin boarding platforms, for example, were suggested by a veteran staffer. Enabling our team to load two Zodiacs at once means guests get off the ship quickly to take advantage of wildlife sightings and maximize exploring time.

Larger than her siblings *National Geographic Sea Bird* and *National Geographic Sea Lion*, *National Geographic Quest* has the same shallow draft, allowing her captain to navigate the same inner reaches and provide the same intimate, "insider" experiences in these charismatic regions. Modern, clean-lined, with large expanses of glass to keep you connected to the extraordinary views, *National Geographic Quest* enables you to see, do, and experience the best of her geographies.



# Cabin Categories

## Category 1

Main Deck: #301-306

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, two nightstands and two portholes, full length mirror, and reading lights.



## Category 2

Main Deck: #307-315

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, two nightstands and two portholes, full length mirror, and reading lights.



## Category 3

Upper Deck: #201-206

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, two nightstands, a large view window, full-length mirror, and reading lights.



## Category 4

Upper Deck: #207-229

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, closet, two nightstands, full-length mirror, reading lights, sliding glass door, and a small, private balcony.



**Note:** Solo occupancy cabins are available in Categories 1 and 2 only. Third person rates are available in Category 5 cabins at one half the double occupancy rate.

**Connecting Cabins via internal doorway access:**

Main Deck: #312-314, #311-315, #306-307;  
Upper Deck: #224-226, #225-227

## Category 5

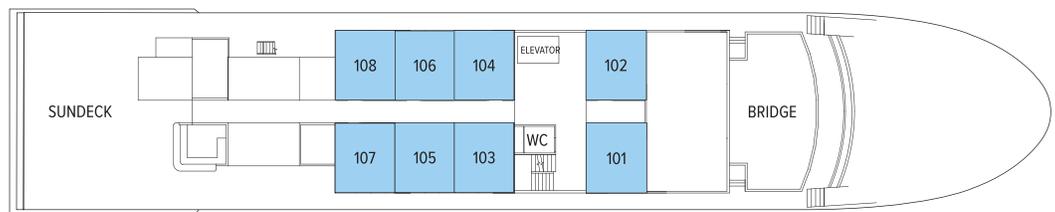
### Observation Deck: #101-108 (SUITE)

Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, large view windows, closet, two nightstands, full-length mirror, reading lights, a suite-sized expanded bathroom, writing desk, ample storage space, and a convertible sofa bed to accommodate a third person.

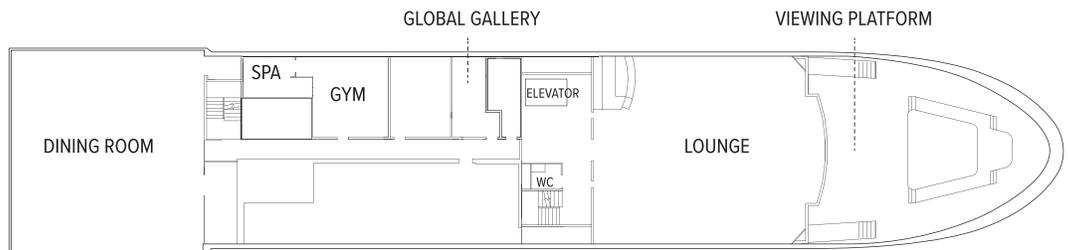


## Observation Deck

Category 5



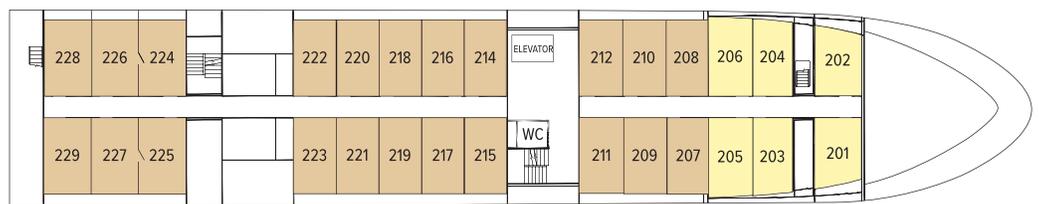
## Lounge Deck



## Upper Deck

Category 3

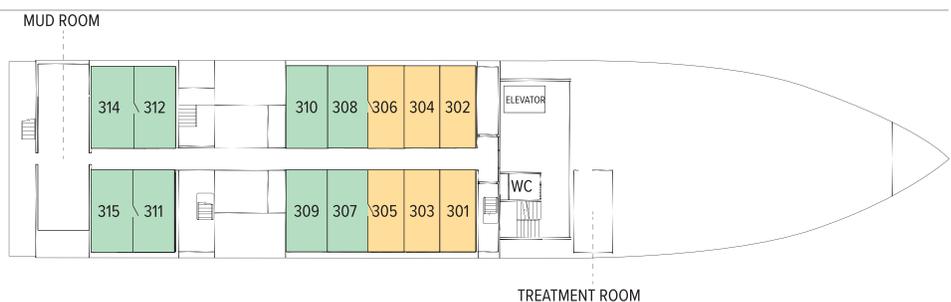
Category 4



## Main Deck

Category 1

Category 2



# Ship amenities

## Public Areas

Reception; main dining area; global gallery; fitness center; lounge with full-service bar and state-of-the-art presentation facilities; observation deck; mudroom with lockers for expedition gear; partially-covered furnished sundeck; plus open access to the Bridge, the Captain, officers and on-duty wildlife spotters.

## Meals

Meals are served in the dining room at a single seating with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Menus feature sustainable choices, local where possible.

## Cabins

50 outside cabins. All cabins face outside with windows, private bathroom, and climate controls. Cabins are equipped with Wi-Fi, phone, multiple electrical and USB outlets, and phones. Luxury linens and pillows. Botanically inspired shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, and lotion are all available in cabin bathrooms, as well as an Expedition Essential Kit. Hair dryers, complimentary insulated water bottles and a National Geographic Atlas are also available in each cabin.

## Expedition Equipment

A fleet of 8 Zodiacs, 24 kayaks, paddleboards; an ROV, hydrophone, splash-cam, underwater video camera, video microscope; snorkeling gear and wet suits for all guests (where applicable).

## Special Features

Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor, undersea specialist and video chronicler. Internet access. Elevator. The design of the outside decks—with the perfect wildlife viewing platform. And the way the proximity of the Lounge to the deck gives you instant access to spontaneous sightings. Have your camera ready!

## Wellness

A fitness center with elliptical, treadmill, weights, resistance bands; LEXspa treatment room, staffed by wellness specialists.



## Self-Disinfecting Ships

ACT Clean Coat™ is a light-activated, self-disinfecting cleaning process that continuously breaks down viruses, bacteria, mold, and airborne allergens across all ship surfaces. Not only does this create a cleaner, healthier shipboard environment for guests and crew alike, but this non-toxic, chemical-free system also saves more than one million gallons of water each year in our cleaning procedures, and reduces our carbon footprint as well as the amount of plastic and waste in our supply chain.

## Special Offers

### SUITE EXCLUSIVES

Spacious living areas and incredible views immerse you in the beauty of your marine surroundings. Our new Suite Exclusives package helps make your voyage all the more memorable. [Learn more](#)

### SAVE 10% WHEN YOU SAIL WITH A GROUP OF SIX OR MORE

Book from March 18 to May 6, 2026: Receive savings of 10% deducted from cabin fare when you book a party of 6 or more on voyages departing on or after April 1, 2026, through 2028. To qualify for the offer, parties must be 6 or more across a minimum of 3 cabins. Applicable savings will be deducted from cabin fare after any additional savings with the purchase of cabin fare. Discount is subject to be removed upon cancellation of party members if group drops below 6. Additional restrictions may apply. Savings offer valid on new bookings only, subject to availability, and offer may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice, not applicable on airfare or extensions, and may not be combined with other promotions. Call to book or for additional details.

### CELEBRATE LIFE'S MILESTONES

Celebrate a milestone with a group of eight or more and enjoy a special amenity package including: 5% savings on voyage fares, custom group photo, US\$150 shipboard credit for the group, and other special gifts. Milestone celebration to be communicated at time of booking.

### PAY BY DEBIT: EARN A \$100 ONBOARD CREDIT

The \$100 onboard credit offer is applied after the

final payment and requires 85% of the cost of the voyage to be placed on a debit card. Maximum of one \$100 onboard credit per cabin. The \$100 onboard credit is a non-refundable, non-transferable credit that can be used for various onboard purchases such as global gallery and spa treatments. It has no cash value, cannot be refunded if not fully utilized, and will be forfeited if not fully redeemed by the end of the voyage. This offer is combinable with other offers. If the booking is altered or canceled, the onboard credit may be forfeited, and it cannot be transferred if the booking is moved to another guest. Lindblad Expeditions reserves the right to modify or cancel the offer without prior notice. Offer applies to Lindblad Expeditions' owned ships only. Offer valid only for Debit Cards issued in the United States for payments made from the United States.

### COMBINING OFFERS

Certain offers may be combinable, up to two savings opportunities, except where noted otherwise. For example, travel with a group of 8 or more on back-to-back expeditions, and take advantage of both savings.

## Included in price

All accommodations aboard ship or in hotels per itinerary; all meals as indicated in the itinerary, both aboard and onshore; beer, wine, cocktails, liquors and spirits aboard the ship (except certain premium brands which are available for purchase); hors d'oeuvres, 24-hour access to snacks, premium coffees and teas, non-alcoholic beverages, and filtered water; excursions and airport transfers to and from recommended flights, as indicated in the itinerary; exploration tools curated to destination, such as Zodiacs, stand-up paddleboards, kayaks, snorkeling equipment (including wetsuits, masks, and fins); guidance and company of our leading expedition staff; assistance by the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic certified photo instructor; access to the OM System Photo Gear Locker; presentations by expedition staff and expert guest speakers; complimentary reusable water bottle; onboard physician consultations; morning stretch classes and 24-hour access to exercise equipment; 24-hour access to lounges, observation decks, library, and other shared spaces; basic WiFi, park and site entrance fees, special access permits, and port taxes. Unused services or items included in our programs are non-refundable.

## Not included in price

Airfare (except flights when indicated as included); pre- and post-expedition extensions; additional hotel nights (except when indicated as included); crew gratuities; private transfers; laundry, spa treatments, travel protection plans; and passport, visa, and immigration fees.

Additional costs associated with medical services outside onboard physician consultation.

## Travel protection plan

We strongly recommend our guests to take advantage of our Travel Protection Plan. This plan offers comprehensive coverage to protect you from cancellation fees, costs incurred due to trip delays/interruption, damage or loss of baggage, medical assistance, and evacuation during your travels. Our Travel Protection Plan is available for U.S. residents only, and may be purchased any time prior to final payment due date, Travel Protection premiums are non-refundable once plan is purchased. Learn more about our

Travel Protection "Plus" Plan: <https://www.expeditions.com/terms-conditions/travel-protection-plan/>

## Cancellation policy

Review our cancellation policy: <https://www.expeditions.com/cancellation-policy/>