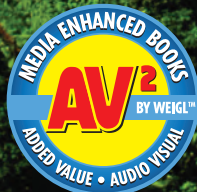


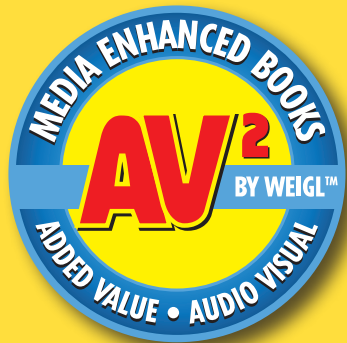
EXPLORING COUNTRIES

# Panama

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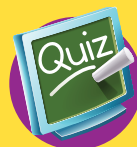
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# Panama Overview

**T**he small country of Panama, located in Central America, links North and South America. Each year, thousands of ships pass between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through a human-created waterway called the Panama Canal. Before the canal across Panama was completed in 1914, these ships had to travel all the way around South America. Panama's economy depends on the canal. Most Panamanians are of Spanish descent. Panama, which was a Spanish colony and then part of Colombia, became independent in 1903. Most residents of Panama are located in and around Panama City. Indigenous People live in the country's forests. Panama's beautiful islands, rich culture, varied plant and animal life, and historic canal attract visitors from around the world.

