



# Panama



**Background** Explored and settled by the Spanish in the 16th century, Panama broke with Spain in 1821 and joined a union of Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela that was named the Republic of Gran Colombia. When the union dissolved in 1830, Panama remained part of Colombia. With US backing, Panama seceded from Colombia in 1903 and promptly signed a treaty with the US allowing for the construction of a canal and US sovereignty over a strip of land known as the Panama Canal Zone on either side of the structure. The US Army Corps of Engineers built the Panama Canal between 1904 and 1914. In 1977, an agreement was signed for the complete transfer of the Canal from the US to Panama by the end of the century. Certain portions of the Zone and increasing responsibility over the Canal were turned over in the subsequent decades. With US help, Panamanian dictator Manuel NORIEGA was deposed in 1989. The entire Panama Canal, the area supporting the Canal, and remaining US military bases were transferred to Panama by the end of 1999. An ambitious expansion project to more than double the Canal's capacity by allowing for more Canal transits and larger ships was carried out between 2007 and 2016.

**Capital** name: Panama City

**Government type** presidential republic

**Area** total : 75,420 sq km  
land: 74,340 sq km  
water: 1,080 sq km

**Climate** tropical maritime; hot, humid, cloudy; prolonged rainy season (May to January), short dry season (January to May)

**Natural resources** copper, mahogany forests, shrimp, hydropower

**Population** total: 4,470,241 (2024 est.)

**Population growth rate** 1.48% (2024 est.)

**Ethnic groups** Mestizo (mixed Indigenous and White) 65%, Indigenous 12.3% (Ngabe 7.6%, Kuna 2.4%, Embera 0.9%, Bugle 0.8%, other 0.4%, unspecified 0.2%), Black or African descent 9.2%, Mulatto 6.8%, White 6.7% (2010 est.)

**Religions** Evangelical 55%, Roman Catholic 33.4%, none 10.1%, unspecified 1.5% (2023 est.)

**Languages** Spanish (official), Indigenous languages (including Ngabere (Guaymi), Buglere, Kuna, Embera, Wounaan, Naso (Teribe), and Bri Bri), Panamanian English Creole (a mixture of English and Spanish with elements of Ngabere, also known as Guari Guari and Colon Creole), English, Chinese (Yue and Hakka), Arabic, French Creole, other (Yiddish, Hebrew, Korean, Japanese)

**Executive branch** chief of state: President José Raúl MULINO Quintero (since 1 July 2024)  
head of government: President José Raúl MULINO Quintero (since 1 July 2024)

**Legislative branch** legislature name: National Assembly (Asamblea Nacional)

**Diplomatic representation in the US** chief of mission: Ambassador José Miguel ALEMÁN HEALY (since 18 September 2024)

**Diplomatic representation from the US** chief of mission: Ambassador Kevin Marino CABRERA (since 5 May 2025)

**Economic overview** upper middle-income Central American economy; increasing Chinese trade; US dollar user; canal expansion fueling broader infrastructure investment; services sector dominates economy; historic money-laundering and illegal drug hub

**Real GDP (purchasing power parity)** \$164.484 billion (2024 est.)  
\$159.908 billion (2023 est.)  
\$148.891 billion (2022 est.)

**Real GDP per capita** \$36,400 (2024 est.)  
\$35,900 (2023 est.)  
\$33,800 (2022 est.)

<b>Exports</b>	\$37.376 billion (2024 est.) \$37.905 billion (2023 est.) \$35.717 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Exports - partners</b>	China 25%, Japan 10%, USA 6%, Thailand 5%, Costa Rica 5% (2023)
<b>Exports - commodities</b>	copper ore, ships, refined petroleum, bananas, fish (2023)
<b>Imports</b>	\$30.887 billion (2024 est.) \$35.927 billion (2023 est.) \$32.646 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Imports - partners</b>	USA 15%, Colombia 13%, China 13%, Ecuador 13%, Japan 11% (2023)
<b>Imports - commodities</b>	crude petroleum, ships, refined petroleum, nitrogen compounds, cars (2023)

Population Pyramid

