

Getting around in Panama

Written by T. Rob Brown (aka Roberto Chocolate)

Friday, 05 November 2010 13:27 - Last Updated Friday, 05 November 2010 13:33

A question came in from a reader (Debra) asking about using taxicabs, walking or renting a car in Panama City. I sent the question to our expert, Nasira. (she runs the back office of nine used-car dealerships)

Here is her response. Roberto

Hey Rob:

How are you guys doing? Heard from Yasser, your new great ventures starting a film festival in Panama.

Anyways, I have several suggestions and questions for Debra:

Suggestions:

1) Local transportation is not advisable. Although taxi cab fares are relatively cheap, it is sometimes difficult to get one at peak hours, they might try to overcharge any tourists and you might lose a good amount of valuable time struggling to communicate with them.

2) I would advise them to get a private driver (it'd be safe and more suitable to run on their schedule, but more expensive). I think that for the city it would be worthwhile anyway.

3) December through March is peak season in Panama (holiday season), rentals are more expensive (christmas, new years, carnivals, school holidays). During that period a lot of tourism goes on.

4) To have a rough idea, a small car like the Hyundai I -100 (similar to the ford fiesta) costs about USD 630 for a month right now, it'd be more for december through march. At the moment this price includes full coverage insurance (comprehensive, collision and third party liability). If you need a bigger car than that, you are looking at a bigger price as well.

4) Definitely it is cheaper to rent in other locations than the airport. Also booking in advance might help with the price.

5) Yes, booking for long term receives the benefit of a better quote.

6) I will have to check if the online quotes include the insurance coverage. Will get back to you

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with that.

Questions:

- 1) What type of car are you looking for (sedan, suv, minivan, truck?)
- 2) How far are you planning to explore Panama? (Meaning: are you thinking about going to the little towns with terrible roads?)
- 3) How much are you looking forward to spend on a rental?
- 4) If you are buying a used car, what's your budget? We might be able to guarantee a buy back price (with conditions such as mileage, vehicle care etc.).

Regards,

Nasira