

**MIT**ALUMNI  
**Travel Program**

# Costa Rica and the Panama Canal

November 30 – December 7, 2025  
*Aboard National Geographic Quest*

Travel with Andrew J. Whittle,  
the Edmund K. Turner Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at MIT





## Dear MIT Alumni and Friends,

Bridging the Americas and dividing two oceans, Costa Rica and Panama are small, neighboring nations brimming with wonders. At this tropical crossroads, waterfalls cascade from misty mountains into winding jungle rivers, where the canopies are alive with a wild symphony of roaring howler monkeys and squawking scarlet macaws. It's easy to see how Costa Rica's pristine beauty inspired the popular greeting, *pura vida*—or "pure life." Then, amid Panama's lush wilderness, stands an astonishing triumph of human ingenuity: the monumental lock system of the Panama Canal.

Discover these remote rainforests, idyllic islands and feats of engineering aboard the small and purpose-built *National Geographic Quest*. With large expanses of glass to keep you connected to extraordinary views, this nimble, 50-cabin vessel is perfectly designed to sail along the sinuous channels and hidden coves of wild places, from Costa Rica's jungle-shrouded Osa Peninsula to Panama's idyllic Coiba Island. We also have special permission to transit the Panama Canal over two days, which allows us to take in eye-level views of its intricate workings and witness the spectacle of its dazzling illumination from a variety of perspectives.

During the trip, **MIT Professor Andrew J. Whittle** will deliver lectures and informal commentary about the Panama Canal. Also, a knowledgeable and experienced expedition team is always on hand to help you spot endemic agouti, fiery-billed aracaris and other fascinating species hidden in the dense forest canopy. Plus, a certified photo instructor is dedicated to helping you capture the photos of a lifetime. Travel by Zodiac or kayak past the tranquil mangroves of Golfo Dulce in Costa Rica's southernmost reaches. Snorkel among thousands of colorful fish, glide across turquoise waters on a stand-up paddleboard or simply relax on golden sands.

This voyage gives you the chance to immerse yourself in one of the most biodiverse places on Earth and one of the most important waterways in history. Please contact National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions directly with all trip inquiries and to make a reservation. Their travel consultants are eager to take your call and answer your questions. Email [groups@expeditions.com](mailto:groups@expeditions.com), or call Lindblad Expeditions at **833-985-1261**.

Sincerely,



Melissa Chapman Gresh  
MIT Alumni Travel Program



**Andrew J. Whittle** is the Edmund K. Turner Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at MIT. He earned his BSc. in Civil Engineering from Imperial College in 1981 and PhD in geotechnical engineering at MIT in 1987. He joined the MIT faculty as an Assistant Professor in 1988, became a Full Professor in 2000 and served as Head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, 2009-2013. Dr. Whittle is an expert in geotechnical engineering, whose research deals principally with modeling the complex mechanical properties of soils and rocks and their application in predicting the performance of large infrastructure projects.

Cover photo: White-faced capuchin monkeys. Opposite: Panama Canal.



# COSTA RICA: STEWARDS OF THE WILD

## **A Wilderness of Epic Proportions**

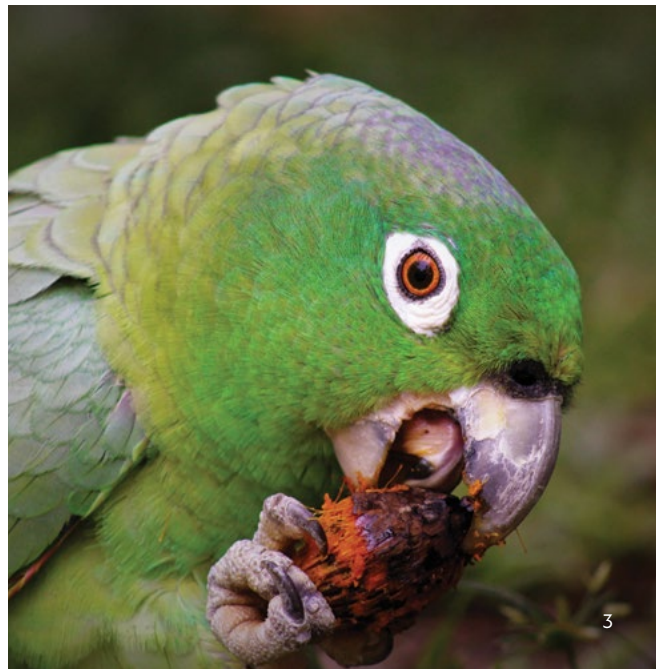
When travelers step into the tangled tropical forests of Corcovado National Park on Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula, it is immediately evident why *National Geographic* magazine dubbed it "the most biologically intense place on Earth." The reserve is a sanctuary for some 140 mammal species in 12 major ecosystems, ranging from coastal mangrove swamps to highland forests that reach into the clouds.

The park is a powerful draw for nature lovers, most of whom visit via inland ranger stations. However, National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions travelers arrive directly on Corcovado's beaches, where we hike into the jungle as the sleepy stillness breaks into a cacophony of bird chirps and monkey chatters. Stop and swim in a waterfall pool, or continue to trek along the river, deeper into Corcovado's wild interior. Either route leads to incredible wildlife sightings, whether it's the flash of a scarlet macaw, foraging coatis or, with luck, a glimpse of a grazing tapir.

## **Preserving Nature, Nurturing Tradition**

Costa Rica is deeply invested in protecting the natural resources that are a critical driver of their economy. On an expedition here, you might chat with coffee farmers who grow their beans in the shadow of the jungle canopy, creating new habitats for birds. Or, you may meet a gold miner who walked away from the mines to protect land where he now demonstrates the practice of panning for gold in mountain rivers—the same clear waters that have become gold for Costa Rica's green-based economy.

*Opposite page (clockwise from top): Caiman crocodilus; expedition leader shows off local moth at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Barro Colorado; Fiery-billed Aracari; southern mealy amazon or southern mealy parrot; National Geographic Quest in Golfito, Costa Rica.*







# THE PANAMA CANAL: A STORIED CROSSING BETWEEN TWO OCEANS

More than a century after its completion, the Panama Canal stands as a critical achievement in commercial and engineering history. Transiting this storied passageway aboard the *National Geographic Quest* means learning about a modern wonder from the inside out—and gaining in-depth perspectives on its economic, mechanical, and political impact from the experts who sail the canal alongside us.



Just beyond the gates of this engineering marvel, we experience a dramatic change in scenery. The concrete walls of the canal stand in sharp contrast to the surrounding leafy jungles, where flora and fauna have thrived thanks to preservation efforts aimed at sustaining the health of this vital ecological corridor.

Step ashore at Barro Colorado Island for an exclusive visit to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and learn about the lush lowland tropical forests that have drawn biologists from across the globe to Panama since 1932. On a Zodiac excursion to the tiny “monkey islands,” get a wild greeting from the curious primates that approach the vessels as we navigate the shoreline. Or, walk along the elevated boardwalks of the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center trail, through a canopy that harbors a rainbow of some 400 bird species.

*Opposite page (clockwise from top): Guests hiking in Corcovado National Park; transiting the Panama Canal in twilight. This page: Zodiac cruise.*



# AUTHENTIC & IMMERSIVE EXPLORATION

## The Perfect Platform for Discovery

The nimble, 50-cabin *National Geographic Quest* is designed to sail along sinuous channels and provide up-close experiences. Her open decks and large windows keep you connected to extraordinary views of turquoise waters and leafy shorelines draped in a thousand shades of green. A fleet of kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and Zodiacs allows us to glide into a quiet cove or a serene bay for a solitary snorkeling excursion. After a day of exploring, gather in the lounge to hear our naturalists discuss the wonders we witness each day, or visit the open Bridge and watch the crew navigate the canals and bays that make these waters so extraordinary to explore.

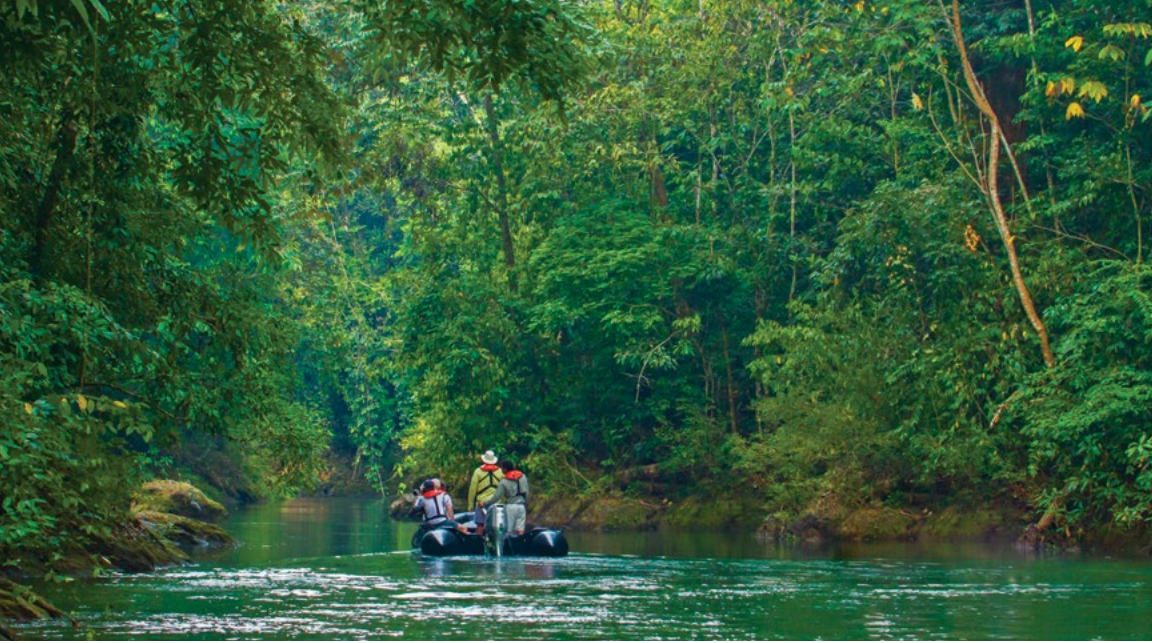
## Travel with a World-Class Expedition Team

Each of the guides—from naturalists to expedition leaders—is committed to ensuring you have an unforgettable experience. The expedition team is curated to ensure that you are getting in-depth perspectives from veteran and locally based experts who have deeply personal connections to the region. Exploring in small groups, you will have the opportunity to hear different perspectives every day, and because there are no group assignments, you can gravitate toward naturalists who share your interests.

Photography is also central to the expedition experience. On this voyage you will be joined by National Geographic photographer Tamara Merino Bloch, as well as a National Geographic certified photo instructor, who will assist travelers with everything from camera settings to composition. Every guest—from smartphone camera users to advanced hobbyists—can stand side by side with top photographers, pick up tips in the field, and return home with extraordinary images you can enjoy for years to come.

*Opposite page (clockwise from top): Zodiac cruise, Rio Esquinas, Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica; scarlet macaws in flight over Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica; guests enjoying a waterfall; guests snorkeling.*





## Itinerary

Exploring Costa Rica and Panama is a singular experience that combines incredible biodiversity with an in-depth crossing of the Panama Canal. Adventures abound amid the region's rainforests, rivers and beaches. Hike deep into the jungle or kayak and stand-up paddleboard in tropical turquoise waters. Swim in a waterfall pool or snorkel amid vibrant coral reefs. Also, enjoy an exclusive opportunity to meet with researchers who rescue, rehabilitate and release Costa Rica's native sea turtles.



### DAY 1: SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA/PUERTO CALDERA/EMBARK

After arrival in San José this afternoon, we transfer to the Pacific Coast town of Puerto Caldera. This evening, embark the ship *National Geographic Quest* and set sail south for a Central American adventure. (D)

### DAY 2: CORCOVADO NATIONAL PARK

Anchor off the Osa Peninsula to see some of the most pristine lowland rainforest on the Pacific coast. In the environs of Corcovado National Park, swim in waterfall pools or trek through the rainforest for a chance to see four species of monkeys: howler, spider, squirrel and capuchin. (B,L,D)

### DAY 3: GOLFO DULCE/OSA PENINSULA

Aboard the nimble expedition ship, travel to the upper reaches of the mangrove-fringed Golfo Dulce, along the southwestern edge of Costa Rica. Go ashore on the western side of the bay, in the pristine waters of the Osa Peninsula's Playa Blanca. Head inland to meet families living in remote communities that work with cocoa, heart of palm and sugarcane. Hike mature rainforest or kayak in peaceful waters in Golfo Dulce, the only tropical fjord on the continent. Visit with researchers from the Latin American Sea Turtles (LAST) Association to learn about their rehabilitation efforts in local sea turtle conservation. (B,L,D)



#### **DAY 4: GOLFO DULCE**

As this Golfo Dulce exploration continues by Zodiac, paddleboard and kayak, you are likely to encounter Pacific Costa Rica's dazzling avifauna—from golden-hooded and Cherrie's tanagers to yellow-throated toucans, fiery-billed aracaris and crimson-fronted and orange-chinned parakeets, all constantly chattering in flight above the jungle tree line. The flora is a kaleidoscope of tropical color, with bromeliads, heliconias and orchids set against the verdant green of the tropical forest. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 5: COIBA NATIONAL PARK, PANAMA**

Today go ashore on the remote Isla Coiba, one of the many islands of Coiba National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Once a penal colony, the island has long been protected and is accessible by special permit only. Among its many endemic species are the Coiba Island agouti and the mantled howler monkey, as well as four varieties of sea turtle. Discover rich marine life while snorkeling, or simply spend the afternoon exploring or relaxing on the beach. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 6: GULF OF PANAMA ISLETS/PANAMA CANAL TRANSIT**

Today, explore the tiny islets of the Gulf of Panama by Zodiac. Here you might spot frigatebirds, brown pelicans, neotropical cormorants and brown boobies. Set sail for the Panama Canal this afternoon. Stretching more than 50 miles, the canal is a colossal engineering feat completed in 1914. It is still traversed by some 14,000 ships every year. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 7: 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 the mouth of the Chagres River and hike on the Panama Rainforest Discovery Center trails. This evening, continue through the complex lock system of the canal. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 8: COLÓN/PANAMA CITY, PANAMA/DISEMBARK**

After breakfast, disembark in Colón and transfer to the airport in Panama City for your flight home. (B)

#### **PRE- AND POST-VOYAGE EXTENSIONS**

##### **Panama City & San Lorenzo • 3 days, 2 nights • From: \$1,540**

Extend your stay in Panama City and enjoy a private tour at the Miraflores Locks Visitor Center, as well as visits to a former U.S. Army base, Frank Gehry's BioMuseo, and two UNESCO World Heritage sites—the historic Casco Viejo Old Town and the San Lorenzo Protected Area, brimming with natural beauty and wildlife.

##### **Caño Negro Rainforests and Reserves • 5 days • From: \$3,990**

Venture to Costa Rica's remote Caño Negro district, celebrated for its wetlands and prolific birdlife. Enjoy a stylish glamping experience at Tocú Tent Camp as we explore Tenorio Volcano National Park, walk suspension bridges for an incredible bird's-eye view of lush rainforests, and learn about the Maleku people, Costa Rica's smallest remaining Indigenous tribe.



# National Geographic Quest



Purpose-built to explore North American coastlines, *National Geographic Quest* has decks designed for exceptional wildlife viewing and shallow drafts for navigating the innermost reaches of carved coastlines. She is U.S.-flagged, eliminating domestic customs stops and allowing more time to explore.

## Capacity

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50 cabins and suites accommodating 100 guests.

## Registry

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United States.

## Overall Length

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238 feet.

## Public Areas

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Global Gallery; fitness center; LEXspa; lounge with full service bar and facilities for films and presentations; OM System Photo Gear Locker; observation deck; elevator; mudroom with lockers for expedition gear and a partially covered sundeck with chairs and tables. The open Bridge provides guests an opportunity to meet the officers and captain and learn about navigation.

## Meals

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Served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere. Cuisine is fresh, sustainable, accented with regional flair, and served plated.



*The casual dining room with its expansive windows.*



*Category 4 cabin with single beds (which can be converted to a Queen) and a private step-out balcony.*

## Accommodations

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All cabins and suites face outside with windows or portholes, private facilities, climate controls and Wi-Fi connections and USB ports for mobile devices. Category 4 cabins have step-out balconies.

## Expedition Equipment

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A fleet of 8 Zodiacs and 24 kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, ROV (remotely operated vehicle); hydrophone, splash-cam, underwater video camera and video microscope.

## Staff & Crew

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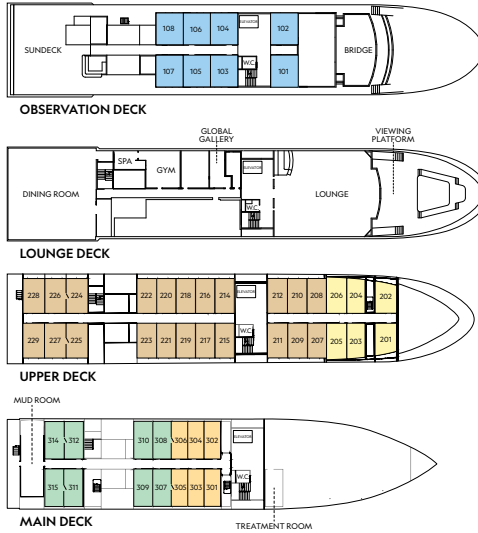
Every staff member is committed to ensuring guests have an unforgettable experience. Many of the veteran guides and naturalists are locally based and have worked with the company for decades. A full-time medical professional, undersea specialist, National Geographic photographer and National Geographic certified photo instructor are on board, and with a low staff-to-guest ratio, you can hear different perspectives and gain new insights every day.

## Wellness

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The vessel is staffed by a wellness specialist and features a gym with an elliptical machine, treadmill, exercycles, handweights and resistance bands. Massages in the LEXspa are available by appointment.

# Ship Deck Plan & Pricing



## Voyage Dates

November 30 – December 7, 2025

## Advance Payment Details

15% of the cabin fare, per person

Prices are per person, double occupancy unless indicated as solo

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>Category 1</b>  | <b>\$7,389</b>  |
| Main Deck #301-306 – Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk and two portholes.   |                 |
| <b>Category 2</b>  | <b>\$8,033</b>  |
| Main Deck #307-315 – Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk and two portholes.   |                 |
| <b>Category 3</b>  | <b>\$8,669</b>  |
| Upper Deck #201-206 – Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk and two large windows.  |                 |
| <b>Category 4</b>  | <b>\$9,758</b>  |
| Upper Deck #207-229 – Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, a writing desk, sliding glass door and small, private balcony.   |                 |
| <b>Category 5*</b>   | <b>\$10,776</b> |
| Observation Deck #101-108 – Cabins feature two single beds that can convert to a Queen, large windows, an expanded bathroom, writing desk, ample storage space and a convertible sofa bed to accommodate a third person. |                 |
| <b>Category 1 Solo</b>   | <b>\$11,024</b> |
| Main Deck #301-306   |                 |
| <b>Category 2 Solo</b>   | <b>\$12,162</b> |
| Main Deck #307-315   |                 |

**\*Suite Exclusives:** The suites on board are your elegant retreat at sea, featuring spacious living areas and incredible ocean views. The Suite Exclusives package gives guests staying in eligible cabins access to an array of amenities designed to enhance your on-board experience, including priority booking for spa treatments, complimentary laundry and other exclusive perks.

**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, #306-308, #305-307; Upper Deck: #224-226, #225-227

## INCLUSIVE PRICING

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- All accommodations aboard ship
- Excursions and airport transfers, as indicated in the itinerary
- The guidance and company of our leading expedition staff
- All meals as indicated in the itinerary, both aboard and onshore. Meals and hors d'oeuvres are inspired by regional cuisine and locally sourced where possible.
- 24-hour access to snacks, premium coffees and teas, non-alcoholic beverages and filtered water
- Selection of exploration tools, including Zodiacs, stand-up paddleboards, snorkeling equipment (including wetsuits, masks and fins) and other gear
- Beer, wine, cocktails and spirits. We are also pleased to offer a selection of super premium wines and liquors, available for purchase.
- Gratuities to local guides
- Presentations by the expedition staff
- Complimentary reusable water bottle to fill at onboard water refill stations
- The services of a medical professional
- 24-hour access to lounges, observation decks, library and other shared spaces
- 24-hour access to the fitness center
- Assistance by the onboard photo instructor
- Special access permits, park and site entrance fees and port taxes
- Basic Wi-Fi, with the option to upgrade

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR SPECIAL OFFERS

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**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, \$150 shipboard credit for the group, and other special gifts. Milestone celebration to be communicated at time of booking. Valid for new bookings only, subject to availability, not applicable on airfare or extensions and may not be combined with other offers. Call for details.

**BRINGING THE KIDS:** Sharing the expedition with your kids or grandkids is a life-enhancing experience. Take \$500 off the double-occupancy price for each person under the age of 18. Not applicable on extensions or airfare.

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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Prices quoted in this brochure are per person based on double occupancy in USD. Prices quoted are valid at the time of printing, and are subject to change and availability at time of booking. Under normal conditions the total expedition price is guaranteed at the time advanced payment is made. However, our expedition pricing is determined far in advance of initial departure on the basis of then-existing projections of fuel and other costs. In the event of increases in those costs, including but not limited to increases in the price of fuel, currency fluctuations, increases in government taxes or levies, or increased security costs, we reserve the right to adjust the price of your expedition or add a surcharge to cover such unexpected increases. We will always provide an explanation of the reason for increase in costs.

**COST INCLUDES:** All amenities listed in inclusive pricing above. Unused services or items included in this program are non-refundable.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Airfare; pre- and post-expedition extensions; additional hotel nights; private transfers; travel protection plan; passport, visa and immigration fees; crew gratuities; items of a personal nature such as laundry, super premium wines and liquors, spa treatments, enhanced and premium Wi-Fi plans and phone services.

**AIRFARE:** Airfare is an additional cost. Lindblad Expeditions will gladly assist in making your air arrangements for a \$50 per person service fee.

**RESERVATIONS:** To confirm your place, an advance payment of 15% of the cabin fare, per person is payable by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover or check. Receipt of advance payment indicates your acceptance of the terms and conditions.

**FINAL PAYMENT:** Due no later than 120 days prior to departure. Lindblad Expeditions reserves the right to cancel your reservation if payment has not been received by final payment due date.

**TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN:** Travel and medical insurance are available at an additional cost. Information will be sent to you upon registration.

**ENTRY AND VISA REQUIREMENTS:** Guests are advised to verify travel documents (passport/transit visa/entry visa) for the country(s) through which they are transiting and/or entering. Reliable and most current information regarding international travel can be found by contacting the consulate/embassy of the country(s) you are visiting or transiting through. We will not be responsible if you are denied entry or transit into a country if you are unable to provide valid documents as per the country's requirement.

**RESPONSIBILITY AND OTHER TERMS & CONDITIONS:** Certain other provisions concerning, among other things, limitations of Lindblad Expeditions' and National Geographic Expeditions' (a division of National Geographic Partners, LLC) liability for loss of property, injury, illness, or death during the voyage will be provided to all guests on the ship's ticket sent prior to departure or upon request. By registering for a trip, the guest agrees to all such terms and conditions.

## CANCELLATION FEE POLICY (PER PERSON)

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**120 or more days prior to expedition start: No penalty:** Advance Payment will be credited toward your next expedition\*\*

**119-90 days prior to expedition start: 50% of trip cost\*\*\***

**89-0 days prior to expedition start: 100% of trip cost\*\*\***

\*\*Advance payments will be credited in the form of a Lindblad Expeditions Travel Certificate, valid for 12 months from the date of cancellation, and which may only be applied towards final payment on any future booking.

\*\*\*Trip cost is total price paid including extensions, charter airfare and other additional services.

We strongly recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan.

**Photo Credits:** Alexandra C. Daley-Clark, Ralph Lee Hopkins, David Vargas, Jeff Mauritzen, Eric Guth, Marc Cappelletti, Corbis, and Shutterstock.



# Reservation Form



## Costa Rica and the Panama Canal

November 30 - December 7, 2025  
ABOARD NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC QUEST

### Contact Information

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Please send reservation to:  
Lindblad Expeditions  
96 Morton Street  
New York, NY 10014

Or contact:  
Ph: (833) 985-1261  
Fax: (646) 390-2050  
E-mail: [groups@expeditions.com](mailto:groups@expeditions.com)

### Passenger Information

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Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ place(s).

Guest 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Name as it appears on passport)*

Guest 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Name as it appears on passport)*

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodations:  Double  Single  Twin share with a friend  
 Share with roommate assigned by tour operator.

Please indicate choice of cabin category in order of preference:

1st choice: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information on these extensions:

- Panama City & San Lorenzo**
- Caño Negro Rainforests and Reserves**

**Advance Payment Information:** 15% of the cabin fare per person.

If paying by check, please make payable to: **Lindblad Maritime Enterprises, Ltd.**  
Enclosed is my advance payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If paying by credit card, we will contact you to finalize your booking and collect payment information.

**Note:** Tour participants must fully review the tour operator's cancellation and refund policies, as the tour participant's financial commitments are directly with the tour operator, with all tour funds being paid to the operator. **The purchase of a comprehensive travel insurance policy is highly recommended.** The MIT Alumni Travel Program provides further information about the Travel Program and the relationship between the Alumni Association and the tour operator online at: <http://alum.mit.edu/travel/about>

# Costa Rica and the Panama Canal

## EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel with Andrew J. Whittle, the Edmund K. Turner Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at MIT.
- Venture into remote wilderness: hike among monkeys, sloths, and tropical birds, and explore far from any inhabited places.
- Transit the Panama Canal over two days to see it by day and in the coolness of night—plus an exclusive stop at the Smithsonian Research Institute.
- Discover the wild rainforests of Corcovado National Park, which *National Geographic* dubbed “the most biologically intense place on Earth.”
- Explore idyllic islands, snorkel over a vibrant coral reef, and take a Zodiac cruise up a wild river.

### LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS: PIONEERING RESPONSIBLE EXPLORATION

From our consistent quest to improve our practices to offsetting 100% of our carbon emissions, supporting conservation, science, and education initiatives around the planet, and investing in the communities in the places we explore, we are guided by our commitment to explore responsibly.

 Printed on 10% recycled content paper with soy-based inks. We recommend that you pass this along for others to enjoy or recycle.



## MITALUMNI Travel Program

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