

Sterling Travel with Jill Aikin



SMALL GROUP
ADVENTURE

Essence of Panama

Tour Dates: January 30 - February 6, 2025


Mayflower
CRUISES & TOURS
A DIVISION OF THE SCENIC GROUP

Essence of Panama



Enjoy a partial transit of the Panama Canal



Shop for handmade handicrafts and clothing

DAY 1 USA / Panama City, Panama: Depart the USA on your flight to Panama City. After arrival, the remainder of the day is at leisure to become acquainted with your new surroundings.

DAY 2 Gatun Lake Expedition: Take part in an expedition on Gatun Lake, one of the largest man-made lakes in the world, located at the Panama Canal. Surrounded by lush forest, it's home to capuchin, howler, and tamarind monkeys as well as iguanas. Travel by coach to the dock in the Gamboa Rainforest Reserve. Enjoy a guided boat ride as you navigate through the Chagres River, a waterway used by the famous pirate Henry Morgan, and hear the history of the area and how the lake was made. After the river experience, travel by coach to the Sloth Sanctuary where the Panamerican Conservation Association team members explain how they care for the species. Enjoy a stroll through the butterfly farm and frog farm. Continue by coach to the Aerial Tram and ascend 280 feet from the shadowy forest floor through dense vegetation to the sun-drenched canopy, with its various shades of green interrupted only by the vibrant colors of flowering trees. At the top, a short trail takes you to the observation tower, offering panoramic views of the Chagres River, the Gaillard Cut, and the rainforest. Lunch is included during the excursion. Return by coach to the hotel at the conclusion of the tour. This evening, join your Tour Manager for an orientation meeting at the hotel. **Meals: B, L**

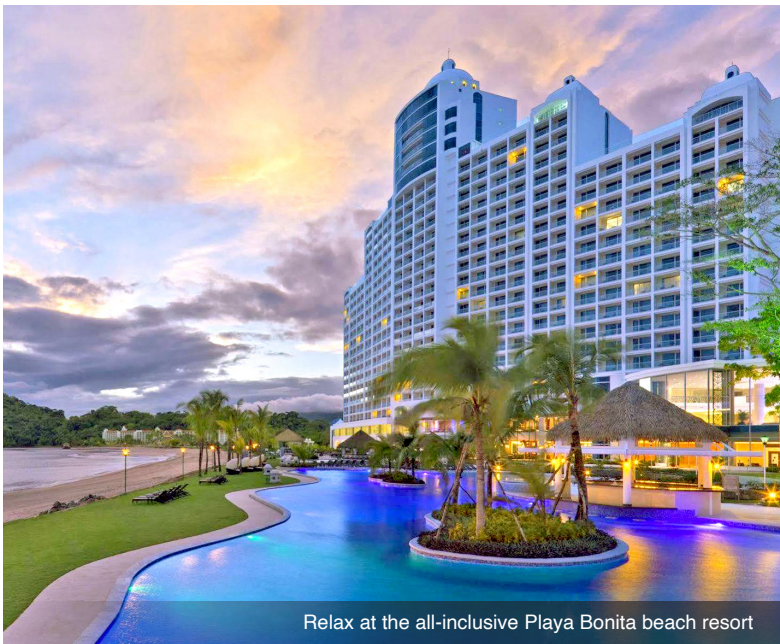
DAY 3 Panama Canal Cruise: Today may well be a highlight of your trip! Depart for the Gamboa area and embark a ship to begin the partial transit of the Panama Canal, narrated by a local expert. Cruise through the Gaillard Cut, cross under the Centennial Bridge and transit the Pedro Miguel Locks. Enjoy lunch onboard while experiencing the operation of the lock as you descend 30-feet in one step and reach Miraflores Lake. Enter the Miraflores Locks in the Pacific Ocean where you are lowered 60-feet in a two-step process. Sail on the Pacific Ocean, pass under the Bridge of the Americas and disembark at Amador Causeway in the Panama

Bay. After an exciting day in the Panama Canal, return to the hotel by coach for an afternoon and evening at leisure. **Meals: B, L**

DAY 4 Panama City: Depart the hotel with your local guide for a panoramic and walking tour of this historic city. Enjoy a stroll through Casco Antiguo - the oldest section of Panama City and a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. Notice the architecture – from crumbling façades of days gone by to beautifully restored buildings in the classic style. See the locals as they go about their everyday life from selling crafts on street corners, to shopkeepers running their businesses. This little area is filled with cultural diversity! Continuing on, visit the Miraflores Lock Visitor Center and view a 3D IMAX movie on the history and construction of the canal. From the balcony, you may have a chance to see the operation of the lock, as you overlook this amazing architectural masterpiece. After the excursion, return to the hotel with free time until the included dinner at a local restaurant. **Meals: B, D**

DAY 5 Panama City – Azuero Peninsula: Leaving Panama City, journey by coach through Panama's countryside. For the next two days, enjoy the authentic Panamanian countryside, rich in tradition, culture and folklore. Stop for lunch at a local restaurant before a late afternoon arrival at the hotel. **Meals: B, L**

DAY 6 Country visits: Today is an immersion into local life as you visit the province of Los Santos. Meet a professional designer of 'cutarras' – traditional sandals of Panama, mostly worn by men, handmade by local artisans. At another stop, see how they make the 'Pollera' – typical costume of Panama worn by women. Admire the artistry, skill and dedication demonstrated by these proud craftsmen. During the included lunch, it's 'hands on' as you assist the chef with the preparation, and dine on your creation! Return to the hotel for some free time before an included dinner and folklore show. **Meals: B, L, D**



Relax at the all-inclusive Playa Bonita beach resort

DAY 7 Azuero Peninsula – Finca Pimel – Playa Bonita: Today's adventure is a visit to *Finca Pamel*, a local farm offering a variety of experiences. Begin with a walk around the farm to see the fruits growing in season, and perhaps you'll try milking a cow! At the farm house, discover Pre-Columbian Art and learn how to make clay dishes. Take your creation home with you as a souvenir of your visit to the Panamanian countryside. The learning of local culture continues as you are taught how to make "Torrejas de Maiz" (corn tortillas), a traditional food in this local province of Los Santos. Enjoy an included lunch while witnessing a dance presentation of 'El Diablico Sucio', another custom deeply rooted in Panamanian folklore. A highlight of the day may be the presentation of the Carnival Queen. The designer of the spectacular dress worn by the Queen explains how the dress can take up to four years to create. Her makeup artist also talks about how the Queen is prepared for the events of this 4-day celebration. Witness the dance of the Queen accompanied by the Murga - a type of music consisting of carnival-style rhythms and orchestra-style ensembles. After an enriching day in the country, continue by motorcoach to Playa Bonita where your final two nights are spent at an all-inclusive resort. Upon arrival at the hotel, the remainder of the day is at leisure to relax on the beach or by the pool. **Meals: B, L, D**

DAY 8 Playa Bonita: Enjoy a full day at leisure, discovering all the amenities of the resort, or, join an optional excursion to the Embera Indigenous Village. Mix and mingle with these happy people, living in the rainforest, with no 'modern conveniences'. See some of their cultural dances and explore the area's abundant variety of birds and wildlife as you explore the surrounds of the village. **Meals: B, L, D**

DAY 9 Panama City / USA: After breakfast, it's time to say goodbye to Panama as you return to the Tocumen International Airport for your flight home. **Meal: B**

Itinerary subject to change and order of events may vary.



Tour Highlights

- 18 Meals: 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 4 dinners)
- Airport transfers on tour dates when air is provided by Mayflower Cruises & Tours
- Enjoy a boat ride on Gatun Lake
- Visit the Sloth Sanctuary
- Ride an aerial tram over the rainforest
- Tour the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Casco Antiguo in Panama City
- Discover the operational marvel of the Panama Canal at the Miraflores Lock Visitor Center
- Sail to the Pacific Ocean on a partial transit of the Panama Canal
- Learn how the beautiful Panamanian dresses (polleras) and traditional sandals (cutarras) are made during visits with professional designers in their workshops
- Visit a local farm and learn how to make corn tortillas
- Relax during the two-night stay at an all-inclusive beach resort

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Days 1 through 4 – InterContinental Miramar, Panama City

Days 5 and 6 – Hotel Presidente, Las Tablas

Days 7 and 8 – Westin Playa Bonita, Playa Bonita

Essence of Panama



Miraflores Lock Visitor Center

2025 Departure	Per Person Twin	Single Room add
January 8, 2025	\$4,379	+ \$859

Price shown includes land and round trip air from DEN.

Please call for rates from your city.

Deposit Amount: \$250 per person

Final Payment Due Date: October 30, 2024

Optional Excursion*

Embera Indigenous Village: \$185 per person

*Note: minimum number of guests required to operate



Travelers Protection Plan (TPP) – \$399 per person

This nonrefundable fee waives all cancellation fees when we are notified of cancellation one day before the tour departs. If you must leave the tour early due to personal illness, illness or death of a member of your immediate family, TPP guarantees full refund for any unused services after the departure of the tour. Other benefits include medical expenses for illness and injury, emergency transportation, 24 hour hot line, and lost or stolen baggage assistance. Return air transportation is included ONLY if your air tickets were provided by Mayflower Cruises & Tours. If you purchase the optional Travelers Protection Plan (TPP), you will be refunded all payments, including deposit amount, less the TPP premium amount.

Cancellation Charges Without Traveler's Protection Plan (TPP)

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • 91 days or more | Deposit Amount |
| • 90 to 45 days prior | 20% of tour cost |
| • 44 to 15 day prior | 30% of tour cost |
| • 14 to 1 day prior | 50% of tour cost |
| • Day 1 of departure | 100% of tour cost |
| or early departure from tour | |
| • No refund on unused portions of the tour | |

Exclusions: Mayflower Cruises & Tours reserves the right to alter its refund and cancellation policy when a substantial amount of cancellation or postponement of travel is attributable to: conditions resulting from an act of God, natural or man-made disaster, fire, government action, civil disorder, war, hostilities between nations, or unavailability of transportation through no fault of Mayflower Cruises & Tours.

FOR RESERVATIONS OR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jill Aikin
Sterling Travel
970-580-4309
aikin@bresnan.net