



Darién Province

POP 48,400 / AREA 8653 SQ KM / ELEV SEA LEVEL TO 3478M

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Best Off-the Beaten-Path Spots

- ➔ Parque Nacional Darién (p247)
- ➔ Piji Basal (p248)
- ➔ Pacific Coast (p253)
- ➔ Jaqué (p253)
- ➔ Reserva Natural Punta Patiño (p250)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Filo de Tallo (p246)
- ➔ Canopy Camp (p245)
- ➔ Punta Patiño Lodge (p250)
- ➔ Piji Basal (p248)
- ➔ Tropic Star Lodge (p253)

Why Go?

One of world's richest biomes is the 5760-sq-km Parque Nacional Darién, where the primeval meets the present with scenery nearly unaltered from one million years ago. Even today in the Darién, the Emberá and Wounaan people maintain many of their traditional practices and retain generations-old knowledge of the rainforest. In a stroke of irony, much of the Darién has remained untouched because of its volatile reputation.

The road to Yaviza – the most accessible part of the province – has scenes of habitat destruction. Cruising the waterways and hiking trails are the only ways to explore the slow-paced interior Darién and the Pacific coast, where Emberá, Wounaan and African-Darienita cultures coexist.

The region's issues are complex. Police checkpoints are frequent because of narcotrafficking. The Darién is not for everyone, but with careful planning and the right destinations, it offers opportunities for intrepid travelers to discover something truly wild.

When to Go

- ➔ **Dec–Mar** The premium months for sportfishing in the Pacific.
- ➔ **Dec–mid-Apr** The best time to visit, with drier trails and easier and more reliable transport connections.
- ➔ **Oct–Feb** Marine turtle hatching on the Pacific coast.



Darién Province Highlights

1 Reserva Natural Punta Patiño (p250) Searching for capybara while exploring the lush jungle reserve of Reserva Natural Punta Patiño on the edge of Golfo de San Miguel.

2 Rancho Frío (p249) Hiking along the spectacular jungle trails surrounding

Rancho Frío, a ranger station on the edge of Parque Nacional Darién.

3 Mogué (p251) or **Piji Basal** (p248) Looking for harpy eagles and interacting with the Emberá around these traditional villages.

4 Filo de Tallo (p246) Enjoying excursions into indigenous communities and the dreamy savanna-like setting of this ecolodge.

5 Jaqué (p253) Helping to rescue marine turtles in this Pacific Ocean community.