

PANAMA INFO

Places of Interest

PANAMA CANAL: ESCLUSAS DE MIRAFLORES/MIRAFLORES LOCKS

ATTENTION: BEST TIME TO VISIT CANAL 9am-11am and 2pm-4pm!!!

Take bus opposite of Supermercado REY which says TERMINAL/TERMINAL DE ALBROOK/ALBROOK. At BUS TERMINAL, take bus to SUMMIT, GAMBOA or PARAISO and tell the driver to let you off at ESCLUSAS DE MIRAFLORES. From the busstop you have to walk about 400 meters to get to the VISITORS CENTRE.

Entrance fee: Only Plattform: \$5; Plattform and Museum \$8 -Studentdiscounts available!!!
Taxi to Plaza 5 de mayo \$1.50 to 1.75. Taxi to Miraflores \$ 8 -10 On way back take any bus to Panama City!

CASCO VIEJO (Old Town)

Take bus opposite of Supermercado Rey which says CALLE 12. Get off at PARQUE SANTA ANA (big PAVILLION AND CHURCH!) at end of pedestrian zone (PEATONAL or AVENIDA CENTRAL). From there it is just a few meters to OLD TOWN (just follow CABLE CAR TRACKS!).

Alternatively take bus to PLAZA 5 DE MAYO. Get off at 5 de mayo and walk from there to end of pedestrian zone! By Taxi \$2.

CAUSEWAY/CALZADA DE AMADOR/AMADOR

Nice 5 km long boulevard which links 3 small islands located right between the Panama Canal and the Bay of Panama. Perfect for Inline skating, riding a (rented) bike or for jogging. It is also a wonderful place to relax, eat & drink in Bars and Restaurants and to enjoy a beautiful view of the whole city and the Bridge of the Americas and watching the sunset.

To go there take a bus in front of MAC DONALDS to PLAZA 5 DE MAYO. There take a Minibus in front of DYNASTY (Sportswear store) to CAUSEWAY. You can also take a Taxi which will cost between \$3-6 depending on where you get off.

CERRO ANCON

Hill where the huge Panamanian Flag is waving. Nice few over the Canal, the Causeway, the Old Town and the rest of the City.

By Taxi from PLAZA 5 DE MAYO \$1 or from Zulys \$1,75 to "ENTRADA DE CERRO ANCON". 20-25 minutes walk up to the hill.

PANAMA VIEJO

Visit the RUINS OF PANAMA VIEJO, the place where Panama City was originally founded. Only recommendable for people who are really interested in ruins! To visit museum and tower there's a fee of about \$3 but most of the area can be visited for free! To go there take Bus which says PANAMA VIEJO either in CALLE 50 or in AVENIDA BALBOA (WATERFRONT!)

ISLA TABOGA

Small Island , 45 minutes by boat from Panama City. Boat leaves from CAUSEWAY/LA PLAYITA. Return ticket \$10. Very, very calm Island with a small Beach and a few Restaurants. Nice boat ride.

Monday:

Panama-Taboga	8.30am and 3.30 pm
Taboga-Panama	9.30am and 4.30 pm

Tuesday:

Panama-Taboga	8.30am
Taboga-Panama	4.30 pm

Wednesday:

Panama-Taboga	8.30am and 3.00 pm
Taboga-Panama	9.30am and 4.30 pm

Thursday:

Panama-Taboga	8.30am
Taboga-Panama	4.30 pm

Friday:

Panama-Taboga	8.30am and 3.00 pm
Taboga-Panama	9.30am and 4.30 pm

Saturday and Sunday and Holidays:

Monday:

Panama-Taboga	8.00am and 10.30am and 4.00pm
Taboga-Panama	9.00am and 3.00pm and 5.00pm

CINTA COSTERA

NICE NEW PARK in Avenida balboa (WATERFRONT), good for Walking, Running, In-line skating, cycling. Nice few over Ocean! 15 minutes walk from Hostel!

CLOSEST BEACHES

Unfortunately there is a very, very limited number of nice beaches close to Panama City. Recommendable beaches (CORONADO, SAN CARLOS, SEA CLIFF, SANTA CLARA (beautiful!) are already between 90-110 km from the city (90-120 minutes by bus from ALBROOK BUS TERMINAL-\$3 one way).

General Information

SAFETY

Compared to other Central American Cities, Panama City is very safe. Nevertheless always use your common sense.

Area where the Hostel is located is very safe, even at night. CALIDONIA and OLD TOWN are relatively safe during daytime. Not recomendable after 9 pm.

STAY THE HELL out of EL CHORRILLO and CURUNDÚ-extremely dangerous!!!!!!!

Post office

Located in PLAZA CONCORDIA right opposite of SUPERMERCADO REY. Enter building where WESTERN UNION has its office and go to back of building! Opening hours from 8.00 am to 5.30 pm. Postcard 35-45 cents! Very slow and bad service. Be prepared that it takes at least 30 minutes – So DON'T write your postcards in the last minutes of your stay!!! If you intend to send a package, you have to wrap it in special paper available at GRAN MORRISON department store located right next to Supermercado Rey. This post office only accepts packages up to 2 kilos, if heavier they tell you to try your luck either in Post office in CALIDONIA (CENTRO COMERCIAL LAS AMERICAS =green building right before EL MACHETAZO (department store) or in CARRASQUILLA (opposite of fire department -see map!) None of the post offices has a sign so use your searching skills!

LAUNDRY

There is several Laundries more or less close to the Hostel

1. Right next to RESTAURANTE COSTA AZUL.
2. Go to Via Veneto (street where MAC DONALDS is Located), turn right after OTEC STUDENT TRAVEL at end of 1. Block, from there it is more or less 150 meters.
3. Go to VIA VENETO. Walk until you reach HOTEL SUITES LAS VEGAS at the beginning of 3rd Block. Keep on walking for 50 more meters and you will find it on your right hand side! Self-service wash and dry \$2 otherwise \$3!

NEARBY RESTAURANTS

Pizzeria Sorrento: located next to Hostel on other side of the street. Pizza for a bit more than \$4. Not the best in town (Pizzeria Napoli is best- located 10 min from Hostel!) but usually ok!

Restaurante Asados: located right opposite of entrance of Casino next to Marriott: cheap panamanian food from \$3.

NIKO'S Café 24hours: American style Diner, good quality from \$2,50. Also tasty greek Giros available!

Costa Azul: from \$5, good quality

Jimmy's Restaurant: from \$3,50, good quality also cheap Pizza (from \$2.75)

Restaurante Beirut: Very good lebanese and indian food, Falafel \$3 other food \$8

ME GUSTA COMIDA Vegetariana: Right next to Restaurante Costa Azul, \$1,80 good quality!

MANOLOS in via Veneto. Food from \$6

CASA VEGETARIANA: Right next to Manolos in Via Veneto. Good quality from \$2

Don Lee: Via Veneto, Chinese Fast food

Opposite of Don Lee: Chinese Restaurant

Hotel Veneto (Via Veneto) FOODCOURT: Several Fast food and Pizza places

VIA ARGENTINA (5 minutes walk): There are several Restaurants in Via Argentina!

GOING OUT IN PANAMA

Compared to other Central American Cities, Panama has a real good night life. There is Discotheques and bars all over the city but there is a Party zone located only a ten minutes walk from the Hostel in the **CALLE URUGUAY AREA**. There is plenty of places reaching from Salsa and Merengue to Electronic music and Rock Music.

The best days to go out in Panama are Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Sunday and Monday are very quiet.

Good place for concerts and other cultural events is LA CASONA in Casco VIEJO. If you just want to have a beer and talk to friends, EL KORCHO (also Karaoke) y TABERNA 21 (Spanish bar, sometimes Live music) in Via Argentina, La Terrazza right next to Restaurante Costa Azul and The Istmo Brew Pub in Via Veneto are good addresses.

The 4 Casinos located right next to Zulys (all within a 3 minutes walk) are the perfect place to either increase your budget or to lose your money. They all have a huge bar area and are also famous for live coverage of important sport events especially REAL football, American football, baseball, basketball, boxing, etc.!

SHOPPING

PANAMA CITY is a paradise when it comes to shopping. Among the several SHOPPING MALLS ALBROOK MALL right next to ALBROOK BUS TERMINAL is the best. There you can get a wide range of products of good quality for very reasonable prices especially in bigger Department stores like EL COSTO, EL TITAN, etc.. Boutiques there are pricier, but still way cheaper than in Europe or North America. Other shopping malls are a bit more expensive like MULTICENTRO or MULTIPLAZA. Alternatively you get very inexpensive stuff in the SHOPPING STREET called AVENIDA CENTRAL (pedestrian Zone) and CALIDONIA but the quality is not always the best. There is another great place for shopping called LOSPUEBLOS located in Via España close to the INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT but it takes about 45 Minutes to go there by bus.

CAMERAS

If you intend to buy a camera you should know that they are not much cheaper than in North America or Europe. Nevertheless you can try your luck in big Places like PANAFOTO (300metres from here on Calle 50) or AUDIO FOTO (Via España opposite of REY) or MULTIMAX (CORNER CALLE 50/VIA BRASIL). In case you're an expert it is recommendable to visit the SMALL SHOPS located between PLAZA 5 DE MAYO and AVENIDA CENTRAL. If you are not happy with the price just tell them and they get a calculator to check out how much discount they can give you!

OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT

There is an ARMY STORE in AVENIDA CENTRAL where you can get Backpacks, Tents etc. It is located right next to BANCO ATZTECA in the middle of the first block on your left hand side.

They also sell snorkeling equipment, guitars, strings and other accessories.

GUITARS ETC.

ARMY Store in Avenida Central (see above). Department store EL MACHETAZO in Calidonia and at end of Avenida Central). In GRAN MORRISON right before SUPERMERCADO REY. Music store located on PLAZA NEW YORK in CALLE 50..

ARTS AND CRAFTS

- *Kuna Indians selling Molas etc. in Via Veneto and Plaza de Francia (Casco Viejo)
- *In Gran Morrison right before Supermercado Rey (overpriced!!!).
- *In SAN ANDRESITO, a small market in Plaza Concordia right opposite of Supermercado Rey (pedestrian bridge).
- *small mercado next to Plaza 5 de Mayo
- *small mercado in SALSIPUEDES right at end of Avenida Central, close to old town.

TRANSPORTATION

TAXIS

Taxis are very cheap in Panama City. Within the City center it is \$1.25 (+25 cents per additional person) Never pay more than \$3!!! Always negotiate price before you enter a taxi- SAY NO if taxi driver (most of them are very unfriendly) tries to screw you- Feel free to insult him if he is very rude, but make sure beforehand that he is not too big and that he doesn't carry a weapon as they tend to be very aggressive!!!

BUSES

Bus fare within city limits is 25 cents. You pay when you get off the bus! Buses opposite of SUPERMERCADO REY go either to PLAZA 5 DE MAYO and then to ALBROOK BUS TERMINAL or to CALLE 12 at end of AVENIDA CENTRAL.

Buses back to the Hostel

If you want to return to the Hostel by bus from Albroom/Plaza 5 de Mayo/ Casco Viejo/Calidonia take any bus that says CALLE 50 and get off in front of PANAFOTO in Calle 50. Panafoto is a big Camera store with a huge sign. If you have any doubts tell the driver to let you off at Panafoto Calle 50!

Going by bus from Hostel to the Airport

To go from the Hostel to the Airport there are 3 different ways:

1. Take a Taxi for \$20
2. Take a bus in CALLE 50 that says TOCUMEN. It will cost you 25 cents but as it takes the route through the city it takes between 50 and 90 minutes depending on the traffic. The busstop is located 300 meters from the airport. Only recommendable when you don't have too much luggage and until 9 p.m. as the area is not the safest at night!
3. Take a bus opposite of Shoppingcenter MULTICENTRO in AVENIDA BALBOA (15 minutes walk or \$1.25 by taxi) and there take a bus that says CORREDOR TOCUMEN. This bus uses the bypass which reduces the traveltime to 30 minutes. It costs \$1.25. The busstop is located 300 meters from the airport. Only recommendable when you don't have too much luggage and until 9 p.m. as the area is not the safest at night!

DOMESTIC AIRLINES

There is two domestic Airlines **AIR PANAMA** (316-9000) and **AEROPERLAS** (315-7500). Prices are the same, Service is similar. Both leave from the domestic Airport in ALBROOK (by Taxi \$2,50 - \$3.50 from Hostel). AIR PANAMA office is located in AVENIDA BALBOA (Waterfront 15 minutes walk from Hostel-see map). They also offer Student rates (international student card required)!

AEROPERLAS office is located in HOTEL CESARS PARK (270-0477 also Sundays).

STUDENT TRAVEL AGENCY

OTEC TRAVEL (STA TRAVEL) located at end of first Block in Via Veneto-see map!

GOING FROM PANAMA CITY TO DAVID, COSTA R. BORDER (PASO CANOAS), BOQUETE, BOCAS DEL TORO

PANAMA-DAVID: BUSES LEAVE FROM ALBROOK BUS TERMINAL:

Timetable Terminales David-Panama booth B29/B30 Phone:314-6228

5.30	1.00		
6.50	3.15	EXPRESS BUS	12 Midnight!
8.15	4.30		
8.30 AM	5.45 PM	Prices: Normal Fare	12.60
9.30	7.15	EXPRESS	\$15
10.30	8.30		
10.45	10.45		
11.45			
12.00	12MN	!!!Prices and times are subjects to change!!!	

PADAFRONT booth B28 Phone: 314-6263/6264 –THESE BUSES FIRST GO TO DAVID AND THEN CONTINUE TO BORDER IN PASO CANOAS!!!

6.30			
8.00 AM	3.30	EXPRESS BUSES	10.45 and 12 Midnight!
10.20	5.15 PM	Prices: Normal Fare	12.60 (\$14 to Border)
	8.00	EXPRESS	\$15 (\$17 to BORDER)
12.30MD	10.45	Prices and times are subjects to change!!!	
12MN			

PANAFRON booth B-19 Phone: 314-6285/6401

10.40 PM EXPRESS \$15

Duracion: Panama City- David 6,5 hours Panama- Border 7,5 hours

Panama to Boquete:

Take bus to David and afterwards at same Bus terminal take Bus to Boquete (every hour 45 minutes/\$1)!

By bus from Panama to Bocas del Toro: Phone 303-3030!

There is a direct bus daily leaving from Albroom Busterminal to Almirante The bus leaves ALBROOK at 8 PM and arrives in Almirante at 6 AM the following day! Price \$24! From Almirante you take a launch for \$4 to Bocas Town on Isla Colon!

Another option is to take first a bus to David (\$12.60/\$15) and from David a Bus to Almirante (every hour \$8)!

Going from Panama City to Costa Rica

1. Direct Buses Panama City- San Jose

- **Tica Bus leaves from Albrook Busterminal daily at 11 AM and 11PM and arriving in San Jose around 4 AM and 4PM the following day! Price \$25**
Bus continues trip to Managua and rest of Central American Countries and Tapachula/South of Mexico at 6 AM!
- **Panaline leaves from Albrook Busterminal daily at 10 PM and arrives in San Jose around 3 PM the following day! Price \$25**
Panaline has also buses from San Jose to Managua!
- **EXPRESS PANAMA leaves from Albrook Busterminal daily at 11.55 PM and arrives in San Jose around 3 PM the following day!**
Price \$25

2. Buses to Border and Buses from Border to San Jose

- **Take first a PDAFRONT Bus to Border in Paso Canoas and on other side of Border take TRACOPA BUS to SAN JOSE-PRICE \$9 (between 7 and 9 hours)**
TRACOPA office is located right between Panamanian and C. Rican checkpoint on your right hand side!

Timetable direct buses Paso Canoas-San Jose:

4 AM 7.30 AM 9 AM 3 PM (Costa Rican Time)

Please remember Time difference to Costa Rica (1 hour behind)

3. Buses from Border to south of Costa Rica

- **There is direct buses from the border to Golfito. Once in Golfito you can take a ferry to Puerto Jimenez which is the gateway to Corcovado National Park on Peninsula de Osa!**
- **There is also 2 direct Buses from Ciudad Neily (The first Costa Rican town behind border 16 km from Paso Canoas) to Playa Uvita and Playa Dominical (one of the nicest beaches in southern Costa Rica and a good surf spot- 3 hours)! First bus leaves early in the morning around 6.30. The second bus leaves at 2.30 PM!**

GOING FROM BOCAS DEL TORO (ISLA COLON) TO COSTA RICAN BORDER (GUABITO-SIXAOLA), PUERTO VIEJO, CAHUITA, LIMON AND SAN JOSE

1. From Bocas del Toro (Isla Colon) to Border in Guabito/Sixaola

Take direct boat to Changuinola (beautiful 45 minutes boat ride-\$6). You will arrive in the marine park in Changuinola. From there take a bus to the bus Terminal in Changuinola (50 cents). From the Terminal take a TAXI COLLECTIVO to the border (1 Dollar). At the border checkpoint in Guabito get your Exit Stamp and then walk over the train bridge to the Costa Rican checkpoint in Sixaola. Once you got your entry stamp, you can take one of the buses going to **PUERTO VIEJO, CAHUITA and LIMON** (see timetable)!

ADVICE: If you want to save money, don't go with the guys offering to bring you from the Marine park in Changuinola to the border for \$10! They tell you it's the cheapest way but as you can see, the above mentioned way is way cheaper!

2. Going from the border (SIXAOLA) to San Jose

If you want to go from the border to San Jose you take either a direct bus from the border or if there is none you first take a bus to **Puerto Limon (3 hours)** and from Limon there is at least one bus per hour to **San Jose (2 hours)**.

3. Going from Changuinola to San Jose (Direct bus)

There is a **DIRECT BUS to SAN JOSE** every morning at 10 am leaving from the bus Terminal in Changuinola (6.5 hours/\$8)!

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THERE IS A TIME DIFFERENCE OF ONE HOUR BETWEEN PANAMA AND COSTA RICA (1 hour behind)!!!

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON BUSES IN PANAMA AND CENTRAL AMERICA PLEASE VISIT:

www.thebusschedule.com