[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country)

**Panama** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell); [Template:Lang-es](/wiki/Template:Lang-es) [Template:IPA-es](/wiki/Template:IPA-es)), officially called the **Republic of Panama** ([Template:Lang-es](/wiki/Template:Lang-es)), is a [transcontinental country](/wiki/Transcontinental_country) situated between [North](/wiki/North_America) and [South America](/wiki/South_America). It is bordered by [Costa Rica](/wiki/Costa_Rica) to the west, [Colombia](/wiki/Colombia) to the southeast, the [Caribbean](/wiki/Caribbean) to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The capital and largest city is [Panama City](/wiki/Panama_City), whose metropolitan area is home to nearly half of the country's 3.9 million people.

Panama was inhabited by several indigenous tribes prior to [settlement by the Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_colonial_empire) in the 16th century. Panama broke away from [Spain](/wiki/Spain) in 1821 and joined a union of [Nueva Granada](/wiki/Viceroyalty_of_New_Granada), [Ecuador](/wiki/Ecuador), and [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela) named the Republic of [Gran Colombia](/wiki/Gran_Colombia). When Gran Colombia dissolved in 1831, Panama and Nueva Granada remained joined, eventually becoming the Republic of Colombia. With the backing of the United States, Panama seceded from Colombia in 1903, allowing the [Panama Canal](/wiki/Panama_Canal) to be built by the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](/wiki/U.S._Army_Corps_of_Engineers) between 1904 and 1914. In 1977, [an agreement](/wiki/Torrijos–Carter_Treaties) was signed for the total transfer of the Canal from the United States to Panama by the end of the 20th century, which culminated on 31 December 1999.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Revenue from canal tolls continues to represent a significant portion of Panama's GDP, although commerce, banking, and tourism are major and growing sectors. In 2015, [Panama ranked 60th in the world](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_HDI) in terms of the [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index).<ref name=HDI10>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Since 2010, Panama remains the second most competitive economy in Latin America, according to the [World Economic Forum's](/wiki/World_Economic_Forum) Global Competitiveness Index. Covering around 40 percent of its land area, Panama's jungles are home to an abundance of tropical plants and animals – some of them to be found nowhere else on the planet.[[2]](#cite_note-2)

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

There are several theories about the origin of the name "Panama". Some believe that the country was named after a commonly found species of tree ([*Sterculia apetala*](/wiki/Sterculia_apetala), the Panama tree). Others believe that the first settlers arrived in Panama in August, when butterflies abound, and that the name means "many butterflies" in an indigenous language.

The best-known version is that a fishing village and its nearby beach bore the name "Panamá", which meant "an abundance of fish". Captain Antonio Tello de Guzmán, while exploring the Pacific side in 1515, stopped in the small indigenous fishing town. In 1517 Don Gaspar De Espinosa, a Spanish lieutenant, decided to settle a post there. In 1519, Pedrarias Dávila decided to establish the Empire's Pacific city in this site. The new settlement replaced Santa María La Antigua del Darién, which had lost its function within the Crown's global plan after the beginning of the Spanish exploitation of the riches in the Pacific.

Blending all of the above together, Panamanians believe in general that the word Panama means "abundance of fish, trees and butterflies". This is the official definition given in social studies textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education in Panama. However, others believe the word *Panama* comes from the [Kuna](/wiki/Kuna_language) word "bannaba" which means "distant" or "far away".<ref name=PAN>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) At the time of the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century, the known inhabitants of Panama included the [Cuevas](/wiki/Cueva_people) and the [Coclé](/wiki/Gran_Coclé) tribes. These people have nearly disappeared, as they had no immunity from European infectious diseases.[[3]](#cite_note-3)

### Pre-Columbian<!--This is NOT a typo. Before Christopher Columbus, not before Colombia --> period[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Panama_Embera0605.jpg)[Embera](/wiki/Embera-Wounaan) girl dressed for a dance The [Isthmus of Panama](/wiki/Isthmus_of_Panama) was formed about 3 million years ago when the land bridge between North and South America finally closed and plants and animals gradually crossed it in both directions. The existence of the isthmus had an impact on the dispersal of people, agriculture and technology throughout the American continent from the appearance of the first hunters and collectors to the era of villages and cities.[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) The earliest discovered artifacts of [indigenous peoples](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas) in Panama include [Paleo-Indians](/wiki/Paleo-Indians) [projectile points](/wiki/Projectile_point). Later central Panama was home to some of the first [pottery](/wiki/Pottery)-making in the Americas, for example the cultures at [Monagrillo](/wiki/Monagrillo_(archaeological_site)), which date back to 2500–1700 BC. These evolved into significant populations best known through their spectacular burials (dating to c. 500–900 AD) at the Monagrillo [archaeological site](/wiki/Archaeological_site), and their beautiful [Gran Coclé](/wiki/Gran_Coclé) style [polychrome pottery](/wiki/Polychrome_pottery). The monumental [monolithic](/wiki/Monolith) sculptures at the [Barriles](/wiki/Barriles) (Chiriqui) site are also important traces of these ancient isthmian cultures.

Before Europeans arrived Panama was widely settled by [Chibchan](/wiki/Chibchan), [Chocoan](/wiki/Chocoan), and [Cueva](/wiki/Cueva_people) peoples. The largest group were the Cueva (whose specific language affiliation is poorly documented). The size of the [indigenous](/wiki/Indigenous_people_of_the_Americas) population of the isthmus at the time of European colonization is uncertain. Estimates range as high as two million people, but more recent studies place that number closer to 200,000. Archaeological finds and testimonials by early European explorers describe diverse native isthmian groups exhibiting cultural variety and suggesting people with developedned by regular regional routes of commerce.

When Panama was colonized, the indigenous peoples fled into the forest and nearby islands. Scholars believe that [infectious disease](/wiki/Infectious_disease) was the primary cause of the population decline of American natives. The indigenous peoples had no acquired immunity to diseases which had been chronic in Eurasian populations for centuries.[[6]](#cite_note-6)

### Conquest to 1799[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Balboa_südsee.jpg)[Vasco Núñez de Balboa](/wiki/Vasco_Núñez_de_Balboa), a recognized and popular figure of Panamanian history [thumb|right|"New Caledonia", the ill-fated Scottish](/wiki/File:New_Caledonia_in_Darien.jpg) [Darien scheme](/wiki/Darien_scheme) colony in the Bay of Caledonia, west of the [Gulf of Darien](/wiki/Gulf_of_Darien) [Rodrigo de Bastidas](/wiki/Rodrigo_de_Bastidas), sailing westward from [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela) in 1501 in search of gold, was the first European to explore the isthmus of Panama. A year later, [Christopher Columbus](/wiki/Christopher_Columbus) visited the isthmus and established a short-lived settlement in the [Darien](/wiki/Darién_Province). [Vasco Núñez de Balboa's](/wiki/Vasco_Núñez_de_Balboa) tortuous trek from the Atlantic to the Pacific in 1513 demonstrated that the isthmus was, indeed, the path between the seas, and Panama quickly became the crossroads and marketplace of Spain's empire in the [New World](/wiki/New_World). Gold and silver were brought by ship from South America, hauled across the isthmus, and loaded aboard ships for Spain. The route became known as the Camino Real, or Royal Road, although it was more commonly known as Camino de Cruces (Road of Crosses) because of the number of gravesites along the way.

Panama was under [Spanish rule](/wiki/Spanish_Empire) for almost 300 years (1538–1821) and became part of the [Viceroyalty of Peru](/wiki/Viceroyalty_of_Peru), along with all other Spanish possessions in South America. From the outset, Panamanian identity was based on a sense of "geographic destiny", and Panamanian fortunes fluctuated with the geopolitical importance of the isthmus. The colonial experience also spawned Panamanian nationalism as well as a racially complex and highly stratified society, the source of internal conflicts that ran counter to the unifying force of nationalism.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

In 1538, the Real Audiencia de Panama was established, initially with jurisdiction from Nicaragua to [Cape Horn](/wiki/Cape_Horn) before the conquest of Peru. A Real Audiencia (royal audiency) was a judicial district that functioned as an appeals court. Each audiencia had an oidores (Spanish: hearer, a judge).

Spanish authorities had little control over much of the territory of Panama. Large sections managed to resist conquest and missionization until very late in the colonial era. Because of this, indigenous people of the area were often referred to as "indios de guerra" (war Indians) and resisted Spanish attempts to conquer them or missionize them. However, Panama was enormously important to Spain strategically because it was the easiest way to transship silver mined in Peru to Europe. Silver cargos were landed at Panama and then taken overland to Portobello or Nombre de Dios on the Caribbean side of the isthmus for further shipment.

Because of the incomplete Spanish control, the Panama route was vulnerable to attack from pirates (mostly Dutch and English) and from 'new world' Africans called [cimarrons](/wiki/Cimarron_people_(Panama)) who had freed themselves from enslavement and lived in communes or palenques around the Camino Real in Panama's Interior, and on some of the islands off Panama's Pacific coast. One such famous community amounted to a small kingdom under [Bayano](/wiki/Bayano), which emerged in the 1552 to 1558. Sir [Francis Drake's](/wiki/Francis_Drake) famous raids on Panama in 1572–73 were aided by Panama cimarrons, and Spanish authorities were only able to bring them under control by making an alliance with them that guaranteed their freedom in exchange for military support in 1582.[[7]](#cite_note-7) The prosperity enjoyed during the first two centuries (1540–1740) while contributing to colonial growth; the placing of extensive regional judicial authority (Real Audiencia) as part of its jurisdiction; and the pivotal role it played at the height of the Spanish Empire – the first modern global empire – helped define a distinctive sense of autonomy and of regional or national identity within Panama well before the rest of the colonies.

The end of the encomienda system in Azuero, however, sparked the conquest of [Veraguas](/wiki/Veraguas) in that same year. Under the leadership of Francisco Vázquez, the region of Veraguas passed into Castillan rule in 1558. In the newly conquered region, the old system of encomienda was imposed. On the other hand, the Panamanian movement for independence can be indirectly attributed to the abolishment of the [encomienda](/wiki/Encomienda) system in the [Azuero Peninsula](/wiki/Azuero_Peninsula), set forth by the Spanish Crown, in 1558 because of repeated protests by locals against the mistreatment of the native population. In its stead, a system of medium and smaller-sized landownership was promoted, thus taking away the power from the large landowners and into the hands of medium and small sized proprietors.

Panama was the site of the ill-fated [Darien scheme](/wiki/Darien_scheme), which set up a [Scottish](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Scotland) colony in the region in 1698. This failed for a number of reasons, and the ensuing debt contributed to the [union](/wiki/Acts_of_Union_1707) of England and Scotland in 1707.[[8]](#cite_note-8) In 1671, the privateer [Henry Morgan](/wiki/Henry_Morgan), licensed by the English government, sacked and burned the city of [Panama](/wiki/Panamá_Viejo) – the second most important city in the Spanish New World at the time. In 1717, the [viceroyalty of New Granada](/wiki/Viceroyalty_of_New_Granada) (northern South America) was created in response to other Europeans trying to take Spanish territory in the Caribbean region. The Isthmus of Panama was placed under its jurisdiction. However, the remoteness of New Granada's capital, [Santa Fe de Bogotá](/wiki/Santa_Fe_de_Bogotá) (the modern capital of [Colombia](/wiki/Colombia)) proved a greater obstacle than the Spanish crown anticipated as the authority of New Granada was contested by the seniority, closer proximity, and previous ties to the viceroyalty of Lima and even by Panama's own initiative. This uneasy relationship between Panama and Bogotá would persist for centuries.

In 1744, Bishop Francisco Javier de Luna Victoria DeCastro established the [College of San Ignacio de Loyola](/wiki/College_of_San_Ignacio_de_Loyola) and on June 3, 1749, founded La Real y Pontificia Universidad de San Javier. By this time, however, Panama's importance and influence had become insignificant as Spain's power dwindled in Europe and advances in navigation technique increasingly permitted to round Cape Horn in order to reach the Pacific. While the Panama route was short it was also labor-intensive and expensive because of the loading and unloading and laden-down trek required to get from the one coast to the other.

During the last half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, migrations to the countryside decreased Panama City's population and the isthmus' economy shifted from the tertiary to the primary sector.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

#### 1800s[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Arco_chato.jpg)[Santo Domingo Church](/wiki/Santo_Domingo_Church) As the [Spanish American wars of independence](/wiki/Spanish_American_wars_of_independence) were heating up all across Latin America, Panama City was preparing for independence; however, their plans were accelerated by the unilateral Grito de La Villa de Los Santos (Cry From the Town of Saints), issued on November 10, 1821 by the residents of [Azuero](/wiki/Azuero_province) without backing from Panama City to declare their separation from the Spanish Empire. In both [Veraguas](/wiki/Veraguas) and the capital this act was met with disdain, although on differing levels. To Veraguas, it was the ultimate act of treason, while to the capital, it was seen as inefficient and irregular, and furthermore forced them to accelerate their plans.

Nevertheless, the Grito was an event t hat shook the isthmus to its very core. It was a sign, on the part of the residents of Azuero, of their antagonism toward the independence movement in the capital.Those in the capital region in turn regarded the Azueran movement with contempt, since the separatists in Panama City believed that their counterparts in Azuero were fighting not only for independence from Spain, but also for their right to self-rule apart from Panama City once the Spaniards were gone.

It was an incredibly brave move on the part of Azuero, which lived in fear of Colonel [José Pedro Antonio de Fábrega y de las Cuevas](/wiki/History_of_Panama#José_de_Fábrega) (1774–1841), and with good reason. The Colonel was a staunch loyalist and had all of the isthmus' military supplies in his hands.They feared quick retaliation and swift retribution against the separatists.

What they had counted on, however, was the influence of the separatists in the capital. Ever since October 1821, when the former Governor General, Juan de la Cruz Murgeón, left the isthmus on a campaign in Quito and left the Veraguan colonel in charge, the separatists had been slowly converting Fábrega to the separatist side. So, by November 10, Fábrega was now a supporter of the independence movement. Soon after the separatist declaration of Los Santos, Fábrega convened every organization in the capital with separatist interests and formally declared the city's support for independence. No military repercussions occurred because of the skillful bribing of royalist troops.

### Post-colonial Panama[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

[thumb|U.S. President](/wiki/File:Roosevelt_and_the_Canal.JPG) [Theodore Roosevelt](/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt) sitting on a steam shovel at the Panama Canal, 1906 In the first eighty years following independence from Spain, Panama was a [department](/wiki/Departments_of_Colombia) of Colombia, after voluntarily joining it at the end of 1821. The people of the isthmus made several attempts to secede and came close to success in 1831, and again during the [Thousand Days' War](/wiki/Thousand_Days'_War) of 1899–1902. When the [Senate of Colombia](/wiki/Senate_of_Colombia) rejected the [Hay–Herrán Treaty](/wiki/Hay–Herrán_Treaty), the United States decided to support the Panamanian independence movement.[[9]](#cite_note-9) In November 1903 Panama proclaimed its independence[[10]](#cite_note-10) and concluded the [Hay–Bunau-Varilla Treaty](/wiki/Hay–Bunau-Varilla_Treaty) with the United States. The treaty granted rights to the United States "as if it were sovereign" in a [zone](/wiki/Panama_Canal_Zone) roughly [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) wide and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long. In that zone, the U.S. would build a canal, then administer, fortify, and defend it "in perpetuity". In 1914, the United States completed the existing 83 km (52 mi) canal. The early 1960s saw the beginning of sustained pressure in Panama for the renegotiation of this treaty.

The US intention to influence the area, especially the [Panama Canal's](/wiki/Panama_Canal) construction and control, led to the [separation of Panama from Colombia](/wiki/Separation_of_Panama_from_Colombia) in 1903 and its establishment as a nation. The United States intensively encouraged the Panamanian separatist movement.[[11]](#cite_note-11) From 1903 to 1968, Panama was a [constitutional democracy](/wiki/Constitutional_democracy) dominated by a commercially oriented [oligarchy](/wiki/Oligarchy). During the 1950s, the Panamanian military began to challenge the oligarchy's political hegemony.

[thumb|Construction work on the](/wiki/File:Panama_Canal_under_construction,_1907.jpg) [Gaillard Cut](/wiki/Gaillard_Cut) of the Panama Canal, 1907 Amid negotiations for the Robles–Johnson treaty, Panama held elections in 1968. The candidates were

* Dr. [Arnulfo Arias](/wiki/Arnulfo_Arias) Madrid,Unión Nacional ("National Union")
* Antonio González Revilla,[Democracia Cristiana](/wiki/People's_Party_(Panama)) ("Christian Democrats")
* engineer David Samudio, Alianza del Pueblo ("People's Alliance") who had the government's support.

(see Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz, Estudios sobre el Panamá republicano 508).[[12]](#cite_note-12) Arias Madrid was declared the winner of elections that were marked by violence and accusations of fraud against Alianza del Pueblo. On October 1, 1968, Arias Madrid took office as president of Panama, promising to lead a government of "national union" that would end the reigning corruption and pave the way for a new Panama. A week and a half later, on October 11, 1968, the National Guard (Guardia Nacional) ousted Arias and initiated the downward spiral that would culminate with the United States' invasion in 1989. Arias, who had promised to respect the hierarchy of the National Guard, broke the pact and started a large restructuring of the Guard. To preserve the Guard's interests, Lieutenant Colonel [Omar Torrijos](/wiki/Omar_Torrijos) Herrera and Major Boris Martínez commanded the first military coup against a civilian government in Panamanian republican history.[[12]](#cite_note-12) The military justified itself by declaring that Arias Madrid was trying to install a dictatorship, and promised a return to constitutional rule. In the meantime, the Guard began a series of populist measures that would gain support for the coup. Among them were:

* Price freezing on food, medicine and other goods[[13]](#cite_note-13) until January 31, 1969
* rent level freeze
* legalization of the permanence of squatting families in boroughs surrounding the historic site of Panama Viejo.[[12]](#cite_note-12)Parallel to this[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify), the military began a policy of repression against the opposition, who were labeled communists. The military appointed a Provisional Government Junta that was to arrange new elections. However, the National Guard would prove to be very reluctant to abandon power and soon began calling itself El Gobierno Revolucionario ("The Revolutionary Government").

#### Post-1970[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:Omar_Torrijos_with_Panamanian_farmers.jpg)[Omar Torrijos](/wiki/Omar_Torrijos) (right) with farmers in the Panamanian countryside. The Torrijos government was well known for its policies of [land redistribution](/wiki/Land_redistribution).

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During [Omar Torrijos's](/wiki/Omar_Torrijos) control, the military regime transformed the political and economic structure of the country by initiating massive coverage of social security services and expanding public education. The constitution was changed in 1972. For the reform to the constitution, the military created a new organization, the Assembly of Corregimiento Representatives, which replaced the National Assembly. The new assembly, also known as the Poder Popular ("Power of the People"), was composed of 505 members selected by the military with no participation from political parties, which the military had eliminated. The new constitution proclaimed [Omar Torrijos](/wiki/Omar_Torrijos) the "Maximum Leader of the Panamanian Revolution", and conceded him unlimited power for six years, although, to keep a façade of constitutionality,[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) [Demetrio B. Lakas](/wiki/Demetrio_B._Lakas) was appointed president for the same period (Pizzurno Gelós and Araúz, *Estudios sobre el Panamá republicano* 541).[[12]](#cite_note-12) In 1981 Torrijos died in a plane crash. Torrijos' death altered the tone of Panama's political evolution. Despite the 1983 constitutional amendments, which proscribed a political role for the military, the Panama Defense Forces (PDF), as they were then known, continued to dominate Panamanian political life.[Template:When](/wiki/Template:When) By this time, General [Manuel Noriega](/wiki/Manuel_Noriega) was firmly in control of both the PDF and the civilian government.[Template:When](/wiki/Template:When)

[thumb|300px|U.S. President](/wiki/File:Jimmy_Carter_and_General_Omar_Torrijos_signing_the_Panama_Canal_Treaty.jpg) [Jimmy Carter](/wiki/Jimmy_Carter) shakes hands with General [Omar Torrijos](/wiki/Omar_Torrijos) after signing the [Panama Canal Treaties](/wiki/Torrijos–Carter_Treaties). In the 1984 elections, the candidates were

* [Nicolás Ardito Barletta Vallarino](/wiki/Nicolás_Ardito_Barletta_Vallarino), supported by the military in a union called UNADE
* Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid, for the opposition union ADO
* ex-General [Rubén Darío Paredes](/wiki/Rubén_Darío_Paredes), who had been forced to an early retirement by Noriega, running for Partido Nacionalista Popular PNP ("Popular Nationalist Party")
* Carlos Iván Zúñiga, running for Partido Acción Popular (PAPO) meaning "Popular Action Party"

Barletta was declared the winner of elections that had been clearly won by Madrid. Ardito Barletta inherited a country in economic ruin and hugely indebted to the [International Monetary Fund](/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund) and the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank). Amid the economic crisis and Barletta's efforts to calm the country's creditors, street protests arose, and so did military repression.

Meanwhile, Noriega's regime had fostered a well-hidden criminal economy that operated as a parallel source of income for the military and their allies, providing revenues from drugs and [money laundering](/wiki/Money_laundering). Toward the end of the military dictatorship, a new wave of Chinese migrants arrived on the isthmus in the hope of migrating to the United States. The smuggling of Chinese became an enormous business, with revenues of up to 200 million dollars for Noriega's regime (see Mon 167).[[14]](#cite_note-14) The military dictatorship, at that time[Template:When](/wiki/Template:When) supported by the United States[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed), perpetrated the assassination and torture of more than one hundred Panamanians and forced at least a hundred more dissidents into exile. (see Zárate 15).[[15]](#cite_note-15) Noriega also began playing a double role in Central America under the supervision of the CIA.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) While the Contadora group[Template:Who](/wiki/Template:Who) conducted diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in the region, Noriega supplied Nicaraguan [Contras](/wiki/Contras) and other guerrillas in the region with weapons and ammunition.[[12]](#cite_note-12) On June 6, 1987, the recently retired Colonel Roberto Díaz Herrera, resentful that Noriega's broke the agreed "Torrijos Plan" of succession that would have made him the chief of the military after Noriega, decided to denounce the regime. He revealed details of the electoral fraud[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify), accused Noriega of planning Torrijos's death and declared that Torrijos had received 12 million dollars from the Shah of Iran for giving the exiled Iranian leader asylum. Hd also accused Noriega of the assassination by decapitation of then opposition leader Dr. [Hugo Spadafora](/wiki/Hugo_Spadafora).[[12]](#cite_note-12)[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

On the night of June 9, 1987, the Cruzada Civilista ("Civic Crusade") was created [Template:Where](/wiki/Template:Where) and began organizing actions of civil disobedience. The Crusade called for a general strike. In response, the military suspended constitutional rights and declared a state of emergency in the country. On July 10, the [Civic Crusade](/wiki/Civic_Crusade) called for a massive demonstration that was violently repressed by the "Dobermans", the military's special riot control unit. That day, later known as El Viernes Negro ("Black Friday"), left six hundred people injured and another six hundred detained, many of whom were later tortured and raped.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

United States President [Ronald Reagan](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan) began a series of sanctions against the military regime. The United States froze economic and military assistance to Panama in the summer of 1987 in response to the domestic political crisis in Panama and an attack on the U.S. Embassy. Yet these sanctions did little to overthrow Noriega but instead severely damaged Panama's economy. The sanctions hit the Panamanian population hard and caused the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to decline almost 25% between 1987–1989 (see Acosta n.p.).[[16]](#cite_note-16) On February 5, 1988, General Manuel Antonio Noriega was accused of drug trafficking by federal juries in Tampa and Miami.

In April 1988, the U.S. President Ronald Reagan invoked the [International Emergency Economic Powers Act](/wiki/International_Emergency_Economic_Powers_Act), freezing Panamanian government assets in all U.S. organizations. In May 1989 Panamanians voted overwhelmingly for the anti-Noriega candidates. The Noriega regime promptly annulled the election and embarked on a new round of repression.

[thumb|300px|The aftermath of urban warfare during the](/wiki/File:Panama_clashes_1989.JPEG) [U.S. invasion of Panama](/wiki/United_States_invasion_of_Panama), 1989

#### U.S. invasion (1989)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

The United States government said [Operation Just Cause](/wiki/Operation_Just_Cause), which commenced on December 20, 1989, was necessary to safeguard the lives of U.S. citizens in Panama, defend democracy and human rights, combat drug trafficking, and secure the neutrality of the [Panama Canal](/wiki/Panama_Canal) as required by the [Torrijos–Carter Treaties](/wiki/Torrijos–Carter_Treaties) (*New York Times*, A Transcript of President Bush's Address n.p.).[[17]](#cite_note-17) Human Rights Watch wrote in the 1989 report: "Washington turned a blind eye to abuses in Panama for many years until concern over drug trafficking prompted indictments of the general [Noriega] by two grand juries in Florida in February 1988".[[18]](#cite_note-18) The U.S. reported 23 servicemen killed and 324 wounded, with Panamanian casualties estimated around 450. Described as a surgical maneuver, the action led to civilian deaths whose estimated numbers range from 400 to 4,000 during the two weeks of armed activities.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) This surgical maneuver represented the largest United States military operation to that date since the end of the Vietnam War (Cajar Páez 22) [[19]](#cite_note-19) The United Nations put the Panamanian civilian death toll at 500, while other sources had higher statistics.[[20]](#cite_note-20) The number of U.S. civilians (and their dependents), who had worked for the Panama Canal Commission and the U.S. Military, and were killed by the Panamanian Defense Forces, has never been fully disclosed.

On December 29, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution calling the intervention in Panama a "flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States".[[21]](#cite_note-21) The resolution was vetoed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.[[22]](#cite_note-22) The urban population, with many living below the poverty level, was greatly affected by the 1989 intervention. As pointed out in 1995 by a UN Technical Assistance Mission to Panama, the bombardments during the invasion caused the displacement of 20,000 people. The most heavily affected district was impoverished [El Chorrillo](/wiki/El_Chorrillo), where several blocks of apartments were completely destroyed. El Chorrillo had been built in days of Canal construction, a series of wooden barracks which easily caught fire under the United States attack.[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25) The economic damage caused by the intervention has been estimated to be between 1.5 and 2 billion dollars. n.p.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Many [Panamanians](/wiki/Panamanians) supported the intervention.[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[26]](#cite_note-26)

### Post-intervention era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|300px|The skyline of](/wiki/File:Panama_Skyline.jpg) [Panama City](/wiki/Panama_City) near [Cinta Costera](/wiki/Cinta_Costera) Panama's Electoral Tribunal moved quickly to restore the civilian constitutional government, reinstated the results of the May 1989 election on December 27, 1989, and confirmed the victory of President [Guillermo Endara](/wiki/Guillermo_Endara) and Vice Presidents Guillermo Ford and Ricardo Arias Calderon.

During its five-year term, the often-fractious government struggled to meet the public's high expectations. Its new police force was a major improvement over its predecessor but was not fully able to deter crime. [Ernesto Pérez Balladares](/wiki/Ernesto_Pérez_Balladares) was sworn in as President on September 1, 1994, after an internationally monitored election campaign.

Perez Balladares ran as the candidate for a three-party coalition dominated by the [Democratic Revolutionary Party](/wiki/Democratic_Revolutionary_Party) (PRD), the erstwhile political arm of military dictatorships. Perez Balladares worked skillfully during the campaign to rehabilitate the PRD's image, emphasizing the party's populist Torrijos roots rather than its association with Noriega. He won the election with only 33% of the vote when the major non-PRD forces splintered into competing factions. His administration carried out economic reforms and often worked closely with the U.S. on implementation of the Canal treaties.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

On September 1, 1999, [Mireya Moscoso](/wiki/Mireya_Moscoso), the widow of former President [Arnulfo Arias Madrid](/wiki/Arnulfo_Arias_Madrid), took office after defeating PRD candidate [Martin Torrijos](/wiki/Martin_Torrijos), son of [Omar Torrijos](/wiki/Omar_Torrijos), in a free and fair election.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) During her administration, Moscoso attempted to strengthen social programs, especially for child and youth development, protection, and general welfare. Moscoso's administration successfully handled the Panama Canal transfer and was effective in the administration of the Canal.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

The PRD's Martin Torrijos won the presidency and a legislative majority in the National Assembly in 2004. Torrijos ran his campaign on a platform of, among other pledges, a "zero tolerance" for corruption, a problem endemic to the Moscoso and Perez Balladares administrations.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) After taking office, Torrijos passed a number of laws which made the government more transparent. He formed a National Anti-Corruption Council whose members represented the highest levels of government and civil society, labor organizations, and religious leadership. In addition, many of his closest Cabinet ministers were non-political technocrats known for their support for the Torrijos government's anti-corruption aims. Despite the Torrijos administration's public stance on corruption, many high-profile cases[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify), particularly involving political or business elites, were never acted upon.

Conservative supermarket magnate [Ricardo Martinelli](/wiki/Ricardo_Martinelli) was elected to succeed Martin Torrijos with a landslide victory in the May 2009 presidential election. Mr. Martinelli's business credentials drew voters worried by slowing growth due to the world financial crisis.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Standing for the four-party opposition Alliance for Change, Mr. Martinelli gained 60% of the vote, against 37% for the candidate of the governing left-wing Democratic Revolutionary Party.

On May 4, 2014, [Juan Carlos Varela](/wiki/Juan_Carlos_Varela) won the 2014 presidential election with over 39% of the votes, against the party of his former political partner Ricardo Martinelli, Cambio Democrático, and their candidate [José Domingo Arias](/wiki/José_Domingo_Arias). He was sworn in on 1 July 2014.

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[500px|thumb|A map of Panama](/wiki/File:Pm-map.png) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|300px|La Palma, Darién.](/wiki/File:La_palma,_Darién.jpg) Panama is located in Central America, bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, between Colombia and Costa Rica. It mostly lies between latitudes [7°](/wiki/7th_parallel_north) and [10°N](/wiki/10th_parallel_north), and longitudes [77°](/wiki/77th_meridian_west) and [83°W](/wiki/83rd_meridian_west) (a small area lies west of 83°).

Its location on the [Isthmus of Panama](/wiki/Isthmus_of_Panama) is strategic. By 2000, Panama controlled the [Panama Canal](/wiki/Panama_Canal) which connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea to the North of the Pacific Ocean. Panama's total area is 74,177.3 km2.[[28]](#cite_note-28) The dominant feature of Panama's geography is the central spine of mountains and hills that forms the continental divide. The divide does not form part of the great mountain chains of North America, and only near the Colombian border are there highlands related to the [Andean](/wiki/Andes) system of South America. The spine that forms the divide is the highly eroded arch of an uplift from the sea bottom, in which peaks were formed by volcanic intrusions.

The mountain range of the divide is called the [Cordillera de Talamanca](/wiki/Cordillera_de_Talamanca) near the Costa Rican border. Farther east it becomes the Serranía de Tabasará, and the portion of it closer to the lower saddle of the isthmus, where the Panama Canal is located, is often called the Sierra de Veraguas. As a whole, the range between Costa Rica and the canal is generally referred to by geographers as the [Cordillera Central](/wiki/Cordillera_Central,_Costa_Rica).

The highest point in the country is the [Volcán Barú](/wiki/Volcán_Barú), which rises to 3,475 metres (11,401 ft). A nearly impenetrable jungle forms the [Darién Gap](/wiki/Darién_Gap) between Panama and Colombia where Colombian [guerrilla](/wiki/Guerrilla) and drug dealers are operating with [hostage-taking](/wiki/Hostage-taking). This and forest protection movements create a break in the [Pan-American Highway](/wiki/Pan-American_Highway), which otherwise forms a complete road from [Alaska](/wiki/Alaska) to [Patagonia](/wiki/Patagonia).

Panama's wildlife holds the most diversity of all the countries in Central America. It is home to many South American species as well as North American wildlife.

[thumb|300px|The](/wiki/File:chagres.jpg) [Chagres River](/wiki/Chagres_River)

### Waterways[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Nearly 500 rivers lace Panama's rugged landscape. Mostly unnavigable, many originate as swift highland streams, meander in valleys, and form coastal deltas. However, the [Río Chagres](/wiki/Río_Chagres) (*Rio Chagres*), located in central Panama, is one of the few wide rivers and a source of enormous hydroelectric power. The central part of the river is dammed by the [Gatun Dam](/wiki/Gatun_Dam) and forms [Gatun Lake](/wiki/Gatun_Lake), an [artificial lake](/wiki/Artificial_lake) that constitutes part of the [Panama Canal](/wiki/Panama_Canal). The lake was created between 1907 and 1913 by the building of the Gatun Dam across the [Chagres River](/wiki/Chagres_River). When it was created, Gatun Lake was the largest man-made lake in the world, and the dam was the largest earth dam. The river drains northwest into the Caribbean. The Kampia and Madden Lakes (also filled from the Río Chagres) provide hydroelectricity for the area of the former Canal Zone.

The Río Chepo, another source of hydroelectric power, is one of the more than 300 rivers emptying into the Pacific. These Pacific-oriented rivers are longer and slower running than those of the Caribbean side. Their basins are also more extensive. One of the longest is the [Río Tuira](/wiki/Río_Tuira), which flows into the [Golfo de San Miguel](/wiki/Golfo_de_San_Miguel) and is the nation's only river navigable by larger vessels.

### Harbors[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

The Caribbean coastline is marked by several good natural harbors. However, Cristóbal, at the Caribbean terminus of the canal, had the only important port facilities in the late 1980s. The numerous islands of the Archipiélago de Bocas del Toro, near the Beaches of Costa Rica, provide an extensive natural roadstead and shield the banana port of [Almirante](/wiki/Almirante). The over 350 [San Blas Islands](/wiki/San_Blas_Islands), near Colombia, are strung out for more than 160 km along the sheltered Caribbean coastline.

[thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:Colon_Panama.jpg)[Colón Harbor](/wiki/Colón,_Panama), 2000 Currently, the terminal ports located at each end of the Panama Canal, namely the Port of Cristobal and the Port of Balboa, are ranked second and third respectively in Latin America in terms of numbers of containers units ([TEU](/wiki/Twenty-foot_equivalent_unit)) handled.[[29]](#cite_note-29) The Port of Balboa covers 182 hectares and contains four berths for containers and two multi-purpose berths. In total, the berths are over 2,400 meters long with alongside depth of 15 meters. The Port of Balboa has 18 super post-Panamax and Panamax quay cranes and 44 gantry cranes. The Port of Balboa also contains 2,100 square meters of warehouse space.[[30]](#cite_note-30) The Ports of Cristobal (encompassing the container terminals of Panama Ports Cristobal, Manzanillo International Terminal and Colon Container Terminal) handled 2,210,720 TEU in 2009, second only to the [Port of Santos](/wiki/Port_of_Santos), Brazil, in Latin America.

Excellent deep water ports capable of accommodating large [VLCC](/wiki/VLCC) (Very Large Crude Oil Carriers) are located at [Charco Azul](/wiki/Charco_Azul), [Chiriquí](/wiki/Chiriquí_Province) (Pacific) and [Chiriquí Grande](/wiki/Chiriquí_Grande), [Bocas del Toro](/wiki/Bocas_del_Toro_Province) (Atlantic) near Panama's western border with Costa Rica. The [Trans-Panama pipeline](/wiki/Trans-Panama_pipeline), running across the isthmus with a length of 131 km, has been operating between Charco Azul and Chiriquí Grande since 1979.[[31]](#cite_note-31)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|300px|Panama map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Panama_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) [thumb|300px|A cold climate is usual near and in the Panamanian highlands.](/wiki/File:VistaBoquete.jpg) Panama has a tropical climate. Temperatures are uniformly high—as is the relative humidity—and there is little seasonal variation. Diurnal ranges are low; on a typical dry-season day in the capital city, the early morning minimum may be [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and the afternoon maximum [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The temperature seldom exceeds [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) for more than a short time. Temperatures on the Pacific side of the isthmus are somewhat lower than on the Caribbean, and breezes tend to rise after dusk in most parts of the country. Temperatures are markedly cooler in the higher parts of the mountain ranges, and frosts occur in the Cordillera de Talamanca in western Panama.

Climatic regions are determined less on the basis of temperature than on rainfall, which varies regionally from less than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to more than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) per year. Almost all of the rain falls during the rainy season, which is usually from April to December, but varies in length from seven to nine months. In general, rainfall is much heavier on the Caribbean than on the Pacific side of the continental divide. The annual average in Panama City is little more than half of that in Colón. Although rainy-season thunderstorms are common, the country is outside the hurricane belt.

Panama's tropical environment supports an abundance of plants. Forests dominate, interrupted in places by grasslands, scrub, and crops. Although nearly 40% of Panama is still wooded, deforestation is a continuing threat to the rain-drenched woodlands. Tree cover has been reduced by more than 50% since the 1940s. Subsistence farming, widely practiced from the northeastern jungles to the southwestern grasslands, consists largely of corn, bean, and tuber plots. Mangrove swamps occur along parts of both coasts, with banana plantations occupying deltas near Costa Rica. In many places, a multi-canopied rain forest abuts the swamp on one side of the country and extends to the lower reaches of slopes in the other.

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|300px|The](/wiki/File:Asamblea_Nacional_de_Panamá.JPG) [National Assembly of Panama](/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Panama). Panama's politics take place in a framework of a [presidential](/wiki/Presidential_system) [representative democratic](/wiki/Representative_democracy) republic, whereby the [President of Panama](/wiki/President_of_Panama) is both [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state) and [head of government](/wiki/Head_of_government), and of a [multi-party system](/wiki/Multi-party_system). [Executive power](/wiki/Executive_power) is exercised by the government. [Legislative power](/wiki/Legislative_power) is vested in both the government and the [National Assembly](/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Panama). The [judiciary](/wiki/Judiciary) is independent of the executive and the legislature.

For all people national elections are universal and mandatory for all citizens 18 years and older. National elections for the executive and legislative branches take place every five years. Members of the judicial branch (justices) are appointed by the head of state. Panama's [National Assembly](/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Panama) is elected by proportional representation in fixed electoral districts, so many smaller parties are represented. Presidential elections do not require a simple majority; out of the four last presidents only one, incumbent president Ricardo Martinelli, was elected with over 50% of the popular vote.[[32]](#cite_note-32)

### Political culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

In December 1989 the United States invaded Panama to depose the dictator [Manuel Noriega](/wiki/Manuel_Noriega). Since the U.S. invasion, and resulting end to the 21-year military dictatorship, Panama has successfully completed four peaceful transfers of power to opposing political factions. The political landscape is dominated by two major parties and many smaller parties, many of which are driven by individual leaders more than ideologies. Former President [Martin Torrijos](/wiki/Martin_Torrijos) is the son of dictator [Omar Torrijos](/wiki/Omar_Torrijos). He succeeded [Mireya Moscoso](/wiki/Mireya_Moscoso), the widow of [Arnulfo Arias](/wiki/Arnulfo_Arias). Panama's most recent [national elections occurred on May 4, 2014](/wiki/Panamanian_general_election,_2014) with Incumbent Vice-President [Juan Carlos Varela](/wiki/Juan_Carlos_Varela) declared the victor.

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [thumb|left|Panama's President](/wiki/File:John_Kerry_con_Juan_Carlos_Varela_e_Isabel_Saint_Malo.jpg) [Juan Carlos Varela](/wiki/Juan_Carlos_Varela) and Vice President [Isabel Saint Malo](/wiki/Isabel_Saint_Malo) with U.S. Secretary of State [John Kerry](/wiki/John_Kerry)

The United States cooperates with the Panamanian government in promoting economic, political, security, and social development through U.S. and international agencies. Cultural ties between the two countries are strong, and many Panamanians come to the United States for higher education and advanced training.

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

The [Panamanian Public Forces](/wiki/Panamanian_Public_Forces) are the national security forces of Panama. Panama is the second country in Latin America (the other being [Costa Rica](/wiki/Costa_Rica)) to permanently abolish standing armies. Panama maintains armed police and security forces, and small air and maritime forces. They are tasked with law enforcement and can perform limited military actions.

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

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[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Panama is divided into ten provinces with their respective local authorities (governors), which are divided into [districts](/wiki/Districts_of_Panama) and [*corregimientos*](/wiki/Corregimientos_of_panama) (townships) and has a total of ten cities. Also, there are five *Comarcas* (literally: "Shires") populated by a variety of indigenous groups.

Provinces

* [Bocas del Toro](/wiki/Bocas_del_Toro_Province)
* [Chiriquí](/wiki/Chiriquí_Province)
* [Coclé](/wiki/Coclé_Province)
* [Colón](/wiki/Colón_Province)
* [Darién](/wiki/Darién_Province)
* [Herrera](/wiki/Herrera_Province)
* [Los Santos](/wiki/Los_Santos_Province)
* [Panamá](/wiki/Panamá_Province)
* [West Panamá](/wiki/West_Panamá_Province)
* [Veraguas](/wiki/Veraguas_Province)

Regions

* [Emberá](/wiki/Comarca_Emberá-Wounaan)
* [Guna Yala](/wiki/Guna_Yala)
* [Ngöbe-Buglé Comarca](/wiki/Ngöbe-Buglé_Comarca)
* [Kuna de Madugandí](/wiki/Kuna_de_Madugandí)
* [Kuna de Wargandí](/wiki/Kuna_de_Wargandí)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Update](/wiki/Template:Update) [thumb|300px|A](/wiki/File:Exclusa_Miraflores_Canal_de_Panama_Panorama.jpg) [Panamax](/wiki/Panamax) ship in transit through the Miraflores locks, [Panama Canal](/wiki/Panama_Canal).

According to the [CIA World Factbook](/wiki/CIA_World_Factbook), [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) Panama had an unemployment rate of 2.7%.[[1]](#cite_note-1) A food surplus was registered in August 2008. On the [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index), Panama ranked 60th in 2015. In recent years, Panama's economy has experienced a boom, with growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) averaging over 10.4% in the 2006–2008 period. Panama's economy has been among the fastest growing and best managed in Latin America.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) The [Latin Business Chronicle](/wiki/Latin_Business_Chronicle) predicted that Panama would be the fastest growing economy in Latin America during the five years period 2010–14, matching Brazil's 10% rate.[[33]](#cite_note-33) The expansion project on the Panama Canal and the free trade agreement with the United States are expected[Template:Who](/wiki/Template:Who) to boost and extend economic expansion for some time.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Despite Panama's upper-middle per capita GDP, it remains a country of stark contrasts. Perpetuated by dramatic educational disparities, over 25% of Panama's population lived in national poverty in 2013 and 3% of the population lives in extreme poverty, according to latest reports by the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank).[[34]](#cite_note-34)[[35]](#cite_note-35) [thumb|300px|The Marine bridge viaduct](/wiki/File:Corsur.JPG)

### Economic sectors[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

Panama's economy, because of its key geographic location, is mainly based on a well developed service sector especially commerce, tourism, and trading. The handover of the Canal and military installations by the United States has given rise to large construction projects.

A project to build of a third set of locks for the Panama Canal A was overwhelmingly approved in referendum (with low voter turnout, however) on October 22, 2006. The official estimated cost of the project is US$5.25 billion. The canal is of major economic importance because it provides millions of dollars of toll revenue to the national economy and provides massive employment. Transfer of control of the Canal to the Panamanian government completed in 1999, after being controlled by the US for 85 years.

Copper and gold deposits are being developed by foreign investors, to the dismay of some environmental groups, as all of the projects are located within protected areas.[[36]](#cite_note-36)

#### Panama as a tax haven[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Since the early [20th century](/wiki/20th_century), Panama has gained a reputation worldwide for being a [tax haven](/wiki/Tax_haven). In 2016, the release of the [Panama Papers](/wiki/Panama_Papers) caused a huge global financial scandal.

### Transportation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:CM_Hubdelasamericas.jpg)[Tocumen International Airport](/wiki/Tocumen_International_Airport), Central America's largest airport [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Panama is home to [Tocumen International Airport](/wiki/Tocumen_International_Airport), Central America's largest airport. Additionally there are more than 20 smaller airfields in the country. See [list of airports in Panama](/wiki/List_of_airports_in_Panama).

Panama's roads, traffic and transportation systems are generally safe, though night driving is difficult and in many cases, restricted by local authorities. This usually occurs in informal settlements.<ref name=travel>["Panama: Country-specific information"](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_994.html). [U.S. Department of State](/wiki/U.S._Department_of_State) (March 18, 2009). [Template:PD-notice](/wiki/Template:PD-notice)</ref> Traffic in Panama moves on the right, and Panamanian law requires that drivers and passengers wear seat belts.<ref name=travel/> Highways are generally well-developed for a Latin American country.

Currently, Panama has modern buses known as Metrobuses,[[37]](#cite_note-37) along with a Metro line.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Formerly, the system was dominated by colorfully painted *diablos rojos*, with some remaining. A [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang) is usually "customized" or painted with bright colors, usually depicting famous actors, politicians or singers. Panama City's streets experience frequent [traffic jams](/wiki/Traffic_jams) due to poor planning for the now extensive private vehicle fleet.

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Refimprove section](/wiki/Template:Refimprove_section) [thumb|Panama City as seen from the Corredor Sur highway.](/wiki/File:Panama_City_from_airport.JPG)

Tourism in Panama is rapidly growing.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) It has maintained its growth over the past five years due to government tax and price discounts to foreign guests and retirees. These economic incentives have caused Panama to be regarded as a relatively good place to retire in the world.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Real estate developers in Panama have increased the number of tourism destinations in the past five years because of the interest for these visitor incentives.[[39]](#cite_note-39) 2,200,000 tourists arrived in 2012.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

The number of tourists from Europe grew by 23.1% during the first nine months of 2008. According to the Tourism Authority of Panama (ATP), from January to September, 71,154 tourists from Europe entered Panama, which is 13,373 more than figures for same period the previous year. Most of the European tourists were Spaniards (14,820), followed by Italians (13,216), French (10,174) and British (8,833). There were 6997 from Germany, the most populous country in the European Union. Europe has become one of the key markets to promote Panama as a tourist destination.

In 2012, 4.345.5 million[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify) entered into the Panamanian economy as a result of tourism. This accounted for 9.5% of gross domestic product in the country, surpassing other productive sectors.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Panama enacted Law No. 80 in 2012 for the promotion of foreign investment in tourism. Law 80 replaced an older Law 8 of 1994. Law 80 provides 100% exemption from income tax and real estate taxes for 15 years, duty-free imports for construction materials and equipment for five years, and capital gains tax exemption for five years.[[40]](#cite_note-40)

### Currency[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

The Panamanian currency is officially the [balboa](/wiki/Panamanian_balboa), [fixed](/wiki/Fixed_exchange_rate) at a rate of 1:1 with the [United States dollar](/wiki/United_States_dollar) since Panamanian independence in 1903. In practice Panama is [dollarized](/wiki/Dollarization): US dollars are [legal tender](/wiki/Legal_tender) and used for all paper currency, while Panama has its own coinage. Because of the tie to US dollars, Panama has traditionally had low inflation. According to the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean, Panama's inflation in 2006 was 2.0% as measured by weight [Consumer Price Index](/wiki/Consumer_Price_Index) (CPI).[[41]](#cite_note-41) The balboa replaced the [Colombian peso](/wiki/Colombian_peso) in 1904 after Panama's independence. Balboa banknotes were printed in 1941 by President Arnulfo Arias. They were recalled several days later, giving them the name "The Seven Day Dollar". The notes were burned after the seven days but occasionally balboa notes can be found in collections. These were the only banknotes ever issued by Panama and U.S. notes have circulated both before and since.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### International trade[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

The high levels of Panamanian trade are in large part from the [Colón Free Trade Zone](/wiki/Colón_Free_Trade_Zone), the largest free trade zone in the [Western Hemisphere](/wiki/Western_Hemisphere). Last year the zone accounted for 92% of Panama's exports and 64% of its imports, according to an analysis of figures from the Colon zone management and estimates of Panama's trade by the [United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](/wiki/United_Nations_Economic_Commission_for_Latin_America_and_the_Caribbean). Panama's economy is also very much supported by the trade and export of coffee and other agricultural products.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

The Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between the governments of the United States and Panama was signed on October 27, 1982. The treaty protects US investment and assists Panama in its efforts to develop its economy by creating conditions more favorable for US private investment and thereby strengthening the development of its private sector. The BIT was the first such treaty signed by the US in the Western Hemisphere.[[42]](#cite_note-42) A [Panama - United States Trade Promotion Agreement](/wiki/Panama_-_United_States_Trade_Promotion_Agreement) (TPA) was signed in 2007, approved by Panama on July 11, 2007 and by US President Obama on October 21, 2011, and the agreement entered into force on October 31, 2012.[[43]](#cite_note-43)

## Society[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

### Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|350px|Panama's population, (1961-2003).](/wiki/File:Panama-demography.png) Panama recorded a population of 3,405,813 in its 2010 census.[[44]](#cite_note-44) The proportion of the population aged below 15 in 2010 was 29%. 64.5% of the population were aged between 15 and 65, with 6.6% of the population being 65 years or older.[[45]](#cite_note-45) More than half the population lives in the Panama City–[Colón](/wiki/Colón,_Panama) metropolitan corridor, which spans several cities. Panama's urban population exceeds 70%, making Panama's population the most urbanized in [Central America](/wiki/Central_America).[[46]](#cite_note-46)

### Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

In 2010 the population was 65% [Mestizo](/wiki/Mestizo) (mixed white, Native American), 12.3% Native Americans, 9.2% Black/[mulattoes](/wiki/Mulatto) and 6.7% White.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Ethnic groups in Panama include [Mestizo](/wiki/Mestizo) people, who are a mix of [European](/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Europe) and native ancestry. Black, or [Afro-Panamanians](/wiki/Afro-Panamanians) account for 15-20% of the population. Most Afro-Panamanians live on the Panama-[Colón](/wiki/Colón,_Panama) metropolitan area, the Darien Province, [La Palma](/wiki/La_Palma), and [Bocas Del Toro](/wiki/Bocas_Del_Toro). Neighborhoods in Panama City that have large black populations include; Curundu, El Chorrillo, Rio Abajo, San Joaquín, El Marañón, San Miguelito, Colón, and Santa Ana. Black Panamanians are descendents of African slaves brought to the Americas on the 1500 [Atlantic Slave Trade](/wiki/Atlantic_Slave_Trade). The second wave of black people brought to Panama came from the Caribbean during the construction of the [Panama Canal](/wiki/Panama_Canal). Panama also has a considerable [Chinese](/wiki/Chinese_people) and Indian ([India](/wiki/India)) population. They were brought to work on the canal during its construction. Most [Chinese-Panamanians](/wiki/Chinese-Panamanians) reside in the province of [Chiriquí](/wiki/Chiriquí_Province). Europeans and [white-Panamanians](/wiki/White-Panamanians) are a minority in Panama. They are descendents of the people who colonized Panama, worked on the canal, and who moved to the country. Panama is also home to a small Arab community that have [Mosques](/wiki/Mosques) to practice [Islam](/wiki/Islam).

The Amerindian population includes seven ethnic groups: the [Ngäbe](/wiki/Ngäbe_people), [Kuna](/wiki/Kuna_people) (Guna), [Emberá](/wiki/Emberá_people), [Buglé](/wiki/Bokota_people), [Wounaan](/wiki/Wounaan), [Naso Tjerdi](/wiki/Naso_people) (Teribe), and [Bri Bri](/wiki/Bribri_people).[[47]](#cite_note-47)

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

Spanish is the official and dominant language. The Spanish spoken in Panama is known as Panamanian Spanish. About 93% of the population speak Spanish as their first language, though many citizens who hold jobs at international levels, or who are a part of business corporations speak both English and Spanish. Native languages, such as [Ngäbere](/wiki/Guaymí_language) are spoken throughout the country, mostly in their native grounds. Over 400,000 Panamanians hold their native languages and customs.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Some new statistics show that as second language, English is spoken by 8%, French by 4% and Arabic by 1%.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Largest cities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

[thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:Ciudad_Colón,_Panamá.jpg)[Panama City](/wiki/Panama_City), Panama's capital. These are the 10 largest Panamanian cities and towns. Most of Panama's largest cities are part of the [Panama City Metropolitan Area](/wiki/Panama_City_Metropolitan_Area).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Nº** | **City** | **Population** | [**Province**](/wiki/Provinces_of_Panama) |
| **1** | [Panama City](/wiki/Panama_City) | align = right|880,691 | [Panamá](/wiki/Panamá_Province) |
| **2** | [San Miguelito](/wiki/San_Miguelito_District) | align = right|315,019 | [Panamá](/wiki/Panamá_Province) |
| **3** | [Tocumen](/wiki/Tocumen) | align = right|103,177 | [Panamá](/wiki/Panamá_Province) |
| **4** | [David](/wiki/David,_Chiriquí) | align = right|89,442 | [Chiriquí](/wiki/Chiriquí_Province) |
| **5** | [Las Cumbres](/wiki/Las_Cumbres) | align = right|89,000 | [Panamá](/wiki/Panamá_Province) |
| **6** | [Colón](/wiki/Colón,_Panama) | align = right|78,000 | [Colón](/wiki/Colón_Province) |
| **7** | [La Chorrera](/wiki/La_Chorrera,_Panama) | align = right|68,896 | [West Panamá](/wiki/Panamá_Oeste_Province) |
| **8** | [Pacora](/wiki/Pacora) | align = right|52,494 | [Panamá](/wiki/Panamá_Province) |
| **9** | [Santiago de Veraguas](/wiki/Santiago_de_Veraguas) | align = right|50,877 | [Veraguas](/wiki/Veraguas_Province) |
| **10** | [Chitré](/wiki/Chitré) | align = right|46,191 | [Herrera](/wiki/Herrera_Province) |

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|300px|Plaza de la independencia,](/wiki/File:Plazadelaindependenciapanama.JPG) [Panama City](/wiki/Panama_City).

The government of Panama does not collect statistics on the religious affiliation of citizens, but various sources estimate that 75% to 85% of the population identifies itself as [Roman Catholic](/wiki/Roman_Catholic) and 15%–25% as [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant).[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50) The [Bahá'í Faith](/wiki/Bahá'í_Faith) community of Panama is estimated at 2.00% of the national population, or about 60,000[[51]](#cite_note-51) including about 10% of the [Guaymí](/wiki/Guaymí) population.[[52]](#cite_note-52) [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) (LDS Church) claim more than 40,000 members.[[53]](#cite_note-53) Smaller religious groups include [Seventh-day Adventists](/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventists), [Jehovah's Witnesses](/wiki/Jehovah's_Witnesses), [Episcopalians](/wiki/Anglicanism) with between 7,000 and 10,000 members, [Jewish](/wiki/Jewish) and [Muslim](/wiki/Islam_in_Panama) communities with approximately 10,000 members each, [Hindus](/wiki/Hindu), [Buddhists](/wiki/Buddhist), and other Christians.<ref name=report/> Indigenous religions include Ibeorgun (among [Kuna](/wiki/Kuna_people)) and Mamatata (among [Ngobe](/wiki/Ngobe)).<ref name=report/> There are also a small number of [Rastafarians](/wiki/Rastafarians).<ref name=report/>

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Originally, during the 16th century, education in Panama was provided by Jesuit priests. Public education, as a national and governmental institution, began in 1903. The principles underlying this early education system were that children should receive different types of education in accordance with their social class and therefore the position they were expected to occupy in society.

[Public education](/wiki/Public_education) began in Panama soon after the separation from Colombia in 1903. The first efforts were guided by an extremely paternalistic view of the goals of education, as evidenced in comments made in a 1913 meeting of the First Panamanian Educational Assembly, "The cultural heritage given to the child should be determined by the social position he will or should occupy. For this reason education should be different in accordance with the social class to which the student should be related." This elitist focus changed rapidly under United States influence.<ref name=cs>[Template:Country study](/wiki/Template:Country_study)</ref>

In 2010, it was estimated that 94.1% of the population was literate (94.7% of males and 93.5% of females).[[49]](#cite_note-49) Education in Panama is [compulsory](/wiki/Compulsory_education) for the children of age group between 6 and 18. In recent decades, school enrollment at all levels, but especially at upper levels, has increased significantly. Panama used to participate in the [PISA](/wiki/Programme_for_International_Student_Assessment) exams but due to debts and unsatisfactory exam results is postponing participation until 2018.[[54]](#cite_note-54)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|300px|](/wiki/File:Empollerada_de_Panamá.jpg)[Pollera](/wiki/Pollera). [thumb|300px|A couple dancing Panamanian Cumbia.](/wiki/File:Tuna_panama.jpg) The culture of Panama derived from [European music](/wiki/Music_of_Europe), [art](/wiki/European_art) and traditions brought over by the Spanish to Panama. [Hegemonic](/wiki/Hegemonic) forces have created [hybrid](/wiki/Cross-genre) forms of this by blending [African](/wiki/Culture_of_Africa) and [Native American](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas) culture with [European culture](/wiki/Culture_of_Europe). For example, the [*tamborito*](/wiki/Tamborito) is a Spanish dance that was blended with African rhythms, themes and dance moves.[[55]](#cite_note-55) Dance is a symbol of the diverse cultures that have coupled in Panama. The local folklore can be experienced through a multitude of festivals, dances and traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation. Local cities host live [*reggae en español*](/wiki/Reggae_en_español), [*reggaeton*](/wiki/Reggaeton), *haitiano (*[*compas*](/wiki/Compas)*)*, [jazz](/wiki/Jazz), [blues](/wiki/Blues), [*salsa*](/wiki/Salsa_music), [reggae](/wiki/Reggae), and [rock music](/wiki/Rock_music) performances.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Handicraft[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

Outside Panama City, regional festivals take place throughout the year featuring local musicians and dancers. Panama's blended culture is reflected in traditional products, such as [woodcarvings](/wiki/Woodcarving), ceremonial masks and [pottery](/wiki/Pottery), as well as in Panama's architecture, cuisine and festivals. In earlier times, baskets were woven for utilitarian uses, but now many villages rely almost exclusively on the baskets they produce for tourists.

An example of undisturbed, unique culture in Panama is that of the [Guna](/wiki/Guna_Yala) who are known for [*molas*](/wiki/Mola_(art_form)). *Mola* is the Guna word for blouse, but the term *mola* has come to mean the elaborate embroidered panels made by Guna women, that make up the front and back of a Guna woman's blouse. They are several layers of cloth, varying in color, that are loosely stitched together, made using a reverse [appliqué](/wiki/Appliqué) process.

### Holidays and festivities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

The Christmas parade, known as *El desfile de Navidad*, is celebrated in the capital, Panama City. This holiday is celebrated on December 25. The floats in the parade are decorated with the Panamanian colors, and the women dress in dresses called [*Pollera*](/wiki/Pollera) while the men dress in the traditional *Montuno*. In addition, the marching band in the parade, consisting of drummers, keeps the crowds entertained. In the city, a big Christmas tree is lit with Christmas lights, and everybody surrounds the tree and sings Christmas carols.[[56]](#cite_note-56)

### Traditional cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

Panamanian Cuisine is a mix of African, Spanish, and Native American techniques, dishes, and ingredients, reflecting its diverse population. Since Panama is a land bridge between two continents, it has a large variety of tropical fruits, vegetables and herbs that are used in native cooking.

Typical Panamanian foods are mild-flavored, without the pungency of some of Panama's Latin American and Caribbean neighbors. Common ingredients are [maize](/wiki/Maize), [rice](/wiki/Rice), [wheat](/wiki/Wheat) flour, [plantains](/wiki/Plantain_(cooking)), *yuca* ([cassava](/wiki/Cassava)), beef, chicken, pork and seafood.

### Traditional clothing[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

Panamanian men's traditional clothing consists of white cotton shirts, trousers and woven straw hat.

The traditional women's clothing is the *pollera*. It originated in Spain in the 16th century, and by the early 1800s it was a typical in Panama, worn by women servants, especially wet nurses (*De Zarate* 5). Later, it was adopted by upper-class women.

A *pollera* is made of "[cambric](/wiki/Cambric)" or "fine linen" (Baker 177). It is white, and is usually about 13 yards of material.

The original *pollera* consists of a ruffled blouse worn off the shoulders and a skirt is on the waistline with gold buttons. The skirt is also ruffled, so that when it is lifted up, it looks like a peacock's tail or a [*mantilla*](/wiki/Mantilla) fan. The designs on the skirt and blouse are usually flowers or birds. Two large matching [pom poms](/wiki/Pom_pom) (*mota*) are on the front and back, four ribbons hang from the front and back on the waist line, five gold chains (*caberstrillos*) hang from the neck to the waist, a gold cross or medallion on a black ribbon is worn as a [choker](/wiki/Choker), and a silk purse is worn on the waistline. Earrings (*zaricillos*) are usually gold or coral. Slippers usually match the color of the *pollera*. Hair is usually worn in a bun, held by three large gold combs that have pearls (*tembleques*) worn like a crown. Quality *pollera* can cost up to $10,000, and may take a year to complete.

Today, there are different types of *polleras*; the *pollera de gala* consists of a short-sleeved ruffle skirt blouse, two full-length skirts and a [petticoat](/wiki/Petticoat). Girls wear *tembleques* in their hair. Gold coins and jewelry are added to the outfit. The *pollera montuna* is a daily dress, with a blouse, a skirt with a solid color, a single gold chain, and pendant earrings and a natural flower in the hair. Instead of an off-the-shoulder blouse is a fitted white jacket with, shoulder pleats, and a flared hem.[[57]](#cite_note-57) Traditional clothing in Panama can be worn in parades, where the females and males do a traditional dance. Females do a gentle sway and twirl their skirts, while the men hold their hats in their hands and dance behind the females.

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

According to Professor [Rodrigo Miró](/wiki/Rodrigo_Miró), the first story about Panama was written by [Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés](/wiki/Gonzalo_Fernández_de_Oviedo_y_Valdés) and published as part of the [*Historia General y Natural de Las Indias*](/wiki/Historia_General_y_Natural_de_Las_Indias) in 1535. Some poets and novelists born in Panamá are: [Template:Columns-list](/wiki/Template:Columns-list)

### Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[thumb|upright|Panamanian baseball catcher](/wiki/File:Carlos_Ruiz.jpg) [Carlos Ruiz](/wiki/Carlos_Ruiz_(baseball)) during 2007 Spring Training. The U.S. influence in Panama can be seen in the country's sports. Baseball is Panama's national sport and [the country has regional teams](/wiki/Panamanian_Professional_Baseball_League) and a [national team](/wiki/Panama_national_baseball_team) that represents it in international events. At least [140 Panamanian players](/wiki/List_of_Major_League_Baseball_players_from_Panama) have played professional baseball in the United States, more than any other Central American country.[[58]](#cite_note-58) Notable players include [Bruce Chen](/wiki/Bruce_Chen), [Rod Carew](/wiki/Rod_Carew), [Mariano Rivera](/wiki/Mariano_Rivera), [Carlos Lee](/wiki/Carlos_Lee), [Manny Sanguillén](/wiki/Manny_Sanguillén), and [Carlos Ruiz](/wiki/Carlos_Ruiz_(baseball)).

In boxing, four Panamanians are in the [International Boxing Hall of Fame](/wiki/International_Boxing_Hall_of_Fame): [Roberto Durán](/wiki/Roberto_Durán), [Eusebio Pedroza](/wiki/Eusebio_Pedroza), [Ismael Laguna](/wiki/Ismael_Laguna) and [Panama Al Brown](/wiki/Panama_Al_Brown). Panama presently has two reigning [world boxing champions](/wiki/List_of_current_world_boxing_champions): [Guillermo Jones](/wiki/Guillermo_Jones) and [Anselmo Moreno](/wiki/Anselmo_Moreno).

Since the finals of the 20th century, [Soccer](/wiki/Association_football) is becoming a popular sport for Panamanians, the progress of the [national league](/wiki/Liga_Panameña_de_Fútbol) and the [national team](/wiki/Panama_national_football_team) are notorious, with legendary players as [Luis Ernesto Tapia](/wiki/Luis_Ernesto_Tapia), [Rommel Fernández](/wiki/Rommel_Fernández), the Dely Valdes Brothers: [Armando](/wiki/Armando_Dely_Valdés), [Julio](/wiki/Julio_César_Dely_Valdés) and [Jorge](/wiki/Jorge_Dely_Valdés); and recent players as [Jaime Penedo](/wiki/Jaime_Penedo), [Felipe Baloy](/wiki/Felipe_Baloy), [Luis Tejada](/wiki/Luis_Tejada), [Blas Perez](/wiki/Blas_Perez), [Roman Torres](/wiki/Roman_Torres) and [Harold Cummings](/wiki/Harold_Cummings).

Basketball is popular in Panama. There are regional teams as well as a squad that competes internationally. Two of Panama's prominent basketball players are [Rolando Blackman](/wiki/Rolando_Blackman), a four-time NBA All-Star, and [Kevin Daley](/wiki/Kevin_Daley), a 10-year captain and showman of the [Harlem Globetrotters](/wiki/Harlem_Globetrotters).

Other popular sports include [volleyball](/wiki/Volleyball), [taekwondo](/wiki/Taekwondo), [golf](/wiki/Golf), and [tennis](/wiki/Tennis). A long-distance hiking trail called the [TransPanama Trail](http://www.transpanama.org/) is being built from Colombia to Costa Rica.

Other non-traditional sports in the country have had great importance such as the [triathlon](/wiki/Triathlon) that has captured the attention of many athletes nationwide and the country has hosted international competitions. [Flag football](/wiki/Flag_football) has also been growing in popularity in both men and women and with international participation in world of this discipline being among the best teams in the world, the sport was introduced by Americans residing in the Canal Zone for veterans and retirees who even had a festival called the Turkey Ball. Other popular sports are [American football](/wiki/American_football), [rugby](/wiki/Rugby_football), [hockey](/wiki/Hockey), [softball](/wiki/Softball) and other amateur sports including [skateboarding](/wiki/Skateboarding), [BMX](/wiki/BMX) and [surfing](/wiki/Surfing), because the many beaches of Panama such as Santa Catalina and Venao that have hosted events the likes of ISA World Surfing Games.

Long jumper [Irving Saladino](/wiki/Irving_Saladino) became the first Panamanian Olympic gold medalist in 2008. In 2012 eight different athletes represented Panama in the [London 2012 Olympics](/wiki/London_2012_Olympics): Irving Saladino in the long jump, [Alonso Edward](/wiki/Alonso_Edward) and [Andrea Ferris](/wiki/Andrea_Ferris) in track and field, [Diego Castillo](/wiki/Diego_Castillo) in swimming, and the youngest on the team, [Carolena Carstens](/wiki/Carolena_Carstens) who was 16 competing in taekwondo. She was the first representative to compete for Panama in that sport.

### Climate change[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

Panama was one of the few countries that didn't enter an [INDC](/wiki/Intended_Nationally_Determined_Contributions) at [COP21](/wiki/COP21).[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[60]](#cite_note-60)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Index of Panama-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Panama-related_articles)
* [Outline of Panama](/wiki/Outline_of_Panama)
* [Water supply and sanitation in Panama](/wiki/Water_supply_and_sanitation_in_Panama)

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

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* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
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* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Panama](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1229332.stm) from the [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News)
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