

Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica
Bertie Green Junior Travel Award 2024
“Panama’s Cultural Crossroads” Itinerary



DAY 1, MONDAY, JULY 15

Depart from the USA. Upon arrival in Panama City, meet your ACIS Tour Manager, transfer to your hotel and begin to explore this vibrant capital city.

DAY 2, TUESDAY JULY 16

Following breakfast, your first stop is the Panama Canal's Miraflores Visitor Center, where you'll sit back in an IMAX theatre and enjoy a movie about the fascinating history and construction of engineering marvel, which changed the face of international trade and economics when it opened in 1914. From the center's observation decks, you can watch ships navigate through the Miraflores locks. After your visit to the Canal, head for the city's charming Old Town and experience history in a different way through a challenging and fun Learn and Discovery game. After lunch, you'll have time to explore more of the Casco Viejo at your own pace, perhaps buying a souvenir like a classic Panama hat or gorgeous embroidered molas, taking in the Panama Canal Museum or admiring the district's Spanish Colonial architecture.

DAY 3, WEDNESDAY JULY 17

Leave the city behind this morning for a day of activities in the lush Gamboa Rainforest. Ascend from the dense undergrowth up through the sun-drenched canopy on aerial tram ride and watch for birds, butterflies and monkeys. Back on the ground, visit a sloth sanctuary and other exhibits showcasing the local flora and fauna. Then keep your eyes peeled for those same exhibit subjects during a boat ride on Gatun Lake, an artificial lake forming part of the Panama Canal that was created by damming the Chagres River during the canal's construction. Lunch at the beautiful Gamboa Rainforest Resort is included. Later today, flex your foodie muscles during a Panamanian cooking lesson, where you'll learn the techniques and ingredients to make delicious regional cuisine from local culinary professional – and savor the fruits of your labors for dinner.

DAY 4, THURSDAY JULY 18

Today's highlight is an immersive cultural exchange at the Emberá Indigenous Village. You'll learn about the history, culture, food and customs of this river-centric tribe, which has lived deep in the Panamanian rainforests for centuries.

DAY 5, FRIDAY JULY 19

It's all about delicious chocolate this morning as you visit a small local cacao factory. Your inner chocoholic will emerge as you learn how this Panamanian delicacy is made, from the picking and cleaning of the seeds, to the roasting, processing and confectionary techniques. Then it's on to the ruins of Panama Viejo, the original capital of the country. Established in 1519 as the first European settlement on the Pacific Ocean, the city flourished as a base for gold and silver to be sent to Spain before being sacked and burned in 1671 by Welsh pirate Henry Morgan and a small army of 1,400 men.

DAY 6, SATURDAY JULY 20

The morning begins with coast-to-coast trip by either land or train transit. Journey from the breaking waves of the Pacific Ocean to the calm waters of the Caribbean Sea and head toward the sleepy port town of Portobelo – on your scenic drive watch for *campesinos* on horseback tending their cattle amid the rolling green hills. Dive into Portobelo's colonial history (and pirate legends) as you see the San Jeronimo fort, whose canons still point toward the bay they once protected; the statue of the Black Christ, which washed ashore here in the 1600s and, according to the legend, possesses divine powers; and the Customs House. Return to Panama City in time for dinner.

DAY 7, SUNDAY JULY 21

On your last day in Panama, visit the renowned Biomuseo (Museum of Biodiversity), located on the Amador Causeway, near the entrance to the Panama Canal. The building is as interesting as the story of the country's natural history featured inside – designed by world-famous architect Frank Gehry, it's his only project in Latin America. Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner as you prepare to bid this historic and vibrant country a fond *adios*.

DAY 8, MONDAY JULY 22: DEPARTURE

Depart for the USA.

