

# Grand Panama City, Panama



PANAMA



February 15 - 22, 2019 (8 days)



*Moving through the Panama Canal!*



## HIGHLIGHTS

**R&J Tour Director and local expert Panama Guides throughout the tour**

**Guided tour of Panama City including Miraflores Locks Visitor Center, Casco Antiguo, Golden Altar, Biomuseo & more!**

**Partial Panama Canal Cruise**

**Trans-Isthmian Railway to Portobelo including City Touring, Casa Congo Art Gallery, & Agua Clara Visitor Center**

**Gamboa Rainforest including Gondola Ride, Observation Tower, & Ecological Exhibits**

**Canoe Ride to Embera Quera Indigenous Community including Cultural Presentation with Traditional Dancing & Music**

**3 Nights in Panama City  
2 Nights in Gamboa Rainforest  
2 Nights in Playa Bonita**

*Gratuities for Local Guides Included!*



## Day 1 – Home to Panama City, Panama

Today we board our flight to Panama – welcome aboard! After landing, we will check into our hotel, strategically located in the financial district of Panama City. Offering amazing views of Panama City, our hotel is also close to the best malls, restaurants, and entertainment centers.

**Hotel: Best Western Plus Zen or similar (3 Nights)**

## Day 2 – Full day Panama City Tour

Breakfast is included at the hotel before we're off on a full day tour, the perfect way to discover Panama City! First up is a visit to the emblematic Panama Canal. Visiting the Miraflores Locks Visitor Center – the nearest set of locks to the city, makes it possible to learn about the history and the daily operation of the Canal. We'll explore the Museum, listen to the audiovisual presentation, and observe the ships passing through each one of the chambers at lookout point. After this, and accompanied by our local guide, we will visit the charming "Casco Antiguo" or Old Quarter, built in 1673 after Panama La Vieja (the first city) was looted and burned. The predominant architectural style of the Casco Antiguo is a combination of Italian, French and Spanish colonial. During the expedition through this colonial part of the city, we will have the opportunity to visit some churches, including the famous Golden Altar which survived the plundering and destruction of pirate Morgan, as well as different parks and plazas while we learn about the history of the city. Lunch is included in one of Casco Antiguo's restaurants. To end the day, we will visit the Biomuseo, which is located in the Amador Causeway. This museum was designed by the world-renowned architect Frank Gehry and is his only work in Latin America. The Biomuseo contains eight permanent exhibition galleries, and the main theme

is the origin of the Panamanian isthmus and its gigantic impact on the planet's biodiversity.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

## Day 3 – Panama Canal Cruise

After a box breakfast at the hotel, we board our ship and begin our Partial Panamá Canal Transit, providing the best way to experience and enjoy one of the greatest marvels of engineering of all time. The transit tour starts at the north end of the Gaillard Cut, where the Chagres River flows into the canal. The Gaillard Cut (also known as Culebra Cut because its curves resemble a snake) is one of the main points of interest for visitors because it was carved through the Continental Divide and this section of the Canal is full of history and geological value. As we transit the Cut for over 8 miles on the way to Pedro Miguel Locks, we'll be able to appreciate the continuous maintenance that this area requires since it is very susceptible to landslides. Just before reaching the Pedro Miguel Locks, we will be able to view the new Centennial Bridge which crosses over the Canal. Once the vessel enters into the Pedro Miguel Locks, which is one of the two sets of locks on the Pacific side, it will be lowered about 30 feet in one step in order to reach the level of the Miraflores Lake - which is a small artificial body of fresh water that separates Pedro Miguel from Miraflores Locks, the latter being the final set of locks before reaching the Pacific Ocean. Once into the Miraflores Locks, our vessel will be lowered about 60 feet in two distinct steps to reach the Pacific Ocean level. From there, we will sail to the marina where we will disembark - passing under the Bridge of the Americas, with the chance to admire the Bay of Panama and Panama City's splendid skyline.

**Included Meals: Boxed Breakfast, Lunch on board**

Visit historic Santiago & San Jeronimo Forts in Portobelo



Plaza de Francia in charming Casco Antiguo



Gondola ride through the beautiful Gamboa Rainforest





## Day 4 – Pan. City to Gamboa Rainforest

After breakfast at the hotel, we head to the Trans-Isthmian Railway, which was built in 1850 to facilitate the construction of the Panama Canal. Our train journey takes about 1 hour, taking us to Colon, going through the jungle, the Soberania National Park and along the Panama Canal. Upon arrival, we will travel to the city of Portobelo – one of the most important American ports during the colonial time. We'll learn about the history of the town that was attacked by the pirate Henry Morgan in 1668. We'll visit the forts of Santiago and San Jeronimo, the Customs House, the remains of the church of La Merced, and the church of San Felipe – the last building built by the Spaniards. We'll also see the beautifully carved statue of Jesus of Nazareth which, because of the dark wood from which it is made, is known as the "Black Christ." Lunch is included at Casa Congo Restaurant. Next we will visit the Casa Congo art gallery where workshops, training, and artistic exaltation take place. We will enjoy the art of handmade congo by local artisans of Portobelo. Afterwards we will stop at the Agua Clara Visitor Center of the Panama Canal, which offers a breathtaking panoramic view that contrasts two particular scenarios. On one side we will find the famous Gatun Lake, where cargo ships and other vessels transit every day, while on the other side, we will be amazed by the view of the modern set of locks. This afternoon we'll check into the beautiful Gamboa Rainforest Resort for two nights, located within a 340 acre property overlooking the stunning Panama Canal and Chagres River.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Caribbean Lunch**  
**Hotel: Gamboa Rainforest or similar (2 Nights)**

## Day 5 – Gamboa Rainforest

Today after breakfast, we'll admire and learn about the Panamanian rainforest and its diverse wildlife, not only from above but from within. Our tour starts with a peaceful and relaxing ride in a gondola, which ascends 280 feet over half a mile and ends at a spectacular viewpoint atop a hill. Our naturalist guide that will help us interpret some of the jungle's most interesting facts. Once we reach the observation tower, we will also have the opportunity to enjoy the most amazing views of the Panama Canal, Chagres River, the Embera Indigenous Community, and much of the Soberania National Park. Then, before ending the tour, we'll visit the ecological exhibitions, providing an excellent opportunity to learn about the most interesting creatures and plants of the Panamanian forest. The three exhibits: butterfly farm, frog garden and orchid nursery.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

## Day 6 – Gamboa to Playa Bonita

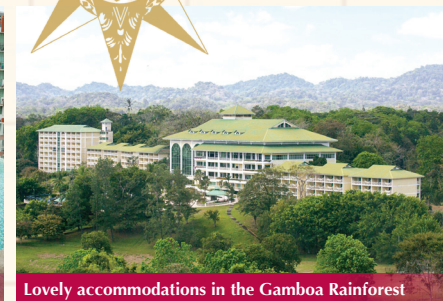
Again breakfast is served at the hotel. Then we glide through the Gatun River in a canoe with outboard motor. As we ride to the Embera Quera Indigenous Community, enjoy the beautiful flora and fauna of the region and learn a little bit about the lifestyle of the community. Once in the community, one of the members will explain to us in detail about the culture, food and language of the Emberas as well as answer any questions we may have about their way of life. A cultural presentation with traditional dances and music will allow us to interact with the group and the members of the community. Then we will have the opportunity to shop some of the handmade crafts by the community residents. A light, traditional lunch (usually based on the catch of the day!) will be served. This afternoon we'll check into The Westin Playa Bonita, located just steps away from the blue waters and the golden sands of the Pacific Ocean, offering amazing views of the ocean or the forest!

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

**Hotel: The Westin Playa Bonita or similar (2 Nights)**



Best Western Plus in Panama City



Lovely accommodations in the Gamboa Rainforest



Pools, palm trees, sunshine - our stay in the Rainforest...pleasant!!

## Day 7 – Playa Bonita

Breakfast is included at the hotel. Today we are free to enjoy the pools and the amenities of the our beautiful resort.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

## Day 8 – Panama to Home

We'll enjoy one last breakfast together before boarding our flight home. We'll return home with grand Panama memories!

**Included Meals: Breakfast** Grand Panama City, Panama

2019 DATES & PRICES			
DATES:	February 15 - 22, 2019 (8 Days)		
PRICE PER PERSON:	\$3,999 Double	\$4,699 Single	
PRICE INCLUDES:	RT Airfare including taxes, fuel surcharges, & baggage fees! 13 Meals, Hotels & Activities as stated, Luxury Motorcoach. <b>Gratuities for Local Guides Included!</b>		
DEPOSIT DUE PER PERSON:	\$200 deposit per person at time of reservation and final payment due Nov. 16, 2018.		
OPTIONAL TRAVEL PROTECTION P/P:	\$270 Double per person	\$340 Single	
TRAVEL BUCKS:	\$50 Travel Bucks earned on this Tour.		
TOUR PACE:	Moderate to Extensive Walking* (*Uneven Terrain)		
CANCELLATION:	Cancelling prior to departure between: 89-60 days: \$200 Deposit non-refundable; 59-45 days: Deposit plus Airline Tickets plus Charges passed on by Suppliers is non-refundable; 44-0 days: 100% Tour cost non-refundable.		
IDENTIFICATION:	A Valid Passport is Required & must be valid 3 months beyond Feb. 22, 2019.		