



Coclé Province

POP 257,000 / AREA 4947 SQ KM / ELEV SEA LEVEL TO 1626M

Includes ➔

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La Pintada	107
Reserva Privada Távida	108
Parque Arqueológico del Caño	109
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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Mesón de Santa Cruz (p106)
- ➔ Xoko (p102)
- ➔ La Casa de Lourdes (p101)
- ➔ Pipa's Beach Restaurant (p104)
- ➔ Da Vinci Deli Pastas Gourmet (p101)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Togo Bed & Breakfast (p103)
- ➔ Golden Frog Inn (p99)
- ➔ Park Eden (p99)
- ➔ Villa Távida Lodge (p108)
- ➔ La Casa de Lourdes (p100)

Why Go?

Coclé is known to Panamanians as the land of salt, sugar and presidents. More salt has been reclaimed from the sea, more sugar refined and more Panamanian presidents have been born here than in any other province. These facts are the source of great civic pride, but Coclé offers a lot more than table condiments and political legacies.

Coclé counts a wide variety of landscapes, from all-but-abandoned coastline to towering cloud forests, with vast agricultural land in between. With its southern side stretching along the Pacific Ocean for more than 100km, the province claims some of the country's most beautiful beaches, which are a magnet at the weekend for day-trippers from nearby Panama City. Up in the highlands, the magnificently situated mountain town of El Valle is another popular retreat. And shoppers take note: the sprawling provincial capital of Penonomé is the best place to pick up a 'real' Panama hat.

When to Go

- ➔ **Dec–Apr** High season on the Pacific coast is a party scene, with Panamanians arriving in droves after Christmas. A wild pre-Lenten carnival takes place around Mardi Gras (February or March) in Penonomé.
- ➔ **Jul–Oct** Rain means muddy trails but highland waterfalls are in full flow. It's the only season to see Panama's national flower, the ghost orchid, in bloom.
- ➔ **Oct–Dec** Bring on the noise: the city of Antón's rowdy Toro Guapo festival in October is followed by at least four days of *fiestas patrias* (national holidays) in November and celebrations of Penonomé's patron in early December.



Coclé Province Highlights

1 El Valle (p95) Hiking to waterfalls, paying a call on the golden frog and browsing the handicrafts market in this lovely highland town.

2 Farallón (p103) Feasting on fresh fish with *patacones* (fried plantains), and strolling along the endless sands.

3 Penonomé (p104) Shopping for an authentic Panama hat and getting caught up in one of the regional capital's festivals.

4 Parque Nacional Omar Torrijos (p108) Hiking through dense rainforest and camping overnight in utter solitude.

5 Natá (p109) Enjoying the historic town's tranquility and visiting the splendid altar carvings at Panama's oldest church.