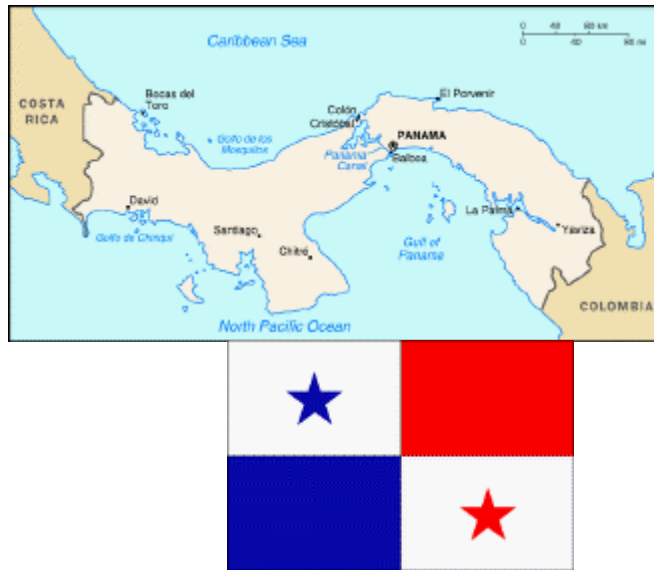


Panama



Introduction

Panama has a population of 2.4 Million people and is one of the smallest countries in Central America. It's ethnic composition is 70 percent mestizo (a mix of Indian and European), 14 percent West Indian, 10 percent European, and 6 percent Amerindian. Panama is a multiparty republic, with a president, two vice-presidents, a cabinet, a unicameral legislative assembly serving 5 year terms, and a supreme court. The president is the head of state and the head of the government.

The official language is Spanish. Because of the extensive U.S. influence, most Panamanians are bilingual in Spanish and English. The majority of the people (94 percent) are Roman Catholic, although Panama has no official religion. There are also small numbers of Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, and others.

Fun Fact

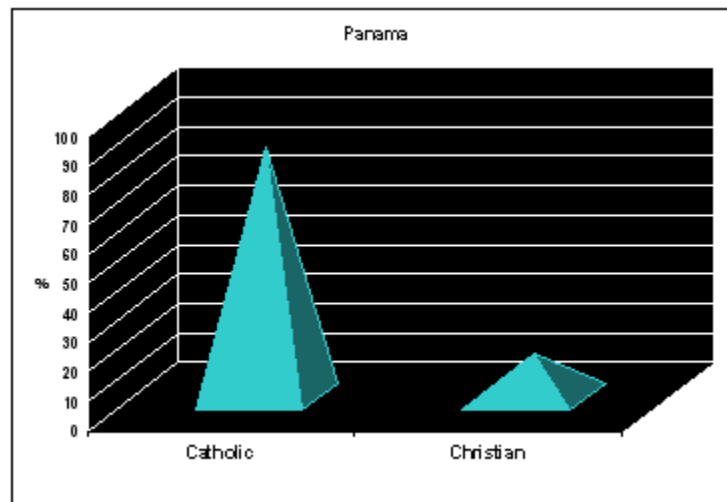
Columbus reached Panama in 1502 on his fourth and final voyage to the New World. The country was first explored by Balboa in 1513. The Panama Canal was completed in 1914 and is under control of the U.S. . It is due to return to Panamanian control on 31 December 1999.

Geert Hofstede Analysis Panama

[Click Here for Geert Hofstede country scores](#)

The Geert Hofstede analysis for Panama is similar to its Latin American neighbors. There is a high power distance indicating that inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow within the society. Uncertainty avoidance ranks high which indicates a high concern for rules, regulations, controls and issues with career security – typically, a society that does not readily accept change and is risk adverse. Individualism ranks lowest which signifies a society of a more collectivist nature and strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. [More Details](#)

Religion in Panama



* WORLD FACTBOOK 2002

Appearance

- Conservative business suits are appropriate for men. Panamanian businessmen in higher positions wear suits; others wear camisillas (a lightweight, open-necked shirt that is not tucked inside the trousers). Women should wear a dress or skirt and blouse. Women should avoid wearing any kind of revealing clothing
- Most North American gestures are understood

Behavior

- Panamanian women are taking more and more managerial jobs, but still it is relatively rare. Women should emphasize the fact that they are representing their company
- Have business cards and other material printed in Spanish as well as English
- When dining, the host usually sits at one end of the table with the guest of honor at the other end
- Foreign businesswomen should always include spouses in invitations to business dinners
- Gifts are not normally exchanged when entertaining

Communications

- Handshaking the custom; old friends embrace
- Titles are important and should be included on business cards. Address a person directly by using his or her title only. A Ph.D or a physician is called *Doctor*. Teachers prefer the title *Profesor*, engineers go by *Ingeniero*, architects are *Arquitecto*, and lawyers are *Abogado*. Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as Mr., Mrs., or Miss, plus their surnames. In Spanish these are:
 - Mr. = *Senor*
 - Mrs. = *Senora*
 - Miss = *Senorita*
- Most Hispanics have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- In business, conversations begin with much small talk
- Good conversation topics: family, hobbies, basketball, baseball
- Bad conversation topics: former Canal Zone, race problems, politics