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Panama Canal

16 Days: February 4-19, 2010

This travel package planned and escorted by Jane Sorenson.

Leave the snow and cold of Iowa behind as we head to the sunny Caribbean! Someone to wait on you and make the bed, no dishes to wash, 14 days of gourmet meals...get the idea? Let's go!

February 4 we pick up through our guaranteed departure cities, on our way to Des Moines. You and your experienced cruise escort check in and fly to **Fort Lauderdale, FL**. Leave the details to us! Upon arrival in Ft. Lauderdale, we're transferred by private motor coach to our hotel. (We build in this overnight so we can allow for weather and airline delays and not miss the ship!)

February 5 enjoy breakfast and a leisurely morning. Our private coach will transfer us to Port Everglades, where Holland America Line's MS Maasdam will be moored. From the time you board the ship, you will sense that something is different! The Indonesian and Filipino staff will do an excellent job of providing you with gracious (nearing unbelievable) service. Your waiter will pick up on your little idiosyncrasies by the second day and anticipate your requests. Your stateroom steward will learn your schedule, make up your room and change your towels seemingly out of thin air, never intruding.



Whether you're a "meat and potatoes" sort of individual, or a discriminating connoisseur, you will find delight in the menus (which have no prices!). Breakfast and lunch can be served to you in the dining room or peruse all of the choices in the Lido Restaurant, arranged food court-style! Don't miss the Royal Dutch High Tea, snacks or specialty coffees in the Explorations Café (a comfortable, coffee house where you can browse through an extensive library, surf the Internet and check e-mail or read the morning paper), the ice cream bar or the late-night extravaganzas understatedly called "snacks." Dinner is a nightly "event" as

you descend the elegant staircase to the sounds of a string trio. A different array of gourmet dishes and decadent desserts are featured each night. Some of our nights will be formal, some informal, and others will be more casual. For a special experience, dine in the upscale alternative restaurant with an even more incredible menu and a more intimate atmosphere; all for a small additional cover charge. If you just want an informal, quick dinner, check out the food court-style Lido Restaurant where you'll find everything from pizza to stir-fry.

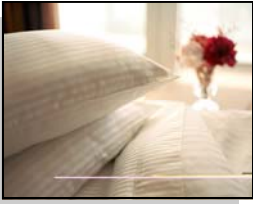


Each evening after dinner, different entertainment will be presented in the 2-level show lounge, including Broadway, comedy, illusion, dance and a variety of musical artists. There's never a cover charge or a ticket to buy! After the show stroll on deck, try your luck in the casino, relax with piano music in the Crow's Nest lounge or rush back to your stateroom to plan your next day! A program will be slipped under your door each evening, providing a list of the many activities available on board for the next day as well as information on ports which lie ahead. On days at sea, you'll find plenty of activities to keep even the most active person occupied. If you

just want to lose yourself in a good book or catch a current movie, the option is yours!

Unpack once in your comfortable stateroom, which is larger than a comparable cabin on other cruise lines. This will be your (pampered) home for the next 14 nights!





February 6 and 7 wake up when you want and enjoy breakfast as you like. Ah!!!! Two full days at sea! Soak up the sun around the pool, participate in some of the many on-board activities, study up on our next port. Maybe you'll want to check out the Greenhouse Spa & Salon, which features facials, hot stone massage, steam in a thermal suite or have your hair and nails done for a special evening. Knowledgeable cruise staff will present information on available shore excursions and will let you know what bargains to seek! Too busy to attend the shore excursions talk? Catch it as it's repeated on the shipboard television system right in your own stateroom, along with

movies, CNN and other programming. Check out the well-stocked library on board, do a little shopping or write in your journal. The Culinary Arts Center, presented by Food & Wine magazine is a state-of-the-art demonstration kitchen for gourmet presentations, tasting events and intimate cooking classes. New menu choices and different entertainment are on each evening's agenda, aboard your floating resort. Dance the night away to live music or a disc jockey, try your luck in the casino, shop or just relax. Guests will be able to "show and tell" their vacation memories through the Digital Workshop powered by Windows®. Free workshops led by Microsoft-trained "techsperts" show even the most novice camera or computer user how to take better vacation photos, make movies, edit pictures and create scrapbooks using a variety of Microsoft Windows and Windows Live services. Learn how to share all your digital memories through e-mail, blogging and social networking — so friends and family can see where you've been cruising even before you return home.



February 8 we dock at **Oranjestad, Aruba**. Shop colorful floating markets. Take a semi-submersible or a submarine trip. Tour the countryside or steal away to a white sandy beach. Tour the Butterfly Farm, Aruba's number one ecological attraction. Sail on a catamaran and go snorkeling or hike and snorkel. Take a kayak trip or learn to scuba dive. Ride a jetboat or go four-wheeling. You'll love this port!

February 9 we spend the day at sea. Curl up with that book you've wanted to read, take a nap (or two!), participate in some of the many activities available on board, start a new exercise program or whatever else you like! It's your vacation! Awesome food awaits you at all 3 meals and you can count on another evening of great entertainment.



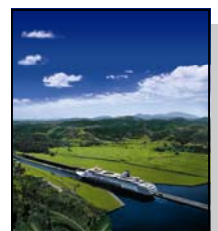
February 10 is the day we've awaited! We experience the **Panama Canal**. In 1513, Spanish explorer Vasco Nuñez de Balboa considered the possibility of a waterway through the jungle. In 1879, Ferdinand Lesseps, who had successfully built the Suez Canal, set out to build a canal between the Pacific and the Atlantic. Overwhelmed and bankrupt, the idea was abandoned in 1889.

Theodore Roosevelt resurrected the idea in 1902, purchasing the French holdings in Panama for \$40 million. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked under terrible conditions. Typhoid, malaria, and other tropical diseases took over 1,200 workers in 2 years and threatened more. In 1904 Col. William Gorgas ordered the swamps drained and brush cleared to eliminate mosquito-breeding areas. The Canal began operation in 1913, ahead of schedule and \$23 million under budget!



Today, approximately 40 ships transit the canal each day, which is open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, saving some 3,000 miles, and a great deal of time. A local pilot is on board to guide the ship expertly through the narrow locks and into the canal. In each of the locks, lines are secured to electric locomotives, referred to as "mules," which keep the ship centered in the locks (110 feet wide and 1000 feet long) as the Maasdam is pulled through. Each ship requires several million gallons of fresh water for the 6 locks (enough to supply Boston for a day), which then spills into the sea.

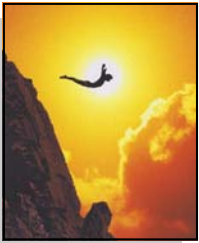
We'll enter Limón Bay, near Cristóbal by daylight and make our way through the **Gatun Locks to Gatun Lake**, one of the largest man-made lakes in the world! Our floating resort is raised 85 feet from sea level in the Gatun Locks. Later, we cross the Continental Divide as we travel the 8-mile Gaillard Cut which was chiseled out of shale and rock. The Cut is really a ditch that at points is scarcely 500' wide. At the Pedro Miguel Locks our ship is lowered 31 feet and at the Mira-



flores locks we are lowered 54 feet in the tallest set of locks on the canal (due to tidal fluctuations). Sunrise on the Caribbean, sunset on the Pacific. This will truly be a day never forgotten!

February 13 enjoy another day at sea. Keep as busy or relaxed as you like.

February 14 (Happy Valentine's Day! What a place to spend it!) The Maasdam arrives at **Santa Cruz Huatulco**, on the Mexican Riviera. This new resort area lies on 9 gorgeous bays, which offer great swimming and snorkeling. The Sierra Madre del Sur Mountains form a scenic backdrop to this tropical paradise. Optional shore experiences include a catamaran cruise, horseback riding, a sailing adventure, a bird-watching eco-tour, an all-terrain vehicle jungle adventure, a river float trip, a scenic drive, a mountain bike tour and others.



February 15 we arrive in **Acapulco**. Several optional shore experiences features the famous cliff divers. Other experiences range from swimming with the dolphins to a bay cruise (or a combination thereof!), city tours, touring by private car, time at a luxury resort and more!

February 16 recuperate from your busy last couple of days with a day of leisure or keep the momentum going! It's your choice. The Maasdam is at sea all day. Food, fun and entertainment will abound.



February 17 we arrive in **Cabo San Lucas, Mexico**, on the tip of Baja California. The familiar rock arch beyond which secluded Lovers' Beach is found is said to be the dividing line between the Pacific and the Sea of Cortés. Choose from an array of shore excursions or explore on your own. Cabo San Lucas has miles of incredible beaches, excellent sport fishing and great shopping.



Take a Rhino ATV adventure, a Jeep safari, a coastal cruise, whale watch cruise; go snorkeling, swim with the dolphins or many other optional excursions. Another outstanding dinner and great show await you! Stay up until the wee hours as there's no need for an alarm in the morning!

February 18 is our last full day at sea. Reorganize your new-found treasures, finish that book, walk off some of the desserts we've taken in, catch up your journal or laze away our last full day aboard the Maasdam. Tonight we bid farewell to our dining room staff and stateroom stewards. (No, you cannot take them home with you!)



February 19 we arrive in **San Diego's scenic harbor**. We'll clear U.S. Customs and Immigration then transfer to the airport. We check in for our flight home, where Hawkeye Stages will be waiting for us to return us to our departure cities.

Reservations & Information: 1-877-694-8687 or www.northlandtravel.com

This 16-day Panama Canal package includes: Luxury motor coach transportation between our guaranteed departure cities and Des Moines International Airport, round-trip air transportation (based on Des Moines departure...quotes for other gateway cities available), lodging for 1 night in Ft. Lauderdale, luggage handling and 14 days of cruising aboard the MS Maasdam. Your cruise includes all meals aboard ship, many activities (shore excursions are optional and not included) as well as nightly entertainment.

Inside staterooms available from \$3,487 per person, double occupancy (category K)
Oceanview staterooms available from \$3,687 per person, double occupancy (category EE)
Verandah staterooms with private balcony available from \$5,187 per person, double occupancy (category B)

Reservations: anytime as long as space is available. A variety of staterooms is available on a first come, first serve basis. To increase your chances of securing your first choice, please book early.

Deposit: \$350 per person, due with your reservation

Balance due: November 13

Early Booking Discount: \$50 per person discount applied toward final payment if deposit is received by September 15.

Peace of Mind Protection: Not available for this package. A number of cancellation protection plans are available. We'll be happy to provide details to you. Without cancellation protection, regardless of the reason for cancellation, the following penalties apply:

Cancellation from November 18-December 7 a \$350 penalty per person will apply.

Cancellation from December 7-January 4 are subject to a 50% penalty.

Cancellation from January 5-February 2 are subject to a 75% penalty.

Cancellations after February 2 are subject to 100% penalty.

Guaranteed departure cities: Decorah, New Hampton, Waterloo, Marshalltown, Ames, Fort Dodge, Webster City, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Coralville and Newton.

A valid passport is required for this cruise.