



Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

Panamá - Bocas del Toro

Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Ciudad de Panamá (Panamá City)
- ✓ **Language:** Spanish
- ✓ **Population:** ± 125000
- ✓ **Currency:** Balboa & American Dollars
- ✓ **Country code:** +507
- ✓ **Visa:** Fore some countries, [check!](#)
- ✓ **Alarm codes:** 911
- ✓ **Vaccinations:** Hep-A / Hep-B / Typhoid / DTP / Yellow fever / Malaria prevention

History Recap Over 1 Drink

1502: Columbus arrives in New World (Panama+Honduras). 1509: Beginning slave trade. 1513: Pacific Ocean claimed by Spain (Balboa) → Spanish settlers. 1519: Ciudad de Panamá founded. 1617: Pirates (Morgan). 1810: Spanish king overthrown by Napoleon → 1821: Independent of Spain, joins Gran Colombia (Colombia/Venezuela/Peru/Ecuador/Bolivia), 1830: Part of Colombia. 1850s: Panama Railway. 1880s: France failed to build Panamá Canal linking Atlantic & Pacific / Independence movement. 1903: Panama independent from Colombia. US (Roosevelt) buys rights (\$40mln) to build Panamá Canal → 1913-15 done (65km). 1936: Begin Pan-American Highway project. 1940s: US government tests weapons in Panamá. 1955: President Remon assassinated. 60s: Guerilla tensions from Cuba, US backs ups Panamá. 1964: Anti-American riots → killings (mostly Panamanians). 1985: Noriega took power (bribery/murder/drugs trafficking). 1999: 1st female president Moscoso. 2006: Seat in US Security Council. 2014: Venezuela breaks ties with Panamá.

Travel Seasons

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dry												
Wet									low	low		
Best	high	high	high									high
Budget												

Altitude: 10m. Climate: Rain forest tropical / year-long rainfall. Surfing: Nov-Apr / Jun-Aug.

Bucket List For Free

- ☺ Put on your hiking shoes and explore! From Bocas you have the easiest entrance to Amistad National Park.
- ☺ Surf's up: Black Rock, Caranero, Wizard Beach etc.
- ☺ Beach breaks: Playa Bluff (Colon), Estrella (Colon), Starfish Beach (Colon), Boca del Drago (Bastimentos), Red Frog Beach (Bastimentos / \$3 entrance).
- ☺ Have lunch at Bibi's (Isla Caranero) and use their kayaks, stand-up paddle boards and snorkeling gear.
- ☺ Do a free tour at [Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute](#).
- ☺ Walk or bicycle around the islands.

Worth The Extra \$€¥

- 👍 Explore the islands: Isla Colon, Isla Bastimentos (National Marine Park), Isla Zapatillas, Isla Caranero & Isla San Cristobal.
- 👍 Watersports: [Scuba diving](#), [Sailing](#), [Snorkelling](#), [Sportfishing](#), Stand-up paddle boarding.
- 👍 Refresh with some [yoga](#).
- 👍 Tours: [Botanical Garden](#), [Chocolate Tour](#), [Caving](#), [Canopy](#), [Sea turtle hatching](#), [Dolphin Preserve](#).
- 👍 [Grab a horse](#).

Tourist Trap Alert

- ⊗ Avoid Isla Colon if you don't like tourist hang-outs, visit Isla San Cristobal or Isla Bastimentos instead.
- ⊗ Before looking into tours, check which daytrips you can arrange: Fishermen can take you to certain locations on their boats.

Budget Bites

- ⌘ Be ready to spend, Bocas is not cheap. Self-catering by shopping in the mostly Chinese-owned supermarkets.
- ⌘ Main square: SnackBar with cheap deals.
- ⌘ Streetfood is not so varied in Panama: Hot dogs (*perro caliente*), skewers, hamburgers, and *raspado* ice creams.

Knowledge I'm Taking Home

- 📖 Hable español: [Habla Ya](#) / [Spanish by the Sea](#).
- 📖 Art & cooking classes: [Random Art](#).
- 📖 Surfing paradise: [Caribe Surf School](#).

Festivals

- ⚙️ Carnaval, religious: Mar.
- ⚙️ [Feria del Mar](#), marine: Sep.
- ⚙️ Independence celebrations: 3&28-Nov.

Next?

- ➔ In Panamá: Boquete, Santa Catalina.
- ➔ International destinations close by: Costa Rica, (Colombia).

Sleep Cheap

- ❖ Selina, +50762948680, Calle 1ra (Isla Colon).
- ❖ Bubba's House, +50765898872, Old Bank (Isla Bastimentos).
- ❖ Go [Couchsurfing](#) or [house-sitting](#)! Or check [Workaway](#).

Nights Best Spent

- ◆ Mondo Taitu, Avenida G, Isla Colon.
 - ◆ Barco Hundido Bar, Calle 1ra, Isla Colon.
 - ◆ La Iguana, Calle 3ra, Isla Colon.
- Keep an eye on the ladies nights: Free drinks!

Mama Said

- ☠️ The surf can be dangerous with strong riptides.
- ☠️ Opposed to everywhere else in Panamá, tap water is not safe to drink in Bocas del Toro.
- ☠️ You can get fined for walking around shirtless.
- ☠️ Drugs are readily available but NOT legal, penalties are high.
- ☠️ Bring enough cash. There's only 1 bank in Bocas on Isla Colon.

Free-Riding?

- The islands are small and most is walkable. To explore Isla Colon a bike or public transport is recommendable.
- To get there: Take a bus to Almirante from where you can take a boat. Buses on Isla Colon run from Bocas Plaza to Bocas del Drago.
- Boats connect the islands and go according to schedules. You can also hire boaters operating motorized boats and canoes.
- Taxi's are pricy for South American standards... and take your precautions. Foreigner = money.

Tip: Download the free Triposo Panama app for an offline map, offline guide & more. Load Google Maps when you have wifi and leave it open, you will still be able to use it offline.

The Earth Becomes My Throne