

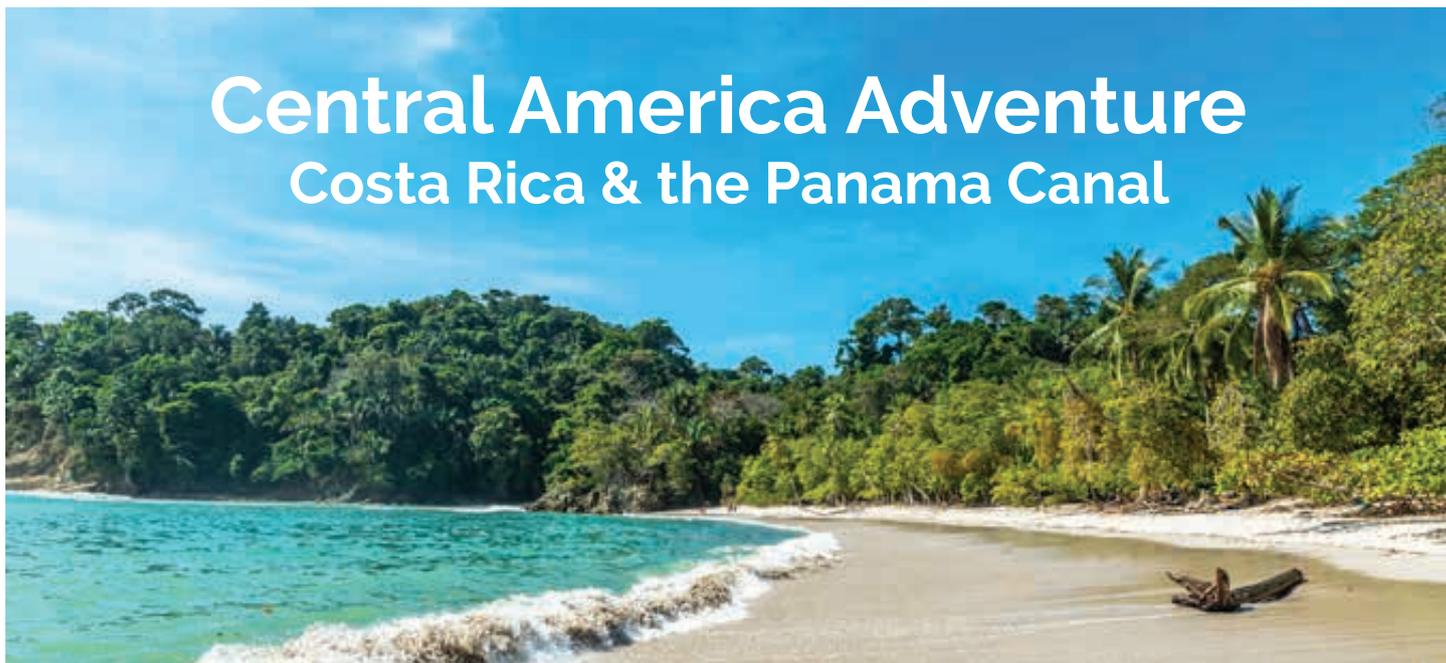
# CENTRAL AMERICA: 2019

## TRIP NOTES



# Central America Adventure

## Costa Rica & the Panama Canal



23 APR – 02 MAY 2019



9 NIGHTS / 10 DAYS



STARTS IN SAN JOSE

## DISCOVER THE MAGNIFICENT BEAUTY OF THIS VIBRANT, ECOLOGICAL PARADISE

Nowhere else in the world can you find a concentration of wildlife like that of Central America – in particular Costa Rica and Panama. Costa Rica alone has over 840 identified species of birds and with over a quarter of the country identified as national parks, these protected areas are a naturalist's dream. Famous for its manmade canal, Panama is also home to 940 avian species, as well as 125 mammal species endemic to this country. *RCGS Resolute* is the ideal vessel to explore this region due to its large outdoor decking areas and large, panoramic viewing platforms.

Our adventure begins in San Jose, Costa Rica, where we will meet at a central location before transferring to Puerto Caldera on the coast. From the Nicoya Peninsula we will work our way south, visiting four different national parks or protected areas. Our small ship gives us unprecedented access to the colourful bays and hidden coves of this lush, tropical coastline. When *RCGS Resolute* drops anchor, we'll launch our zodiacs, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards, so you can explore even further in guided small groups. You will also be able to explore on foot, hiking the trail network of the parks, or strolling along the white sandy beaches.

After a week we will leave this tropical paradise and head for Panama City, journeying down one of the modern wonders of the world - the Panama Canal. The penultimate day of our voyage will be spent travelling from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, through the 100-year old canal. We will end our voyage in Colon, Panama.



## Expedition Highlights

- > Explore the protected national parks of Costa Rica & Panama
- > Hike through rugged rainforests learning about the many endemic wildlife species
- > Enjoy this tropical paradise in a zodiac, kayak or on a stand-up paddle board
- > Travel through the Panama Canal – one of the modern wonders of the world

## ON THIS TRIP

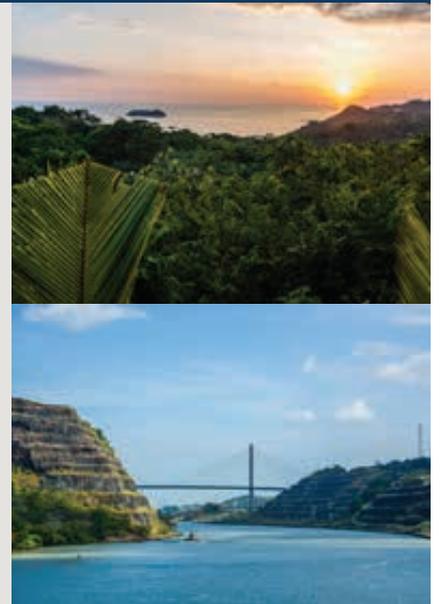
-  Zodiac excursions
-  Onshore hiking options
-  Wildlife observation
-  Photographer-in-Residence
-  Sea kayaking available
-  Whale watching
-  Local guides
-  Educational presentations
-  Active Cruising & Wellness

## IMPORTANT VOYAGE LOGISTICS

This trip commences in San Jose - Costa Rica's lively capital city. We recommend you arrive in San Jose at least one day prior to the scheduled voyage departure date. This gives you a buffer in the event of any unexpected travel delays between home and trip departure time. On the first day of the trip we transfer by coach to Puerto Caldera, which is approximately two hours. On arrival we embark the ship, meet our crew and set sail.

At the end of our voyage, our disembarkation point will be the historic port of Colon in Panama. Here you will be transferred to Panama City – either to a central downtown location or to the airport if you are flying out today.

Full joining instructions are provided in your final travel documentation. If you have questions before this time, please ask us.



## YOUR DAY-BY-DAY EXPEDITION ITINERARY

### DAY 1 / SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA (TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 2019)

This morning we will have the opportunity to explore the capital city of Costa Rica, San Jose. Wander through some of the many plazas that dot this historic city and try a plate of the national dish, Gallo Pinto. After our afternoon rendezvous at a central location in San Jose, we will then transfer two hours west to Puerto Caldera. Here we will meet our vessel, RCGS Resolute, head aboard and settle into our rooms. Tonight we will enjoy dinner and then migrate to the deck, reveling in the first of many tropical sunsets. *RCGS Resolute* will make a short sail across the Gulf of Nicoya to anchor off the Nicoya Peninsula, ready for the next day's adventures.

### DAY 2 / NICOYA PENINSULA & CURU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Today we will explore the Curu National Wildlife Refuge which is nestled at the southeast tip of the Nicoya Peninsula. From a gentle walk along the well established trails in the heart of the park, to a more challenging hike on the Finca de Monos trail - a prime spider monkey viewing area - there are several ways to explore this national treasure and its diverse wildlife. The refuge hosts one of the most beautiful beaches on the peninsula and has spearheaded many successful sustainable development programs from reintroducing the near extinct spider monkey, to the coral reef restoration project and migratory bird monitoring. The tangled mangroves of the shoreline and nearby islands are the ideal backdrop for kayaking, paddle boarding or snorkeling.

### DAY 3 / MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK

Our adventure continues in the Manuel Antonio National Park, one of the smallest yet most visited national parks in Costa Rica. Boarding our zodiacs, we will access the park, slowly cruising along the turquoise blue waters of this tropical paradise. Boasting over 100 species of mammals, 184 species of birds and a plethora of diverse flora, this park is a wildlife lover's dream. Keep your eyes peeled for two and three toed sloths, white-faced monkeys and toucans as you explore the entanglement of trails weaving through the park. The network of hiking trails crisscross the parkland, providing access

to its rainforest, white sand beaches, waterfalls and coral reefs. You may also catch a glimpse of the dramatic volcanic rock formations, Punta Cathedral and Punta Serrucho, from several of the beaches that line the Manuel Antonio National Park. If you'd rather explore the park by water, you can use a paddleboard or kayak for an aquatic adventure, or simply relax on one of the white sand beaches.

### DAY 4 / OSA PENINSULA & CORCOVADO NATIONAL PARK

Extending into the sea at the southern end of Costa Rica's Pacific coast, the Osa Peninsula is rich with both wildlife and history. This is the first of two days in one of the country's most remote destinations and we once again take advantage of our coastal access to explore the 'Parque Nacional Corcovado'. Almost half of the peninsula is devoted to the park which protects an incredible variety of wildlife, including Costa Rica's largest population of jaguars and tapirs. The park is also home to the only remaining old growth wet forests on the Pacific coast of Central America, all four of the country's monkey species: howler, spider, white-faced capuchin and squirrel, 20 species of hummingbird, the endemic yellow-billed cotinga and black-cheeked ant tanager, crimson fronted parakeets, and more.

### DAY 5 / OSA PENINSULA & GOLFO DULCE

On the second day on the Osa Peninsula we will round its most southern point, while navigating the emerald waters of the Golfo Dulce or "Sweet Gulf". You will experience the breathtaking tropical paradise unfolding before your eyes. You will have two ways to explore the Golfo Dulce, either by land or sea. If you want to try your hand at panning for gold, a practice that extends back 1000s of year in the region, join us when we visit the little town of Puerto Jimenez, one of the largest towns on the Osa Peninsula, boasting just over 3,000 inhabitants. If the water is your preferred method of exploration, kayak or paddle board through the expansive tangled mangroves as the wildlife thrives around you. Pods of spinner, bottlenose and spotted dolphins are also residents of the gulf, and in April and May, the enigmatic whale shark comes to breed in Golfo Dulce. If we are lucky we may be able to spot one of these solitary gentle giants, who can live up to 150 years old.



#### DAY 6 / COIBA ISLAND & GOLFO DE MONTIJO, PANAMA

As we bid farewell to Costa Rica, our first stop in Panama is Coiba Island, a place with an unusual history. Having separated from the mainland an estimated 15,000 years ago, Coiba is now home to many endemic subspecies, such as the Coiba Island howler monkey and the Coiba spinetail. In 2005, Coiba National Park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The park is home to numerous native flora that have since become extinct on the mainland of Panama due to deforestation. This also one of the last places in Central America where the scarlet macaw can still be found in sizeable numbers. We can venture out on foot, kayak, or paddle board to explore this tropical gem. If time permits, we may have the opportunity to sail to near-by Granito De Oro, which is a top snorkeling location due to the diversity and volume of marine life. In the afternoon we explore the famous wetlands of the Golfo de Montijo, whose 50,000 acres of mangroves are home to a staggering abundance of wildlife. We cruise the shoreline of the gulf with our cameras and binoculars poised, ready to view the wetlands that are teeming with waterfowl and wading birds.

#### DAY 7 / PEARL ISLANDS & ISLA DEL REY, PANAMA

We have now entered the Gulf of Panama, but before we head for the Panamanian mainland, we make one more island-hopping stop at the Pearl Islands, or as locals refer to it, Islas de las Perlas. This archipelago of more than 250 islands received its name from Spanish Conquistadors who found countless pearls when they visited the islands in 1503. Isla Del Rey is the largest and most visited, with several resorts and hotels, while Isla Saboga is less populated, less visited and offers a glimpse into traditional island culture. Most famous for their deserted white sand beaches, fragile ecosystems and marine life, the islands also made a splash when they were featured as the location for the Survivor television series.

#### DAY 8 / PANAMA CITY, PANAMA

After a week of exploring the remote tropical coastline and far-flung islands, we trade our flip-flops for walking shoes today as we venture into the cityscape of Panama City. Steeped

in rich Spanish history, its cobblestoned historic centre, Casco Viejo, is framed by colonial era landmarks such as the Presidential Palace and Metropolitan Cathedral. Be sure to enjoy an espresso or mojito in one of the many cafés shaded by bougainvillea in Panama's old quarter. For those in search of a cultural experience, the numerous museums, including the Museum of Biodiversity, designed by Frank Gehry, is an experience every architectural fan should check off their bucket list. If you are looking for a quintessential Panamanian Hat or a mola made by the Guna Indians in the San Blas Islands, then the markets are a must see. Head to the fish market for a tasty snack or the National Handicraft Market if pottery, molas and jewelry handcrafted by the pre-Spanish indigenous people of Panama is more your style.

#### DAY 9 / PANAMA CANAL, PANAMA

With our cups full of the cultural experiences of Panama City, today we sit back and let the history come to us. Spending the better part of the day (8+ hours) moving through the 77km Panama Canal from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, we will pass under the Bridge of the Americas before entering the Miraflores Locks. The locks will then take us up to Miraflores Lake, then up again to Gatun Lake, before being lowered back down to the sea level of the Caribbean Sea. You will not simply watch this incredible feat of engineering, you will have the opportunity to experience it firsthand. With the crossing completed, we will then anchor near the city of Colon to enjoy our final dinner together attended by the Captain of the ship and toast our adventures.

#### DAY 10 / COLON, PANAMA (THURSDAY 02 MAY, 2019)

After breakfast, it is time to bid farewell to your crew and fellow travellers as we disembark RCGS Resolute. A transfer back to Panama City is provided for all guests and while some of us will travel to the airport, many may wish to add a few extra days to explore more of the masterpiece that is Panama City.

**ABOUT OUR ITINERARY:** Small ship expedition cruising can sometimes be unpredictable. Specific sites visited will depend on prevailing weather and sea conditions at the time of sailing. The above itinerary should be read as a 'guide only' and may change. The ship's Captain in conjunction with the Expedition Leader continually review the sailing plan throughout the voyage, making adjustments to the itinerary along the way to take advantage of optimal weather and sea conditions or to maximise our encounters with wildlife. Years of experience spent exploring these waterways mean we have plenty of outstanding landing sites and zodiac cruising locations to consider, even when the weather conditions may not be ideal. A flexible approach is something we encourage you to bring to the ship.

## YOUR EXPEDITION INCLUDES:

- ✓ Comprehensive pre-voyage information package including details to help you prepare for your voyage
- ✓ Transfers to the ship on embarkation day and from the ship to the airport or local hotel on disembarkation
- ✓ Shipboard accommodation in your selected cabin category with daily housekeeping. Cabins feature outside views with windows or portholes that open on each deck
- ✓ High quality, eco friendly, Canadian made natural amenities in every cabin
- ✓ All breakfasts, lunches and dinners on board throughout your voyage with daily afternoon tea
- ✓ 24-hour tea, coffee, hot chocolate in bar lounge plus in-cabin tea, coffee, hot chocolate replenished daily
- ✓ Experienced Expedition Leader and professional expedition team of marine biologists, naturalists, historians, adventure guides and photographers
- ✓ Daily off-ship excursions by zodiac boat breaking into small groups for shore landings
- ✓ Guided hikes and walks on shore of various durations for guests of all abilities
- ✓ Visits to wildlife colonies, historic sites, places of outstanding natural beauty and community visits
- ✓ Educational presentations and talks by experts in their field (ie. marine biologists, naturalists, historians etc). Onboard or on shore
- ✓ Resident photography guide available to assist all guests
- ✓ Access to computers in the multimedia lab for image downloads, file back up and management
- ✓ An emergency trained medical physician onboard every voyage
- ✓ Dedicated hospitality team including Hotel Manager, four chefs, professional bar staff and Adventure Concierge staff
- ✓ Onboard sauna, plunge pool, jacuzzi and fitness centre including personal trainer and massage options (charge applies for massage and spa treatments)
- ✓ Access to well stocked library full of reference books
- ✓ Optional Sea Kayaking, snorkeling, stand up paddling boarding, etc. (included in the voyage fare)
- ✓ End of voyage video, photos and take home USB
- ✓ Port fees and all permits to access visited areas

### The right gear for your trip – included ✓



When you travel with One Ocean Expeditions, you will have the use of an expedition gear package free of charge. Containing around \$US900 worth of essential equipment, this kit includes a quality waterproof/windproof jacket and bib-pants plus insulated rubber boots designed for extended walking. We also include a set of binoculars and a Nordic trekking pole for use when on shore. A waterproof backpack completes your package. This kit saves you buying expensive clothing and equipment you may only ever use once. It also eliminates the need to carry such cumbersome gear to the ship (total weight around 8kg/17lbs).

### The Expedition does not include:

- › 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 all One Ocean Expeditions trips)
- › A voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for expedition staff and ship crew (suggested amount – \$US12-15 per day)

# THE RIGHT SHIP = THE BEST EXPERIENCE



*RCGS Resolute* offers exceptional onboard facilities and provides an ideal platform for expedition cruising in remote locations such as the North Atlantic islands. Outstanding observation areas both inside and from the outer decks allow you to be completely absorbed by the coastal landscapes along the way. Our priority is to craft specially designed itineraries that provide you with maximum time in the pristine locations we visit. The vessel has capacity of just 146 guests and we break into small, special interest groups. There are wonderful hiking options onshore, visits to small coastal communities, historic sites and throughout the voyage we enjoy outstanding wilderness areas. Cruising in the zodiacs photographing the landscapes, or observing coastal marine and bird life is a highlight for many. For the more adventurous, sea kayaking is another memorable experience. To learn more about this exceptional vessel, request a copy of the **Ship Fact Sheet** containing detailed technical specifications and additional information about cabins, amenities and inclusions.

## BEFORE YOU BOOK – IMPORTANT VOYAGE DETAILS

### COMPREHENSIVE PRE-VOYAGE INFORMATION

Upon receipt of your deposit and booking forms, a detailed booklet will be sent to you providing additional information to help you prepare for your voyage. This resource is full of useful facts and covers practicalities such as suggested clothing, life on board the ship, wildlife, geography and history as well as details about the activities available throughout your voyage. Information regarding passports and visas, budgeting, as well as travel insurance requirements are also found in this helpful document.

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

On all One Ocean Expeditions' voyages, you must have comprehensive travel insurance. Your booking agent can recommend a policy designed to cover participants on these voyages. Your policy must provide coverage for your medical costs in case of hospitalization, emergency travel and repatriation.

Please check the terms of your policy carefully, particularly with regard to limits of cover. Also ensure you are familiar with the procedure for making claims. Once you have paid your deposit or full payment, certain fees will apply if you have to cancel your holiday (see the cancellation provisions in our booking terms and conditions). For this reason you should take out travel insurance at the time of paying your deposit, which should then protect you in such a situation. You will be required to send us travel insurance policy details prior to your voyage.

### FAMILY FRIENDLY

Central America is a fascinating place for young and inquisitive minds. These voyages are family friendly and we offer special rates for children and youth (up to 21 years of age at time of travel) when travelling with a family member. For children younger than 12 years of age at the time of travel, please contact your booking agent, or our office to discuss the options.

### PASSPORTS AND VISAS

UK, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, US and South African passport holders travelling to Central America for touristic purposes do not require a visa for stays up to 90 days. Ensure your passport is valid for more than six months after your intended stay in these countries. For visitors travelling on other passports, be sure to check with your booking agent whether you will be required to obtain a visa for these locations.

### SEA KAYAKING

The sea kayaking program is directed at any passenger with an adventurous spirit and some prior paddling experience. Included in the voyage fare, an expression of interest must be mentioned at the time of booking. You will need to complete a special questionnaire outlining your previous kayaking experience. Ask your agent, or our office for a copy of this document if you are interested in joining the sea kayaking program.

### THE ONE CLUB – EXPEDITION ALUMNI

Come as a passenger, leave as a friend. Once you have experienced one voyage with us, it's likely you will want to experience another. Your commitment to travel with us is rewarded with our commitment to you, our valued guest. As members of the One Club Expedition Alumni, your loyalty is rewarded with a range of great travel benefits when you return for your next voyage — no matter the destination. Ask your booking agent for details.



**IMPORTANT:** The information provided here is given in good faith and has been compiled with all reasonable care. However, some of the information may become out of date. Please keep this in mind and check with us if you want to be sure about anything. The document was correct at time of printing. If you have any queries, please contact your voyage booking agent or our office. We are here to help you.



### Supporting Local Communities

Many locations on this voyage are well off the tourist trail. Our visit provides an economic boost through port and visitor fees and when guests come into contact with the local economy, through the purchasing of arts, crafts and produce. We employ a number of local staff and on and off the ship to share with you their fantastic knowledge, history and cultural traditions. Local guides in several locations provide additional insight.



### World Leading - the World Over

For several years One Ocean Expeditions and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society have maintained a collaborative relationship grounded in geographical education, exploration, science, social and economic community development, Canadian national identity and experiential travel. We are proud to be the exclusive marine travel partner of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and affiliates.



### The right team = exceptional service

You will come to appreciate the dedication of our expedition team when onboard the ship. The highest staff to guest ratio in the industry (1:4) allows you to experience the broadest range of activities possible, catering to all interests and abilities. We are committed to providing exceptional service and are renowned for our flexible, yet professional approach and an ability to 'make things happen'.

## INTERESTED IN THIS EXPERIENCE?

**When choosing to travel with One Ocean Expeditions we ensure your experience from start to finish is straight forward and well organized.**

Start by customizing your journey and mapping out the trip ahead.

If this sounds like the right trip for you, please discuss your ideas and plans with your preferred booking agent. They will reserve a cabin for you on your chosen voyage. This provides time to book flights to the embarkation points of this voyage and to plan other pre or post voyage travel requirements. Please remember that you will require comprehensive travel insurance to join our voyages. This is best arranged at the time of booking. Following confirmation of your reservation, you will need to complete a detailed **One Ocean Expeditions Booking Package** plus other pre voyage documentation to accompany your deposit. At this point your voyage of discovery is underway.

Take advantage of our experience, which spans decades of expedition travel in the world's most remote regions. Should you have any questions, we are here to help at any time.

YOUR NOTES:

Trip Note Updated: 03APR18 - RC