

# Natural & Cultural History of Central America

From **29/12/2020**  
to **05/01/2021**

Ship: **LE CHAMPLAIN**

From **Colón**  
to **Puerto Caldera**



**PONANT** takes you to discover **Costa Rica** and **Panama** with an 8-day expedition cruise. A truly beautiful journey between **nature reserves**, encounters with local communities and **sailing through the Panama Canal**.

Your journey in Central America will start with the discovery of the golden sand and crystal-clear waters of the coral islets of the **San Blas islands**.

After sailing through the world-famous Panama Canal, which connects the Atlantic to the Pacific, your ship will then head for the magnificent **Darien National Park** in Panama. This little corner of paradise is a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to remarkable plants and wildlife. Sandy beaches, rocky coastlines, mangroves, swamps and tropical rainforests vie with each other for beauty and offer a feast for photographers. This will also be the occasion for meeting the astonishing semi-nomadic Emberas community.

Then you will be able to enjoy a visit to the **Manuel Antonio National Park** and the **Curú Wildlife Refuge**. Deep inside the tropical rainforest you may be lucky enough to see multicoloured birds, monkeys, and iguanas.

*The encounters with the wildlife described above illustrate possible experiences only and cannot be guaranteed.*



The information in this document is valid as of 03/09/2020

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## YOUR STOPOVERS :

### COLÓN

Embarkation 29/12/2020 from 16h00 to 17h00

Departure 29/12/2020 at 23h00

**Colón** is the second largest city in **Panama**, at the Caribbean entrance of the **Panama Canal**. Colón is today an important port, and the free trade zone created in 1953 contributed greatly to the development of the city. Colón 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.

### SAN BLAS ISLANDS

Arrival 30/12/2020

Departure 30/12/2020

Located on the north-east coast of **Panamá**, the **San Blas archipelago** is a string of coral islands that graces the heart of the Caribbean Sea. Over 300 islands and cays covering an area of 300 square kilometres offer travellers a multitude of treasures. Sheltered behind a long coral reef, the **San Blas Islands** are full of paradisiac anchorages. The long sandy white beaches bounded by crystal clear waters will allow you to relax and enjoy an incredible marine fauna before discovering the **Kunas Indian community**. Still feeding off hunting and fishing, their villages of bamboo houses are gathered near the beaches.

### CROSSING THE PANAMA CANAL

Arrival 31/12/2020

Departure 31/12/2020

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 in 1887 and opened in 1914. The canal crosses the Isthmus of Panama and links the Atlantic to the Pacific. 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.

## PLAYA MUERTO, DARIEN NATIONAL PARK

Arrival 01/01/2021

Departure 01/01/2021

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.

## AT SEA

Arrival 02/01/2021

Departure 02/01/2021

During your day 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 day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, 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.

## MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK

Arrival 03/01/2021

Departure 03/01/2021

You will land in a Zodiac® on the beaches of the **Manuel Antonio National Park**, one of the jewels of **Costa Rica**. Protected since the 1970s, this small park, only 16 km<sup>2</sup> and bordered by the **idyllic beaches** of the Pacific Ocean, is home to rich biodiversity. Along peaceful paths or during a break on the beach, you will be welcomed by a tropical forest full of life: from the discreet **sloth** to the noisy **howler monkey** and the mischievous **white-faced capuchin**. On the fine sandy beaches rising to lush hills and **coconut trees**, you will be amused by the dance of the **racoons** that race down from the trees to tease visitors.

## CURÚ WILDLIFE REFUGE

Arrival 04/01/2021

Departure 04/01/2021

On the southern part of the Nicoya Peninsula, the small **Curú Wildlife Refuge** is the oldest protected park in **Costa Rica**. This refuge is an exemplary site in terms of **ecotourism** as well as a **research centre** for scientists from all over the world. It has been at the heart of an original conservation and **sustainable development** project since the 1930s. After a short

Zodiac® trip, you will discover, via the paths that criss-cross the tropical forest and lead to magnificent beaches, the most emblematic species of Costa Rica: monkeys, iguanas and over 200 bird species. Since their recent reintroduction, the **scarlet macaw** and the **spider monkey** have thrived in this preserved environment.

## PUERTO CALDERA

Arrival 05/01/2021 early morning

Disembarkation 05/01/2021 at 07h00

The port of Puerto Caldera lies on the Pacific coast, in the Puntarenas region, at the mouth of the Gulf of Nicoya. Areas of wilderness stretch along the coast. 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, and more than ten thousand species of tropical plants.