

Visions of Panama: Commerce, Culture, and Biodiversity

Smithsonian Associates talk by Essdras M Suarez/ 2 X Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer

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- Panama, a country located in Central America, is known for its rich cultural heritage, vibrant biodiversity, and the famous Panama Canal. Situated between Costa Rica and Colombia, Panama serves as a vital land bridge connecting North and South America.
- Panama has 10,000 different plant species that are native, including 1,400 variations of orchids, 678 ferns, and more than 1,500 types of trees.
- Panama has two independence days: One from Spain in 1821 and then from Colombia in 1903.
- Panama is home to an incredible variety of flora and fauna due to its geographical diversity.



- Panama is the only place in the world where you can see the sun rise in the Pacific and set in the Atlantic.
- The canal generates fully one-third of the Panama's entire economy.
- Famous palindrome: "A man, a plan, a canal, Panama."
- Panama was the first Latin American country to adopt US currency as its own.
- According to the UN's last census in 2016, the population of Panama was estimated at 3.99 million inhabitants, which places it 132nd in population in the world and the smallest population in Central America.
- The first ship to cross the canal was the cargo ship Ancon on Aug. 15, 1914.
- The average container ship crossing the canal pays between \$60 to \$300K depending on their size and there are additional fees based on the number of containers being carried.
- The lowest toll paid was \$0.36 by Richard Halliburton, a.k.a. as the 'last of the romantic travelers,' in 1926 when he swam the length of the canal and all three sets of locks.
- Seven out of 10 Panamanians haven't heard of the song 'Panama' by Van Halen.
- Sen. John McCain was born in what was known as the Panama Canal Zone when it was considered US territory.
- The origins of the Panama hat are actually from Ecuador.
- The origin of this misnomer comes from a famous photo of US president Teddy Roosevelt touring the Canal in 1906 while wearing a white linen suit and a hat. The media dubbed the latter, a Panama hat... and the rest is history.
- In Panama, you can swim in the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean in the same day.
- Panama has the oldest-operating railroad in the Americas. The Panama Canal Railway (PCR) train, which was founded

in 1855 and the cost to build it was \$8 million and it is estimated that anywhere 5,000 to 10,000 workers lost their lives in the construction of the engineering marvel of its time.

- Panama City is the only capital city in the world that has a rainforest, Parque Metropolitano, within its city limits.
- Panama has more than 976 bird species... that is more than the combined number of birds found in Canada and the US.
- The name Panama according to Panama's Ministry of Education is abundance of fish, trees, and butterflies.
- Panama is multilingual and multicultural. The average Panamanian genetic makeup is made out of a combination of many ethnicities such as Spaniards, African, European and many more.
- The official language of Panama is Spanish, but English is widely spoken in urban areas.
- There's very little seismic activity so the country has a propensity to build high-rise buildings.
- Panama ranks #26 in the 150m + completed buildings.
- There are 67 skyscrapers in Panama City.
- The tallest one being the former Trump Tower, now a JW Marriott at 284 m (932 ft).

RESOURCES:

[Visit Panama](#) [Skycrapercenter.com](#) [Panama on Lonely Planet](#)

[Panama on National Geographic](#) [Barefoot Panama dot com:](#)

[Map of Panama](#) [Essdrasmsuarez.com.](#)



