

## 1: Lonely Planet Panama by Lonely Planet

*Explore Panama holidays and discover the best time and places to visit. | From clear turquoise seas to the coffee farms and cloud forests of Chiriquí, Panama can be as chilled out or as thrilling as you wish.*

UTC minus five hours Electricity: Metric see the conversion table. Estimated , visitors per year Warning Panama City is safer than most capital cities, but some parts of it particularly the district of Chorrillo should not be strolled around at night. The area of Darien Province between Yaviza and the Colombian border along the upper Tuira River is unsafe due to the presence of smugglers, bandits and Colombian guerrillas and paramilitary forces. The old district of San Felipe also known as Casco Viejo juts into the sea on the south-western side of town. Panama Canal The Canal is both an engineering marvel and one of the most significant waterways on earth. Seeing a huge ship nudge its way through the narrow canal, with vast tracks of virgin jungle on both sides, is an unforgettable sight. The easiest and best way to visit the Canal is to go to the Miraflores Locks, on the north-eastern fringe of Panama City, where a platform offers visitors a good view of the locks in operation. Boats leave Balboa, a western suburb of Panama City, for a five-hour tour through the locks to Miraflores Lake. Isla Taboga This charming and historical island, 20km south of Panama City, has an attractive beach, some lovely protected rainforest, and is home to one of the largest colonies of Brown Pelicans in Latin America. Known as the Island of Flowers, because at certain times of the year it is filled with the aroma of sweet-smelling blooms, the island is a favourite retreat from the city. Taboga has a long history and was settled even before Panama City. There is a small church here, claimed to be second oldest in the Western Hemisphere, and Pizarro set sail from here for Peru in Taboga is a one-hour boat trip from Balboa. Boquete Known for its cool, fresh climate and pristine natural environment, the small alpine town of Boquete is nestled into a craggy mountain valley 35km north of David. The islands are home to the Kuna Indians, who run the islands as an autonomous province, with minimal interference from the national government. They maintain their own economic system, language, customs, and culture, with distinctive dress, legends, music and dance. The economy of the islands is based on coconut sales, fishing and tourism, and they offer travellers good diving, snorkelling and swimming; the best diving conditions are between April and June. The most interesting islands are Achutupu, Kagantupu and Coco Blanco. The park offers great diving, snorkelling and swimming and its beaches are used as a nesting ground by several species of sea turtles. There are a handful of places to stay on the island and boats for rent, but no dive operators or places to rent snorkelling equipment. Divers looking for something different might want to consider diving in the Panama Canal; not only are there wrecks to explore but also all kinds of submerged equipment left by the French when they worked on the railroad many decades ago. Copa is the national airline. There are three land border crossings between Panama and Costa Rica; Paso Canoas, on the Interamerican Highway, is the most popular, followed by Guabito-Sixaola near the Caribbean coast. There are buses to the border which connect with local services on the Costa Rican side. The two-week hike through the jungle that comprises the Darien Gap - the roadless terrain between Yaviza and the Colombian border - is an unwise endeavour see the warning above but if you absolutely must cross the Panama-Colombia border on foot, do so at Puerto Obaldia, a sleepy little town just a couple of km from some fine beaches. Getting Around Panama has a number of domestic airlines and a good domestic flight network. Boats are the principal mode of transport in several parts of Panama, particularly between the San Blas and Bocas del Toro archipelagos. Cars can be rented in Panama City and David.

## 2: Lonely Planet - Destination Panama

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