

bcw Juntos

National Hispanic Heritage Month



Travel Guide

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National Hispanic Heritage Month

It is time to start planning your next vacation! Follow along this travel guide and discover some of the most thrilling and inspiring places across South America and Spain. Whether you are looking for an adventurous, relaxing or historic type of vacation – **this guide is sure to have the perfect recommendation for you.**

Every Hispanic country has unique landmarks that tell the story of their culture. What better way to immerse yourself in the culture than by visiting a new place? While traveling to a new country can be intimidating, don't let that scare you. Our JUNTOS members have shared the best tips and tricks that are sure to help you plan your visit.

Where will you be heading next?

BCW JUNTOS ERG



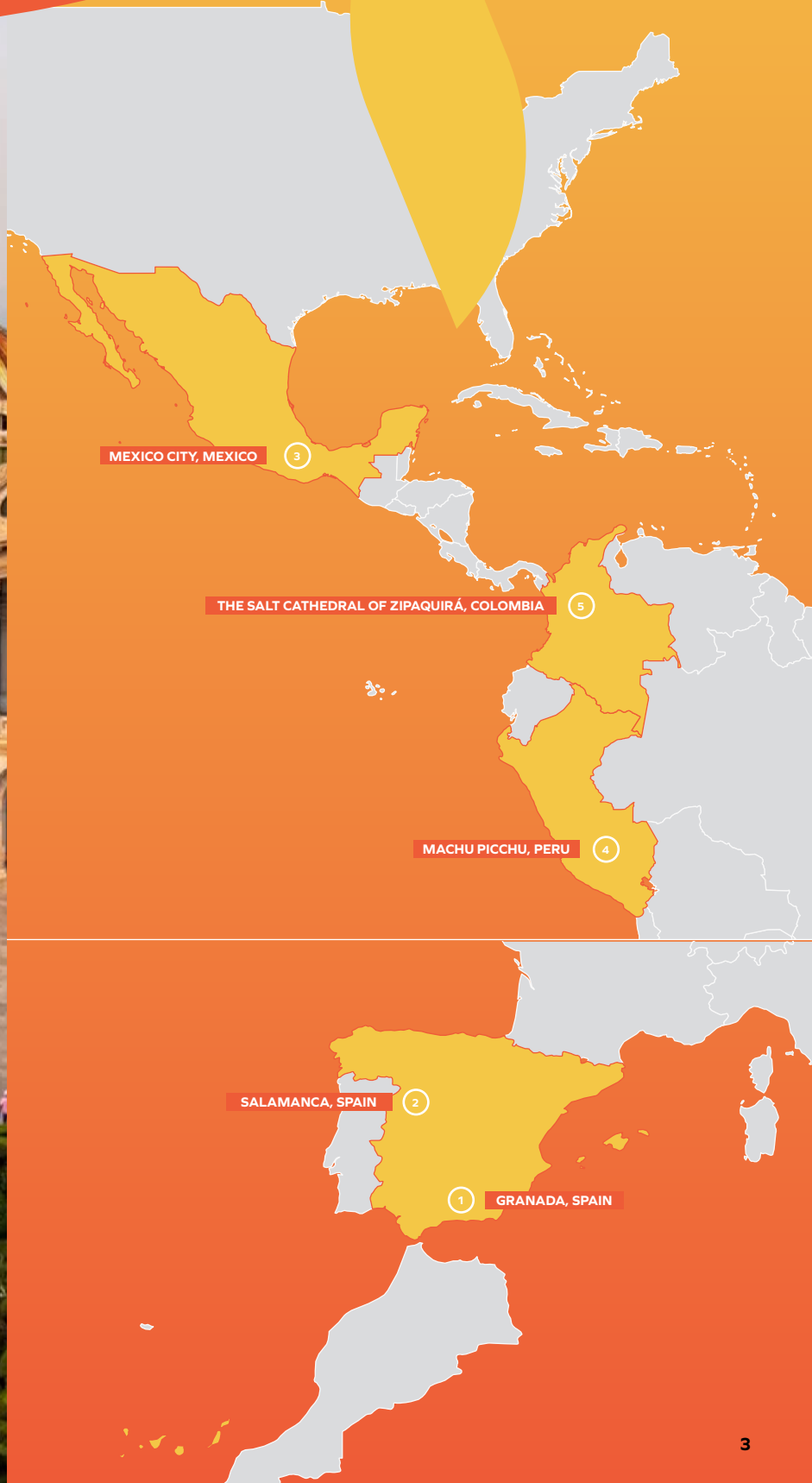
For the Historian



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 VISITED 

GRANADA, SPAIN

Granada is the capital city of the province of Granada, in the autonomous community of Andalusia, Spain. Granada is located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains, at the confluence of four rivers, the Darro, the Genil, the Monachil and the Beiro. Ascribed to the Vega de Granada comarca, the city sits at an average elevation of 738 m (2,421 ft) above sea level, yet is only one hour by car from the Mediterranean coast, the Costa Tropical. *By Schantelle Henry*

FUN FACT

Granada is home to the enchanting Alhambra. This magnificent sight is hard to sum up with a few words: The Alhambra is a palace, castle, summer retreat and enclosed town all in one enchanting place. It was built during the 1200s and 1300s for the Nasrids, who ruled the the Emirate of Granada in the final centuries of Muslim control in Andalusia. After the "Reconquista" it also became the royal court of the Catholic Monarchs, Isabella I and Ferdinand II.

TIPS & TRICKS

The best time to visit is in May-June and September - October. Temperatures are cool, flowers are in full bloom and some of the city's biggest cultural events are on the calendar.


 VISITED 

SALAMANCA, SPAIN

Located two hours from Madrid, Salamanca is home to one of Europe's oldest universities and is declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. In the heart of downtown, enjoy a historic stroll past Plaza Mayor, Casa de las Conches and two iconic cathedrals - Catedral Nueva de Salamanca and Catedral Vieja de Salamanca. Full of hidden treasures, spot the astronaut carved into the façade of the New Cathedral or test your luck finding the hidden frog on the University of Salamanca's façade, a popular student tradition for those hoping to pass their exams. Full of student life, there is no shortage of experiencing Salamanca's cuisine and nightlife. From cured meats to cheese and wine, Salamanca offers numerous restaurants to taste test limitless tapas and sweets. Nearby on Calle Toro and Calle de Zamora, get lost shopping for clothes, shoes, accessories, jewelry, souvenirs, art and local handicrafts. *By Robin Rectenwald*

FUN FACT

Salamanca is home to Europe's first University. The University of Salamanca was founded in 1218, making it the oldest university in Spain.

TIPS & TRICKS

Because Salamanca is situated on the top of a mountain next to the Tormes River, be sure to purchase tickets to Ieronimus, The towers of Salamanca Cathedral, to enjoy a 360-degree view of Salamanca.


 VISITED 

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

Mexico's capital city is not only one of the historic centers of Latin America - home to Mesoamerican ruins and the Zocalo, with a cathedral built by 16th century conquistadors - it has become a booming hub in the art universe, and is considered by some in the art world to be the art capital of Latin America. The region's oldest capital city plays host to Zona Maco, an annual art fair that features galleries from across Central and South America. The city itself teems with examples of the region's architectural innovators, including Luis Barragan and Mario Pani, and its walls have been painted by some of the most famous muralists of the 20th century: Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. *By Monica Palid*

FUN FACT

The city was nicknamed "the city of the palaces" (la ciudad de los palacios) after a German noble visited in the 1800s, writing home that Mexico City could rival any capital on the European continent.

TIPS & TRICKS

The neighborhoods of Roma and Condesa are popular for travelers looking to stay in AirBnBs. The app Rappi is a must-download, and used by residents to order delivery for everything from food to groceries and household items. Make reservations to tour one of Luis Barragan's homes or the beautiful Casa Organica in advance of your trip. The Infatuation has published an excellent guide to food in/around the city.


 VISITED 

MACHU PICCHU, PERU

Explore one of the seven wonders of the world, Machu Picchu, the Lost City of the Incas. *By Karla Mendez*

FUN FACT

The early bird gets the worm in Machu Picchu - JUNTOS recommends going in the early morning to avoid crowds and ensure you get the best view of the iconic Incan archaeological site.

TIPS & TRICKS

Getting to Machu Picchu is quite the adventure:

Fly into Cusco, take the marvelous Hiram Bingham train to the Aguas Calientes town, and then, a bus ride will take you to the sacred entrance of Machu Picchu and you can start the small hike from there!


 VISITED 

THE SALT CATHEDRAL OF ZIQAQUIRÁ, COLOMBIA

The Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá or la Catedral de Sal de Zipaquirá, is an underground Roman Catholic church built within the tunnels of a salt mine 660 ft underground in a halite mountain near the city of Zipaquirá, in Cundinamarca, Colombia. *By Catalina Castro*

FUN FACT

The cathedral is broken up into 14 small chapels connected by tunnels. Each chapel represents the stations of the cross, or Jesus Christ's last journey before crucifixion.

TIPS & TRICKS

The Cathedral is about 30 miles from the center of Bogotá. Be sure to give yourself at least two hours to explore everything the cathedral has to offer. To be sure you get the most out of your experience, consider booking a guided tour!

Chill & Relax

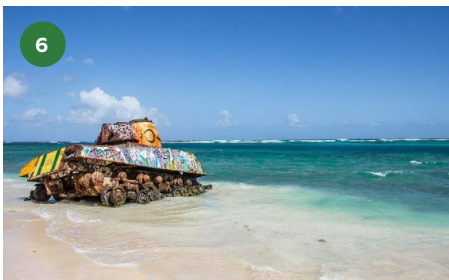


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VISITED

CULEBRA, PUERTO RICO

Isla Culebra (Snake Island) is an island, town and municipality of Puerto Rico and geographically part of the Spanish Virgin Islands. The island of Culebra can be reached by private boat, the Culebra Ferry, or airplane. Culebra is a popular tourist destination for mainland Puerto Ricans, Americans and residents of Vieques. Culebra has many beautiful beaches including Flamenco, Tamarindo, Zoni, and Resaca beach. *By Megan Otero*

FUN FACT

Culebra totals a little over 10 square miles and served as a U.S. Naval base until 1975. More than 20% of Culebra has been preserved as a National Wildlife Refuge for more than 100 years. The refuge serves as a habitat for endangered sea turtles and seabirds, among other creatures.

TIPS & TRICKS

If you are planning to visit, here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Take a taxi to and from the ferry terminal or ask your resort if they offer a shuttle service.
2. If you do bring your car, get there by 7:30 a.m. and park strategically, either close to the booth or close to the ferry - don't get caught in the middle.
3. Purchase your tickets at the ferry booth a few hours before your scheduled departure and then play some more on the island.



7
VISITED

LOS ROQUES, VENEZUELA

Los Roques is an isolated and magical archipelago, and in my opinion, one of the best beaches in the world! This oasis is actually a national park that hosts over 50 species and aquatic ecosystem. Highly recommend visiting Los Roques if you are looking for perfect beaches and an escape. Even though Venezuela is a turbulent country, crime rates in Los Roques is nonexistent and very safe for tourists. *By Karla Mendez*

FUN FACT

Los Roques has a deserted island feel to it, in the best way possible. As a Natural Park, the island development is strictly controlled, there are no mega resort complexes, but rather small, island inns; no vehicles, everything is walking distance.

TIPS & TRICKS

Fly into Gran Roque, the main island, in a short 40min flight from Caracas.

Research and book a quaint inn or "posada" in Spanish, in Gran Roque.

Most posadas include all your meals (homemade and freshly fished), boat rides to the smaller islands and everything you need during the day (chairs, umbrellas, ice, etc.)

Pack A LOT of sunscreen



8
VISITED

ROATÁN, HONDURAS

Roatan is an island located in the Caribbean, off the eastern coast of Honduras. The island lies on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, making it a popular destination for snorkeling and diving. Roatan is also home to beautiful beaches, making it a perfect getaway to relax, explore, and learn about the rich history and cultures found on the island. *By Daniel Peláez*

FUN FACT

The Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System is the second-largest barrier reef in the world! The reef extends approximately 700 miles, ranging from the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico to the Bay Islands. Despite the official language of Honduras being Spanish, Caribbean English is the most common language spoken in Roatán because it was an English colony before it became part of Honduras.

TIPS & TRICKS

Aside from renting a car, taxis and water taxis are popular modes of transportation for tourists on the island! The climate in Roatán is hot and humid, so it is recommended to pack light clothing for comfortability.



9
VISITED

PAPALLACTA, ECUADOR

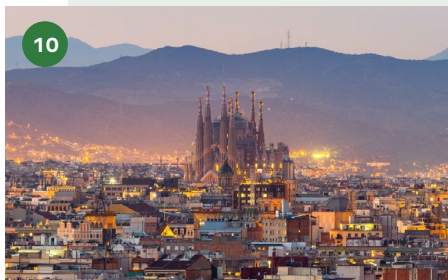
Papallacta is a small town high in the Andean mountains, about a 2 hour scenic trip away from Quito, the country's capital. Termas de Papallacta, a resort famous for medicinal hot springs, includes a restaurant, spa, hot spring access (of course), and other activities. It's the perfect place for a weekend treat or even just a few hours to let the stress melt away. Feeling like you're wrapped in the clouds as you soak in the springs or trek along the river will definitely leave you feeling content. *By Jing Jing Wang*

FUN FACT

Papallacta's hot springs are heated by the Antisana volcano and lies not far from the Cayambe volcano. These are just two of the Ecuador's dozens of volcanoes, including Mount Chimborazo which is inactive. Although Mount Everest is the highest mountain on Earth when measuring from sea level, Mount Chimborazo is the point on Earth that is closest to space due to the uneven shape of the earth and its position just beneath the equator.

TIPS & TRICKS

If you decide to stay at Termas de Papallacta, just know that their classy cabins have heated floors and the private hot springs you get 24 hour access to tend to be empty at night. For a more affordable option, it is also fairly easy to find lodging in town or simply make it a day trip! There are regular buses between the two cities.



10
VISITED

BARCELONA, SPAIN

Known as the cosmopolitan capital of Spain's Catalonia region, Barcelona, Spain serves as one of the top destinations in Spain to travel. Barcelona is a city with a wide range of original leisure options that encourage you to visit time and time again. Overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, and famous for Gaudí and other Art Nouveau architecture, Barcelona is one of Europe's trendiest cities. It's a hub of new trends in the world of culture, fashion and cuisine. It combines the creativity of its artists and designers with respect and care for local traditions. *By Makayla Williams*

FUN FACT

The sea side in Barcelona was completely run over by industries and there existed no beach for the use of the city's populace. This was changed in 1992 when the city was chosen to host the Olympic Games. The authorities shifted the industries and converted the sea side area into one for leisure, with lots of restaurants and bars.

TIPS & TRICKS

If you're looking to shop and take a leisurely stroll, visit Las Ramblas, a central street in Barcelona filled with amazing food, museums, art galleries, markets, and shops.

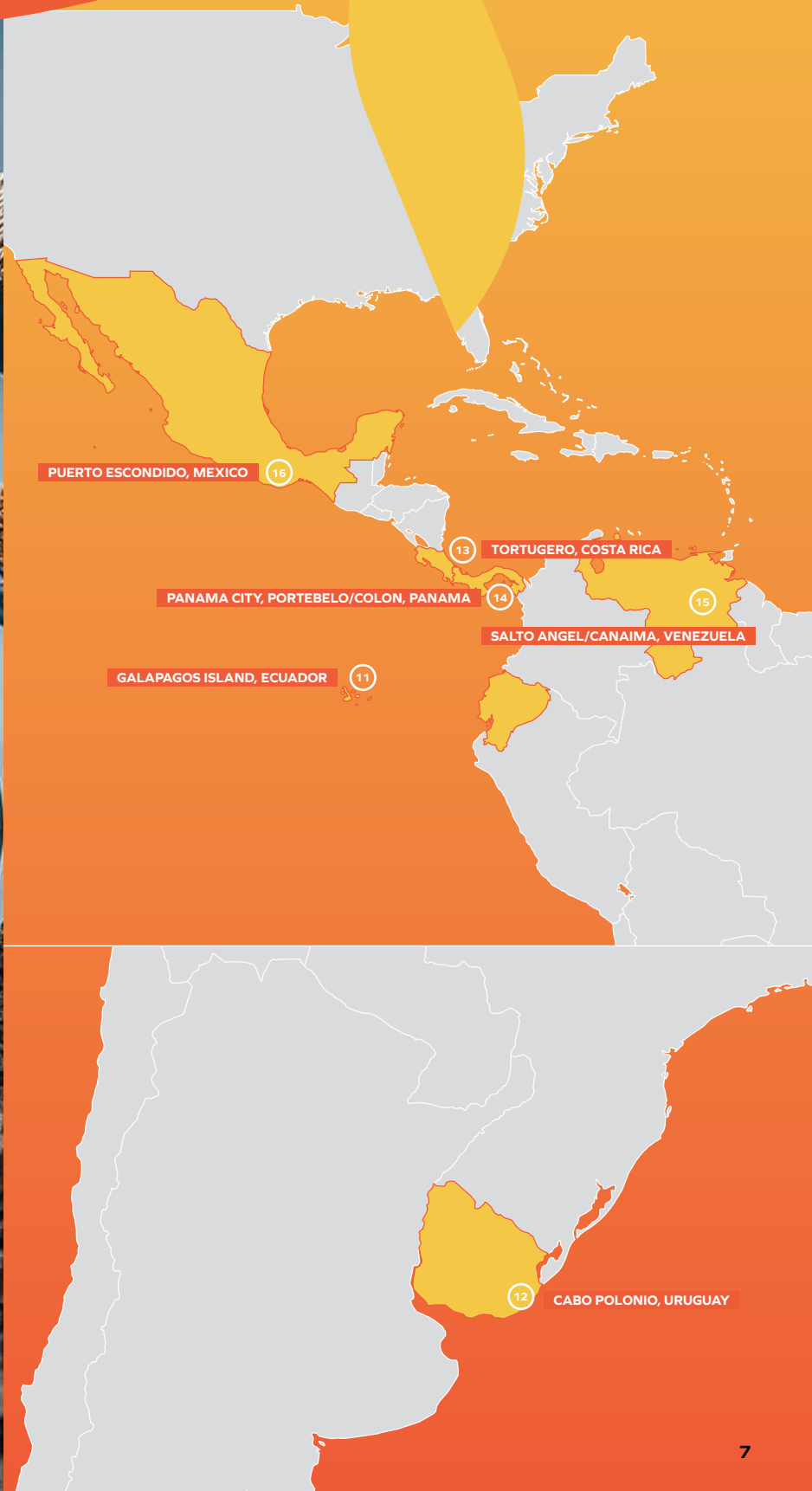
For the Adventurer



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VISITED

GALAPAGOS ISLAND, ECUADOR

A haven for wildlife and wildlife-lovers, these protected islands provide sanctuary for an incredible amount of animal species year-round. Witness sights like penguin or flamingo migrations, meet world famous tortoises, and experience beauty - above or below water - like no other. The biodiversity in these world-famous islands give the Galapagos their world renown. For the adventurer, there are numerous options for local stays as well as liveaboard cruises. *By Marcos Marti*

FUN FACT

97% of the Galapagos is a national park. The Galapagos have incredible biodiversity, including several active volcanoes. You can follow Charles Darwin's footsteps by exploring the same islands and sites he visited back in 1835. Less than 79,000 visitors tour Galapagos on liveabords annually. In the Galapagos there is a lack of natural predators, so creatures have very little natural fear of people (although visitors must remain at least 2m away from wildlife).

TIPS & TRICKS

Due to conservation efforts, there is a limit to the amount of yearly tourists that can travel to the Galapagos, so book early. Every tourist party must be accompanied by a conservation specialist in protected areas - so plan accordingly. Take a bike tour, plan a hike, there's as much to do above and under water. Local tourguides can take snorkelers and scuba divers to the best locations to swim with seals, sea turtles, and even see sharks! Discounted travel rates vary year-round, but you can visit the islands year-round.



12

VISITED

CABO POLONIO, URUGUAY

Cabo Polonio is a small beach town, situated in an area of great natural beauty which still retains typical features of the Uruguayan Atlantic coast from prior to the expansion of the traditional urban tourism model. The authenticity and charm is unique! An off-the-grid gem hidden in South America. The beautiful beaches, endless sand dunes, seals sunbathing without anything to bother them, and it's historic light house will leave you speechless! *By Bruno Giordano*

FUN FACT

The town does not have electric power or running water. It's part of the charm! Being able to see a starry night without any light interference is priceless!

TIPS & TRICKS

This is a summer destination, so keep in mind the best time to visit is between December and March. I highly recommend going for the weekend while visiting Uruguay. There are little hostels and houses for rent for short periods of time, but you'll have to book in advance as availability is very limited. If you are a true adventurer, and nature lover, spend a week there, it is the ideal place to disconnect for the world, and connect with nature!



13

VISITED

TORTUGERO, COSTA RICA

Tortugero National Park dominates the northern coast of Costa Rica and is largely known as the Costa Rican version of the Amazon rainforest. This area is a series of rivers, canals and jungles drawing in a large variety of wildlife - most known for its large turtles. You can participate in canal cruises, go fishing, go canoeing or even go for an adventure hike through the thick rainforest and experience the over 800 species of wildlife. *By Angelica Sanchez*

FUN FACT

Tortugero means 'Land of the Turtles' as this area is largely known for its large turtle population. This area is one of the country's most important nesting sites for the Leatherback, Loggerhead and Hawksbill turtles.

TIPS & TRICKS

The best time to visit this area is in April and May as that is the time the wildlife comes into the area.



14

VISITED

PANAMA CITY, PORTEBELO/ COLON, PANAMA

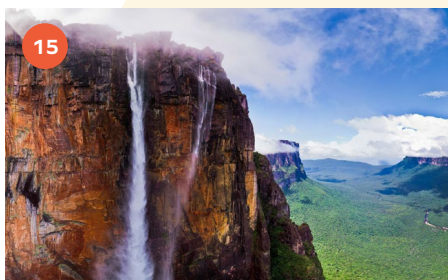
This relatively small but long and narrow country, bookended with the Pacific and Atlantic oceans is much more than a Canal attraction. The city is a mix of cosmopolitan sophistication and all that brings - great restaurants, nightlife (Casco Viejo rooftops parties are amazing), fitness culture (Cinta Costera on a Sunday morning or Parque Omar for a class), global diversity of the people. *By Carol Watson*

FUN FACT

Panama has one of the most racially and ethnically diverse populations. Over 70%+ of the population are a mix of indigenous, African diaspora, Spanish and Asian ethnicities. A U.S. historical military, economic and political influence and US currency has contributed to its popularity as a destination for bio diversity lovers, digital nomads and retirees.

TIPS & TRICKS

If you are in Panama City, take a ferry to Tobago Island for a day at the beach. Then, take a hike in the Gamboa rain forest and plan a weekend trip to El Valle Antón for beautiful waterfalls and mountains. Visit or plan a weekend in Portobello in the Colon region and visit Casa Congo to see the African historical influence and to see the famous Black Jesus and hear the stories of how he arrived in this area and the annual pilgrimage honor him annually. Then, island hop into amazing Caribbean seas and fried fish dishes. While on that side of the country, take a trip to San Blas to learn more about the Guna people and the history of the Mola.



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VISITED

SALTO ANGEL/CANAIMA, VENEZUELA

Salto Angel is the world's tallest waterfall, and it is in Venezuela's Canaima National Park. It is famous for water falling from a height of almost 3,300 feet or 1000 meters, with an uninterrupted drop of 2,647 feet or 806.8 meters. Canaima National Park is very special because of its natural diversity; it is home to many plant and animal species. Because of its difficult access, it is yet to be explored in depth for the discovery of new species. *By Eugenia Soto*

FUN FACT

Many mountains in the Canaima region have a flat top and are called "Tepuyes" meaning "casa de los dioses" / "house of the gods" in the native Pemón language. The tepuis are some of the oldest geological formations in South America. Because tepuis are high above the forest, they are home to some species of animals and plants found nowhere else on Earth. About a third of the vegetation in the mountains is endemic. The national park has inspired many books and movies, two of the most famous examples are Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's book The Lost World and the movie Up.

TIPS & TRICKS

The town of Canaima is the starting point for all excursions to el Salto Angel and other nearby attractions. Since there are no roads to get to the town you have to fly. The cheapest way to get there is by taking a flight from Puerto Ordaz or Ciudad Bolívar, and it's usually done in small planes. To get to el Salto Angel or any other excursions, you need local guides. For some you have to navigate a river for more than 3 hours and only the guides know how to get there. It is also part of a protected reserve.



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VISITED

PUERTO ESCONDIDO, MEXICO

Puerto Escondido is a port town on Mexico's Pacific Coast in the state of Oaxaca. Although it's one of the most popular destinations on the Oaxacan coast, Puerto Escondido retains its rustic and relaxed atmosphere, as evidenced by the lack of large resort chains. The most popular activity in Puerto Escondido is to beach-hop between the city's 8 unique beaches to enjoy the different restaurants and activities that they offer. Additionally, the area surrounding Puerto Escondido boasts hot springs, bioluminescent bays, lagoons, and a national park, Lagunas de Chachahua. *By Meaghan Flores*

FUN FACT

Puerto Escondido is also Mexico's premier surfing destination. Playa Zicatela, one of Puerto Escondido's 8 beaches, is home to the Mexican pipeline, one of the largest and best surf breaks in the world. Every May, surfers from all over the world flock to Zicatela for the annual Surf Open Puerto Escondido.

TIPS & TRICKS

Additionally, Puerto Escondido is home to a large amount of sea turtles each year. In the interest of their protection and study, the Centro Mexicano de la Tortuga (Mexican Turtle Center) is in charge of operating sea turtle protection camps on the Oaxacan coast. If you visit from June to November, this research center offers travelers the opportunity to assist in safeguarding the Olive Ridley and Leatherback turtles between June and November. During this time, you are welcome to join the beach patrols that collect eggs and release baby turtles.