

En el Cuadro 11 se incluye la cifra exacta de traductores calificados registrados en la República de Panamá.

**Table No. 11**  
**Number of qualified translators and interpreters registered at the Ministry of Education and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

| Languages                                   | Amount |
|---|--------|
| English - Spanish / Spanish - English       | 680    |
| French - Spanish / Spanish - French         | 29     |
| Portuguese - Spanish / Spanish - Portuguese | 10     |

The experience of the FTAA Temporary Venue in Panama was satisfactory in regard to the performance and professional quality of local translators and interpreters.

Likewise, there are 19 companies in Panama City committed to translating and interpreting with professional personnel trained in Spanish, English, Portuguese and French. According to the rates charged by these companies, the cost of hiring a translator or interpreter in Panama is approximately 40% less than the average value in the hemisphere, based on information provided by the FTAA Tripartite Committee. In 1997, the Committee estimated that the average daily cost of hiring the services of interpreters or translators for FTAA conferences was US\$ 400.00. The present cost of a similar service in Panama is US\$ 250.00.

All the facilities offered by the Republic of Panama for hiring non-local interpreters and translators, in the event the activities of the Administrative Secretariat requires their services, are detailed in Section III, which includes Panama's offer:

## **E. QUALITY OF LIFE**

### **INFORMATION REGARDING FACTORS RELATED TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY OF PANAMA, INCLUDING, ALTHOUGH NOT EXCLUSIVELY, THE FOLLOWING: HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL FACILITIES; RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS; CULTURAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES.**

Panama is one of the Cities with the best quality of life in the entire hemisphere. US magazine "International Living" recommends Panama as the best place to live in the hemisphere, and Modern Maturity, a publication of the American Association of Retirees, rates our country as one of the four most healthy areas in the world to live. Moreover, Harper's Bazaar magazine considers that "Panama is the most beautiful place in the world to retire."

Tourist wise, the National Geographic Travelers magazine considers Panama "as one of the five main destinations in the Caribbean," while Travel and Leisure describes the country as "one of the ten best destinations in the world."

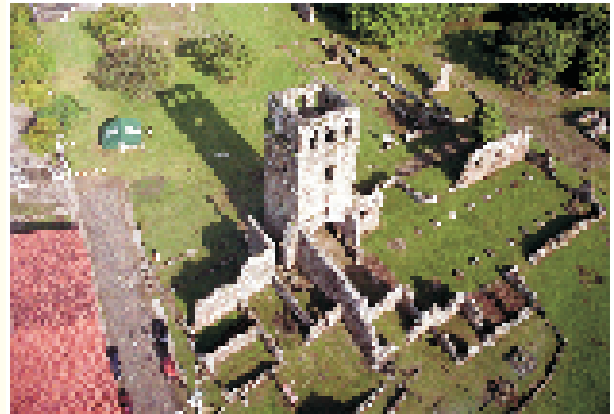
# PANAMA

The distinctive of its friendly and multilingual population, high security levels, road and tourist infrastructures, climate, beauty, attractions and monuments, natural diversity, access to all the facilities of modern life and high technology, among other attributes, make the Capital of Panama one of the favorite cities to live in the world.

Due to its cultural appeal, Panama City was honored last year by being selected as the "Cultural Capital of America."

**Climate:**

Panama's climate is pleasingly tropical with usually the same temperature throughout the year; an average temperature of 27 degrees centigrade.



*Old Panama's tower*

**Environment:**

Twenty nine percent of the Republic of Panama's territory is protected with natural parks, 7 forest reserves and 10 wildlife sanctuaries, enabling 944 registered bird species to live in Panama, more species than in the entire United States and Canada together. It comprises 7 of the 12 necessary zones to sustain land ecosystems in the world, and shelters the largest biological diversity in Middle America. It is a natural bridge that joins North and Central America with South America, thus protecting species of the entire continent.

Panama City, the capital, has a part in the national commitment to preserve nature. To contribute with this effort, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute operates two tropical labs in the city.

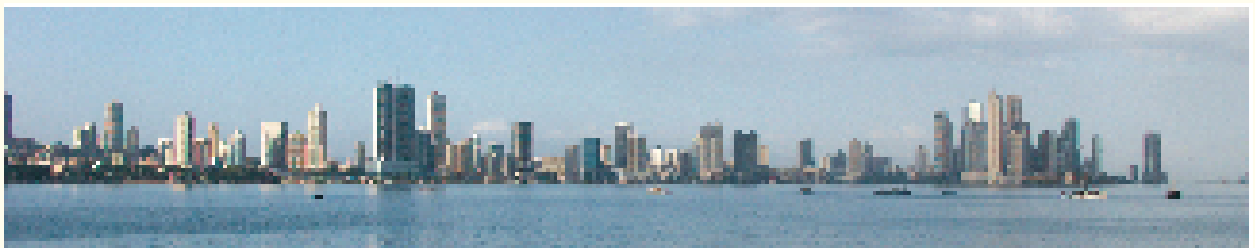
The prestigious scientific entity Audubon Society reported nearly 38 bird species in a single tree during an afternoon, in a site located at Panama City outskirts.

A reliable evidence of Panama's commitment to nature and health is the fact that it is one of the few countries in the world where it is safe to drink water directly from the faucet.

**Attractions and Monuments:**

The 80-kilometer long inter-oceanic canal, considered the eighth wonder in the modern world, borders Panama City on its Pacific side. The Panama Canal handles 5% of world trade, with an annual traffic of more than 13,000 vessels from 80 countries sailing through 120 trade routes. Located near the city center, Miraflores Locks offers a modern Visitor's Center with interpretative exhibits, restaurants and gift shop.

Gatun Lake, the third largest manmade lake in the world, is one of the most important international eco-tourism sites.



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Nearly 500 years of culture are combined in Panama. Old Panama City, with its colonial past, boasts one of the oldest towers built by the Spaniards in the American continent. The Historic District of Spanish and French influence includes the Presidential Palace, several government offices, beautiful plazas and an active night life. The modern City is the center for commercial, financial, tourist, industrial and service activities. The area surrounding the Panama Canal's entrance displays the influence of US neoclassical constructions and due to multimillionaire investments has been transformed for commercial, tourist, residential, industrial and maritime activities.



*Amador Causeway*

The one kilometer long Amador Causeway connects three islands to Panama City. The causeway was built with the dirt and rock excavated from the canal. It exhibits a beautiful view of the capital and the canal entrance, with hotels, cruise ship and yacht ports, and numerous shops, restaurants, bars and discotheques. The Figali Convention Center, also located in the Causeway, was the site of the 2003 Miss Universe Pageant and numerous musical and artistic events.

Ancon Hill is one of the highest points in Panama City and from the hilltop there is a spectacular view of the capital and the canal entrance. Mi Pueblito tourist complex, located down the hill, recreates the architectural influence of the three main cultures in the City - the Spanish Colonial, West Indian and Indigenous.

The Panama railroad, the world's first transoceanic railway, was built in 1855. The route across the Isthmus of Panama takes only one hour, running through its narrowest stretch including sections next to the canal. The Kansas City Railway company modernized and re-inaugurated the railroad at a cost exceeding US\$ 47 million, preserving the original route. Its main activity is serving as the primary alternative for multi-modal cargo transportation, but it offers as well passenger wagons for tourists.

The Canopy Tower, a former US military observation site transformed into a tourist lodging, is now considered as one of the best bird observation sites in the world. It is located next to Gamboa Rainforest Resort, a luxury hotel complex that was developed with the counsel of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

Summit Gardens hosts Panama City's largest zoo. It is located within 250 hectares near to the Miraflores Locks Visitor's Center, Canopy Tower and Gamboa Rainforest Resort.

Found in 1998, the City of Knowledge is a multi-institutional education, research, and innovation complex created by the Panamanian State at the former Clayton military base. It was created to promote participation in the global network of production and dissemination of knowledge and innovation, based on the opportunities offered by Panama in regard to its biological and cultural diversity, international trade and businesses, qualified human resources, management of complex ecosystems, and communication and transportation technologies.



*Canopy Tower*

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Business, educational, and international organizations come together in the City of Knowledge, with emphasis given to research and development of information technology, biotechnology, environmental studies and agricultural industries. Likewise, it is a stronghold for the development of multi-modal activities and a center to debate issues of worldwide interest. The synergy that arises from the three activity areas is considered a catalyst for local and regional development dynamics.

#### Cultural Activities:



*National Theater*

The City of Panama offers 14 museums that specialize in different areas of culture, arts, and history, including the Panama Canal Museum, two anthropological museums, the Contemporary Art Museum, the West Indian Museum, the History Museum, Old Panama Museum, the Natural Science Museum, the Explore Arts and Sciences Center, the Emerald Museum, the National Bank Museum, the Arias-Feraud Mansion, the George Westerman Center, and the Magic Portal Toucan Museum. Furthermore, there are 20 art galleries with permanent exhibits of paintings and antique, modern and contemporary pieces.

In 2006, Panama will inaugurate the Biodiversity Museum at the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal. This monumental project, located within 35,000 square meters, was designed by world famous architect Frank O. Gehry to represent the Isthmus of Panama's influence on life in the planet. It is estimated that this Museum will be visited by half a million persons every year. It is the only design by famous architect Frank O. Gehry in Latin America.

The National Theater of Panama, located in the Historic District, is symbolic of neoclassical architecture. It has a 803 persons capacity, with elegant balconies and a foyer displaying paintings by Roberto Lewis, one of the most important national artists.

The ATLAPA Convention Center Anayansi Theater, the main amphitheater in Panama City, regularly presents renowned artists, symphony orchestras, plays, shows and other cultural events. It is equipped with a state-of-the-art audiovisual system.

The Figali Convention Center was recently built and was inaugurated to celebrate the Miss Universe Pageant. Located in the Amador Causeway, it was also the site of several events to commemorate the Republic's centennial year.

The capital city is the home of the Panama National Ballet, the National Symphony Orchestra, the National Polyphonic Choir and the most important theater groups. Cultural activity in Panama is continuous and diverse. Theater plays are varied and presented continuously in numerous theater halls, including one exclusively devoted to present plays in the English language.

The National Library of Panama, located in the Omar Recreation Center, is one of the largest and most modern in the region. It keeps books by national and Iberian-American authors, collections, research and official documents, audiovisual materials, periodicals, a newspaper library, official gazettes and judicial registries. In addition, Panama City offers a great variety of book shops and specialized libraries. There are several literary groups. The most active is the Santa Maria la Antigua University (USMA) Readers Group that even publishes books by local writers.



*Justine Pasek - Miss Universe 2002*

# PANAMA

The Panama International Book Fair is held at the ATLAPA Convention Center every year, with 128 stands, 300 editorial houses, 50 distributors and 9 Latin American book organizations. It is organized by regional Book Chambers and the Iberian-American Editors Group. Panama was chosen as the location of this International Fair due to its exceptional facilities.

There are more than forty movie theaters in the City that present all types of film productions, including the latest releases from international movie studios. In addition, different countries frequently present their most important film productions.

More than 20 national and international fairs and expositions are celebrated in Panama, including Expocomer, one of the largest trade exhibits in the continent.

### **Civic and Social Activities:**

Panamanians are characterized by their strong civic awareness and citizen participation activities. There are different international civic organizations, such as the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, 20-30 Active Club, American Society, Inter-American Women's Club and International Soroptimist.

Panamanian social clubs are well known for their quality and enjoy international reciprocity. Union Club and City Club members are benefited with the use of facilities at similar distinguished clubs in America, Europe and Asia and vice versa. The Union Club also offers special membership conditions to Ambassadors credited in the Republic of Panama.

### **Financial Institutions**

The largest financial center in Latin America and the Caribbean is located in Panama City, with nearly US\$ 36 billion in deposits. Banking is the main activity of the international financial center. There are approximately 80 international and local banks from 35 countries from North America, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The Panama World Trade Center is located in the banking area and offers quality facilities similar to other trade centers worldwide.

For 100 years, the US dollar has been the legal currency in Panama. With a strong economic stability, the financial system allows the free flow and transfer of capitals and its attractive fiscal system is an essential factor for the sector's development. There is a large variety of financial services at very attractive costs offered through banks, stock exchange, money exchange offices and financial companies. The interest rates in US dollars in the country are the lowest in the region. The growth of the financial center stimulated the development of national banking. Panama has 18 banks of local capital with presence in the different areas of the Panamanian economy. The National Bank, one of the two State-owned banks, serves as the compensation chamber for Panamanian financial entities. The financial Center complies with international money laundering control regulations through the Banking Superintendence and Financial Analysis Unit. The active Panama Banking Association, composed of the majority of bank entities, is the founder of the Latin American Banks Federation, (FELABAN) which celebrated its first meeting in Panama. The Latin American Exports Bank (BLADEX), the largest in Latin America to finance exports in the region, also has its head office in the Panamanian capital.



*Latinamerican Exports Bank (BLADEX)*

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