Central America Adventure
Costa Rica & the Panama Canal
23rd April to 2nd May 2019 (10 days)

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.

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

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TOUR ROUTE MAP...
THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

Day 1: Arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica. 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, revelling 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, Costa Rica. 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 Central American 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 snorkelling.

Day 3: Manuel Antonio National Park, Costa Rica. 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 Hoffmann’s Two-toed and Brown-throated Sloths, White-faced Capuchin 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 Antonia 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, Costa Rica.** 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 Baird’s 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: Mantled Howler Monkey, Central American Spider, White-faced Capuchin and Central American Squirrel Monkey, 20 species of hummingbird, the endemic Yellow-billed Cotinga and Black-cheeked Ant Tanager, Finsch’s Parakeets, and more.

**Day 5: Osa Peninsula and Golfo Dulce, Costa Rica.** 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 breath-taking 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 1000’s 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, Common 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 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 snorkelling 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 Island & 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 Ray 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 jewellery 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 though 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. 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.

THE VESSEL...

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 RCGS Resolute additional information about cabins, amenities and inclusions.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:
The price for this voyage on the RCGS Resolute are as follows:

- Main Deck Triple Share: US$ 3,995 per person sharing;
- Twin Private: US$ 5,295 per person sharing;
- Superior: US$ 5,895 per person sharing;
- Superior Plus: US$ 6,095 per person sharing;
- Shackleton Suite: US$ 7,095 per person sharing;
- One Ocean Suite: US$ 8,695 per person sharing;

IMPORTANT NOTES:
a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour).
b) Please also note that a Rockjumper leader may not accompany the expedition unless a minimum
of 10 participants are signed up through Rockjumper. In the case that a Rockjumper leader is not on board, the professional expedition staff will take care of all participants signed up through Rockjumper.  
c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs (especially fuel) and may have to be adjusted as a result. You will be notified by email if fuel surcharges or other price adjustments need to be implemented.  
d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.  

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:  

- 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.  
- 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.  
- Rockjumper have taken an allotment on this cruise rather than chartering the cruise in its entirety. We cannot, therefore, predict the number of Rockjumper participants that will be aboard the ship and therefore the number of Rockjumper guides. Furthermore, Rockjumper will need a minimum of 10 participants aboard in order to send out a Rockjumper leader to accompany our guests on this cruise. Any number less than 10 means that we will not have one of our leaders aboard. Regardless, there will be a professional expedition leader aboard (not necessarily an expert birder but nonetheless well versed in Antarctica wildlife) and he will have assistant leaders with him.  
- 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.  
- 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.
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:
This tour **does not** include any airfares. The tour will depart from San Jose, Costa Rica on day 1 in the mid-afternoon, and conclude by 10.00am (sea conditions can affect this time) on day 10 in Panama City, Panama.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:
Juan Santamaría International Airport, San José (IATA: SJO) is the main port of entry for international flights into Costa Rica and is serviced by several international carriers. Tocumen International Airport, Panama City (IATA: PTY) is the main port of departure from Panama and is equally well serviced by international carriers. **IMPORTANT: please DO NOT book your international flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**