Panama became known to the world when the famous canal was being built. The stunning country has a rich history and friendly culture. Panama’s first citizens were the indigenous tribes of the Coche and Cuevas people. They lived mostly peaceful lives and lived off the land until Europeans began arriving. Rodrigo de Bastida was the first European to set foot in Panama in 1501. Christopher Columbus gained an interest in the country and arrived a year later to establish the city of Darien. The Cuevas people suffered greatly from the effects of Spanish colonization. By 1535, the tribe was officially exterminated. Europe would gain a fascination with the biodiverse country.

Vasco de Balboa completed his journey to the Isthmus of Panama in 1513. The European had sought to prove that Panama could be reached through a crossing. As a result, Panama was elevated from a quiet country into a major trading center. Silver and gold were major imports and exports. Panama was the middleman for shipping gold from the New World discovered by Columbus to the royal coffers in Spain. Panama would remain a colony of Spain for almost 300 years. Columbia took over in 1821 and Panama became part of their domain. Panama was not happy at the thought of not being independent and sought help from America. In 1903, Panama was able to declare its independence and signed a treaty with America. In exchange for the United States to vouch for their freedom, Panama gifted America with the rights to a zone 10 miles wide and 50 miles long, enough to build the Panama Canal. The Panamanian-America project was completed in 1914 and officially the canal was turned over to Panama in 1999.

Laborers came from all over the world to build the largest canal the world had ever seen. At its peak, there were 45,000 workers. The majority of the laborers were from Panama, the West Indies, Europe, and Asia. The intent of the canal was to unite the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The result is Panama has a rich genetic history that honors almost every culture in the world. There remain citizens, however, who are descended from the indigenous tribes of Kunas, Emberas, and Ngobe-Bugles.

Panama is known for its stunning biodiversity. Mountains, rainforests, and white sandy beaches create a background for paradise. There are 12 million acres of rain forest that are only accessible by boat. There are more 1,400 tree species and a multitude of animals that are unique to Panama such as the golden frog. Visit Panama today. Take a tour of the Panama Canal that united the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans for the world. Its rich history pulls from a diverse range of cultures from the indigenous tribes that were the first residences to the laborers who came to Panama for the benefit of humanity. Panama is truly a gift for the world.

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