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Panama Jazz Festival

January 12-20, 2020

Day 1 | Jan 12

D

On arrival at Tocumen International Airport in Panama City, transfer to the group hotel to rest before meeting your local guide and group for welcome cocktails at 5:00 pm. **Welcome Dinner with a special invited guest from the Asociación Nacional de Conciertos.**

Day 2 | Jan 13

B, L

After breakfast, a group orientation meeting led by your local guide to discuss program logistics and travel in Panama. Following the orientation, we enjoy a walking tour to Independence Plaza and a short visit to the History Museum of Panama for an introduction to the pre-colonial and colonial history of Panama by a Panamanian historian. Today we will understand why UNESCO declared both the **Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo** and Historic District of Panamá World Heritage Sites. After lunch, we continue our **guided walking tour of old Panama**. Founded in 1519 by the conquistador Pedrarias Davila, Panama Viejo is the oldest European settlement on the Pacific coast of the Americas. We walk the colonial ruins, preserved and managed by the Panamanians and hark back to a time when the Spaniards shipped gold from South America via a Pacific route, transported it overland across Panama to the Caribbean and reloaded it on ships bound for Spain. Old Panama is found just to the east of the modern city center and consists of a large, wooded park with the stately, stone ruins of once elegant buildings. This afternoon we will meet with a representative of **La Fundación Danilo Pérez**, the organizer behind the Jazz Festival to learn about its history. You're free to explore dinner options on your own tonight, or join us for a group reservation. Evening we will enjoy local music at **Danilo's Jazz Club**.

Day 3 | Jan 14

B, L

This morning we meet with specialists or representatives of the Arco Properties and San Felipe Inmobiliaria to learn about the **Master Plan for Restoration of the Casco Viejo** through salvaging of neglected buildings, tourism for restoration investment, and the accompanying social plans. We will also learn about the history of Panama's UNESCO World Heritage Status. In the afternoon, we enjoy a continued **walking tour of Casco Viejo**, a World Heritage Site defined by its massive historic sea wall built in the 1670s to defend the city from attack by the pirates. For hundreds of years Panamanians and visitors alike have enjoyed strolling atop this wall and gazing out into the Pacific Ocean.

Following our walking tour enjoy local galleries and artists studios.

Afternoon and Evening are Free for **Jazz Festival Activities**,
<http://www.panamajazzfestival.net>

Day 4 | Jan 15

B, L

In the morning, we visit **The Fundacion Calicanto (“Calicanto”)** to learn about its mission to preserve both the architectural and human heritage of Casco Antiguo (“Casco”). Calicanto has also worked to empower neighborhood residents so that they too can shape and share in the revitalization of Casco Antiguo. Fundacion Calicanto's vocational training program: CAPTA (Capacitacion para el Trabajo), to learn about how local women enter the hotel and tourism industry with their support.

Afterwards, we visit the **Panama Canal History Museum** (<http://www.canalmuseum.com/>) to learn about the history of the Panama Canal. Here we discover that the Panama Canal officially opened by the passing of the SS Ancon on August 15, 1914. At the time, no single effort in American history had exacted such a price in dollars or in human life. The American expenditures from 1904 to 1914 totaled \$352,000,000; far more than the cost of anything built by the United States government up to that time. Together the French and American expenditures totaled \$639,000,000. It took 34 years from the initial effort in 1880 to actually open the Canal in 1914. Then enjoy free time to walk the Casco.

Afternoon and Evening are Free for **Jazz Festival Activities**.

Day 5 | Jan 16

B, L

After breakfast we are off to visit the **Instituto Nacional de Música de Panamá** or another local music school or conservatory.

In the afternoon we exchange with the Aprojusan an organization built to support the Casco's most vulnerable residents. We learn about their social and educational programs for youth and adolescents. We end our daytime activities by exploring local artist studios before going to dinner. Then you have time to explore the Casco Viejo on your own.

Afternoon and Evening are Free for **Jazz Festival Activities**.

Day 6/ Jan 17

B, D

This morning we tour the **City of Knowledge**, an example of space transformation. What was once designed to lodge a military base (Fort Clayton 1919) is now a center of knowledge, entrepreneurship and innovation. Weapons were exchanged for technological development, battalion flags for banners of international organizations working for peace, and troop barracks for classrooms. This transformation took place as a result of Panama's recovery of its sovereignty over the Canal area. The facilities were named Fort Clayton as a tribute to the memory of Colonel Bertram T. Clayton, who led the troops in the Canal Area between 1914 and 1917 and died in French territory during World War II, on May 30, 1918. Panama became fully sovereign thanks to the Torrijos Carter Treaties (1977), which gave sovereignty back to Panama over the interoceanic canal and the adjacent areas that were under US control, i.e. a total of 1,432 square kilometers (552.9 square miles). This historic moment was also a time of dreams and innovating projects for the country, in search of the final way for development. Lunch and then we learn about the expansion of the canal and economic development with a representative of the **Superintendency of Banks of Panama** to learn about how the country is on its way to becoming an international financial hub

Afternoon and Evening are Free for **Jazz Festival Activities**.

Day 7 | Jan 18

B, D

In the morning, we visit the **Tupper Center, the main building of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI)**. Morning lecture on sustainability and conservation follows after our short morning tour of the Institute.

Following lunch, we enjoy a guided hike through the tropical rainforest of Soberania National Park, bordering the Panama Canal watershed. The park includes some 19,500 hectares of protected lowland tropical forest with a superb diversity of plants, birds and mammals. Our instructor will lead the group on trails explaining the ecology of Panama's rainforest. We will learn about how the Canal fostered the conservation of these biodiverse green corridors and how the park has become a basis of local ecotourism. In the afternoon, we complete our excursion out of the **city by visiting the Fundacion Avifauna Eugene Eisenman Panama**, home to almost 1,000 species of birds. This incredible abundance in bird diversity for such a small country (smaller than South Carolina), together with a rather small population (around 3 million people), a variety of natural habitats, and a good national park system, make Panama a land bridge for the bird migration that ravel annually from North America to South America.

Afternoon and Evening are Free for **Jazz Festival Activities**.

Day 8 | Jan 19

B, L

Today we enjoy an all day **Canal Tour Excursion**. Commencing in the early morning, we travel from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean on the same day. Once in the Pacific you can admire the Bay of Panama and the City's splendid skyline before passing under the iconic Bridge of the Americas. The vessel will then transit through the first set of locks, the Miraflores Locks, where it will ascend 18 meters in two distinct steps. Next, the cruise will enter Miraflores Lake, which is a small artificial body of fresh water that separates Pedro Miguel locks, the cruise will travel through the Gaillard Cut, where the Chagres River flows into the canal. The Gaillard Cut (also known as Culebra Cut because its curves resemble a snake) is one of the main points of interest for visitors because it was carved through the Continental Divide and this section of the Canal is full of history and geological value. Next we enjoy a trip through **Gatun Lake**, which was formed by erecting

the Gatun Dam During your transit through Gatun Lake you will pass the Smithsonian Research Station at Barro Colorado.

We celebrate the last evening of our tour at **Las Tinajas Restaurant**. Following our feast, we enjoy a folkloric show of diverse national dancers in elegant costumes.

Day 9 | Jan 20

(B)

Transfer to airport for flight home

Wrap up meeting after breakfast, followed by room checkout then transfer to the airport for your return flight home.

This Journey is Powered by .. 