**PACKAGE HOLIDAY TO PORTOBELO AND EMBERÁ QUERA FOR 2 DAYS & 1 NIGHT (Private guide and Driver)**

**1st Day:** **Panama City – Gatún Locks - Panama Canal Expansion – Portobelo**

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 1855, a year when The French decided to buy it for the sake of the construction of the canal. In 1904, The French 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, due to the fact that 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 lush vegetation of the area. After a journey of approximately one hour, you will visit Gatún Locks and the expansion of the canal which are located at the entrance of the Caribbean Sea. 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 perpetrated by 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started in land and continued along Chagres River in order allow the transit even during rainy season, a route that superseded Camino Real’s route.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 small 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 small 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 Castle 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. At the end of the day, you will be taken back to the hotel where you will stay overnight.

MEALS: lunch.

**2nd Day: Portobelo – Emberá Quera Native Community - Panama City**

This second and last day, the tour starts with the shuttle service 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 to Darién, who in turn come from 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. The Emberá are very skillful artisans, 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. At the end of the tour, you will be transferred back to Panama City.

MEALS: breakfast and lunch.

NOTES: The train leaves very early in the morning; that is why we offer takeaway breakfast upon prior request. The transfer to the Hotel El Otro Lado is done by boat and it only includes a tour at *Puerto Francés* Beach and a walk for approximately forty-five minutes along the trails of the forest.