



PANAMA

A Taste of Panama: Canal, Rainforest, & Culture

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

CUSTOMIZE
THIS
PROGRAM!

Journey to the “Crossroads of the World” for a comprehensive introduction to Panama’s fascinating history, culture, and natural heritage. 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. Meanwhile, you’ll also go beyond the canal and delve deeper into the country’s indigenous heritage, its colonial legacy, and its vital role in shaping the flora and fauna of the Americas as we know them today.

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, passing 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 PICQ



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 along the Amador Causeway. 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 Country Inn & Suites.*

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. Founded in 1519, Panama Viejo (Old Panama) was the first Spanish city established on the Pacific coast of the Americas and was one of the most important trade routes in the history of the American continent. Together with the historical district of Panama, it forms a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. Highlights 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 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 causeway, listen to a lecture given by a local expert, "The Panama Canal: Past, Present, and Future." *Overnight at Country Inn & Suites. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - PANAMA CITY

Today after breakfast, continue exploring Panama with a visit to the historical district of Casco Viejo, or Casco Antiguo, built in 1671 after the destruction of Panama Viejo by the English privateer Henry Morgan. Casco Viejo's parks and narrow streets are lined with colorful buildings representative of Spanish, French, and early American architectural styles. 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. Have lunch at a local restaurant, then visit the Biomuseo, Panama City's Biodiversity Museum. The strikingly colorful building was designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry. It represents the saga of the Isthmus of Panama, a land that united two continents, changed the



world's biodiversity, and connected the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Inside, eight permanent exhibits tell the story in graphic detail. *Overnight at Country Inn & Suites. (BLD)*

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. One of the first observations you'll pass is the Bridge of the Americas. Part of the Pan-American Highway, the bridge is a 30,000 mile network of roads that stretches from Alaska to Argentina. It is also the bridge connecting the land that was divided during the construction of the Panama Canal. As the cruise continues, 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. During lunch, reach Pedro Miguel Locks where the boat is raised 30 feet. Continue cruising through Gatún Lake (85 ft. above sea level) 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 and have the remainder of the day at leisure. *Overnight at Meliá Panama Canal. (BL)*

DAY 5 - COLÓN

After breakfast, take a field trip to Fort San Lorenzo, which was constructed in the 1500s during the reign of King Philip II of Spain. The San Lorenzo National Park contains not only Fort San Lorenzo but also Fort Sherman, erected in 1911. The park covers an area of 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 New Locks Visitor Center to view the new set of locks on the Caribbean side of the Canal. Gain insights into the updated lock design and the work that went into making 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 seven indigenous tribes in Panama. The people of the Emberá

community will provide a warm welcome and share about their 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. Created 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 unique view of the forest. The tram ends at an observation tower 100 feet high with expansive



360-degree views of Soberanía National Park. Have a farewell dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Gamboa Rainforest Resort. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - DEPART

This morning transfer to the international airport for the flight to the United States. Participants with later flights can keep their hotel rooms until check out at 12 pm. Except for breakfast, all other meals are on your own today. (B)

LAND PRICING

\$2,645 (10 participants + 1 leader)

\$2,295 (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 2020.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. 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. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Non-refundable final payment is due at 95 days prior to departure.



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Holbrook was founded on the principle that travel fosters a greater understanding of our world's cultural and natural treasures and that these experiences allow individuals to become agents for global change. We hope that your experiences in Australia will remain with you forever and will challenge you to make a difference in the world we share!

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OLD PANAMA BY JOSÉ PORRAS

