

Getting Around Boquete

Boquete district, Chiriquí, Panama · checked 2026-10-31 · BQTWatch · Buses, local vans, taxis and drivers - which to use, how to use them and what they cost.

QUICK GUIDE - ESTIMATED FARES (cash, US dollars)

Taxi in and near town: \$2 - \$4 a ride.

Local vans (colectivos) to the neighbourhoods: about \$0.60 - \$1 for short runs, \$2 - \$3 for the longer loops.

Bus to David: about \$2, roughly every 20 - 30 minutes, early morning to about 9 pm, about 1 hour.

Taxi to David or David airport: about \$25 - \$45 for the car - agree the price first.

Tips: not expected on buses or vans. For taxis, round up or leave the change; give more (about 10%) when the driver carries bags, waits for you or does a long trip.

Carry small bills and coins. No cards, no change for \$20s. Uber and InDrive do not operate in Boquete.

Fares are estimates from 2023-2026 reports and change with fuel prices, time of day and distance. For anything beyond a short hop, agree the price before you get in.

1. Which to use when

Trip	Best choice	Estimated cost
Around downtown, groceries, rain, after dark	Taxi - flag one on the street or call a driver you know.	\$2 - \$4
Home to your neighbourhood on a budget	Local van (colectivo) from downtown - destination on the windshield.	\$0.60 - \$3
Shopping in David, bags only	Bus to David, then a David taxi between stores.	~\$2 each way + \$2 - \$4 per taxi
Big load - furniture, appliances, building materials, a PriceSmart run	Pickup-truck taxi or a hired driver with a pickup. Agree a flat price.	Agree first
David airport (DAV) with luggage	Taxi or driver booked ahead, door to door.	\$35 - \$45 for the car (about \$18 - \$23 each for two) + tip
Panama City	Fly from David airport, or bus from David terminal (day or overnight).	Bus \$15 - \$20; flight ~\$80 - \$150+
Bocas del Toro, Costa Rica	Door-to-door shuttle from Boquete (Bocas), or bus from David terminal to the border.	Shuttle \$25 - \$45; border bus ~\$2

2. Local vans and buses (colectivos)

- Small buses and vans run loops from downtown Bajo Boquete out to the neighbourhoods - for example Alto Boquete, Arco Iris, Bajo Mono, Alto Quiel, Volcancito / El Salto, Horqueta, Palmira, Jaramillo - and back. The **destination is written on the windshield**.

- **Where to catch them:** the vans wait downtown **by Supermercado Bruna** (Avenida Central and Calle 1a, one block north of the central park), or **flag one anywhere along its route**. In Alto Boquete

they pass Plaza San Francisco often.

- **Bus stops:** there are numerous covered bus stops (paradas) throughout the district - wait at one, or wave from the roadside.
- **Paying:** cash to the driver when you get off. Short runs (Alto Boquete to downtown) about \$0.60 - \$1; longer loops such as Bajo Mono or Volcancito \$2 - \$3.
- **Getting off:** say "*parada, por favor*" or tell the driver your stop when you board. For a small extra charge some drivers will take you to your door if it is near the route.
- **Hours:** no published timetable. Most routes run about every 30 - 45 minutes during the day and stop in the early evening. Do not count on them after dark.



Colectivo vans waiting by Supermercado Bruna, downtown Bajo Boquete - the route is on the windshield.

3. The bus to David

- Larger buses (some coaches, some old U.S. school buses) marked **BOQUETE - DAVID**. In Boquete the stop is on Avenida Belisario Porras by the central park. **Buy your ticket on the bus.** You can flag the bus pretty much anywhere on its route (Alto Boquete, Plaza San Francisco, Palmira turn and Vía Boquete). In David it leaves from the David bus terminal (Terminal de David, Avenida del Estudiante).
- **When:** about every 20 - 30 minutes, from roughly 5:00 - 6:00 am until about 9:00 pm. The trip takes 45 minutes to an hour.
- **Fare:** about \$2 (\$1.75 - \$2.50 reported 2024-2026). Exact change is appreciated.
- **Getting off before the terminal:** the bus will stop along Vía Boquete as it comes into David - tell the driver where you want to get off.
- **Stops on the way:** ask for the Caldera turn-off for the Caldera hot springs (about \$1.50), then a short taxi ride or a colectivo the rest of the way.
- Bags and shopping are fine; very large boxes may be refused or charged extra - use a pickup for those.



The Boquete - David bus at its stop on Av. Belisario Porras by the central park.

4. Taxis - including pickup trucks

- Yellow taxis are easy to find downtown and along Vía Boquete. There are no meters: rides in and near town are usually **\$2 - \$4**, a little more at night or with a lot of shopping.

- Outlying areas (upper Volcancito, Jaramillo, Palmira, Caldera, the Volcán Barú ranger station) cost more - **agree the price before you get in**. Example reported in 2026: Boquete to the Volcán Barú ranger station about \$15 each way.
- **Some Boquete taxis are pickup trucks.** They can carry what will not fit in a car - furniture, appliances, a mattress, plants, building materials, a big order from PriceSmart or Do It Center - and can be hired just for a **delivery**, with or without you riding along. Describe the load and agree a price up front.
- **Suggestion:** when you find a driver you like, save his WhatsApp number. Most regulars will take bookings for early starts, airport runs and deliveries.
- **Uber / InDrive:** not available for pickups in Boquete (2026). Uber does work in David - useful for getting around David or a ride back up to Boquete (reported \$16 - \$18 from David).



A Boquete pickup-truck taxi: room for passengers in the cab and a load in the bed.

5. Private drivers

- Many residents use a trusted private driver for **airport runs, shopping days in David, medical appointments and trips to Panama City**. You can usually hire by the trip, the hour or the day.
- **Book ahead.** Good drivers are busy - arrange the trip days in advance, especially for early flights and in high season. **If you wait until the last minute, your driver may not be available.**
- Ask neighbours for drivers they recommend. Confirm the price and the waiting time included before the day. For Panama City trips, also agree who pays the highway tolls and parking.
- Rough guide: **David or David airport** about \$35 - \$45 one way for the car (about \$18 - \$23 each for two). **Panama City:** private van about \$200 - \$250 for the whole vehicle (about \$50 - \$63 each for four); a shared shuttle van costs about \$90 per person (2026).

6. A shopping day in David

- **By bus (cheapest):** Boquete - David bus (about \$2). Get off along Vía Boquete near the stores you want, or go to the terminal. Use David taxis between stores - short rides about \$2 - \$4 (estimate). Take the bus home from the terminal or flag it on Vía Boquete. Leave David before dark if you can.
- **By taxi or driver (easiest):** one car for the day - he waits while you shop and loads the car. Agree the total price and number of hours before you leave.
- **A frequent stop is Plaza Terronal** ("Gringo Corner"), on the Vía Interamericana at Avenida Obaldía - Supermercados Rey, Conway and other stores in one place. Other popular stores and malls: PriceSmart; **Federal Mall** (Stevens, Titán, La Onda, El Costo, El Fuerte, Cinépolis cinema); City Mall, El Campeón (clothing, Avenida Bolívar), Do It Center, Novey, Cochez, Romero and El Machetazo.
- **Bought something big?** Ask the store about delivery to Boquete, or send a pickup-truck taxi or driver to collect it.
- Hospitals and specialists are also in David (see the Emergency Numbers sheet).

7. The airport and Panama City

- **David airport (Enrique Malek, DAV)** is about 5 km south of David, roughly an hour from Boquete. **Taxi or driver: about \$35 - \$45 for the car** - agree the price before you get in, or book ahead. There is no direct bus; the budget route is the Boquete bus to David terminal, then a taxi to the airport (about \$5 - \$6 for the car, estimate).
- **Allow extra time for flights.** In dry season (December - April) traffic on the main road through Bajo Boquete can add 20 - 30 minutes, and so can school opening and closing times.
- **Flights to Panama City** take about an hour. Copa flies to **Tocumen (PTY)**, the international airport - best for connecting to international flights. Air Panama flies to **Albrook (Marcos A. Gelabert)**, the domestic airport in the city. Fares roughly \$80 - \$150+ one way; book early.
- **Bus to Panama City:** from David terminal, about hourly by day plus overnight express buses (Padafront, Terminales David - Panamá). 6 - 8 hours, about \$15 - \$20, to Albrook bus terminal. Buy at the window. Overnight buses are very cold - bring a jacket.
- **Albrook to Tocumen airport:** the Panama Metro (rapid transit) runs from Albrook to Tocumen international airport - Line 1 from Albrook, change to Line 2 at San Miguelito, then the airport branch. Cheaper than a taxi if your luggage is light.

8. Further afield

Where	How	Estimated cost
Bocas del Toro	Door-to-door shuttle van from Boquete, about 4 hours including the water taxi; book a day ahead. Or bus from David terminal to Almirante (about 4 hours) plus boat.	Shuttle \$25 - \$45; bus \$8.50 - \$10 + boat \$6 - \$12
Costa Rica (Paso Canoas border)	Bus from David terminal to the border, about 1.5 hours.	About \$2
Caldera hot springs	David bus to the Caldera turn-off, then a short taxi ride or a colectivo - or a taxi all the way from Boquete.	\$1.50 bus + taxi or colectivo

9. Tips and discounts

- **Jubilados / pensionados** (women 55+, men 60+, Panamanian or resident foreigners) are entitled by law to **30% off interurban transport** (such as David - Panama City buses) and **25% off airline tickets**. Show your cédula or carnet de jubilado when you buy.
- **Tipping:** taxi drivers - round up or leave the change; about 10% for extra help, waiting or a long trip.
- Carry \$1 and \$5 bills and coins. Drivers rarely have change for \$20.
- Useful Spanish: "*¿Cuánto cuesta a ...?*" (how much to ...?), "*Aquí, por favor*" (here, please), "*¿Me espera?*" (will you wait for me?).

Sources

Bus Boquete - David, fares and hours: PanamaSpot "Cómo llegar a Boquete sin carro" and "Boquete Travel Guide" (2026); Dan Round the World (updated Jan 2026); The Lost and Found Hostel bus-fare guide (Aug 2026); The Haven Boquete transportation page; Wikivoyage (Boquete, David). **Local vans:** PanamaSpot (2026); Two Travel Turtles (2023); TripAdvisor Boquete forum (older). **Taxis, Uber:** Vidala Boquete expat guide (2026); PanamaSpot (2026); The Haven; Dan Round the World. **Drivers, shuttles:** PanamaSpot (2026). **Flights:** Casa Solution (Copa vs Air Panama); Vidala (2026). **Tipping:** Tripmasters "How to tip in Panama". **Metro to Tocumen:** La Estrella de Panamá, "El aterrizaje del Metro de Panamá en el aeropuerto de Tocumen". **Discounts:** La Estrella de Panamá, "Jubilados y pensionados en Panamá: todos los descuentos ... en 2026". **Ticket sales, bus stops, van stop, pickup taxis, David stores:** BQTWatch local knowledge; Plaza Terronal and El Campeón from store location listings; Federal Mall stores from The Visitor Panama (2020), Prestige Panama Realty and Titán store listing. **Photos:** BQTWatch (October 2026). Fares change: please send corrections with a source.