

PANAMA CANAL CRUISE, RAIN FORESTS & BEACHES

CARAVAN *Fully Escorted Tour all meals included.*

Nov. 2-9, 2014 \$2143

Itinerary

Day 1 – Panama City, Panama

Welcome to fun, vibrant Panama, home to the Panama Canal, the most important waterway in the world. Take two daytime cruises on the Panama Canal: one through the canal locks and another cruise on Gatun Lake. The Isthmus of Panama links North and South America. See both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. With Caravan you explore rainforests and sandy beaches. Meet friendly native Indians living in the jungle. Caravan provides transfers from Panama's Tocumen Airport to your hotel for a two night stay. Rooms are available for check in after 4:00 p.m. Join Caravan for an 8:00 p.m. welcome briefing. Dinner is served until 9:30 p.m. at your hotel. **D**

Day 2 – Casco Viejo, Miraflores Locks

Morning drive by the ruins of Panama Viejo (Old Panama), the city founded by the Spanish in 1519, as a gateway for gold from the Inca Empire. Next, drive into Casco Viejo for a visit to San Jose Church. See the famous Gold Altar, saved from the pirate, Henry Morgan. Stroll the Main Plaza. Both Panama Viejo and Casco Viejo are UNESCO World Heritage sites. Lunch. Visit the Canal Museum at Miraflores, overlooking the Panama Canal locks. Learn about the Canal construction and operation. From Pre-Columbian times to the present day, Panama had a prominent role as the major transit route between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Next, drive through the City of Knowledge, the former United States Army Base, Fort Clayton. Then, drive along Panama City's bay front. See the statue of Vasco Balboa, the first European explorer to cross the Isthmus and view the Pacific Ocean. Enjoy dinner. **BLD**

Day 3 – Panama Canal Cruise - Gatun Lake

This morning cross the Isthmus to Colon, the Caribbean port at the north end of the Panama Canal. Your short drive of Colon goes by the Free Trade Zone, the largest in the Americas and the Panama Canal Railway Station. Visit Gatun Locks, the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal. At the visitor center you will learn about the three adjoining locks which raise ships 87 feet above the Caribbean Sea on to the Panama Canal. Lunch. This afternoon enjoy a boat ride on Gatun Lake, the artificial lake which forms part of the Panama Canal. See the lush jungle watershed region of the Panama Canal. Cruise through jungle canals and by hilltop islands, home to a variety of wildlife. Look for monkeys. Enjoy a relaxing two night stay at your resort located in the rainforest. Dinner. **BLD**

Day 4 – Panama Canal Cruise - Locks Transit

Today an unforgettable adventure as you cruise another portion of the Panama Canal. Cruise by the Bridge of the Americas, pass through Miraflores and Pedro Miguel Locks, cross the Continental Divide. Then wind through the Gaillard Cut to the town of Gamboa. Your small passenger vessel allows for close-up views of the opening and closing of the huge six foot thick steel gates of both the Miraflores and Pedro Miguel Locks. See, at eye-level, how transiting vessels are guided by tugboats and pulled by small trains. (Please note: route may be reversed.) Next, drive by the Smithsonian's Tropical Research Institute. Return to your jungle resort. Stroll the gardens, swim in the pool, or enjoy the scenic views from your private balcony. Dinner. **BLD**

Day 5 – Embera Indians, Beach Resort

This morning, cruise on the Chagres River to visit an Embera Indian village. The Embera inhabit the rainforests of Panama. Look for exotic Embera handicrafts, such as tightly woven palm fiber baskets and carvings made from tagua nuts and the cocobolo tree. Lunch. Next, drive by the Embera Indian health clinic and school. Then cross over the Panama Canal on the Centenario Bridge for stunning views of the Gaillard Cut and Pedro Miguel Locks. Continue to your beach hotel for a relaxing two night stay on the Pacific Coast. Dinner. **BLD**

Day 6 – Beach Resort

Entire day at leisure to enjoy your magnificent beach resort. Swim in your hotel's infinity pool. Lunch. Enjoy a carefree afternoon. Time to beachcomb while strolling your resort's beach. Dinner. **BLD**

Day 7 – Kuna Handicrafts, Panama City

Brief morning visit to a Guava plantation. Return to Panama City via the Bridge of the Americas. Next, drive spectacular Amador Causeway connecting Perico, Naos, Culebra and Flamenco Islands. Enjoy views of Casco Viejo and the stunningly modern Panama City skyline. Panama City is a combination of Manhattan, Miami, and Las Vegas blended with Latin American flavor and style. Lunch. Visit a Kuna Indian marketplace. Shop for colorful Kuna mola embroidery depicting rainforest animals and marine life. Look for exotic wood handicrafts. Enjoy a farewell dinner. **BLD**

Day 8 – Panama City

Your tour ends after breakfast this morning at your hotel. Breakfast begins at 6:00 a.m. Caravan provides transfers to Panama's Tocumen airport, arriving at 5:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Thanks for vacationing with Caravan.
¡Hasta la vista! B

Two Daytime Cruises on the Panama Canal

With Caravan, you enjoy two daytime cruises on the Panama Canal. Your Panama Canal Gatun Lake Cruise is one hour by small watercraft. Your Panama Canal Locks Transit Cruise is usually three hours, depending on canal schedules. This is a public vessel so you may be joined by other tourists. The smaller size of the ship allows for unique close-up views of the opening and closing of the six foot thick steel gates of both the Miraflores and Pedro Miguel Locks.