

# Got Rum?™ We Do!

June 2004

**Rum News,  
PANAMA,  
& The Spirit of Cooking!**

Got Rum? Magazine  
[www.rumshop.net](http://www.rumshop.net)



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# From the Editor

## Traveling to Panama

Mention the word "Panama" and most people will immediately think about the world-famous Panama Canal. Panama is, after all, a natural land bridge that links North and Central America with South America. It is also a melting pot of cultures, races and traditions, and it is one of the busiest international trading centers in the world.



But, before we talk about the specific facts that make Panama one of the most fascinating countries we've visited, let's review some general facts.

### Visa Requirements

Depending on your nationality, you may be required to have a valid passport and a visa or a \$5.00 tourist card which may be purchased at the airline counters.

### Language

Although the official language in Panama is Spanish, English is widely spoken and understood in the major cities.

### Climate

The country enjoys an agreeable tropical climate and an average daytime temperature of 80 degrees Fahrenheit, with cooling in the evenings. The average humidity is 70%. The rainy season goes from May to December.

### Electricity and Public Services

The current is 110w - 60hz and 220w. Telephone and international cable services in Panama are excellent. We have a direct-dial system to locations inland and all over the world. The country code is 507.

### Money

Since 1904, the United States dollar has been the legal currency in Panama. The Balboa, the Panamanian monetary unit, is par valued with the dollar. Prices can be expressed in Balboas (B/.) or in Dollars (\$).

### Customs

A tourist card gives you an automatic 30-day stay, and is extendable for another 60 days. Travelers from countries other than the US or



Canada should consult with the Panamanian consulate or embassy in their country to obtain the latest information on entry requirements. When entering the country, you may only bring up to one carton of cigarettes and 3 bottles of liquor. Like other countries, you may be fined and charged for leaving Panama with products made from endangered species.

### Health & Water

No vaccines or pills are necessary prior to visiting Panama. Remember, the tropical sun can be strong; so it's wise to take protective sunglasses and sunscreen with you. Although Panama is indeed a tropical country, mosquito control is effective. Exceptions would include hiking and over-nighting in the jungle, in which case you should use protective insect repellent.

### Dangers

Panama was given the highest ranking (along with the United States) for tourist safety from the Pinkerton Intelligence Agency.

I hope that the following pages will inspire you to embark on your own journey of discovery through the magical land of Panama.

Luis K. Ayala  
Editor

## About Panama and the Canal



The Panama Canal opened to maritime traffic on August 15, 1914. This engineering wonder of the world took ten years, more than 75,000 workers and \$400 million to complete. The builders faced unprecedented challenges, from tropical diseases and the ever-present danger of landslides to the logistics and problems of excavating the mammoth locks.

The Canal is 80 km. long, and flows from Colon in the Caribbean to Panama City in the Pacific. Average transit time is between 8 and 10 hours. Since its construction, more than 700,000 vessels have traversed it.

The focal points of the Canal are Lake Gatun, an artificial central lake that extends along almost the whole Isthmus; the Gaillard Cut, a 13 km excavation along the Continental Division, which extends from Lake Gatun to the Pedro Miguel Locks; the locks on both sides of the Isthmus, which raise the vessels between the

level of the sea and the Gatun Lake (the Gatun lock on the Caribbean and the Miraflores and Pedro Miguel locks on the Pacific); and the ports of Balboa on the Pacific and Cristobal on the Caribbean.

When the Canal was built, the Gatun Dam was the world's largest earth dam, and Gatun Lake the world's largest artificial lake. Vessels are raised or lowered some 85 feet through the three chambers of the Gatun locks.

The Canal is aggressively maintained. During the last ten years, approximately \$100 million have been invested in modernizing its operation.

For a computer-generated animation that explains how the Panama Canal works, please visit the following page:

<http://www.ared.com/kora/java/pcc/javaani.html>

## Gamboa Rainforest Resort

One of the highlights of our recent trip to Panama, was our visit to the Gamboa Rainforest Resort. Located about 1 hour away (by car) from Panama City, the resort epitomizes luxury in a setting that inspires you to dream about unexplored jungles.

The resort has been carefully designed to provide a variety of educational and adventure experiences. For a bird's eye view of the Soberanian National Park and the Panama Canal, climb aboard the on-site specially designed Aerial Tram and glide quietly through the rainforest canopy, where you'll encounter plants and animals rarely seen by visitors on the ground.



To help you better understand the complexity of this remarkable ecosystem, Gamboa Rainforest Resort has created several exhibits to showcase the vast diversity of the rainforest's flora and fauna. Strolling along the pathways and trails located throughout the resort, you'll discover a variety of educational exhibits, each one designed to explain a different element of the rainforest. You can visit the freshwater fish aquarium, orchid and botanical gardens, butterfly nursery, turtle and iguana nesting areas, a reptile exhibit, historical and cultural displays, or sign up for various nature and observation tours guided by the resort's own naturalists. They will provide information about the various plants and animals found in the area. One of the main attractions is bird watching. Exploring the rainforest has never been easier!



The accommodations at the resort consist of 38 one and two bedroom air-conditioned, renovated villas and a new, 107 room luxury hotel. The villas, originally built in the 1930's and 40's, are the former residences of Panama Canal administrators and their families and have been completely refurbished to capture the ambiance of the original buildings. The main hotel facility is comprised of 107 deluxe, air-conditioned river front rooms, each with private balconies and hammocks, offering spectacular views of the Chagres River and the surrounding Soberania National Park.

## Panama: Three Cities in One



### Old Panama

About 8 kilometers from the center of the modern city, we find the ruins of what was the first city of Panama, which was destroyed in 1671 by the greed of pirate Henry Morgan, who set it on fire and destroyed it. In this trip through history, you will be able to appreciate the Cathedral of Our Lady of La Asunción, which still stands defying the passage of time. Other structures that can still be seen are: the Convents of San Jose, the Cathedral, the Municipal Government Building, the Slave Market and the San Juan de Dios Hospital. All of these are silent remnants of what was called "The Queen of the Pacific". You will also find in Old

Panama handicrafts at good prices in the National Market of Craftsmanship and the Cultural Center.

### Colonial Panama

Let us walk along alleys and colonial buildings, ruins and streets of stone, museums and antique churches, where three styles of construction are combined: Spanish, French and Italian, which give birth to an impressive architectural frame where the French and neoclassic styles prevail. In the "Old Quarter", founded in 1673, you will appreciate among other curiosities the famous "Arco Chato" or "Flat Arch", a fabulous architectural structure.

### Modern Panama

There is no doubt that Panama City, with about six hundred thousand inhabitants, is a cosmopolitan and modern metropolis with tall buildings and hundreds of banks; with its many commercial centers and "duty free" shops. Panama City is a buyer's paradise, where we find a great diversity of merchandise from all parts of the world.

Shopping in Central Avenue is an experience, one of the most important commercial avenues, transformed into a picturesque pedestrian road, adorned with beautiful plants and benches to rest.



## Rums of Panama



Ron Cortez (available in White, Gold and Añejo), alongside with Ron Abuelo, proudly work as ambassadors of Panama to the world. These rums are produced by Varela Hermanos, a company founded in 1908 by Mr. José Varela Blanco. Today the company is operated by members of the third generation of the family, who work hard to maintain traditions alive while at the same time embracing new technologies and a changing global economic climate.

By the time you read these words, Ron Abuelo will have a new companion product in its portfolio: "Ron Abuelo 7 Years Old," a rum deeply rooted in the style and quality that made "Ron Abuelo" a legend in Panama, but which embraced and conquered the challenge of improving the winning formula. Ron Abuelo 7 Years Old uses selected reserves of old rum, aged in the generous climate of the rain forest, to produce a rum of remarkable smoothness and sophistication.

Panama Jack and Rum Jumbie are two recent additions to the ever-growing line of spiced and flavored rums in the world. Both are also produced by Varela Hermanos and are also great examples of the versatility and creativity of Master Blender Mr. Francisco J. Fernandez Perez and his team of chemists and engineers.

## Seco Herrерano



Seco Herrерano is a distilled alcoholic beverage made from the same sugarcane employed in the production of Ron Cortez and Ron Abuelo. However, once distilled, it is blended with natural flavors to produce an exceptionally smooth and tasteful product. Seco Herrерano can be enjoyed with seltzer water, fruit juices and even milk! If you go to Panama and you do not try Seco Herrерano, you will miss out on an integral part of the country's gastronomical heritage.

## The Spirit of Cooking - by Margaret Ayala

### Eat The World Without Leaving Your City

Gourmets and food aficionados often have to travel long distances across continents to taste authentic cuisines from around the world. When in Panama, especially Panama City, you are rewarded with typical Panamanian fare, plus traditional dishes from Spain, Colombia, India, China and Brazil, to name a few. The influx of laborers needed to construct the Canal fueled the growth of ethnic restaurants required to cater to their diverse palates.



Must visit restaurants include: "Jimmy's" (excellent char broiled octopus), "Las Bóvedas," "Pencas Restaurante Bar," "Bucaneros" and "Angel Restaurante". Now I will share with you some typical recipes from Panama. Hope you enjoy them!

### Rum Plantains

4 Ripe Plantains  
6 Tbsp. Butter  
2 Tbsp. Flour  
4 Tbsp. Sugar  
2 Oranges (cut in thin slices with rind)  
1/2 C. Rum  
1/4 C. Corn Syrup  
1 Tbsp. Lemon Juice  
1/2 Lemon (grated)

Peel the plantains and cut them into 2-inch slices. In a large frying pan, melt the butter and brown the plantains slightly. In a bowl, mix the flour with the sugar and mix in the browned plantains. Grease a Pyrex bowl and spoon in the plantain mix. Cover with orange slices and rind. In a bowl,

mix the rum, lemon juice, grated lemon and corn syrup. Pour this mixture over the plantains, orange slices and rind. Bake at 350 for approximately 30-35 minutes, dipping the plantains in its own juice.

### Plantains a L'Orange

6 Ripe Plantains  
Juice of 3 Oranges  
2 Tbsp. Rum  
3/4 C. Bee's Honey  
1 tsp. Cinnamon



Peel the plantains and cut them in small pieces. Place them in a Pyrex bowl and cover them with the orange juice, rum, and bee honey. Sprinkle the cinnamon on top. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 350 degrees for approximately 30-35 minutes.

### Chicha de Arroz con Pina

Since it was first discovered by Columbus on the West Indies Island of Guadeloupe in 1493, the pineapple has been one of the world's favorite fruits. In addition to using it in foods and beverages, the Caribs placed a pineapple on their doors as a sign of hospitality. It was so highly esteemed by the earliest settlers in the new world that the pineapple motif soon became a favorite European decoration.

Commercially, in addition to the fruit and juice, the pineapple shells, ends, and trimmings are processed to make citrus acid used in making drugs, soft drinks and foods. Even the enzymes from the stumps of the mature plant are used in the brewing of beer and as a tenderizer. Many thousands of tons of pineapples from

Hawaii are carried through the Canal each year en route to world markets. Several varieties are available in Panama during dry season and the beginning of rainy season. Panamanians will tell you that the world's best pineapples come from the Island of Taboga. One of the favorite beverages in Panama is made from the peel of the pineapple.

1 Pineapple  
1/2 C. Rice  
1 C. Evaporated Milk  
Sugar (to taste)

Select a good sized pineapple. Wash it thoroughly and peel it. Boil the peel with the rice in water to cover. When the rice is tender, discard the peel and strain. Add milk and sugar to the liquid and serve very cold.



## Rum Soaked Pineapple

Here is another Panamanian favorite: cut off a pineapple about 1 1/2 inches down from the top. Remove the core being careful not to cut through the bottom. Pour rum into the pineapple. Put the top back on it and place in the refrigerator overnight. The pineapple absorbs the rum and the rum takes on the pineapple

flavor. You will have a delicious rum drink. Slice the pineapple and serve as a fruit course or use as a garnish. Especially good with ham.

One of the most common of wild fruit trees in Panama is the jobo, which reaches a height of from 40 to 60 feet and bears an abundance of fruit. The ripe fruit, about 1 1/2 inches long and 3/4 inches across, makes an excellent beverage. It has a thin, bright yellow skin and a soft juicy pulp around a large seed. The flavor varies considerably from tree to tree, ranging from sweet to sweet-tart. Harvesting the jobo is easy as the fruit falls when it is ripe. Pick it up from the ground before the insects and birds get to it.

## Drunken "Soup"

1 Bizcocho (Sponge Cake)  
12 Eggs  
3/4 lb. All Purpose Flour  
1 lb. Raisins  
1 lb. Prunes  
1 Bottle of Ron Abuelo  
1 Bottle of Dry Sherry  
1 Bottle of Moscatel Wine  
3/4 lb. Sugar  
Cinnamon Sticks  
12 Cloves

Cover sugar, raisins, prunes, cinnamon and cloves with water and bring to a boil. Let it cool down and add the rum, sherry and wine. Cut the Bizcocho into cubes, place it in a deep pan and pour the mixture over it.

Note: Variations of this "Soup" dessert recipe exist under the names of "**Bocado del Rey**", "**Bocado de la Reyna**". You don't have to use the Sherry nor the Wine, but if you do, they add a unique taste and depth to the mixture.

## Traditional Drinks of Panama

### Sorrel Beverage

Fruit beverages are good year around, but sorrel, the light, spicy concoction made from the bright, red blossoms of a shrubby plant of the ornamental hibiscus family, combined with other flavorings, seems to be more appropriate during the Christmas season, when it is available. Sorrel is also related to the okra family. It is not really a fruit but the petals of a flower. The deep, red petals have a tangy flavor similar to the cranberry. Make sorrel beverage like this:

2 C. Sorrel Flowers/Petals  
1/4 oz. Crushed Ginger Root  
2 Cloves  
1 Sm. Piece Orange Peel  
3/4 C. Sugar  
4 C. Boiling Water

Cut off the hard portion at the base of the flower, discard the seed pod. Wash the sorrel petals. Place in a large bowl with the ginger, cloves and orange peel. Add the boiling water and let it steep overnight. The following day, strain the liquid and add the sugar. Stir well and serve cold or with ice. By adding a dash of rum, you'll have a delicious, beverage.

### Fruit of the Palm

The refreshing and palatable drink is from the fruit of the palm tree, the constant supplier of food, shelter, clothing, timber, wax and wine. Furnishing tannin, dyeing agents, resin and a host of minor products make it the most valuable tree to the native population in the tropics and one of the world's most important crop trees.

The ripe fruit gives us the familiar shredded coconut, and oil from it is used in making soaps, shampoos, detergents, oils, margarine, vegetable shortening, synthetic rubber, glycerine, hydraulic brake fluid and plasticizing for safety glass!

Mounds of green pipas and ripe coconuts can be found throughout the year at markets, at fruit stalls along the highway, and in every town and village in the Republic.

To enjoy the cool beverage, simply cut off the top of the pipa and drink it directly from the fruit or use a straw. Or pour it into a pitcher, spoon out the tender jelly-like pipa meat and add it to the water. A little sugar to taste may be added. For a more "spirited" beverage, add rum.

### Tamarind Juice

Misnamed by Europeans who thought the brown pods were fruit of the palm because the Arabians called it "tamar hindi" or Indian date, the tree is not a palm at all. It is a tall stately tree with lacy foliage that curls up at sundown. The fruit is really a pod, from about 1 1/2 inches to 8 inches long, often growing in clusters of three or four. The pods are filled with seeds and an acid, juicy pulp, dark brown in color. The beverage is made by shelling the fragile, tree-dried pods, removing the sticky pulp from the seeds and mixing it with water. The pulp is considered to have laxative properties while the seeds are astringent.

### Chichita Bristol

Chichita is a delicious and refreshing Panamanian drink. Unfortunately there are no easy substitutes for Seco Herrero.

1 Bottle of Seco Herrero  
3 1/2 C. Grapefruit Juice  
2 1/2 C. Orange Juice  
2 C. Pineapple Juice  
2 Tbsp. Grenadine  
1 Tbsp. Angostura Bitters  
1/4 C. Lime Juice

Mix all ingredients in a pitcher. Add the ice prior to serving.

# Zacapa Rum Tasting at Miami Beach China Grill

On Thursday May 20th, Dana Wine & Spirits (importers of Ron Zacapa Centenario) and China Grill hosted a night of Fine Dining at China Grill's Miami establishment (Miami Beach, Florida).



Rum expert Luis Ayala was at hand to share his views and experiences with the selected crowd, which included industry people as well as key restaurateurs and rum aficionados. The dining extravaganza comprised of a five course meal, representing some of the dishes that have made China Grill one of the hottest and trendiest spots in the country.

Each of the five entries was accompanied by an original cocktail, customized by China Grill's dexterous staff and designed specifically to highlight Ron Zacapa Centenario. The recipes are:

## Fashion Fruit

¼ Strawberry Fresh  
1 Orange Slice  
¾ oz. Simple Syrup  
1 ½ oz. Ron Zacapa  
½ oz. Kerns Apple Nectar

In rocks glass muddle strawberry, orange and simple syrup. Add ice, rum and apple nectar and shake. Garnish with an apple chip.

## Tamarind Teaser

1 Lemon Wedge  
1 Lime Wedge  
1 Orange Slice  
¾ oz. Simple Syrup  
1 ½ oz. Ron Zacapa  
1 ½ oz. Tamarind Juice (Le Fe)  
Splash of Orange Juice

In highball glass, squeeze pieces of fruit. Add simple syrup. Add ice, rum, tamarind juice and orange juice. Shake and serve.

## Caribbean Cooler

¼ oz. Fresh Pomegranate Puree  
1 oz. Passion Fruit Puree  
½ oz. Apricot Brandy  
1 ½ oz. Ron Zacapa  
1 ½ oz. Kerns Guava Nectar

In wine glass add all ingredients and ice. Shake well and serve!

## Honey Martini

½ Fresh Lemon  
1 ½ oz. Ron Zacapa  
1 ½ oz. Honey  
1 oz. Club Soda

Prepare honey mix (equal parts honey and water), squeeze lemon in shaker, add rum and honey mix. Add club soda, shake and strain into Martini glass. Garnish with a lemon wedge.

## Ginger Kissed Apple

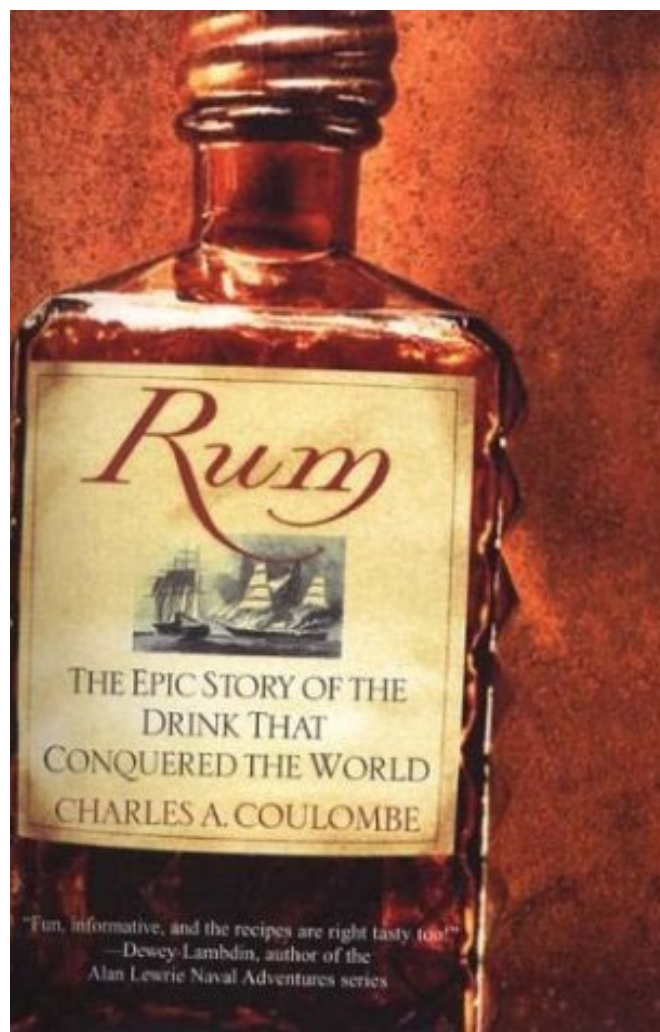
2 Tbsp. Apple Sauce  
½ oz. Simple Syrup  
1 ½ oz. Ron Zacapa  
1/8 tsp. Fresh Ginger Juice  
1 oz. Kerns Apple Nectar  
1 oz. Club Soda

Chop and squeeze ginger to extract fresh juice. In a rocks glass add apple sauce, simple syrup, rum, ginger juice and apple nectar. Shake with ice. Return to glass and when putting in glass add club soda.

## China Grill

404 Washington Avenue  
Miami Beach, FL 305-534-2211

## Book Review: "Rum"



**RUM – The Epic Story of the Drink that Conquered the World** by Charles A. Coulombe.

In a world full of books which endlessly recount well-known stories and facts about rum, it is refreshing to come across this title. In "Rum," Mr. Coulombe manages to share with his readers many little known facts about rum, such as the religious and historical impact rum has had on society.

The book is well written, well researched and fills an important gap in today's rum literature: the impact of rum in our culture.

This book is not about rum styles, production methods, ratings and distillery propaganda. In fact, only a dozen pages (out of nearly 300) are devoted to naming rum companies and their brands. Instead, readers will find themselves immersed in passages that narrate historical events, religious backgrounds and economic conditions that led to the quick adoption of rum as a pillar of many societies.

Chapter 9 "Rum as Sacrament: Voodoo and Obeah" is particularly interesting, as it exposes rum a religious artifact or component.

Overall, an excellent book on the subject of rum. We wish Mr. Coulombe great success with this printing so that future editions may benefit from the addition of charts, maps and illustrations, which would greatly enhance the educational value of this piece.

Reviewed by: Luis K. Ayala, Rum Runner Press, Inc.

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Gold Medal  
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Ron Abuelo Añejo was recently awarded a "Gold Medal" in the "Aged Rums" category and recognized as "Exceptional Rum" and "Best Buy" by the Beverage Testing Institute of Chicago. Varela Hermanos, S.A. proudly celebrates this honor, and shares its passion to produce the best aged rum.



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*Obra: Victoria  
Técnica: Óleo  
Autor: Al Sprague*

*"The Pollera is a product of an anonymous art which grew and was developed in our rural homes as well as in the purest environment of our feminine craft".*

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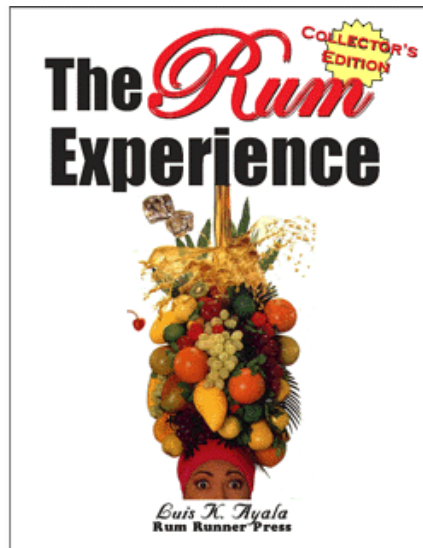
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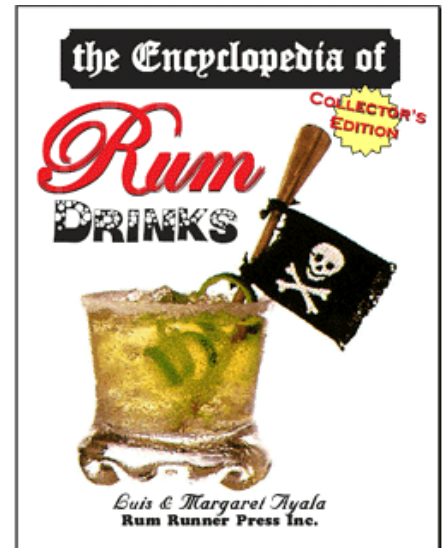
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- 1) To educate people around the world about the many faces of Rum.
- 2) To help rum Distillers, Blenders, Importers and Resellers spread the word about their wonderful products.
- 3) To promote the responsible and sensible enjoyment of what is perhaps the world's most underrated distilled spirit today.