



PANAMA CITY, PANAMA

2015 Course Dates and fees:

- January 19 - February 12, 2015
- February 23 – March 19, 2015
- April 6 – 30, 2015
- June 1 – 25, 2015
- July 6 – 31, 2015
- August 3 – 28, 2015
- September 7 – October 2, 2015

Panama City Course Fee: \$1,595.00

Accommodation: Approximately \$600 to \$800.00 Single Room with Panamanian family plus 2 meals per day. Also available hostels, hotels and apartments.

Panama is located between the Pacific Ocean and tropical rain forest. The Parque Natural Metropolitano (Metropolitan Nature Park), stretching from Panama along the Panama Canal, has unique bird species and other animals such as tapir, puma, alligators, etc. At the Pacific entrance of the canal is the Centro de Exhibiciones Marinas (Marine Exhibitions Center), a research center for those interested in tropical marine life and ecology. Centro de Exhibiciones Marinas is managed by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

Tropical forests around Panama are vital for the functioning of the Panama Canal. These forests provide the canal with the water required for its operation (a rare example of a vast engineering project in the middle of the forest which actually helped preserve that forest). Due to the importance of the Canal to the Panamanian economy, tropical forests around the canal have been kept in an almost pristine state. Along the western side of the Canal is the Parque Nacional Soberania (Sovereignty National Park) which includes Summit botanical gardens and a zoo. In this national park, the best known trail is the Pipeline Road, popular among birdwatchers.

The city has numerous tourist attractions. Particularly interesting for tourists are sites located in the old quarter (also referred to as "Casco Viejo", "Casco Antiguo" or "San Felipe"), including

- *Las Bóvedas*, literally *The Vaults*, a waterfront promenade jutting out into the Pacific.

- The National Institute of Culture Building and across from it, the French Embassy;
- The Cathedral on *Plaza de la Catedral*
- *Teatro Nacional*, a performance center, with outstanding natural acoustics; It provides an intimate performance environment and seating for about 800 guests.
- *Museo del Canal Interoceánico* (Interoceanic Canal Museum);
- Numerous restaurants located near the French embassy.
- *Palacio de las Garzas* (Heron's Palace), the official name of the presidential palace, named for the numerous herons that inhabit the building.

The area immediately east of the Pacific entrance of the canal—known as the Amador Causeway—is being developed as a tourist center. The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute operates a station and a small museum open to the public at Culebra Point on the island of Naos. A new museum, *The Bridge of Life Museum*, is under construction on the causeway. The Bridge of Life Museum was designed by the American architect Frank Gehry famous for the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.

TEFL Training Center



The Via Lingua Panama City training facilities are located in ELS Language Centers, Panama City. The Training Center is located in the middle of the most prestigious and modern area of Panama City.

Teaching English in Panama

Living in Panama is not as difficult as the latest “Survivor” series might suggest. Whether you are looking to relocate, retire, or just spend a few months under the tropical sun, you can easily support yourself as an English teacher.

Spanish is helpful but hardly necessary. Many Panamanians know at least some English, and in the classroom most schools demand that the teacher only speak English with students.

The typical language school offers afternoon, night, and weekend classes. Students range from college age to older business people. Private primary and secondary schools teach English as a language or use English for other subjects.

The Importance of English in Panama

The English language has been part of Panama since Francis Drake and probably even before Drake. Today English has become a very important part of Panamanian life because of the opportunities that English offers in three areas: tourism, real estate and call centers. Tourism is where English is most needed in Panama. The expansion of hotel construction has meant a high demand for English speakers. Traditionally, service in Panama has not been very good because of the lack of communication between client and service provider. This is changing as companies like hotel giant *Inter-Continental* begin to build training facilities for their hotel staff in Panama. There is investment in human development so the work force of Panama can provide better service. Taxi drivers that speak English make more money than those that don't.

Food and Clothing

Plentiful seafood is served in Panama like squid (*calamares*), octopus (*pulpo*), prawns (*langostinos*), lobster (*lanosta*), shrimp (*camarones*), and of course, crab (*cangrejo*). The fresh octopus is especially tasty.

Ceviche. This is raw fish marinated in lime or lemon juice with some oil and spices, which chemically 'cooks' the fish. It's not only an appetizer but an addicting entree as well. Sample different versions using different seafoods and different levels of spiciness or piquancy. Team ceviche up with a cool *cerveza*.

Panamanian diet wouldn't be complete without the staple root vegetable called yuca or manioc. It's prepared in a number of ways but the most common method is through deep-frying. You'll know that yuca is prepared well when it's crispy and golden brown on the outside, but chewy on the inside. Another favorite yuca treat is making it into a roll called *carimanolas*. It's made by boiling yuca first before stuffing it with meat then deep-frying. Plantains (*platanos*), which are like bananas, are a common street food. You'd also love to have a fill of *patacones*, which are green plantains cut crosswise into discs, fried, pressed and then fried again.



Other typical and familiar treats include *empanadas*, a kind of turnover cooked by stuffing flour or corn pastry with spiced ground meat before frying; *tamales*, which are made from boiled ground corn stuffed with chicken meat or pork and some spices, then wrapped in banana leaves and boiled; and *tortillas*, which locally are thick, fried corn cakes oft-served during breakfasts, especially in the countryside.



The truth is the Panamanian palate might strike you as bland due to a minimal inclusion of spices in their foods. But when cooked well, even the simplest country fare can be delectable. Try the *ropa vieja* consisting of spiced, shredded beef served over rice is also tasty. So is one of their most common dish of chicken and rice called *arroz con pollo*. Try *cancholo*, a thick and hearty soup simmering with chicken, yuca and whatever vegetables are around. Menus outside Panama city aren't served any differently. You'd find most of the main dishes are involved with beef (locally referred to as *carne*), chicken (*pollo*) and pork (*puerco*).

Men

Panamanians are used to the heat and get on with their lives by wearing long pants all the time. Bring pair of comfortable walking shoes.

For going out bring a dress shirt and jeans or nice pants. I

Women

Women do dress up in restaurants and at bars...for women that could even mean a pair of nice jeans and a tank top which is a popular look. Bring dresses skirts and tank tops. Sometimes the air conditioning is extreme. So bring a few light summery sweaters and cardigans to go over outfits.

Climate

The Panama weather, at whatever elevation you choose to live, is reasonably predictable. From about May through to December, expect rain most days. But only on about two of those days each month will rain settle in for a good daylong soaking on the Pacific side of the mountainous spine that runs the length of the country. Most days in this period, called winter or the green season, expect a short, heavy downfall once or twice a day. The typical 'winter' weather in Panama City starts sunny in the morning. There are usually a few fluffy cumulous clouds on the horizon, perhaps along with some darker ones. By mid-morning, the clouds have moved in over the city, and the rain starts in the early afternoon. It typically lasts for about an hour, often coming down in buckets. If you get caught, stay where you are for a while, if possible. The worst will probably soon pass, and the sun will come out again to dry everything off.

Accommodation

Accommodation runs from \$600.00 to \$800.00 per month for a single room with a Panamanian family including two meals per day. Hotels, hostels and apartments are available upon request.

Telephone and Internet Service

Keeping in touch with family friends is not a problem in Panama. Panama has an excellent privatized telephone system, with around 400,000 phone lines. Cable & Wireless provides telecommunication coverage nation wide. Presently they offer international telephone, fax, telegraph, and some e-mail services. They also offer provide such innovative services as answering, voice messages and beeper services. In 1997, they became the first private company to take over the previously inefficiently run government phone system. Now they have a virtual monopoly when it comes to residential and business service.

Obtaining a phone line and to open an account in Panama costs around \$50 for Panamanian citizens and \$100 for non-citizens. It usually takes about a week to have a regular phone connected.

Calls within the country are a bargain. You can call any place in the country for only a few cents. If your house or apartment does not have a phone, do not worry. Public telephones are just about everywhere in Panama and use \$.05, \$.10, and \$.25 cent coins. Both Panamanian and U.S. coins are the same size and interchangeable. Coin -operated pay phones cost \$.15 for three minutes. Phones accepting pre-paid phone cards are slowly replacing coin-operated phones.

Excursions and Cultural Highlights

Via Lingua Panama City can help you arrange different trips to beautiful places a short drive or flight from the city. On the day you arrive we will help you set up any sight seeing trips you may be interested in participating on. For more information please visit:
www.visitpanama.com.

Special Offers

Via Lingua has announced the second annual "**Ernestine Moore" Scholarship Award**" to be offered to a deserving candidate in 2014 to any of the Via Lingua locations for a one-month intensive TEFL Course. Ernestine Moore was a lifelong advocate of education and worked tirelessly to promote educational opportunities for children and young adults. Through her personal and professional advocacy in the field of Social Work and Children's Rights she had a lasting contribution to her field and all those around her. She lived and practiced Service Learning. The author of the widely adopted college textbook "Child Welfare and Family Services: Policies and Practice", Ernestine was a staunch supporter of Via Lingua and its dedication to global learning and multicultural understanding for all ages.

Double-up discount

Book together with a friend for the same course and you can both claim a 100 EUR discount on the advertised price. Offer applies to all course dates and locations. We can also arrange for you to share the same accommodation if required.



