

Panama: Tropical Resort Rowing

Description

Information package

Arrival & Departure

Flying

The most convenient and fastest way to get to the trip start is to fly to [David's Enrique Malek International Airport](#). While you might be able to find a direct flight options from Canada and the United States to David, you will likely need to fly to Panama City first and take a domestic flight to David from [Tocumen International Airport](#) or [Albrook "Marcos A. Gelabert" International Airport](#).

There are three daily round-trip flights from Tocumen Monday through Friday, and two daily flights on Saturday and Sunday; the flight takes around 70-90 min.

According to website information we encountered, if you book a ticket to David via Tocumen from your home country directly, you might not have to clear customs and immigration at Tocumen. You will go straight to the gate for David and go through immigration and customs in David. In fact, this is not our experience on the ground. Be ready to go through customs and immigration in either location.

If you decide to stay in Panama City before the trip and then go to David, you might want to consider flying out of Albrook. It is generally less busy and closer to Panama City Centre. In this case, you will need to fly with Air Panama.

You can also arrive in David by bus or driving a rental car. A good general travel website is [Rome2Rio](#).

A transfer from David to the resort is included in the trip package. You arrange this directly with Seagull Cove Resort – please be in touch with them once you know your arrival time. Their contact information is below.

Documents

You will need a valid passport for this trip. The passport should be valid for at least three months from the date of entry. No visas are required for American, Canadian, Australian citizens and citizens of most European countries.

It is a good idea to make a photocopy of the pages of your passport that contain your personal information and photograph and carry it separately from your passport.

It is your responsibility to purchase get Travel Medical / Evacuation Insurance. CARRY YOUR MEDICAL INSURANCE DOCUMENTS ON YOUR PERSON. Be sure you know how your particular health insurance system works.

Transportation

During this Independent Rowing Experience, transportation is not required beyond getting to or from the resort. On the day excursion to Boquete, transportation is provided.

About Panama

Emergency

In case of emergency, dial 104 for police or 911 for medical assistance.

Electricity

In Panama, the standard voltage is 110 V with 60 Hz frequency. You can use your electric appliances in Panama if the standard voltage in your country is between 110 – 127 V (US and Canada). The plugs are the same as in North America.

Money

Panama's official currency is the balboa but it is the same equivalency as the US dollar. The US dollars is widely accepted as they do not print paper currency. There are coins in 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent pieces. They are the same size, color, and weight as US coins and both are

used frequency.

A few restaurants and hotels take credit cards but for the most part you would expect to pay in cash. While shopping or eating out you may see prices with either the “\$” or “B/” before them, meaning dollars or balboas. They mean the same thing and have the same value.

There is no ATM in Boca Chica so ensure you bring US money with you or use one of the ATMS in David. If you arrive with other foreign currencies, you would need to exchange it at the airport.

Accommodation

[The resort](#) is located on a hillside overlooking the stunning Chiriquí Gulf Coast. It is located on the Pacific Ocean side of the country. The resort is sheltered from the ocean by islands and waterways. Panama is well known for exotic birds, reptiles and animals that can all be experienced on, or very near to the property.

Restaurants

Breakfasts are included in this package. Also included is a multi-course dinner on the night you arrive and the night before you leave, as well as dinner at the lodge on the islands. A pack lunch is provided for the row to the islands. You are welcome to purchase other lunches or/and dinners at the [Luna Azul Cafe & Restaurant](#).

Exploring Boca Chica, Chiriquí & beyond

Consider coming even earlier or staying longer at the resort. They offer day trips for cultural experiences... David is not a key tourist destination in itself, although a pleasant location for an overnight stay. You will visit Boquete for a day during this Travel2Row Experience but you may want to explore more of the Highlands or else other parts of this beautiful country.

Panama City is well worth a visit. Easy to fill four or more days. The ideal spot to stay is Casa Veijo, full of accommodation and restaurant choices. We have stayed at the modest Magnolia Inn in a terrific penthouse room. Be sure to eat at Lo Que Hay. Grab an Uber and spend a few hours exploring Panama Viejo with its ruins and excellent historical information. Don't leave Panama without seeing a sloth at the Centro Natural Punta Culebra.

Sustainability

Embark on a journey to Panama that leaves a positive impact with these sustainable travel tips tailored for your adventure. Here's how you can make your trip to Panama an environmentally conscious and unforgettable experience:

1. **Choose Eco-Friendly Accommodations and Support Locally Owned Properties:** When visiting Panama on your own, look for eco-lodges and boutique hotels that prioritize sustainability. Accommodations often utilize renewable energy, support local conservation efforts, and offer immersive nature experiences. Opt for locally owned hotels and guesthouses over large chain resorts.
2. **Utilize Sustainable Transportation:** Explore Panama's diverse landscapes using eco-friendly transportation options. Take advantage of the extensive public bus system, hop on the Panama Canal Railway for a scenic journey between Panama City and Colón, or rent bicycles to explore destinations like Casco Viejo in Panama City or the Amador Causeway.
3. **Visit Local Markets:** Immerse yourself in Panama's vibrant culture by visiting local markets. Support small-scale farmers and artisans while enjoying fresh produce, handmade crafts, and traditional snacks.
4. **Discover Eco-Friendly Attractions:** Explore Panama's natural wonders and eco-friendly attractions, such as:
 - [Soberanía National Park](#): Embark on birdwatching tours or guided hikes through lush rainforests teeming with biodiversity.
 - [Coiba National Park](#): Dive into crystal-clear waters to discover vibrant coral reefs, marine life, and pristine beaches in this UNESCO World Heritage Site.
 - [Emberá Indigenous Villages](#): Experience authentic cultural encounters and eco-tours with indigenous communities in the Darién Rainforest, promoting sustainable tourism and preserving traditional lifestyles.
5. **Reduce Water Consumption:** Practice water conservation during your stay by taking shorter showers, reusing towels, and turning off taps when not in use. Participate in eco-friendly initiatives offered by accommodations, such as rainwater harvesting or low-flow showerheads.
6. **Reduce Plastic Waste:** Minimize plastic waste by bringing a reusable water bottle and refilling it at refill stations or purified water sources. Support eco-friendly businesses that offer alternatives to single-use plastics and encourage responsible waste management practices.

By following these sustainable travel tips, you can minimize your environmental footprint while embracing the beauty and culture of Panama. Let's make your journey an eco-friendly and enriching experience for both you and the destinations you visit.

Books

Guidebooks

Lonely Planet Panama (Travel Guide) by Lonely Planet. (9th edition. Published: 2022) Lonely Planet's guidebook to Panama offers detailed insights into the country's highlights, hidden gems, and travel tips, making it a valuable resource for trip planning.

Panama Travel Guide for 2023, 2024 and Beyond: A Guidebook to this Beautiful Country. Alexander Harris, 2023.

Real Facts Guide to Panama: Your Insider's Panama Travel Guide to Culture, Cuisine, History, Nature and Adventures to Remember. Real Facts. 2023

Culture and History

Henriquez, Cristina. The World in Half. 2009

This novel by the prizewinning author follows the story of a woman who finds her mother's letters that were written by her father, whom she has never met. She travels to Panama to meet her father and discover the missing pieces. The World in Half paints a vivid image of Panamanian culture.

Terrenoire, David. Beneath a Panamanian Moon. 2005.

This novel is a thriller about a retired spy from DC who takes an assignment in Panama. He plays piano at a resort as a coverup. Meanwhile he is in charge of keeping an eye on the American mercenaries and Columbians at the hotel.

Darnay, Melissa. The Panama Affair. 2019.

Brianna Morgan, the globetrotting journalist is on vacation in Panama and arrives at a five-star oceanfront resort in Panama. She meets a charismatic real estate developer but the next morning she discovers he has been murdered. She is forced to go underground to out

think the killer and the cops. She goes from Panama's white sandy beaches to its dense urban jungle. The glamorous international beach setting will make you want to book a vacation to Panama.

Carr, Roberta. Clara's Way. 2019.

This is historical fiction story set around the building of the Panama canal. Nurse Clara goes to Panama to bring back her brother who was working in Panama. He is ill and too sick to travel alone. She goes but then doesn't want to leave. The story offers little known, exciting facts about the canal's history.

le Carré, John. The Tailor of Panama. 1996

A classic and while dated, still very readable. Le Carré visited Panama five times to research the novel, which brings in politics to a spy novel. An easy book to read at the resort.

Check [this page](#) for additional books and movie suggestions.

Packing suggestions

FOOTWEAR In general plan on wearing shoes in the boats. The foot stretchers are like those on ergometers. Long socks can be helpful in preventing irritation from seat rails in narrow boats. It is always a wet launch and landing, so have water shoes. Your feet could get wet during the rowing, so it is easiest to have water shoes that you wear throughout the row.

YOUR HANDS Consider bike or rowing gloves just for variation. Bring lots of bandaids and blister packs. These are also useful if the seat rails are hurting your calves.

SEAT COVER If you have one, bring it.

JACKET The most important feature of your jacket is that it be visible. Have at least one lightweight jacket in a bright, preferably neon colour. Also be prepared for rain. Bring a jacket that is waterproof, not just water-repellent. The best are both waterproof and breathable (e.g. Entrant, Gore-Tex).

SUNGLASSES Wear ones that block UV rays 100%.

ROWING CLOTHES Bring loose-fitting, comfortable clothes that you would row in at home.

Also bring at least one bright coloured top for visibility.

EXTRA LAYERS Temperatures can vary greatly, especially on morning rows. We highly recommend 'transport layer' underwear, which wicks away moisture and is worn as a top layer.

TRAVEL TOWEL A small towel will be very useful, to dry your feet after a wet launch or if there is a drive to the accommodation after rowing.

DRY SACK AND DAYPACK Be prepared that your things will get wet with coastal rowing, and that you might not have a lot of storage space. Bring a dry sack. A day pack that is waterproof can be used in the boat and for other activities.

WATER BOTTLE Whatever you get, make sure it's BIG!

CAP Can be cool in so many ways.

PFD/LIFE JACKET These are not provided for this tour. If you are concerned, bring your own. We recommend the waist type, often used by SUP boarders (stand-up paddle board). Generally it appears that airlines will allow you to bring a self-inflating (with CO2 cartridge) in your carry-on or checked luggage, but check with the carrier that you are flying with.

CELL PHONE Everyone, whether European or North American or from elsewhere, has to pay roaming charges outside of your own country. Much depends on your service provider and how much you might wish to use it to talk, text and for data functions. There are virtually no pay phones. If you are planning to travel in Europe before or after your trip, an occasional short call to resolve logistics may make carrying the phone worthwhile.

PLUG ADAPTERS Many, if not most, electronics are designed to work on multiple voltages. But double-check before you plug your favourite device into the socket. All that may be needed is a plug adapter – these are hard to acquire in the tour area, so bring what you need.

MONEY BELT OR FANNY PACK This is a practical way to keep your passport, airline tickets, health insurance information, money, and credit cards with you at all times.

LAUNDRY SOAP Carry soap in a zip-lock bag, so that you can do laundry in the sink.

SUN BLOCK Sunscreen (SPF 50+) is recommended.

FAQs

What are the rowing shells like?

Coastal boats are used. The type of boat (solo or double, the resort owns two of each) will depend on the size and experience of your group.

What will the experience be like?

New coastal boats impeccably maintained, gorgeous scenery, and great options for rowing. The resort owners, passionate about water sports, have introduced rowing to this region, establishing a club with two double and two single coastal rowing shells. You can choose flat water in one direction, with islands, bays and mangrove forests to explore. Or head to more coastal conditions, including the potential to surf and play in Pacific rollers.

What are the meeting arrangements?

Your guide will be in touch with you, and final meeting details can be made together.

What kind of shape do I have to be in?

One great advantage of a Travel2Row Experience is that the rowing can usually be tailored to suit your preferences, fitness and experience. You will work closely with the Seagull Cove team to dial in the rows to you and your group, to the extent possible. A good level of rowing fitness is recommended. The fitter you are, the more you will enjoy your trip. You should be able to row for at least two hours at a rate of 18 strokes per minute, with only brief breaks.

We strongly recommend that you train and prepare for your trip. We have found that guests who assume that their usual rowing routine is adequate, may be surprised by how tired they are. On a rowing trip, distances rowed are usually longer than normal distances rowed at a home club. In addition, rowers may not be used to rowing these distances multiple days in a row. Training for a trip can be part of the fun.

What can I do if I find the rowing too tiring?

To reduce difficulty during the trip, we encourage you to rest frequently, drink water, and

have a snack.

What can I do to prepare for the trip?

Your training preparation should be in two areas: cardiovascular fitness and endurance. The rowing will typically be at a steady but slow rate, so intense cardiovascular preparation is less important but always helpful. More important is being able to sustain physical activity for a long period in both the morning and afternoon. Practice rowing longer distances and if possible increase the frequency of your rowing in advance of the trip. Sometimes it is also a matter of getting used to sitting on the rowing seat that long!

Although the best way to get into shape for a rowing trip is to row, you can build fitness and endurance through other physical activity as well. And there is always the ergometer.

Your Guides

Your guide on this adventure is Otto Oosterwijk, one of the owners of Seagull Cove Resort. Originally from the Netherlands, Otto has many years of entrepreneurial experience in North America and now Central America, as well as extensive sailing experience. Passionate about his rowing vision, he took up the sport in Panama when his shells arrived. A trainer came from Holland to get him and the equipment set up. Otto rows regularly when he is at the resort, continuing to build his skills. He will be on the water with you, whether in a shell or a support boat.

Guide contact information

Otto can be reached at +507 6633 3975 (WhatsApp as well) or by otto@seagullcoveresort.com. For all logistics and extra bookings please email Melissa: melissa@seagullcoveresort.com.

If you have any questions, contact us at row@rowingtheworld.com

Have a great trips!