

Finca Magneta (Orlando's Farm)
Anna Cornell

Just a few kilometers from the Chiquita banana plantation in western Panama lies a very different kind of agricultural farm, Finca Magneta, also known as Orlando's Farm. In the tropical highlands, this small scale cacao farm is a hub for biodiversity, sustainability, and deeply rooted philosophy. Finca Magneta draws in ecotourists, students, and organic farming enthusiasts eager to connect with the land and learn from Orlando, whose approach to agriculture is both inspiring and wildly successful.

Visitors to Finca Magneta have the opportunity to learn directly from Orlando, a passionate farmer whose every decision is guided by intention. "You must know yourself before you can care for the land," he says, a belief reflected in every element of the farm's design. Orlando manages fungal threats to his cacao trees not with chemicals, but through close observation and a desire to understand the behavior of the fungus before responding. Throughout the farm, you will also observe Orlando's crossed cacao plants he designed to produce shorter trees with larger fruits, blending traditional knowledge with experimentation. His philosophy encourages visitors to slow down, observe patterns in nature, and respond thoughtfully, rather than reactively.

The experience is hands-on and deeply personal. After walking the farm, visitors often share a homemade meal with Orlando in his home. Through my time at the farm, I was deeply inspired by Orlando and his approach to land stewardship. Hearing his philosophies firsthand and then witnessing how they manifested in the design and care of his farm was a powerful experience. His thoughtful way of working with nature, along with his ability to captivate his audience through both words and actions, left a lasting impression on me. Being welcomed into his home with the same generosity and intention he brings to his farm made the experience feel even more personal and meaningful.

Finca Magneta's rich biodiversity, slow farming philosophy, and emphasis on observation and connection make it an ideal stop for anyone interested in tropical permaculture or sustainable food systems through the lens of community and care.