



Trip Name

TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: January 15 – 23, 2011

Location: Panama, Central America

Cost: \$2235, \$850 for extension

Rating: 3

Activities: Sea kayaking, hiking, rafting, cultural exploration

Meeting

Place: Panama City, Panama

Arrive: anytime before 5 pm
Jan. 15

Depart: anytime, Jan. 23 or Jan. 26th for the extensions

* Deduct 5% for being one of the first 5 to register (by 9/15/10) and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- meals as specified on the itinerary, basically from Saturday breakfast through the following Sunday breakfast with the exception of one dinner
- eight nights double occupancy lodging
- all activities specified on the itinerary, except for the optional Tree Trek (i.e. zipline) adventure on the extension
- all transportation within Panama, including internal flights
- experienced guides
- gratuities for the Panamanian guides

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- alcoholic beverages
- airfare to/from Panama City
- single supplement: \$200 for main trip, \$120 for extension

Trip Highlights

- Sleeping under the stars with the cool night breeze on an island surrounded by aqua water and waking up to fresh fruit and coffee
- Sea kayaking from island to island on the San Blas Archipelago and learning about the Kuna inhabitants
- Walking just a few feet with snorkel, mask and fins into a virtual aquarium in the sea, complete with fish, octopus, and coral reef
- Walking through tropical rainforest and rafting the primitive Chagres River
- Sampling the diversity of Panamanian culture and cuisine
- Having the option to hike in a cloud forest and try zip lining during the Chiriqui Highlands extension

Trip Overview

Panama is what Costa Rica used to be. Just emerging as a popular Central American destination, it combines a stable government, diverse ecosystems rich in bird species, and indigenous populations that are both in touch with modern life and still keeping traditional customs. And best of all, because it is not well known yet, it receives fewer visitors than neighboring countries; thus it is possible to feel that you have truly gotten off the beaten track here. We'll spend eight days exploring the southern part of this beautiful country by kayak and raft. We'll raft the jungle river of Chagres, spend 4 days sea kayaking in the San Blas islands, and visit the Panama Canal (singing God Bless the Queen as a large ship goes though is optional but much enjoyed by our 2010 participants- actually it was initiated by them. If you have the time, we highly recommend staying for an additional four days and visiting the opposite end of the country, Boquete and the Chiriqui highlands.

Our Itinerary

January 15 (Saturday) Arrival in Panama. Our trip officially begins at 5pm at our hotel in Panama City. We will have group introductions, a trip orientation, and then go out for a welcome dinner. Whenever you arrive,

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:

Days Prior to Trip	Refund
90 + days	All but \$50
90 – 61 days	50% of deposit
60 – 30 days	50% of trip fee
29 days or less	No refund

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances.

On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.

TIPPING GUIDELINES

Tipping at the end of the trip is optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$7 to \$12 per person, per day.

Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it at the last shared meal.

Our Itinerary Continued

you will be met at the airport by one of our Panamanian representatives and transferred to our hotel. Panama City is quite safe and if you get here early, its an interesting city to walk around. Overnight Hotel in Panama City (D)

January 16 (Sunday) It's going to be an early start today (5 am) but so worth it! We'll get taken by an all-terrain vehicle to the remote village of San Cristobal, northeast of Panama City and past the mountains of Cerro Azul. Our vehicle takes us on rough roads through Chagres National Park, a huge protected tropical rain forest. After a light breakfast we'll hike for about 2-3 hours to Rio Piedras, a Chagres River tributary. On the way we'll be looking for some of the many species of monkeys that inhabit the forest, including spider, howler, whiteface capuchin and Geoffrey's Tamarin monkeys.

At Rio Piedras we will get into rafts to float downstream (Class II-III rapids) into the untouched jungles of the upper basin of the Chagres River. Late in the afternoon we will be met further downstream by a piragua, a native wooden canoe equipped with outboard motor, that will take us to their Embera Indian Village. We will camp here at the village shore around 4 p.m. Tales around a cozy campfire are a sure thing.

January 17 (Monday): After breakfast and taking down our camp, we will visit the Embera Indian Village, Parara Puru. These Embera Natives migrated from the Darien Jungle in Colombia to Chagres National Park more than 20 years ago because of its similar habitat. The village was established by its chief as a place where villagers could share their traditional costumes and rituals and earn additional income to sustain the village.

Today is our chance to learn about a culture that has changed little for over 500 years. We learn their typical celebration and curative dances; how women make beautiful straw bowls and plates from their own trees, dying the straw with vegetable ink to turn it into different colors; and see their jewelery made out of coins and different metals. During a short hike through the surrounding tropical rainforest our guide will share his amazing knowledge of natural medicine, contained in their incredible forest full of natural medicinal plants. We'll learn about other plants that are used in construction of habitat and handcrafts. As we return we will take a refreshing dip in a hidden waterfall and have time to talk with the Indians in an informal way about their way of life (e.g. social, religious, economic and other aspects of their culture). At around 01:00 p.m. we will have a lunch in the village, and then have time to buy their famous handcrafts: cocobolo wood and tagua (or vegetable ivory) carving, and parara puru (palm leave) baskets. After sharing their kind hospitality, we will get back into our piragua that will take us to the nearest road where a driver takes us back to Panama City.

On the way back we make a short stop at the Panama Canal Miraflores Locks. This is a fitting place to end our visit to Chagres as most of the water used in Canal Operations comes from the Chagres River, and in fact the National Park was established to protect the watershed. The Canal is still vital to world trade today and indeed, without it there isn't world commerce as we know it. You have whatever is left of the rest of the day free, and

Our Itinerary Continued

dinner is on your own. You are welcome to join your guide or to check out any restaurants you may have heard about.
Lodging at a Hotel in Panama City (B,L)

January 18 (Tuesday) Another early morning departure as we travel by plane to the extraordinary San Blas Archipelago. With more than 350 islands spreading out along the isthmus, the archipelago is a Kuna Native Reservation. The Kunas are known for their handicrafts and their unique culture. A nation within Panama, The Kuna have their own language, culture, laws and territory. The Kunas' effort to preserve their own identity and control over San Blas has made it possible to keep this region the pristine paradise it is today. We will catch an early domestic flight to Carti, San Blas and from there we are transported by boat to the tent camp. After setting up camp and having lunch, we will have an introduction to the kayaks and take a short paddle.
Lodging at Tent Camp (B, L, D)

January 19-21 (Wednesday-Friday) For the next three days, we will enjoy this paradise of sea kayaking and snorkeling. Where we go exactly will depend on wind and weather conditions, but with endless nearby islands and reefs to explore, the options are truly endless. Friday is our final day in San Blas, and it will be harder to leave than you can possibly imagine. Your stress has left, your biggest problem is whether to kayak, swim or snooze in the hammock, and work is a million miles away. However, leave we must! We will pack up, spend one last day exploring the reef and islands, and then transfer by boat to our lodge at Ukuptupu. Lodging at Tent Camp (B, L, D)

January 22 (Saturday) Our flight back to Panama City is another early one, but it gives us time to explore this wonderful city that is rapidly changing. We'll have a City Tour that includes the colonial Panama, "Panama Viejo", the old Panama, "Casco Viejo", and the modern Panama City. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to walk, relax or shop before we gather for our farewell dinner at Casco Viejo.
Lodging at Hotel in Panama City (B, L, D)

January 23 (Sunday) You will be taken to the airport for your international flight or on to...

...Our extension: Another early morning as we transfer to the opposite end of Panama: the pristine western highlands. We will fly from Panama City to David, the capital of Panama. Upon arrival in David we transfer to Boquete, a small and charming mountain village tucked away on the eastern slopes of the Baru Volcano. After lunch, we will visit a Coffee Plantation and learn all about Panama's robust coffee crops (samples included). For those who want to try the totally thrilling activity of ziplining, another option is to go on a Tree Trek. Imagine gliding through the tops of trees that are over a century old, high above pristine rivers. Fortunately you will be attached securely in a harness to an overhead line! The adrenaline is high but the actual risk is lower than it might feel. Lodging at Panamonte Hotel (B, D)

January 24 (Monday) Today we hike a magnificent trail in Baru Volcano National Park, home to Panama's tallest peak (11,400 ft). Our hike takes us through an enchanting cloud forest, under some of the tallest trees in the hemisphere and home to 5,000 species of plants found nowhere else on earth. This hike will last anywhere from 3 to 6 hours, with time to stop and admire the views, and learn about the environment from our guide. If you have visited Monteverde in Costa Rica, you know how magnificent and unique a cloud forest truly is. Lodging at Panamonte Hotel. (B, L, D)

February 25 (Tuesday) Today we spend rafting on the Chiriqui Viejo River. With most rapids being Class III, the river is eminently suitable for beginners. The river passes through a canyon and spectacular waterfalls characterize it. Depending on the water level and section used we will be rafting about 3-4 hours. Although we will have only spent three days in the Highlands, our time is so action-packed it will feel much longer. In later afternoon we will return to David Airport to take our flight back to Panama City, where we will check into our hotel, clean up, and then go out for a final farewell dinner. Lodging at hotel in Panama City (B, L, D)

February 26 (Wednesday) This morning we are transferred to the International Airport for our flight home or on to other adventures.

Packing List

Panama is a tropical climate and highs typically are in the 80s to 90s and lows in the 60s. Comfortable clothes and used gear is best for saltwater camping. Light colored clothing is also preferable to keep you cooler in the sun. Luggage and extra clothing can be left with our outfitter. We recommend packing for the trip in a backpack or medium duffel bag lined with a garbage bag. **There is a 30lb limit on the flights within Panama**, so please pack accordingly.

FOOTWEAR:

- 1 pair Teva/Chaco sandals, river shoes, or dive booties for kayaking and rafting.
- 1 pair sturdy hiking shoes: light boots, athletic shoes with a good sole (the trails are uneven terrain and can be muddy)
- 1 pair comfortable camp shoes (can be your athletic shoes, sandals or crocs)
- 2 - 3 lightweight pair socks: (Thorlo, Smartwool, running socks, etc.)

CLOTHING

- 2 pair lightweight pants/capris: synthetic (Supplex, or nylon/polyester/spandex blend)
- 1-2 lightweight long-sleeved shirts (a surfing shirt called a "rash guard" is great for kayaking and snorkeling)
- 1 lightweight raincoat with hood - good quality "**waterproof**" PVC coated nylon, e-vent, or Gore-Tex.
- 2 pairs of shorts: Quick drying nylon is recommended
- 4-5 t-shirts (synthetic for paddling and hiking is recommended)
- 1 wide-brimmed hat, for rain, sun and high fashion (a string tied to the hat will keep the wind from blowing it away)
- 1 lightweight fleece jacket, fleece sweatshirt, or other warm layer. A vest is an option for this layer.
- underwear/nightwear
- bathing suit (nylon shorts and a running bra also work as swimwear)
- 1-2 sets comfortable clothing to wear around camp and in town (skirts/dresses/blouses)
- gloves for paddling - optional (bike gloves work well)

ESSENTIALS

- Passport** and Xeroxed copy
- 1 one-quart water bottle
- 100% UV sunglasses with case and retention strap
- sunscreen and lip protection with an SPF of 30 or greater
- light blanket, fleece liner or summer weight sleeping bag
- small day or fanny pack for day use (hiking)
- small* dry bag to carry wallet, passport, sunscreen, etc. for day use while paddling
- snorkeling gear (mask, snorkel and fins) – the outfitter has some, but you may want your own
- bandanna
- headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries
- Insect repellent
- 2 garbage bags for boat transfers/wet clothes

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- small to medium-sized towel (like a PakTowel)
- tampons or pads in ziplock bags and extra toilet paper
- biodegradable soap, toothbrush, paste, dental floss, lotion, hand sanitizer (small), extra contact lenses/glasses. Please minimize the amount of lotions, shampoo and soap you bring.
- personal "patch kit": bandaids, moleskin, ibuprofen, immodium, seasick medication (if tendency to motion sickness), and personal medications, if any. **Individuals allergic to insect stings must bring an epi-pen.** Please consult your physician.

OPTIONAL PERSONAL GEAR

- binoculars
- watch: water resistant
- journal and pen
- waterproof camera bag
- camera, film/memory card, and an extra camera battery
- powdered hydrating drink mix (Gatorade, lemonade, etc.)
- trekking poles (recommended for the hike into Chagres and for the extension)
- book
- extra sunglasses
- ear plugs (for a good night's sleep)
- camp chair (Crazy Creek type)
- small pocket knife
- Small camping pillow

Notes on the Packing List

This trip is like several mini-trips in one. You will be taking only what you need on each section of the trip, so having 2 bags is ideal – one to pack what you will bring and one to leave extra clothing with our outfitters/hotel. There is a weight limit of 30 lbs on internal flights for checked luggage and 10 lbs carry on.

CLOTHING: Panama is typically pleasant at this time of year - warm and humid - but it can rain as well. Bring clothing that can get wet (synthetics are best). Clothing will get salt stains, so don't bring new clothing.

RAIN GEAR: Typically we recommend rubberized rain gear for sea kayaking trips, since they are warm, work best in steady downpours, and their effectiveness is not diminished by salt water. Since this trip is in Panama, we are recommending a jacket made of waterproof/breathable fabric or coated nylon. This layer will most likely be worn more often as a wind-proof layer than a rainproof layer on this trip, so having it be breathable is a good addition. Coated nylon is not very breathable, but it is lightweight, waterproof, and can be relatively inexpensive. Gore-tex (and other brand-identified waterproof materials) is a great material, but can be quite expensive. **If you have any questions about raingear, please call us.**

SHOES/BOOTS: You will need three types of footwear: one for boat-wear one for hiking, and one for camp-wear (could be the same as your hiking footwear). For boat-wear bring something that can get wet such as river shoes, sandals, keens or Solomon water-shoes or dive booties. Camp-wear can be light-weight boots or athletic shoes or even flip-flops or crocs. Saltwater makes sandals straps really "crunchy" and can lead to bad blisters. Make sure that you camp shoes are comfortable for walking. You may want to bring a couple lightweight pairs of socks to wear under your water shoes as well (helps prevent blisters). For hiking you want a sturdy pair of boots/hiking shoes with a good sole that are comfortable and broken in. The trails may be muddy and uneven terrain.

WATERPROOF BAGS: We recommend a water-proof dry bag for your personal day gear, several companies make vinyl bags with good closures (Phoenix, Outdoor Research, Cascade Designs). Wide-mouthed plastic jars are good for film, first aid supplies, and the like. Ziplock bags are handy for many uses.

BRINGING YOUR CAMERA ON A SEA KAYAKING TRIP: Ocean water is highly corrosive to camera equipment. To protect your camera from the salt, pack it in a waterproof sports bag. Many outdoor retailers and most camera shops have inflatable bags that are waterproof, float, and cushion your camera against bumps. Phoenix, Basic Designs, and manufacturers of whitewater equipment make inflatable camera bags. Ammo cans can be purchased at Army surplus stores

Personal First Aid Kit: Small first aid kit with familiar medicine you might need for personal use: bandaids, first aid tape, body glide (to prevent chafing), moleskin, safety pins, etc. Other suggestions: remedies for respiratory ailments? Stomach ailments? Sore muscles or joints? Sea sickness? We will have a first aid kit too, but if you already know what works for you it's better to have it.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters including:

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840
www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231
www.ems.com

Sierra Trading Post
800-713-4534
www.SierraTradingPost.com

Also check out the websites on the Affiliate page of our website (under Resources)

Additional Trip Preparations

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Learn more about the engineering and history of the *Panama Canal*
<http://www.pancanal.com/>

A great web site for all sorts of details, history and information about traveling in Panama.
<http://panama-information.executivehotel-panama.com/in-panama-history.html>

Our outfitters website:
www.aventuraspanama.com

WEATHER

Panama has two climates - the lowlands including Panama City, which are tropical and humid and the highlands, which have spring-like temperatures year round. In the lowlands, temperatures during the day range between 80 F and 90 F (25-30 degrees Celsius). It cools off in the evenings, typically into the 60s. In the Highlands in late January the lows are usually in the 50s and the highs in 60s-70s.

We will be there during the dry season, however, it definitely could still rain. And in Boquete they often get a mist called the *bajareque*. Both San Blas and Boquete can also be windy in the dry season.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

We will send you the information for our hotel in Panama City in the pre-trip letter. You can also leave the AIGC office number (877/439-4042) as your emergency number and we will get in contact with you in Panama. Our Panamanian Outfitter is Aventuras Panama and their phone number is: 011 (if calling from the US) 507-260-0044

CONDITIONING

Additional aerobic conditioning is unnecessary for anyone who already exercises regularly. If you don't, you will want to start a moderate exercise program a couple of months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 3 or 4 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is brisk enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Other options are working out at a health club on a stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, or any activity that makes you breathe deeply.

Weight training with lightweights can also be useful. Focus on building endurance rather than strength, meaning that more repetitions with light weights is preferable to fewer with heavy weights. Yoga can also be an added benefit for overall strength and stamina. Give us a call if you need more specific guidance.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Phone calls: The most affordable way to make phone calls to the US/Canada is to buy a \$10 phone card (available at grocery stores and vending machines). The country code is +507. If you want to receive phone calls, you can buy a cheap cell phone in a mall. You activate it by buying a phone card. Then you will have your own Panama # and people can you from the States.

Cell phones work in Panama, though you will need roaming service or a local SIM card along with a GSM compatible phone. Check with your cell phone carrier to see what their coverage is for Panama.

Internet: Depending on which hotels we stay in, there may be internet access in the lobby (either free or for a fee.) There are also a few internet cafes in Panama City.

Special Considerations for International Trips

PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for travel in [Name of Country]. You will need to present it at the airports before and after your flights. Be sure to carry a photocopy of your passport in a separate location, for security's sake. It is also a good idea to leave one with somebody at home. If you already have a passport, check to make sure it is still current (they expire every 10 years). Passports can be renewed through the mail. If you are getting a passport for the first time, you must submit your application in person.

For information on how to obtain a passport, download an application from travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html, ask your travel agent, or call the Passport Office at 202-647-0518. Allow at least 6 weeks.

VISA

A visa is not needed for stays under 90 days, however tourists from the USA, Canada and EU need to purchase a \$6 tourist card from their airlines at the ticket counter on the day of departure for Panama. A tourist card gives you an automatic 90-day stay in Panama and can be extended for another 60 days.

MONEY

The National Currency is the Panamanian balboa (B). However, the official paper currency is the U.S. dollar, which is accepted everywhere at the rate of B1 = US\$1. The centesimos coins are of identical size, denomination, and metal as U.S. coins, and the coins of both nations are used here interchangeably.

Credit cards are well accepted at hotels, major stores and better restaurants in Panama City. Outside Panama City, in general, cash will be necessary. We recommend getting what you think you will need in Panama City. Outside Panama City best to carry denominations of \$20 or less

Panama City has numerous ATM machines. Double check with your bank to make sure your

ATM card will work. Traveler's checks are not well accepted in Panama except at banks: American Express preferred.

You will need spending money for a few meals, snacks, optional excursions, personal gifts, drinks and guide gratuities. A tip of 10-15% is common in Panama, though some restaurants add the tip to the bill. Taxi drivers do not get tipped.

HEALTH

There are currently no required immunizations for travel to Panama, although there are recommended ones. Taking anti-malarial medication is recommended and yellow fever is optional; please discuss this with your doctor. To obtain the most current immunization recommendations, you should contact your state health department or visit an international travel clinic.

Panama is considered a safe country to travel in, but as is true in many cities, there are pickpockets so be careful with your personal belongings. We recommend keeping your money and documents in a moneybelt. Also, make sure to use only reputable taxi companies – have someone call you a taxi if you need one.

WATER

The Chagres River is considered one of the cleanest waterways. Tap water, which comes from the Chagres, is considered safe to drink in Panama City, however, precaution may be taken when in the smaller towns and villages. Drinking water used will be from a local purified water outlet while we are camping. You can also buy bottled water.

If you are concerned about the possibility of an intestinal disorder, we suggest a daily dose of acidophilus for one to two months before travel. Be sure to buy the kind that needs no refrigeration, and remember to keep taking them before, during, and for a short time after your trip.

Getting There

OUR TRAVEL AGENT

If you need assistance with making your travel plans, call Sara Schuitemaker at Scan East West Travel. Her toll-free number is 800-727-2157 and her email is sara@scaneastwest.com.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend travel insurance. We know that women never want to cancel their trips, and the reasons for doing so are always excellent. Occasionally it's a sudden illness; even more frequently it's the illness of someone they care about. Trip insurance at least minimizes the disappointment and expense during what is often a difficult time. In addition insurance covers the cost of lost baggage; medical expenses during your trip, including emergencies, repatriation, and evacuation; and trip delay. If you decide to purchase insurance, you can secure a policy through your own insurance company or enroll with the company we use, Travelex Insurance. Call 1-800-228-9792 or visit www.travelexinsurance.com. The location code is 20-0016.

TRAVEL

Commercial international flights to Panama land at the Tocumen International Airport (**PTY**), in Panama City, about 15 miles from the city center. There are direct flights to Panama from some US cities, including Atlanta, Newark, Washington D.C. and Dallas. Airlines that fly to Panama include Continental, American, Delta, KLM, Taca, and Copa. Your flight should land no later than 3:30pm to allow for time to pass through customs and get to the hotel for our 5pm trip orientation.

LANGUAGE

Spanish is the official language although most Panamanians speak some English and many speak it fluently, especially those that cater to tourists. In some of the smaller villages English may be less well-spoken, and the Kuna speak a native language.

CUISINE

Panama has its own unique and rich cuisine. As a land bridge between two continents Panama has an incredible variety of tropical fruits, vegetables and herbs that are used in native cooking. Also, as a crossroads of the world, Panama's cuisine is influenced by its diverse population of Hispanic, native Indian, European, African and even Chinese migrations.

TIME ZONE

Panama is on Eastern Standard Time from October to April and Central Standard Time the rest of the year

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Electrical sockets (outlets) in Panama are very similar to the electrical outlets found in the United States and Canada, and if your appliance has a North American plug, it's possible that you won't need any adapter at all in order to plug in there.

Getting There Continued

RECOMMENDED PRE-TRIP READING

Lonely Planet Panama A thorough, informative and fun guidebook for all.

The Guide to the Birds of Panama, by Robert Ridgely and John Gwynn Jr. The guide to Panama's amazing bird population-944 recorded bird species, more than the USA and Canada combined.

The Path Between the Seas The Creation of the Panama Canal, by Pulitzer-prize winning historian David McCullough. Reads like an historical novel too good to put down and too incredible to be true, but it all is. It will give you a feel for Panama the country - people, culture, weather, fauna, terrain, politics, history and geological destiny.

Don't Kill The Cow Too Quick, by Malcolm Henderson. A readable sometimes hilarious account of the first six years of an Englishman's experiences living in Bocas del Toro. Building an unconventional house in Bocas town and establishing an organic farm on the shores of a distant lagoon, the author reveals many of the challenges facing ex pats as they settle in Panama.

The Panama Cruising Guide, by Eric Bauhaus/Sailors Publications. This book is written by a young Dutch sea captain who was sailing around the world in his yacht when he happened upon Panama. He fell head over heels in love with the incomparably picturesque Atlantic archipelago of San Blas and its 365 perfect islands and colorful Kuna indian villages. Complete with detailed instructions on how to cross the Panama Canal.

Travelers' Tales Central America: True Stories, by Larry Habegger and Natanya Pearlman. An anthology, this is a collection of stories from people who have traveled in Central America. What makes it particularly delightful is the mix of well-known writers (e.g. Joan Didion, P.J. O'Rourke and Paul Theroux with unknown writers.

The Tailor of Panama, by John Le Carre • Set in Panama, this thriller by master storyteller John Le Carre includes spymasters, corrupt officials, arms manufacturers and other unsavory types.

Plants and Animals in the Life of the Kuna, by Valerio Nunez, Heraclio Herrera, Jorge Ventocilla, James Howe, and Elisabeth King • An ethnobiology and cultural portrait of Panama's Kuna Indians and their home, the San Blas Islands.