JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE PANAMA: CANAL, WILDLIFE AND BEACH

12 days from **£3,200pp**

PANAMA / PANAMA CITY AND THE PANAMA CANAL / BOQUETE AND THE CHIRIQUÍ HIGHLANDS / BOCAS DEL TORO ISLANDS



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

A two-week holiday brimming with variety, from a trip on the Panama Canal to walks and coffee tours in the volcanic highlands, to relaxing on the pearl white beaches of Bocas del Toro.

DAY 1	**Arrive in Panama City and transfer to your hotel.**
DAY 2	**Casco Viejo walking tour**
DAY 3	**Partial transit of the Panama Canal.**
DAY 4	**Fly to David and transfer to Boquete.**
DAY 5	**Hanging Bridges excursion**
DAY 6	**Optional excursions in Boquete**
DAY 7	**Transfer to Almirante on the Caribbean Coast via Oreba Chocolate Farm; continue to Bocas del Toro by water taxi.**
DAYS 8-9	**At leisure in Bocas del Toro.**
DAY 10	**Fly to Panama City and transfer to Gamboa.**
DAY 11	**Boat tour on Lake Gatún.**
12	**Transfer to Panama City airport for international flight home.**

ITINERARY

This holiday introduces you to the extraordinary history of a country linking oceans, spanning cultures and hosting pathways for smuggled gold, we take you to visit some of nature's most fecund forests, laden with ebullient wildlife and luscious plants.

Your first thoughts about Panama may envisage hats (actually from Ecuador) and a large, strategic canal. But that would be underestimating the unexpected charms and variety of this hilly Central American republic. Your trip with us will change your mind about that.

The capital city is one of the world's most cosmopolitan, an eclectic mix of American, European and Asian influences forged by centuries of immigration while the palm-defined, pearl white beaches are undeveloped. The Panamanian people, relaxed and welcoming, will ensure you have an enriching holiday.

DAY 1

Arrive in Panama City and transfer to your hotel.



This thriving cosmopolitan metropolis sits at the Pacific end of the Panama Canal. The city dates back to 1519 when it was a settlement base for transporting Peruvian gold back to Imperial Spain. Its subsequent wealth made it a frequent target for pirate raids. These days, soaring skyscrapers, sparkling banks and smart modern offices overshadow forts, Spanish convents and sumptuous French-style mansions, reminders of its colonial heyday.

DAY 2

Casco Viejo walking tour



Take a walking tour of Casco Viejo, the capital's atmospheric and vibrant historical quarter and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, home to the Presidential Palace, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the National Theatre, the French plaza and other landmarks which are a testimony to the city's rich history, culture and heritage.

From the top of the old city's wall you'll have expansive views of the Pacific Ocean, dotted with fishing boats and immense ships waiting to cross the Panama Canal, with the impressive skyline of modern Panama City as a backdrop.

Your walking tour includes a visit to the Panama Canal Museum, housed in the building that was the original headquarters for the French canal building effort in the 1880s, as well as a stop at the Museo de la Mola which exhibits several hundred 'molas', a traditional textile art form made by the Guna indigenous group of Panama.

DAY 3

Partial transit of the Panama Canal.



Today you have a partial transit of that most astonishing feat of engineering, the Panama Canal. It's a short drive to the Port of Balboa and Miraflores Locks, where the boat is raised 17m above sea level. The next set of locks is even higher; you will be 26m above sea level before entering the Gaillard Cut where the Chagres river flows into the Canal.

The canal's construction involved the creation of the largest man-made lake in the world – Gatún – which is where you will disembark before returning to Balboa by bus.

In the afternoon there is the option of visiting the Emberá indians who live on the Chagres River. The people of these indigenous communities have maintained their traditional way of life and are famed for their basket weaving.

DAY 4

Fly to David and transfer to Boquete.



Boquete is a small provincial town set in a valley within the craggy, verdant Chiriquí Highlands. It enjoys a pleasant mountain climate and the surrounding area is both very beautiful and extremely fertile: benefiting from rich volcanic soils crops such as citrus fruit, strawberries, coffee, flowers and vegetables thrive in a European style system of small-scale farming. The town itself has a few quaint old buildings and some good restaurants.

DAY 5

Hanging Bridges excursion



This is a wonderful opportunity to appreciate the biodiversity of Boquete's cloud forest from a lofty perspective. It consists of a circuit of 8 bridges covering a staggering 4.5 km route over the treetops. The bridges are located within the Rio Cristal private forest reserve in the Talamanca mountain range bordering La Amistad International Park. You will be accompanied by a local guide who will tell you all about the lush flora and fauna of the forest. Enjoy breathtaking views of rivers, waterfalls and the towering Volcan Barú.

DAY 6

Optional excursions in Boquete



Boquete is blessed with a good selection of hikes in the surrounding countryside, including the Sendero Los Quetzales from where you can walk (7-8hrs) over the mountains to Cerro Punta, the best area to spot the resplendent quetzal – the colourful bird which is a Central American icon.

Boquete is to coffee what Bordeaux is to wine. Over several years, Panama's coffee has been rated the best coffee in the world and we can arrange for you to visit a local, family-run finca.

DAY 7

Transfer to Almirante on the Caribbean Coast via Oreba Chocolate Farm; continue to Bocas del Toro by water taxi.



Today you'll cross the Continental Divide on a scenic four-hour transfer from the Chiriqui Highlands to the Caribbean Coast.

Just before reaching the small fishing village of Almirante, you'll make a stop at the Oreba cacao plantation where a local Ngobe Bugle indigenous tour guide will show you around as part of a group. Oreba Chocolate is considered among the finest 100% pure unsweetened chocolate in the world.

Not only will you learn about each step from planting, growing, harvesting, fermenting, drying and producing the actual chocolate, but the Ngobe Bugle guide is also an expert regarding the local plants and their medicinal uses.

Later in the afternoon, your driver will drop you off at the water taxi terminal in Almirante from where you continue on a 30-minute boat ride to Isla Colón, the main island of the Bocas del Toro Archipelago.

DAYS 8-9

At leisure in Bocas del Toro.

The undeveloped islets of white sand beaches, fringed by palms and reeds, with rocky outcrops and reefs are ideal for snorkelling and diving, and provide a marvellously laid-back hang-out for a few days. The islands shelter profuse wildlife – especially tropical birds, frogs and butterflies – and are blessed with splendiferous sunsets.

Spend your days sunbathing, snorkelling, strolling along dazzling snow-white beaches or sipping a cool drink and surveying a scene of unbridled tranquillity.



DAY 10

Fly to Panama City and transfer to Gamboa.

Set on the edge of Gatún Lake, the small town of Gamboa was formerly an American Canal Zone residential area for canal workers. Today, it is best known for its surrounding rainforest scenery and magnificent bird-watching.

Take a short drive to the rainforested Soberanía National Park and walk the Pipeline Road – built during World War II as a precaution to transport fuel from one ocean to the other in case the Panama Canal was attacked. Fortunately the pipeline never had to be used, while the roads built at that time have opened up opportunities for spectacular bird and wildlife spotting, with 525 species of bird living in the area.



DAY 11

Boat tour on Lake Gatún.

You'll board an expedition boat at Gamboa Resort's marina for an adventure on Lake Gatún. A naturalist guide is on hand to help make the most of the wildlife – amongst which are three-toed sloths, crocodiles, ospreys, snail kites and keel-billed toucans. Getting up close to the foliage as it meets the waterline there is a good chance of seeing white faced capuchins, mantled howler monkeys and spider monkeys. You'll be able to watch, almost within touching distance it seems, mighty Panamax freighters glide past, towering above the jungle canopy.



12

Transfer to Panama City airport for international flight home.

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INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Panama City: Casco Viejo walking tour (private)
- Panama City: Panama Canal partial transit (shared)
- Boquete: Hanging Bridges (shared)
- Gamboa: Panama Canal Rainforest boat adventure (private)

ESSENTIALS

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS
12 days, 11 nights: 3 nights Panama City, 3 nights Boquete, 3 nights Bocas del Toro, 2 nights Gamboa.

ACCOMMODATION
This trip combines friendly mid-range hotels with well-equipped rooms and comfortable but not luxurious wildlife and beach lodges.

TRANSPORT
2 domestic flights (1 hour each), 3 road journeys (max 4 hours)

MEALS
Breakfast daily. Lunch on days 3 & 11.

GUIDES
Our local, trusted and carefully selected partners understand the expectations of our customers very well, and their staff and guides are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

On this holiday, you will be joined by different guides for each activity and or region, ensuring you benefit from specialised expertise and knowledge, often from someone local to the area.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS
As well as any included activities, most Private Journeys include some free time for optional excursions. As optional excursions are often subject to availability, we recommend you discuss and arrange them with your Travel Expert as early as possible before you depart.

INSURANCE
Travel insurance is essential.

Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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