



# NOMADIC SKIES

PANAMA

JOURNEY THROUGH THE INDIGENOUS KINGDOM  
OF THE GUNA PEOPLE TO THE HISTORIC SITE  
OF SCOTLAND'S LOST DARIEN COLONY

DISCOVER TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

# DISCOVER THE REMOTE CARIBBEAN COAST OF THE GUNA PEOPLE

Traverse palm-fringed coastal trails and untamed jungle by foot and boat, immersing yourself in the culture and traditions of the Guna people. Encounter remarkable wildlife and explore the historic sites and lasting echoes of Scotland's ill-fated Darien scheme.

**Exclusive, expertly guided small-group expeditions through the little visited trails of the Darien in the indigenous kingdom of the Guna people.**

Nomadic Skies is founded on the principle of promoting travel that fosters meaningful connections with, and delivers economic benefits to, fragile, remote, and marginalised communities.

This exclusive small-group, 11-day expedition follows a remote route along Panama's eastern coast in the indigenous kingdom of Guna Yala. It offers immersion in Guna culture and traditions, exploration of coastal and jungle habitats, and insight into the enduring Scottish legacy of the Darien scheme.



# SLOWER & EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL

**Nomadic Skies focuses travelling in remote yet inhabited regions. Unlike many operators that simply pass through local communities, we design our journeys around meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships with those who live there—working with individuals whose unique skills, knowledge, and perspectives enrich every expedition.**

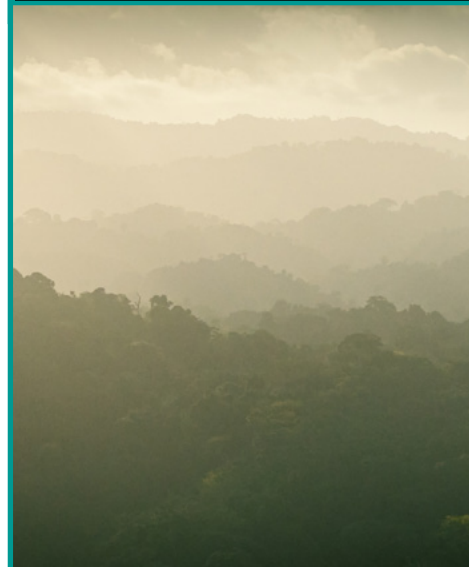
## CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

Nomadic Skies also aims to support conservation and environmental protection in the region, including sea turtle conservation and plastic waste management in local communities. As our expeditions grow, we will help identify and support locally led initiatives in these areas.

## TRAVEL THAT BENEFITS LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In Panama, we work with Indigenous Guna communities and guides to build local guiding capacity in a little-visited region, with a focus on developing younger and female guides. Our journeys also include experienced Panamanian guides who share their deep knowledge of the area's history and environment, while supporting skills exchange with local guides and participants.

As a Scotland-based company, Nomadic Skies also seeks to deepen understanding of the historical links between Darien and Scotland, rooted in the legacy of the failed Scottish Darien project.





## A JOURNEY UNLIKE ANY OTHER

- Explore cosmopolitan Panama City, including its markets, museums, and the Mola Museum, where you'll discover the fabric and clothing central to Guna identity.
- Travel by charter plane to a remote part of Guna Yala in eastern Panama, the Indigenous kingdom of the Guna people.
- Walk palm-fringed paths while staying near Guna settlements and on pristine beaches.
- Venture into primary rainforest and jungle by foot and river, encountering rich wildlife and dramatic landscapes.
- Gain a deeper understanding of Guna culture and traditions, from music and crafts to beliefs and the symbolism behind Mola textiles.
- Discover the history of the Scottish Darien scheme through its remaining sites and the traces it has left in modern place names and landscapes.

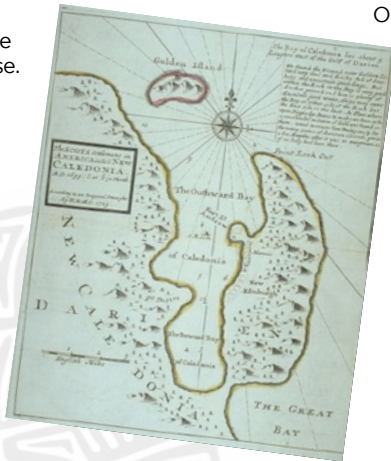
11 days / 10 nights starting  
and finishing in Panama City



# THE DARIEN SCHEME (1698-1700)

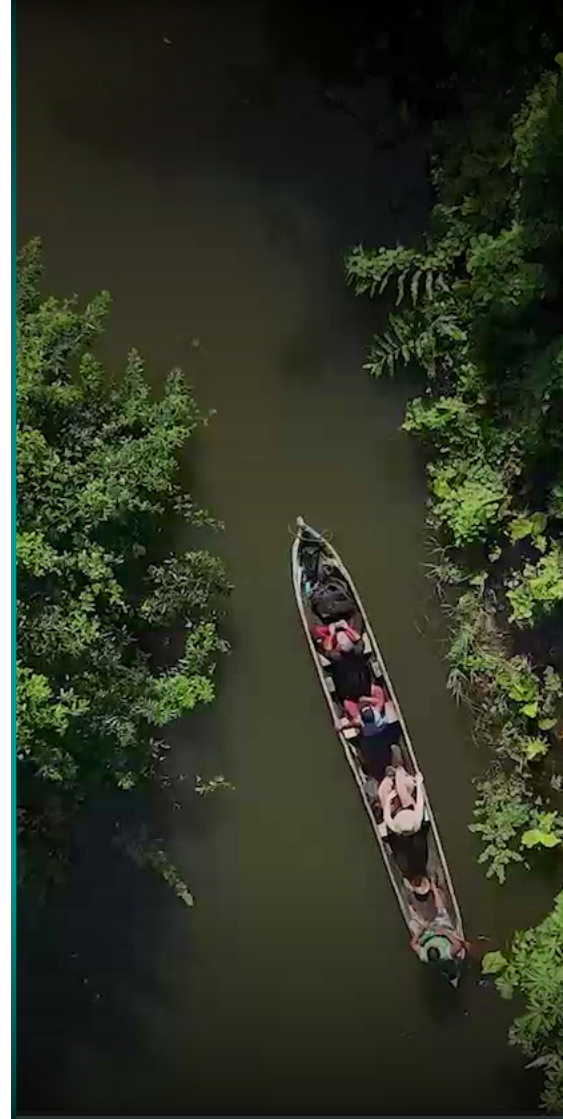
**In the late 17th century, the then independent Kingdom of Scotland undertook a bold but ultimately disastrous attempt to establish a trading colony on the coast of Darien.**

A peninsula and bay were selected, and a settlement was planned for what would be known as “New Edinburgh” and “Fort St Andrews,” beside the “Bay of Caledonia.” Between 1698 and 1700, settlers arrived in two waves, but illness, poor planning, and conflict with the dominant Spanish presence in the region led to the colony’s collapse.



The financial ruin that followed played a major role in Scotland’s decision to join the Union with England and the formation of the United Kingdom. Today, the sparse remains of New Edinburgh are being reclaimed by forest, yet the story endures through local place names: the peninsula is still known as Puerto Escocés (Scottish Port), the headland as Fuerte St Andrews, and the nearby island town as Caledonia, where the Guna people who once lived on the peninsula relocated.

On this journey, you will explore this remarkable history firsthand, deepening your understanding of its legacy alongside your local guides.





YOUR JOURNEY



## YOUR FULL ITINERARY

### DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN PANAMA CITY

Your journey begins in cosmopolitan Panama City. You'll stay in the historic old town, with the evening set aside for a welcome dinner in a local restaurant as your expedition officially begins.

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### DAY 2: PANAMA CITY EXPLORATION

Take time to explore Panama City's architecture, markets, shops, museums, and galleries. A highlight is the Museo de la Mola, where you'll discover the intricate reverse-appliqué textiles central to Guna identity, offering valuable context for what you'll later see and experience in Guna Yala.

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### DAY 3: FLY TO GUNA YALA AND JOURNEY TO ARMILA

You'll fly by small charter plane to Puerto Obaldía in eastern Panama, near the Colombian border, entering Guna Yala—the Indigenous kingdom of the Guna people. After clearing entry formalities, you'll meet your local guides and begin your journey, either by a short coastal trek or boat ride to Armila village. Here, you'll settle into cabins hosted by Nacho Crespo and his wife Gladys, beside the Armila River where jungle meets sea.

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### DAY 4: EXPLORE THE ARMILA RIVER

In the morning you'll travel by small boat up the Armila River, exploring lush jungle habitat and watching for crocodiles, caiman, and abundant birdlife. After returning to the village, you'll spend time with Nacho and Gladys learning about Guna life, traditions, and the meaning and craftsmanship behind traditional dress and Mola textiles. A second night follows in Armila.

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### **DAY 5: ARMILA TO ANACHUCUNA (WALK OR BOAT)**

Today you'll set out early from Armila, hiking along coastal paths to the second Guna village of Anachucuna (around 10 miles/16km). The route follows an extraordinary stretch of coastline, with sections along open beaches where leatherback turtles may be nesting, and shaded paths beneath palm trees lining the shore.

If you prefer, you can take the support boat instead, enjoying a relaxed morning in Armila before travelling along the coast to meet the group.

Both options bring you together in Anachucuna around lunchtime, where you'll have time to explore this striking village on its peninsula above the crashing surf. After lunch, you'll continue on a short 1km hike to a pristine white-sand beach, where your camp is set beneath palms and your well-ventilated tents are already in place. Here, you'll spend the night under the stars, with your gear transported by boat.

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Every Nomadic Skies Journey is unique and takes advantage of seasonal activities ceremonies and opportunities that arise with our local contacts and interaction.

### **DAY 6: ANACHUCUNA TO CARRETO (WALK OR BOAT)**

You'll rise early for cooler conditions, either hiking around 8km through jungle and along beaches or travelling by boat to Carreto. The trail offers the chance to spot wildlife tracks, including jaguar prints, before opening onto sweeping coastal views and a pristine beach with crashing surf.

After arriving, you'll share lunch, explore the village, and experience local music and children's performances before camping just outside the village beneath a canopy of palm trees, falling asleep under a star-filled sky.

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### DAY 7: CARRETO EXPLORATION

You'll spend the day discovering Carreto, a remote village that sees very few visitors. Guided walks may reveal birds, howler monkeys, crocodiles, and jungle tracks, or take you to the "Village of the Dead," where structures are maintained for deceased relatives.

The day ends with further opportunities to connect with village life, music, and craft, followed by a second night at your beach camp.

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### DAY 8: CARRETO TO DARIEN SCHEME SITES & ATIDUB ISLAND

Traveling by boat you'll experience the wild stretch of coastline leading to the historic sites of New Edinburgh and Fort St Andrews, the centre of the Scottish Darien Scheme.

With your expert guide, Rick Morales, Panama's foremost jungle guide, you'll explore the remains and uncover the story of this extraordinary chapter of history.

You'll continue via Isla del Oro before heading north through the archipelago to Atidub Island, where you'll stay in comfortable huts with showers and access to the crystal-clear warm Caribbean Sea.

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### DAY 9: CALEDONIA ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Your opportunity to enjoy a relaxed morning before visiting Caledonia, an island town whose name was carried here by Guna communities relocated after the Scottish presence in the Darien area.

You'll explore the surrounding islands, reefs, and lagoons by boat before returning to Atidub for a second night.

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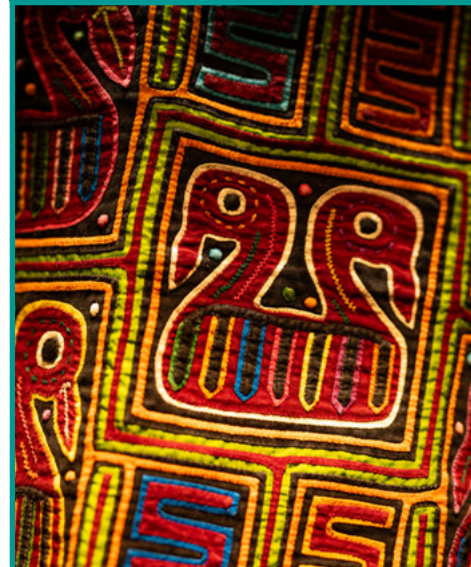
### DAY 10: RETURN TO PANAMA CITY

We will take a boat a short distance to the Coetupo landing strip where our charter plane will arrive to pick us for our return flight to Panama City. We will arrive back in Panama City and relax before a final farewell dinner in a good restaurant and our final official night in Panama.

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### DAY 11: DEPARTURE DAY

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# YOUR TRAVEL & BOOKING INFORMATION

## ACCOMMODATION: 14 DAY JOURNEY

- 3 nights in a good hotel in Panama City
  - 4 nights in local hut accommodations  
(*2 nights in Armila & 2 nights in Atidub*)
  - 3 nights camping on stunning beach locations  
(*1 night in Anachucuna and 2 in Carreto*)
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## GROUP SIZE AND LEADERSHIP

Our group size will be 8 to 10 participants with an international leader. Panama based group leader and local Guna guides and team.

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## CLIMATE

Panama is hot and humid for much of the year, though you'll be travelling in a season chosen to avoid the hottest and wettest periods, when seas are also calmer. Expect daytime temperatures in the upper 20s to low 30s Celsius, with high humidity, and night-time temperatures staying in the mid 20s.

You'll walk in the cooler morning hours, often through shaded palm and forest trails, typically with a refreshing sea breeze helping to moderate the heat. Camping is in well-ventilated tents with insect protection, designed for comfort in tropical conditions.

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## HEALTH

Participants should consult their doctor, pharmacy, or travel clinic for advice on recommended vaccinations and health precautions for this trip. A yellow fever vaccination is generally recommended for this region, and while malaria risk is considered low, preventative medication may also be advised.

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### **LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY OF THIS JOURNEY**

The trekking sections are generally straightforward, and boat support is available on most days for those who prefer an alternative to walking. However, you should expect some walking and exploration on uneven, rough terrain, so a good level of walking fitness and mobility is recommended. You should also be comfortable camping on mats and using basic bush (dug hole) toilet facilities.

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### **EQUIPMENT**

You will receive a full packing checklist upon booking. All camping equipment, including sleeping mats, is provided for the camping nights, with the exception of a light sleeping bag or sleeping liner, which you will need to bring yourself.

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### **COSTS**

Check our website for current journey costs

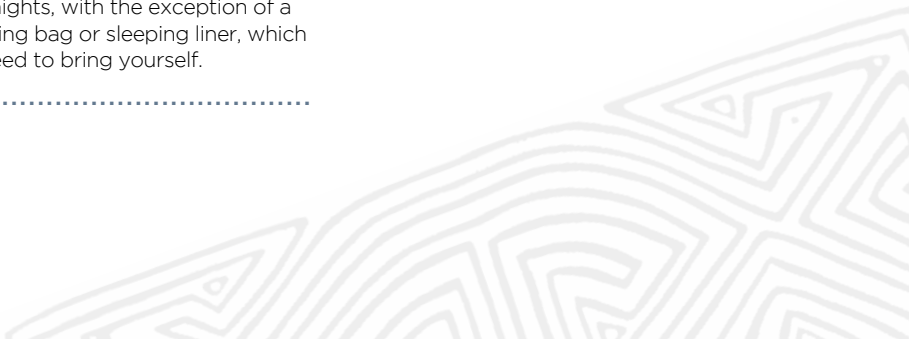
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### **BOOKING PROCEDURES**

To register, please request a booking form. Journeys are confirmed once a minimum of 8 participants have registered. A deposit is required to secure your place, with the balance due six weeks before departure.

Nomadic Skies is a member of the UK Travel Trust Association (TTA), and all payments are held in a protected trust account for your security.

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An aerial photograph of a lush tropical forest with a winding river. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right, curving through the dense green canopy. In the lower right section of the river, a small boat is visible. The background shows rolling hills covered in forest under a cloudy sky. A large, semi-transparent, stylized logo is overlaid in the top right corner of the image.

# JOURNEY DETAILS



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### TRAVEL

- All airport transfers in Panama City
- Charter flights to and from the Guna Yala
- All boat transport

### ACCOMMODATION

- All hotel hut and camping accommodation
- Provision of camping gear

### GUIDES AND STAFF

- International guide
- Expert guide, interpreter and historical guide from Panama City
- Local Guna Guides
- Local staff for camp and transport

### FOOD

- All food from evening dinner on the day of arrival to breakfast on the day of departure

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

- 100% consumer financial protection via the UK Travel Trust Association



## AND WHAT'S NOT

- International flights to and from Panama City
- Panama tourist visa (if required)
- Drinks (other than water)
- Travel insurance
- Required vaccinations
- Tips for local guides and staff (optional)



**To book or make enquiries contact:**

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