



AMC ADVENTURE TRAVEL
Volunteer-Led Excursions Worldwide

Panama – Adventures at Coastal and Mountain Eco Lodges

February 3–15, 2023

Trip #2301



*Casa Cayuco Eco Adventure Lodge Isla Bastimentos Bocas Del Toro – Photo credit: Billy Donahue
Unless otherwise noted, all photos courtesy of the respective eco-lodges*

Trip Overview

Come with us and explore the wonders of Panama!

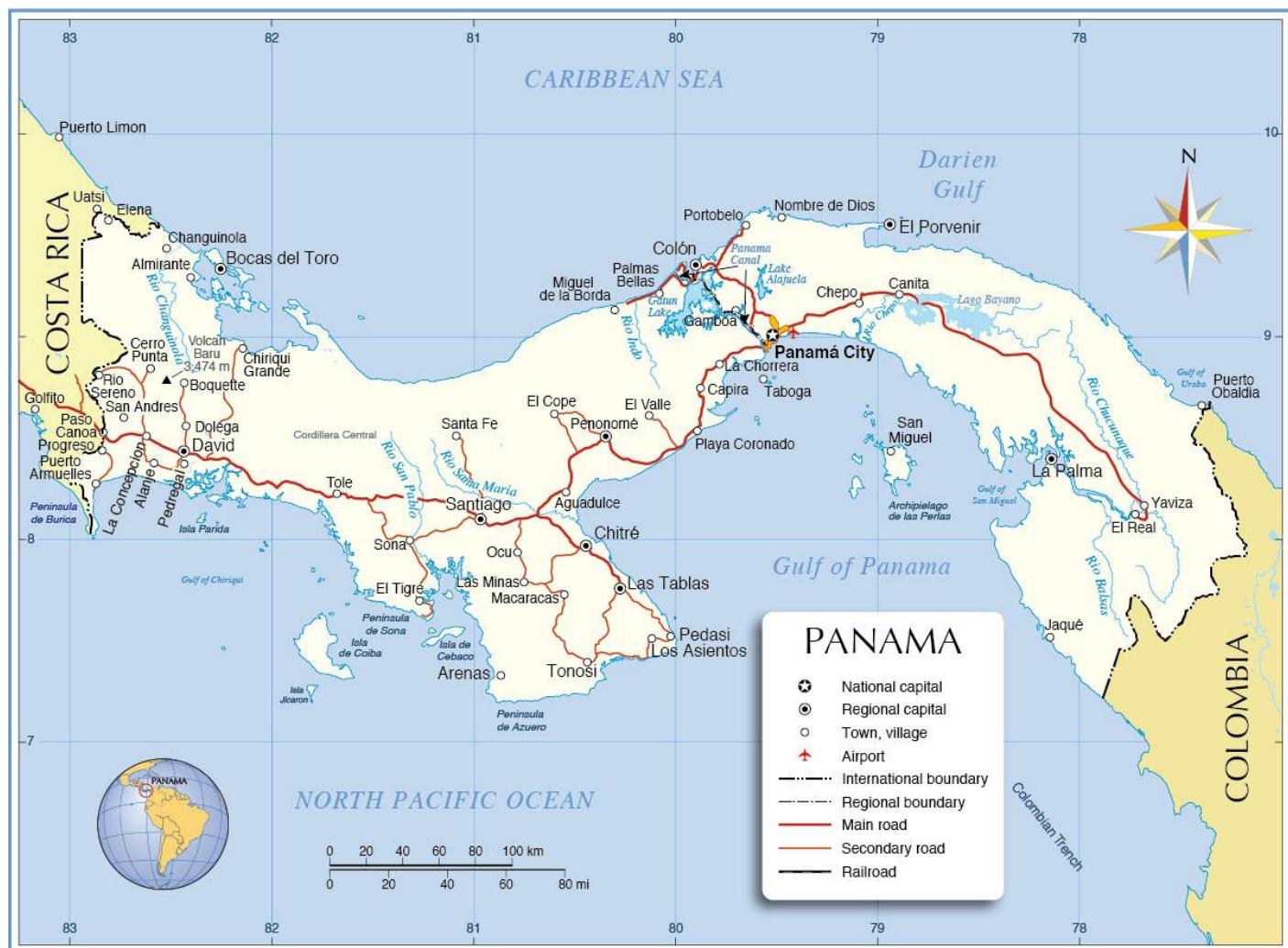
Panama, the isthmus between the Americas, melds together an awe-inspiring collection of both natural and cultural treasures. Our trip to this fascinating country encompasses the sites of Panama City, exploration of Caribbean coastal waters, and hiking in an extraordinarily biodiverse rainforest.

Panama's biodiversity is staggering: the country is home to 220 mammal species, 226 species of reptile, 164 amphibian species and 125 animal species found nowhere else in the world. Panama also boasts 978 avian species, which is the largest number in Central America.

Our adventure begins with a visit to Panama City and the famed Panama Canal. The Panama Canal, a famous feat of human engineering, stretches 48 miles long linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans serving as an essential shipping route. During our stay in Panama City, we'll also tour the historic Casco Viejo district (literally meaning old quarter) which is an UNESCO World Heritage Site. This charismatic neighborhood is known for its unique architectural styles including Spanish colonial, neo-classical, art deco, and Caribbean. We'll have the opportunity to try out the flavor of local restaurants, shop for Panama hats, and take in the sites of this vibrant city.

The next stop on our adventure will be to remote Isla Bastimentos in western Panama, located in the Caribbean coastal area of Bocas del Toro. Here we'll be immersed in the essence of the Panamanian Caribbean. This tropical destination provides us opportunities for snorkeling coral reefs, meeting indigenous villagers, and observing the astonishing biodiversity.

Following our Caribbean stay, our voyage continues to the Mount Totumas Cloud Forest eco-resort located in the province of Chiriquí (12 miles) outside of Volcán. This majestic preserve has a network of well-marked trails teeming with flora and fauna, including monkeys, jungle cats, wild orchids, and birds ranging from quetzals and red-headed barbets to black guans and blue-crowned motmots. The knowledgeable owners have dedicated their lives to preserving this fragile habitat and La Amistad National Park, which it borders. After visiting Mount Totumas eco-resort, we return to Panama City for a special dinner and stay until our flights the next day.



Trip Difficulty

This trip is rated Moderate (#4)

Participants should be comfortable engaging in various water activities. Coastal walks/hikes are short with little elevation change. In the Cloud Forest, with the exception of the optional hike to Mount Totumas, walks/hikes vary in length from 1 to 5 miles with modest elevation gains. [Trip Ratings](#)



Casa Cayuco Eco Adventure activities include kayaking, paddle boarding, and snorkeling

Itinerary Overview:

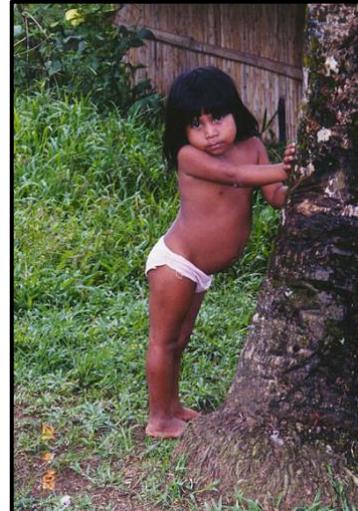
Feb. 3, 2023 - Friday - Fly from US to Panama City. After arrival at Panama-Tocumen International Airport (PTY), we recommend taking a taxi to Global Hotel Panama and get settled in. Tonight, we'll get together as a group for introductions and dinner. During dinner we'll discuss our trip itinerary and return to our hotel to rest up for tomorrow's introduction to Panama City.

Feb. 4 - Saturday – Today we'll tour the famed Panama Canal as well explore the historic Casco Viejo area of Panama City. Tonight, we'll experience Latin American cuisine at a local restaurant while taking in the fabulous rooftop views of this vivacious city.

Feb. 5 - Sunday – This morning we fly to Bocas del Toro where staff from eco-resort Casa Cayuco whisk us away to Isla Bastimentos to embark on the Caribbean segment of our Panamanian adventure. Our Casa Cayuco staff have specially arranged daily excursion choices for us. During our stay here, our Casa Cayuco hosts will provide us a nice variety of locally sourced Panamanian dishes for mealtimes.

Feb. 6 - Monday – Today we will get to know the people and customs of Salt Creek Village, which is our neighboring indigenous village. We'll have the opportunity to mix and meet with local villagers and learn much more about their fascinating culture and traditions, and possibly even help with a service project.

This is a very special place and a wonderful opportunity to partake in our AMC's mission to foster the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the outdoors. During our visit to Salt Creek, we'll also participate in a short-guided tour and boat transfer through Salt Creek's mangrove channel.



Salt Creek Village

Feb. 7 - Tuesday – This morning we'll venture out to snorkel the reefs of beautiful Isla Zapatillas. This location is known for its pristine sandy beaches, clear turquoise water, and the plenteous presence of tropical fish within the National Marine Park (snorkel gear provided).

Feb. 8 - Wednesday - Today we offer optional activities such as visiting a botanical chocolate farm or participating in a bat cave tour.

Feb. 9 - Thursday – This is the day to take in all our Casa Cayuco home has to offer including kayaking, paddle boarding, and exploring additional local trails.

Feb. 10 - Friday – We depart Casa Cayuco via water taxi and travel by chartered vans on a scenic route to our next destination, Mount Totumas Cloud Forest (the highest eco-lodge in Panama at 6300 ft). We'll be in for a treat as the cuisine here is predominantly created from their gardens and local produce vendors.



Sunrise at Mount Totumas Cloud Forest



White Throated Mountain Gem



Resplendent Quetzal

Feb. 11 - Saturday – Today we'll venture out on La Amistad Trail (4.2 miles) known for great opportunities to spot howler and spider monkeys.

Feb. 12 - Sunday – Our trail today is Roble Trail. This is a short 1.4-mile loop trail of moderate difficulty known as an excellent spot for birding. Here we hope to catch a glimpse of the Resplendent Quetzals, Black Guans, and other exotic species.

Feb. 13 - Monday – You'll have the choice for an easy or harder hiking option today. The Puma Trail which is the easier option (1.8 miles) is a prime habitat and viewing spot for forest birds and monkeys. Those wishing for a more challenging hike, can elect to hike the Mount Totumas Peak Trail. This 5-mile round-trip hike is a steep with 2200 feet of elevation change. Since the trail is unmarked in places, we will go with a guide. This trail rewards participants with a hike through magical pristine oak bamboo forest and views from the 8628 ft. peak of Mount Totumas.

Feb. 14 - Tuesday – This morning we'll travel to David (the capital of Chiriquí Province in western Panama) to catch our flight back to Panama City. Back in Panama City, we'll celebrate our final dinner together at a special restaurant and enjoy an evening stay again at the Global Hotel Panama.

Feb. 15 Wednesday – Today we say goodbye to this remarkable country and catch our flights home. While we will be leaving Panama, we will leave with the treasure of exceptional memories of our adventure.



Lodge at Mount Totumas

Accommodations/Meals/Transportation

Accommodations will be two persons/room (subject to confirmation). Single participants will be assigned same-gender roommates.

Global Panama Hotel (Panama City) <http://www.globalhotelpanama.com/>

Casa Cayuco Eco-Resort <https://casacayuco.com/>

Mount Totumas Cloud Forest Eco-Resort <https://www.mounttotumas.com/>

Meals at the eco resorts are fixed. Expect fresh, locally grown produce. There will be options for vegetarian, and certain other dietary needs.

Internal transportation includes planes, buses, ferries, water taxis, vans and SUVs.

Plan to arrive at Panama-Tocumen International Airport (PTY) by 4PM on February 3, 2023.



Dining at Mount Totumas' Highest Eco Lodge in Panama at 6300 ft.

Weather

There are two basic climatic zones in Panama. First of them is flatland with humid typical climate and second is highland “eternal spring”. Plain regions have average daytime temperature in range between 77-86 °F while in highlands it is about 50-81 °F. The year is divided into two seasons which are rainy and dry. Panama’s dry season lasts from mid-December through mid-April. We will be there during the dry season, but it can rain in the cloud forest any time of the year.

Trip Price

The AMC Member trip price is \$3550. The non-member price is \$3650. To join the AMC (2021 pricing \$50 individual, \$75 family) click [here](#). This price does not include airfare to/from Panama. The estimated round-trip airfare is \$600–\$700.

Price includes:

- Panama City Hotel (double occupancy) 2/3, 2/4, and 2/14
- All group meals (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner) starting dinner 2/3 through dinner 2/14
- Panama Canal/ Panama City tour
- Group internal flight from Albrook Panama City Airport (PAC) to Bocas del Toro (BOC)

- Group water transport to/from our accommodations at Isla Bastimentos
- Accommodations (double occupancy) at Casa Cayuco Eco-Loge 2/5-2/9
- AMC group scheduled events at Casa Cayuco
- Use of kayaks, paddle boards, and snorkel gear at Casa Cayuco
- Land transport from Isla Bastimentos to Mount Totumas Cloud Forest Eco-Lodge
- Accommodations at Mount Totumas Cloud Forest Eco-Lodge 2/10-2/13
- Group hikes at Mount Totumas Eco-Lodge (optional guided summit hike fee is not included)
- Group transport from Mount Totumas Eco-Lodge to Enrique Malek Airport (DAV) in David
- Group internal flight from Enrique Malek Airport (DAV) to Panama City (PAC)

Price does not include:

- Arrival and Departure flights to/from the country of Panama
- Transportation from airport to hotel at beginning of trip
- Transportation from hotel to airport at end of trip
- Snacks or meals on-own
- Optional activity offerings
- Alcoholic drinks



View from the Balcony

Adventure Travel Terms and Conditions

Please carefully read and understand AMC Terms and Conditions.

[Terms and Conditions](#)

Subjects include:

- Cancellation Policy
- Leaders' Right to Change Itinerary
- Leaders' Expectations of Participants
- Trip Price
- Travel Documents
- Safety
- AMC Activity Rating System



Panama Canal photo courtesy of Michael Camphin

Application Process

We expect a group size of 18, including your AMC Adventure Travel leaders. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible.

1. Complete the online trip application: [Application](#)
2. Download, complete, and submit (by post or email) the following documents: [Forms](#)
 - Confidential medical form
 - Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release form

Mail a \$1000 deposit check payable to the Appalachian Mountain Club to Ron Janowitz at the address at the end of this document. You will not be accepted until you have completed the steps above, and the leader has determined by telephone conversation with you, that you and the trip are a good match. Your check will not be deposited until the trip leaders confirm the trip has sufficient number of participants and will be run as scheduled. Deposit checks from wait-listed applicants will not be cashed until they are offered a spot on the trip AND they accept.

Once you have been officially accepted and the trip has the required number of qualified participants to make the trip ‘a go,’ your application check will be deposited, and the trip’s cancellation policy will take effect. A second deposit of \$1500 is due February 1, 2022. The balance of the trip fee \$1050 (or \$1150 if not an AMC member) is due June 1, 2022.

Cancellation Policy

If you cancel after the trip is declared a go, the minimum cancelation fee is \$250.

Also read the complete Cancellation Policy in the [Terms and Conditions](#).

Trip Leadership

Pam Madigan



Pam was essentially brought up on AMC experiences at Cardigan Lodge, canoeing the Allagash, and hiking in the White Mountains. Pam has served as a leader or co-leader for an array of AMC Adventure Travel trips including St. John USVI, Hawaii, Russia, Trinidad & Tobago, Italy, Paris, New Zealand, and Fiji. Pam's favorite outdoor activities include walking, hiking, and snorkeling. Pam works as a volunteer for the RI Medical Reserve Corp. Pam currently serves on the AMC Adventure Travel Committee and holds her Wilderness First Aid and CPR certifications.

Ron Janowitz



Ron lives in New Hampshire and regularly hikes in the White Mountains. He has been leading AMC Adventure Travel trips since 2010. He has led numerous trips to southern Utah. He has led trips to other National Parks in the West. Internationally, he has led trips to Slovakia, Patagonia, Peru, Scotland, Ireland, India, Italy, Switzerland and Albania. Recently, Ron was the vice-chair of the Adventure Travel Program. He is the current treasurer for the NH Chapter of AMC. He looks forward to sharing this unique adventure with the participants on this trip.

For questions: Feel free to reach out to either trip leader:

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