

PANAMA: UNESCO World Heritage Sites

(Note: This is only a sample tour)

Day 1: Depart for **Panama City**, Panama. Panama City is the capital and largest city in the country. It is home to a diverse blend of cultures and an enormous historical sector in the Old City. The lively and vibrant banking district on the other hand is very modern and often compared to Miami. Upon arrival, meet your assistant and transfer you to your hotel.

Day 2: Tour Panama City and the **Miraflores Locks**. See huge vessels getting lifted or lowered 16 meters in two distinct steps. Visit the Museum and Visitor Center at Miraflores which gives you a good idea on the history and construction of the Canal – a masterpiece of engineering. Continue to the **Amador Causeway**, offering magnificent views of the Canal and the skyline of Panama City. Continue to the Casco Viejo, Panama City's colonial quarter. Admire the lovely colonial houses, the narrow roads and the impressive churches. Panama's historic district together with the Old Panama was declared a world heritage site in 1995 due to its importance in Colonial times. Afterwards continue to Panama Viejo, the **Old Panama**, the first European settlement on the Pacific coast of the Americas. This first Panama City was looted and destroyed by the notorious English buccaneer Henry Morgan in 1671 and therefore abandoned. Today there are only ruins left. Still, the tower of the ancient cathedral is standing and has become a landmark of the town.



Day 3: This morning enjoy an hour train ride along the Panama Canal to Colon on Panama's Caribbean side. From there continue to Portobelo. In the 15th century the Spaniards transported all their Peruvian treasures through this small port to Spain. To-day, **Portobelo** is a ruin complex set up in the middle of the tropical rain forest. See fortresses, castles, military bases as well as the ancient custom house. After lunch continue to San Lorenzo. A magnificent example of the 17th and 18th century military architecture, this Panamanian fort on the Caribbean coast formed part of the defence system built by the Spanish Crown to protect transatlantic trade.



Day 4: Flight to **David**, Panama's second city. Transfer uphill to the quaint mountain village of Cerro Punta at the foothills of the Barú Volcano. This alpine village is nestled in the Chiriquí highlands – the land of eternal spring – with a diverse combination of rainforest, lush emerald green meadows, springs, rivers, waterfalls, high mountain lakes, coffee plantations, vegetable and flower farms, dairy farms, racehorse and cattle ranches.

Day 5: Visit La **Amistad National Park**, a park shared by Costa Rica and Panama. A unique site where Quaternary glaciers have left their mark, this park allows the fauna and flora of North and South America to interbreed. Four different Indian tribes inhabit this property, which benefit from close co-operation between Costa Rica and Panama. Enjoy a guided hike spotting different mammals, reptiles and birds. Later enjoy mountain biking or horseback riding.



Day 6: Transfer to the small coastal fishing village of **Santa Catalina** located on the Pacific Ocean. It is home to black sand beaches and world class surf. The village is the closest access point to **Isla Coiba, a UNESCO world heritage site** offering a plethora of wildlife to spot, jungle to explore, and sea life for diving or snorkeling.

Day 7: Coiba National Park protects Coiba Island, 38 smaller islands and the surrounding marine areas within the Gulf of Chiriqui. Coiba's Pacific tropical moist forest maintains exceptionally high levels of mammals, birds and plants due to the ongoing evolution of new species. It is also the last refuge for a number of threatened animals such as the crested eagle. The property is an outstanding natural laboratory for scientific research and provides a key ecological link to the Tropical Eastern Pacific for the transit and survival of pelagic fish and marine mammals. Visit Coiba Island on a **two day sea kayaking trip**. Travel along the Pacific Coast to Isla Coiba. Explore the secluded bays brimming with wildlife and the white sand beaches. Enjoy pristine snorkelling with the opportunity to **see rays, sharks, turtles, puffer fish and much more marine life**. In the evening you will take a short hike on the island and enjoy the silence and the sky full of stars. The accommodation is at the local park ranger station which is rather basic but offers electricity and even A/C in the evening.

Day 8: This morning is activities of choice – beach combing, hiking, snorkeling, or more kayaking. Alternatively just sit back and relax in a hammock while keeping a close eye on the resident croc named Tito. After lunch cruise through the beautiful park islands and follow the coastline back to Santa Catalina.

Day 9: Transfer to Panama city for your last night.

Day 10: Transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Return air Panama City, Panama
- Internal flight Panama City - David
- All ground transportation as indicated on itinerary
- All tours and activities as indicated on itinerary
- English speaking guide
- 9 nights hotel accommodation with private facilities
- 9 breakfast
- 8 lunches
- 8 dinners
- Kayaking tour
- Taxes and service charges

