

Panama to Mexico Explorer Cruise With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



May 2 – 11, 2019

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We invite you to join Naturalist Journeys on a NEW! Central American cruise from Panama to Mexico. Over the course of 10 days, we visit six different countries through the tropical waters of Panama, Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Belize, and Mexico.

We already dearly love Central American for its stunning Neotropical bird life and rich culture, but we are excited to spend time exploring the waters of some of our favorite destinations. This cruise offers the perfect blend of wildlife watching, active discovery, and relaxation. With turquoise seas and lush forests, magnificent Mayan ruins, bustling markets, and flourishing farms, the Caribbean coast of Central America is packed with opportunities to explore.

Swim and snorkel around colorful coral reefs during the day before relaxing under the starry skies. Whether you choose to soak up the sun on palm-lined beaches, hike through protected national parks, or kayak to remote bays, this fun cruise offers something for everyone.

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Cruise onboard the grand *RCGS Resolute*
- ✓ Discover Panama's picturesque San Blas Islands, replete with white sand beaches, palm trees, and sparkling turquoise waters
- ✓ Explore Cartagena's "Old Town," a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ✓ Enjoy the quirky San Andrés and Providencia islands — hike up Alto El Pico for 360-degree views of the entire Caribbean
- ✓ Kayak around Nicaragua's Miskito Cays
- ✓ Hike Jeanette Kawas National Park to see West Indian Manatee, sea turtles, Black Howler or White-headed Capuchin Monkeys, as well as Common Black Hawk, Gray Hawk, Ringed Kingfisher, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, and Red-lored Parrot
- ✓ Spend time exploring by kayak, paddleboards, zodiacs, and on foot at Belize's Blackbird Caye and Turneffe Atoll to see an incredible array of marine life

Tour Summary

10-Day / 9-Night Central American Snorkeling Cruise
\$3995 - \$8695, from Panama City, departing Cozumel
Airports are Tocumen International (PTY) & Cozumel International (CZM)

Itinerary

Thurs., May 2 Colon, Panama

Today, our group meets at a central location in Panama City and transfers by bus to the port at Colon. If you would like to come in early to explore the city, do the canal, or spend a few days at a rainforest lodge, please let us know and we can make recommendations. Upon arriving at port we board the grand *RCGS Resolute*, our home for the next 10 days. After embarking and settling into our rooms, we gather for cocktails, followed by dinner, after which we can relax on deck and enjoy the tropical sunset. Cheers!

Fri., May 3 San Blas Islands, Panama

Panama's Caribbean-side islands are stunning. With over 365 islands scattered over 100 square miles, we could spend an entire year visiting an island each day! Most of these islands are not inhabited, however, the larger of the group — Aguja, Kuanidup, Chichimeí and El Porvenir — are inhabited by the indigenous people known as the Kuna, or Guna. The birders amongst us keep our eyes peeled for Brown Booby, Magnificent Frigatebird, Royal Tern, and Sandwich Tern. We spend time exploring today before setting off to Colombia tomorrow.

Sat., May 4 & Sun., May 5 Cartagena & Rosario Islands, Colombia

Cartagena's "Old Town," a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is surrounded by more than 10 kilometers of centuries-old stone walls. We explore Old Town and the walls this morning, taking in this colorful city. Around the port, visitors should be able to see Yellow-headed Caracara, Great Egret, Eared Dove, Great Kiskadee and Brown-throated Parakeet. There is a park near the port which hosts Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Southern Lapwing, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Cattle Tyrant, Social Flycatcher, Blue-gray Tanager, and Saffron Finch — being able to visit a green space for an hour or two makes a huge difference!

Later in the day, we sail for the Rosario Islands, which were declared a National Park to protect the critical coral reef that encircles the archipelago. Grab a snorkel, kayak, or paddleboard and then we head off to learn more about the coral and ecosystems first-hand — fun! This evening and tomorrow are spent at sea, heading towards the San Andrés and Providencia Islands.

Mon., May 6 San Andres & Providencia Islands, Colombia

Surrounded by turquoise waters and reefs, this quirky pair of islands, San Andrés and Providencia, is well worth the day at sea. Found off the coast of Nicaragua, the islands are historically connected to England and are politically part of Colombia. The result, socially speaking, is the 300-year-old English-Creole-speaking Raizal culture, which bumps up against the much more recently arrived Colombian culture.

We take time to investigate the quieter corners, bays, and atolls here today, perhaps stopping for a snorkel or paddle to take in the beauty of the coral reefs. On Providencia we can, once again, spend time in the small town, or stretch our legs on a hike up Alto El Pico, for 360-degree views of the entire Caribbean. Those looking for a more gentle stroll can wander the beaches or head to the north end of the island to cross the colorfully painted Lover's Bridge, which takes you to Santa Catalina, the next island. Birds on these islands include White-crowned Pigeon, Green-breasted Mango, Caribbean Elaenia, Thick-billed Vireo, and San Andres Vireo (endemic).

Tues., May 7 Miskito Cays, Nicaragua

Once a hot-spot for pirates, Miskito Cays may be the least discovered island of Nicaragua. Sitting 80 kilometers off shore, Miskito Cays are part of the Northern Atlantic autonomous region, which is recognized by the Nicaraguan government. The Miskito people have maintained their ancient culture. The seascape and marine life in this area is so complex, delicate and interesting, it was declared part of the larger Biological Marine reserve and Coastal Fringe. What better way to take in this amazing ecosystem than with a tranquil paddle in a kayak or on a stand-up paddleboard. We soak in this island's wonders all day today. Birds here on the Miskito Cays include Brown Pelican, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, and Magnificent Frigatebird.

Wed., May 8 Guanaja, Honduras

We explore the island of Guanaja today, lush and mountainous with its highest peak topping out at 1400 feet. We have the option of a short hike to the only waterfall on the island or a longer hike up to Grant's Peak for amazing views of the nearby islands. Typical birds of the island include White-crowned Pigeon, Common Ground-Dove, Smooth-billed Ani, Green-breasted Mango, Canivet's Emerald, Common Black Hawk, Gray Hawk,

Yucatan Woodpecker, Yellow-naped Parrot, Yucatan Vireo, Brown-crested Flycatcher, as well as wintering warblers. The island sits on the second largest barrier reef in the world, it is not surprising that diving and snorkeling are very popular activities today.

Thurs., May 9 Jeanette Kawas National Park, Honduras

Officially named Jeanette Kawas National Park in honour of the murdered environmental activist, this park was previously known as Punta Sal. The park is located on a tiny peninsula off the mainland. Here the large lagoon, marine estuaries, tropical rainforests, and mangrove swamps make for an incredibly diverse National Park. Forest trails allow us to explore the park, a well-known birding destination that is home to over 300 recorded species. West Indian Manatee and several types of sea turtle also frequent this area. Further inland you may run into Black Howler or White-headed Capuchin Monkeys. We watch for Common Black Hawk, Gray Hawk, Ringed Kingfisher, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Red-lored Parrot, Great Kiskadee, and Prothonotary Warbler. This park is also inhabited by the Garifuna people who have lived here for hundreds of years. Their villages are scattered throughout the park and the Garifuna traditions and culture are protected by the park's mandate.

Fri., May 10 Blackbird Caye & Turneffe Atoll, Belize

World-renowned for diving, snorkeling, and fly-fishing, Blackbird Caye and the Turneffe Atoll offer an incredible array of marine life. We get out and explore today using our kayaks, paddleboards, zodiacs, or simply our feet as we get close and personal with these hidden treasures. Our birders watch for Cinnamon Hummingbird, Ruddy Turnstone, Spotted Sandpiper, Little Blue Heron, Tropical Mockingbird, Hooded Oriole, and Yellow Warbler. We enjoy a farewell dinner tonight as we cruise to our port of call.

Sat., May 11 Cozumel, Mexico

Today we wake up off the shores of Cozumel, Mexico, the final destination of this voyage. After breakfast we bid farewell to the crew and disembark the ship. Transportation is provided to the Cozumel airport where you can begin your journey home, or on to further adventures in Mexico or Belize!

About the *RCGS Resolute*

In November 2018, a purpose built polar expedition vessel *RCGS Resolute* joined *Akademik Ioffe* and *Akademik Sergey Vavilov* under the One Ocean Expeditions banner, to offer the most capable, safe, and exclusive expedition cruise fleet in the industry.

Designed for comfort, *RCGS Resolute* is modern, well appointed, safe and ice-strengthened. From small group sessions to briefings for all passengers, we have public spaces onboard the ship ideally suited for each and every need. Two separate bar and lounge areas featuring 180 degree views and a wonderfully stocked library provide ideal places to relax or catch up on some reading. The sumptuous meals prepared for you by our culinary team are enjoyed in either of our two dining rooms, one of which features our popular bistro menu offering quick and easy meals for those prioritizing time out on deck. Both dining rooms have ample and open seating paired with modern furnishings and large picture windows with 180 degree views. Other facilities include a theatre style presentation room, gift-shop, gymnasium, wellness center, Jacuzzi, sauna and steam room, and salt water pool.



One Ocean Suite — \$8695

The One Ocean Suites are situated on Deck 6 and offer an indulgent amount of space. Sleeping quarters feature a queen size bed with upgraded linen/pillows. Included is a comfortable sectional lounge with matching club chairs, a large desk, expansive floor to ceiling cabinetry, and spacious washroom facilities with both a shower and bathtub. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. These suites provide easy access to the ship's bridge, the bistro and outdoor observation spaces. The panoramic observation lounge and recreation facilities are located nearby on Deck 7.



Shackleton Suite — \$7095

The Shackleton Suites are situated on Deck 6. Suites include the comfort of a sectional lounge, writing desk, substantial floor to ceiling cabinetry, and washroom facilities with shower. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. Sleeping quarters feature the option for either a queen or two single beds with upgraded linen/ pillows. These Suites provide easy access to the ship's bridge, the bistro and outdoor observation spaces. The forward panoramic observation lounge and recreation facilities are also located nearby on Deck 7.



Superior Plus Cabin — \$6095

Superior Plus cabins are located midships on Deck 5. They are spacious and well appointed with the option for either a queen or two single beds. A comfortable lounge is placed by the large picture window, writing desk and chair, ample floor to ceiling cabinet storage and private washroom facilities with shower. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. Centrally located on the ship, these cabins provide easy access to the aft observation lounge featuring 180 degree views and the ship's dining areas.



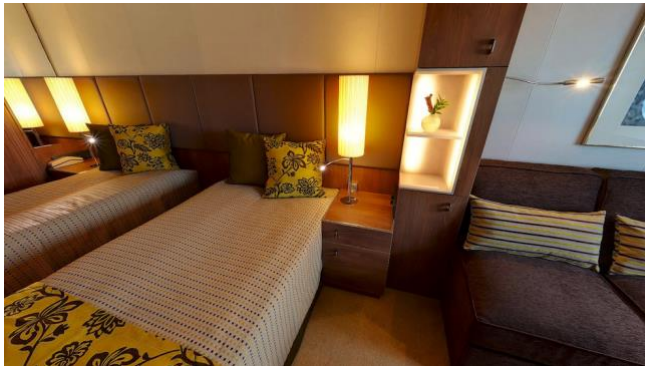
Superior Cabin — \$5895

Located forward on Deck 5 the Superior cabins have the option for either a queen or two single beds. Features include a comfortable lounge adjacent to the large picture window, writing desk and chair, ample storage and private washroom facilities with shower. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. These cabins provide easy access to the forward stairs leading up to the bridge on Deck 6 and the forward observation lounge located on Deck 7.



Twin Private Cabin — \$5295

Spacious and well appointed, these cabins are situated on Deck 4 and have the option for either a queen or two single configured beds. Features include a comfortable lounge adjacent to the large picture window, writing desk and chair, ample storage and private washroom facilities with shower. A flatscreen entertainment system is also included. These cabins provide easy access to the main dining room on the ship as well as the gift shop.



Main Triple Deck — \$3995

These cabins are a popular choice for solo travellers willing to share, a family, or a group of friends travelling together. Located on Deck 3, cabins feature three single beds, one of which can convert to a convertible sofa and lounge during the day. These cabins feature writing desk and chair, ample storage and private washroom facilities. A flatscreen entertainment system is also included. These cabins provide easy access to the expedition room and gangway.

Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Travel Information

Please plan to arrive in Panama City, Panama at Tocumen International Airport (PTY) by morning of May 2, 2019. Please plan your departure for after NOON on May 11, 2019 from Cozumel International Airport (CZM). More details about arrival and departure times will be available shortly. Please ask before you book your flights.

Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey is **\$3995 - \$8695** per person based on cabin type, from Panama City, Panama. This cost includes accommodations for nine nights, all meals from dinner day one to breakfast day 10, professional guide services, other park and program entrance fees and miscellaneous program expenses.

Cost does not include: round-trip airfare to Panama City and from Cozumel, Any international or local airfare unless otherwise specified in the voyage itinerary, Visa and passport expenses, Pre or post-cruise hotel accommodation unless otherwise specified in the itinerary (or pre-arranged), Pre or post-cruise transfers unless otherwise specified in the itinerary (or pre-arranged), Personal expenses on board such as alcoholic beverages, bar charges or laundry expenses, Telecommunication charges (ie. email, satellite phone), Baggage, cancellation or medical travel insurance related expenses (comprehensive travel insurance is mandatory on this trip), A voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for expedition staff and ship crew (suggested amount – \$US12-15 per day).

Photo Credits

Cartagena, Capuchin, San Blas Island, Snorkeling, Kayaking, Panama Canal, Dolphin, Coral, and Room photos, all courtesy of One Ocean Expeditions; Common Black Hawk by Greg Smith.

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