



GATUN LOCKS AT PANAMA CANAL

PANAMA

A Taste of Panama: Canal, Rainforest, & Culture

8 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: OCT - JUL

Journey to the “Crossroads of the World” for an informative look at Panama’s fascinating history, culture, and natural beauty. Explore both the Pacific and Caribbean sides of the country as you learn about the engineering marvel that is the Panama Canal. Discover its past, present, and future during a partial transit. You’ll also go beyond the canal and delve deeper into the country’s cultural identity, spending time with an indigenous community and reflecting on the effects of Spanish colonization in the capital’s historical districts. Meanwhile, examine how Panama’s unique geography played a vital role in shaping the ecology of the Americas.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Uncover Panama’s role as an international trade center and cultural melting pot in the historical district of Casco Viejo.
- Make a partial canal transit, cruising under the Bridge of the Americas and Centenario Bridge and viewing the elaborate lock system in action.
- Learn about the geological origins, natural history, and ecological effects of the Panamanian isthmus at the Frank Gehry-designed BioMuseo.
- Kayak on Lake Gatún, a man-made lake 85 feet above sea level.
- Meet members of the indigenous Emberá tribe and learn about their history, traditions, and culture.
- Observe tropical flora and fauna during a hike and aerial tram ride through Soberanía National Park.

WHAT’S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



EMBERÁ CHILD BY YVES PICO



PANAMA VIEJO RUINS BY ADAM JONES

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - PANAMA CITY

Upon arrival at Tocumen International Airport in Panama City, meet your driver and transfer approximately 45 minutes to the hotel, which is situated at the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal near the Bridge of the Americas. Check-in begins at 3 pm. This is an international arrival day, with most flights arriving in the evening; therefore, no activities are planned today. *Overnight at Radisson Panama Canal.*

DAY 2 - PANAMA CITY

This morning meet for a welcome breakfast and orientation to the program and Panama City before heading out to explore the historical wonders of the city. The first stop is Panama Viejo (Old Panama). Founded in 1519 by the Spanish, Panama Viejo was the first European settlement established on the Pacific coast of the Americas and was a key port for Spain's conquest of Peru. Together with the historical district of Panama, it forms a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. Today the city is an archaeological site due to its abandonment in 1671, when the English privateer Henry Morgan sacked the settlement. Highlights of Panama Viejo include the Catedral Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Bishop House, Convent of the Nuns, and the Panama La Vieja Museum. Next, head to the Miraflores Locks Visitor Center at the Panama Canal to view the locks at work and enjoy the museum's interactive displays. Have lunch while watching ships passing through the canal. Return to the hotel in the afternoon. Before heading out for dinner at a local restaurant on the Amador Causeway, listen to a lecture given by a local expert, "The Panama Canal: Past, Present, and Future." *Overnight at Radisson Panama Canal. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - PANAMA CITY

Today after breakfast, continue exploring Panama with a visit to the historical district of Casco Viejo, or Casco Antiguo, which was built in 1671 after the destruction of Panama Viejo. Casco Viejo's parks and narrow streets are lined with colorful buildings representative of Spanish, French, and early American architecture. This eclectic collection of architectural styles reflects the city's role as an international trade center and cultural melting pot long before the building of the canal. Explore the Metropolitan Cathedral, Municipal Palace, National Theater, French Embassy, and France Plaza, with views of Panama's modern skyline and the Bay of Panama. Have lunch at a local restaurant, then visit the Biomuseo, Panama City's Biodiversity Museum. The modern and colorful building was designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry. Inside, eight permanent exhibits depict the geologic and natural history of the Isthmus of Panama, a strip of land that united two continents, changed the world's biodiversity, and would one day connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. *Overnight at Radisson Panama Canal. (BLD)*



METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL BY CHRISTA MARKLEY

DAY 4 - COLÓN

After an early breakfast, transfer to Flamenco Marina and board a boat to make a partial canal transit, beginning in the Pacific Ocean and heading north through two of the Canal's three lock systems. One of the first observations you'll pass is the Bridge of the Americas, which was built by the United States in 1962 to connect the land that was divided during the Panama Canal construction.

The bridge is also part of the Pan-American Highway, a 30,000 mile network of roads that stretches from Alaska to Argentina. As you continue your cruise, arrive at the first set of locks, the Miraflores Locks. Miraflores are the tallest of the canal's locks system, a necessity due to the extreme tidal variation of the Pacific Ocean. Vessels are raised 54 feet across two lock chambers.

During lunch aboard the cruise, reach Pedro Miguel Locks where the boat is raised 30 feet across three chambers. Continue cruising through Gatún Lake before approaching the Gaillard Cut, the narrowest section of the Panama Canal where the majestic Centenario Bridge comes into view. The journey culminates at the confluence of Gatún Lake and the Chagres River. The Chagres River is the main source of water used in the canal's operation. Continue to the town of Gamboa for disembarkation, then journey to Colón on the Atlantic coast and have the remainder of the day at leisure. *Overnight at Meliá Panama Canal. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - COLÓN

After breakfast, visit Fort San Lorenzo, which was constructed in the 1500s to fortify Spain's Atlantic port—and protect the transfer of Peru's riches from attack by pirates. But like Panama Viejo, it was sacked by Henry Morgan, and today exists as ruins. In addition to Fort San Lorenzo, the San Lorenzo National Park contains Fort Sherman, a United States army base erected in 1911. The park covers approximately 24,000 acres on Panama's Atlantic coast, along the western banks of the Panama Canal. On the way back to the hotel, stop at the Panama Canal Expansion Visitor Center to view the new set of locks on the Caribbean side of the canal, completed in 2016. Gain insights into the updated lock design and the work that made the canal expansion a reality. After lunch at the hotel, venture on a kayaking expedition on Lake Gatún. *Overnight at Meliá Panama Canal. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - GAMBOA

After breakfast, transfer toward Lake Alajuela, with

discussions en route about indigenous cultures and their history in Panama. Upon arrival at the Chagres River, board dugout canoes for the journey through the dense jungle. Upriver, step out of the dugout canoes and experience a short hike (which could be a bit muddy) to a beautiful waterfall in the midst of the rainforest. Those who want to cool off can take a swim in the refreshing pool just beneath the waterfall. Continue to the village of the Emberá, one of six indigenous tribes in Panama, for a visit with community members and opportunities to learn about their daily life. The village chief will provide a brief explanation on the history of the tribe, its traditions, cultures, beliefs, and handicrafts. After a typical lunch of fish and plantains prepared by the Emberá women,

experience a traditional dance and have the opportunity to shop for handicrafts. The sale of local products directly benefits the village and helps fund schooling for the children. There is also the opportunity to get "inked" with a temporary Emberá tattoo painting. Later this afternoon, return by boat to the dock and transfer by bus to Gamboa Rainforest Resort. Settle in and have dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Gamboa Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - GAMBOA

After breakfast, visit Soberanía National Park. Established in 1980, it stands as one of Panama's natural jewels and is one of the country's most accessible tropical rainforests. Next, visit Summit Botanical Gardens, which hosts a research center for development of tropical biology and horticulture. The botanical garden showcases a representation of plant species from tropical and subtropical countries around the

world and from the native species of Panama. Afterwards, return to the resort for lunch. This afternoon venture almost 2,000 feet above the rainforest floor on Gamboa's Aerial Tram for a gondola ride through the forest canopy. The tram ends at an observation tower 100 feet high with expansive 360-degree views of Soberanía National Park and Gatún Lake. In the evening, return to the hotel and have a farewell dinner. *Overnight at Gamboa Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - DEPART

This morning transfer to the international airport for your flight back to the United States. Check-out is no later than 12 pm. (B)



GEOFFROY'S TAMARIN IN SOBERANÍA

LAND PRICING

\$2,695 (10 participants + 1 leader)

\$2,355 (15 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, or items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe



ACTIVITY LEVEL **2** EASY-MODERATE

WHAT TO EXPECT

Visiting both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts of the isthmus, this program focuses on Panama's natural, cultural, and historic heritage. Your 8-day itinerary includes two- and three-night stays in three different locations. Daily activities are not strenuous but can last two to three hours. This includes walking tours of Panama City's UNESCO-listed historic districts, where there may be cobbled or uneven streets, and stairs. Also included is a partial cruise transit of the Panama Canal; an aerial tram ride approximately 2,000 feet above the rainforest floor; and an excursion to an indigenous Embera village via dugout canoes, with a short hike and optional waterfall swim. Panama is warm and humid, with a dry season that runs from December to March, and a longer wet season from mid-March to December. Even during the wet season rains can be short and intermittent, with a lush effect on the landscape. Land transportation is aboard private, air-conditioned motorcoaches.

