

FULL TRANSIT PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

Panama City, Panama to Ft Lauderdale, Florida



Departing Tuesday 29th October 2024 for 12 Days / 11 Nights

Join us on this great cruise at a great price! We travel aboard the beautiful Viking Mars and journey on a Full Transit of the Panama Canal from West to East...

Cruising through the Panama Canal will be one of the unforgettable experiences of your voyage. It takes approximately eight hours to navigate the 50-mile waterway linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, allowing you to experience firsthand one of the engineering marvels of the 20th century. Completed in 1914, the canal marks the culmination of a dream born in 1513, when Balboa became the first European to cross the Isthmus of Panama and sight the Pacific. In 1880 Ferdinand de Lesseps and the French Canal company, builders of the Suez Canal, began construction in Panama, only to be defeated by disease, staggering cost overruns, and massive engineering problems. The French sold their claim and properties to the United States for \$40 million, a staggering loss of \$247 million on their investment. The United States began construction in 1904, completing the project in 10 years at a cost of \$387 million. Building the canal meant solving three problems: engineering, sanitation, and organization. The project, for example, required carving a channel through the Continental Divide and creating the then-largest man-made lake ever built, as well as defeating yellow fever and other tropical maladies. The United States oversaw the operation of the Panama Canal until December 31, 1999, when the Republic of Panama assumed responsibility for the canal's administration.

Our Ship:

Introduced in 2022 as Viking's seventh ocean ship, Viking Mars follows the exact blueprint of its sister ships. And therein lies its appeal: repeat cruisers appreciate the sense of familiarity aboard the 930-passenger ship, while newcomers are charmed by its stylish design and intuitive layout.

Sporting an elegant flair inspired by Nordic nature, Viking Mars often feels like a luxe boutique hotel, without going over the top. Nods to Viking and Scandinavian culture are present in the décor and design elements, while birch tones, wintry blues and earthen hues provide a light and airy ambiance. Art is ubiquitous -- including original works by Norwegian masters like Edvard Munch, Nikolai Astrup, and Jakob Weidemann -- while black-and-white travel photography serve as a constant visual reminder of Viking Mars' raison d'être.

But for all its inward allure, Viking Mars is a ship made for destination-intensive itineraries. Its nimble size means it can visit a wider assortment of ports ranging from world class to barely accessible. And you get one free excursion in each port -- one of the many inclusions you enjoy when sailing with Viking -- further emphasizing the cruise line's commitment to shoreside exploration. Onboard, daily enrichment lectures led by resident historians and informative port talks whet passengers' appetite for discovery.

As we enter the canal approach between 4am & 5am, it's always great to view from your own private balcony...no need to go anywhere, just get up and drink coffee -- a once in a lifetime opportunity to marvel at this amazing achievement. Is it worth it? 100% of Balcony Stateroom passengers say yes!



Day to Day Itinerary:

Day 1 - Home Airport to Panama City, Panama (Fuerte Amador)

After checking-in at your designated departure airport, please go directly through to the departure gate so you don't get caught in a long line for security. When you arrive in Panama City, Panama proceed to the baggage re-claim area and an ABS Travel Group Representative will be there to meet you. Once all bags have been re-claimed, you will be directed to your transportation for transfer to the hotel near the Airport for overnight.

Fuerte Amador, situated at the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal, is a man-made peninsula extending out into the Pacific Ocean. The one-mile causeway was created by connecting four small islands with rocks excavated from the Panama Canal. There are several shops, restaurants, and other specialty stores centered around a large marina that serves as a tender dock. The causeway also affords a panoramic view of Panama City's impressive skyline and serves as the home for the Smithsonian Institute of Tropical Research.

Overnight Panama City, Panama – no meals included today

Day 2 – Hotel transfer to Ship.

Mid-morning we transfer to your floating home for the next 10 nights. Once on board it's time to explore this beautiful vessel... Lunch is available in the buffet restaurant and dinner tonight is in the main dining room. Let the festivities begin... enjoy.

Overnight Ship – Lunch and Dinner included.

Days 3 – Scenic cruising the Panama Canal

The Panama Canal connects the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, crossing the narrowest stretch of the Isthmus of Panama. A full transit through the 48-mile-long canal takes around eight to ten hours and passes through the Gatun Lake and the Culebra Cut, an artificial valley that runs through the Continental Divide. An engineering marvel of the 20th century, the crossing passes through a series of locks that lift and lower ships 85 feet from sea level, guided by electric locomotives known as molas. The Panama Canal transit is a rite of passage and a truly memorable experience.



And this is just the beginning...

Overnight aboard ship – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 4 – Colon, Panama

Colón lies near the Panama Canal's Atlantic entrance. During the California gold rush, prospectors from the eastern United States sailed here, trekked across the narrow isthmus of Panama, then sailed up the Pacific coast, believing the journey easier than traversing the entire United States. Indigenous tribes maintain a strong presence in this northern corner of Panama. In the city's rural reaches, the Emberá people—descended from ancient tribes—live in thatched-roof huts, travel by dugout canoe and weave traditional baskets.

Overnight aboard Ship – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 5 – San Jose, Costa Rica (Puerto Limon)

Puerto Limón is the gateway to one of the world's most biodiverse countries. In 1502, Christopher Columbus landed on the nearby island of Isla Uvita. Puerto Limón boasts a diversity of its own. Italian, Jamaican and Chinese residents descended from immigrants who came here to lay the railroad to San José in the late 19th century. Coffee exports from the highlands, and the later arrival of the United Fruit Company, helped to bolster the local economy. Today, a rich Afro-Caribbean heritage is prevalent, with many speaking a creole form of English, Limonese Creole.

Overnight aboard ship – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 6 – At Sea

Sail through turquoise waters where legends of marauding pirates, swashbucklers and tales of hidden treasures were born. As you sail, explore our well-curated Library, tucked in a private alcove of the Living Room, and select from a broad range of titles. Read a book by the Main Pool, a calming oasis in any weather with its retractable roof, allowing for year-round swimming.

Overnight aboard ship – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 7 – Roatan, Honduras

Roatán is part of the Bay Islands and a snorkeler's paradise. The reefs that skirt its archipelago boast the highest diversity of corals in the Caribbean. Its botanical and butterfly gardens host an astonishing array of tropical plants and multihued winged creatures. More than a tropical playground, the Bay Islands have a rich history of Spanish, British and French presence, as all of them vied for land with the indigenous Caribs. Over the decades, settlers from around the world put down roots in this island paradise and established a successful fruit trade industry.

Overnight aboard ship – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 8 – Belize City, Belize

Inhabited by the Maya for more than 5,000 years, Belize is home to more than a dozen remarkable ruins. At the ancient site of Altun Ha, one of Central America's most accessible archaeological treasures, several Mesoamerican temple-pyramids stand as testaments to an advanced civilization. Its most famous, the Temple of the Masonry Altars, is 54 feet tall. Offshore, Belize boasts another spectacular wonder: the famous Great Blue Hole. Just off Ambergris Caye, this natural phenomenon is a breathtaking chute in the middle of a shallow lagoon and paradise for diving enthusiasts.

Overnight Ship - Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 9 – Cozumel, Mexico

The island of Cozumel holds the keys to many of the most intriguing secrets of Mexico's ancient civilizations. At San Gervasio, pre-Columbian women made offerings to Ix Chel, goddess of the moon and fertility. More recently, the Spanish left marks of their early presence in the colorful colonial architecture and lively traditions of San Miguel and at the scenic lighthouse at Punta Sur. Today, this island off Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula attracts as many snorkelers as it does history buffs; the Cozumel Reefs National Marine Park is the world's second-largest coral reef system.



Overnight aboard ship – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 10 & 11 – At Sea

Learn about the delicate ecosystems of the Caribbean Sea that lie beneath the surface of these crystal clear, warm waters. These remarkable coral reefs are known as the “rainforests of the sea.” As you sail, take advantage of the array of delicious cuisine offered on board. You may visit Mamsen's, our casual gourmet deli, any time from early morning to late at night for a taste of traditional Norwegian fare. Or, dine at Manfredi's and savor an authentic Italian meal, with options ranging from Milanese risotto to Tuscan inspired classics.

Overnight aboard ship – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner aboard Ship

Day 12 – Ft Lauderdale, Florida

Arrive Ft Lauderdale and transfer to the airport for your return flight home.

Your accommodations - Balcony Stateroom with Ocean View:



\$5,795 per person based on double occupancy

Itinerary at a glance

Price: from \$5,795 (pp based on double occupancy)

Starts: Tuesday 29th October 2024

Ends: Saturday 9th November 2024

What's included?

- Return flights from most US Airports and Rapid City SD
- Pre-Cruise overnight
- Transfers to and from the ship plus all meals and entertainment aboard ship
- 6 Ports of Call with all air & cruise taxes
- Onboard Cruise Gratuities for Stateroom Attendant and Dining Room Staff
- All baggage handling (excluding airline fees)
- Fully escorted

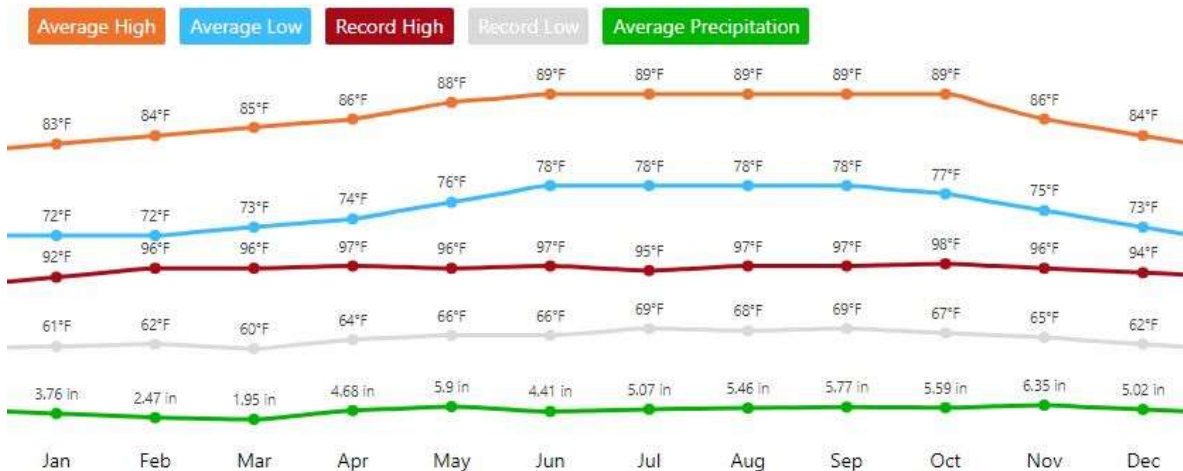
How to book

- Deposit \$1,000 per person
- Final Balance Due July 15th 2024 or at time of booking if after this date

What you'll need

- A Passport is required for this Cruise
- Sun tan lotion for that warm Caribbean Sun!

Weather



June is on average the **WARMEST** month.

January is on average the **COOLEST** month.



1-888-788-6777

abstravelgroup.com