

Top 3 Golf Courses You Need to Play in Panama

by Dave Finn



Lucero Golf & Country Club

Looking for the next "hot" golf destination? Do you prefer cityscapes, ocean views or the tranquillity of the rainforest? Panama may be small in size but is big in style. Situated at the lower end of the continental divide that separates North and South

America, the country's topography has been used to its advantage to create links style, parkland, ocean and mountain courses. There are 13 uniquely different golf courses, and I was fortunate to play nine. Here is my countdown of the top 3 championship golf courses you need to play.

#3 Mantarraya Golf Club

It is located near Farallon, less than 2-hours from Panama City and only steps from the Scarlett Martinez International Airport. Mantarraya is the crowning jewel of the all-inclusive Royal Decameron Resort. Even though the fairways are relatively wide with subtle rolls, I was pleasantly surprised at the difficulty served by this resort course. There are 14 holes where water will come into play, and while the average-size greens have slight undulations, they are extremely fast, so your pace of putting is critical. Green fees for 18 holes range from US\$60 to \$75.

#2 Club de Golf de Panamá

"Mature and stately" would be the best way I can describe the 105-year-old Panama GC because of the towering trees that line the fairways and the dramatic elevation changes. The entire course appears to be carved out of the jungle, with water evident on 12 holes, but thankfully, I found the fairways wider and more receptive than they looked. This club is private, but members' guests can play here for a US\$125 green fee.



Casco Viejo - Plaza de la Independencia



Panama City - A contrast of modern and historic architecture

#1 Lucero Golf & Country Club

Playing atop a mountain is like playing on top of the world, and Lucero, Panama's highest golf course, delivers. Sitting almost 3500 feet above sea level in the highlands near Boquete, this course is simply the most visually stunning in Panama. Architect Michael Poellet has taken every advantage of the natural landscape with a 360° view, including Volcán Barú and the Pacific Ocean, more than 90 miles away. It felt like I was playing at the edge of the world. Green fees range from US\$80-90.

In addition to offering world-class golf, Panama is a very affordable, exotic destination and one of the safest countries in Latin America for tourists, travellers and retirees alike. Panamanians are among the friendliest people in the world, and many speak English fluently, so it's easy to get around once you're there. After taking in the sights and sounds of the Capital, in no time, you can find yourself on the Caribbean or Pacific beach, on a volcano, watching the sun rise or hiking a trail in a national park before indulging in a fabulous meal or taking in the nightlife. As simple or as sophisticated as your tastes, Panama has it all. 🌴



Mantarraya Golf Club



Panama Golf Club