

Bocas del Toro, Panama

The waters at Bocas del Toro, Panama flash turquoise and jade green as the boat zips over coral reefs hidden beneath the waves of the Caribbean. The salty spray from the wake of the ferry is refreshing under the hot, tropical sun. As the ferry cruises over the deeper, blue waters, a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins jumps and porpoises off to the left. Further ahead, the luxuriant green shoreline of one of several islands on the horizon gets bigger as the boat approaches its destination; Bocas Town on Isla Colon.

History of Bocas del Toro, Panama

Originally settled by various indigenous tribes, the islands of the Bocas del Toro archipelago were visited by Christopher Columbus on his fourth and final trip to the Americas. As with several other islands and coastlines where he made landfall on his voyages to the New World, he named his favorite places after himself. Thus in Bocas del Toro, we have Isla Colon (Columbus Island), Almirante Island (Admiral Island), and Isla Cristobal (Christopher Island).

After Columbus failed to turn up any gold in Bocas del Toro, Panama, the Spanish didn't bother with this part of western Panama. Because of their absence, the islands became a haven for pirates for the next two centuries, and were partly settled by French Huguenots.

The Bocas del Toro islands may have been ignored by the Spanish because they lacked gold, but that didn't mean they were about to hand it over to anyone else. To keep the islands in Spanish hands, soldiers were sent to Bocas del Toro. They proceeded to drive out the French, and also killed most of the indigenous population either in battle or inadvertently with European diseases.

During the following century (the nineteenth), Americans and Colombians arrived in Bocas del Toro, Panama with a number of slaves and attempted to establish plantations. They didn't have very much success though, and with the abolition of slavery in 1850, the former slaves stayed on at Bocas del Toro and became small farmers and fishermen.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Bocas del Toro, Panama became a very important region for farming bananas. American companies planted large areas of mainland Bocas del Toro, Panama with this cash crop and United Fruit established one of its headquarters at Bocas town on Isla Colon. United Fruit has since exchanged hands many times but most of the banana plantations are still under operation in the province of Bocas del Toro, Panama under the Chiquita brand.

Bananas still play an important role in the economy of Bocas del Toro, although tourism and real estate have also become important factors during the past ten years or so.

Culture in Bocas del Toro, Panama

The culture of Bocas del Toro is quite diverse. On the mainland, Indigenous tribes such as the Ngöbe Buglé live in the area as well as Panamanians of Chinese, African, and Spanish ancestry. On the Islands of Bocas del Toro, Panama, most of the locals who were present before the tourism boom are descendents of African slaves from Colombia, the United States, and Jamaica. Although ex-pats from a number of countries who have moved into Bocas del Toro, Panama have given the islands more of an international flavor, the predominant culture is still Afro-Caribbean.

Activities in Bocas del Toro, Panama

Bocas del Toro, Panama is one of the best places in Panama to visit for “eco-water” activities such as snorkeling and diving. Many of the islands are still covered in tall, verdant rainforests, beaches with golden sand abound, and the waters are clear and filled with colorful reef fish.

Although “tropical paradise” has become an overused cliché, it’s hard to think of a more accurate description for Bocas del Toro, Panama. Most people snorkel and dive in the Marine National Park of Isla Bastimentos but the waters are so clean and clear in Bocas del Toro, Panama that a wide variety of tropical fish can be easily seen right off of the main boat dock in Bocas Town! There are several companies that do snorkeling and diving trips. Two of the best are [Bocas Water Sports](#) and [Starfleet Scuba](#).

Other activities include swimming (be very careful of riptides), hiking through rainforest, and offshore fishing.

Types of accommodations available in Bocas del Toro, Panama

One of the great things about Bocas del Toro, Panama is that it has a fairly wide range of accommodations to choose from. There are a couple of hostels for backpackers on the tightest of budgets, a few bed and breakfasts, many small hotels, and a number of mid-sized, more upscale hotels. Most lodging in Bocas del Toro is found in and near Bocas Town although there are also some hotels found on the northern section of Isla Colon.

Tourism in Bocas del Toro, Panama

On the islands of Bocas del Toro, Panama, the local economy is more or less based on tourism. This means that there are plenty of options for accommodation and dining to choose from, there are lots of things to do and buy, and that Bocas Town can be quite the happening place (the hostels in Bocas Town have often been listed among the top party hostels of the world).

Whatever your reason may be for visiting Bocas del Toro, it’s a perfect place to experience a Caribbean-Panamanian blend of coral reefs, rainforests, and beaches.

Real estate in Bocas del Toro, Panama

If you always wanted to live in a friendly, easy going, upbeat Caribbean place with coral reefs and jungles that beg for exploration, Bocas del Toro, Panama will surpass your expectations.

There is plenty of land in Bocas del Toro, Panama and demand grows on a daily basis as word gets out about this beautiful archipelago. After several centuries of relative quiet, Bocas del Toro, Panama is no longer a forgotten corner of Central America. It has become one of the “must see” places in the western hemisphere and its popularity as a destination continues to grow. By all indications, land value in Bocas del Toro, Panama is only going to go up, so don't wait too long before [purchasing real estate in this tropical paradise!](#)