



Comarca de Guna Yala

POP 31,600 / AREA 2360 SQ KM / ELEV SEA LEVEL TO 748M

Includes ➔

The Guna	228
Cartí & Around	234
East Lemon & Chichime Cays	235
Río Sidra & Nearby Islands	236
Corazón de Jesús & Narganá	237
Playón Chico & Nearby Islands	238
Achutupu & Nearby Islands	239

Best Off-the-Beaten-Path Spots

- ➔ Cayos Holandeses (p237)
- ➔ East Lemon & Chichime Cays (p235)
- ➔ Cayos Los Grullos (p237)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Dolphin Lodge (p238)
- ➔ De Mar Achu (p234)
- ➔ Camping Salardup (p235)
- ➔ Akwadup Lodge (p239)
- ➔ Yandup Lodge (p238)

Why Go?

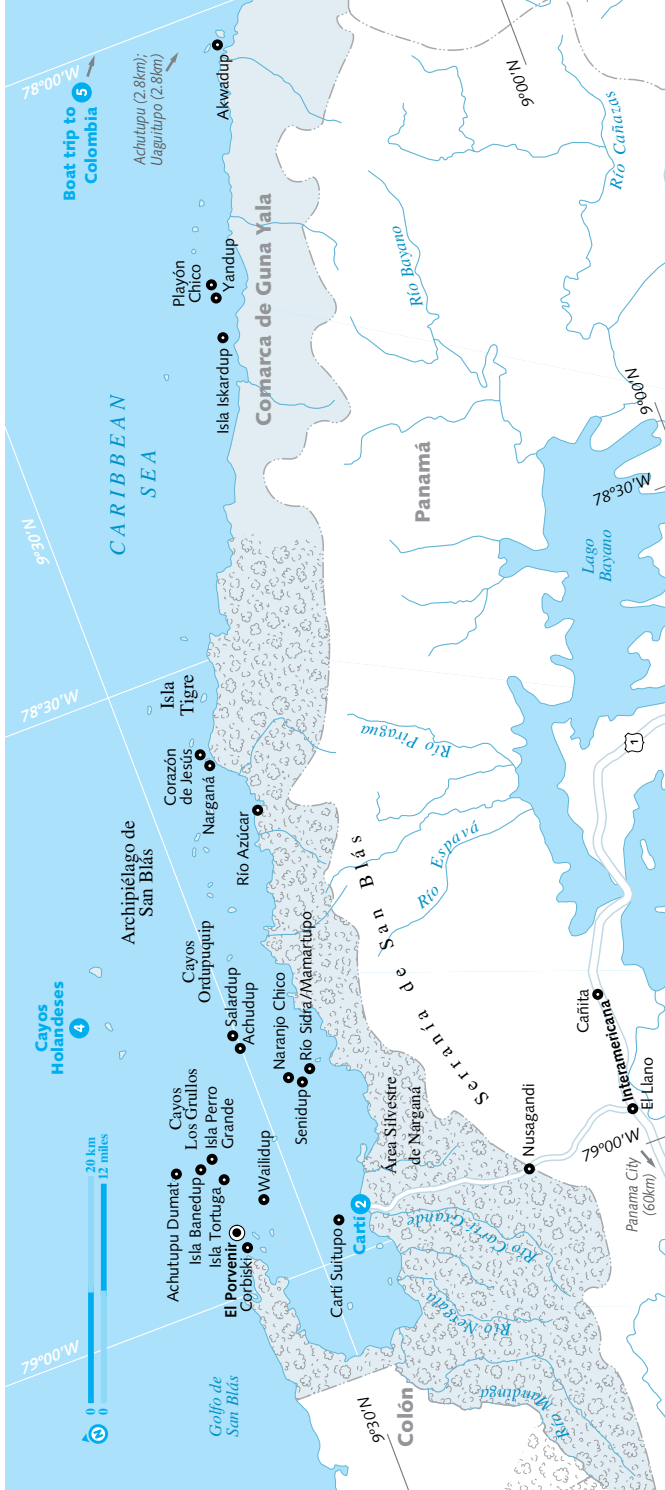
Imagine a turquoise tropical archipelago with one island for every day of the year. With white sand and waving palms, these Caribbean islands cheat no one's version of paradise. The Comarca is home to the Guna, the first group in Latin America to gain indigenous autonomy. Though they have had contact with Europeans since Columbus sailed these waters in 1502, clan identity is paramount, and many make tenacious efforts to preserve a traditional way of life.

In 2009 the road to Cartí was completed, making the region more accessible than ever and opening up options for day trips. Still off the beaten track, this narrow, 226km-long strip on the Caribbean coast stretches from the Golfo de San Blás to the Colombian border.

Community islands are acre-sized cays packed with bamboo huts, livestock and people. Visitors often prefer the more remote outer islands with fewer inhabitants. Most areas require landing fees.

When to Go

- ➔ **Dec–Apr** During trade-wind season there's little rain. It can get hot in the thatched huts, but conditions are ideal for sailing, with winds from the north and northeast.
- ➔ **Oct** Isla Tigre celebrates traditional dance at the Nogagope, which brings communities together for a week of dancing as well as canoe races and an art fair.
- ➔ **May–Aug** There's good visibility for snorkeling, though rainstorms are around and so are annoying *chitras* (sand flies). Thunderstorms mean it's not a preferable time to sail.



Comarca de Guna Yala Highlights

- 1 Guna** (p228) Interacting with the Guna, a fiercely independent people who maintain their traditions in a changing world.
- 2 Sailing** (p234) Cruising in white-sand cays, swimming in clear waters and soaking up sunrise on a sailboat – most trips depart from **Carti**.
- 3 Molas** (p231) Shopping the community islands for *molas*, traditional Guna textiles that have become the national handicraft of Panama.
- 4 Cayos Holandeses** (p237) Snorkeling aquamarine waters through reefs and wrecks in the magical Cayos Holandeses.
- 5 Colombia** (p234) Camping on sandy beaches and living the adventure of a three-day **motorboat trip to Colombia**.