



DARIEN PACKAGE - 4 DAYS / 3 NIGHTS

DAY 1 | PANAMA CITY – BOCA DE LARA – METETÍ

The tour starts in the morning (between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.) with the shuttle service from Panama City to Darién through the Carretera Panamericana [Pan-American Highway] which connects the capital with the rest of the continent. The Pan-American Highway occupies 25,800 kilometers [16,031.37 miles] from Alaska in North America to Buenos Aires in Argentina, but in Yaviza, the inaccessible forest of the eastern end of Panama, it is interrupted. In fact, as of that point, named Tapón del Darién [Darien's Plug], there are solely fluvial forests, rivers and forgotten small towns. Along other 106 kilometers [65.86 miles], streets turn into rivers and the connection is done by means of different-size ships, among which are extended Indian canoes, pirogues or canoes appertaining to local communities.

This area has a small population. Thanks to that, one of the richest ecosystems in the world has evolved there, with an exceptional diversity of flora and fauna. The area registers also a high level of endemism. The small city of Chepó represents the entrance to the region; in fact, Panamanian people consider that it is the border because the highway used to finish at that point before.

The tour continues at the edge of lago Bayano [Bayano Lake], within the territories of the district of Guna de Madungandí, until arriving to Aguas Frías. Once you have passed the checkpoint, you will arrive to Santa Fe, where you will leave behind the main street to go deep into the rainforest through a clear-of-trees path up to the Wounaan village of Boca de Lara where you will have lunch and you will learn about the history and traditional costumes of the community.

Straightaway, you will take a canoe trip around the area for observing fishing techniques and you will go for a walk along trails of the forest in order to discover its medicinal plants and its abundant fauna. (The tour will be confirmed in situ and it will depend on both meteorological conditions and the river level).

At the end of the day, you will be transferred to Filo de Tallo Lodge in Metetí where you will have dinner and you will stay overnight.



The Emberá-Wounaan people come from Chocó, Colombia. They are two different native groups that share many traditions. You could tell apart one group from the other mainly because of the language and the way they paint their bodies. They live at the edge of the river in little communities of thatch-roofed palafittes named tambos, for counteracting humidity and avoiding floods.

The Emberá-Wounaan people are very skillful artisans. Men manufacture the famous pirogues, canoes made by shaping logs, used to navigate even during the dry season. Women, as for them, make splendid baskets, plates and masks out of vegetal fiber and delicate knitting. They wear colorful skirts named parumas, collars made with radiant pearls named chaquiras, and during official celebrations, they wear traditional jewels that are made out of old silver coins. All the members of the community use the genipa juice to paint their bodies with geometric designs; apparently, that works very well as repellent and has healing properties.

Their economy is fundamentally based on agriculture, fishing and hunting. Nevertheless, those activities are mostly done to exist above subsistence level. Their spiritual world is complex. It is plenty of Gods, spirits and mythological animals which have influence over their lives as referents of the good and the evil. The Shaman or Jaibana uses hallucinogens in order to communicate with them and ask them to intervene in illnesses healing. They are expert Botanists, that is why, they use a great quantity of plants for medicinal purposes, among the plants, the Dutchman's pipe (*aristolochia* spp.) is used for snake bites, yopo (*piptadenia peregrina*) is used as pain reliever and cedron (*simaba cedron*) is used for the fever.

MEALS: lunch and dinner.

DAY 2 | METETÍ - GULF OF SAN MIGUEL – METETÍ

This second day, the tour starts in the morning with the shuttle service to Puerto Quimba, a small town located at the edge of Sabana River. You will sail from that port in a powerboat to explore the Gulf of San Miguel. The Spanish conquest of Panama began in 1510, precisely in Darién, with the foundation of the city of Santa María, now the border with Colombia, entrusted to Vasco Núñez de Balboa.

This city of the ancient Darién was the capital of Castilla de Oro until the foundation of Panama City. In 1513, Balboa decided to open the famous way to the Pacific Ocean seeking the other sea and the gold.



The tough expedition, muggy weather, steep forest and violent confrontations with native communities, compensated his effort with the gulf that was baptized by him and took the name of San Miguel. The Gulf is the largest estuary in Panama which occupies approximately 1760 kilometers [1093.61 miles], where Darién's largest rivers, Tuira and Chucunaque, flow into.

At the edge of them, incredible mangrove forests stand out; trees of which can even exceed thirty meters in height and they are the habitat of several bird species, among which are the kingfisher, white ibis, little blue heron, and the wading bird. After taking a trip along little channels where you will be able to have regard for the huge roots of mangroves and their lush fauna, you will visit the Fort of San Carlo which is entirely surrounded by vegetation. In the times of Colonization, the Fort had a strategic relevance for the protection of the gold extracted from the mines of the area and sent immediately to Spain by ships.

The tour continues in La Palma, the capital of the region, located at the end of the peninsula, in the delta of Tuira River. La Palma can be only reached by boat or plane. Its wooden and bright-colored houses have been built on palafittes or at the foot of the hill. Cimarrons, who are descendants of Africans who escaped in the times of slavery and who currently dedicate themselves to fishing, and the native people of the ethnic groups of Emberá-Wounaan, a group of displaced Colombian citizens and their official rulers, live in this small village. In the main street, you will find places, restaurants, a bank and the so-called taverns, typical food restaurants which play music at full blast. You will have lunch in one of those restaurants.

At the end of the tour, you will be transferred to the lodge where you will have dinner and you will stay overnight.

MEALS: breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

DAY 3 | METETÍ – CHUCUNAUQUE RIVER - METETÍ

This third day, the tour is focused on discovering Darién's legendary forest. First, you will take off in a powerboat along Chucunaque River.

You will be able to have regard for its incredible fauna, the kingfisher, the white ibis, the little blue heron, yellow-crowned night-heron, howler monkeys which protect the troop with their cacophonous cries, spider monkeys, the black hawk, toucans, macaws, parrots, cormorants, trogons, crocodiles which sunbathe at the edge of the rivers, alligators and the incredible basilisks, a species of reptile which can run on water.



You will disembark near a community; a packed lunch will be given to you there. Afterwards, you will go on a hike of approximately two hours along the forest trails where you will discover the amazing flora: the ceiba tree, the huge cuipo tree (*cavanillesia platanifolia*), the giant rubber plants and the spiked spiralfrog ginger (*costus spicatus*). At the end of the tour, you will be transferred to the lodge where you will have dinner and you will stay overnight.

MEALS: breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

DAY 4 | METETÍ – YAVIZA – PANAMA CITY

This fourth and last day, the tour starts with the shuttle service to the farthest border of Darién, Yaviza, located 350 kilometers [217.48 miles] away from Panama City and 97 kilometers [60.27 miles] away from the border with Colombia. At this point, the Pan-American Highway is interrupted, beyond that point there are only forests, mountains, rivers and forgotten small towns.

The fluvial port is a place with a great flow of canoes loaded with plantains, watermelons, cassavas, yams, papayas, mangoes and pineapples that arrive to Yaviza from faraway communities and that are transported to the markets in the capital city. Its population consists mainly of descendants of African people and natives of the Emberá-Wounaan tribe, who dedicate themselves to agriculture, stockbreeding and wood industry. At the end of the visit, you will be transferred to the lodge where you will have lunch before returning to Panama City.

MEALS: breakfast and lunch.

GUIDE: Spanish and English speaker guide.

IT INCLUDES: transfers from/to Panama City, tours and visits, meals, water and non-alcoholic drinks.

IT DOESN'T INCLUDE: alcoholic drinks or unexpected visits to native communities.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: light-colored cool and long sleeve shirt, long pants (to avoid mosquitoes), knee socks (to wear with rubber boots that will be lent to you at the hotel, where you should indicate your size), hiking shoes or trainers, sunscreen, sunglasses, repellent, and raincoat (a poncho preferably).

NOTE: It is mandatory to bring always your passport for transfers and tours, police officers may request it.