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The Leader for Independent Travel



For Immediate Release

Crossroads of the Americas

Avanti Introduces Two New Independent Travel Vacations, 10 New Hotels, and 19 New Tours in Panama; New Joint E-brochure, Microsite, Webinar, and Advisor Incentive with Visit Panama

Portland, Oregon, October 3, 2023 – Wholesale FIT* tour operator **Avanti Destinations** has expanded its offering for advisors' independent travel clients going to **Panama** with two new customizable vacations, 10 new hotels and 19 new tours and experiences, as well as one new destination, the province of Veraguas, home to two national parks.

Avanti has partnered with **Visit Panama** on three helpful tools for advisors: a new 32-page downloadable, shareable e-brochure (*Panama Awaits*) <https://www.flipsnack.com/779977E569B/panama/full-view.html>, microsite https://content.avantidestinations.com/panama_hub_microsite/index.html, and webinar scheduled for Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 2pm Eastern/10am Pacific <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8279053607840450647>. These are all designed to educate advisors and their clients on the many options for independent travel throughout Panama.

As part of the joint educational campaign on independent travel to Panama, travel advisors can earn **one \$25 gift card for each FIT booking** made by December 31, 2023 for a minimum of three nights in Panama with a minimum land value of \$2,500

Within Panama, Avanti offers a **total of four customizable recommended vacations, 42 three-, four- and five-star hotels and resorts, and 109 tours and experiences**, including the latest additions. Among the new, mostly four- and five-star hotels are rainforest jungle lodges, some properties with over-the-water bungalows, and a resort and spa on a private island.

Avanti sells custom-crafted independent travel vacations **exclusively** through travel advisors, not directly to consumers.

Active travel, cultural immersion, gastronomy, wildlife, beaches, jungles, mountains

"Panama is easily accessible for U.S. travelers with convenient air connections and stopover programs," said Paul Barry, CEO of Avanti Destinations. "While Spanish is the official language, most Panamanians speak English, and the U.S. dollar is the main currency."

“The country is not only located at the geographic and ecological intersection of North and South America, the Atlantic and the Pacific, but it also represents a rich cultural crossroads, with many indigenous territories, and influences from Spain, the Caribbean, and the U.S. Because of Panama’s year-round mild climate and the many intriguing off-the-beaten-path places that we offer, travelers can choose from a wide range of activities, including hiking, surfing, snorkeling, cycling, wildlife-spotting, learning about indigenous traditions, and gastronomic experiences, all featured in our new products. Panama is so much more than just the Canal. We are pleased to partner with Visit Panama on this educational campaign, which we believe will inspire excitement about the destination,” said Barry.

“Our partners, including Avanti, are essential to achieving our goal of establishing Panama as a world-class sustainable tourism destination by 2025 by attracting travelers in support of our mission,” said Fernando Fondevila, CEO of PROMTUR Panama, Panama’s DMO. “Our mission is to highlight the extraordinary richness and diversity of Panama’s natural and cultural heritage and the quality of its services, while prioritizing a balanced approach between environmental protection and conservation, tourism’s economic benefits, and host communities’ well-being”, said Fondevila.

Ten destinations

Avanti’s destinations in Panama include: **Panama City**, flanking the canal, with a colorful historic district, and home to the world’s first biodiversity museum, designed by Frank Gehry; **Boquete**, a small town in the cool Chiriquí Highlands, a region of mountains, waterfalls, hot springs, cloud forests, coffee plantations, and the Barú Volcano National Park; the **Bocas del Toro** archipelago, encircled by coral reefs, dolphins, white sand beaches, and crystal clear emerald waters; **Boca Chica**, on the Pacific Coast, near Chiriquí National Park, eco-resorts, private islands, with abundant opportunities for snorkeling, fishing and whale-watching; **El Valle de Anton**, charming town in the crater of an extinct volcano, surrounded by mountains, cloud forest, and populated by hundreds of endemic bird species; **Portobelo**, former colonial port and fortress on the Caribbean coast, a center for Afro-Panamanian culture with brightly-colored houses, surrounded by rainforest; **Pedasi**, a small fishing village on the **Azuero Peninsula**, known for its lively annual carnivals, sport fishing, scuba diving, and surfing; **Gamboa**, on the Chagras River near the Canal, in the middle of forests and wetlands and near Soberanía National Park, home to jaguars, sloths, and many bird species; the province of

Veraguas, Avanti's newest Panama destination, known for its vast wilderness areas and two national parks – one with mountains in the north, the other in the south, a protected UNESCO World Heritage area rich in marine wildlife, consisting of dozens of tropical islands, including Coiba; and the area on the **Pacific coast** southwest from Panama City, famous for its luxury resorts.

New tours and experiences – indigenous crafts, gastronomy, cycling, snorkeling, horseback riding

“Most of the 19 new tours and experiences are **private**,” Barry pointed out. “These are not skim-the-surface sightseeing, they are true encounters with the local culture and natural environment.”

Among these are: private six-hour **hike and farm-to-table experience** (tour and lunch) at an organic mountain farm outside Boquete, that raises coffee as well as produce and farm animals; private eight-hour private **snorkeling** expedition in the islands of the Coiba National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where clients will see sea turtles, nurse sharks and a wide variety of flora and fauna; private seven-hour Panama Folkloric Path experience (with lunch of local specialties) where clients will **learn how to make Diablico Sucio masks** used in traditional dances, and craftsmen will make cutarras (leather peasant sandals) tailored just for them; private three-hour **horseback riding** in the Chiriqui Mountains; private eight-hour cultural day tour with typical Afro-Caribbean lunch in Portobelo, where clients will **learn painting in the Afro-Caribbean Congo style** and enjoy a performance of the Congo dance; private 11-hour excursion to **San Blas**, home of the Guna people who produce the colorful textiles called “mola”; private seven-hour gastronomic experience in an Ngäbe indigenous community, where clients will see where the locals source their ingredients and **learn to cook authentic, organic Ngäbe specialties** for lunch; private four-hour **biking in the mountains and tasting tour** in Boquete after cycling; private four-hour **premium rum and craft beer tour** of a distillery and a brewery, plus tastings of three styles of rums and a craft beer “with personality”.

Two new customizable independent vacations

These two new recommended vacations may be modified to include additional nights, experiences, transfers, and other destinations . All Avanti vacations are completely customizable.

- **Panama Short and Sweet** – eight days/seven nights in **Panama City** and **Bocas del Toro**. Includes: eight-hour private historic Portobelo, Caribbean beach and boat tour with lunch; private boat tour with time for snorkeling/swimming at Cayos Zapatilla islands and Isla Solarte, stopping at the off-grid, over-the-water Blue Coconut restaurant; shared partial Panama Canal transit tour; all ground transfers; daily breakfast; choice of accommodations.

- **Authentic Panama** - 12 days/11 nights learning about indigenous tribes and traditions in **Panama City, Pedasi, Veraguas, Boca Chica**. Includes: private walking tour of Panama City's historic district/Casco Viejo; shared day-long tour of San Blas island (home of Guna people) with lunch; private eight-hour snorkeling tour with lunch in Isla Coiba; shared seven-hour Ngäbe indigenous community gastronomic and cooking experience with lunch; private six-hour Panama Folkloric Path tour with lunch on the Azuero peninsula; private Gulf of Chiriquí boat tour; shared folklore show and dinner with private transfers; all ground transfers; daily breakfast; choice of accommodations.

For more information on independent travel in Panama and Central and South America generally, or to book custom-crafted, multi-destination FIT travel 365 days a year throughout Europe, Asia, North Africa, the Middle East, the South Pacific, or Central and South America, log onto the recently revamped advisor portal <https://book.avantidestinations.com> or call 1-800-422-5053 to speak with an expert travel consultant.

Since 1981, Avanti Destinations has been selling **independent travel** products and custom-crafted vacations in 57 countries in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the South Pacific, and Central and South America exclusively through travel advisors. The Portland, Oregon-based wholesale tour operator offers a wide range of FIT components **to travel advisors only**, including air, rail, rental cars, hotels, sightseeing/attractions, transfers and hard-to-find experiential travel options. Avanti specializes in hand-picked, locally-owned hotels in both large and small cities and in **connecting all the pieces of complex, multi-destination itineraries**. The company also creates complete packages for custom groups of 15-100 passengers. For more information: <https://book.avantidestinations.com>.

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- **Note: FIT=Foreign Independent Travel**

Electronic photos available at <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AjdZmJ2b7j-YhK04G6nYYI2ZukHdjQ?e=P8hsts> – photo credit (for all photos): Visit Panama

Caption: *Avanti Destinations has introduced two new customizable vacations in Panama for advisors' independent travel clients, plus 10 new hotels and 18 new tours/experiences throughout Panama. Visit Panama and Avanti have partnered on a travel advisor educational campaign including a new 32-page e-brochure, microsite, webinar, and advisor incentive for bookings made by December 31, 2023.*

Shown– photo credit (for all photos): Visit Panama

- *Artisan working on the Azuero Peninsula, near Chitre, where Avanti offers a **private** Folkloric Path experience that teaches clients how to make a traditional Diablico Sucio mask.*
- *From Colón Island near Bocas del Toro, advisors can book clients on a shared boat trip to starfish-filled Drago Beach on Bird Island.*
- *At a village of the indigenous Ngäbe people near Boca Chica, Avanti offers a **private** gastronomic experience where clients will learn to can make authentic, organic specialties for lunch from locally sourced ingredients.*

- *After cycling along the Caldera River, clients can sample local specialties in Boquete on a **private** biking and tasting tour.*
- *On a **private** Portobelo cultural day tour, clients will see a traditional Congo dance performance, learn how to paint in the Afro-Caribbean Congo style, and enjoy a typical lunch in this center of Afro-Panamanian culture.*
- *From Panama City, advisors can book clients on an 11-hour **private** excursion to San Blas, home of the Guna people who produce the colorful textiles called “mola”.*
- *For nature lovers, Avanti offers a **private** eight-hour private snorkeling expedition in the islands of the Coiba National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where clients will see sea turtles, nurse sharks and a wide variety of flora and fauna.*