**PANAMA CITY – VISITS AND EXCURSIONS**

**Half-day Visit to Panama City**

Go to the fizzy Panama City in a half-day visit. The tour starts at the neighborhoods located at the foot of Ancón Hill – the highest point in the city – which belonged sometime to the so-called Canal Zone where U.S. army officers and officials lived in during the U.S. administration of the canal. There will be a brief stop for contemplating an incredible view showing on one hand skyscrapers, part of a modern and lively city, and on the other hand the little historic center and its wonderful gulf. The tour continues at Amador Causeway, an artificial street that was built for communicating Naos, Culebra, Perico and Flamenco Islands with the continental part of the city; they were used for protecting the canal entrance. Nowadays, it offers one of the most spectacular panoramas of the city where the Bridge of the Americas and the line of ships that are waiting to go through the canal are visible. The tour continues at the *Biomuseo* or Museum of Biodiversity designed by Frank Gehry, the creator of the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum in Spain. It exhibits the amazing biodiversity of Panama by means of its eight rooms. The next stop is at the Old Quarter of the city, the historic center of San Felipe founded in 1673 after the destruction and plundering perpetrated by the Pirate Henry Morgan. It was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1997, thanks to its eclectic fusion of colonial, neoclassic and French architecture. This stop includes a walk in the streets, squares and gravel roads and a visit to emblematic colonial buildings, churches and palaces. San José church is one of them; it is famous because of its gold altar, a surprising baroque altar that survived to Morgan’s dreadful plundering in Old Panama. Straightaway, after crossing the A Avenue, you will reach *Plaza Francia* [France Square] which is probably the most beautiful square due to its extraordinary location in front of the sea, at the end of the peninsula. Sometime, it was the main square in the city and a guard of a fort destroyed late in the XXth century. In the middle of the square, there is an obelisk erected with a Gallic rooster surrounded by the bust of Ferdinand de Lesseps and other characters in homage to France and the role it played in the construction of the canal. Among the historic buildings surrounding the square, there are the Embassy of France, the National Institute for Culture and the Anita Villalaz Theater. A few meters away, there is the *Plaza Bolívar* [Bolívar Square], a lovely square surrounded by beautiful buildings, modern bars and restaurants offering the best night environment in the city. This square was known as *Plaza San Francisco* until 1926, a year during which it changed its name in homage of Simón Bolívar, The Liberator, for having led the pro-independence fight against Spain. The little but attractive San Francisco Church and the sumptuous National Theater designed by the Italian Architect Ruggieri located close to it; the theater is definitely one of the most representative works of the neoclassic architecture. If you raise your eyes, you will find the bell tower, decorated with mother of pearls, of the Church of San Felipe Neri and its adjacencies where it is located the oldest house in the Old Quarter that survived several fires, Casa Góngora [Góngora House], built in 1756 by a Spanish dedicated to the trade of pearls, where art exhibitions are currently performed. The Independence Square is other of the bastions of the Old Quarter, in fact, it is the most important square in the area, it is commonly known as *Plaza de la Catedral* [Cathedral’s Square]. Close to it, you may have regard for extraordinary residences and constructions, among them, there are the splendid Metropolitan Cathedral with its part-Moorish and part-baroque façade protected by two extremely white bell towers, and the imposing City Hall built in 1910 under the neoclassic style where it was proclaimed Panama as an independent republic from Spain and the separation from Colombia. The tour ends at the Executive Mansion (entrance is not guaranteed), a structure dating from 1673 which after numerous transformations, turned into the President’s residence. It is also known as *Palacio de las Garzas* [Herons Palace] because of the herons decorating its backyard; they were brought from Darién and were given as a present to President Belisario Porras. It holds inside wonderful halls, *Salón Amarillo* [Yellow Hall] stands out among them; it is the most significant hall because the most important ceremonies of the country are held there and *Salón de los Tamarindos* [Tamarind Hall] where the most famous murals of Roberto Lewis representing the history and culture of the country are visible right over there.

DURATION: approximately 4 to 5 hours.

TIMES: to be agreed. It may be done both in the morning and in the afternoon.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel, visits and entrances.

NOTES: the *Biomuseo* is closed on Tuesdays and it is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Cerro Ancón may be visited in small buses (15 people max.) only. The Executive Mansion is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Entrance is not guaranteed. Casa Góngora is closed on Mondays.

ATTENTION: Visits order may be modified, even during the tour and not every building will be visited inside.

**Half-day Panoramic Visit to Panama City and Miraflores Locks**

The tour starts at the Panama Canal, a magnificent work of engineering, in fact, it is the greatest and most expensive human feat of its time, the one Balboa had dreamt about since 1513. After thirty and forty minutes of route, you will reach the Visitor Center of Miraflores Locks, from which you will be able to see in detail ​ships ​moving along the canal inaugurated in 1914 and the way it operates. This work divides the lowest and narrowest point of the Isthmus of Panama, it reaches eighty kilometers length and connects the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea and allows the crossing of ships in approximately eight hours, every day of the week, 24 hours per day. It uses a lock system that works as water elevators for lifting ships from the sea level to the level of Gatún Lake, given the fact that the difference is of approximately 26 meters height. Forthwith, you will visit the Amador Causeway, an artificial street that was built for communicating Naos, Culebra, Perico and Flamenco Islands with the continental part of the city; they were used for protecting the canal entrance. Nowadays, it offers one of the most spectacular panoramas of the city where the Bridge of the Americas and the line of ships that are waiting to go through the canal are visible. The tour continues at the *Biomuseo* or Museum of Biodiversity designed by Frank Gehry, the creator of the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum in Spain. It exhibits the amazing biodiversity of Panama by means of its eight rooms. The tour continues at the neighborhoods located at the foot of Ancón Hill – the highest point in the city – which belonged sometime to the so-called Canal Zone where U.S. army officers and officials lived in during the U.S. administration of the canal. Lastly, there will be a brief stop for contemplating an incredible view showing on one hand skyscrapers, part of a modern and lively city, and on the other hand the little historic center and its wonderful gulf.

DURATION: approximately 4 to 5 hours.

TIMES: to be agreed. It may be done both in the morning and in the afternoon.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service, visits and entrances.

NOTES: the *Biomuseo* is closed on Tuesdays and it is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Miraflores Locks Visitor Center opens everyday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

ATTENTION: Visits order may be modified according to the times of the Museum and the Visitor Center.

**Walk at dusk in the Old Quarter of the City (shuttle service from/to the hotel not included)**

The walk is centered in the Old Quarter of Panama City, the historic center of San Felipe founded in 1673 after the destruction and plundering perpetrated by the Pirate Henry Morgan. It was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1997, thanks to its eclectic fusion of colonial, neoclassic and French architecture. You will discover the area by going over the squares, streets and gravel roads and by visiting emblematic colonial buildings, churches and palaces. San José church is one of them; it is famous because of its gold altar, a surprising baroque altar that survived to Morgan’s dreadful plundering in Old Panama. Straightaway, after crossing the A Avenue, you will reach *Plaza Francia* [Francia Square] which is probably the most beautiful square due to its extraordinary location in front of the sea, at the end of the peninsula. Sometime, it was the main square in the city and a guard of a fort destroyed late in the XXth century. In the middle of the square, there is an obelisk erected with a Gallic rooster surrounded by the bust of Ferdinand de Lesseps and other characters in homage to France and the role it played in the construction of the canal. Among the historic buildings surrounding the square, there are the Embassy of France, the National Institute for Culture and the Anita Villalaz Theater. A few meters away, there is the *Plaza Bolívar* [Bolívar Square], a lovely square surrounded by beautiful buildings, modern bars and restaurants offering the best night environment in the city. This square was known as *Plaza San Francisco* until 1926, a year during which it changed its name in homage of Simón Bolívar, The Liberator, for having led the pro-independence fight against Spain. The little but attractive San Francisco Church and the sumptuous National Theater designed by the Italian Architect Ruggieri stand out close to it; the theater is definitely one of the most representative works of the neoclassic architecture. If you raise your eyes, you will find the bell tower, decorated with mother of pearls, of the Church of San Felipe Neri and its adjacencies where it is located the oldest house in the Old Quarter that survived several fires, Casa Góngora [Góngora House], built in 1756 by a Spanish dedicated to the trade of pearls, where art exhibitions are currently performed. The Independence Square is other of the bastions of the Old Quarter, in fact, it is the most important square in the area, it is commonly known as *Plaza de la Catedral* [Cathedral’s Square]. Close to it, you may have regard for extraordinary residences and constructions, among them, there are the splendid Metropolitan Cathedral with its part-Moorish and part-baroque façade protected by two extremely white bell towers, and the imposing City Hall built in 1910 under the neoclassic style where it was proclaimed Panama as an independent republic from Spain and the separation from Colombia. The tour continues at the Executive Mansion (entrance is not guaranteed), a structure dating from 1673 which after numerous transformations, turned into the President’s residence. It is also known as *Palacio de las Garzas* [Herons Palace] because of the herons decorating its backyard; they were brought from Darién and were given as a present to President Belisario Porras. It holds inside wonderful halls, *Salón Amarillo* [Yellow Hall] stands out among them; it is the most significant hall because the most important ceremonies of the country are held there and *Salón de los Tamarindos* [Tamarind Hall] where the most famous murals of Roberto Lewis representing the history and culture of the country are visible right over there. The walk ends near the Seafood Market from where you will be able to see the beautiful flashing horizon of the city.

DURATION: approximately 2 hours and a half.

TIMES: between 4:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: visits and entrances.

NOTES: the Executive Mansion is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Entrance is not guaranteed. Casa Góngora is closed on Mondays.

ATTENTION: Visits order may be modified, even during the walk and not every building will be visited inside.

**Walk at dusk in the Old Quarter of the City**

The tour starts with the shuttle service to the Old Quarter of Panama City, the historic center of San Felipe founded in 1673 after the destruction and plundering perpetrated by the Pirate Henry Morgan. It was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1997, thanks to its eclectic fusion of colonial, neoclassic and French architecture. The walk invites you to discover the area by going over the squares, streets and gravel roads and by visiting emblematic colonial buildings, churches and palaces. San José church is one of them; it is famous because of its gold altar, a surprising baroque altar that survived to Morgan’s dreadful plundering in Old Panama. Straightaway, after crossing the A Avenue, you will reach *Plaza Francia* [Francia Square] which is probably the most beautiful square due to its extraordinary location in front of the sea, at the end of the peninsula. Sometime, it was the main square in the city and a guard of a fort destroyed late in the XXth century. In the middle of the square, there is an obelisk erected with a Gallic rooster surrounded by the bust of Ferdinand de Lesseps and other characters in homage to France and the role it played in the construction of the canal. Among the historic buildings surrounding the square, there are the Embassy of France, the National Institute for Culture and the Anita Villalaz Theater. A few meters away, there is the *Plaza Bolívar* [Bolívar Square], a lovely square surrounded by beautiful buildings, modern bars and restaurants offering the best night environment in the city. This square was known as *Plaza San Francisco* until 1926, a year during which it changed its name in homage of Simón Bolívar, The Liberator, for having led the pro-independence fight against Spain. The little but attractive San Francisco Church and the sumptuous National Theater designed by the Italian Architect Ruggieri stand out close to it; the theater is definitely one of the most representative works of the neoclassic architecture. If you raise your eyes, you will find the bell tower, decorated with mother of pearls, of the Church of San Felipe Neri and its adjacencies where it is located the oldest house in the Old Quarter that survived several fires, Casa Góngora [Góngora House], built in 1756 by a Spanish dedicated to the trade of pearls, where art exhibitions are currently performed. The Independence Square is other of the bastions of the Old Quarter, in fact, it is the most important square in the area, it is commonly known as *Plaza de la Catedral* [Cathedral’s Square]. Close to it, you may have regard for extraordinary residences and constructions, among them, there are the splendid Metropolitan Cathedral with its part-Moorish and part-baroque façade protected by two extremely white bell towers, and the imposing City Hall built in 1910 under the neoclassic style where it was proclaimed Panama as an independent republic from Spain and the separation from Colombia. The tour continues at the Executive Mansion (entrance is not guaranteed), a structure dating from 1673 which after numerous transformations, turned into the President’s residence. It is also known as *Palacio de las Garzas* [Herons Palace] because of the herons decorating its backyard; they were brought from Darién and were given as a present to President Belisario Porras. It holds inside wonderful halls, Salón Amarillo [Yellow Hall] stands out among them; it is the most significant hall because the most important ceremonies of the country are held there and Salón de los Tamarindos [Tamarind Hall] where the most famous murals of Roberto Lewis representing the history and culture of the country are visible right over there. The walk ends near the Seafood Market from where you will be able to see the beautiful flashing horizon of the city.

DURATION: approximately 3 hours.

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel, visits and entrances.

NOTES: the Executive Mansion is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Entrance is not guaranteed. Casa Góngora is closed on Mondays.

ATTENTION: Visits order may be modified, even during the tour and not every building will be visited inside.

**“*Fortaleza*” Special Walk in Panama City at Dusk**

Under the catch phrase “*We used to rob tourists before, now we offer them tours*”, a group of young former gangsters from the fearsome criminal group known as *Ciudad de Dios* [City of God] tell tourists their story during a walk around the streets of the historic center which were declared red-light districts years before. These young men participate in a program of *Esperanza Social Venture Club*, a non-profit private organization that is part of *Fundación Calicanto* which has rehabilitated approximately forty criminals who belonged to the criminal groups named Hot boys, La Terraza and Ciudad de Dios [The Terrance and City of God] and it has helped them rejoin society. The walk starts at *Plaza Herrera*, in front of the luxurious American Trade Hotel which worked previously as a base for the criminal group *Ciudad de Dios* and from where gangsters used to keep an eye on tourists in order to rob them. The hotel’s structure was known as Grayskull, the imaginary castle of the 80’s TV show He-man. Next to the internal stairways, walls are decorated with graffiti images that used to cover the interior of the building at that time. During the walk, they will tell you episodes and anecdotes from those violent years while describing important buildings and going over forgotten footways that have not been restructured between Calle 9 [9th Street] and Calle 13 [13th Street]. The walk ends in Calle 11 [11th Street], rebaptized under the name of *Callejón Fortaleza* [Fortaleza Alley], a little dead-end street where the criminal group used to escape from the police, where nowadays it is a tourist reference with its local food places. Smiles, commitment and kindness of these young men will make you doubt about their dark past, still more, when they do state: “*This is the real life and not the other one*”, a phrase showing their enormous will to change.

DURATION: approximately 2 hours and a half.

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

GUIDE: a Spanish speaker guide.

**“*Fortaleza*” Special Walk in Panama City at Dusk and Dinner**

Under the catch phrase “*We used to rob tourists before, now we offer them tours*”, a group of young former gangsters from the fearsome criminal group known as *Ciudad de Dios* [City of God] tell tourists their story during a walk around the streets of the historic center which were declared red-light districts years before. These young men participate in a program of *Esperanza Social Venture Club*, a non-profit private organization that is part of *Fundación Calicanto* which has rehabilitated approximately forty criminals who belonged to the criminal groups named *Hot boys, La Terraza and Ciudad de Dios* [The Terrance and City of God] and it has helped them rejoin society. The walk starts at *Plaza Herrera*, in front of the luxurious American Trade Hotel which worked previously as a base for the criminal group *Ciudad de Dios* and from where gangsters used to keep an eye on tourists in order to rob them. The hotel’s structure was known as Grayskull, the imaginary castle of the 80’s TV show He-man. Next to the internal stairways, walls are decorated with graffiti images that used to cover the interior of the building at that time. During the walk, they will tell you episodes and anecdotes from those violent years while describing important buildings and going over forgotten footways that have not been restructured between *Calle 9* [9th Street] and *Calle 13* [13th Street]. The walk ends in *Calle 11* [11th Street], rebaptized under the name of *Callejón Fortaleza* [Fortaleza Alley], a little dead-end street where the criminal group used to escape from the police, it is nowadays a tourist reference with its local food places. Thus, you will have dinner there, seated in unsophisticated chairs and wood tables; a menu of fried fish or chicken, slices of fried plantain, French fries and coconut rice served with the famous Fortaleza mojito, rigorously prepared by the former members of the criminal group Ciudad de Dios.

Their Smiles, commitment and kindness of these young men will make you doubt about their dark past, still more, when they do state: “*This is the real life and not the other one*”, a phrase showing their enormous will to change.

DURATION: approximately 4 hours.

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

GUIDE: a Spanish speaker guide.

**Daylong Visit to Panama City and the Miraflores Locks (it does not include lunch)**

The tour starts at the Panama Canal, a magnificent work of engineering, in fact, it is the greatest and most expensive human feat of its time, the one Balboa had dreamt about since 1513. After thirty and forty minutes of route, you will reach the Visitor Center of Miraflores Locks, from which you will be able to see in detail ​ships ​moving along the canal inaugurated in 1914 and the way it operates. This work divides the lowest and narrowest point of the Isthmus of Panama, it reaches eighty kilometers length and connects the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea and allows the crossing of ships in approximately eight hours, every day of the week, 24 hours per day. It uses a lock system that works as water elevators for lifting ships from the sea level to the level of Gatún Lake, given the fact that the difference is of approximately 26 meters height. Forthwith, you will visit the Amador Causeway, an artificial street that was built for communicating Naos, Culebra, Perico and Flamenco Islands with the continental part of the city; they were used for protecting the canal entrance. Nowadays, it offers one of the most spectacular panoramas of the city where the Bridge of the Americas and the line of ships that are waiting to go through the canal are visible. The tour continues at the *Biomuseo* or Museum of Biodiversity designed by Frank Gehry, the creator of the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum in Spain. It exhibits the amazing biodiversity of Panama by means of its eight rooms. The tour continues in the Old Quarter of Panama City, the historic center of San Felipe founded in 1673 after the destruction and plundering perpetrated by the Pirate Henry Morgan. It was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1997, thanks to its eclectic fusion of colonial, neoclassic and French architecture. This stop includes a walk in the streets, squares and gravel roads and a visit of emblematic colonial buildings, churches and palaces. San José church is one of them; it is famous because of its gold altar, a surprising baroque altar that survived to Morgan’s dreadful plundering in Old Panama. Straightaway, after crossing the A Avenue, you will reach *Plaza Francia* [Francia Square] which is probably the most beautiful square due to its extraordinary location in front of the sea, at the end of the peninsula. Sometime, it was the main square in the city and a guard of a fort destroyed late in the XXth century. In the middle of the square, there is an obelisk erected with a Gallic rooster surrounded by the bust of Ferdinand de Lesseps and other characters in homage to France and the role it played in the construction of the canal. Among the historic buildings surrounding the square, there are the Embassy of France, the National Institute for Culture and the Anita Villalaz Theater. A few meters away, there is the *Plaza Bolívar* [Bolívar Square], a lovely square surrounded by beautiful buildings, modern bars and restaurants offering the best night environment in the city. This square was known as *Plaza San Francisco* until 1926, a year during which it changed its name in homage of Simón Bolívar, The Liberator, for having led the pro-independence fight against Spain. The little but attractive San Francisco Church and the sumptuous National Theater designed by the Italian Architect Ruggieri stand out close to it; the theater is definitely one of the most representative works of the neoclassic architecture. If you raise your eyes, you will find the bell tower, decorated with mother of pearls, of the Church of San Felipe Neri and its adjacencies where it is located the oldest house in the Old Quarter that survived several fires, Casa Góngora [Góngora House], built in 1756 by a Spanish dedicated to the trade of pearls, where art exhibitions are currently performed. The Independence Square is other of the bastions of the Old Quarter, in fact, it is the most important square in the area, it is commonly known as *Plaza de la Catedral* [Cathedral’s Square]. Close to it, you may have regard for extraordinary residences and constructions, among them, there are the splendid Metropolitan Cathedral with its part-Moorish and part-baroque façade protected by two extremely white bell towers, and the imposing City Hall built in 1910 under the neoclassic style where it was proclaimed Panama as an independent republic from Spain and the separation from Colombia. The tour continues at the Executive Mansion (entrance is not guaranteed), a structure dating from 1673 which after numerous transformations, turned into the President’s residence. It is also known as *Palacio de las Garzas* [Herons Palace] because of the herons decorating its backyard; they were brought from Darién and were given as a present to President Belisario Porras. It holds inside wonderful halls, *Salón Amarillo* [Yellow Hall] stands out among them; it is the most significant hall because the most important ceremonies of the country are held there and *Salón de los Tamarindos* [Tamarind Hall] where the most famous murals of Roberto Lewis representing the history and culture of the country are visible right over there.

DURATION: approximately 6 hours.

TIME: to be agreed.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service, visits and entrances.

NOTES: the *Biomuseo* is closed on Tuesdays and it is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Miraflores Locks Visitor Center opens everyday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. the Executive Mansion is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Entrance is not guaranteed. Casa Góngora is closed on Mondays.

ATTENTION: Visits order may be modified, even during the tour. Not every building will be visited inside.

**Daylong Visit to Panama City and the Miraflores Locks (lunch at the Seafood Market is included)**

The tour starts at the Panama Canal, a magnificent work of engineering, in fact, it is the greatest and most expensive human feat of the time, the one Balboa had dreamt about since 1513. After thirty and forty minutes of route, you will reach the Visitor Center of Miraflores Locks, from which you will be able to see in detail ​ships ​moving along the canal inaugurated in 1914 and the way it operates. This work divides the lowest and narrowest point of the Isthmus of Panama, it reaches eighty kilometers length and connects the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea and allows the crossing of ships in approximately eight hours, every day of the week, 24 hours per day. It uses a lock system that works as water elevators for lifting ships from the sea level to the level of Gatún Lake, given the fact that the difference is of approximately 26 meters height. Forthwith, you will visit the Amador Causeway, an artificial street that was built for communicating Naos, Culebra, Perico and Flamenco Islands with the continental part of the city; they were used for protecting the canal entrance. Nowadays, it offers one of the most spectacular panoramas of the city where the Bridge of the Americas and the line of ships that are waiting to go through the canal are visible. The tour continues at the *Biomuseo* or Museum of Biodiversity designed by Frank Gehry, the creator of the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum in Spain. It exhibits the amazing biodiversity of Panama by means of its eight rooms. Afterwards, you will make a brief visit at Mercado de Abasto [wholesale marketplace], the fruit and vegetable largest market of the city, where you will find the best products of the country. Lunch will be served in one of the unsophisticated and typical restaurants of the traditional Seafood Market of the city (only fish dishes are offered). This fish and crustacean market offers a great quantity of fresh fish such as tuna, lobster, calamari, octopus and spider crabs. The tour continues in the Old Quarter of Panama City, the historic center of San Felipe founded in 1673 after the destruction and plundering perpetrated by the Pirate Henry Morgan. It was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1997, thanks to its eclectic fusion of colonial, neoclassic and French architecture. This stop includes a walk in the streets, squares and gravel roads and a visit of emblematic colonial buildings, churches and palaces. San José church is one of them; it is famous because of its gold altar, a surprising baroque altar that survived to Morgan’s dreadful plundering in Old Panama. Straightaway, after crossing the A Avenue, you will reach Plaza *Francia* [Francia Square] which is probably the most beautiful square due to its extraordinary location in front of the sea, at the end of the peninsula. Sometime, it was the main square in the city and a guard of a fort destroyed late in the XXth century. In the middle of the square, there is an obelisk erected with a Gallic rooster surrounded by the bust of Ferdinand de Lesseps and other characters in homage to France and the role it played in the construction of the canal. Among the historic buildings surrounding the square, there are the Embassy of France, the National Institute for Culture and the Anita Villalaz Theater. A few meters away, there is the *Plaza Bolívar* [Bolívar Square], a lovely square surrounded by beautiful buildings, modern bars and restaurants offering the best night environment in the city. This square was known as *Plaza San Francisco* until 1926, a year during which it changed its name in homage of Simón Bolívar, The Liberator, for having led the pro-independence fight against Spain. The little but attractive San Francisco Church and the sumptuous National Theater designed by the Italian Architect Ruggieri stand out close to it; the theater is definitely one of the most representative works of the neoclassic architecture. If you raise your eyes, you will find the bell tower, decorated with mother of pearls, of the Church of San Felipe Neri and its adjacencies where it is located the oldest house in the Old Quarter that survived several fires, Casa Góngora [Góngora House], built in 1756 by a Spanish dedicated to the trade of pearls, where art exhibitions are currently performed. The Independence Square is other of the bastions of the Old Quarter, in fact, it is the most important square in the area, it is commonly known as *Plaza de la Catedral* [Cathedral’s Square]. Close to it, you may have regard for extraordinary residences and constructions, among them, there are the splendid Metropolitan Cathedral with its part-Moorish and part-baroque façade protected by two extremely white bell towers, and the imposing City Hall built in 1910 under the neoclassic style where it was proclaimed Panama as an independent republic from Spain and the separation from Colombia. The tour ends at the Executive Mansion (entrance is not guaranteed), a structure dating from 1673 which after numerous transformations, turned into the President’s residence. It is also known as *Palacio de las Garzas* [Herons Palace] because of the herons decorating its backyard; they were brought from Darién and were given as a present to President Belisario Porras. It holds inside wonderful halls, *Salón Amarillo* [Yellow Hall] stands out among them; it is the most significant hall because the most important ceremonies of the country are held there and *Salón de los Tamarindos* [Tamarind Hall] where the most famous murals of Roberto Lewis representing the history and culture of the country are visible right over there.

DURATION: approximately 8 hours.

TIME: to be agreed.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service, visits and entrances.

NOTES: the *Biomuseo* is closed on Tuesdays and it is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Miraflores Locks Visitor Center opens everyday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. the Executive Mansion is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Entrance is not guaranteed. Casa Góngora is closed on Mondays.

ATTENTION: Visits order may be modified, even during the tour. Not every building will be visited inside.

**Daylong Trip to *Barro Colorado***

The tour starts very early in the morning bound for Gamboa’s dock, about thirty-five minutes away from Panama City. From that point, the journey is done by boat in Gatún Lake for approximately forty-five minutes until reaching Barro Colorado Island. The lake was created from the construction of Chagres River’s dams, waters of which were necessary for elevating the water level and allowing the operation of the canal’s locks. Thus, great part of the existing forest was covered and Barro Colorado, its largest island, rose in the middle of the artificial basin. It is a biological reserve since 1923 and it has been administrated by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute since 1946. It works as a biological research center on tropical ecosystems. Every year, approximately 200 scientists visit the area in order to study the ecology, the evolution and behavior of plants and animals. When you reach the island, you will meet the reserve’s guide and you will have a walk of approximately two hours and a half (around two kilometers) through trails going through the tropical forest formed by big focuses, palm trees and ceiba trees, a habitat of 122 species of mammals, among them, there are seventy-two species of bats, five species of monkeys, guinea pigs, tapirs, coatis, sloths and peccaries. The visit includes the entrance to the Visitor Center where the natural history of Barro Colorado is explained and there is a two-option vegetarian buffet lunch at the coffee shop.

DURATION: approximately 8 hours.

TIME: departure between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. and return between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

GUIDE: a Spanish/English speaker guide of the park.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel, entrances to the park and to the Visitor Center and lunch. Takeaway breakfast upon prior request.

NOTES: it is a collective visit along with other visitors, from different countries. Limited places. It is recommended to book it in advance and bring your passport. It is not offered on Mondays, Thursdays and some holidays.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: long pants, long sleeve shirt, hat, comfortable shoes for the walk, sunscreen, repellent, hydration and a raincoat, especially between April and December.

**Half-day Trip to the Metropolitan Natural Park**

The trip starts with the shuttle service to the Metropolitan Natural Park where you will have a walk of approximately two hours through trails where the park’s incredible fauna and flora can be seen. The park, created in 1985, represents the sole forest and faunal reserve of Central America located entirely inside the urban perimeter and it forms the amazing Mesoamerican Biological Corridor along with Camino de Cruces and Sovereignty National Park. This park shelters one of the last refugees of dry tropical forest where a great quantity of birds live, more than 250 species, the curious blue-crowned motmot, the club-winged manakin that sings while making wing sounds in order attract a mate, the sympathetic keel-billed toucan with a yellow chest, its colorful bill is so large that it represents one-third of its body, and the thorough weaverbird with its astonishing nests stand out. There are also sloths, coatis, monkeys, iguanas, anteaters, morpho butterflies and extraordinary orchids. Furthermore, the parks’ trails offer spectacular views of the city and the gulf.

DURATION: approximately 3 hours.

TIME: Preferably, early in the morning in order to observe the fauna.

GUIDE: a Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel and entrance to the park.

NOTES: it is not recommended to do the trip on Sundays. It is recommended to bring your passport.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: long pants, long sleeve shirt, hat, comfortable shoes for the walk, sunscreen, repellent, hydration and a raincoat, especially between April and December.

**Half-day Partial Crossing of Panama Canal**

The visit invites you to feel the excitement of going through part of the canal in order to observe the actual workings of the locks. The way water fills the basins in order to allow vessels to pass through the canal from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea. The tour starts with the shuttle service to the Modern International Flamenco Marina where you will set sail to the entrance of the canal. In the boat, you will enjoy a panoramic view of the city, the Bridge of the Americas and the spectacular gulf dotted by numerous ships waiting to pass through the canal. Before arriving to the Miraflores locks, you will pass unhindered around the ancient military base of Fort Clayton. Later on, the ship will enter the basin and the huge metal screens will close so that the basin fills up with water. Every Vessel should be secured using mooring lines in order to be towed by electric locomotives called mules which move over parallel rails to keep vessels aligned. In just eight minutes, water will reach the established level and the lock will open by the side of the stem allowing the ship to pass to the following basin. The tour continues at the Miraflores Lake up to reach Pedro Miguel’s locks where the level rises other nine meters, then the canal shrinks and the ship will continues under the Centennial Bridge until it reaches the famous Gaillard Cut or Culebra Cut, known for its meandering bends where the Chagres River converges on. This is one of the most interesting sites of the journey since Engineer Gaillard dug the canal through the continental river basin. The tour ends in Gamboa where you will disembark in order to go back to the hotel. You will have lunch during the tour.

DURATION: approximately 4 to 5 hours.

TIME: in the morning.

GUIDE: a Spanish/English speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel, Lunch with non-alcoholic drinks.

NOTES: it is a collective visit along with other visitors, from different countries. On some dates, the itinerary is inverted, that is to say, the tour starts in Gamboa and finishes in Flamenco Marina.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: comfortable shoes and clothes, hat, sunscreen, repellent, sunglasses, an umbrella and a raincoat.

CALENDAR FOR YEAR 2015:

November: 6, 13, 27 north crossing – 7, 14, 21, 22, 28 south crossing

December: 4, 11, 26 north crossing – 5, 12, 20, 27 south crossing

CALENDAR FOR YEAR 2016:

January: 2, 7, 14, 21, 23 north crossing – 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 29 south crossing

February: 4, 6, 11, 18, 25, 27 north crossing – 5, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26 south crossing

March: 3, 5, 10, 17, 24, 26, 31 north crossing – 4, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25 south crossing

April: 2, 8, 22, 29 north crossing – 1, 9, 17, 23, 30 south crossing

May: 7, 13, 27 north crossing – 7, 14, 22, 28 south crossing

June: 3, 10, 24 north crossing – 4, 11, 19, 25 south crossing

July: 1, 8, 22, 29 north crossing – 2, 9, 17, 23, 30 south crossing

August: 5, 12, 26 north crossing – 6, 13, 21, 27 south crossing

September: 2, 9, 23, 30 north crossing – 3, 10, 18, 24 south crossing

October: 7, 21, 28 north crossing – 1, 8, 16, 22, 29 south crossing

November: 4, 11, 25 north crossing – 5, 12, 20, 26 south crossing

December: 2, 9, 22, 29 north crossing – 3, 10, 18, 23, 24, 30, 31 south crossing

**Daylong tour to Gatún Locks, Panama Canal Expansion and San Lorenzo by train (return trip by car, lunch is included)**

The tour starts early in the morning with the shuttle service to the railroad station where

you will take a colorful train of ancient railway cars to Colón. Panama’s railroad was built during the time of The California Gold Rush for the purpose of shortening the course from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. This work finished in 1885, a year when French people decided to buy it for the sake of the construction of the canal. In 1994, the French people sold it to the United States along with the rights over the canal; they in turn administered it until 1979. A passenger service operates since 2001, since the railroad borders the canal and passes along the historic Culebra Cut and the magnificent Gatún Lake; the water used by the canal comes from said lake, it traverses the area’s lush vegetation. From the Visitor Center, you will be able to see at a short distance, you will even be able to touch, the mastodontic vessels that pass through the canal and you will be able to see in detail the ingenious system of locks that lifts ships so that they pass from one basin to another. Forthwith, you will be able to see in detail the canal expansion works that will allow the transit of supersize ships, another ambitious feat through which it is expected to have a water recycling system and larger basins. In order to continue toward San Lorenzo National Park, you should wait until one of the basins are closed and pass through one little iron street next to the impressive screen. San Lorenzo Reserve is a protected nature reserve which provides shelter to twelve ecosystems and occupies approximately 9,653 hectares of forest, mangroves, rain forests and semi-deciduous forests where 430 bird species and 81 mammals have been identified. It is part of The Mesoamerican Biological Corridor to a great extent which represents a paradise for Biologists and Amateur Bird Watchers. The area was the former U.S. army base of Fort Sherman where army officers and astronauts were trained in combat techniques and in how to survive in the jungle. The jewel of the park is undoubtedly Fort San Lorenzo which dominates Chagres River’s mouth and was built by Spaniards in order to protect the transcontinental route to the New World from pirate assaults. It is a UNESCO's World Heritage Site. You will have lunch during the tour.

DURATION: approximately 7 to 8 hours.

TIME: To be agreed.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel, train ticket from Panama City to Colón, entrances to the Visitor Center and lunch. The train leaves very early, that is why we offer takeaway breakfast upon prior request.

NOTES: The train does not work on weekends. If you wish, the rail journey can be replaced with a private shuttle service. Visits order may be modified, even during the tour. You should bring your passport.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: comfortable shoes and clothes, hat, sunscreen, repellent, and a raincoat, especially between April and December.

**Daylong tour to Gatún Locks, Panama Canal Expansion and Portobelo by train (return trip by car, lunch is included)**

The tour starts early in the morning with the shuttle service to the railroad station where you will take a colorful train of ancient railway cars to Colón. Panama’s railroad was built during the time of The California Gold Rush for the purpose of shortening the course from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. This work finished in 1885, a year when French people decided to buy it for the sake of the construction of the canal. In 1994, the French people sold it to the United States along with the rights over the canal; they in turn administered it until 1979. A passenger service operates since 2001, since the railroad borders the canal and passes along the historic Culebra Cut and the magnificent Gatún Lake; the water used by the canal comes from said lake, it traverses the area’s lush vegetation. From the Visitor Center, you will be able to see at a short distance, you will even be able to touch, the mastodontic vessels that pass through the canal and you will be able to see in detail the ingenious system of locks that lifts ships so that they pass from one basin to another. Forthwith, you will be able to see in detail the canal expansion works that will allow the transit of supersize ships, another ambitious feat through which it is expected to have a water recycling system and larger basins. The tour continues in Portobelo, founded in 1597 as a Caribbean terminal for the trade route of the Isthmus of Panama, superseding this way *Nombre de Dios* after the plundering of Francis Drake. At that time, it was sought to make easier the trip from Panama through Camino de Cruces, a journey that started in land and continued along Chagres River in order allow the transit even during rainy season, a route that superseded Camino Real’s route. This little city guarded by the Caribbean Sea and its gentle hills boasts about its name “Puerto Bello” [Beautiful Port] that was assigned by Christopher Columbus in 1502 during his last trip only just when he sighted land. This quiet and little city still preserves features of that glorious past which are visible in its colonial wooden houses and buildings built expressly around the ruins of the Fort of San Fernando and the Fort of San Jerónimo. Its inhabitants, the Congos, descend directly from African slaves and they have conserved their habits and traditions throughout the time; they are mainly manifested in the music, dance and painting. You will have lunch during the tour.

DURATION: approximately 7 to 8 hours.

TIME: To be agreed.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel, train ticket from Panama City to Colón, entrances to the Visitor Center and lunch. The train leaves very early, that is why we offer takeaway breakfast upon prior request.

NOTES: The train does not work on weekends. If you wish, the rail journey can be replaced with a private shuttle service. Visits order may be modified, even during the tour. You should bring your passport.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: comfortable shoes and clothes, hat, sunscreen, repellent, and a raincoat, especially between April and December.

**Daylong tour to Gatún Locks, Panama Canal Expansion and Portobelo (lunch is included)**

The tour starts with the shuttle service to Colón, after a journey of approximately one hour, you will visit Gatun Locks and the Panama Canal Expansion located at the Caribbean Entrance. From the Visitor Center, you will be able to see at a short distance, you will even be able to touch, the mastodontic vessels that pass through the canal and you will be able to see in detail the ingenious system of locks that lifts ships so that they pass from one basin to another. Forthwith, you will be able to see in detail the canal expansion works that will allow the transit of supersize ships, another ambitious feat through which it is expected to have a water recycling system and larger basins. The tour continues in Portobelo, founded in 1597 as a Caribbean terminal for the trade route of the Isthmus of Panama, superseding this way *Nombre de Dios* after the plundering of Francis Drake. At that time, it was sought to make easier the trip from Panama through Camino de Cruces, a journey that started in land and continued along Chagres River in order allow the transit even during rainy season, a route that superseded Camino Real’s route. This little city guarded by the Caribbean Sea and its gentle hills boasts about its name “Puerto Bello” [Beautiful Port] that was assigned by Christopher Columbus in 1502 during his last trip only just when he sighted land. This quiet and little city still preserves features of that glorious past which are visible in its colonial wooden houses and buildings built expressly around the ruins of the Fort of San Fernando and the Fort of San Jerónimo. Its inhabitants, the Congos, descend directly from African slaves and they have conserved their habits and traditions throughout the time; they are mainly manifested in the music, dance and painting. You will have lunch during the tour.

DURATION: approximately 7 to 8 hours.

TIME: To be agreed.

GUIDE: a private Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel, entrance to the Visitor Center and lunch.

NOTES: Visits order may be modified, even during the tour. You should bring your passport.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: comfortable shoes and clothes, hat, sunscreen, repellent, and a raincoat, especially between April and December.

**Daylong tour to Gatún Locks and Emberá Quera native Community (lunch is included)**

The tour starts with the shuttle service of approximately one hour to the little pier of Gatún River, few minutes away from Buena Vista, where you will board a pirogue, a motor canoe, to arrive to the community of Emberá Quera, located at Gatún River’s mouth. During the journey of approximately forty minutes, you will be able to see in detail the splendid jungle and if you are lucky, its monkeys, butterflies, herons and turtles. Upon your arrival, you will be received by the Indian Chief of the community who will tell you the history of the Tribe and its cultural wealth and that of its traditions. The Emberá are native of the Darién, who in turn come from the Chocò, Colombia. They live at the edge of the river in little communities of thatch-roofed palafittes named *tambos*, for counteracting humidity and avoiding floods. Men dedicate themselves to 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 collars known as *chaquiras* 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. The visit to the community will finish and you will go over a little island inhabited by monkeys. Afterwards, a typical lunch will be served to you and you will enjoy a folkloric show with traditional music and dances.

DURATION: approximately 6 hours.

GUIDE: a local Spanish speaker guide.

INCLUSIVE: shuttle service from/to the hotel and lunch.

NOTES: Visits order may be modified, even during the tour. You should bring your passport.

RECOMMENDED OUTFIT: comfortable shoes and clothes, hat, sunscreen, repellent, and a raincoat, especially between April and December.