

Interview Responses from John Gascoyne

After John wrote his wonderful story about his adventure to Panama, I had the opportunity to ask him a few clarifying questions. Below are the questions I asked and his responses.

What was your favorite site visited on the tour?

I am really fascinated with engineering, so one of my favorite things I was able to see in Panama was the Panama Canal Locks. These locks make the canal accessible for larger ships to cross it, by lifting and moving the ships to locations they can safely take the journey on the canal.

I also really enjoyed see the capuchin monkey and El Valle. El Valle is a town situated in the crater of a dormant volcano.

Did you see any wildlife?

I did see a number of different animals during the trip. During the trip we stopped at a zoo, which is not my favorite way of seeing animals. I was able to see alligators, sloths and monkeys. My favorite animal I saw was the capuchin monkey, which is how monks got their name. The monkey looked a lot like a monk would look, it was really amazing.

What is the coolest tradition you learned from the natives?

The coolest think I learned from the natives was at the Embera Indian Village. I was able to see a traditional dance. Watching the dance was a very interesting thing to see.

What were your favorite food dish, drink and dessert?

I did not really have a favorite food. Most of the trip was buffet style, although I really did enjoy the flan. I did notice that many of the Indians on the tour with me were upset because they were devoted vegetarians and the buffet did not provide many options for them.

Did you do any hiking?

There was not much hiking opportunity for me on the trip. There was one walk that took a loop in the rainforest, it was not a very long hike.

What was your favorite city or town visited?

I really liked Playa Blanca, it kind of reminded of Miami Beach. I also really enjoyed the cruise on Gatun Lake. Here I was able to see the locks and the capuchin monkey.

Did you find any of your personal tourist habits unacceptable to the local culture?

I did not notice any behavior that was unacceptable. However when we were at the Embera village, after they performed the traditional dance, some of the Indians on the tour with us, got up and stated dancing their traditional dances. It was very cool to watch, but I am not sure how well that went over

with the villagers. There was no public display of anger, but I can image that they may have felt disrespected.

How remote is Panama?

Panama is not very remote at all; there are a lot of tourists everywhere you go. There is also a lot of new construction happening, being done by the Chinese.

Overall, John had a great time on the tour. He usually travels differently, on his own, but he did enjoy the tour and loved traveling that way.