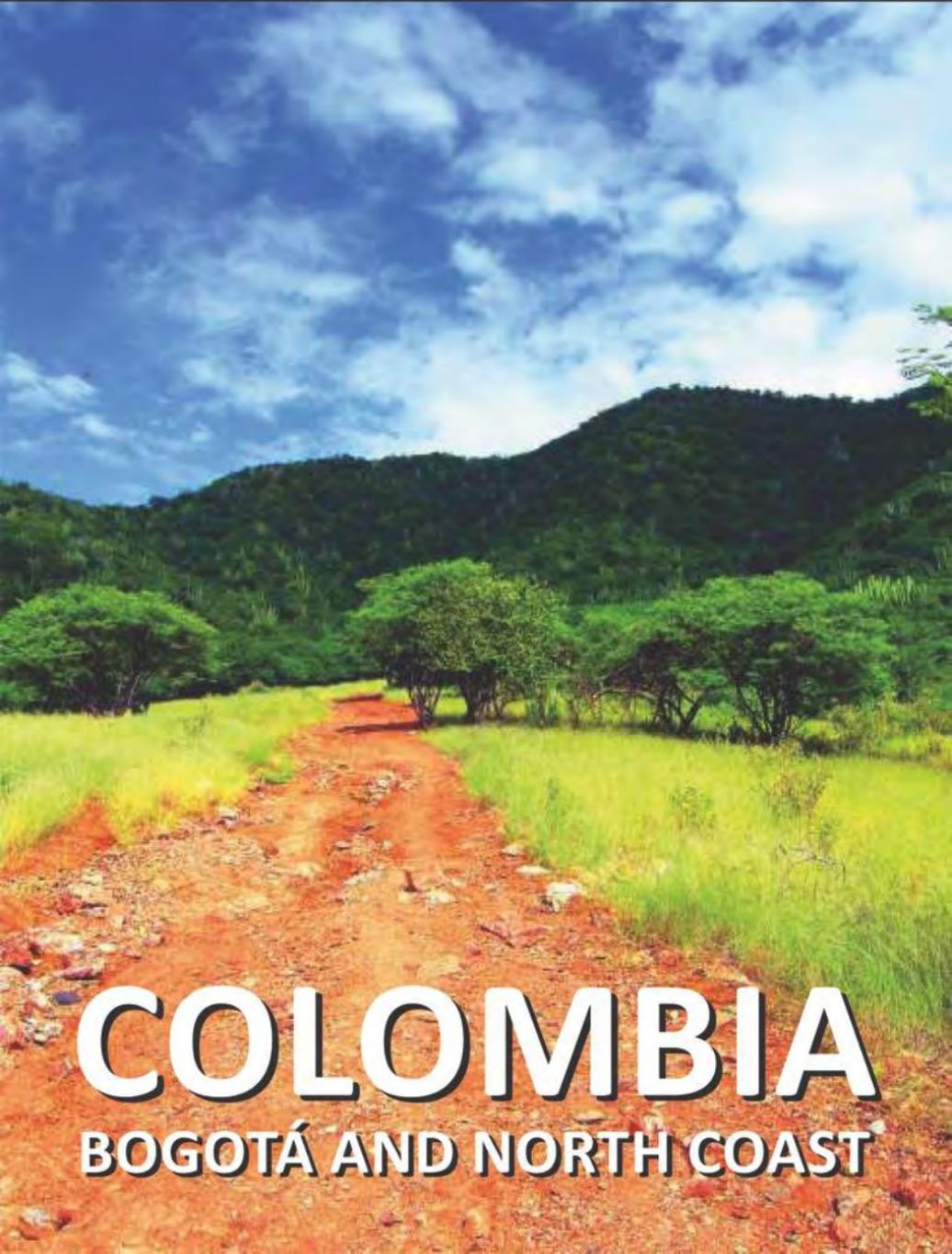


EXPLORE TRAVEL GUIDES



COLOMBIA
BOGOTÁ AND NORTH COAST

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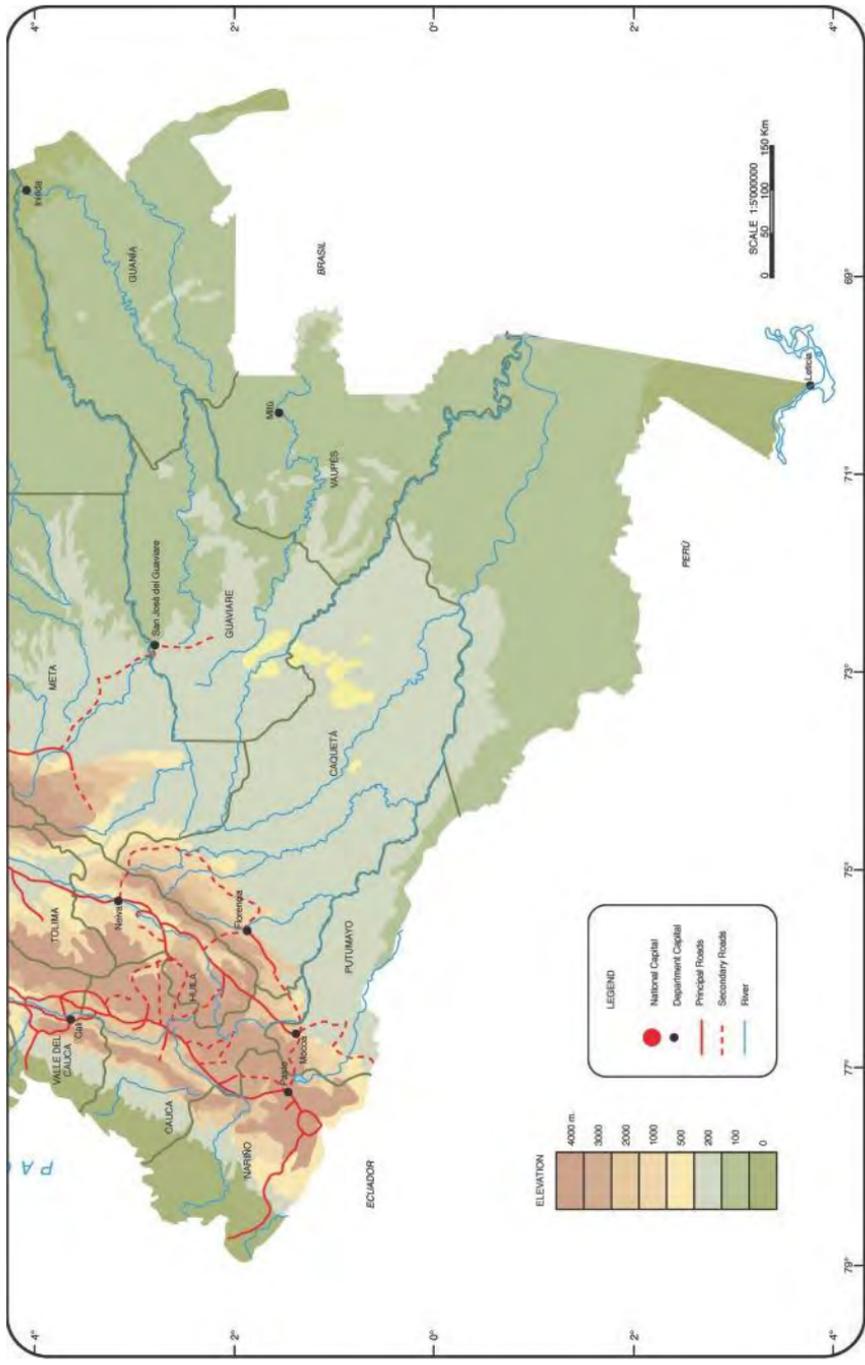
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Written and researched by

Justin Cohen





BOGOTÁ



BOGOTÁ



BOGOTÁ



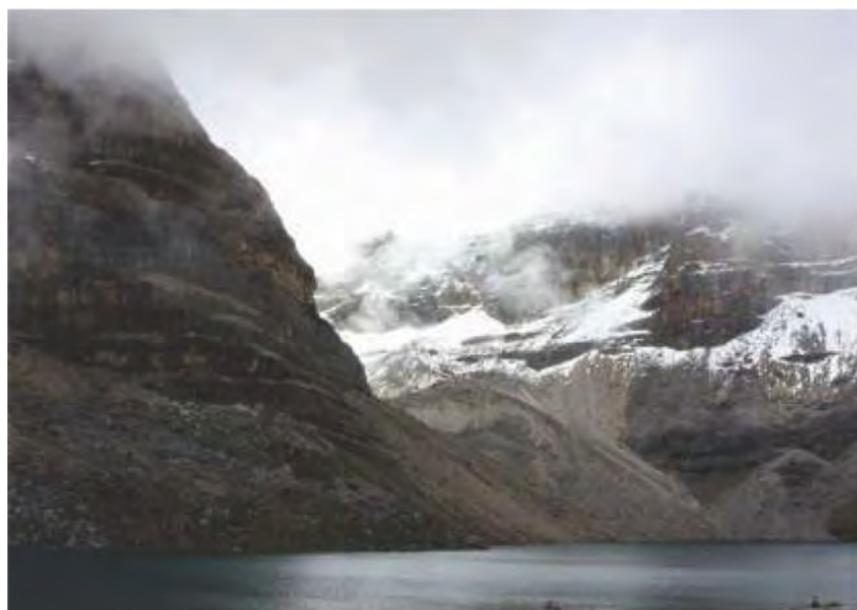
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PARQUE NATURAL CHICAQUE



SUESCA



NEVADO DEL COCUY



TOLÚ



PARQUE TAYRONA



MINCA



SIERRA NEVADA DE SANTA MARTA



EL RODADERO



TAGANGA



SANTA MARTA



RIOHACHA



CABO DE LA VELA



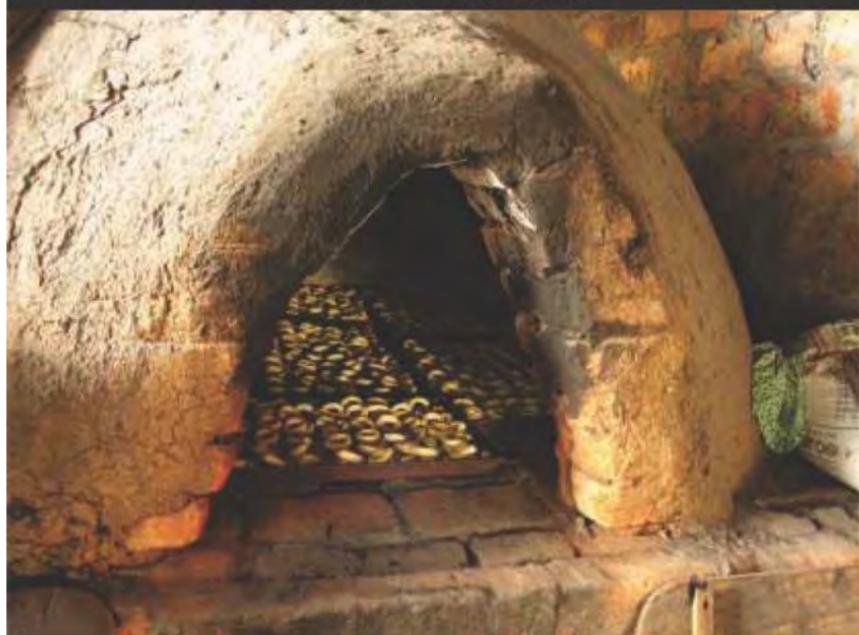
VALLEDUPAR



NABUSIMAKE



TRADITIONAL HAMMOCK



TRADITIONAL FOOD - PANDEBONO

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GENERAL INFORMATION

This book is intended to be a resource to help plan your lodging, activity, restaurant, nightlife and transportation choices while visiting Bogotá and the North Coast of Colombia.

PRICES

The prices have been broken down into three categories for both accommodations and restaurants. All prices used in this book are in Colombian pesos (COP).

Accommodations

Budget = Under 30,000 COP per night

Mid-Range = Between 30,001 COP and 80,000 COP per night

Expensive = More than 80,001 COP per night

Restaurants

Budget = Under 15,000 COP for a meal and a drink

Mid-Range = Between 15,001 COP and 25,000 COP for a meal/drink

Expensive = Over 25,001 COP for a meal and drink

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CLIMATE

There are climate charts in Celsius and Fahrenheit throughout the book for larger cities that have airport weather reporting systems. The weather in Colombia varies according to each region.

Although Bogotá is almost always cold and rainy, the sun does show itself, especially from mid-December through January. It's recommended to pack a rain coat, sweatshirt and other mountain weather clothing. People respond to weather differently. If you don't react well to cold weather, it's best to bring gloves and a warm hat.

The North Coast's climate is extremely hot. It's recommended to pack clothing that you can breathe in. It rains on the coast all year, but especially in September and October. August and November also see frequent rainfall. The rain will come and go, but the rainy season can have an effect on people's vacation times. If you're looking for a pure beach experience, it's best to plan your time on the coast in a careful manner.

Medellín and Bucaramanga have the most pleasant climates. Medellín has even earned the nickname "the City of Eternal Spring". If you're looking for prototypical perfect weather these two locations are recommended.

The Coffee Region is pleasant, but it has mountain-like weather conditions. It's best to come prepared when visiting these areas.

Cali has hot weather, but not as hot as the coast.

CLOTHES

Packing for Colombia is not an easy task. With the drastically different climates a person must choose their clothing choices wisely. It's highly recommended that you bring the following items for your stay.

All of Colombia

Raincoat and pants

A pair of pants

Long sleeve shirt with collar (men)

Broken in hiking boots or reliable shoes to walk in

For men with large feet, an extra pair of shoes, as they can be hard to find

For Bogotá (depending on your cold tolerance)

Hat

Gloves

Heavy sweatshirt or sweater

For the North Coast

Bathing suit

Sandals or flip-flops

Light weather clothing

For Nights on the Town

When you go out you will want to look nice. Colombians are excellent dressers and fashion is important. For men a collared shirt and pants are essential. Most places you can wear jeans, but if you're going to a club, a nice outfit from head to toe is recommended. Women can adhere to their own style, but making an effort is essential. You should expect more attention from people based on the fact that you're a foreigner. Like most places in the world the way you dress has a huge impact on your first impression.

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Buying Clothing

You can find all the clothing that you forgot to bring with you anywhere in Colombia. Some items may be more expensive, but if you take your time you can find what you need at reasonable prices.

Laundry

It's also best to remember the length of your trip and your laundry requirements. Most hostels or hotels have a service to do laundry. It can be costly in certain parts of the country. You must think of your clothes situation deeply as having the proper clean clothing takes effort and planning.

FOOD

Eating in Colombia is an experience in itself. On the coast, fish-based meals are common and easy to find. Colombian meals are large and usually include soup, a meat dish, and a few sides. They are usually more on the un-healthy side. Vegetarian restaurants can be found, but they are not common. If you take the time, you can find acceptable meals by dining in restaurants, on the street and purchasing food from grocery stores.

Restaurants

Different types of food can be found all over Colombia. International menus are common alongside Colombian food. Chicken, meat and fish are the core items on the menu.

Streets

Cheap meals can be found on all Colombian streets. Fast food such as hotdogs, hamburgers, pizza and other common junk food are available in all cities. Colombian hand-held snacks such as arepas and empanadas can be found all over the country. It's HIGHLY recommended NOT to eat from street vendors unless you've been traveling in Latin America for an extended period of time. Your body needs to adjust and eating vendor food is the fastest way to ruin your

vacation. Even seasoned travelers get sick when eating off the street. Please be careful.

Grocery Stores

There are major chains of grocery stores in big and mid-sized cities. You can find a great variety of products that allows you to cook at your hostel and put together meals with different items. Many backpackers in Colombia save money by cooking their favorite meals in their hostel.

Fruit

Colombia is a fruit lovers paradise. Smoothies and fruit drinks are very popular. You can find fruits in restaurants, stores and in the street.

Vegetables

Vegetables can be found all over Colombia, but not with the same variety as fruit. It's hard to find a good salad, but it is possible. Vegetable lovers need to make an effort to get their daily intake, but it's not an impossible task. One should be careful about how well-washed the vegetables are before ordering salad - cooked vegetables are more reliable.

EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

Embassies are located in Bogotá and many countries maintain consulates throughout Colombia in other major cities. Please consult the following website below for your home country. Please check if the information is correct before coming to Colombia. It's important to understand your country's level of assistance if you run into a problem. Most embassies encourage you to register upon arrival in a foreign country. (www.embassiesabroad.com/embassies-in/Colombia).

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DOCUMENTS

All foreign travelers must have a valid passport to enter Colombia. It's the traveler's responsibility to make sure their passport is current and has at least six months of validity. There must be blank pages to stamp upon arrival. **It's highly recommended that travelers make multiple photo copies of their main passport page and the page with their entrance stamp.** While in Colombia, law enforcement officers and soldiers have the right to ask for identification without probable cause. A photo copy of your passport can be presented. Your passport along with your ATM and credit cards are your most important possessions. It's critical to be aware of your passport's location at all times. By carrying a copy of your passport you lessen the risk of losing it or having it stolen. The last thing you want to do is spend your precious vacation days at the embassy dealing with a replacement.

If you wish to drive you must have a valid driver's license. Driver licenses are recognized from foreign countries. If you want to ride a motorcycle you must have a valid motorcycle designation on your driver's license.

VISAS

Below is a list of countries that are eligible for basic tourist visas. This list is subject to change and it's the **traveler's responsibility** to verify their personal requirements based on their home country.

Andorra, Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei-Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Holland, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea (Rep), Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Norway, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Panama,

Paraguay, Peru, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Spain, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Trinidad & Tobago, Turkey, UK, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela.

Citizens from the above list can travel within Colombia for a **period of six months**.

Citizens from other countries must inquire with the Colombian government for their visa requirement.

Upon arrival in Colombia tourists will receive either a 30, 60, or 90 day tourist stamp. **It's critical that you get a stamp for the total length of your trip. Ask the agent for the longest length possible (90 days)**. If you're given a 30 day stamp and plan on being in Colombia for 40 days you will have a legal problem. It is critical that you clarify your length of stay before the agent stamps your passport. By law you need an ongoing ticket to another country. This is not always asked for, but you need to be ready to prove that you will be leaving Colombia. If you plan on staying in Colombia past your original visa expiration you must visit the Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS). You can receive 30-day extensions up to the maximum of a six month total stay in Colombia. There is a process to learn this extension. You must present yourself to DAS to receive the current requirements. A representative of DAS will give you instructions that will most likely consist of possessing a valid passport, having your fingerprints taken, taking a trip to the bank, and providing photos, as well as other safeguards. In big cities, it's best to plan a good part of your day to do this. **It's highly recommended you visit the DAS offices in smaller cities** as they provide quicker service because they see less foreign visitors. It's impossible to list the exact requirements as they can change and are also interpreted differently in different DAS offices.

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Explore Travel Guides Colombia insists that **ALL** travelers research their own personal situation for their visa requirements. The above information is subject to change and it's critical all travelers understand their visa situation before arriving in Colombia.

MONEY

Colombian Peso

The currency in Colombia is the Colombian peso. The value of the Colombian peso is liable to fluctuate on a daily basis. From Jan. to Mar. 2013, the peso fluctuated between 1,758 - 1,818 COP per dollar.

The peso is referred to as COP, in this travel guide.

The COP is found in 100, 200 and 500 coins and in 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 and 50,000 paper notes. It's convenient to carry coins to pay for things on the street. **It's critical to have an understanding of Colombian money upon arrival.**

20,000 and 50,000 notes are very difficult to change in many places. A smart traveler will hoard smaller notes and change the larger bills at grocery stores, gas stations, higher-end restaurants, chain restaurants and establishments that see higher levels of business. Small stores, taxis and people on the street have a hard time changing the larger notes.

Counterfeit money floats around Colombia and you will notice that most cashiers and vendors check the notes. It's difficult to give a lesson in a travel guide on how to spot these bad bills. The best practice is to check your bills when they come out of the ATM. If they look funny ask a trusted Colombian to take a look at the note. If it's bad, you need to make a trip to the bank or accept that you have a new souvenir with a story. **Don't pay your taxi with a 20,000 COP or 50,000 COP note.** It's best to have exact change for taxis. There is a common taxi scam in which the driver switches your original note with a

counterfeit and returns it to you telling you he can't accept it. Two travelers have reported this scam during the writing of this book.

Exchanging Money

You can exchange money at the airport, but the rate of exchange is not favorable for travelers. In major cities there are money exchange businesses that give better rates. In Bogotá you can exchange money at the mall at Parque 93 and the mall at Usaquén. There are multiple money exchange businesses. If you're in Colombia on business and are dealing with large money exchange transactions you need to take precautions. The Colombian National Police will assist with security escorts for money exchanges to a safe point, upon request from foreigners.

It's recommended to use ATMs to receive your money in Colombia.

ATMs/ Credit Cards

Colombia has a modern and extensive banking system. There are dozens of banks and you can find ATMs everywhere. Upon arriving at the airport you can find multiple ATMs to receive your original traveling money. ATMs in Colombia accept the same network of ATM cards throughout the world. Still, some travelers have reported problems with using their ATM in Colombia. This is rare, but it happens. It's best to carry an extra ATM card to protect from this happening.

Travelers MUST inform their bank that they will be using their card in Colombia and other countries where they're traveling. Many banks will shut off access to cards that are being used abroad. A simple phone call to the bank before your travels can help avoid this. Banks do this to protect their customers from fraud. You should also check your bank's transaction fee for international withdrawals. Many banks have varying rates for the transaction.

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It's recommended travelers carry two separate ATM's or credit cards for their travels. Travelers should carry the cards in separate areas of their body and bags. This is to ensure a cash flow in case a card is lost, damaged or stolen.

It is uncommon, but travelers in Colombia and Latin American countries have tried to make withdrawals and the transaction went through, but no money came out of the machine. Report this to the bank of the ATM and contact your home bank. Your home bank will do an investigation and you will be returned the funds in the future if found in your favor.

Many establishments accept credit cards, but don't assume that all will. If you're using a credit card it's wise to ask before receiving the services.

MONEY CONVERSIONS TO US DOLLAR

Many people use the 2,000 pesos to 1 U.S. dollar conversion in their head to figure costs. By using this method you can get a rough estimate. The reality may be off by around ten percent.

1,000 pesos	=	50 cents
2,000 pesos	=	\$1.00
5,000 pesos	=	\$2.50
10,000 pesos	=	\$5.00
20,000 pesos	=	\$10.00
50,000 pesos	=	\$25.00

COSTS

Colombia has been reported to be more expensive than other countries for backpackers, but it's still much less expensive than traveling in Western countries. The following are estimates and can greatly fluctuate based on the region of the country and the individual personal habits.

Hostels/Hotels

A hostel bed can be found for 15,000 COP - 25,000 COP (\$8.30 - \$13.85, at the Mar. 2013 exchange rate of 1,806 COP).

A single room in a hotel can be found for 25,000 COP - 60,000 COP (\$13.85 - \$33.20). This could be a decent room depending on the location in Colombia.

Prices for double rooms vary from 10,000 COP more than the single rate to double the single rate.

Restaurants

You can find a typical plate of Colombian food for 4,000 COP - 25,000 COP (\$2.20 - \$13.85). It depends on the quality of food and the type of establishment.

A good sit-down meal costs a minimum of 12,000 COP - 25,000 COP (\$6.65- \$13.85) for international food.

Street

Travelers who can eat off the street can get by the cheapest. A traveler can eat like a king all day for 10,000 COP - 20,000 COP (\$5.55 - \$11.10) depending on their personal levels of intake.

Grocery Stores

Food costs in stores are similar to Western style supermarkets. Costs for typical Colombian staple items may be lower. If you want imported goods the cost will greatly increase.

Personal Items

Shampoo, batteries, deodorant, sun-screen and other personal items carry a slightly higher price tag than in western countries. You can basically find any item available in your own country, but you may want to stock up if you want to pinch pennies.

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ALCOHOL

Drinking is very popular in Colombia. Colombia is an extremely social country and drinking is a common method of bonding and is prevalent at almost all events. The legal drinking age in Colombia is 18 years old. You can find all types of drinks in Colombia. There are several types of national beer that can be found and imported beer is available throughout Colombia. Rum is very popular on the coast and in other areas. A Colombian alcoholic beverage called aguardiente is a favorite among Colombians. **This drink is very powerful and can be dangerous for foreigners who consume large amounts of it.** Many foreigners have lost many vacation days to this drink, due to tremendous hangovers. Public drunkenness is frowned upon. Foreigners are encouraged to refrain from alcohol abuse as it lowers your ability to assess your security situation.

TIPPING

Tipping customs vary in Colombia. Many mid-range and higher-end restaurants add a 10% tip to the bill's total. Part of the problem is that by law the owner does not need to give this to the server. It's very polite and kind to leave an extra tip for your server. Even if it's just a few thousand pesos, the server will be very grateful. Most servers only make 500,000 pesos a month, and this small amount from you goes a long way for them. Taxi drivers don't receive tips, but they appreciate it as they work extremely long hours under difficult conditions. Other workers who should usually receive tips such as bellmen and the people who work in other service-related jobs also appreciate a small tip. **Tipping in Colombia is a nice gesture and insures good service.** You should remember that the people serving you make a very small salary and usually work six days a week.

SERVICE

On the average service is very slow in Colombia. Expect long waits in stores, restaurants and in other places. Patience is necessary when going about your day. **There are exceptions to this as there are many well-run businesses in Colombia that recognize the value of customer service.**

LINES

In Colombia the concept of lines is not followed in many places. When you're standing in a line make sure you establish your turn or you may have to wait longer.

HAGGLING

It's very common to haggle or negotiate for certain purchases. Hostels, hotels, items sold in the street, bus tickets, guide services and a few other services at times can be negotiated. Hagglng is best when there is competition and when things are slow. Negotiating is a skill and you must be patient and ready to walk away. Sometimes things are written in stone and there is no budging.

MEDICAL

Travelers who need health assistance can rest assured, as Colombia has an effective and well organized medical system.

Doctors

Colombia has one of the highest-ranked medical systems in the world. If you have a medical issue, you need to speak with your hostel or hotel management. They should assist you in finding a doctor. The U.S. embassy maintains a list of English-speaking doctors in Bogotá. For more info, go to Google U.S. embassy

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Bogota, go to "citizen services", then "travel services", and then "health providers available in Bogotá".

Eye Care

If you have issues with your eyes, you can find eye doctors very easily. Glasses are cheap in Colombia. Contact lenses are more expensive if you need a western brand, and some brands are not available. You can find contact lens solution in all cities. Getting an eye exam and prescription is inexpensive.

Dental

Colombia's dental care system is known for being one of the best in the world. If you have problems with your teeth you can find a good dentist in most areas.

SAFETY

Colombia has enjoyed a drastically improved security situation in the past few years. Kidnappings have decreased tremendously when Colombia was known as the world's kidnapping capital a decade ago. The major guerrilla movements have dropped kidnapping as a major source of funding. There are still a few hundred documented kidnappings a year, but taking foreigners statistically has almost completely stopped. **Foreigners are more at risk for petty theft and robbery. In this respect, travelers should treat Colombia like all other Latin American countries.** Theft is common and anything of value needs to be secured at all times. Strict procedures must be followed when protecting your possessions. It's extremely important to protect your drinks while in bars and never accept drinks, cigarettes and food from strangers.

KNOCK - OUT DRUGS (BURUNDANGA)

There are drugs in Colombia that criminals use to disable and control their victims. The criminal will steal all of the victim's possessions and in many instances use the victims ATM cards for multiple withdraws. Many of these

criminals pass themselves off as stable and charming people that can inspire confidence quickly. They only need a second to poison you and take you under their control. **To protect yourself you must never accept a drink, cigarette or food from a stranger. Many of the criminals can pass themselves off as professionals or people that can install confidence quick.** If you meet someone interesting at a bar or club don't leave with them under any circumstances. It's best to establish a relationship over a period of time. These crimes are committed all over Colombia. Multiple incidents have been reported in the past on the North Coast and in Medellín.

TRANSPORTATION

Colombia has an excellent bus and air system. Travelers can find routes that go in all directions.

Air

It's worth noting that traveling by air in Colombia can be inexpensive at times to certain destinations. Sometimes air rates are lower than bus rates. It's suggested that you check the air rates of the three major airlines before traveling. Colombia's airlines are professional and follow strict security procedures. **Air rates fluctuate greatly throughout the year and travelers should monitor the sites frequently for deals before they travel.**

Avianca

This airline is Colombia's largest and offers the most routes. **Avianca also offers low rates and consistently has great specials on many routes.** There is an issue with its online reservation system which charges foreign credit cards a much higher rate than Colombian cards. The best way is to buy your ticket at a travel agent or at the airport. This may hurt your chances to get the lowest rates, but it's a glitch that many foreigners have lived with when trying to fly with Avianca. Many foreigners have claimed to find ways to navigate the Avianca website to get the Colombian rate, but the fact remains that making online reservations as

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a foreigner is a difficult task unless you have a card issued in Colombia. (www.avianca.com).

LAN

This airline offers competitive rates and has many national and international routes. LAN acquired the former airline Aires a few years ago. (www.lan.com).

Copa

Copa is a reliable airline that has received great reviews for its operation. Copa's prices are a little higher than those of the other two airlines, but it has received higher praise for its consistent on-time service. (www.copaair.com).

Airport Tax

When leaving Colombia you must pay an airport tax if you stayed in the country longer than 60 days. The tax is \$38 U.S. or 68,000 COP. You will be directed on how to make this payment when you check-in. Many airlines have included this tax with the air ticket purchase and you don't have to worry about when you leave. You need to inquire with your airline upon your purchase if the tax is included in your ticket price. If you stay shorter than 60 days, you can get an exit tax exemption at the airport. Ask your airline for assistance.

Flight to Aruba

Tiara air has a route you can use to fly from Riohacha to Aruba and back. (www.tiara-air.com).

Flight to Cuba

Copa air operates a route from Bogota to Panama to Havana. You can find fares for around \$500 U.S. if you search through multiple dates. (www.copaair.com).

Renting Cars

Car rentals can be found in all major cities. **Explore Travel Guides Colombia recommends that foreigners don't rent cars in Colombia.** Driving a vehicle in

Colombia is very dangerous if you are inexperienced driving in Latin America. Buses, reckless drivers, animals, adverse weather and poorly maintained roads can lead to constant dangerous driving conditions. It's also very difficult to navigate in unfamiliar cities in Colombia. If you need to rent a car you must have a valid driver's license from your home country. You need to check with the car rental agency for specific requirements. Check the following rental company's websites for rates and detailed information.

National - www.nationalcolombia.com

International car rental - www.internationalcarrental.com

Buses

Colombia has modern buses with routes that connect the whole country. Multiple companies have routes to various destinations. Brasilia is the largest bus company with an extensive system of routes. When riding on a bus, it's recommended that you bring warm clothing as many travelers have reported buses with very cold air conditioning. It's common for buses to be stopped by the military and police, for random weapons and drug searches. Foreigners are frequently searched when this happens. If you carry drugs in Colombia on a bus you're taking a serious risk. You can try to negotiate for bus rates throughout Colombia, especially during the low seasons. Rates change frequently. There are several bus companies throughout Colombia. Below are three of the larger bus companies, but there are dozens more at each station.

Expreso Brasilia - www.expresobrasilia.com

Copetran - www.copetran.com

Bolivariano - www.bolivariano.com.co

Mini-buses

In mid-sized and big cities there are mini-buses that run a variety of routes. Destinations are posted on the front of the bus. Make sure that the driver's assistant clearly knows your destination at the start. If you're in Bogotá and want

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to head to one of the Northern destinations, one of these mini-buses will be needed.

Moto-taxis

On the coast in Santa Marta, Riohacha, Valledupar and other cities men ride around on motorcycles with an extra helmet and give rides to people. This is the cheapest and fastest way to get to a location, **but you need to be brave.**

Taxis

Taxis can be found in most cities. The system and rates of payment are different based on the city that you're in. Taxis in Bogotá and other large cities use a meter. Mid-sized cities like Valledupar, Riohacha and Santa Marta have fixed rates for the whole city. Barranquilla and Cartagena rates are set by the driver and the rider and you must first negotiate the fare. This is difficult for travelers as rates for different distances vary greatly. **Travelers should always ask the hotel staff for proper rates and assistance in getting a taxi when leaving their hostel or hotel.** There are rates included throughout the book, but it's impossible to include all taxi cost scenarios.

Inner-City Transportation

Barranquilla has a bus system that is not recommended for traveling foreigners to use unless they are properly instructed or are taking a simple trip to the bus station or airport.

Medellín has a simple metro system that is user-friendly. Inquire at your hostel or hotel for assistance with a better understanding of the system.

Bogotá has a city wide bus system called the Transmilenio. The Transmilenio takes time, effort and practice to learn. Travelers who want to visit Zipaquirá, Suesca, or Guatavita can save money by taking a bus from the Portal del Norte, which is easy to get to on the Transmilenio. There are instructions on this in the Bogotá section.

Hitch-hiking

Hitch-hiking is never recommended in Colombia, but it's sometimes necessary when visiting rural destinations. When accepting a ride its best to only go with families, farm trucks and other vehicles that are transporting people. Single women should never hitchhike or be in secluded areas by themselves.

SINGLE WOMEN

Single women have reported feeling safe when traveling in Colombia, but only when taking the proper safety precautions. Women, especially foreigners are subject to being hissed at and cat-called in the streets. Ignoring this behavior is the best response. Women traveling alone can narrow their risks by participating in activities with other travelers.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Travelers don't need immunizations to enter Colombia. They are a personal choice. Check with your country's department of health for immunization recommendations and do your own research to be able to make the best decision for your own personal health.

YELLOW FEVER SHOT

At the entrance of Parque Tayrona, you may be asked to present proof of the yellow fever vaccination. Many travelers have reported not being asked for this document. Still it's highly recommended to get this vaccination and to have the paperwork with you if you want to visit Tayrona. It would be a tragedy to miss Parque Tayrona for the lack of a document. Ten days must elapse after getting your shot before you can enter the park. There is a Red Cross office at El Dorado Airport in Bogotá where you can get the shot at a fraction of the cost than you would in a Western country.

ALTITUDE SICKNESS

Bogotá is the third highest capital in the world at around 2,600 meters/8,612 feet. Travelers must adjust to this altitude when they arrive in Bogotá. It's recommended that travelers take it easy for the first twenty-four hours in Bogotá. Drinking alcohol and excessive walking the first day you're in Bogotá may lead to altitude sickness. It's recommended to drink plenty of water before arriving in Bogotá and for a few days. Many travelers report headaches and a sick feeling the first time they visit Bogotá. If this happens, take aspirin and relax in your hotel. This clears up very quickly and your body will adjust to the altitude.

SUNBURN

It's highly recommended that you protect yourself with sunblock and with clothing while in Colombia. When you're in the mountains and the outdoors, the sun can have a painful effect. On the coast, the sun can be overwhelming for some people. You can easily buy sun block anywhere in Colombia.

TIME ZONE

Colombia falls within the GMT-5 time zone. The whole country is in the same time zone as New York City in the winter, and as Chicago in the summer. This is due to daylight savings in the Northern Hemisphere (like most tropical countries, clocks never change in Colombia). Also, because it is located so close to the equator, there are 12 hours of daylight every day of the year.

INTERNET

Internet cafes and WiFi can be found everywhere. Most hostels and hotels in Colombia have WiFi. Travelers must make sure their connection works and the room they are given has a proper signal. It's very common for hostels to have

WiFi, but not on the entire property. **Travelers should ask to check their WiFi connection and signal in the room they are given.** If it doesn't work it's okay to ask for a new room, but this should be done upon check-in. Internet cafes are found in every city regardless of size. Connections and computers range from good to very slow and bad. The average cost is between 1,000 COP to 2,000 COP for an hour.

PHONES

Most western cell phones don't work on Colombia's phone system. If you buy a Colombian SIM card and have a phone from outside Colombia you must visit a *banda*. These stores can unlock the phone for a fee. A SIM card cost around 5,000 COP. There are three major cell companies in Colombia: Movistar, Comcel and Tigo. The companies all have different per minute cost and coverage. Travelers have two options to charge minutes on the phone. You can buy cards or you can have it charged at stores. On the streets there are vendors who have signs that say, minutos and then a cost. These vendors have cell phones that you can use and pay by the minute. This is the cheapest way to make phone calls in Colombia.

Dialing Inside Colombia

Dialing phones in Colombia is no easy matter. From a cell phone and from a landline, different procedures are used.

Cell phones

When you dial from a **cell phone** to another **cell phone** you must dial the number **directly**.

When you dial from a **cell phone** to a **land line** you must use different **codes**. First dial 0 + 3 + city code + phone number

For instance, a call to 432-2354 in Bogotá would be 031-432-2345.

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City Codes

Armenia	6
Barranquilla	5
Bogotá	1
Bucaramanga	7
Cali	2
Cartagena	5
Manizales	6
Medellín	4
Mompox	5
Pereira	6
Popayan	2
Riohacha	5
Santa Marta	5
Taganga	5
Tolu	5
Valledupar	5

BUSINESS HOURS

Most businesses and governmental offices have office hours from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. From 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM many businesses and offices are closed for lunch, but not banks. If you visit a business or governmental office it's best to plan ahead. Banks have limited hours and visits need to be planned ahead. Many restaurants and stores close at around 8:00 PM or 9:00 PM.

LEGAL

By law, people are presumed innocent until convicted in Colombia. If you're arrested you have the right to contact your embassy. If you're in legal trouble you have the right to a lawyer. **Cooperate with the police at all times, but protect your rights at all cost.** If you feel that you are being questioned by the police for

no reason, tell the officers that you want to speak with their superiors. **If you still feel threatened, demand to speak with the commanding officer at a station and to your embassy.** The police are generally honest, if you're having problems, you are most likely guilty of something or you look very suspicious.

TOILETS

You can find a bathroom in all locations. However, many toilet facilities are not in the best conditions. Most toilets have a waste basket next to it for toilet paper. It's important that you don't flush toilet paper in the toilet. Many plumbing systems in Colombia get easily backed up by paper.

WATER

Travelers are advised to drink bottled and bagged water at all times. Although the tap water in major Colombian cities is safe to drink, it's best for travelers to lean on the side of caution. It's recommended to wash all fruit you buy on the streets and stores with water to ensure its safe to consume. **Travelers who have not been in Latin America for long are urged to not eat food sold by street vendors, since they may use water that is unsanitary.**

BORDER CROSSING

Colombia has border crossings with Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. **We apologize,** but at this time Explore Travel Guides Colombia has not covered borders crossing into or out of Colombia.

WORKING IN COLOMBIA

Many foreigners fall in love with Colombia and want to move here. **This is a very difficult task to accomplish unless you have an independent source of income or are wealthy.** The unemployment rate is high and there are many qualified,

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but unemployed Colombians. The education system is very strong and produces many professionals. **Most foreigners who are successful in finding employment do it the following ways.**

TEACHING ENGLISH

Many foreigners secure employment teaching English at institutes and through private lessons in different cities throughout Colombia. If you take the intensive one-month course and get a Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching (CELTA), your chances of getting a position at an institute improve greatly. This course is offered by the British Council throughout the world and in Bogotá.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

There are several international schools throughout Colombia. The best way to attain a teaching or school administrative position at an international school is through an international teaching job fair. Several organizations host fairs throughout the world every year. Most positions require educators to have certificates in teaching specialties. There are four main international teaching fair organizers. Please note that these agencies require certification to attend.

University of Northern Iowa

This is a Midwestern fair that has the most Colombian schools in attendance. It takes place every year in early February. Ten schools from regions throughout Colombia attended the 2013 fair. UNI is known for being a good service to use to break into the international teaching field for young and new teachers. (www.uni.edu/placement/overseas).

Search Associates

This family-operated teacher and administrator recruiting company holds job fairs in Boston, London, Bangkok and a few other locations. Schools from

Colombia also attend their fairs. This fair is known for hosting many of the finest international schools in the world. (www.search-associates.com).

International School Services

ISS holds fairs in the United States for teachers and administrators. Their fairs in February, 2014 are in Boston, San Francisco, Bangkok and a few other locations. (www.iss.edu).

Queen's University

The largest international school fair in Canada is the Teacher's Overseas Recruiting Fair (TORF) at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The next fair will be held January 24th - 26th, 2014.

(www.educ.queensu.ca/services/careers/international/torf.html).

The recruiting season for international schools starts in October and most of the fairs are in January and February. **There are two websites that are also useful for international teachers.**

The International Educator

The International Educator lists open positions and has information on international teaching. TIE also publishes a well-made newspaper on the international school world. (www.tieonline.com).

The International Schools Review

This is an excellent site that holds thousands of reviews of international schools throughout the world. This is a subscription site that is a very valuable tool for international teachers to help evaluate schools. The site also has informational sections that you can browse for free. (www.internationalschoolsreview.com).

In Bogotá, there are official German, French, British, and Italian schools for qualified teachers from these countries. To locate these schools, you must use your "Google skills" to find them.

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BILINGUAL SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

All Colombian cities have bilingual schools. These schools like to hire foreign teachers. To find these jobs you must contact the schools directly. The certification for many schools is not as strict as international schools, but a BA is usually required. Many universities are also interested in hiring English instructors. The better-known universities may require a graduate degree.

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Many foreigners try to start businesses to support their Colombian dreams. There are several different options to attain the proper visa requirements to start a business in Colombia. Pro-export maintains this site with good basic information about starting a business in Colombia. (www.investincolombia.com.co).

STUDYING SPANISH

Colombia is a great place to study Spanish. Learning Spanish in Colombia can be done with private instructors, at language institutes or at universities. In the Bogotá, Cartagena, Taganga and Valledupar sections of this book there are Spanish instructors and schools.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Colombia has a great need for volunteers due to high levels of poverty and social issues. Voluntarios de Occidente (www.voluntariosdeoccidente.org) has volunteer opportunities in Cartagena. Fundación Mariposas Amarillas needs volunteers in their Santa Marta operations working with children. (www.fmacolombia.weebly.com).

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

Appearance

A person's appearance is extremely important in Colombia. Colombians are proud of their attire and how they present themselves. Women dress for both fashion and comfort. Men also dress nicely. Men who don't shave and who are unkempt are less common in Colombia than in other Latin American countries.

Time

Colombia moves on what may be called "island time". People are constantly late for appointments. Personal relationships are very important and it's difficult to end conversations. Transportation is also slower which makes it difficult to be on time. Being late is not considered an insult and is very common.

Photographs

It's considered rude to take pictures of people without permission. If you want to take pictures in a cultural context you need to ask permission. Many indigenous people will let you take pictures for a few thousand peso tip, which is a reasonable request.

Questions and Directions

Colombians are very friendly and open people. It's not inappropriate to start a conversation with strangers if you have a reason. If you're curious about something it's okay to ask someone in the area if you have questions. You can ask directions from anyone at any time. Women travelers should ask people who are working or in professional situations. Men travelers should ask Colombian men for directions rather than women.

DATING

It's very common for male and female foreigners to date Colombians when they are traveling and living in Colombia. Cultural differences, language barriers and

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dating customs make this both exciting and complicated. Dating rituals in Colombia are more conservative than western practices. Foreigners should have realistic dating expectations when dating when visiting Colombia.

ARCHITECTURE

Colombia's architecture varies among the regions. Colonial architecture can be found in many small, mid and large cities and towns throughout Colombia. Churches that are representative of the Medieval and Renaissance periods of Spain (are found in all parts of Colombia). In contrast, modern architecture is found in Colombia's larger cities. Many visitors are in fact surprised at the contemporary architecture of Bogotá and Medellín.

ART

Travelers who appreciate art can find museums in most major cities. There are several museums in Bogotá that house large exhibits. There are art museums in Cartagena, Barranquilla and Santa Marta that are listed in this guide. Museums display art such as pottery, gold and stonework from pre-Columbian times, as well as paintings from the colonial, Baroque and Renaissance periods can be found in Colombia.

One of Colombia's most famous artists is Medellín-native Fernando Botero. His paintings and sculptures can be found in every art museum in Colombia.

LITERATURE

Colombia is very proud to be the home of 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature winner Gabriel García Márquez. His novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is considered one of the world's foremost literary masterpieces, and his other books are also excellent — read *Love in the Time of Cholera* while you are in Cartagena (where it takes place). Literature during colonial times revolved around religion, but

during 19th and early 20th centuries, Colombians were known for writing poetry — Rafael Pombo's children's verses are still recited, and the words to Colombia's national anthem were written by Rafael Nuñez, who was also elected president. During the 20th century, literature about peasant life and criticism of society and the government became popular. Current award-winning Colombian authors include Héctor Abad Faciolince, Jorge Franco, and Laura Restrepo — each have works translated into English.

MUSIC

Wide varieties of music can be heard throughout Colombia. Salsa, vallenato and reggaeton are popular forms of modern music that are heard in bars, clubs and discos. These three forms of music are referred to as crossover when played in bars and clubs. These and other forms of Colombian music that have roots in African, Spanish, indigenous and Caribbean cultures, and can be heard throughout Colombia.

FILM

Colombia has a film industry that produces a small number of movies every year. Colombia has several film festivals that take place in major cities every year. Blockbuster Hollywood films find their way into Colombia cinemas to delight large crowds. Unless they are for children, non-Spanish movies are subtitled rather than dubbed.

TELEVISION

Colombia has several private and state owned television networks. These networks mostly produce series, telenovelas (soap operas) and the news. U.S. produced programs can be found in English on cable throughout Colombia.

NEWSPAPERS

All mid and major cities produce their own Spanish newspapers. The most prominent ones are El Tiempo and El Espectador, published in Bogotá. This site has links to many of Colombia's top newspapers.

(www.onlinenewspapers.com/colombia.htm).

MAGAZINES

Colombia has a flourishing magazine industry. Semana magazine is Colombia's equivalent to the United States Time magazine. Many national fashion, sports and travel magazines can be found throughout Colombia.

RELIGION

Catholicism is the most common practiced religion in Colombia. Colombia's constitution protects the freedom of religious choices. Small populations of Muslims, Jews, Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, Pentecostals, Baptists and Mormons can be found throughout the country, especially in the cities.

SPORTS

Soccer is Colombia's sport of passion. Colombia has a professional league with teams in mid and large cities that have loyal followings. There are multiple divisions within the league. There is a system for playoffs and movement between divisions. Baseball is played along the Caribbean coast and there are Colombians in the major leagues in the U.S. — Barranquilla's Edgar Renteria has played in three World Series, and was elected Most Valuable Player for the victorious San Francisco Giants in 2010. Cycling is also popular, especially in Bogotá, Boyacá, and Antioquia — it isn't surprising that Colombian cyclists consistently win the mountain stages in international competitions.

FESTIVALS

Festivals are a very important part of Colombia's culture and society. Christmas and Easter are extremely important holidays in Colombia (All cities celebrate their own festivals at different times throughout the year). Travelers should consider attending these as part of their Colombian experience. There are festivals listed for many of the destinations in this book

THE SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is an annual exhibition of living cultural heritage that takes place in the United States. In 2011, the festival took place in Washington D.C on the National Mall. Colombia was featured as the main country of exhibition on the festivals program. Artists, musicians and many other presenters of Colombia's culture represented their country. This festival is free and is visited by over a million people annually. On the Smithsonian website there is a lot of information on Colombia and the process of Colombia's participation in the festival. (www.festival.si.edu/2011/Colombia/index.aspx).

COLOMBIA WEBSITES FOR TRAVELERS

QUESTION AND ANSWER FORUMS ABOUT COLOMBIA

Poor But Happy - www.poorbuthappy.com

This was once the most solid informational website on Colombia. In March, 2010 the site's European owner shut down the forum function due to member conflict issues. This site is still operational with extensive archives about Colombia. These archives have relevant information about living, traveling and other topics regarding Colombia. Poor But Happy had a loyal following of thousands of posters and was a high traffic site. Even though this site does not add any new information it's considered one of the best sites on Colombia for answers to questions on many topics.

Thorn Tree Forum - Google - Thorn Tree Forum

Thorn Tree Forum is owned by Lonely Planet and is a great source for travel information. It offers a question and answer format with positive posters. The forum on Colombia is not high traffic, but many knowledgeable posters frequently leave good information.

Trip Advisor - Google - Trip Advisor Colombia

Trip Advisor has a simple question and answer forum with light traffic of knowledgeable posters. On the Trip Advisor Colombia web page the travel forum link is located in the middle of the page.

There are many other forums that receive small amounts of traffic. You can find them through search functions.

COLOMBIA - TRAVEL INFORMATION

Colombia's Official Tourism Portal - www.colombia.travel/en/

This site is maintained by Proexport and is the Colombian government's official tourism website. There is information about activities, destinations, festivals and other tourist related information. This site contains a section with informative travel blogs about Colombia.

Hostel Trail - www.hosteltrail.com

Hostel Trail has information about South American countries that is very useful for backpackers and independent travelers. It has a wide range of information and pictures of hostels in Colombia. Hostel Trail also has an engine on its site which allows for booking of hostels in Colombia.

Paisa Tours - www.paisatours.com

Paisa Tours offers extensive information about Colombia. The site also has important information about a volunteer program that assists in marine environment protection.

Off 2 Colombia - www.off2colombia.com

A well-developed informational site with photos and recent articles covering all regions of Colombia.

Country Reports - www.countryreports.org/Colombia

Country Reports has information on the culture and history of Colombia. It also contains statistics and factual information about the country.

COLOMBIA - BLOGS

See Colombia Travel - www.seecolombia.travel

See Colombia Travel has an excellent blog which is frequently updated about cities, food, music, and basically everything else about Colombia. This site is highly recommended for travels to check out, before they come to Colombia.

Traveltocolombia - www.traveltocolombia.org

An updated blog by a writer who lives in Bogotá. This is worth a visit to check out fresh information from an expat living in Colombia.

Banana Skin Flip Flops - www.bananaskinflipflops.com

A blog by a female expat who lives in Bogotá. This blog is both informative and entertaining.

BOGOTÁ - TRAVEL INFORMATION

Bogotá D.C. - www.bogota-dc.com

This governmental website contains information about Bogotá's history, photos and much more information about Bogotá.

Bogotá Bike Tours - www.bogotabiketours.com

Bogotá Bike Tours website maintains informative information on Bogotá. Click on La Candelaria and browse the links in blue.

BUCARAMANGA - TRAVEL INFORMATION

Bucaramanga - www.bucaramangacity.com

This site is maintained by the city government and contains pictures and information of services that are available in Bucaramanga.

CARTAGENA - TRAVEL INFORMATION

Cartagena Info - www.cartagenainfo.net

Cartagena Info provides information on Cartagena's tourism industry.

Cartagena de Indias Convention Bureau - www.cartagenatravel.com

This site is in English and provides information on tourism and Cartagena's convention services.

MEDELLÍN - TRAVEL INFORMATION

Official Tourism Portal of Medellín - www.medellin.travel/en

This site is maintained by the government of Medellín. It includes information on hotels, restaurants and other tourism services available in the Antioquian capital.

Medellín Executive Suites - www.medellinexecutivehotel.com

This website has an extensive list of links about Medellín in its affiliates section.

Medellín Living - www.medellinliving.com

A well-developed blog and informational site developed by an expat who lives in Medellín. He also is the author of *Medellín Travel Guide: Insider Advice from an American Expat in Colombia*. This travel guide of Medellín should be mandatory for visitors of Medellín. It's sold off his site as an e-book or can be purchased on Kindle from Amazon.

SANTA MARTA - TRAVEL INFORMATION

Las Pleyades Tours - www.santamarta-hotels-tours.travel

Las Pleyades Tours website is maintained by a highly recommended tour operator. The site contains information on hotels, restaurants and tours in the Santa Marta area.

COLOMBIAN NEWS WEBSITES - ENGLISH

Colombia Reports - www.colombiareports.com

Daily English news that focuses on politics, sports, culture and travel.

Colombia Politics - www.colombia-politics.com

A site devoted to political news in Colombia.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST IN COLOMBIA - ENGLISH

Santa Marta Explora - www.santamartaexplora.com.co

This is a beautiful magazine that provides information on tourism, restaurants, clubs, entertainment and many other topics in the Santa Marta area (in both English and Spanish). The magazine is found in Santa Marta hostels, restaurants and other locations. The site is only in Spanish.

The City Paper Bogotá - www.thecitypaperbogota.com

The City Paper Bogotá newspaper is in English and is available in Bogotá in hotels, restaurants and numerous other locations. The paper is a monthly edition covering politics, entertainment, travel and many other topics. It is well put together and is a great read.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST IN COLOMBIA - SPANISH

Semana Magazine - www.semana.com

Semana Magazine is a news weekly that could be considered Colombia's equivalent to Time Magazine from the United States.

El Colombiano - www.elcolombiano.com

Medellín's major newspaper.

El Tiempo - www.eltiempo.com

Bogotá's major newspaper. It has been managed by the family of the current president, Juan Manal Santos, for one hundred years.

El Espectador - www.elespectador.com

Colombia's oldest newspaper, based in Bogotá.

El Universal - www.eluniversal.com.co

Cartagena's major newspaper.

El Pais Vallenato - www.elpaisvallenato.com

Valledupar's major newspaper.

Vanguardia - www.vanguardia.com

Bucaramanga's major newspaper.

El Pais - www.elpais.com.co

Cali's major newspaper.

GOVERNMENTAL SITES

President of Colombia - www.presidencia.gov.co

Official site of President Santos. Includes information on arranging a visit to the Casa de Narino.

Colombia Embassy - www.colombiaemb.org

Official site of the Colombian embassy in the U.S., with important visa information.

Colombia Consulate in Chicago - www.consulcolombia.us

This embassy site contains important information on how to obtain visas at their consulate.

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Pro Export - www.proexport.com

Pro Export is a private company that represents the government of Colombia in promoting tourism, foreign investment and exports.

U.S. Embassy - <http://bogota.usembassy.gov>

Official site of the U.S. embassy in Bogota.

British Embassy Bogotá - www.ukincolombia.fco.gov.uk/en

Official site of the British embassy in Bogotá. You can use this site to register your presence in Colombia.

CURRENT DOLLAR/EURO TO PESO EXCHANGE RATE

DATAIFX - www.dataifx.com

Track the exchange rate of the peso against the dollar and Euro.

EXPAT SERVICES

Quantum - www.quantumcolombia.com

Quantum Consulting is a highly recommended firm that can assist with visas, business structuring, and relocation services.

STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Por Colombia - www.porcolombia.us

Por Colombia is an organization of Colombian students in the United States and Canada. Por Colombia has active chapters in twelve East Coast universities. Their mission is to create networking activities with an emphasis on academic, social, cultural, and philanthropic activities. The website is well worth the visit. These students are putting forth a commendable effort in representing and promoting Colombia on their campuses.

INDIGENOUS CULTURE INFORMATION

The Elder Brother - www.theelderbrother.com

The Elder Brother is a site that chronicles the experiences of a foreign woman who spent time in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta on a medical mission (with the Kogi tribe).

Tairona Trust - www.taironatrust.org

Tairona Trust is a British NGO that is working on a project with the Gonavindua Tairona. This site has excellent information on Tairona history and culture.

Tairona and Kogi - www.crystalinks.com/kogi.html

This site contains an interesting informational article on the Tairona and Kogi tribes.

ROSARIO ISLANDS

Rosario Islands - www.rosarioislands.com

This site has information on the Rosario Islands near Cartagena.

CHARITIES AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS IN COLOMBIA

Fundacion El Derecho a Jugar - www.agameforall.com

A non-profit organization that has constructed a golf course in Bucaramanga and uses the game to teach life skills to underprivileged children.

Colombianitos - www.colombianitos.org

Colombianitos operates multiple programs nationwide that provide children with educational and life skill development.

Fundacion NU3 - www.nu3.co

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NU3 is a highly developed non-profit organization with a mission to eradicate child malnourishment in Barranquilla.

Fundacion Mi Sangre - www.fundacionmisangre.org

Fundacion Mi Sangre was founded by Colombian musician Juanes to address the needs of land mine victims and other social problems in Colombia. Fundacion Mi Sangre is a highly organized and proactive organization which updates its website frequently with important information on its activities and programs.

Barefoot Foundation - www.barefootfoundation.com

The Barefoot Foundation was founded by musician Shakira to help address educational and developmental issues in Colombia, and constructed and maintains several schools in Colombia. The foundation works in conjunction with its sister charity, Fundación Pies Descalzos in Colombia.

BEACHES PALOMINO

Playa Koralia - www.koralia.com

Playa Koralia is in the Palomino area one hour from Santa Marta.

Hukumeizi Hotel - www.hukumeizi.com/english/

Hukumeizi Hotel is also in the Palomino area one hour from Santa Marta.

RENTAL INFORMATION

A seven year old article on renting laws in Colombia.

(www.globalpropertyguide.com/Latin-America/Colombia/Landlord-and-Tenant).

REAL ESTATE

This site lists apartments and houses for sale all over Colombia.

(www.metrocuadrado.com.co/servlet/co.com.m2.servlet.MostrarHom)

COLOMBIAN HOSTEL ASSOCIATION

Colombian Hostels - www.colombianhostels.com.co

This organized hostel association includes the finest hostels in Colombia. Its website has an informative timetable between popular destinations. New hostels must meet numerous requirements to be admitted as members of the association.

MOTORCYCLE BLOG

Moto Adventure - www.motoadventures.org

A blog of an adventure motorcyclist who now owns Casa Kiwi in Medellín.

PERU INFORMATION

Andean Travel Web - www.andeantravelweb.com/peru

Andean Travel Web is as great resource for traveling in Peru. This site includes detailed information on destinations, hostels, restaurants, guides, volunteer opportunities and much more.

RETIREMENT WEBSITE

This is an interesting website on retiring in foreign countries. There is a cost breakdown of living in Medellín on the site.

(www.liveandinvestoverseas.com/country-budgets/index.html).

TRAVEL SITES

Hostel Life - www.thehostellife.com

An interesting site that uses videos to chronicle a traveler's escape from the 9 to 5 routine to a life of travel, adventure and hostels.

Nomadic Matt - www.nomadicmatt.com

A traveler who has devoted his last nine years to bringing well-developed travel strategies and information to other travelers. Matt has written many books on travel and his site contains an interesting blog.

Chris Guillebeau - www.chrisguillebeau.com

Chris Guillebeau is the author of *The Art of Nonconformity*. His goal is to help others understand how to live life with meaning. He writes a blog of his travels and philosophy on his website.

ACTIVITIES IN COLOMBIA

BIKING

Biking is very popular in Colombia. People use bicycles everywhere. In Bogotá, on Sundays, a portion of the main streets are closed for the morning. This creates a huge 100KM bike path over the whole city. You can rent bikes in the Candelaria district to explore Bogotá with or without a guide. Bogotá Bike Tours (www.bogotabiketours.com) leads daily bike tours of Bogotá and you can rent bikes in many cities in Colombia.

BIRDWATCHING

Colombia is a birdwatchers' paradise, with more bird species than anywhere else in the world. The casual birdwatcher just needs to bring his or her binoculars and observe during daily activities. If you're interested in a specific vacation that revolves around bird watching, you need to contact a professional guide service. Two recommended bird watching operations that offer nationwide bird watching services are:

Jaguarundi Travel - www.jaguarunditravel.com

Colombia Birding - www.colombiabirding.com

CAMPING

Camping sites can be found in many places in Colombia. Most tourist areas in the country have camping, but there is a general lack of information on the locations and facilities. Check the following sections for camping information:

Playa Grande (Cartagena), El Rodadero, Minca, Suesca, Taganga, Tayrona.

CAVING AND RAPPELLING

Adventurers can find caving and rappelling in the San Gil area. Paramo Santander Extremo (www.paramosantanderextremo.com) leads tours near San Gil.

DIVING

Diving can be found on the Pacific Coast, San Andres, Cartagena and Taganga. In Cartagena and Taganga full courses are available. Cartagena offers diving to islands off its shore. Diving Planet (www.divingplanet.org) operates out of Cartagena. Taganga has at least eight dive companies offering different types of services with different price ranges. On the Pacific Coast you can dive in reefs and in wrecks with Posada Turistica Rocas de Marzo. (www.posadaturisticarocasdecabomarzo.com).

GOLF

Golf is a popular activity in Colombia, but hard to access for foreigners. There are golf courses all over. Bogotá has a few public courses and over 30 private clubs. One hour outside of Bogotá, La Cima Golf Club is open to public. This beautiful mountain course has reasonable green fees, but is challenging to get to. City Golf Performance Center in Bogotá has an excellent indoor practice

facility with very low cost for use and lessons. Check our Bogotá section for information on both golf facilities.

HIKING

Light hiking trails can be found all over Colombia. Just outside Bogotá great hiking can be found in Suesca, Guatavita and Parque Chicaque. There is excellent mountain hiking in Minca and Parque Tayrona offers amazing trails that border the jungle and the ocean. Cabo de la Vela has stunning desert hikes for those seeking solitude.

TREKKING

Colombia's main treks are to the Lost City and El Cocuy. The Lost City trek must be done with a guide. We have listed a few guide companies in the Taganga section who offer the Lost City Trek. The Cocuy trek is possible on your own, but it's advised to contact a tour operator for advisement. The following companies conduct El Cocuy treks:

Jaguarundi - www.jaguarunditravel.com

Aventura Colombia - www.aventuracolombia.com

Vamonos P'al Monte (Suesca) - www.vamonospalmonte.com

Colombia Trek - www.colombiatrek.com

KITESURFING/WINDSURFING

In Cartagena you can take lessons for kitesurfing and windsurfing at Mokana, (www.mokanaclub.com). There is some good wind at other places down the coast in Riohacha and Cabo de la Vela. Contact Kai Eco Tour for info in Riohacha, (www.kaiecotravel.com).

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking tours and activities can be found in many destinations in Colombia. Access to trails is difficult, however, and travelers should hire professional guides. In Suesca you can contact Andres at Explorea Suesca for guided mountain bike tours. The Plantation House in Salento rents mountain bikes and helps with trail information. (www.theplantationhousesalento.com).

PARAGLIDING

Paragliding can be found in Bucaramanga and in Medellín. Colombia Paragliding (www.colombiaparagliding.com) operates out of Bucaramanga.

RAFTING AND KAYAKING

There is kayaking on the Rio San Diego outside of Santa Marta. Inquire at Expotur in Taganga for information. In San Gil you can contact:

Colombia Rafting - (www.colombiarafting.com)

Colombia Explora - (www.colombiaexplora.com)

SPORT FISHING

World class fishing is found on the Pacific Coast. Posada Turistica Rocas de Marzo leads trips. (www.posadaturisticarocasdecabomarzo.com).

SURFING

You can rent surfboards and receive lessons at Mokana in Cartagena, (www.mokanaclub.com). Outside Santa Marta there is a surf camp called Costeña, (www.costeno.surf.com). You can get lessons, rent boards and camp on the site. There is good surfing found on the Pacific coast.

WHALE WATCHING

Whale watching can be found on the Pacific Coast from June to late September. There are bays that are used as a breeding ground during this time. You can catch a tour with Posada Turistica Rocas de Marzo before the whales depart for the Arctic in October. (www.posadaturisticarocasdecabomarzo.com).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF COLOMBIA

Because of its geography, Colombia is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. The high Andes mountains splits into three ranges (cordilleras) in Colombia, offering a vertical climate for the cultivation of just about any crop in its slopes and valleys, while at the same time dividing the country into distinct regions which even today have difficulty communicating with each other overland. Between the eastern and central cordilleras flows Colombia's most important river, the Magdalena, which empties into the Caribbean near Barranquilla; the Cauca River, which divides the western and central cordilleras, meets the Magdalena in the coastal lowlands. East of the Andes lay vast plains called the llanos, which extend into Venezuela. Southern Colombia is mostly rainforest, part of the Amazonian system; thick jungles are also found on the Pacific coast and all along the border with Panama. The Caribbean coastal plain is interrupted by a small but high mountain range near Colombia's northernmost point, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

The vast majority of Colombians live in the Andes — four of the five largest cities are located in the mountains, including Bogotá in the center of the eastern cordillera (at 2,600 meters/8,600 feet), Bucaramanga in the northern part of the eastern cordillera, Medellín in the central cordillera, and Cali in the southwest — these last three are all at lower and more comfortable elevations than the capital (the fifth city, Barranquilla, is the major port city on the Caribbean).

Long before the arrival of Europeans and Africans, many agriculturally-based societies thrived in what is now Colombia. The largest indigenous community was the Muisca, dedicated to raising corn and mining salt in the valleys extending north from present-day Bogotá through the department of Boyacá. Smaller indigenous groups were also present in the mountainous regions between Ecuador and Colombia's capital. Some, like those who built the impressive statuary near San Agustín and the burial caves at Tierradentro, disappeared before the arrival of the Spanish. Towards the Caribbean coast were other complex indigenous societies, such as the Sinú who constructed intricate irrigation systems, and the Tairona in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, who left the stone foundations of their communities at the El Pueblito site in Parque Tayrona, and at the "Lost City" deeper in the Parque Nacional de la Sierra Nevada — both are popular hikes for travelers.

In the sixteenth century, after first establishing settlements on the Caribbean coast, the Spanish set off to find gold and silver. This expedition, led by Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, encountered the Muisca nation high in the Andes — which did not have mineral riches comparable to those of the Aztecs in central Mexico or of the Inca in Peru, but did have a large population. The Spanish quickly took advantage of the land and cooler climate and established a hacienda system, using Indians and mestizos (those of mixed European and indigenous descent) as cheap agricultural labor on large farms.

The conquistadores, and subsequent colonial administrations, certainly treated the indigenous peoples badly — the conquest was bloody, with rape employed to terrorize the natives, and torture applied in order to find the supposedly hidden riches. As in the rest of Spanish America, many died at the hands of soldiers, and many more from the new diseases brought from Europe. Alongside the conquest was a cultural colonization, led by missionary clergy who were charged with converting the Indians and teaching them the Spanish language and customs. Still, as awful as it was, the Spanish conquest and colonization differed greatly from that of the British: the conquistadores became dependent

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on indigenous labor and trade, while the English were more interested in taking land and forcing the Indians to move (an attitude continued in the nineteenth century by the U.S. government). In Spanish America there was more of a negotiation of sorts between the desires of the Spanish and the interests of the Indians — which has resulted in a greater degree of indigenous cultural preservation, seen throughout Colombia today.

The Spanish called the region New Granada, and for most of its colonial history it remained a backwater. Gold was found in the west, near Santa Fe de Antioquia, providing the colony with its major export; still, the enormous silver trade from Mexico and Peru was far more important to the empire. Shipping gold back to Spain led to the fortification of the city of Cartagena on the Caribbean coast, which also became the first stop for Spanish slave traders coming from Africa (early in the conquest, the Crown decided that the Indians could not be enslaved, but that Africans could continue to be captured and traded). Africans were put to work constructing the walls of Cartagena; this labor force was also taken to mine the gold of Antioquia. Certain remote areas of the nearby Chocó region along the Pacific coast became havens for escaped and recently freed slaves, who formed their own settlements. These communities, called *palenques*, were also established on the Caribbean coast.

Throughout the Western Hemisphere, however, the majority of enslaved Africans were involved in raising sugar cane, which explains the enormous presence of people of African descent on the islands of the Caribbean and on the northern coast of Brazil. The sugar trade in New Granada was limited by comparison. Nevertheless, Colombia has the largest Spanish-speaking population of African origin in the Americas — even larger than Cuba's.

Colombia's geography limited trade during and after the colonial period: transportation inland from the Caribbean coast to Andean towns and cities took weeks by pole boat via the Magdalena River, then by mule over difficult mountain trails. Internal commerce was based on regional agriculture and

handicrafts, which, combined with unique combinations of Europeans, Africans, and Indians, explains the differences in music, culture and cuisine that one can enjoy in the various regions of Colombia today.

Social conditions in colonial New Granada were similar to those in the rest of Spanish America, with a hierarchy based on race. The first murmurs of independence from Spain often began near the top among native-born colonists of European descent — the criollos. They controlled the local economy, but were generally shut out of the colonial government, which was dominated by Spanish-born officials. Travel to Europe by members of the criollo elite brought Enlightenment ideas into the mix. New Granada then followed the pattern seen in the rest of Spanish America during the years of the struggle for independence: after Napoleon toppled the Spanish government in 1808, cities and towns set up juntas that declared their loyalty to the deposed king, Ferdinand VII. These juntas pointedly included criollos in their leadership, giving locally-born notables their first experience of political leadership — in Bogotá, this occurred in 1810, on July 20, which is a national holiday. As the situation in the mother country did not change, various juntas took the step to declare outright independence (the first city to declare independence in Colombia was Cartagena, in 1811 on November 11 — another holiday). The newly independent cities and provinces soon fell into civil war over how much power the central government should have, and most were quickly reconquered when Ferdinand was restored to power in Spain after Napoleon's final defeat in 1815.

In 1819, New Granada became the first colony to be liberated by the charismatic Venezuelan Simón Bolívar after an impressive campaign in which he took his army across the llanos and over the Andes to decisively defeat the Spanish at the Battle of Boyacá on August 7 (yet another national holiday). Bolívar immediately established a central administration in Bogotá with himself as president to govern "Gran Colombia," which in time included present-day Panamá, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Bolívar then led his armies north into Venezuela and

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then south into Peru, leaving his vice president, General Francisco Paula de Santander, in charge of the Gran Colombian government.

Santander, from the northern New Granadan town of Cúcuta near Venezuela, had trained as a lawyer in Bogotá; as acting president, he scrupulously followed the letter of the law. However, he faced the rise of separatist movements in Venezuela and Ecuador. When Bolívar returned to Bogotá in 1826, he was upset with the near-dissolution of Gran Colombia, reassumed the presidency, and eventually established a dictatorship in 1828 — Santander led the opposition. Since many New Granadan military leaders were captured and executed during the Spanish reconquista in 1816-1817, most senior army officers were from Venezuela. After a series of intrigues and revolts, the Venezuelans, including Bolívar, left Bogotá in 1830; military rule was discredited after that and university-trained lawyers dominated the government. Since this time, elected civilians, rather than professional soldiers, have almost exclusively governed Colombia; military regimes have only ruled briefly (1854, 1861-1863, and 1953-1958), an atypical record in Latin America.

Elected civilian government, however, did not guarantee peace-political violence accompanied nearly every electoral contest from the 1840s through the 1950s, and there were frequent civil wars between the two traditional political parties, the Liberal and the Conservative. Although these parties emerged in the 1840s, their origins are somewhat based on the split between Bolívar and Santander, and each party claimed one or the other as their "spiritual father": the "Liberator" for the Conservatives, the "Man of Laws" for the Liberals. Beyond this, there were not many differences: within each party, there were factions that split over a variety of issues; politicians and supporters in both parties came from all social classes and engaged in all kinds of economic activities. The most consistent ideological division between the two parties was related to the position of the Church in Colombian society, with the Conservatives in support of a wider role for the clergy and the Liberals in favor of a degree of separation of Church and state. Well into the 1950s, during the worst of the partisan

conflict known as La Violencia, certain bishops and priests openly supported the Conservative Party and issued condemnations of Liberalism from the pulpit.

The parties were vertically-organized and members were expected to not only vote, but to also attend political rallies, participate in armed gangs at election time, and join the partisan armies during the various civil wars. Decades of shared struggle led families and communities to develop an unwavering devotion to one party, and a "hereditary hatred" for the opposite party. By the mid-nineteenth century, different regions were already leaning towards one party or the other: the Caribbean coast was overwhelmingly Liberal, while Antioquia and the highlands along the border with Ecuador were mostly Conservative. The rest of the country was more or less evenly divided between the two parties, but few towns were divided; most were dominated by a single party, the trim on the whitewashed houses either being red (for the Liberals) or blue (for the Conservatives).

The new republic immediately had to confront social and economic challenges. The government contracted a huge loan with London banks; since no economic miracle appeared to increase revenues, servicing the debt became the major government expense and only the most rudimentary bureaucracy and army were maintained—infrastructure improvements were few, and other public services were mainly left to the Church. There was one positive development: as in other Latin American republics, a gradual dismantling of the institution of slavery ended with outright abolition in 1850, without serious opposition or widespread civil war. At the same time, efforts to improve public education sparked acrimonious debate between the two parties — Liberals wanted to introduce progressive methods and books while Conservatives demanded that the Catholic Church run the schools. Land reform also caused deep divisions: in the 1860s, a Liberal government took over underused Church lands for redistribution to landless peasants, despite fierce opposition from Conservatives and the clergy. The government's need for revenue, however, led to the sale of

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these properties to merchants and large landowners who had ready cash — making the rich even richer.

Meanwhile, pioneers from Antioquia established homesteads in generally uninhabited lands in the central cordillera — Antioquians, known as paisas, are still known for their entrepreneurial spirit. The lands they settled — the departments of Caldas, Risaralda, Quindio and parts of Tolima — provided for only the most basic subsistence agriculture until the late nineteenth century, when it was discovered that their farms were ideal for raising coffee.

For most of the nineteenth century, the country was in a shambles, with frequent partisan civil wars, local and regional uprisings, and governmental ineffectiveness — as well as continued economic underdevelopment. The frequent unrest discouraged international investors, while wealthy Colombians took advantage of any crop that seemed to have promise as an export. A series of booms began with tobacco in the 1840s, followed by indigo, cotton (during the U.S. Civil War), and quinine in quick succession until the 1880s. Most local merchants and hacienda owners who invested in these booms looked upon them as get-rich-quick schemes, and without making the proper capital investments to maintain quality and quantity, boom soon became bust.

Into this situation stepped the dynamic Rafael Núñez, who was elected president as an "Independent" Liberal with Conservative support in 1884. His government proclaimed a "Regeneration" and took a pragmatic but authoritarian approach to organizing the nation, with the goal of setting Colombia on the road to "progress." In contrast with previous Liberal administrations, the Church was embraced as an institution that would help unify the nation and control the masses. A new constitution was written in 1886 — with some modifications, it remained the law of the land until 1991 — and a strong central government was set up in Bogotá: the president appointed departmental governors, who in turn appointed the mayors of the municipalities under their jurisdiction. By appointing party members all along the executive hierarchy, Conservatives

controlled the ballot box and the presidency. The Liberals would have none of it: a major civil war broke out in 1899, known as the "War of a Thousand Days."

By this time, widespread cultivation of coffee was slowly improving the economic situation. The coffee business changed the attitudes of Colombian investors: it was not only profitable and an ideal crop for mountainous Colombia, but planters had to wait four to five years for coffee bushes to begin to produce beans — it forced a capital investment. Huge coffee plantations were first established in northern Colombia along the Venezuelan border and in the lower altitudes near Bogotá and in Antioquia. In the region of the Antioquian colonization, small paisa farmers found coffee to be a particularly lucrative crop—Colombia's tropical location allows coffee bushes to produce beans twice a year, providing enough revenue for a small holder to survive. Today this region is known as the "Eje Cafetero" — the center of coffee production. "Juan Valdez" of the Colombian Coffee Growers Association is based on fact — although we only see him and his burro, his entire family was involved in coffee cultivation.

The rise of the coffee economy was a factor in the War of a Thousand Days. Liberals hoped to find support for their uprising from among Conservative coffee growers, who were being overly taxed by the government; the rebels were disappointed when these planters stayed loyal to their own party — Liberal armies were defeated by 1900. However, a guerrilla war raged on in parts of the country for two more years, until nearly 100,000 were killed. In 1902, peace treaties were signed by the leaders of the last Liberal resistance on the Caribbean coast, and, significantly, in the Department of Panamá.

The United States government, anxious to begin constructing a canal in Panamá, played a role in negotiating an end to the war in that region. However, when the Colombian Senate hesitated to approve a canal treaty that was overly generous to U.S. interests, the U.S. backed a separatist rebellion in Panamá in 1903. The new Panamanian government immediately approved the canal treaty. Nearly

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twenty years would pass before the U.S. would reimburse Colombia for the loss of Panamá.

After the civil war and the loss of Panamá, members of the political elite were more receptive to resolving their differences peacefully. Conservative presidents began appointing Liberals as government ministers and diplomats, and a constitutional reform even guaranteed the minority party representation in the legislatures. At the same time, Conservative administrations were still rooted in the political traditions of the nineteenth century — close relations between the Church and the party continued, with the clergy controlling public education, foreign missionaries governing underpopulated jungle regions, and the archbishop of Bogotá making the final selection of the official Conservative presidential candidate. Entrenched in political power, the Conservative Party was less able to address the problems of a society that was beginning to industrialize, urbanize, and organize. The coffee economy created a market for manufactured goods among newly-moneyed peasants, and new factories sprang up in cities throughout Colombia; Medellín, near the heart of the major coffee-producing areas, became the center of the textile industry. With industrialization came urbanization; the building trades provided jobs while brick and cement factories were established and expanded. Colombia's transportation infrastructure also improved in order to serve the coffee economy, creating jobs in the construction and operation of railroads — Bogotá was finally linked to the Magdalena River by rail in 1909. With the political and economic climate more stable, foreign investment also increased, particularly in mining, oil, and bananas.

With the developing economy came demands for better wages and working conditions, as well as for a breakup of the large coffee estates. Labor organizing had a particular effect among banana workers attached to the U.S. - owned United Fruit Company in the Santa Marta region on the Caribbean coast. During a strike against the UFC in 1928, the Colombian army machine-gunned dozens of unarmed workers assembled in the town of Ciénega. The Conservative

government was condemned for the massacre by Liberals in congress, led by the young Jorge Eliécer Gaitán.

As members of the opposition party, Liberals were in a better position than the Conservatives to channel societal unrest into political action. In general, the Liberals benefited from increased urbanization of Colombian society; peasants, recently uprooted from traditional rural life, were more receptive to the new ideas they encountered in the city — and were upset with the inability of Conservative governments to meet their needs. In the presidential election of 1930, Liberals took advantage of a split in Conservative ranks and won the presidency for the first time in nearly 50 years.

After appointing Liberal governors in a few key departments, the new administration put their party in control of electoral machinery — and local police forces — and soon the Liberals established their own electoral hegemony. A virtual civil war between the parties broke out in municipalities along the border of Boyacá and Santander; hundreds died before this conflict was halted by a wave of bipartisan patriotism when a Peruvian army attempted to take Colombian territory in the Amazon region (the only war Colombia has had with a neighboring country in the twentieth century). Still, the partisan conflict of 1931-1933 foreshadowed what was in store for the nation when the Conservatives retook the presidency in 1946, initiating the period of conflict known as La Violencia.

Liberal administrations, especially that of Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934- 1938), attempted to modernize Colombia and its government, passing labor laws, reforming the tax code, and encouraging industrial development. Land reform and an attempt to increase the distance between Church and state (especially in education) met with less success, while animating and unifying the Conservative Party under the leadership of the intransigent Laureano Gómez. Eduardo Santos, the editor of Bogotá daily *El Tiempo* and the great uncle of the current president of Colombia, was elected as a moderate in 1938; he was followed again by

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López, who was reelected in 1942. This second López administration was dogged by scandals publicized by the Conservative press; and a few military officers briefly held López captive during an attempted coup in 1944. He resigned the presidency in 1945, leaving his close advisor, Alberto Lleras Camargo, to finish his final year. By this time, a popular movement led by the charismatic Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was animating the Liberal base while splitting the party leadership.

Gaitán, born into a humble lower middle class family, had risen to become an effective lawyer and an active left-wing politician. He was a talented organizer, and in 1945-1946 he assembled a popular movement under his leadership, promising greater political participation and economic opportunity for the new urban middle and working classes (while not forgetting the small farmers).

Gaitán ran for president in 1946 against the official Liberal Party candidate and the Conservatives regained the presidency against the divided Liberals. The new president, Mariano Ospina Pérez, appointed governors from his party in a few key departments, police forces switched from Liberal to Conservative, and by 1947 a virtual civil war was once again flaring in Boyacá and Santander - and in several other departments as well. This time, however, the violence was different. It was not enough to control elections: Liberals had to be eliminated in order to defend Christian civilization in Colombia and elsewhere — which led Liberals to organize self-defense units, some of which went on the offensive, especially in traditionally Liberal regions. Since party identification was believed to be passed on genetically, the cry of armed partisan bands was "to leave not even the seed" — women and children were massacred, along with the men (who, after all, were the only ones with the right to vote at the time). International events had inspired and influenced Colombian politicians — not only World War Two and the Cold War, but also, and especially, the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), during which Liberals identified with the Republic, while Conservatives felt a kinship with Franco and the Nationalists. Rumors of coups and uprisings ran rampant in the partisan press, which always expected the

worst from the opposition. Both sides trumpeted an "it-can-happen-here" attitude, which eventually became a self-fulfilling prophecy. 1946 was the beginning of La Violencia.

In 1947, Gaitán became sole leader of the Liberal Party and its candidate for the 1950 presidential election. As La Violencia continued, he organized a silent march in Bogotá in February 1948 in which he accused the government of encouraging the murder of Liberals and their families. Two months later, on April 9, Gaitán was assassinated outside of his law office on his way to lunch on the Carrera Septima with Avenida Jiménez in Bogotá (the site is marked with several plaques, a few meters from a McDonald's). Because of the assassination and the events that followed, the nation lost its last chance to stop and reverse La Violencia. It was a major turning point in Colombian history. Gaitán's assassin was immediately seized by a crowd and lynched; his body was dragged down the Septima to the Presidential Palace. The crowd blamed the Conservative government and armed itself with whatever was at hand to overthrow Ospina and his ministers. Radio stations were seized and exaggerated reports were broadcast to the nation declaring that a revolutionary government had taken over in Bogotá, inspiring actions and reactions the rest of the country. Rioters targeted Conservatives, government ministries, and church buildings. The pock marks of bullets from April 9 are still visible on the belfries of Bogotá's cathedral. However, revolution was thwarted: the army stayed loyal to the government and the presidential guard defended the Palace. In their frustration, rioters turned to looting and drink, and by early evening, there was little organization on the streets. By that time, Liberal Party leaders had made their way to the Presidential Palace for negotiations, and a unity government was immediately formed to calm passions — although it would not last a year.

The 9th of April was complicated by the fact that there were so many foreigners in Bogotá that day — the Ninth Panamerican Conference was meeting there at the time. This was at the beginning of the Cold War, and the U.S. government wanted the assembled representatives to pass an anti-communist resolution.

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Simultaneously, an anti-American student meeting was taking place in the city. Given this context, Conservatives quickly blamed foreign communist agitators for the unrest. Among the many foreign students in Bogotá was a group from Cuba that visited Gaitán in his office several days before his assassination. One of them even made an appointment to see Gaitán again — at the Gaitán museum today, the Liberal leader's datebook is opened to April 9, 1948, and one can see what he was planning to do after lunch that day: "3PM — Fidel Castro." The young Fidel Castro was in Bogotá! There are some who still believe that the Cuban revolutionary killed Gaitán, but by his own account, he was not much more than a bystander — with other students, he was hustled out of the capital by the Cuban ambassador on a flight a few days later. All evidence seems to point to a mentally unstable individual, Juan Roa Sierra, as the sole perpetrator of the murder, but since he was immediately lynched, the full story may never be known. The CIA has often been blamed, but the young agency seemed to have been caught off guard by events in Bogotá, and was several years away from organizing coups in Iran and Guatemala. Nevertheless, the U.S. government has never released all of its documents on the incident.

After the initial shock over the assassination and the riots wore off, La Violencia resurfaced in the countryside (as an urban phenomenon, the conflict was limited to the 9th of April). Nervous Conservatives feared that their Liberal neighbors would rise up again, and Liberals were afraid of the increasingly repressive Conservative government. In an atmosphere of murders, massacres, and atrocities, the Liberals boycotted the next presidential election and the Conservative candidate, the intransigent Laureano Gómez, won unopposed. By this time, personal and economic motives had quickly crept into the partisan conflict, as local party leaders and ordinary peasants saw opportunities to steal crops and land by massacring members of the opposite party. Some Liberal self-defense units came under the influence of communist ideology, including one led by a peasant fighter named Pedro Antonio Marín (alias Manuel Marulanda, alias "Tirofijo" — "Sureshot"). Marulanda remained a guerrilla for the remainder of his life, leading the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — FARC) from 1964 until his death (by natural causes) in 2008.

As La Violencia continued, a coalition of Liberal and moderate Conservative politicians supported a bloodless military coup against Gómez in 1953, led by General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. As Gómez went into exile, Rojas declared an amnesty for all Liberal guerrillas, which was accepted by many (but not all). The general, inspired by the Perón regime in Argentina, also tried to form a third political force based on a populist mix of nationalism, anti-elitism, and government aid programs. However, after a period of relative peace, it became apparent that Rojas (who was from a Conservative background) was not planning on leaving office. Student protests were met with violence, fear between Liberals and Conservatives returned, and La Violencia reintensified, often led by bandit groups of young men who had suffered the trauma of watching their families be massacred. Liberal ex-president Alberto Lleras Camargo met Conservative ex-president Laureano Gómez in Spain and they forged the National Front to restore electoral democracy in Colombia and end the military dictatorship.

In 1957, demonstrations and an economic shutdown forced Rojas into exile, and a caretaker military junta was put into place until National Front elections brought back civilian rule (women voted for the first time in these elections, winning the suffrage later than in most countries in Latin America). The National Front was a power-sharing scheme that lasted 16 years. Each party was guaranteed equal representation in all legislative bodies, in the entire bureaucracy, and in the presidential cabinet; the presidency alternated between the parties for four terms, beginning with the Liberal Alberto Lleras Camargo in 1958.

The National Front was successful in its main endeavor: ending La Violencia between Liberals and Conservatives. By 1964, the last partisan "bandits" had been killed or captured, and the civil conflict which had begun in 1946 had

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finally ended, leaving an estimated 200,000 dead. The National Front governments also instituted ambitious social programs: the education system improved, increasing Colombia's literacy rate to a respectable level, and a mild land reform law was instituted. Many programs were supported by the U.S. government through the Alliance for Progress, which provided funding and Peace Corp volunteers in an effort to improve the lot of ordinary Colombians (while at the same time trying to prevent "another Cuba" — Castro had come to power in 1959).

Although the National Front deal ended La Violencia, many were frustrated by the fact that after 200,000 dead, the same politicians who had inspired the civil conflict through their words and actions were still in power. Even today there are no monuments to the dead from La Violencia, no major films, and few works of literature — the conflict, which is so basic to understanding current events in Colombia, was officially ignored by the political class, especially when compared to how the two world wars and the Holocaust are remembered in Europe, or how the painful history of the Vietnam War still plays a role in the U.S. It was easier to ignore La Violencia for another reason: despite the murders and massacres in the countryside, coffee continued to be harvested and exported, industry continued to develop and expand in the cities, and in general, the economy grew. By the early 1960s, anti-National Front movements began to organize: the former dictator Rojas Pinilla formed the Alianza Nacional Popular (National Popular Alliance — ANAPO) while a popular chaplain from the National University, Father Camilo Torres, organized the Frente Unido (United Front).

Guerrilla groups also began to form. Communist guerrillas had not participated in the amnesties of the National Front, and, like so many others throughout the hemisphere, were inspired by the success of armed revolution in Cuba. In 1964, the Colombian government — in consultation with U.S. military advisors — decided to try to eliminate them militarily, rather than negotiate. Although surrounded, the bulk of the communist guerrillas, led by Tirofijo, made their way over the mountains to the llanos, where they officially renamed themselves the

FARC in 1966. Other guerrilla groups were already organizing: university students inspired by the Cuban Revolution formed the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (Army of National Liberation — ELN) in 1964; they received training and funding from the Cuban government. Camilo Torres abandoned the civic struggle against the National Front and joined the ELN in 1965, but was killed in his first armed action. The ELN then took on a Christian-Marxist hue, and was led by a former Spanish priest, the "Cura Pérez," from the 1970s through his death in 1998 (by natural causes). Both the FARC and the ELN established themselves in parts of rural Colombia where the government historically had little or no presence, in particular in regions settled by refugees from La Violencia. These two groups are still active today.

The guerrillas were initially supported to a degree by the Communist bloc (by way of Cuba). However, since their beginnings, the guerrilla groups have mainly funded themselves by "taxing" the residents and businesses in the regions they control — and by kidnapping people for ransom. Sometimes people are kidnapped from their homes, but they are also taken in temporary roadblocks set up by the guerrillas. Kidnapping reached a peak around 2000, but has decreased dramatically in recent years.

Of all of the guerrilla groups established in the 1960s and 1970s, the M-19 had the most popular support. It came out of the left wing of ANAPO, the political movement of the former dictator, Rojas Pinilla. The name "M-19" (Movimiento del 19 de Abril — April 19th Movement) comes from the date of the last National Front presidential election in 1970, which many Colombians still feel was stolen from the ex-general. Led by middle-class university students, the M-19 was an urban-based guerrilla movement known for creative actions — stealing Bolívar's sword, tunneling under the military barracks in Bogotá and taking arms, and holding a group of diplomats hostage at the Dominican embassy.

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Since the end of the National Front in 1974, governments have confronted ongoing social and economic discontent in different ways. Liberal Julio Cesar Turbay, elected in 1978, gave the military a free hand in dealing with guerrillas, union organizers, and community activists — certain army units soon racked up a negative human rights record which included torture and disappearances. In 1982, a divided Liberal Party was defeated by the Conservative candidate, Belisario Betancur, who pursued a peace process. During these talks, the FARC organized a political party, the Unión Patriótica (Patriotic Union — UP) as a means to reenter civil society and the M-19 signed a ceasefire agreement. The military was upset — after being given a free hand by the Turbay administration (and watching comrades die in the civil conflict), the army was now ordered to stay in their barracks. Grafted onto this situation was the explosion in the cocaine trade — narcotraffickers soon began to fund illegal death squads which were at least tolerated, when not actively supported, by sectors within the military.

The illegal drug trade in Colombia began on the Caribbean coast during the marijuana boom of the 1970s. By the end of the decade, a burgeoning cocaine trade was developing, based in Medellín. For years high protectionist tariffs had encouraged contraband smuggling of electrical appliances and other goods; this trade was managed from the Antioquian capital, which was close to Panama and the Colombian free trade zone on the island of San Andrés where goods were purchased. The contrabandists discovered that instead of going empty-handed, they could trade cocaine. Soon, coca paste was being transported to Colombia from the coca-producing highlands of Peru and Bolivia, where indigenous people had been chewing the leaf for centuries. In jungle labs, the paste was combined with the right chemicals (produced in the U.S.) and made into high quality cocaine. Established contraband routes expanded further into the U.S. and Europe, cocaine production skyrocketed, the price of the drug fell (especially in the form of "crack"), and addiction spread across the developed world.

Colombians are correct in stating that there would be no cocaine trade if there was no market for the drug; although cocaine has a degree of popularity among some Colombians, the consumption rate is half that of the U.S. and parts of Europe. Foreign travelers may want to ask themselves why there is such a need for cocaine in all sectors of their "advanced" countries. That said, there is no cultural or geographic reason why the trade should center in Colombia — coca is traditionally consumed by only a few indigenous groups on the Caribbean coast, and up until the mid-1990s, most of the coca paste was coming from Peru and Bolivia. 80% of the world's cocaine is still produced in Colombia mainly because the state has never had an effective presence in all of the national territory.

By the mid-1980s, cocaine traffickers like Pablo Escobar — the infamous leader of the Medellín cartel — were making lots of money. They took their profits and invested in ranches, urban properties, the contraband trade, and other businesses around Colombia, laundering their money in the process. They came up against the guerrillas — when members of their families were kidnapped (and sometimes killed), they reacted by forming their own paramilitary death squads — the paras.

Such death squads were responsible for attacking and killing members of the M-19 after the truce had been signed in 1984. The M-19 leadership blamed the government, and came up with a plan to take over the Palace of Justice building in Bogotá and present their case before the Colombian Supreme Court on national television. The takeover took place on November 6, 1985; but things did not turn out as planned. President Betancur was shocked, disappointed and depressed, and allowed the military to take charge during the incident. The army attacked and soon the building was on fire. The president of the supreme court, unable to contact President Betancur, called a radio station instead, and the nation heard his plea to stop the attack and negotiate with the guerrillas; it was all in vain. All of the guerrillas involved in the incident were killed, along with many innocent bystanders and others who worked in the Palace — eleven justices lost their lives. Army officers were convinced, incorrectly, that the M-19

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had collaborators on the inside. There is video documentation of a number of people being taken out alive from the Palace by the military, only to be disappear later (sometimes with their charred bodies "found" in the following days in the ruins). Many claim that the M-19, or the army, or both, received funding from Pablo Escobar, and that one goal of the attack was to destroy evidence against the narco-trafficker — there is ongoing debate over who started the fire in the building. The whole incident was a tragedy, and court cases continue even today.

Despite all of this, negotiations with the guerrillas continued. The M-19 laid down its arms in 1989, and entered electoral politics; members of the group were active in writing the new 1991 Constitution, and are still involved in politics on the left today, particularly in the Polo Democrático ("Democratic Pole" — "Polo," established in 2003). On the other hand, thousands of members of the UP were murdered by paramilitary groups over the course of ten years. The UP was rural-based, and so its members were often in areas where narco-traffickers and ranchers wanted complete control. There are serious claims that perhaps the FARC leadership were more interested in having the UP fail in order to have more reason to continue the armed struggle — the failure of the 1999-2002 peace talks between the FARC and the government can also lead one to this conclusion.

Smaller guerrilla groups also laid down their arms in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including an indigenous-based movement, Quintin Lamé (named after an early-twentieth century Indian guerrilla leader) and the Maoist Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Liberation Army — EPL). The EPL was active among banana workers in the Urabá region along the border with Panama; by the 1980s, narco-traffickers had begun to buy land at rock-bottom prices from ranchers there who no longer wanted to deal with the EPL. When the EPL signed a peace agreement with the government in 1991, it created a power vacuum in the region, initiating a war between paramilitary groups and the FARC. The FARC began murdering former EPL members, claiming that they were traitors who

supported the paras (some former EPL members did fall into this category). But the struggle was larger than the EPL, or even the banana industry: lucrative cocaine shipments left the Gulf of Urabá, while illegal arms shipments arrived. The paras engaged in almost daily massacres of suspected guerrilla sympathizers, union organizers, and human rights workers in the late 1990s, finally winning the area from the FARC by 1999. The Colombian armed forces were conspicuous in their absence.

Beyond Urabá, actions of the paras have been felt in every region and city of Colombia. They are largely responsible for displacing up to three million peasants from their farms in the countryside — after terrorizing an area with selective massacres, the paras take the land while the displaced find refuge in the cities. According to the human rights reports issued by U.S. State Department, by the 1990s paramilitary groups were responsible for 65% of all extrajudicial killings (the guerrillas were responsible for 25% and state forces for 10%). The most recent report points to this same proportional breakdown (although overall annual numbers of political murders today are in the hundreds, rather than in the thousands).

By the election of 1990, narcotraffickers — in particular the Escobar-led Medellín cartel — had begun assassinating any judges, lawyers, police officers, and journalists who were working against them. Pressure from the Reagan and Bush administrations in the late 1980s led to a strengthened extradition treaty, and several major traffickers were tried and sentenced in the U.S. - Escobar and his organization would have none of it, and used terror tactics to pressure the government, blowing up police stations, newspaper offices, and other targets, killing dozens of innocent bystanders. During the 1990 political campaign, no less than three major candidates were assassinated by narcotraffickers, including the leaders of the UP, the M-19, and the reform wing of the Liberal Party. The winner of the election, Cesar Gaviria, came from this last political group.

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Gaviria supported the writing of a new more democratic constitution — mayors and governors are now elected rather than appointed, and the voting system changed to favor the formation of third parties. Although the Liberal and Conservative parties still exist, they no longer play a dominant role in Colombian politics. The new constitution also ended extradition; when this measure was adopted by the constituent assembly, Pablo Escobar immediately turned himself in; he stayed in his own specially-designed facility outside of Medellín, from which he pretty much continued to direct his cartel. By this time, however, Escobar had earned many enemies among narcotraffickers and their paramilitary supporters. A hunted Escobar left his "jail" in July 1992, and was gunned down by the Colombian police on a rooftop in his hometown in December 1993. His dramatic death, however, did nothing to weaken the lucrative cocaine trade.

The Gaviria administration also opened up Colombia to free trade, and a commercial-led boom lasted in Colombia through the mid-1990s. In 1994, Liberal Ernesto Samper was elected president, promising to socialize the economic boom to a degree. Instead, his administration was dogged by allegations that he had received campaign contributions from the Cali cocaine cartel. Samper spent most of his administration defending himself from the charges, successfully avoiding impeachment by the Colombian congress. During this time, however, the boom went bust and the economy was suffering — Colombian industrial products, such as textiles from Medellín, were not competing well in international markets and free trade had even broken the international coffee pact, which sent the price per pound to its lowest level in decades. Meanwhile, impoverished farmers found a new lucrative crop: coca. Successful U.S. — led efforts to suppress coca cultivation in the highlands of Peru and Bolivia led to the development of coca species that could grow in the Colombian jungles and lowlands. This change also provided new revenues to the FARC, since coca was now being grown in areas that had been under their control since the 1960s. A reinvigorated FARC began to attack government forces in the jungles and in the llanos, capturing dozens of soldiers at a time.

This set the stage for the 1998 election, which was won by Andres Pastrana, the son of a former Conservative president. During the campaign, millions of Colombians marched for peace, exhausted by the ongoing war with the guerrillas and the massacres perpetrated by the paras. Pastrana promised to open talks with the FARC; a member of his campaign was photographed visiting Tirofijo before election day.

After the Colombian army ceded territory the size of Switzerland to the FARC in the llanos, the peace talks began in January 1999. Public discussions on a variety of social themes were televised, with international visitors observing and participating. Despite the dialogue, armed conflict actually intensified: the army was again in no mood to negotiate, while the FARC leadership seemed to be using peace talks as a way to strengthen themselves militarily - the FARC had just lost Urabá to the paras. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration in the U.S., in consultation with the Pastrana government, designed "Plan Colombia," a comprehensive program to fight the drug war. Although crop substitution schemes and judicial reform are part of the Plan, by far the largest amount of funding goes to the police and military — for instance, more than half of the billion dollars appropriated by the U.S. Congress for Plan Colombia in 2000 paid for helicopters. President Pastrana saw the Plan as a way of strengthening his hand at the bargaining table with the FARC.

Outside of a few minor agreements on the ground rules of the ongoing conflict, little came of the three years of negotiations. Talks ended in February 2002 during another presidential campaign. A few days after, former senator, anti-corruption crusader, and French citizen Ingrid Betancourt, who was running for president, was kidnapped by FARC guerrillas when she tried to enter the recently-ended demilitarized zone. She was one of many politicians taken by the FARC at the time, kept in captivity alongside captured soldiers and, in February 2003, three U.S. contractors whose drug reconnaissance plane had been shot down by the guerrillas.

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The Colombian electorate was not only upset with the Pastrana administration for the failure of the peace talks, but also for its inability to resolve the problems of high unemployment and the economic downturn. Voters turned to former Antioquia governor Alvaro Uribe Vélez as the man who would set things straight. Uribe's father had been kidnapped and killed by the FARC in 1983; as governor in the mid-1990s, Uribe had enthusiastically embraced a government scheme that armed peasants to fight the guerrillas—this program was criticized for its ties with paramilitary groups. As a presidential candidate, Uribe promised to fight the guerrillas, while opening a peace process with the paras.

Under Uribe's administration, the civil conflict lessened considerably, and the state has regained a presence in many parts of Colombia — travelling is safer than it was ten years ago, but there are restricted areas: parts of the Pacific coast and much of the Llanos, for instance. The FARC still has some 10,000 members, but that number is far less than in the late 1990s. A series of victories by the army culminated in 2008 with the pursuit and killing of the FARC's number two man, Raul Reyes (on Ecuadoran territory); Tirofijo himself died shortly thereafter. In July of that year, Colombian armed forces also rescued Ingrid Betancourt, the three American contractors, and a few other FARC captives in a dramatic operation. Meanwhile, thousands of paramilitary fighters laid down their arms during the Uribe peace process — but reinsertion into civil society has been difficult and incomplete; many paras have reorganized under different names, again funded by narcotraffickers.

Success against the FARC and with the paras boosted confidence among international and Colombian investors and the economy began to improve. Inspired by the positive direction of the country, the constitution was altered to allow for the reelection of presidents, and Uribe easily won the 2006 contest. Uribe had a populist touch, going to town hall meetings in far-flung corners of Colombia on weekends in order to hear the pleas of ordinary citizens. However, union organizers, community activists, and human rights workers continued to

be threatened and killed by paras —many fault Uribe's government for inaction, or even cooperation, in these murders.

Ratcheting up the war with the FARC brought tensions between Uribe and Hugo Chávez, the left-wing president of Venezuela, who was elected in 1999. Chávez has rechanneled much of Venezuela's vast profits from its petroleum industry into social programs modeled on those of the Cuban revolution, and has also financially and diplomatically supported the Castro regime and leftist governments in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Argentina. The Venezuelan president also voiced support for the FARC as a legitimate representative of the desires of the Colombian people — Uribe countered with claims that the Venezuelan military was allowing the guerrillas a safe haven in the neighboring country. Saber rattling by the two presidents was frequent, but usually ended in an embrace at some international meeting — after all, the two countries are major trading partners.

Scandals marked Uribe's second administration — members of the government illegally wiretapped opposition politicians and journalists, and political corruption increased on lower levels (while the president seemed to stay above the fray). Even worse, army officers were responsible for kidnapping young men from Bogotá's poorest neighborhoods, taking them out to rural areas, forcing them to put on military uniforms, and shooting them — all in order to take advantage of government-awarded bonuses for killing guerrillas. Still, Uribe's popularity remained high going into the 2010 presidential election — Colombia, like much of Latin America, has survived the current financial crisis better than many developed countries. However, when the Colombian supreme court determined that a third term would be unconstitutional, the president honorably accepted the decision, unlike other leaders in similar situations throughout Latin America and the world.

Uribe never organized his own political movement and relied on a coalition of parties to pass his program, so he had no obvious successor. The first round of

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voting in the presidential election led to a coalescing of pro-Uribe forces around the candidacy of Juan Manuel Santos, who had served in several previous governments before becoming Uribe's defense minister in 2006. Previously, he established and led the pro-Uribe Partido Social de Unidad Nacional (Social Party of National Unity - Partido de la U). The opposition united behind the popular two-time mayor of Bogotá, Antanas Mockus. Mockus, a college professor and former rector of the National University, had success in making the capital more civic and livable in the 1990s — cleaning up parks, reorganizing public transportation, weeding out corruption and improving policing. Through innovative — some would say eccentric — teaching methods, he reminded bogotanos of what it meant to be a good neighbor and a good citizen. His success inspired other mayors to emulate his policies, and civic movements sprang up all over Colombia.

Santos decisively won the second round of the elections, and was inaugurated on August 7, 2010. His first action was to meet with Hugo Chávez and repair relations with Venezuela, which had broken down again in the last weeks of the Uribe administration. In September, Colombian armed forces killed the military commander of the FARC, the infamous Mono Jojoy, and have since killed or captured other high-ranking leaders of the guerrilla organization. President Santos is also pursuing a scheme to return displaced persons to their lands — a complicated and difficult task that would be worth the hard work if it succeeds.

In 2011, most Colombians and foreign observers agree that, thanks to the efforts of Uribe, the country is certainly safer for travelers than it was ten years ago — and thanks to the efforts of mayors like Antanas Mockus, Colombian cities are also more secure and organized than they were twenty years ago. It is too early to judge President Santos and his government, especially to the extent that human rights are respected and democratic dissent and labor organizing are tolerated, but the future certainly looks hopeful for Colombia and its people.

BOGOTÁ

Many travelers who visit Colombia start their vacation in Bogotá. Once a city whose name was once whispered with fear, Bogotá has become a shining example of progress and stability. Bogotá has become a tourist favorite due to the vast amount of options for entertainment, activities and the opportunity to walk in one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. Bogotá has been called the Athens of Latin America, due to its numerous universities. Bogotá has one of the most dynamic business environments in all of Latin America, evident in the modern design in many parts of the city. There are many sections to sight-see, dine and find excellent accommodations. Art lovers have numerous choices of museums and galleries to visit and a dynamic theatre community offers presentations every night of the week. Bogotá's nightlife is considered world class with options throughout the city. Within an hour and a half there are multiple beautiful outdoor destinations. In Suesca you can rock climb over 400 routes or you can enjoy mountain biking. A trip to the charming town of Guatavita also offers excellent hiking opportunities and a chance to enjoy the country. Parque Natural Chicaque has excellent camping facilities and stunning cloud forests to explore. Travelers must plan and choose their time wisely in Bogotá, because there always will be new experiences to discover.

GETTING TO BOGOTÁ

You can find a bus heading for Bogotá from anywhere in Colombia and South America. International and domestic flights arrive from all over Colombia and the world.

TOURISM AREAS

Travelers in Bogotá stay and visit within several different areas spread out over the city. Travelers usually choose the more historic La Candelaria area or the more modern North Bogotá. La Candelaria is found in El Centro section of Bogotá. The following areas are listed from south to north starting with El Centro. Bogotá's main tourism areas have been divided into the two main sections of El Centro and North Bogotá.

EL CENTRO

El Centro contains the historic district of Bogotá also known as La Candelaria. There are several other identified areas within El Centro. The El Centro section of this book and the maps has been labeled with five different sections: La Candelaria, Eje Ambiental, Las Nieves, Centro Internacional, and La Macarena.

La Candelaria

Travelers usually choose to stay in the La Candelaria area, in part because this is where the majority of Bogotá's hostels can be found. It also holds the main cultural attractions. It has a very energetic feel to it with many university students and with lively streets. La Candelaria has a tough reputation, but its danger can be greatly reduced when you use precautions.

Eje Ambiental

Eje Ambiental has unique boundaries that run from Carrera 7 to the mountains near Monserrate. Avenida Jimenez runs through Eje Ambiental. Avenida Jimenez is used as a main walkway and includes many good restaurants.

Las Nieves

Las Nieves is an area with many businesses, restaurants and bars. The busy intersection of Carrera 7 and Calle 19 is located in Las Nieves.

Centro International

A few important museums and sights are found in Centro International. There is also a food court with many outstanding restaurants.

La Macarena

The Macarena area is a short walk from La Candelaria and the Centro Internacional and is filled with high-quality restaurants; its unique feeling makes it worth a visit.

NORTH BOGOTÁ

Many tourists like to stay in the modern and more safe feeling North Bogotá area. This area includes the Zona G, the Zona Rosa and the Parque 93 areas. These areas begin around in the north of Chapinero.

Chapinero

This neighborhood is north of Macarena and is filled with students and theatres, as well as many gay bars and nightclubs.

Zona G

Many nice restaurants can be found in Zona G; the "G" stands for "Gourmet".

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Zona Rosa

High-end clubs, bars, restaurants, malls and a more elegant feeling can be found in this area.

Parque 93

Many restaurants and drinking spots surround this lovely park that is popular with families and people wishing to relax in a more up-scale environment.

Usaquén

Restaurants, bars, a large mall, a small park and a church can be found in this charming North Bogotá area. Usaquén hosts an interesting flea/artist market every Sunday as well.

NAVIGATION

One of Bogotá's downsides is the traffic. It's a highly populated city with traffic problems. The city is designed in a carrera and calle pattern, but it can be very complicated. Be aware of your surroundings so you don't get lost. Look for landmarks in your hotel's area. A main road that connects the tourist areas of Bogotá is Carrera 7. This road is also referred to as the Septima ("Seventh").

CLIMATE

Bogotá's climate is what surprises people the most. At an altitude of over 8000 feet, Bogotá is high in the Andes. Expect dreary and cold weather. If you plan on spending time in Bogotá, bring a heavy sweatshirt, sweater or some type of warm clothing. It rains frequently, and the weather is a turn off for many people seeking a sunny vacation. People who like mountain type weather that allows for sweatshirts and pants enjoy Bogotá more than others.

Climate - Average High Temperature and Precipitation

	J.	F.	M.	A.	M.	J.	J.	A.	S.	O.	N.	D.
C.	12	13	13	13	13	13	12	12	13	13	13	12
F.	66	66	66	65	65	64	64	64	65	65	65	66
mm.	33	43	111	94	94	57	41	49	115	115	88	54
In.	1.3	1.69	4.4	3.7	3.7	2.2	1.6	1.9	4.5	4.5	3.5	2.1

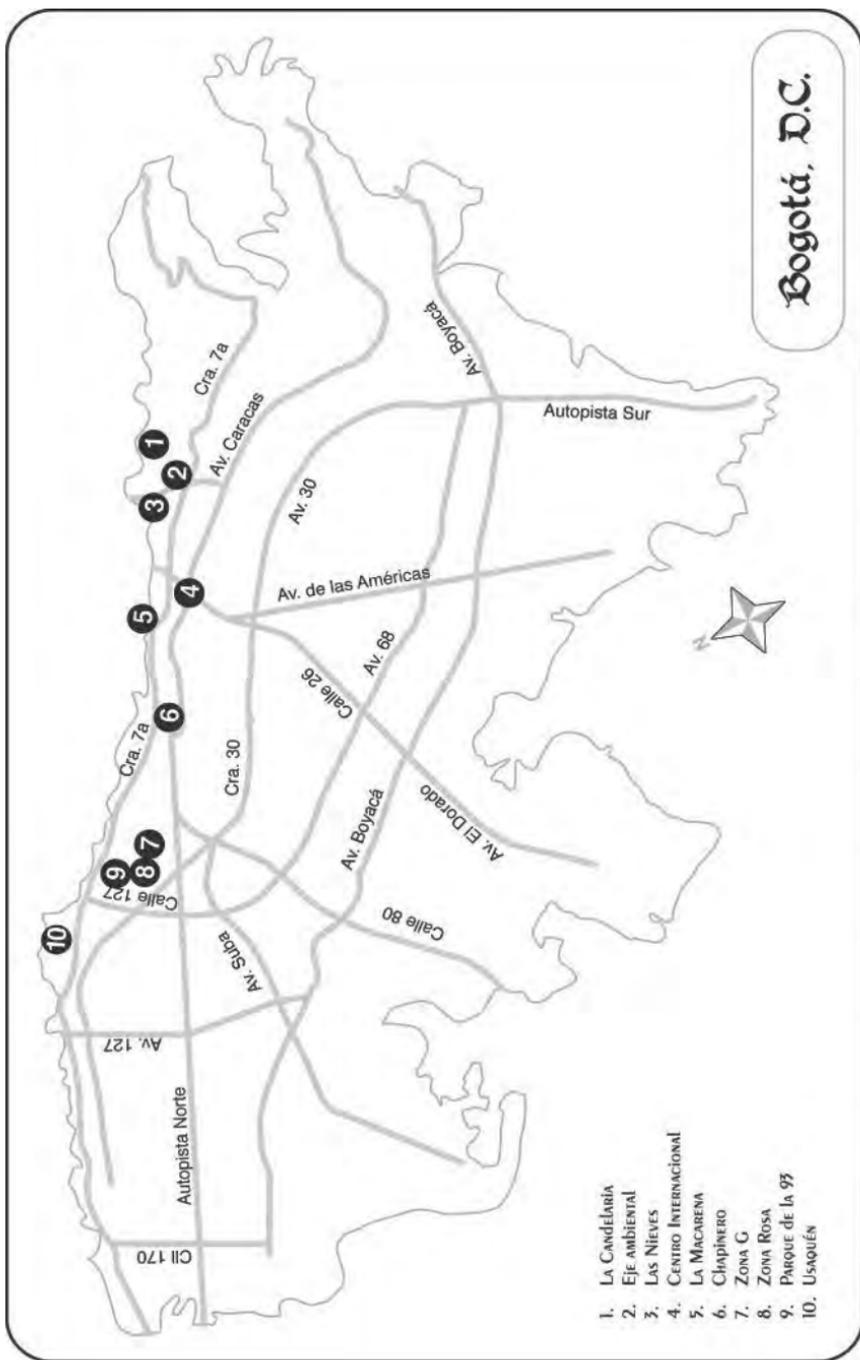
FESTIVALS

Rock al Parque, July, 2013. Rock al Parque is a rock festival that takes place in Simón Bolívar Park during the first week of July. International and Colombian musical groups perform throughout the week. Punk, metal and other types of music can be heard at the festival. This festival, has gained international recognition for graciously offering free admission to concertgoers. (www.rockalparque.com.co).

Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro en Bogotá. This event is one of the biggest drama festivals in the world. The festival takes place every two years and is scheduled next for April 2014. The event draws over two million people and includes 450 performances in theatres and 150 street performances. **Bogotá Film Festival**, October, 2013. This yearly international film festival has been held since 1984.

Feria Internacional del Libro De Bogotá, April, 2013. This event is one of the largest book fairs in the world. Every year publishers, authors and other book-related companies come together at the Corferias complex west of El Centro. This event is open to the public. (www.feriadellibro.com).

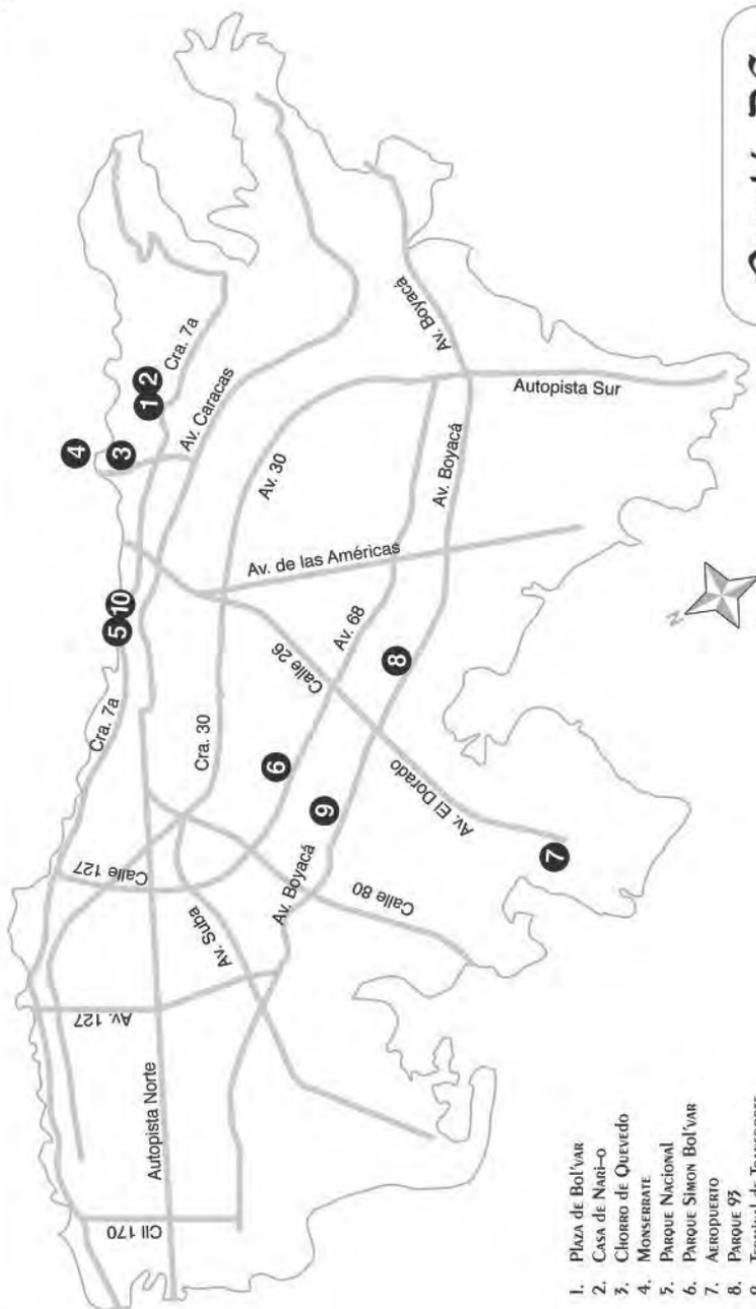
Jazz al Parque, September. Jazz al Parque is a yearly jazz festival that takes place throughout Bogotá. During the festival, jazz can be heard and enjoyed in parks all over Bogotá.



Bogotá, D.C.

1. LA Candelaria
2. EJE AMBIENTAL
3. LAS NIEVES
4. CENTRO INTERNACIONAL
5. LA MACAREMA
6. Chapinero
7. ZONA G
8. ZONA ROSA
9. PARQUE de la 93
10. USaquén

Bogotá, D.C.



1. PLAZA DE BOLÍVAR
2. CASA DE NARIÑO
3. CHORRO DE QUEVEDO
4. MONSERRATE
5. PARQUE NACIONAL
6. PARQUE SIMÓN BOLÍVAR
7. AEROPUERTO
8. PARQUE 95
9. TERMINAL DE TRANSPORTE
10. MUSEO NACIONAL

BOGOTÁ IS FOR WHO?

Bogotá is for all travelers and it should be a planned stop on your Colombian vacation. For those who don't like the cold or big cities, plan only a few days to at least visit the historical sites. If you're friendly, it's a great place to meet other travelers and Colombians. Bogotá has a positive, cosmopolitan feeling to it. People who like big cities could easily fall in love with Bogotá.

TIPS

Bring cold weather clothes. This is difficult for backpackers, but make sure you have a sweatshirt or something heavy to wear. If you have problems with the cold, bring gloves and a warm hat. Be prepared to have all your expectations shattered too. Bogotá is not what you think it is. If you bring a positive attitude and let things develop, you can have an amazing time in Bogota. Solo travelers should pair up with other travelers and go party, but try to make friends with Colombians too. Make sure you visit the historical sites as well; they are very impressive. If you like the outdoors, you need to go to Suesca, Guatavita, and Parque Natural Chicaque. All three destinations are paradises for outdoor lovers.

Avoid traveling during the week between 7:00 - 9:00 AM and 5:00 - 7:00 PM, due to rush hours. Also, don't try to find a taxi in the street during the evening rush hour, as this can be very difficult, especially in El Cento.

TIME

Three days to two weeks. People who love cities and new activities will have no problem staying for a long time. People who are itching to get to the coast or sun may want to limit their stay to a few days. It's important to visit the historical sites to get a glimpse of Colombia's past and culture.

SAFETY

Bogotá is one of the world's largest cities and has a history of crime. If you take precautions you should have no problems. Crimes against tourists are rare and are usually due to mistakes made by the tourist. You must take great diligence with regards to your safety. Do not walk around flashing your electronics. Leave your large camera in your room. Ask your hotel/hostel operators about the area you're in. Do not walk alone at night. If you have little experience in Latin America and worry excessively, it may be better to stay in North Bogotá. Treat your stay in Bogotá the same as you would if you were visiting New York City or any other large city.

AIRPORT

When arriving in Bogotá at the Aeropuerto Internacional El Dorado you should get a taxi at the airport taxi office. Outside there is a few booths on each side of the airport. You give your destination to the attendant and they will give you a piece of paper. Grab the first taxi that is in the line of them waiting. The cost to La Candelaria is around 20,000 COP and takes around forty minutes depending on traffic. It's highly recommended that you take a taxi from the airport to your destination. (www.elnuevodorado.com).

BUS TERMINAL

The Terminal de Transportes is a modern and extremely large bus terminal. There are restaurants, cafes and dozens of bus companies running routes all over Colombia. It's about twenty minutes from the airport and thirty minutes from La Candelaria in a taxi.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Bogotá is a great city to walk in. Within El Centro walking is the best option.

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Taxi

Taxi from La Candelaria to North Bogotá a taxi cost between 10,000 COP to 20,000 COP. The rates differ for distances and time in the cab. It's best to travel in a taxi in Bogotá between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM. If you travel during rush hour times you can double or triple the time it takes to get to your destination. There is an extra charge on Sundays, holidays and after 8:00 PM.

It's very difficult to find a taxi in the street from five to seven in the evening during the week. The best way to catch a cab is to have your hostel or hotel call the cab for you. Only use cabs that are yellow, modern and clearly legal. Inside the taxi there should be a meter and a chart. The chart has a picture of the driver and system of rates. When your ride is over, the meter will display a number. The chart will assign a rate to the meter number. There are many add on charges depending on different situations and the minimum rate is 3,300 COP.

Charges (January 2011):

Original pick up cost - 1,600 COP

To/From Airport add on - 3,300 COP

30 second charge - 65 COP

Night and Holiday charge - 1,600 COP

Pick-up at hotel charge - 600 COP

Hourly rate - 14,600 COP

Transmilenio

Bogotá has a bus public bus service called Transmilenio. Their huge red buses service several dedicated routes all over Bogotá. Many first time users can be intimidated by the complexity of the Transmilenio system and foreign travelers who don't speak Spanish may have trouble understanding how to navigate it. Las Aguas and Museo de Oro stations are the closest to La Candelaria.

Travelers may find themselves wanting to use the Transmilenio to get to areas outside of Bogotá. It's easy to go from Las Aguas to get to Portal del Norte,

Portal Sur, or Portal de la 80. The outside areas of Bogotá can be easily accessed from these stations. There are attendants in the station who can help direct you to the proper intermunicipal bus. Just tell them your final destination. Tickets for a one way trip on the Transmilenio are 1,700 COP. It's safe to take the Transmilenio, but watch your possessions as many people can be close together. The buses operate **Mon. - Sat.**, 5:00 AM - 11:00 PM, **Sun./Holidays** 6:00 AM - 10:00 PM. (www.transmilenio.gov.co).

Mini-buses

There are many mini-buses that run routes all over Bogotá. The name of the destination is on the front of the bus. You need to ask the driver's assistant to inform you when you get to your stop. You need to be careful not to get on the wrong bus. To avoid making this mistake, communicate with the driver or assistant to make sure you're heading towards the right destination.

BASIC SERVICES

The Bogotá basic service section revolves around El Centro areas.

Tourism Information

Instituto Distrital de Turismo. The Bogotá tourism department has booths and offices with English-speaking representatives all over Bogotá. Two of these centers can be found in the Aeropuerto Internacional El Dorado and right off the Plaza de Bolívar. These centers have maps and information for travelers. There are computers with internet that can be used free of charge for up to fifteen minutes. The representatives are also very helpful and friendly.

Internet

Omar's Café, Carrera 7 No. 13-84. Omar's is a great internet café that offers many other services. There is a bar with food and a balcony with a great view overlooking the Septima. Internet is 2,000 COP an hour and WiFi is 3,000 COP per day. **Mon. - Sat.** 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM.

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There are many other internet cafes scattered throughout El Centro.

Banks

BBVA, corner and Carrera 4 and Calle 19. You can find an ATM at this location.

BBVA, corner of Avenida Jimenez and Carrera 5. You can find an ATM and a full branch BBVA at this location.

Bancolombia, corner of Carrera 7 and Calle 19 next to the Foto Japon. There is a full service Bancolombia with ATM machines at this location.

Davivienda, corner of Carrera 4 and Avenida Jimenez. There is a full service Davivienda at this location.

Mail Service

DHL, Calle 19 No. 4-56 9A. Worldwide package and mail service can be found in this office. The cost to send a letter to the United States or Europe is around 70,000 COP.

Federal Express, Carrera 7 No. 16-50. You can mail packages worldwide from this office.

Servientrega, Calle 19 No. 4-37 Local 5. Servientrega is Colombia's largest in-country package shipper. You can ship packages to most anywhere in Colombia from here. This is the cheapest way to send a letter abroad (around 15,000 COP), but it may take up to two weeks to arrive.

Western Union, Carrera 13 No. 4-94. You can receive international money wires at this Western Union office.

Laundry

Novaclean, Carrera 2 No. 16-62 (031-281-2823). Novaclean is a dry cleaner that also does laundry. Each shirt or pants cleaned costs 1,500 COP.

Airline Ticketing

Avianca Office

Calle 19 No. 4-37. If you can't buy a ticket online with Avianca, you can purchase the ticket at the online price at their office for a 20,000 COP service charge.

Mon. - Fri. 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM, **Sat.** 9:00 PM - 1:00 PM.

Grocery Stores

Asociacion Futuro, Calle 15 No. 2-17. Asociacion Futuro is a small store that sells groceries and has a nice selection of fruit and vegetables. The store is in an excellent location in the heart of La Candelaria and is close to many hostels.

Mon. - Fri. 7:00 AM - 9:00 PM, **Sun.** 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM.

Olympica, Ave Jimenez No. 4-74. Olympia is a chain grocery and drug store. This store has a fruit and vegetable section. It has a bakery and a good selection of groceries too. **Mon. - Sat.** 7:00 AM - 9:00 PM, **Sun.** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Almacen Ley, Carrera 7, just north of the Plaza de Bolivar. Almacen Ley is the biggest grocery store in El Centro. It's a full supermarket that has a bakery, fruit and vegetable sections as well as everything else big stores offer. **Open every day** from 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM.

Bookstores

Fondo de Cultura Economica, Calle 11 No. 5-60, Centro Cultural Gabriel García Márquez. The Fondo de Cultura is one of the nicest bookstores in Latin America. If you like bookstores the Fondo de Cultura is worth visiting. The bookstore has a huge selection of books inside an interesting store design. **Mon. - Sat.** 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM, **Sun.** 12:30 PM - 5:00 PM.

Panamericana, Carrera 7 No. 18-48. You can find a large selection of books, electronics, office supplies and much more at this Colombian mega franchise.

Lerner, Avenida Jimenez 4-35. This large bookstore has a small selection of English books in the basement. Lerner also has the Mapas de Ruta map book

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(13,000 COP). This is a collection of maps of Colombia's main roadways that are good for motorcyclists or travelers in autos.

Photo

Foto Japon, Corner of Carrera 7 and Calle 19. Foto Japon has camera-related merchandise and you can get passport and visa photos taken there.

Communications

Comcel, Carrera 8 No. 19-41. This Comcel office has multiple services and technicians to assist you with your cell phone services. **Mon. - Fri.** 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM, **Sat.** 9:00 AM - 1:30 PM.

SPANISH LESSONS

Private Instructor

Angela Velandia teaches individual and group lesson in her home. She lives only a few minutes outside of La Candelaria by foot. Angela has been teaching Spanish for over eight years. She offers flexible schedules and gives lessons on the weekends and holidays. Angela focuses on the students individual needs and likes to make her classes fun. She charges 25,000 COP for one student for one hour; 40,000 COP for two students; 50,000 COP for three students.

(031- 281-9037, cell- 311-2077-2857, spanish1.english1@gmail.com).

(www.angieschool.com).

Language Schools

Universidad Nacional de Colombia offers a Spanish for Foreigners program. They have five levels that include 80 hours of instruction each. The classes meet from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM from Monday through Friday. The cost of the classes are 690,000 COP per level. Contact the university for more information.

(<http://www.humanas.unal.edu.co/lenguas/extension/spanish-courses-for-foreigners/>).

International House, Calle 10 No. 4-09 (031-336-4747, info@ihbogota.com). International House has Spanish lessons for foreigners. They have a school in a convenient La Candelaria location. (www.ihbogota.com).

TOUR AGENCIES

Nova Tours, Carrera 6 No. 14-64, (031-286-1355). You can purchase plane tickets for all Colombian airlines, rent cars, and book trips to destinations all over the country from this travel agency. They have a bilingual manager on staff to assist with purchases. **Mon. - Fri.** 8:00 AM - 6:30 PM, **Sat.** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Aviator, Avendia 19 No. 4-62, (031-382-7111). This beautiful office is Aviator's headquarters. You can find information on Aviator's services for Parque Tayrona and throughout Colombia. This office has a bilingual staff to assist with questions and purchases. **Mon. - Fri.** 8:00 AM - 6:30 PM, **Sat.** 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

TOUR OPERATORS

Bogotá Bike Tours, Carrera 3 No. 12-72 (031-281-9924, Cell - 312-502-0554, bogotabiketours@gmail.com). Bogotá Bike Tours offers daily morning and afternoon tours of Bogotá. This is an excellent way to see the city. The tours visit city parks, markets and many interesting sites. The tours last for four to five hours and include an English-speaking guide, bike and a helmet. **The cost of the tour is 30,000 COP and worth every peso.** The bike shop has a full time mechanic who keeps the bikes in proper condition. The shop has used books in English, French, German, Dutch and other languages for exchange or sale. (www.bogotabiketours.com).

Colombia Trek, (Cell-320-339-3839, arias_rodriigo@hotmail.com). Rodrigo Duque operates Colombiatrek.com based out of Guican, which specializes in bringing hikers or trekkers to the circuit trek and to the snow-capped mountains of Guican and El Cocuy National Park. Rodrigo also rents all the necessary

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equipment for glaciers and camping. Rodrigo speaks English and can provide different levels of service, arranging day hikes and multi-day treks, (Rodrigo can have you picked up in Bogotá and transported to Guican or El Cocuy). Rodrigo is currently developing a new concept of exploring the outdoors around Bogotá which includes one to three day hiking, rock climbing, kayaking and mountain biking programs. (www.colombiatrek.com).

Jaguarundi Travel, (Cell-312-585-9630, info@jaguarunditravel.com). Jaguarundi Travel is operated by a Colombian who studied ecology at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. The company specializes in eco-tourism that stresses conservation tourism. They take visitors to eco-systems throughout Colombia, including El Cocuy, La Guajira, the Amazon, the Pacific Coast, around Bogota and many other areas. Jaguarundi owns 4 x 4 trucks and has a large van to transport groups up to a maximum of ten people. All inclusive tours that include nutritional and balanced food are available. The company practices strict ecological waste management. Jaguarundi has experience hosting researchers from universities from all over the world in the field. The company can arrange guides who are experts in fish, birds, plants, mammals and culture. Unique yoga retreats and photo safaris can be arranged. Jaguarundi's premium service is all-inclusive with food, insurance, transportation, guides, lodgings and much more. They also offer a service that assists backpackers with connecting with local guides. Jaguarundi is a true eco-tourism operator that strives to be a leader and positive example by practicing conservatism. (www.jaguarunditravel.com).

Aventura Colombia, Avenida Jimenez No. 4-49, office 204 (Cell -313-510-4856). This adventure company offers excursions from Bogota to locations all over Colombia including Mompox, the Lost City, La Guajira, El Cocuy and other locations that a professional guide may be needed. Aventura Colombia also embarks on trips for these locations from its office in Cartagena. (www.aventurecolombia.com).

BIKE SHOP

Pure Bike Shop, Carrera 13 No. 78-47, (031-476-5058). Pure Bike Shop has a nice inventory of supplies for mountain and street bikes. Pure Bike Shop organizes tours every Sunday within Bogotá and the surrounding areas. These group tours are a great way to bike in areas that are hard to find by yourself. They currently don't have rentals, but if there was an interest maybe the owner could be persuaded. (www.purebikeshop.com).

OUTDOOR STORES

Altura Maxima, Carrera 13 No. 67-26, (031-321-7282, ventas@alturamaxima.com.co). This Chapinero based outdoor store has tents, backpacks, camping gear, climbing equipment, hiking boots and other outdoor supplies for purchase.

HIKING TOURS

Fundacion Colombia Sal Si Puedes, Carrera 7 No. 17-01. Sal Si Puedes is a highly organized hiking organization that offers low cost hikes every weekend in the Bogotá area. The hikes include transportation and guides. The organization has a pleasant office on the Septima that you can walk into for more information. Please check the event calendar on their website for future hikes. (www.salsipuedes.org).

SPORTS/EXERCISE

Travelers and foreign residents looking for exercise have several options in Bogotá.

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Sunday Ciclovía – Biking

Every Sunday and holiday from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM over one-hundred kilometers of Bogotá's streets are closed to allow cyclists to roam over the city. You can rent bikes from Bogotá Bike Tours to enjoy this very popular Sunday event.

Yoga

Loto Azul, Carrera 5a No. 14-00 (031-334-2346). Loto Azul holds yoga classes every Monday and Wednesday from 5:15 - 6:30. Four classes for 40,000 COP or 8 classes for 60,000 COP.

Gym

Gimnasio People Training, Calle 19 No. 6-39, Edificio-Vida Nova, 4th floor (031-243-7534). This gym has free-weights, weight-machines, cardio machines, aerobic classes, saunas and an incredible view of the Septima and Calle 19. This gym also has reasonable prices. **Day pass**, 8,000 COP; **Month**, 65,000; **Year**, 470,000.

Basketball

On Sundays at Parque Nacional (between Carrera 5 and 7, and Calles 36 and 39) there is a full court basketball game that starts early in the morning and goes until the early evening. The quality of play is around high school level, there are some talented players on hand to make the game challenging.

Tennis

There are several walls to practice your shots and several clay courts for public use at Parque Nacional.

Golf

City Golf Performance Center, Carrera 15A #120-45. This North Bogotá golf practice center is an excellent facility to work on your game. The center has six simulators as well as a putting green, pro-shop and restaurant that serves great

looking steaks. The center offer lessons for 50,000 COP per hour with a golf professional.

La Cima Golf Club, Kilometer 14 Via La Calera, (cell - 320-834-3986). La Cima Golf Club is a beautiful 18 hole, par 70, 6089 yard long course high in the mountains. The course is the second highest golf course in South America. Green fees are a very reasonable 39,000 COP during the week and 72,000 COP on the weekends. Caddy rates are from 24,000 COP to 28,000 COP. The course is one hour by taxi from La Candelaria. Unfortunately the taxi fee is quite high, 92,000 COP each way.

Soccer

In Parque Simón Bolívar (entrance at Calle 63 with Carrera 60) there are several games being played on the weekends. If you ask politely and can keep up in a serious game, you probably will be able to join in.

Swimming Pool

Complejo Acuatico Simón Bolívar, Calle 63 No. 42-00 (031-221-0622/23 ext. 101). The aquatic center has four pools. The general public can use the olympic size pool (50 mts.). Foreigners must bring a medical certificate saying that you don't have any contagious illnesses. You also need a medical insurance card and an ID. Colombians or residents of Colombia need to bring a medical certificate and their EPS carnet. The cost for an hour of pool use is 7,500 COP. **Tues. - Fri.** 6:00 AM - 2:00 PM, Sat/Sun. 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM. **Closed Mondays.**

CHIVA/PARTY TOUR

Musicology Hostel operates a party bus every Thursday and Saturday night. The bus picks you up at your hostel at around 10:00 PM. On Saturdays you go to a viewpoint called La Calera where you can enjoy the views while drinking free cocktails. After the views the bus goes to Zona Rosa and visits two or three of the best clubs. At 3:00 AM the bus goes back to La Candelaria. You can either go

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home or get dropped off at an underground party (usually at The End, a club on the 30th floor of a high-rise). There are free cocktails on the bus at all times. Thursday night is a toned-down version of Saturday. Musicology guests receive 5,000 COP discount.

Chiva prices:

Thursday - 30,000 COP

Saturday - 40,000 COP

Both nights - 60,000 COP

THE SEPTIMAZO

Every Friday night the Séptima (Carrera 7) is closed to traffic. Street performers, vendors and other people come out to entertain thousands of people who stroll through the streets. **This weekly event is a must visit if you find yourself in Bogotá on a Friday.**

FLEA AND ARTIST MARKETS

There are several flea and artist markets in Bogotá.

Park at Carrera 4 and Avenida Jiménez

In this park people sell almost anything on Sundays and holidays. It's more like an organized junk fair. Many travelers have reported finding things they strangely need at this market.

Carrera 7 and Calle 24

On the weekends this parking lot fills up with vendors selling all sorts of interesting items. It is slightly more upscale than the one at Carrera 4 and Avenida Jiménez.

Usaquén

Please refer to the shopping information in the Usaquén section.

DAY TRIPS

Catedral de Sal

Zipaquirá is a town about **ninety minutes to two hours** from **La Candelaria**. In Zipaquirá you can find the **Catedral de Sal** (031-852-9890, **everyday** 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM). This is one of Bogotá's biggest tourist attractions. The Catedral de Sal is found inside a massive salt deposit that is an operating salt mine. This three-level mine provides a sizable amount of Colombia's salt. This is a good attraction if you like churches and underground caverns. The cavern is huge and features a descriptive tour of Jesus Christ's last walk with religious displays throughout the mine. There are guides available or you can just wander around. The admission fee is **20,000 COP fee (2013)**.

Transportation to Zipaquirá is very easy by bus. Take the **Transmilenio** (1,700 COP) or a taxi (12,000-18,000 COP) to the **Portal de Norte**. Without leaving the station, you can grab a small intermunicipal bus (4,100 COP) outside of the Exito to Zipaquirá. **Once in Zipaquirá** you need to **walk** about **10-15 minutes** to the Catedral. It's **best to ask a local** where the Catedral del Sal is located. When returning from Zipaquirá, reverse the directions back to La Candelaria.

PARKS

There are several parks throughout Bogotá. Two of the more visited parks are Simón Bolívar Metropolitan Park and Parque Nacional.

Simón Bolívar Metropolitan - The largest park in the city hosts rock concerts and other events. There are biking, running and walking paths. There is a large lake in the middle where you can rent a paddle boat.

Parque Nacional - This is a recommended park to visit and is a nice walk from La Candelaria. It's a hilly park that starts at the Septima and goes up into the mountain. There are walking and biking paths.

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THEATRES

Bogotá is filled with theatres that provide a wide variety of presentations. Many theatres offer free concerts and theatrical performances. There are countless theatres in Bogotá. Here is a small sample of some of Bogotá's finest theatres.

Teatro la Candelaria, Calle 12 No. - 2-59. Teatro la Candelaria has a reputation for being one of Colombia's most professional theatres. Classical and modern presentations are held through the year.

Corporación Colombiana de Teatro, Calle 12 No. 2-65. This theatre is next door to the Teatro La Candelaria and is considered its sister theatre. Performances take place Monday through Saturday, with a majority taking place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The theatre seats 150 people; There are at least four companies presenting performances at this theatre. (www.corporacioncolombianadeteatro.com).

Fundación Centro Cultural Gabriel García Marquez, Carrera 13 No. 3-17. This theatre holds musical performances and contemporary plays on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendano, Calle 10 3-16, FREE. This theatre **hosts free concerts many days of the week**. Fundacion Alzate is a beautiful two story theatre that seats 460 people. You can pick up a monthly schedule at the theatre.

Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Calle 11 # 4-14. This library is one of the most beautifully designed libraries in the world. Free and paid concerts are held throughout the month. Check with the library for the current schedule. This library is highly suggested for a short visit to see its unique modern architecture. Go to the top floor cafeteria for a great view of Bogotá. **Mon. - Sat.** 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM, **Sun.** 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Teatro Colon, Calle 10 No. 5-32. Teatro Colon was under renovation at the time of this writing. It was built in the late 1800's and was declared a national monument in 1975. The lavish theatre was constructed with Italian renaissance architecture characteristics. Teatro Colon houses Bogotá's finest opera and musical performances.

Cinemateca Distrital, Carrera 7 No. 22-79. Cinemateca Distrital shows classic international films four times a day. **Cost** is **2,500** COP for admission. **Daily movie times** are at 12:30, 3:00, 5:15, and 7:30 PM.

Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Municipal Theater, Carrera 7 No. 22-47. This is one of Bogota's biggest theaters. Musical concerts, plays, ballet, dance performances and many other types of shows are performed at this theatre.

HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS/MUSEUMS

La Candelaria area is filled with historical and culturally significant buildings and museums. The area has beautiful old Spanish colonial architecture and interesting streets to explore. There are numerous museums dedicated to preserving and displaying important artifacts of Colombia's history. These museums all have informative and interesting displays that help educate the viewers. Plan a whole day of exploring with breaks of relaxation at numerous high quality restaurants and cafes that are scattered all over the area. There are also several museums and other interesting sites that are about a ten minute walk north up the Septima.

LA CANDELARIA

HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS/MUSEUMS

Plaza de Bolívar is the center of the cultural area of Bogotá. This plaza is the one that all the museums, churches, governmental and other important buildings

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surround. The plaza has great views of the surrounding mountains and areas. **The plaza should be a requirement for your visit in Bogotá.** Throughout the year, the plaza is used as a location for important events. The Plaza de Bolívar is visited by local and foreigner tourists and it's where sight-seeing should begin. The Plaza has a deep history in both the past and modern Colombian history.

Palacio de Justicia (not open to the public). The Palacio de Justicia is the location of the 1985 M-19 massacre.

Catedral Primada, Church on the Plaza de Bolivar, **FREE**. The Catedral Primada is a beautiful example of colonial Spanish architecture. This church is enormous to the point where there are churches inside the church. It's a magnificent building, adorned with chandeliers, paintings and multiple chapels and an impressive tomb of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, the Spanish founder of Bogotá. **This church is highly recommended for a visit.** **Capitolio Nacional** (not open to the public). This is where the Colombian congress meets. It offers an excellent photo op of the building with a fountain and a Colombian flag.

Edificio Lievano (not open to the public). On the side of the plaza across from the church is the mayor's office.

Museo del 20 de Julio, Calle 11, No. 6-94 (031-334-4150, 3,000 COP, **Tues. - Fri.** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM; **Sat./Sun**, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM). A museum dedicated to the independence of Colombia. It's a small museum, but it's informative and has very interesting displays. This museum is a nice visit to get a feeling of Colombia's history. This museum is recommended for a visit if you like history.

Museums, Calle 11 No. 4-93, **FREE**. This is a building that hosts multiple museums and exhibits. The complex of museums is well worth visiting. **Casa de Moneda** houses an exhibit of Colombian money. If you're lucky a staffer will give you a coin souvenir. **Museo Botero** features the paintings and sculptures of famed Colombian artist Fernando Botero, as well as his personal collection of

European and American art from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. **Botero's personal collection will impress any art lover even if they don't like Botero's own style.** There are other salons and art galleries throughout the two story complex that frequently host traveling international exhibitions, there was an interesting art collection from Mexico and a Man Ray retrospective at the time of this writing. There is also a charming restaurant in the museum that serves meals for between 10,000 and 20,000 COP. A visit to these museums is highly recommended. **Mon. - Sat.** 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM, **Sun./Holidays** 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM. **Closed on Tuesdays.**

Museo Militar (031-281-2548), **FREE.** The military museum is an interesting visit, especially for military buffs. The museum displays military artifacts and objects from the past to modern times. There is an interesting display on Colombia's involvement in the Korean War. There is a parking lot with some serious weaponry in the form of a few attack planes, a tank, a helicopter and a missile. **Tues. - Sun.** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Museo de Arte Colonial, Carrera 6 No. 9-77 (031-341-9761, **FREE, Tues. - Fri.**, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, **Sat./Sun.** 11:00 AM - 4:00 AM). The Museo de Arte Colonial is housed in a beautiful building with gorgeous religious art and other art-related exhibits. This is another highly recommended museum to visit.

Museo Arqueológico, Carrera 6 No. 7-43 (031-243-1048, **3,000 COP, Tues. - Fri.** 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM, **Sat./Sun.** 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM). The Museo Arqueológico has salons of pottery, sculptures and other culturally relevant artifacts. There is also a busy cafe which allows you to enjoy coffee in a lovely courtyard in the museum.

Museo Francisco Jose de Caldas, Carrera 8 No. 6-87, **FREE.** This small museum has exhibits dedicated to Colombian military history.

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Portal de Muesos de la Universidad Nacional, corner of Calle 7 and Carrera 8, **FREE**. This university museum is worth a quick peek. The museum has rotating exhibits with different themes. **Mon. - Sat.** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, **Sun./Holidays** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Casa de Narino, The presidential palace is the where the president works and sometimes lives. It's a heavily guarded area and this is not a place where one should play around. There are presidential guards who will let you take pictures of them with you at the front gate.

Iglesia Santa Clara, Carrera 8 No. 8-91, **FREE**. Iglesia Santa Clara is a beautiful and wonderfully preserved church. Iglesia Santa Clara is a small church that can be visited in five minutes, but this visit may be one of the more visually appealing museum experiences of your lifetime. **Mon. - Fri.** 9:00 - 5:00, **Sun.** 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Museo Historico de la Policia, Calle 9, No. 9-27, **FREE**. **The police museum is one of the better museums to visit in Bogotá.** Visitors are politely received and assigned a young English speaking guide, who is also a police recruit. These young police officers are serving their mandatory nine - month service. The museum is beautifully decorated and has numerous viewing rooms. There is a Pablo Escobar exhibit which includes his old weapons and pictures of his demise. There is also a very interesting room that houses uniforms from police departments from all over the world. There are also many displays of weapons and exhibits on the different tasks of the Colombian police. **The police museum should be a mandatory visit for both foreigners and Colombian tourists.** The museum is open seven days a week from 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

CENTRO INTERNACIONAL - ATTRACTIONS/MUSEUMS

Museo Nacional, Carrera 7 No. 28-66, **FREE**. **The Museo Nacional is a required visit in Bogotá.** It is a three-floor masterpiece of a building, which was a former

prison turned into a beautifully decorated and well-planned museum. With beautiful wood floors and meticulously maintained, the Museo Nacional is a fine example of a museum. Salons 15-18 graciously includes English place cards that you can carry around that describe the pieces of history you're viewing. **Tues. - Sat.** 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Sun. 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

Planetario de Bogotá. At the time of writing, the Planetario de Bogotá was going through a renovation. The Planetarium has reopened since with a refurbished facility that hosts laser shows.

Plaza de Toros de Santamaria. Bogotá's bullfighting ring is a beautiful building worth checking out. It's rumored you can talk your way inside for a visit if you can find an open entrance. If you're interested, the bullfight season is in January and February, on Sunday afternoons.

Biblioteca Nacional. This library is an interesting place in which to take a quick look. The building has a unique interior design. There is a small historical salon with relaxing classical music playing.

Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Calle 24, No. 6-00, 4,000 COP. This museum hosts different national and international exhibits.

EJE AMBIENTAL - ATTRACTIONS/MUSEUMS

It's suggested to visit the Quinta de Bolívar and Monserrate on the same day. The walk from La Candelaria is a nice stroll that takes you by the Universidad de los Andes. The university area has a positive feeling of progress and youth.

Museo de Oro, Calle 16 No. 5-4 Parque de Santander, **3,000 COP.** The Museo de Oro houses gold and ceramic pieces from pre-Columbian indigenous cultures. Over 33,000 gold and 10,000 ceramic pieces are on display. This is a popular tourist attraction for both Colombians and foreigners. **Mon. - Sat.** 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM, **Sun./Holiday** 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

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Quinta de Bolívar, Calle 20 No. 2-91, 3,000 COP. Quinta de Bolivar is a small property where Simon Bolívar occasionally lived, (monuments and information on the liberator). The Quinta is a pleasant ten minute walk from La Candelaria. Quinta de Bolívar is interesting and has a very peaceful feeling. You can get a good look into the house where Bolívar lived. **A visit to the Quinta de Bolívar is highly recommended.**

Cerro de Monserrate, Carrera 2 No. 21-48 Paseo Bolívar, Mon. - Sat. 15,400 - day/17,000 COP night (after 5:30 PM), Sun 9,000 COP. Monserrate is a major tourist destination in Bogotá. Monserrate is high on a mountain overlooking El Centro. You have a choice of taking a gondola or a cable car (funicular). There is a trail that for centuries has been used for pilgrimages. This route is not recommended for tourists due to reported robberies. There are restaurants and little shops at the top. There is a beautiful church and interesting things to look at. The view of Bogotá is stunning and is worth the trip up the mountain alone. **A trip to Cerre de Monserrate should be mandatory during your visit in Bogotá.** Mon. - Sat., 7:45 AM - Midnight., Sun. 6:00 AM - 6:30 PM. (www.cerromonserrate).

LA CANDELARIA - EJE AMBIENTAL

This area is where the majority of backpackers and tourists stay. La Candelaria houses most hostels and historical sites. There is a huge selection of bars and restaurants to choose from as well. La Candelaria is a very busy part of Bogotá and is in the location of many universities. There is a youthful vibe in the air and countless avenues of entertainment. At night there is a huge party atmosphere with students enjoying their time off. La Candelaria has reputation for crime, but this can be countered by making good decisions. Do not walk around at night by yourself. There are high traffic areas that are safe. Stick to these areas and your chances of having problems are greatly lowered. La Candelaria is an amazing place and should be highly considered when planning your trip. El Ambiental contains important attractions and many great restaurants. Avénida Jimenez is

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found in this section and it is very interesting to walk up from the Séptima to Monserrate.

INTERESTING STORES

Listed below are stores and markets that are worth a walk through if you are looking for a nice memento or souvenir.

Arts and Crafts

There is a small arts and crafts mall in the walking alley way off of the Chorro de Quevedo. You can find locally made items in multiple booths.

Emeralds and Jewelry

On the corner of Carrera 5 and Ave. Jimenez there is an interesting mall with numerous emerald and jewelry stores. Colombia is the source of most of the world's emeralds.

Souvenirs

Next to the Museo de Oro is the **Galeria Artesanal de Colombia**. You can find many shops that have interesting arts, crafts and souvenir-type items for sale.

ARTISTIC HAIR STYLISTS

La Peluqueria, Carrera 3 No. 15-47. La Peluqueria offers hair cutting and styling services for both men and women. Cuts for men from 15,000 - 20,000 COP; Women can receive a vast array of services starting at 20,000 COP. La Peluqueria stylists are all artists who also sell their work in the salon. There is occasional live music, couches to relax on and an artsy progressive feeling.

ACCOMMODATIONS

You can find most of the hostels in this area. It's recommended to reserve ahead for the more popular hostels. It's not hard to find a hostel in Bogotá, but the better

known hostels do fill up. All accommodations are in La Candelaria except the Hotel Bacata.

Budget

Hostel Bella Vista, Carrera 2 No. 12B-31 (031-334-1230, WiFi, info@bellavista hostel.co). Hostel Bella Vista is a hostel that may be one of La Candelaria's best-kept lodging secrets. Hostel Bella Vista is found on the edge of Chorro de Quevedo. This is a very lively area of La Candelaria with numerous bars and restaurants just steps away. Chorro de Quevedo is a small plaza where musicians, hippies, students and other people gather to socialize. It is in a beautiful colonial house. The hostel has a pleasant feeling to it and has grown into a very popular hostel in Bogotá. **Prices Nov. 2013: Dorm**, 9 beds, 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, 7 beds, 22,000 COP; **Dorm**, 4 beds, 25,000 COP; **Private**, 2 single beds, 70,000 COP; **Private**, double bed, 70,000 COP. Prices include breakfast. (www.bellavistahostel.co).

Hostel Fatima, Calle 14 No. 2-24 (031-281-6389, WiFi). Hostel Fatima is a unique hostel that offers quite a lot to travelers. Hostel Fatima offers a restaurant, a busy bar, book exchange, an interesting T.V. room and many other creative services for its guests. Hostel Fatima is a social hostel and if you're friendly you can meet tons of other people. Hostel Fatima also offers apartments for rent in a different location down the street. **Prices Nov. 2013: Dorm**, 6, shared bath **Single**, no bath, 35,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 50,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 50,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 70,000 COP. (www.hostalfatima.com).

Swiss Hostal Martinik, Carrera 4 No. 11-88 (031-283-3180, Wifi). A big hostel that has a lot to offer with a positive energy. There is a huge common area with hammocks, tables, computers and information. Martinik has another comfortable space to relax and watch television. There is a kitchen to prepare your own meals. Martinik has numerous dorm rooms, **Prices 2013: Dorm**, 10 beds, 18,000 COP; **Single**, no bath, 38,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 50,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 70,000 COP. (www.marinikhostal.com).

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Cranky Croc Hostel, Calle 15 No. 3 - 465 (031-342-2438, WiFi, reservas@crankycroc.com). The Cranky Croc is a well-run hostel that has gained a solid reputation as a great place to stay. The hostel is huge and feels like it never ends. There are multiple common areas that allow for many social opportunities. The Cranky Croc has a café and bar. There are a few outdoor patios and much more. It's highly suggested you make reservations if you want to stay there. **Prices 2011: Dorm**, 20,000 COP; **Single**, no bath, 46,000 COP; **Double**, no bath 60,000 COP; **Triple**, no bath, 90,000 COP; **Quad**, no bath, 120,000 COP. **Single**, bath, 56,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 70,000 COP; **Triple**, bath, 105,000 COP; **Quad**, bath, 140,000 COP. (www.crankycroc.com).

Chocolate Hostel, Calle 16 No. 2-43 (031-341-3104, WiFi info@chocolatehostel.com). Chocolate Hostel was formally known as Platypus Hostel, one of Bogotá's more popular hostels. Time will tell if the new operation can continue to bring in many travelers, which made it necessary to book in advance like Platypus Hostel did. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorms**, 3 -6 beds, 20,000 COP; **Small room, single**, no bath, 36,000 COP; **Double**, 44,000 COP; **Large room, single**, no bath 44,000 COP, **Double**, 48,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 50,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 55,000 COP; **Suite**, 75,000 COP. (www.chocolatehostel.com).

Hostel Sue, Calle 16 No. 2-55 (031-334-8894, WiFi, reservations@hostal suecom). Hostal Sue has hot showers and a nice courtyard with heaters. There is a relaxing T.V. lounge which offers chances to meet other people. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm**, 5 beds, 20,000 COP; **Single**, 36,000 COP, no bath, **Double**, 40,000 COP, no bath; **Single**, 50,000 COP, bath; **Double**, 55,000 COP, bath.

Musicology, Carrera 9 No. 3-15 (031-286-9093, WiFi, contact@musicologyhostel.com). Musicology is a spacious hostel with 42 beds. There is a bar, television area, a foosball table, an outside area and much more. Each bunk has a locker with plugs to charge your electronics. Musicology rates include both breakfast and dinner. Musicology runs a party bus and gives a 5,000 COP discount to its guests. **Prices 2011: Dorm**, ten beds, private bath, 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, 8 beds, private bath, 22,000 COP; **Dorm**, 6 beds, shared bath, 23,000

COP; **Dorm**, 4 beds, shared bath, 25,000 COP; **Dorm** 4 beds, private bath, 27,000 COP. (www.musicologyhostel.com).

Mid-Range

Hostal La Candelaria, Calle 16 No. 2-38 (031-600-7559, WiFi, info@hostallacandelaria.com). Hostal La Candelaria is an excellent choice for travelers who like a quieter stay. Hostal La Candelaria is highly recommended for its comfort, staff, security and overall quality. **Prices 2011:** **Single**, no bath, 47,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 60,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 60,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 90,000 COP; **Apartment with two bedrooms**, small living room and kitchen, 110,000 COP for two people, 30,000 COP each additional person. (www.hostallacandelaria.com).

Casa Platypus, Carrera 3 No. 12F-28 (031-281-1643, WiFi, casaplatypus@yahoo.com). Casa Platypus is a beautiful hotel in a pleasant area of La Candelaria, perfect for travelers with higher budgets who like to stay in upscale accommodations. It has a gorgeous terrace, T.V. room, and dining area. It's highly recommended to look at this hotel if you travel in this price range. **Prices 2013:** **Dorm**, 42,000 COP; **Single**, 137,000 COP; **Double**, 158,000 COP; **Twin**, 158,000 COP; **Triple**, 179,000 COP; all rooms include breakfast and private bathroom. (www.casaplatypus.com).

Expensive

Hotel Bacata, Calle 19 No. 5-20 (031-283-8300). Hotel Bacata is a huge high end hotel with a good location on Calle 19. The rooms are very comfortable and spacious. There are two restaurants on the property. **2011 Prices:** **Single**, 170,500 COP; **Double**, 199,100 COP. This hotel is located in the Las Nieves section. (www.hotelbacata.com.co).

Hotel de la Opera, Calle 10 No. 5-72 (031-336-2066). Hotel de la Opera is a gorgeous property that caters to high-end travelers. The hotel has a beautiful spa with a unique pool. This is the hotel for travelers looking to spoil themselves.

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Conveniently located near many historical sites. **Prices 2011: Single**, 307,000 COP; **Double**, 360,000 COP. (www.hotelopera.com.co).

RESTAURANTS

There are countless choices for restaurants in La Candelaria. Listed below are several budget and mid-range choices. Other restaurants can be also found throughout the area.

Budget

Crazy Mongolian Flaming Barbecue, Calle 15 No. 3-77. Crazy Mongolian is gaining a reputation as one of La Candelaria's best restaurants. It's a simple and small restaurant that is hard to miss if you don't look hard enough. The food here is amazing and comes with many different sauce options. Veggies and noodles, 7,000 COP; meat and noodles, 10,000 COP; ten chicken wings, 10,000 COP; tequila/whiskey shot, 3,500 COP. **Open seven days a week**, 12:00 PM - 9:00 PM.

Café de Sol, Calle 14 No. 3-64. Café de Sol is a great Café to get breakfast or a drink anytime during the day. Great service and very nicely decorated. Café de Sol has WiFi and is a nice place to relax in. Coffee, 1,300 COP; cappuccino, 3,500 COP; breakfast combos from 4,000 - 7,000 COP. **Mon. - Fri.** 7:30 AM - 9:30 PM,

El Nuevo Ejecutivo, Carrera 5 No. 13-54. El Nuevo Ejecutivo is a backpacker's breakfast dream. For 1,500 COP you get a plate of white rice, bread and eggs. If you add on a nice glass of fresh OJ it brings your bill up to 2,700 COP. Fast service with a nice sized staff that keeps the operation running smoothly. El Nuevo Ejecutivo is a highly recommended restaurant based on value, quality and service. **Mon. - Fri.**, 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Sat. 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM.

Al Samira, Carrera 4 No. 13-55. Al Samira serves well-priced Arabian food. This is a popular restaurant that plays great Middle Eastern music



BASIC SERVICES

1. NOVA TOURS
2. BOGOTÁ BIKE TOURS
3. EMERALD TRADE CENTER
4. WESTERN UNION
5. ASOCIACION FUTURO
6. OLYMPIA
7. ALMACEN LEY
8. INTERNET
9. INTERNET
10. HAIR
11. LAUNDRY
12. ARTIST SHOPS
13. BBVA
14. DAVVENDA

HOSTELS/HOTELS

15. HOSTEL BELLA VISTA
16. VILLACANDELARIA HOSTEL
17. HOSTEL FATIMA
18. CRANKY CROC HOSTEL
19. CHOCOLATE HOSTEL
20. HOSTEL SUE
21. HOSTAL LA CANDELARIA
22. CASA PLAYDUS
23. MARTINIK HOSTAL
24. HOTEL DE LA OPERA
25. MUSICOLGY

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Pizzeria Ricasole, Carrera 4 No. 14-83 (031-282-9554, delivery). The thin crust vegetarian pizza is very good. Pizza Ricasole's is a sit-down restaurant that is popular with university students. The restaurant serves pasta and other types of fast food. Pizzeria Ricasole is for when you're looking for a quick slice. Slice of pizza, 2,000 COP.

Gyros and Cocteles, Carrera 4 No. 15-11. This restaurant has different types of excellent gyros sandwiches. Gyros and Cocteles offers a combo with a sandwich, great chips and a drink. Nice couches to relax on with a big screen to look at. This is a highly recommended restaurant to get a great simple and fast meal. Sandwich combo, 9,500.

Romana Cafeteria, Avenida Jimenez No. 6-65. Romana Cafeteria is part of a franchise that has a few locations in El Centro. Romana Cafeteria has an old style Café theme. This is a professional restaurant with fast service. The food is very good and there is an extensive menu. Their simple quick breakfast combos are recommended. They sell excellent bread sticks and other baked goods that you can purchase to go. Breakfast combo, 7,700 COP. **Mon. - Fri.** 7:00 AM - 8:30 PM, **Sat.** 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM, **Sun.** 9:30 AM - 5:30 PM.

Empanadas Mexicanas, Carrerea 3 No 14A-14. Empanadas and hand-held type foods can be found here. They have an amazing guacamole, but it's incredibly spicy hot. Empanadas Mexicanas is highly recommended for a quick and economical meal. Chicken empanada, 1,200 COP.

Shawarma Khalifa, Avenida Jiménez No. 4-47. This Palestinian-owned Middle Eastern restaurant has good food. Shawarma's second floor dining room is well decorated and filled with comfortable couches. There are a few tables that have great views of Avenida Jiménez. Sandwiches from 6,500 COP; Mediterraneo Plate, 17,900 COP.

Café Plazuela, Carrera 6a No. 14-21. Café Plazuela is a charming restaurant that serves breakfast and Colombian food. The food is excellent. Café Plazuela is very popular with locals and it can be hard to find a seat at peak times. Huevos with rice, 4,000 COP; Carne a la Plancha, 10,000 COP. **Open seven days a week** from 7:00 AM - 11:00 PM.

Loto Azul, Carrera 5a No. 14-00 (031-334-2346). Loto Azul is a vegetarian restaurant that serves veggie burgers, lasagna and other healthy options. There is a small store that sells other related food products. Loto Azul also offers courses in cooking and has a Hindu boutique. Yoga classes are also available every week.

Toro Burger, Avendia Jiménez No. 4-30. Toro Burger is the best burger option in La Candelaria. Toro Burger serves huge burgers and great fries. Toro Burger combos start at 12,400 COP. The double carne burger is quite the handful at 15,700 COP. Toro Burger has WiFi and a relaxing dining room. **Highly recommended when you want pure gluttony.**

Oishi Oriental, Carrera 3 No. 15-94. Oishi has a variety of oriental food. The food is extremely good and well-priced in this restaurant. Oishi is well designed and has an interesting second floor. This is a highly recommended restaurant. Combo - chicken wings with rice, 10,800 COP. Six different combos from 9,500 - 11,200 COP. Sushi from 9,500 - 13,500 COP.

Hibiscus Restaurante, Calle 15 A No. 2-21. This Colombian restaurant is a good place to eat breakfast in La Candelaria. You can get eggs, bread, coffee and fresh squeezed orange juice for 5,000 COP. They also serve a good Colombian lunch and dinner. This is a good restaurant to find breakfast on Sundays in La Candelaria. **Mon. - Fri.**, 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM, **Sat.** 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM, **Sun.** 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Yumi - Yumi, Carrera 3 No. 16-40. The owner of this restaurant picked the perfect name. Yumi-Yumi serves incredible sandwiches at a great price. A side

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salad and chips comes with your meal. Large cocktails and techno music accompany your food. Yumi-Yumi is highly recommended. Chicken sandwich, salad, chips 11,200 COP. **Tues. - Thurs.** 12:00 PM - 11:00 PM, **Fri.** 12:00 PM - 1:00 AM, **Sat.** 6:00 PM - 1:00 AM.

Pita Wok, Carrera 4 No. 14-88, (031-560-7453, delivery). Pita Wok's theme is healthy eating with a menu of Falafel, Kababs, humus and much more. Falafel pita, 5,800 COP; Arroz Thai, 8,500 COP.

Panaderia Las Torres, Carrera 2 No. 6 - 52. This bakery and store has really good pastries. You can grab a couple of great chicken-filled pastries, a bag of chips and a drink for around 4,000 COP.

Broaster Coffe and Pizza, Carrera 2 No. 14 - 19 (031-342-94-49, delivery). This small pizzeria is very popular with students, junk food seekers and for people looking for a slice. Broaster has pizza, chicken, hamburgers, lasagna and more. This restaurant is always crowded with repeat customers. Slice of pizza, 3,000 COP. **Mon. - Thurs.** 11:00 AM - 1:00 AM, **Fri./Sat.** 11:00 AM - 3:00 AM, **Sun.** 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM.

Juan Valdez, Calle 11 No. 5-60, Centro Cultural Gabriel García Márquez, WiFi. This Juan Valdez Café has a relaxing outside patio in the same building as the Centro Cultural Gabriel García Márquez.

Helado de Yougurt Woody's, corner of Carrera 7 and Calle 12, and corner of Calle 19 and Carrera 4. Woody's is a franchise that has great frozen yogurt cones for 1,500 COP. The guanabana is excellent.

McDonalds, Carrera 7 No. 14-47. Travelers from all nations like to sneak in a visit to the golden arches. This popular McDonalds has great second floor view of one of Bogotá's busiest intersection. Big Mac combo, 12,900 COP; Ice Cream

Cone, 2,000 COP. **Mon. - Thurs.** 7:00 AM - 10:00 PM, **Fri.** 7:00 AM - 11:00 PM, **Sat.** 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM, **Sun.** 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM.

Barra de Café y Postres, Carrera 4 No. 14-95. This bakery has amazing cookies, pie and other pastries. There is nice second floor area to eat with a hobbit ceiling like from the Lord of the Rings. Pie, 3,000 COP; Croissant, 2,200 COP. **Mon. - Fri.** 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM, **Sat./Sun.** 9:30 AM - 6:00 PM.

Mid-Range

Crepes and Waffles, Avenida Jiménez 4-55. This franchise of Crepes and Waffles is a very popular location. There is a huge underground restaurant that is worth a visit. There is also a nice second floor area to relax with a great view of Avenida Jiménez. Crepes and Waffles has a wide variety of ice cream and food to choose from. Chicken and Mushroom Crepe, 11,900 COP; Waffle with Ice Cream, 6,500 COP. **Mon. - Fri.** 10:00 AM - 8:30 PM, **Sat./Sun.** 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

Al Sabor del Carbón, Avenida Jiménez 4-69. Al Sabor Carbón has good Argentinean steaks and Colombian food. Steaks from 13,000 COP; Bandeja Paisa 13,000 COP. **Open every day** 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM.

NIGHTLIFE

Most foreigners travel to the Zona Rosa to party, but there are many places in La Candelaria area to drink, dance and kick back. Musical acts can be found throughout the week in many cafes and bars.

Mitho Café, Carrera 2 No. 14-83. You can walk by this place a hundred times and you would never know what you're missing. Mitho Café is beautifully decorated, with an area which takes you back to kindergarten, but with the ability to drink. A roaring fire can be found in the front room. If you're looking for great ambiance to relax with a significant other or with friends, this could be the perfect stop.

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Fatima, Calle 14 No. 2-24. Fatima is a popular bar that both foreigners and locals visit. Fatima has an organized weekly schedule (2011):

Wednesday - Salsa classes at 9:00.

Thursday - Live music.

Friday - Latin fusion party.

Saturday - Electronic music party with a D.J.

Jamming, Carrera 3 No. 15A-37. Jamming is a simple reggae bar where students and locals dance and celebrate. There is a small cover of a few thousand pesos.

Dona Ceci Bar, Carrera 4 15-18. This bar is very popular with locals and foreigners. Dona Ceci looks like a tienda from the outside, but it is one of La Candelaria's most busy and well-known bars. Dona Ceci is a hard drinking bar with different types of music.

Gyros and Cocteles, Carrera 4 No. 15-11. Gyros and Cocteles has a great basement bar that is popular with students.

Sanalejo, Avenida Jimenez No. 3-73. Sanalejo is a nice bar and restaurant. Sanalejo is interestingly decorated. There is a cool basement room in which a small group can get comfortable and relax.

Café Bar Building, next to Las Aquas Station. There is a building that houses over ten Café-type bars. You can find all types of bars including a theatre bar, classic rock bar, bars with live music and others with salsa.

Rincón Cubano, Carrera 4 No. 18-50 Local 123-124. Hidden away in the back of the Café Bar Building may be El Centro's most exciting and happening bars. Rincón Cubano is a salsa bar that has had an electrifying feeling every time visited. Friday night is the best night to enjoy Salsa Cubana with an energetic crowd. **Mon. - Tues.** 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM, **Thurs. - Sat.** 6:00 PM - 3:00 AM., **Sun.** 2:00 PM - 10:00 PM.



La Candelaria

Cafes, Restaurantes
and Nightlife

Cafes

1. JUAN VALDEZ
2. CAFÉ DEL SOL

RESTAURANTS

3. GYROS AND COCTELES
4. BARRA DE CAFÉ Y PASTERES
5. PIZZERIA RICASOLE
6. LA LUPITA
7. PITA WOK
8. BROASTER COFFEE AND PIZZA
9. EL NUEVO EJECUTIVO

10. LOTO AZUL
11. HELADO DE YOGURT WOODY'S
12. PATTY
13. MCDONALDS
14. ROMANA CAFETERIA
15. CAFÉ PLAZUELA
16. ARTIGIANA ITALIA
17. AL SABOR CARBON
18. CREPES AND Waffles
19. SHAWARMA KHALIFA
20. TORO BURGER
21. ARABIAN
22. MONGOLIAN
23. HIBISCUS RESTAURANTE
24. EMPANADAS MEXICANAS

25. OISHI ORIENTAL
26. YUMI – YUMI
27. PANADERIA LOS TORRES

Nightlife

28. SANLEJO
29. JUAN CHACO
30. DONA CECI BAR
31. MERLIN CAFÉ
32. EL GATO GRIS
33. BOLÓN DE VERDE
34. MINHO
35. FATIMA
36. REGGAE

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Juan Chaco, Carrera 4 No. 15-64. Juan Chaco is a downstairs salsa bar in a crowded party area of La Candelaria. Live music every Friday and Saturday. Juan Chaco has a great energy with people dancing everywhere. Tues. - Sat., 1:00 PM - 2:30 AM.

El Gato Gris, Carrera 1A No. 12A-13. El Gato Gris is a restaurant and cafe that hosts live musicians on Fridays and Saturdays. Gato Gris is a beautiful restaurant and Café on the El Chorro de Quevedo that has a very lively scene. There are multiple rooms and terraces to relax in. **Mon. - Sat.**, 11:00 AM - 2:00 AM. (www.gatogris.com).

Merlin Café, Carrera No. 12-84. Merlin is an interesting Café and restaurant right off the Chorro de Quevedo. You can find cool Merlin and Lord of the Ring related decorations. There is a wood burning stove that is great to huddle around with a drink on a cold Bogotá night. Merlin is **open every day of the week from 12:00 PM - 1:00 AM**. Merlin also has live music on the weekends.

Bolón de Verde, Carrera 1A No. 13-20. Bolón de Verde is a famous jazz bar located in the Chorro de Quevedo, with live music every Tuesday through Sunday. A very interesting bar with a very positive energy. **Tues. - Sun.**, 5:00 PM - 2:00 AM.

LAS NIEVES

RESTAURANTS

There are a lot of Colombian and fast food restaurants in this area.

Budget

Patty, Av. Jimenez No. 7-43; Carrera 7 No. 12-25; and Calle 19 No. 4-34 (031-652-9898, delivery). Patty is a franchise that offers good healthy choices for a low cost. There are three Patty's in the El Centro area. Patty is an excellent

franchise that is worth many visits. Cereal, yogurt, bread, fruit and a hot or cold beverage, 8,000 COP. (www.fruteriaspatty.com).

Dunkin Donuts, Calle 19 No. 4-46. Dunkin Donuts offers comfort food and a nice couch to sit on. You can get a donut and coffee in a cup that reminds you of the United States.

Chopi Centro, Carrera 7 No. 21-59. Chopi Centro is a great fried chicken restaurant, with a friendly and quick staff. The three piece combo for 6,800 COP includes chicken, fries and arepa.

Punto Rapido, Carrera 7 No. 22-64. Punto Rapido is a cafeteria-style restaurant with excellent pastries. Punto Rapido has a great fruit bar that lets you build your salad. Bowl of fruit, 6,800 COP.

Café Restaurante Makondo, Carrera 4 No. 18-31. Café Makondo has very good economical Colombian food. Soup, chicken, rice, and beans for 6,000 COP. Mon. - Sat. Restaurant, 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM only. Café bar, 4:00 PM - 11:00 AM.

Mid-Range

Asadero Los Tronquitos, Carrera 5 No. 17-66 (031-609-7082, delivery). Asadero Los Tronquitos is an amazing Colombian parrilla that offers excellence in every way possible. The food is incredibly good for the price. Los Tronquitos serves large portions of meat with many excellent sides. The staff and owners are super friendly. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM there is live music. This establishment is one of the best restaurants in the 20,000 COP range in Bogotá.

NIGHTLIFE

There are numerous types of popular bars in this area, especially on Friday nights when local students leave classes.

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Terraza Pasteur, Corner Carrera 7 and Calle 24. This building holds several interesting types of bars and shops. There are vallenato bars, a death metal record store, tattoo shops, and a few barber shops on the bottom floor.

Buona Notte La Cockteleria, Carrera 5 No. 22-43. This is a nicely decorated second floor bar. There are two small unique balconies that hang out over the street for a good place to drink. Buona Notte plays pop, rock and reggae. People dance wherever they wish. Friday nights the bar is crowded with students. **Tues. - Wed.**, 12:00 PM - 10:00 PM, **Thurs.** 12:00 PM - 1:00 AM, **Fri.** 12:00 PM - 3:00 AM, **Sat.** 12:00 PM - 1:00 AM.

Piper Club, Carrera 5 No. No 22-43. Piper Club is in the same building as Buona Notte. Crossover (Vallenato, salsa and reggaeton) plays in a nice bar on the first floor. Friday night is the best night with students and others blowing off steam after a hard week of work. **Mon. - Thurs.**, 12:00 PM - 12:00 AM, **Fri. - Sat.** 12:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

La Maye, Calle 19 No. 6-20. La Maye is a third-story salsa bar that is extremely crowded on the weekends. La Maye plays crossover and the atmosphere is very positive. A giraffe of beers (15 beers) is 30,000 COP. **Mon. - Sat.** 6:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

El Rodeo Taberna, Calle 19 No. 6-21. El Rodeo Taberna has a cowboy/old movie star poster theme going on in a bottom floor bar. This bar is extremely lively with youths dancing all over the place with great energy. El Rodeo plays crossover and is very popular on Friday and Saturday nights. **Mon. - Sat.** 4:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

Colombian Beer Café - Pub, Calle 19 No. 4- 37 Local 6. Colombian Beer serves different types of micro-brewed pints from 6,000 - 8,000 COP. Live music on Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays. Friday nights is the best night for a crowd.

Las Nieves

**BASIC SERVICES**

1. AVIANCA
2. SERVEINTREGA
3. DHL
4. AVIATUR
5. SUPER ALMACEN LA MUSICA
6. GYM
7. PAN AMERICANA
8. FOTO JAPON
9. BAN COLOMBIA
10. BBVA
11. COMCEL
12. Multiple Cine Colombia

ATTRACTIONS

13. BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL
14. MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO DE BOGOTÁ
15. JORGE ELIÉCER GAITÁN MUNICIPAL THEATER
16. CINEMATECA DISTRITAL

RESTAURANTS

17. Woodleys
18. PATYS
19. DUNKIN DONUTS
20. ASADERO LOS TRONQUITOS
21. CHOPÍ CENTRO
22. PUNTO Rápido
23. CAFÉ RESTAURANTE Makondo

Nightlife

24. Café building
25. RINCON CUBANO
26. QUIBRA-CANTO
27. MOULIN BLUE
28. COLOMBIAN BEER
29. LA MAYE
30. EL RODEO TABERNA
31. TERRAZA PASTEUR
32. PIPER CLUB
33. BUONA NOTTE LA COCKTELERIA

HOTEL

34. HOTEL BACATA

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Mon. - Wed. 10:00 AM - 12:00 AM, **Fri.** 10:00 AM - 3:00 AM, **Sat.** 10:00 AM - 1:00 AM.

Moulin Bleu, Calle 19 No. 4-37 Local 4. Moulin Bleu is a great two-story bar for listening to live music. They have solo performers Tuesday through Friday on their second floor. It's a very interesting performance area that lets you get real comfortable while you listen and drink. **Mon. - Sat.**, 10:00 AM - 3:00 AM.

Quiebra - Canto, Carrera 5 No. 17-76. Quiebra - Canto is a popular two-story salsa bar. This bar is the most upscale salsa bars in El Centro area. Quiebra-Canto has great giant posters of great classic films such as Pink Floyd The Wall, Snatch and Alfred Hitchcock movies.

CENTRO INTERNATIONAL

RESTAURANTS

The Museo Nacional, Planetarium, Bibliotecial Nacional and Museo de Arte Moderno are all in this area. There is a notable food court named Plazoleta de Comidas Santa Cruz de Mompox. This unique food court has a pleasant ambience and a choice of five quality restaurants. The food court is a great place to stop when visiting the attractions in this area.

Mid-Range

Soya Express Wok, Plazoleta de Comidas Santa Cruz de Mompox, Transversal 6 No. 27-57 (031-315-2287). Soya has a Latin Chinese fusion theme. The food is fresh and creative. Soya features large servings at a great price. The Pollo Crispi Honey Mustard dish (15,000 COP) is amazing and includes rice with over eight different vegetables.

LA MACARENA

La Macarena is a short 15 minute walk from the main hostel area. It's a more quiet area, and three blocks up (literally) from the Centro Internacional. It's a more quiet area, where both students and professionals reside. There are many high quality restaurants in La Macarena. It has a more calm feeling then La Candelaria.

CAFÉ

Café la Bohème, Diagonal 27 No. 5-28 (031-286-8463). Café La Bohème is a quaint relaxing Café in La Macarena. Nicely decorated and has WiFi. Serves a large variety of beverages and light food. The upstairs has 8 computers for internet use. Soothing Latin music sets a peaceful environment. **Mon. - Fri.**, 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM, **Sat.** 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

CAFÉ BOOKSTORE

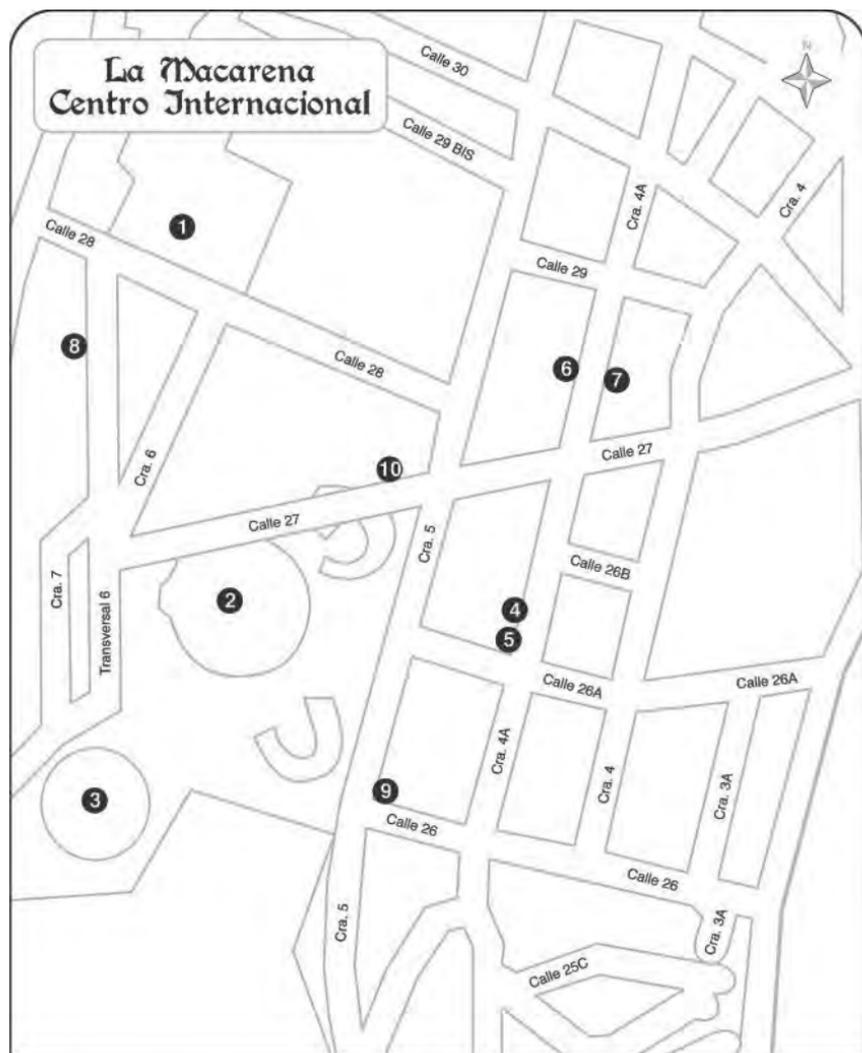
Luvina Libros, Carrera 5 No. 26A- 06. Luvina Libros is nicely stocked with Spanish language books and a Café to relax in. There are only a few selections of books in English however. The Café has WiFi, which makes this a great place to unwind with your favorite beverage. **Mon. - Sat.**, 11:00 AM - 9:00 PM.

RESTAURANTS

La Macarena has a wide variety of restaurants to choose from. Here is a small selection of what is available.

Budget

Distrito, Carrera 4 A No. 26 A-05 (031-281-1653). Distrito is a fast food Mexican restaurant that serves a fresh menu of tacos, tortas, gringas, and more. Highly recommended for low-cost Mexican food.



HISTORICAL/ATTRACTIONS

1. MUSEO NACIONAL
2. PLAZA DE TOROS DE SANTAMARÍA
3. PLANETARIO DE BOGOTÁ

RESTAURANTS

4. DISTRITO
5. LA FRONTERA
6. LA HAMBURGUESERÍA
7. CAMELOT BURGER PUB
8. SOY EXPRESS

Book STORE/Café

9. LUVINA LIBROS
10. CAFÉ LA BOHÉME

Mid-Range

La Frontera, Carrera 4 A No. 26 A-05 (031-281-1653). La Frontera is a sit-down Mexican restaurant with excellent food, service and ambience. The food is incredibly fresh and of great quality. They serve excellent chips and bean dip. LaFrontera has WiFi and an entertaining website. This restaurant is highly recommended. (www.lafronteramex.com). **Mon. - Sat.** 12:00 PM - 1:00 AM.

La Hamburgueseria, Carrera 4A No. 27-27 (031-281-1286). La Hamburgueseria is an extremely popular restaurant that has an extensive menu. Gourmet hamburgers from 12,000 - 20,000 COP and many other great options. La Hamburgueseria is a franchise and serves beer from the Bogotá Beer Company. Please check their website for their multiple Bogotá locations. (www.lahamburgueseria.com).

Camelot Burger Pub, Carrera 4A No. 27-14. Camelot Burger Pub is a great place for a pint and some excellent bar food. A pint of "Irish Black Stuff" or "Irish Indian Ale" will cost you 7,000 COP. The Picada Mix Lancelot appetizer is a steal at 4,500 COP. Fries, chips, potatoes, yucca and chili form a perfect unhealthy combo with a beer. Gourmet burgers start at 13,500 COP including a chili con carne burger with guacamole. Classic rock is blasting with American ESPN on the T.V. in this English-themed pub. **Mon. - Sat.** 12:30 PM - 12:00 AM. **Sun.** 12:30 PM - 8:00 PM.

CHAPINERO

Chapinero is a large area in between La Macarena and Zona Rosa, with restaurants, theaters, gay-lesbian venues and universities. This is not a secure enough area to be walking alone late at night. However, if you use caution in this area, it's a safe place to visit.

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THEATRE

Teatro Libre, Carrea 11 No. 61-80. Teatro Libre is a two story theatre located in Chapinero. Teatro Libre hosts local and international performances. (www.teatrolibre.com).

ZONA G

Zona G is a pleasant neighborhood near Chapinero with many finer restaurants.

BOOKSTORE

Authors, Calle 70 No 5-23 (031-217-7788). Authors carries a stock of English books. You can view their inventory on their website. You can also pick up a copy of the daily Miami Herald International Edition in English for 2,000 COP at Authors. (www.authors.com.co).

RESTAURANT

Mister Ribs/Tony Roma's, Carrera 6 N. 69A-20 (031-249-5271). Classic slabs of American ribs can be found at Mister Ribs, which also houses a Tony Roma's. Original baby back full slab ribs, 41,000 COP. **Mon. - Thurs.** 12:00 PM - 12:00 AM, **Fri.** 12:00 PM - 1:00 AM, **Sat.** 12:00 PM - 12:00 AM, **Sun.** 12:00 PM - 10:00 PM.

ZONA ROSA

Zona Rosa is an area with high-end clubs, restaurants, malls and stores. This area is considered a more safe location where you can party and enjoy a more modern environment. There are three good accommodation options for backpackers and mid-range travelers. There are also many options for high-end hotels in the area.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Budget

North House Hostel, Carrera 18 No. 80-66 (031-530-1968, WiFi). North House is the only hostel in Zona Rosa. The owner is a friendly American who is on-site to manage his property. North House is surrounded by restaurants, nightlife options and it's in one of Bogotá's safest areas. **Prices Nov. 2013: Dorm**, 6 beds, 25,000 COP; **Dorm**, 8 beds, 20,000 COP. (www.northhouse.hostel.com).

Mid-Range

Chapinorte V.I.P., Calle 79 No. 14-59, (031-256-2152, cell - 317-640-6716, chapinortevip@hotmail.com). Chapinorte is a guest house type of accommodation that is on the third and fourth floor of a building. Multiple apartments have been turned into rooms for travelers. This is a very safe area that is known for excellent restaurants and nightspots. Chapinorte is owned by a personable and friendly Spaniard. **Prices Nov. 2010: During the week, single**, no bath, 50,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 60,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 60,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 70,000 COP; **Weekends, single**, no bath, 60,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 70,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 70,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 80,000 COP. (www.chapinortehostelBogotá.com).

Los Andes B & B, Carrera 13A, No. 79-07 (031-530-4035, losandebackpacker@hotmail.com). Los Andes B & B offers dorms and private rooms steps away from all the action of the Zona Rosa. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm**, 3 and 4 beds, 30,000 COP; **Single**, 65,000 COP, **Doubles** 70,000 - 80,000 COP (www.losandeshostel.com).

Expensive

Suites Real 85, Carrera 18 No. 84-56 (031-218-0100). Suites Real 85 offers upscale apartment-type accommodations. Suites Real 85 is very comfortable, quiet and private. **2011 prices:** one bedroom, **Single** 183,000 COP; **Double** 198,000 COP. **Two bedrooms**, one to four people, 295,000 COP.

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Andino Royal, Calle 85 No. 12-78 (031-571-3131, andino@hoteleroyal.com). Andino Royal is a beautiful hotel in an area of Zona Rosa that has numerous clubs, bars and restaurants. This hotel is for business travelers or for those who like elegant accommodations. There is a restaurant and a gym for its guests. Comfortable rooms with good sized flat screens, a sofa, and large bathrooms with a bathtub. **Prices 2011: Standard** - 380,000 COP, **Dec. to Jan. 15** - 270,000 COP. Rates don't include tax. Colombian Nationals pay 10% more tax.

RESTAURANTS

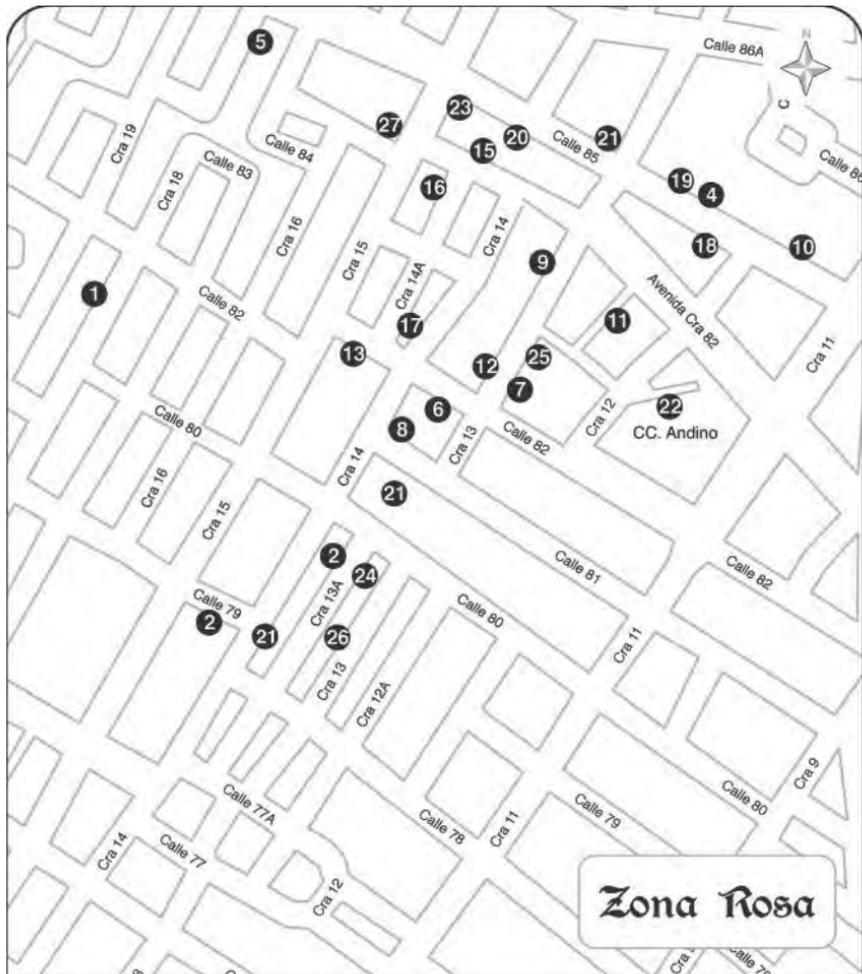
There are countless choices of restaurants in The Zona Rosa.

Budget

El Carnal, Calle 82 No. 13-15. El Carnal is a Mexican burrito shop that serves good quick food. Chicken burrito, 8,700 COP; taco 2,600 COP. **Sun. - Wed.**, 12:00 PM - 11:00 PM, **Thurs. - Sat.**, 12:00 PM - 1:00 AM.

Pizza, Pandebona, Cappuccino, Calle 81 No. 13-68 Local 2. This pizzeria and Café offers a quick tasty slice and breakfast. Pizza and drink 5,000 COP; breakfast combo 5,000 COP.

Yumi - Yumi, Carrera 13 No. 83-83. Yumi - Yumi in Zona Rosa serves excellent sandwiches, juices, cocktails and techno music. This is a sister restaurant of Yumi - Yumi in La Candelaria.



HOTELS

1. North House Hostel
2. Chapinorte
3. Los Andes B & B
4. Andino Hotel
5. Real 85

RESTAURANTS

6. El Carnal
7. Gyros and Kabobs
8. PIZZA, PANDEBONA, CAPUCCINO
9. YUMI – YUMI
10. HOOTERS

NIGHTLIFE

11. THE PUB
12. JHONNY CAY
13. SALSA CAMARA
14. LA DELICIA
15. GNOVERA
16. ROSA PEDEROSE BAR
17. SAMOME PAGANA
18. ALMA
19. GAVANNA
20. DANZATORIA DISCO
21. BOGOTÁ BEER COMPANY

SHOPPING/STORES

21. ATLANTIS CENTRO COMMERCIAL
22. ANDIO CENTRO COMMERCIAL
23. SURTILRIVER DE LA SABANA
24. MONTANA EQUIPMENT STORE
25. HARLEY
26. BIKE SHOP
27. CARULLA

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Mid-Range

Gyros & Kebab, Carrera 13 No. 82-28 (031-478-0505, delivery). Gyros & Kebab is a beautiful restaurant that serves excellent Arabian food. Very nicely decorated and has a relaxing atmosphere. Huge hookah's are available for usage. Groups can get combination plates of multiple unique items. **Mon. - Wed.** 12:00 PM - 11:00 PM, **Thurs.** 12:00 PM - 12:00 AM, **Fri./Sat.** 12:00 - 1:00 AM, **Sun.** 12:00 PM - 10:00 PM.

NIGHTLIFE

The Zona Rosa has an amazing nightlife. The following listed clubs and bars are known Bogotá institutions along with new popular nightspots and interesting places to party. Within the Zona Rosa are two pedestrian blocks of restaurants and bars that form a T and is called the Zona T.

La Deliciosa, Calle 84 No. 14-02. La Deliciosa is a popular club that gets crowded on Friday and Saturday nights. La Deliciosa plays salsa and reggaeton. **Cover on Friday and Saturdays is 15,000 COP.** Bottle of aguardiente is 60,000 COP; beer 5,000 COP. **Thurs. - Sat.,** 8:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

Gnoveva, Calle 84 No. 14-44. Gnoveva is a popular club with great pictures on the wall. The best night at Gnoveva is on Fridays. Gnoveva plays salsa and reggaeton. **Cover on Friday and Saturdays is 10,000 COP.** Bottle of aguardiente is 55,000 COP; Heineken 6,000 COP. **Thurs. - Sat.,** 8:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

Rosa Poderosa Bar, Carrera 14 No. 83-57. Rosa Poderosa is a great looking bar that offers different types of music. Pop, house and dance can be heard at Rosa Poderosa Bar. **No cover.** Martinis range from 18,000 COP to 24,000 COP; beers from 7,000 COP to 12,000 COP. **Mon. - Sat.,** 5:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

Salome Pagana, Carrera 14 No. 82-16. Salome Pagana is a legendary Bogotá salsa bar which has been open for over thirty years. You can feel the history of

this bar even when it's empty. Salome Pagana plays salsa and Colombian music. **Cover 10,000 COP when there is live music on the weekends.** Mojito Cubano 15,000 COP. **Tues. - Sat.,** 6:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

The Pub, Carrera 12 No. 83-48. The Pub is a huge Irish bar with outdoor seating and multiple indoor bars. You can find great beer and bar food at The Pub. British pop and rock music is played. The Pub is on the T. 6,200 COP for a glass of beer; 9,500 COP for a pint of beer. **No cover.** Live Celtic music the first Saturday of the month. **Open seven days a week,** 11:00 AM - 2:30 AM.

Jhonny Cay Bar, Carrera 13 No. 82-17. Jhonny Cay is an upscale reggae bar on the T. Jhonny Cay has been in Bogotá over twenty years. This bar has a very good energy and is very popular. Live music every Friday and Saturday. Jhonny Cay plays reggae and calypso music. **Cover on Friday and Saturdays** 5,000 COP to 10,000 COP. 46 different types of cocktails from 16,000 COP to 18,000 COP; beers 6,500 COP. **Mon. - Thurs.,** 4:00 PM - 1:00 AM, **Fri./Sat.** 4:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

Salsa Camara, Calle 82 No. 14-13. Salsa Camara is another legendary Bogotá salsa place. Salsa Camara is a beautiful bar that must be seen to be appreciated. This club has been in Bogotá 22 years. Live salsa band every Friday night. **Cover 10,000 COP on Fridays.** Bottles of liquor from 75,000 COP to 140,000 COP; beer 6,000 COP. **Thurs. - Sat.,** 7:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

Alma, Calle 85 No. 12-49. Alma is a huge multi-level high-class Hollywood-type club. If you're looking for the ultimate night club experience, Alma is a great choice. Alma has a guest list only many Friday and Saturday nights. Crossover and electronic music is played. There is a frequent DJ. You need to dress very nice if you want to get into Alma. **Cover 20,000 COP for all nights.** Bottles from 70,000 COP; beer 9,000 COP. **Thurs. - Sat.,** 9:00 PM - 3:00 AM.

Gavanna Disco, Calle 85 No. 12-46. Gavanna is a very popular up-scale disco with great decorations. Gavanna has an extremely appealing V.I.P section. You

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need to dress nicely to get into this club. Gavanna also throws huge event parties in Cartagena that have a reputation for a top-notch experience. Gavanna plays crossover and has a DJ. The best night to visit is Friday. **Cover for all nights is 20,000 COP.** A beer cost 8,000 COP. **Thurs. - Sat., 10:00 PM - 3:00 AM.**

Danzatoria Disco, Calle 85 No. 14-77. Danzatoria is a new disco that is rapidly becoming popular, especially on a Saturday night. Danzatoria plays crossover music. Bottles start at 70,000 COP, beer 7,000 COP. **Cover for all nights if 15,000 COP. Thurs. - Sat., 10:00 PM - 3:00 AM.**

SHOPPING

Centro Comercial Andino. This is one of Bogotá's most visited malls. There are hundreds of shops, a movie theatre and restaurants. There is a very popular Juan Valdez outdoor Café right outside the mall. (www.centroandino.com.co).

Centro Comercial Atlantis. This mall has many shops, restaurants and a movie theatre. Colombia's first Taco Bell recently opened in this mall and there are frequent long lines to take a run to the border. (www.atlantisplaza.com).

Surtifruver de la Sabana, Calle 85 and Carrera 15. This chain has a gigantic fruit and vegetable selection. (www.surtifruverdelasabana.com).

Carulla, corner of Calle 85 and Carrera 15. This Carulla has a great salad bar for a low price. Carulla is a huge supermarket chain that is found throughout Colombia.

PARQUE 93

This is a very pleasant section of Bogotá within walking distance of the Zona Rosa. There are quite a few restaurants and bars in the area. There is a square with a park in the middle which sometimes offers beanbags to relax in.

CAFÉ

Café Oma, Calle 93A No. 13-55. This gigantic branch of Café Oma is beautifully decorated and holds many different types of sections to relax in. **Open seven days a week** from 7:00 AM - 11:00 PM.

RESTAURANTS

Parque 93 has many restaurants and drinking spots to choose from.

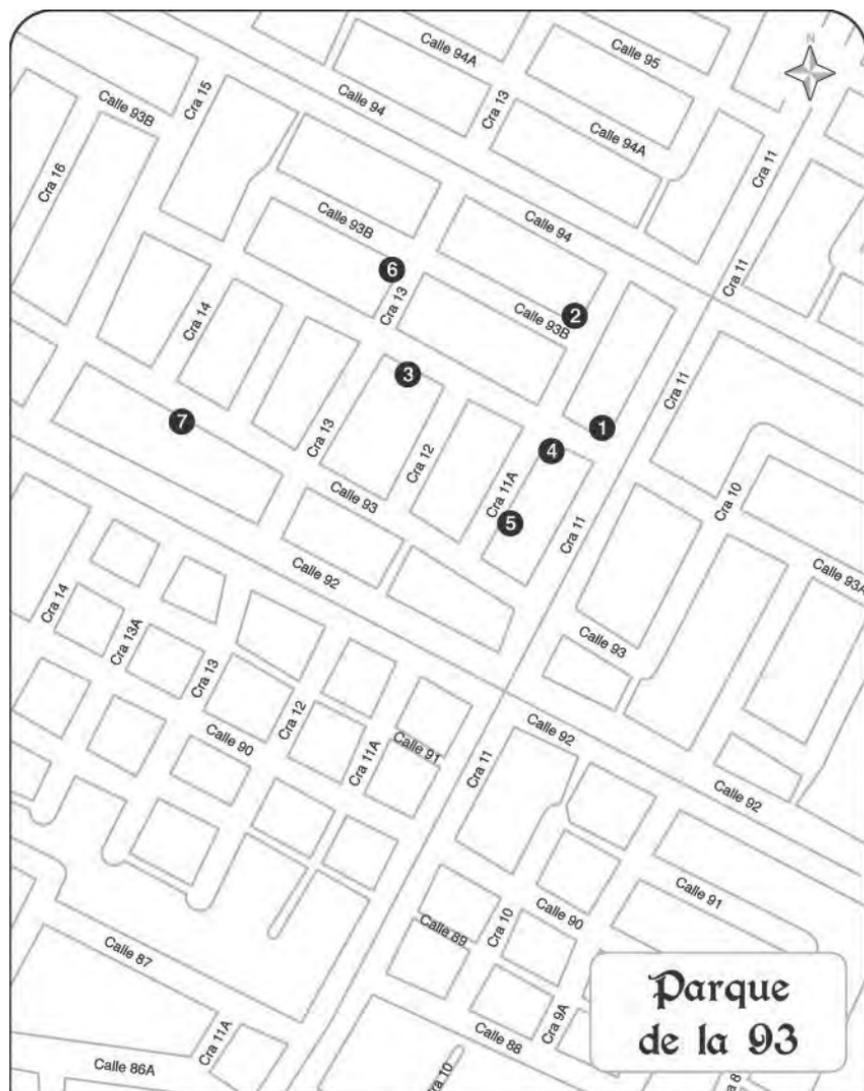
Mid-Range

Buffalo Wings 93, Carrera 93 A No. 11-30 (031-257-5023). Buffalo Wings 93 has an excellent selection of wings, alcohol, NFL, great service and very friendly employees. Buffalo Wings 93 subscribes to NFL ticket (multiple games at once) and has over 10 giant flatscreens. **Mon. - Wed.** 12:00 PM - 10:00 PM., **Thurs.** 12:00 PM - 11:00 PM, **Fri./Sat.** 12:00 PM - 1 A.M, **Sun.** 12:00 PM - 9:00 PM. Ten wings, 15,600 COP; twenty wings, 29,990 COP. (www.thebuffalowings.com).

Diner, Carrera 11A 93B-11, (031-616-0193). Diner is a pleasant restaurant with a nice patio across from the park. Diner has an extensive menu and a nice wine selection. A Colombian meal called Kalentation Turco con Huevo for 19,900 COP appeared to be extremely popular with the packed crowd. This dish includes meat, rice, beans and eggs. Diner has six locations total in Bogotá. **Open seven days a week** from 7:00 AM - 11:00 PM.

NIGHTLIFE

Bogotá Beer Company, Cra. 11A No. 93-94 (031-802-6765). This location of the Bogotá Beer Company has a very friendly staff that goes along with great beer and bar food. This is a good place to start or end your night if you're out in the Parque 93 area. 330 ML beer 5,900 COP; 3 Liters 47,900 COP. **Open** 12:30 PM - 2:30 AM. (www.bogotabeercompany.com).



Parque de la 93

RESTAURANTS

1. Buffalo Wings
2. Diner

Café

3. OMA Café

Nightlife

4. BOGOTÁ BEER COMPANY
5. Red Lion English Pub
6. Salto del Ángel

BOOKSTORE

7. FORUM discos and libros

The Red Lion English Pub, Carrera 12 No. 93-64 (031-691-7938). The Red Lion is a nicely decorated English Pub a little bit off the square. International sports telecast, beer, English food, international music and an English phone booth can all be found at The Red Lion.

Salto del Angel, Corner of Calle 93B and Carrera 13. Salto del Angel is one of Bogotá's most popular restaurants and nightspots. Salto del Angel gets quite crazy late at night and is a lot of fun. 15,000 COP cover, (www.saltodelangel.com.co).

BOOK STORE

Forum Discos and Libros, Carrera 93A No. 13A-49. Forum has a nice selection of music, magazines and books. There is an outdoor Café to relax in. You can also pick up a copy of the daily Miami Herald International Edition in English for 2,000 COP at Forum's.

USAQUÉN

Usaquén is a peaceful upper scale area of North Bogotá filled with restaurants and bars. On Sundays there are two different flea markets that have nice arts, crafts, clothes and other interesting things for sale.

Centro Comercial Santa Barbara is a nice mall to visit. Usaquén is recommended for a visit, especially on a Sunday.

HOTEL

Usaquén has one of Bogotá's most creative and comfortable hotels.

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Expensive

Art Suites, Carrera 5 No. 117-07 (031-602-5959). Art Suites is a gorgeous hotel that is highly recommended if you have a higher budget. The location is very calm and within walking distance to everything. The standard rooms are very comfortable. **The master suite receives the highest recommendation for any room in this book.** The suite includes a huge patio, sofa, a great bathroom and an elevator with a private entrance. **Prices 2011: Standard**, 320,000 COP; Master Suite, 380,000 COP. (www.usaquenartsuites.com).

RESTAURANTS

There are dozens of choices of restaurants in Usaquén. Here are a few excellent choices.

Budget

Camino del Café, Cra 6A No. 117-26 (031-673-5152). Camino del Café is an interesting Café that serves different types of sandwiches, juices, pastries, deserts and more. The Café has WiFi, a pleasant outdoor section and an art filled second floor. Café Espresso 2,000 COP; Cesar Salad 15,500 COP; Delicious Chicken Pastry and Coke 6,000 COP. **Mon. - Wed.** 9:30 AM - 8:00 PM, **Thurs.** 9:30 AM - 10:00 PM, **Fri.** 9:30 AM - 12:00 AM, **Sat.** 1:00 PM - 12:00 AM, **Sun.** 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM.

Mid-Range

Abasto, Carrera 6 No. 119b - 52 (031-215-1286). Abasto is an amazing restaurant, Café and wine store, beautifully decorated with several different areas to eat and relax. One section has incredibly comfortable couches. Serving high quality meals using fresh ingredients, Abasto is perfect for breakfast, lunch and dinner. There are over 90 brands of wine in its store. **Mon. - Fri.** 11:30 AM - 11:00 PM, **Sat.** 9:00 AM - 11:00 PM, **Sun./Holidays** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Arroz Caldoso with Shrimp and Chile Guajillo, 21,900 COP; Pancakes with Fruit and Honey, 7,900 COP.

NIGHTLIFE

There are many choices for drinking in Usaquén. There is a Bogotá Beer Company close to the center of Usaquén.

The Pub, Carrera 6A No. 117-45, (031-213-4157). The Pub in Usaquén is a great place to drink. It is wonderfully decorated and has great charm. The patio area has a beautiful wall of plants that must be seen to appreciate. On the first and third Sunday of each month there is live Celtic music. Cuba Libre 16,900 COP; Burger 19,900, Pints 9,500 - 17,900 COP; Irish Breakfast consisting of Irish Sausage, Bacon, Scrambled Eggs, Tomatos, Boxy, and Soda Bread, 13,900 COP.
Mon. - Sat. 12:00 PM - 2:00 AM, **Sun.** 10:00 - 12:00.

SHOPPING

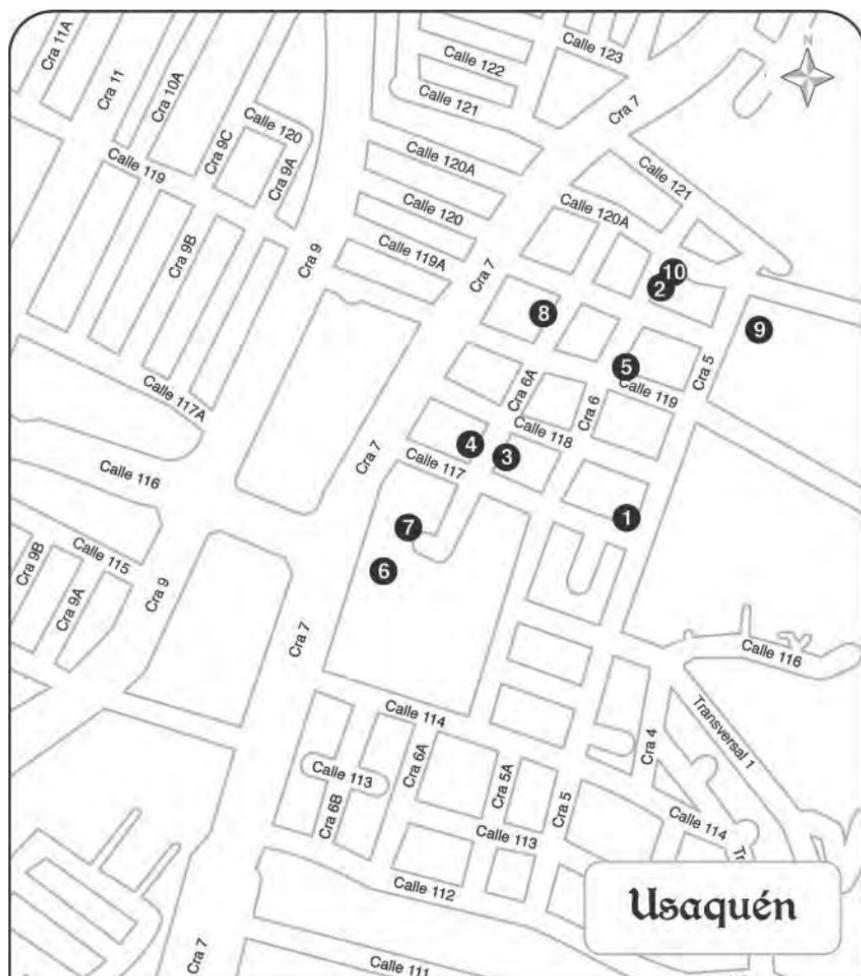
Many travelers enjoy visiting Usaquén for its many artist and craft markets. Usaquén also has a giant mall that is interesting to visit.

Centro Comercial Santa Barbara. This mall has many shops and restaurants. There are multiple money exchanges that offer safe places to exchange foreign money.

Plazoleta Las Aguas Usaquén. Directly next to the Centro Comerical Santa Barbara there are many booths with art, crafts and other interesting things to buy. These vendors are here every day.

Mercado Artesania de Usaquén. On Sundays artists set up booths to display their crafts along Carrera 6A and Calle 118.

Mercado Carpe - Diem. On Sundays there is a flea/artist market that is set up with arts, crafts, food and much more. This is a very interesting market to can be found at Carrera 5 and Calle 120.



Usaquén

Hotel

1. ART HOUSE

RESTAURANTS

2. ABASTO
3. CAMINO DEL CAFÉ

Nightlife

4. THE PUB
5. BOGOTÁ BEER COMPANY

Shopping

6. SANTA BARBARA CENTRO COMMERCIAL
7. PLAZOLETA LAS AGUAS USAQUEN
8. MERCADO ARTESIAN DE USAQUEN
9. MERCADO CARPE - DIEM

Other

10. CINEMA PARAISO

NIGHTLIFE - OTHER LOCATIONS

Congo, Carrera 7 No. 49-43. Congo is a Reggae bar on a section of the Septima that has numerous bars, clubs and place to eat. Congo has sandy floors and a Caribbean feeling. Locals and foreigners both like to party at this bar. **8,000 COP Cover.**

DEPARTING BOGOTÁ

Buses from the Terminal de Transport leave to all destinations in Colombia. **Prices and times of buses can shift from day to day.** Listed below are **estimated** hours of travel to many popular destinations **from Bogotá.** The longer the distance usually equals a higher price. Consult with your hostel or hotel for assistance with bus travel.

DESTINATION	HOURS OF TRAVEL
Barranquilla	19
Cali	10
Cartagena	19
Manizales	7
Mompox	14
Medellín	9
Riohacha	21
Salento	8
San Agustin	9
San Gil	6
Santa Marta	18
Taganga	18
Valledupar	17
Villa de Leyva	4

OUTSIDE OF BOGOTÁ

SUESCA

Suesca is an amazing town to visit if you enjoy rock climbing, mountain biking, hiking and nature. It is only a little over an hour away from Bogotá, by bus. There is a small area of restaurants and adventure operators that allows the visitor to waste little time getting to their favorite activity. There is a very comfortable hostel that is a five minute walk away from all the action. Suesca has over 400 routes for climbers that are suitable for beginners to veterans. Mountain bikes are available for rent with or without guides. Suesca could easily be one of your favorite Colombian memories.

To get to Suesca you need to take a bus. Take the **Transmilenio** (1,700 COP) or a taxi (12,000-18,000 COP) **to the Portal del Norte**. From the Portal del Norte take a mini-bus to Suesca (5,500 COP). **Make sure you get off at the rock climbing shop stop** which is right before the town. Around the corner from the shop is a restaurant called **Vamonos P'al Monte**. The owners or staff of the restaurant will direct you to the **Hostal el Vivac** which is a five minute walk away. You can get a **bed in a dorm for 25,000 COP. (www.elvivachostal.com)**

There is a campsite with a restaurant right next to the rocks. You need your **own tent** to camp here.

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Among the few restaurants in the area, it's recommended you eat at **Vamonos P'al Monte**. The restaurant serves Thai and other wonderful meals. Around the corner there is fast food, pizza and an Argentinian restaurant. You can get **rock climbing lessons** with the owner of **Vamonos P'al Monte** or inquire at the **rock climbing shop** for instructors. You can contact Vamonos P'al Monte through their website. (www.vamonospalmonte.com).

Andres, the owner of **Explora Suesca** rents **mountain bikes** and **gives tours**. Andres is very friendly and can take you to beautiful places all around Suesca for a low cost. **Explora Suesca is right around the corner from Vamonos P'al Monte**. Please inquire with Andres for exact prices in Suesca.

If you plan on rock climbing and mountain biking leave room for at least three days to truly appreciate Suesca. If you're an addict of either or both activities plan on a much longer visit.

GUATAVITA

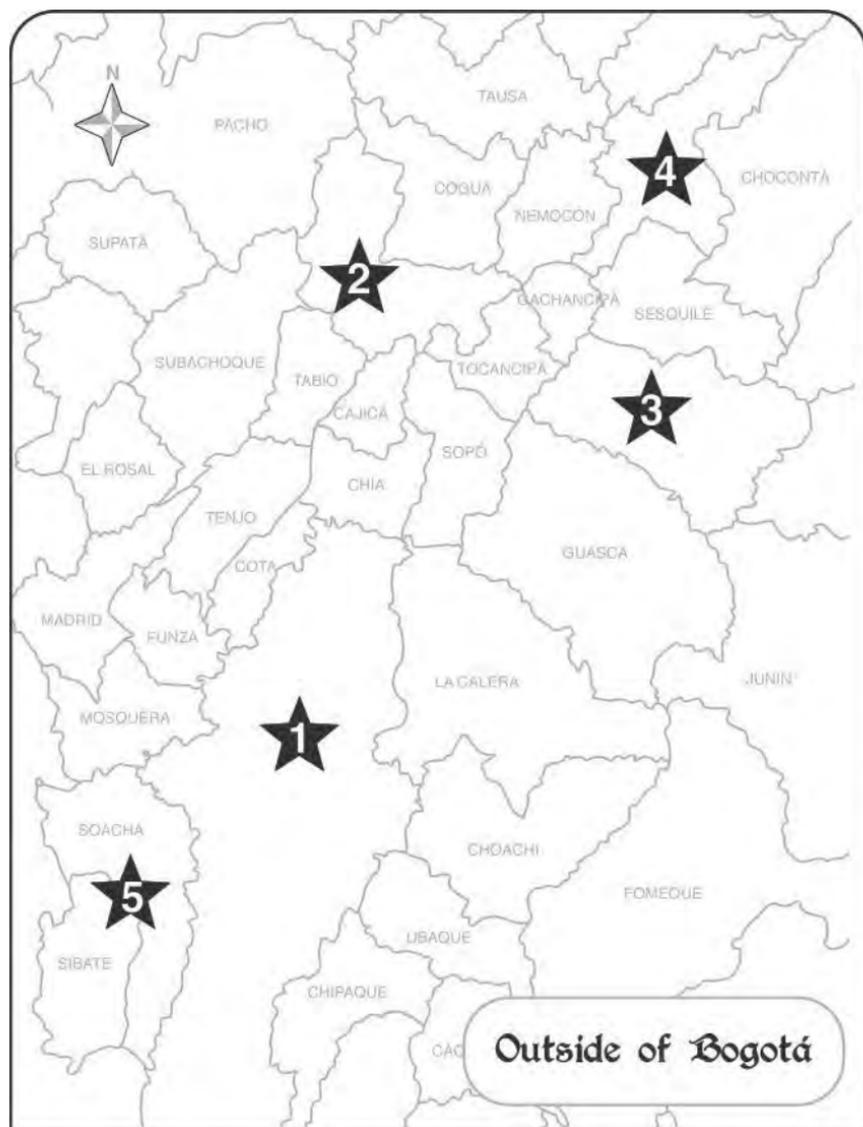
Guatavita is a charming town about two hours from La Candelaria. A visit to Guatavita can be a very rewarding experience offering a glimpse into a tiny gorgeous mountain town. The town sits above a huge reservoir, Tomine and has a very peaceful feeling. On the weekends it fills up with Colombians from Bogotá looking for an escape from the big city. During the week, it's a small quiet town with great appeal. The original Guatavita was flooded to create the reservoir. The current town was rebuilt in white colors and Spanish tile roofs. You can also find a few restaurants in town that offer inexpensive meals.

To get to Guatavita you need to take a bus. Take the **Transmilenio** (1,700 COP) or a taxi (12,000-18,000) to the **Portal del Norte**. At the **Portal del Norte** you need to **take a bus to the town of Guatavita**. There are two options for hotels. **Calipso Hospedaje** is a simple hotel where you can get a single room for **25,000 COP** or a double for **30,000 COP**. They have cool 1980's bedspreads that will take you

back in time. **Hospedaje El Mirador de Pueblo Viejo** is a nicer option with comfortable rooms, **a single goes for 70,000 COP**. Please check with the hotel for the double room price. There is a restaurant called **Charly Restaurant** that serves a good typical breakfast and a healthy bowl of fruit.

Guatavita is a good place to visit and spend a relaxing night. You can wake up early and check out the Laguna Guatavita, a small round lake that was sacred for the Muisca - each year, the cacique dusted himself in powdered gold and dove in the lake. This was the origin of the Spanish legend of El Dorado, the golden man. You need to take a Bogotá bound bus (14 kilometers) and ask the driver to let you off at the access road entrance. You must walk 7 kilometers straight uphill to get to the Laguna Guatavita entrance. **It's highly recommended that you bring water and food as there are few services in this area.** On the weekends there are shuttles to the Laguna Guatavita park entrance from the town of Guatavita. Travelers can choose to try to hitch or walk the distance. It's a nice, but challenging hike to the entrance. You must pay 13,000 COP for the park entry fee. From the park entrance it's another 20 minutes to the Laguna Guatavita. This lake has a long history of exploration for mythical gold. It's a crater with a lake inside and is worth the visit. There are information plaques in both Spanish and English throughout the hike in the park. If you want to hike back to the road you can leave through a back entrance. If you choose this exit you must be careful of the route you take. There are many forks in the road and you must make difficult decisions. It's best to take the road that goes downhill. **Don't take the back route out unless you have plenty of time to get your bearings if you get lost.** The total hike if you don't get a ride is around four hours. It's beautiful hilly country and is well worth the energy spent.

Once at the road take a Bogotá bound bus back to the Portal del Norte and work your way back to your hotel.



1. Bogotá, D.C.
2. Zipaquirá
3. Guatavita

4. Suesca
5. Parque Natural Chicaque

PARQUE NATURAL CHICAQUE

Parque Natural Chicaque is a stunning privately owned cloud forest. The park is a must visit for nature lovers and hikers. Spectacular hiking is possible throughout the park and there are two excellent camping options. The park has an upper camp ground and a lower area that has a restaurant, hotel and campground. The facility has a gorgeous mountain cabin style lodge. The cost to **enter the park is 12,000 COP** and **camping is 10,000 COP** per person per night.

The park consists of many trails that are well marked, in excellent condition and enjoyable to hike. Many of the trails go straight down a hill which makes for some very strenuous hiking both going up and down. The upper campground is gorgeous and highly recommended. It's best to bring food bought at a grocery store. You can hike to the lower area in about forty-five minutes. The restaurant has excellent food. You can **camp** at the **lower area** for **45,000 COP** a night **which includes three meals**. The meals are excellent and filling. It's recommended to forgo the meal plan and just pay for the meals on the side and camp on the upper grounds. If you camp on the lower grounds, the hike with your full pack may be challenging. The lodge also has hammocks with amazing views of the cloud forest.

You can stay in the lodge overnight. The rooms are cabin-style with bunks. The cost is **78,000 COP with three meals**. This is a great place to stay if you're looking for solitude. There is also a cottage on the property. The **cottages** rates are **247,000 COP** for **two people with three meals**. The walk from the lodge to the upper campground is pretty strenuous, but not too difficult. Be careful on the paths as the rocks get slippery. There are ropes on many parts of the trail and it's recommended to use them for stability when you hike upwards and downwards. Many people choose to rent a horse and have a more relaxing ride into or out of the lodge. A horse will cost you **16,000 COP each way**.

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Parque Natural Chicaque is very close to Bogotá, more precisely twenty minutes from South Bogotá. **If you have a higher budget a taxi is recommended as the quickest and easiest way.** You need to negotiate with a taxi driver to get a good rate. A taxi ride to the park takes an hour or so and it makes the trip a lot easier. To get to the park by bus is a challenge, but seeing the park is worth the hassle.

From La Candelaria

1. You need to get to the Terminal de Sur. You can get there from Jimenez and 10 on the Transmilenio or you can pay 12,000 COP for a taxi.
2. From the Terminal de Sur take a micro-bus to Soacha. Make sure you wait for a bus with a seat, there are many buses that pass by every few minutes.
3. **Option One** - In Soacha you need to ask for directions in the street where you can find a bus that passes by Chicaque Parque Natural.
Option Two - You can call the park office and someone will pick you up in Soacha.
4. Get off at the park entrance. Walk 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) to the park. This is a beautiful hike down a country road. If you're lucky and brave someone may stop and offer you a ride.

The whole trip may take 2 to 3 hours depending on your personal speed and navigational ability. To return to Bogotá you need to reverse the directions and make your way back to La Candelaria.

The main activity in the park is hiking. Chicaque Parque is recommended for those who love to hike and just spend time in the beautiful outdoor settings.

Chicaque Parque Natural, Bogotá office - Transversal 26 B No. 41 - 51, (031- 368-3118). The park staff is very helpful when you call them, but they only speak Spanish. (www.chicaque.com).

NORTH COAST

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

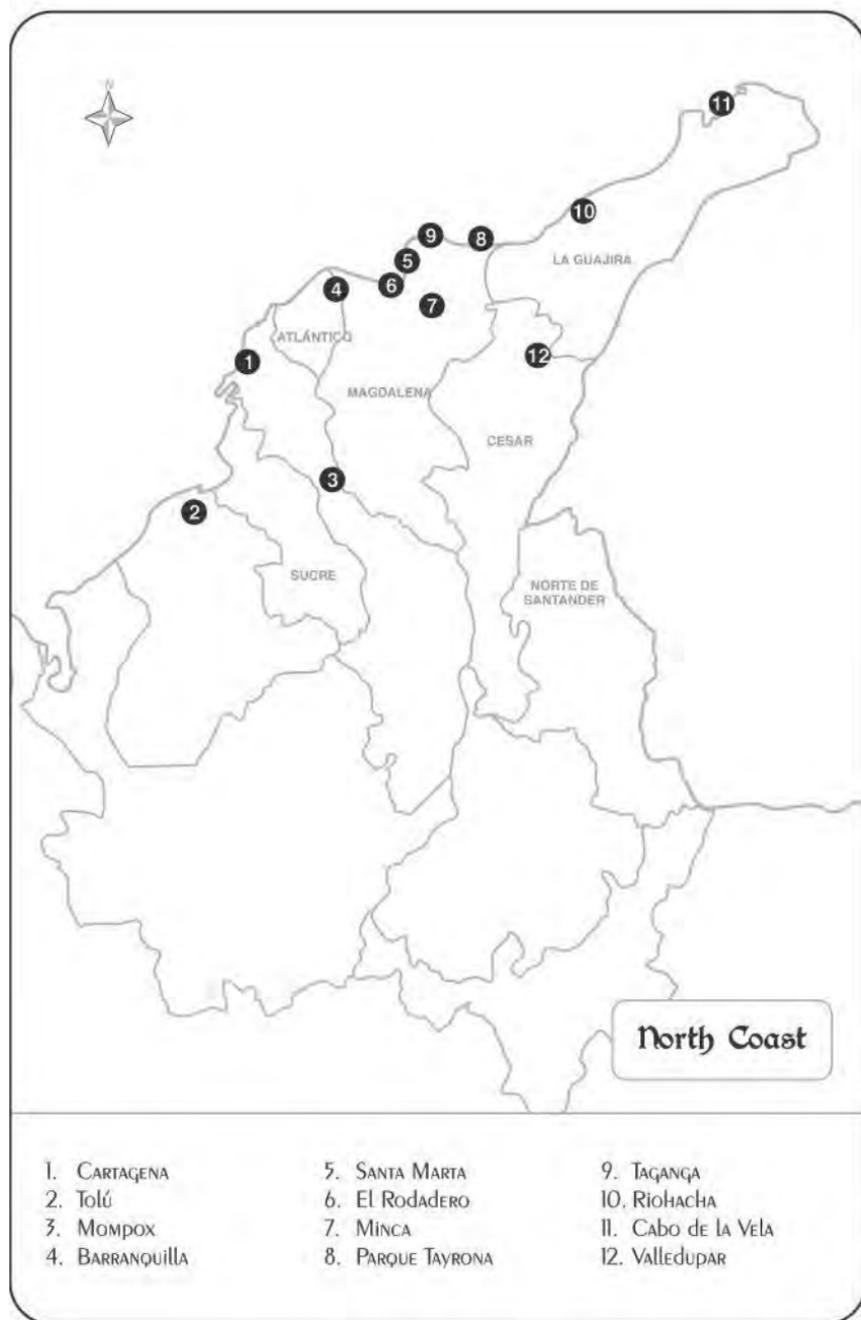
HIGH SEASON

The tourism industry follows different types of high seasons throughout Colombia. Each area is different and operators within the same areas use different dates and rate increases.

On the North Coast the high season can fall under the following periods: December, January, Semana Santa (the week before Easter), June, July and sometimes into August.

Some operators double their rates during these times. This should be a consideration when planning your travel.

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CARTAGENA

History, romance, restaurants, a sizzling nightlife and many other attractions make Cartagena a must visit during your Colombian vacation. Cartagena is considered by many as one of Latin America's most preserved and beautiful colonial cities. You can spend days walking through the city, discovering sights that you've only seen in movies. Cartagena may also be one of the most romantic cities in the world. It's the perfect getaway for couples, who can walk hand-in-hand through gorgeous streets, eat at countless fine restaurants and stay in beautiful hotels. Many may argue that the beaches of Cartagena are not that appealing, but others find them to be just perfect. For those with higher beach standards, a short boat ride takes you to the tropical paradise of Playa Grande. For night owls, Cartagena offers countless options for dancing, live music or for a few drinks.

GETTING TO CARTAGENA

Cartagena can be reached from all directions by bus. There are daily flights from Bogotá and many other national airports. Rafael Núñez International Airport services flights from many countries.

NAVIGATION

The majority of tourists in Cartagena visit and stay in the Old Town and Bocagrande. The Old Town can be broken down into El Centro, San Diego and Getsemani. Bocagrande is mostly visited by Colombian tourists, but many foreigners are also drawn to its beaches. El Centro and San Diego are more elegant sections of the Old Town. Getsemani is a backpacker area filled with bars, restaurants, and hostels. Getsemani has a slightly shady side to it but, at the same time, it has a very positive, vibrant and energetic feeling to it. In the Old Town, the streets can be hard to understand as the names change at every

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block. It's best upon arrival to keep track of the streets so navigation is easier down the road.

CLIMATE

Average High Temperature and Precipitation

	J.	F.	M.	A.	M.	J.	J.	A.	S.	O.	N.	D.
C.	31	31	31	32	32	32	31	31	31	31	31	31
F.	88	89	89	89	90	90	90	89	89	88	88	88
mm.	34	49	99	152	150	65	49	26	27	130	150	33
ln.	1.4	1.9	4	6	6	3	2	1	1.1	5	6	1.3

FESTIVALS

Early January, 2014 - The Cartagena International Music Festival. The Cartagena International Music Festival is a festival focusing on chamber music. Performances are held throughout the city at colonial churches, theatres and squares. (www.cartagenamusicfestival.com).

Late January, 2014 - Hay Festival Cartagena. The Hay Festival is a four-day event that promotes culture and social issues. Events that showcase literature, visual arts, cinema, music, geopolitics, journalism, and the environment are held. (www.hayfestival.com).

February, 2014-Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena. The Cartagena film festival is the oldest Latin American festival of its kind. The festival celebrates the Colombian and Latin American film and television industries. (www.festicinecartagena.org).

November - Independence of Cartagena and National Beauty Pageant. The festival is a two-week celebration of the Declaration of Independence from

Spain. Spectators can view parades with floats and groups of dancers performing to African and Caribbean rhythms. A beauty pageant is also held with the profits going directly towards multiple social work projects.

CARTAGENA IS FOR WHO?

Cartagena appeals to all travelers. Cartagena has it all. If you can't find something amazing in this city, it's suggested you turn in your passport and rethink traveling.

TIPS

Walking on top of the wall of the old city is a magical experience. It can be done at any time, but when it cools down at night, this walk is incredible. You may choose to skip the trip to the Isla de Rosario, but do make it a point to go to Playa Blanca and hang out at the beach all day. Choose wisely where you spend your nights. Getsemani, El Centro and San Diego are close, but they are separate worlds and they all have different qualities. If you go to Bocagrande, don't sit on the beach because of the pesky vendors. It's better to eat, drink and relax at the El Laguito Beach Club.

VENDORS

Cartagena may be one of the most amazing cities in the world, but it has a flaw. It's true that vendors need to work hard to make their living, but Carthaginian vendors are by far the most aggressive in all of Colombia. Most vendors walk away after a "no", but in Cartagena, three or four staunch refusals may be required to get one of them off your back. There is no shelter from the annoyance, but it's possible to lessen the amount of harassment. **Do not show any interest in something unless you are prepared to buy it.** You must exercise patience and keep saying "no". Most importantly, do not let the vendors put anything in your hands. **DO NOT** take free samples and **DO NOT** accept free

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massages. Most of all, do not let this section scare you, as Cartagena is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Not everything can be perfect.

TIME

Four days to a lifetime. Each traveler must set his or her own pace. If you have time to enjoy the sites, the history, the nightlife, the restaurants, the people and all the other great parts of Cartagena, plan at least a week. It's possible to blaze through in four days, but Cartagena is a place where you want to stop and smell the roses.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Within the Old City, walking should be your main form of transportation. If you must take a cab, however, the fare should be under 5,000 COP. A taxi ride from the Old City to Bocagrande is 5,000 COP. Muelle Turistico La Bodeguita is where boats depart for the islands.

To Bus Terminal

By Bus

Check with your hostel for directions.

By Taxi

It cost approximately 10,000 COP - 12,000 COP to the bus terminal from the Old City.

To Airport

By Bus

Check with your hostel for directions.

By Taxi

It cost approximately 8,000 COP - 10,000 COP to the airport from the Old City.

BASIC SERVICES

Bank

BBVA/Bancolombia ATM's can be found inside the Plaza de la Aduna.

Laundry

Check with your hostel for laundry service.

Internet

Please check the map for internet locations.

Tourist Information Booth #1

Inside the Plaza de Los Coches.

Tourist Information Booth #2

By the Cathedral de San Pedro Claver.

DANCE LESSONS

Crazy Salsa, Calle Tumbamuertos, Local #2, San Diego, Centro Historico (035-660-1809, info@CrazySalsa.net). **Written from Crazy Salsa's brochure** - At Crazy Salsa, our primary goal is to make you feel and enjoy different rhythms and movements. First of all, we try to sensitize and practice the moves that make Latin dancing such a pleasure, to enhance your body awareness and to get the different rhythms into your feet and heart. Right from the beginning, we will make you feel confident and secure while dancing and ensure you have a good time moving across the floor. (www.CrazySalsa.net).

SPANISH SCHOOLS

Amaury Martelo teaches private Spanish lessons in hostels. He charges **25,000 COP for one person** and **40,000 COP for two people per hour (2013)**. Amaury

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speaks English, French, basic German and, of course, Spanish. He studied social sciences at the University of Pamplona Norte de Santander. You can book lessons by calling him at 035-691-1040 (home) or 313-526-3910 (cell) (amartesi@yahoo.com). Amaury comes highly recommended by multiple by sources.

Babel International Language Institute, Calle Tumbamuertos, Local #2, San Diego, Centro Historico. Babel Offers group classes with a maximum of 8 students. Babel uses highly-skilled teachers with superior levels of English. State-of-the-art technology is used for reinforcement. There are six different levels of courses with two of them involving salsa lessons on the side. There is a full price schedule under the "classes section" on their website. (www.babelschoolcartagena.com).

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Voluntarios de Occidente is seeking volunteers for their La Boquilla operation. La Boquilla is an economically disadvantaged town 15 minutes outside of Cartagena. Voluntarios de Occidente is an established charity that has been operating out of Ecuador and Peru for the past 14 years. Voluntarios de Occidente works in programs that reach out to young children. Volunteer duties include helping children learn English, computer usage, reading, and many other important developmental skills. Volunteers will be involved with many more enriching activities. Volunteers must have a basic level of Spanish and be independent workers. (www.voluntariosdeoccidente.org).

TOUR COMPANIES

Aventura Colombia, Calle de la Factoria No. 36-04, (035-660-8722, Cell-314-588-2378, info@aventuracolombia.com). Aventura Colombia is owned and managed by a personable and helpful French expat. He organizes highly professional guided excursions to multiple locations in Colombia. The operation started in

Cartagena, but also has a La Candelaria office in Bogotá. With these two bases of operations, Aventura Colombia has become one of Colombia's stronger and more reliable nationwide tour operators. Aventura Colombia offers excursions from Cartagena and Bogotá to locations such as Mompox, the Lost City, La Guajira, all locations within Santa Marta, El Cocuy and numerous other highly desirable locations that can't be accessed without a professional guide. (www.aventurecolombia.com).

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Cartagena is a good place to learn how to surf, kitesurf, windsurf, scuba-dive or to rent a bike for a self-guided tour.

BIKING

Almacen Ciclo Sport, Local 1B-174, call or email for information, (035-660- 1582, Cell- 314-547-5758, ciclosport412@hotmail.com). Almacen Ciclo Sport has bikes for rent. **One hour** is 5,000 COP; **eight hours**, 25,000 COP; **twenty- four hours**, 45,000 COP. They have tandem bikes for rent as well: **one hour**, 10,000 COP; **eight hours**, 50,000 COP; **twenty-four hours**, 90,000 COP. They will bring the bike to your hostel on request.

SURFING, WINDSURFING, AND KITESURFING

Mokana Escuela Nautica de Deportes, (Cell-301-789-4368, Check Bocagrande map for location). Surfing, windsurfing and kitesurfing school and rentals. Mokana has a nice selection of gear for beginners and advanced surfers. Mokana operates a well-run business and is highly recommended. (www.mokanaclub.com).

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SCUBA-DIVING

Dive Planet, conducts dives to many locations around Cartagena including the National Park Corales del Rosario y San Bernardo. There are lagoons, mangroves Marine grasses to explore. (www.diveplanet.com).

SAILING TO PANAMA

Sailing Koala, (Colombia Cell - 300-805-1816, Panama - 68-74-3410, 1,000,000 COP, fabian@sailingkoala.com). Captain Fabian and this boat have been highly recommended for travelers seeking to go to Panama/Cartagena. Contact Captain Fabian directly for information. (www.sailingkoala.com).

There are several other captains and boats to choose from in Cartagena. Ask your hostel for recommendations.

A trip of this length and magnitude must be taken seriously by the traveler. It's highly recommended that you take the time to research the captain and boat on which you plan on spending six days with.

The trip from Cartagena to Panama is usually a six-day journey on a sail boat. Most trips go through San Blas Islands which are reported to be a blissful paradise. The islands are an archipelago comprised of 356 islands in the Caribbean Sea. The islands are on the boundary between Colombia and Panama. A boat may make many different stops in different islands. Dolphins and other marine life may be spotted on your trip. San Blas's indigenous population (the Kuna) has remained autonomous. Tourism is limited, which has maintained a more authentic atmosphere.

CARRIAGE RIDE

You can take a romantic trip around Cartagena in a horse carriage. Prices are negotiable with the service that you use. The below price information is from an organized service and prices are most likely cheaper on the street. **Historic Centre**, 20 min., 40,000 COP; **Historic Centre - San Diego**. 30 min., 50,000 COP; **Modern Cartagena - Old City**. 60 min., 80,000 COP.

SHORT TOURS

City Chiva - There is a chiva tour that leaves every day at 2:00 PM from Bocagrande. This tour cost 40,000 COP and lasts about four hours. It includes visits to Castle Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas, a stop in the walled city and two other locations where vendors are always positioned for your arrival. It's best for the independent traveler to avoid this tour. Most hostels and hotels book this tour.

Party Chiva - On the other hand, the party chiva is something that is quite enjoyable. When you put together rum, a colorful bus, a bar, vallenato, and thirty of the happiest Colombians you have ever met, it's going to be a great time. The trip includes stops within the old city and to a party in the streets with other chivas. It ends with a stop in a bar in Arsenal. The cost is 35,000 COP and includes booze on the bus and entrance to the bar. Most hostels and hotels book this tour.

DAY TOURS

Islas del Rosario and Playa Blanca. These islands are located approximately forty kilometers from Cartagena. They are made up of 43 islands with extensive coral reefs. The Islas del Rosario can be accessed by a one-hour or so boat ride, depending on what type of boat you take. The **large party-style boats** are more comfortable and you can get food and drinks. The cost is **40,000 - 50,000 COP**

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plus a **6,000 COP port tax** and **6,000 COP national park tax**. The smaller, **quicker speed boats** are **40,000 COP - 50,000 COP** and you must also **pay both taxes**. You can book these trips through your hostel/hotel or you can walk down to the Muelle de la Bodeguita (boat launch) and purchase directly. Many vendors will try to sell tickets outside the gates, but it's better to purchase directly at the port office. The boats leave between 8:00 - 9:00 AM and return in the evening at around 5:00 PM. Check with the operators for exact departing and returning times. Food, snacks and drinks are available on the islands, but at a slightly higher cost. There are available packages that include food and a visit to the Oceanario Islas del Rosario. At the oceanario, there is a dolphin show, sharks, eels, turtles, and an educational museum on the ecology of the area. **If you want to visit a good beach, but want to skip the tourist trap, it's best you go directly to Playa Blanca**. The boats may have different routes, but ask to be put on the boat that goes to Playa Blanca first. It's possible to spend the night in Playa Blanca. There are **hammocks** for rent for **10,000 COP** at a place called **Estrella**. A few feet down the beach from Estrella there may be two nice young men renting tents for 10,000 COP a person. It was a fly-by-night operation, but they seemed determined to establish a tent renting service.

Volcano Totumo. A little over an hour from Cartagena there is a giant mound that houses a pool of mud at the top. The mud contains sulfates, phosphates, and magnesium. This compound is believed to be a healing agent for the body. There are local women who will massage you and whisk you off to a lake around the corner to rinse you off. The **entrance to the volcano is 5,000 COP which does not include tips for the massagers**. The best way to reach the volcano is to go with a group. **This tour costs 40,000 with lunch or 30,000 without lunch**; contact Casa Viena to book if your hostel does not offer it.

HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS/MUSEUMS

For history buffs, lovers of architecture, walkers and those with a romantic soul, Cartagena's sites will be heaven. There is a tourism booth by the Torre del Reloj

entrance, inside the Plaza de Los Coches. There is another booth by the Cathedral de San Pedro Claver. They offer good fold-out tourist maps of the Old City for free. You can see all the sites in a day if you're quick, but it's best to break them down into two days. The following sites are all close to one another.

Torre del Reloj - This is the main entrance to the old city. The clock is considered a symbol of Cartagena. The tower was finished in the 19th century. There is a statue of the city's founder, Don Pedro de Heredia, in the front of the tower.

Plaza de Los Coches - This square, which is the first stop after entering the Torre del Reloj, is the former slave market. There are surrounding buildings with columns and arches. This area of columns is called the Portal de los Dulces and there you can find chocolate, rock candy and other local favorites. Almost nightly you can find traditional dances held by dance groups in the Plaza de Los Coches.

Plaza de la Aduana - Plaza de la Aduana is the oldest and largest square in Cartagena. In the past, it hosted governmental buildings. There is a statue of Christopher Columbus in the middle of the plaza.

Catedral de San Pedro Claver (035-664-4991, 6,000 COP, Mon. - Sun. 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM). The Iglesia de San Pedro Claver is located on the Plaza de San Pedro Claver. The church was founded in 1603. San Pedro Claver was a Jesuit priest who became the patron saint of Colombian slaves. For many years, he took care of many sick and dying slaves.

Museo de Arte Moderno de Cartagena, Plaza San Pedro Claver (035-664-5815, 3,000 COP, Mon. - Fri. 9:00 AM - NOON / 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM / Sat. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM). Contemporary Colombian art and sculptures. If you like art, it's well worth the 3,000 COP.

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Museo Naval del Caribe (035-664-2440, 7,000 COP, 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM). A paradise for military history buffs, this museum hosts two floors of boat models, historical plaques, and heavy weaponry.

Plaza de Santo Domingo, A nice place to sit and take a break from sightseeing. There are a few restaurants and cafes in the plaza. The plaza is directly in front of the Iglesia de Santo Domingo church.

Iglesia de Santo Domingo Church (035-664-1301, Plaza de Santo Domingo, check for price). The Iglesia de Santo Domingo is the oldest church in Cartagena. It was originally located in the Plaza de los Coches, but it was moved to its current location after a fire.

Plaza de Bolívar - First named Plaza de la Iglesia, this park has gone through numerous name changes. Located right outside the Museo de la Inquisición, it was properly named Plaza Inquisición. Its name was changed permanently to Plaza de Bolívar where it now hosts a lovely statue of the liberator. It's a nice park to relax.

Museo de Oro, Plaza de Bolívar (FREE, Tues. - Fri. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM / 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM, Sat. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM / 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM. Sun. 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM). The Cartagena gold museum contains the gold and artifacts of the Zen culture. Through various exhibits, the museum displays over five hundred pieces of jewelry and hundreds of other artifacts.

Museo de la Inquisición (035-664-4570, **12,000 COP**, Plaza de Bolívar). Housed in a beautiful building where the Spanish Inquisition practiced its brutality, the museum displays instruments of torture, colonial paintings and other artifacts. It may be slightly overpriced compared to other attractions.

Plaza de las Bovedas - Built alongside the walls between 1792 and 1796, these numerous vault-like structures were used to store ammunition and, over time,

were turned into a prison. The site now houses stores and galleries for tourists. It's also a destination for both chiva tours.

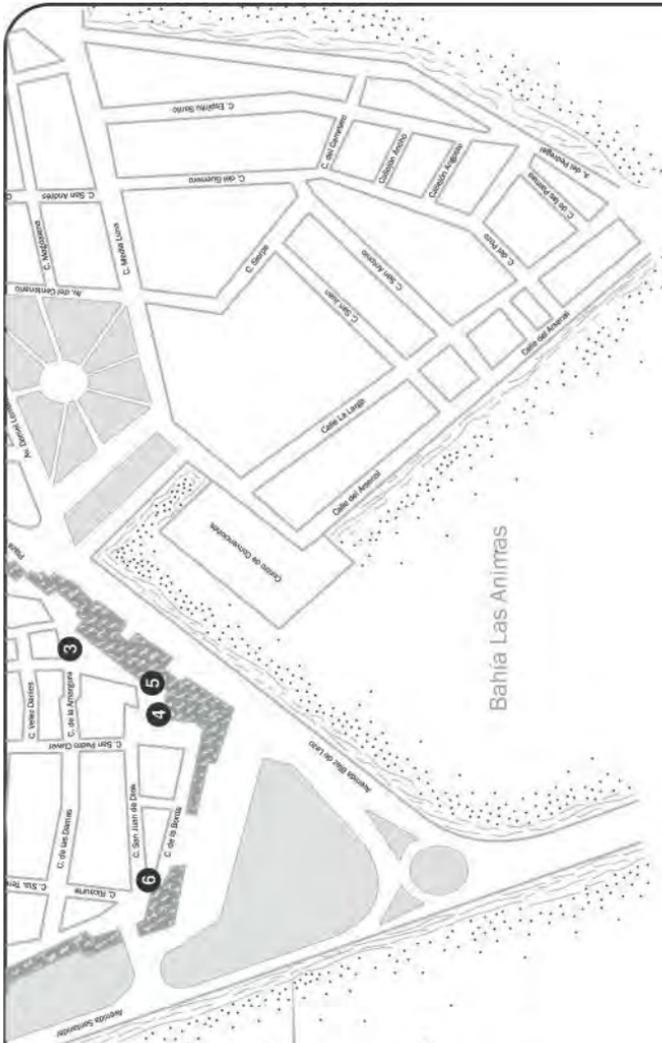
Museo de las Fortificaciones and Las Murallas (6,000 COP, Mon. - Sun., 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM). At the end of the Bovedas, you need to walk up on the wall and go around the corner and look down. There is a museum that is dedicated to the history of the construction of the walls. Check out the site down below. Click on fortificaciones and then Museo de las Fortificaciones.

(www.fortificacionesdecartagena.com).

Casa de Rafael Nunez (1,000 COP, outside of the walls, near the Museo de las Fortificaciones, check map. This house takes an effort to get to as you need to find the break in the wall to get there. It's a beautiful nineteenth-century home that is worth a peek and it's worth the price. For 1,000 COP (price Aug. 2010), you get to see a preserved home with a library, dining room, bedrooms and the rest of the house. There was a modern photography exhibit and a few entertaining parrots at the time of my visit. Across the street is **Parque Apolo** which has a small church and sculptures of historical figures with unusually giant heads.

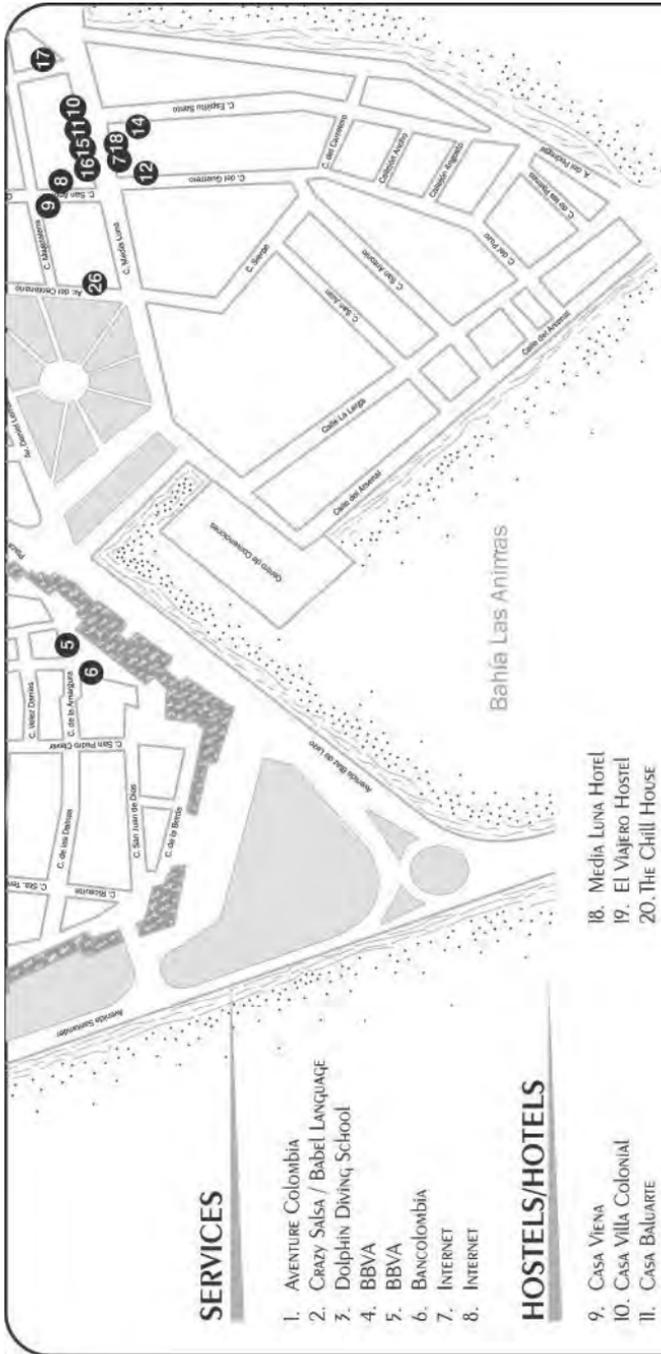
Monumento a la India Catalina - There is a monument outside of the wall at the entrance of the old town dedicated to the India Catalina, who is of significant historical importance in Cartagena. As a young girl, Catalina was kidnapped and brought to Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic. She was later brought back to her homeland and worked as a translator for Pedro de Heredia. This homecoming did not go well because the inhabitants had been conquered by Heredia. After some time, Catalina married Heredia's nephew and lived the rest of her life in Spain. The awards for the Cartagena Film Festival are smaller versions of this statue.

Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas (035-666-4790; 17,000 COP adults, 7,000 COP children, Av. Arévalo, open every day, 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM). This castle is a **MUST**



HISTORICAL SITES

1. TORRE DEL RELOJ
2. PLAZA DE LOS COCHES
3. PLAZA DE LA ADUANA
4. CATEDRAL DE SAN PEDRO CLAVER
5. MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO
6. MUSEO NAVAL DEL CARIBE
7. PLAZA DE SANTO DOMINGO
8. IGLESIA DE SANTO DOMINGO
9. PLAZA DE BOLÍVAR
10. MUSEO DE ORO
11. MUSEO DE LA INQUISICIÓN
12. PLAZA DE LAS BÓVEDAS
13. MUSEO DE LAS FORTIFICACIONES
14. CASA DE RAFAEL NÚÑEZ
15. MONUMENTO A LA INDIA CATALINA



SERVICES

- 1. AVENTURE COLOMBIA
- 2. CRAZY SALSA / BABEL LANGUAGE
- 3. DOLPHIN DIVING SCHOOL
- 4. BBVA
- 5. BBVA
- 6. BANCOLOMBIA
- 7. INTERNET
- 8. INTERNET

HOTELS/HOTELS

- 9. CASA VIENA
- 10. CASA VILLA COLONIAL
- 11. CASA BALUARTE
- 12. HOSTAL SAN ROQUE
- 13. HOSTAL LA CASONA
- 14. HOTEL CASA MORIA
- 15. HOTEL HOLIDAY
- 16. HOTEL MARLIN
- 17. HOTEL VILLA COLONIAL
- 18. MEDIA LUNA HOTEL
- 19. EL VIAJERO HOSTEL
- 20. THE CHILL HOUSE
- 21. HOTEL BOUTIQUE
- 22. HOTEL MS CASA LOS PUNTALES
- 23. HOTEL EL VIAJERO
- 24. SANTO DOMINGO
- 25. HOTEL EL PORVENIR
- 26. HOTEL CENTENARIO

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for your visit to Cartagena. This fortress took over 140 years to build and was strategically situated on a hill to dominate the land around it and to have direct position over the Bay of Cartagena. The fort has a striking entrance that includes a walk up a short hill. You will very quickly notice the engineering that made this castle impregnable once it was completed. There are corridors and mazes of tunnels you can walk through. At the highest point of the castle, the view of Cartagena is breathtaking. A very large flag of Colombia blows in the wind in a majestic manner. The photo of this flag is one of the most popular Colombian flag images in the country. The castle is considered one of the most elaborately well-built examples of colonial Spanish military architecture. **It is highly recommended to walk the fifteen minutes to the castle from the Old City.** A taxi can be taken for around 5,000 COP. You can also take a bus from Parque del Centenario. The castle is off the map, but not hard to find, as it's a major tourist attraction.

Convento De La Popa (035-666-2331, 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM, **check for price**). There is a convent on top of a 150 meter hill that is a popular tourist attraction. The Convento de la Popa was founded in 1607 by Augustinian fathers and was used as a convent as well as military barracks in later years. Taking a taxi from either the Old Town or at the base of the hill is the most recommended manner of transportation.

Fuerte de San Fernando. A short boat ride from the Muelle Turistico de La Bodeguita, takes you to the Isla de Tierrabomba where sits a nicely built fort. This fort, along with Bateria de San Jose, protected the Bay of Cartagena with a long iron chain. It's an impressive site and well worth the visit **if you like forts**. If you can snap a picture of the fort head-on with the flag blowing, you will have one amazing image. **The cost of the boat ride is upwards of 20,000 COP with all the taxes.** Locals pay only 5,000 COP to get to the village of Bocachica which is nearby, but you most likely don't qualify. There are tour packages that include lunch. Be mindful of the day and time you go here, however, because if you go on a Sunday or a holiday, you may end up spending more time than planned.

Water taxis only run so often, so please check for return times if you go. **There is a small entry fee into the fort.**

NOTE TO READER

Hostels, hotels, restaurants, and nightlife have been broken down into specific city sections for easy navigation.

GETSEMANÍ - HOSTEL/HOTELS

The majority of visiting foreigners stay in the many hostels and hotels in Getsemaní. There are numerous choices for your different budgets and individual tastes. All hostels have their own feel, but you will most likely meet other travelers at Casa Viena, Media Luna and Hotel Holiday.

Budget

Hotel Holiday, Calle Medina Luna No. 10-47 (035-664-0948, WiFi, hotelholiday@hotmail.es). Hotel Holiday is a nice place for the price. Hotel Holiday has many tables in a long courtyard common area for many social opportunities. Many guests reported an enjoyable stay. All rooms have baths. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm**, 2/3/4 beds, fan, 17,000 COP; **Single**, fan, 25,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 45,000 COP. High Season, Nov. 11- Jan. 30, **Single**, 30,000 COP; **Double** 50,000 COP.

Hotel Marlin, Calle de la Media Luna No. 10-35 (035-664-3507, WiFi, hotelmarlincartagena@hotmail.com). Hostel Marlin is in a great location and has a peaceful feeling. Guests reported to be happy there. Very friendly and helpful staff too. There is even a giant marlin over the front desk. Breakfast is included with all rooms. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm**, fan, bath, 20,000 COP; **Single**, fan, bath, 35,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 45,000 COP; **Single**, air, bath, 50,000 COP; **Double**, air, bath, 60,000 COP. **High Season**, Jan. 1 - Jan. 25, prices near double.

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Casa Viena, Calle San Andres No. 30-53 (035-664-6242, WiFi, hotel@casaviena.com). Casa Viena is known as a very popular backpacker haven. The owner and staff are extremely friendly and knowledgeable about Cartagena. Many happy travelers attested to their great stay at Casa Viena. It's a good hostel to meet other travelers. **Prices Nov. 2013: Dorm** 8 beds, air, 24,000 COP; **Dorm** 3 beds, fan, 26,000 COP; **Single**, no bath, 35,000 COP; **Double**, with bath, 60/70,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 55,000 COP; **Triple**, with bath, 90,000 COP. Check with hostel for High Season prices. (www.casaviena.com).

Hostal La Casona, Calle Tripita y Media Cra 10 No. 31-32 (Cell - 320-567-8720 WiFi, hostallacasona@hotmail). La Casona is a nice hostel with a peaceful feeling in a good location in Getsemaní. This is a very clean hostel. Hostal La Casona does not appear to offer many opportunities to meet other travelers. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm**, air, 20,000 COP; **Single**, air, 43,000 COP; **Double**, air, 60,000 COP. Check with hostel for High Season prices.

Hostal San Roque, Calle de Guerrero No. 29-134 (035-664-3562, WiFi, sanroquehostel@hotmail.com). Hostal San Roque is a very simple and quiet hostel for a stay in Cartagena. Location is great and management is very helpful. This is a small hostel in a house setting which might provide small opportunities to meet a few other travelers. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm** 4 beds, fan, no bath, 18,000 COP; **Dorm**, 3 beds, air, no bath, 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, 3 beds, air, bath 22,000 COP; **Single**, fan, no bath, 30,000 COP; **Double**, fan, no bath, 40,000 COP. Check with them for High Season prices.

Media Luna Hostel, Calle de la Media Luna No. 10-46 (035-664-3423, WiFi, reservas@medialunahostel.com). Mega hostel Media Luna is a beautiful hostel built with great care. With a refreshing courtyard pool, 24 smartly decorated rooms, and a professional staff. Media Aluna has 164 beds. Top notch operation. Media Luna offers good opportunities to meet other travelers. **Prices: Nov. 2013: Dorm**, shared bath, 27,000 COP; **Dorm**, private bath 35,000 COP;

Single, 55,000 COP; **Double**, 100,000 COP; **Triple**, 96,000 COP. Check with Hostel for High Season rates. (www.medialunahostel.com).

Hotel Centenario, Av. del Centenario No 30-40 (035-664-8276, WiFi, hhotelcentenario@gmail.com). Hotel Centenario is a great hotel if you like privacy along with a good room for a good price. The common area has a wonderful couch, flat screen and computers. Its only drawback is that it's in the sketchiest part of Getsemaní. It's worth a look if you want privacy. Ask for the rooms downstairs. **Prices 2013: Single**, air, 50,000 COP; **Double**, air, 70,000 COP. **High Season**, Dec. 25 - Feb. 15, **Single**, 50,000 COP; **Double**, 85,000 COP.

Casa Villa Colonial, Calle de la Media Luna No. 10-89 (035-664-5421, WiFi, hotelvillacolonial@hotmail.com). Casa Villa Colonial is a beautiful colonial style property in a great location. Mid-range priced and very comfortable, this hotel has all the ingredients of a great stay. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, air, 70,000 COP; **Double**, air, 100,000 COP. Check with the Casa for High Season prices.

Hotel Casa Mora, Calle del Espiritu Santo No. 29-139 (035-664-5480, valentina0111@gmail.com). Hotel Mora is a visually stunning property with some really nice rooms. Mora's courtyard has a pool and spectacular architecture. A few rooms have bathtubs which is extremely rare in Colombia. However your bath may be a cold one, as hot water on the coast is as rare as the bathtubs. For the price, this is an amazing hotel. **Prices Nov. 2010: Standard - Single** 60,000 COP; **Double** 80,000 COP; **Triple** 110,000 COP; **Quad** 130,000 COP. **High Season, Single** 80,000 COP; **Double**, 120,000 COP; **Triple**, 150,000 COP.

Hotel Villa Colonial, Calle de la Maravillas No. 30-60 (035-664-4996, hotelvillacolonial@hotmail.com). Sister hotel to the Casa Villa Colonial around the corner. A nice and comfortable option with a good price. The hotel has very helpful management. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, fan, 35,000 COP; **Double**, fan 55,000 COP; **Single**, air, 55,000 COP; **Double**, air, 65,000 COP. High Season prices double.

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Hostal Casa Baluarte, Calle de la Media Luna No. 10 81 (035-664-2208, admin@hostalbaluarte.com). Hostal Casa Baluarte is a very well-priced choice with a very nice peaceful feeling. It appears to be quite private, which limits opportunities to meet other travelers. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, fan, 35,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 50,000 COP; **Double**, two beds, fan, 50,000 COP; **Three beds**, fan, 80,000 COP; **Double**, air, 70,000 COP. All rooms have bathrooms. High Season prices double.

GETSEMANÍ - RESTAURANTS

There is a wide range of budget choices for breakfast in Getsemaní. You can also find lunch and dinner for low prices. For fast food, head to the food carts on the side of the park.

Budget

Arriba Café, Calle Media Luna Esquina Calle Guerrero (Cell - 311-392-0936). If you're looking for great tasting, filling and carbohydrate-loaded food, Arriba Cafe is the place. Owned and operated by a friendly Italian expat. The pasta is very good and the pizza looks fantastic. Great choice for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Spaghetti Bolognese 7,000 COP. **Open 4:00 PM - 12:00 AM, every day**, except Tuesday.

Café Media Luna, Connected with Media Luna Hostel. A nice cafe with good simple food. Great place to decompress after a long night out. Omelette 7,000 COP; Pancake 7,000 COP; Fruit Plate 5,000 COP.

Gato Negro Café, Calle San Andres No. 30-39 (035-664-0958). Gato Negro Cafe has a wonderful breakfast that is very fulfilling. Omelets and crepes are perfect to get you going. Omelet, with bread, hot chocolate, Café, and juice 6,500 COP. Omelet with coffee instead of chocolate only 5,500 COP. **Mon. - Sat.** 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM, **Sun.** 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM.

Caffe Lunatico, Calle de la Media Luna No. 10-81 (cell - 311-420-6927). Caffe Lunatico has it all. Breakfast, lunch, Indian food, dessert, juices, WiFi, wraps, great friendly service and much much more. Chicken wrap is extremely good. Chicken wrap 10,000 COP.

Luna Nueve, Calle Media Luna (check map). Great simple breakfast to start your day. Fast and friendly service, eggs and fruit 7,000 COP.

Tropical Polo, Avenida Daniel Lemaitre (check map). Tropical Polla is technically a little outside of Getsemani, but it's worth the walk of a few blocks. Great food, great prices, and fast happy service. Half a chicken, bollo, fries, and Pepsi. 13,000 COP.

El Jugo, Calle Media Luna (check map). Outstanding "jugo" (juice) de everything. Jugo de banano was amazing. 3,000 COP for a long list of juices. **Pizzas, Pastas, and Italiana** (check map). Pizza, Pastas, and Italiana has excellent pizza at a great price. Personal pizza for under 10,000 COP.

GETSEMANÍ - NIGHTLIFE

Getsemaní has the most active nightlife in Cartagena. There are many choices among Café-bars, clubs, discos, and bars. The six establishments listed here are excellent choices, but there are more for you to discover.

Baluma, Avenida de Arsenal, This is the place the chiva may take you. A simple bar within stumbling distances of the other hot spots in the area.

Cafe Havana, Calle de la Media Luna and Calle del Guerrero. Dress nice and come early if you want a table. Great vibe, dancing and good clean fun. This is a place to go with a group or as a couple.

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La Casa de la Cerveza, San Lorenzo del Reducto, on the wall (**4:00 PM - 4:00 AM**). La Casa de la Cerveza is a great place to dine and drink on Getsemani's wall. A beautiful view and a very nice atmosphere makes this a great location to relax. Food and drink are a little expensive, but it will be money well spent. (www.casadelacerveza.com.co).

Leon Baviera, Arsenal No. 10B-65 (035-664-4450, **open until 4:00 AM from Tuesday - Sunday**). Leon's is known to have a good crowd throughout the week, even when the rest of the bars are empty. Live music on Thursday and sometimes Saturdays. Owned by a German, it has a very good reputation as a solid drinking spot.

Mr. Babilla, Arsenal No 8B-137 (**open until 4:00 AM on Fri./Sat.**). Mr. Babilla is Cartagena's hotspot. Expect lines, a cover charge, and an inspection of your attire. If you're wearing shorts, go home and change, or you won't be allowed in. **Cover 10,000 COP.**

SAN DIEGO - HOSTELS/HOTELS

Very recently, San Diego was a place for high rollers, but in mid-2010, two new hostels with very distinctive personalities have opened up. Alongside beautiful hotels that cater to those with higher budgets, San Diego may see more foreign faces in the future.

Budget

El Viajero Hostel, Calle 7 Infantes 9-45, (035-660-2598, WiFi, info@hostelcartagena.com). El Viajero Hostel is a great looking option in the San Diego area. The owners are from Uruguay and own many hostels there. At the time of this writing, they were putting the finishing touches on this mega hostel. This professional operation looks like a very solid choice for a few nights stay. When this hostel starts to fill it up, it will be an easy place to meet people. They offer a generous discount for Hostelling International members. **Prices Nov. 2010:**

Dorm, 10/12 beds, 25,000 COP; **Dorm**, mixed/female 8 bed, 28,000 COP; **Dorm**, 6 bed mixed/female, 30,000 COP; **Dorm**, 6 beds, 30,000 COP; 4 beds, 40,000 COP; **Triple**, 50,000 COP; **Double** 60,000 COP. All prices are per person. (www.elviajerohostels.com).

The Chill House Backpackers, Old Town Calle la Tablado No. 7-12, (035-660-2386, WiFi, thechillhousehostel@hotmail.com). Perfectly situated on the Parque Fernando de Madrid near many restaurants and drinking options. Sitting atop the second floor, the name of the hostel describes the general attitude of the place. A very nice T.V. room, a balcony, a mini-jacuzzi, and what may be one of the most friendly front desk staff in Colombia. Great place to meet people. **Prices Nov. 2010:** **Dorm**, bath, fan, 18,000 COP; **Dorm**, no bath, air, 22,000 COP; **Dorm**, 5 beds, 24,000 COP, air no bath; **Private**, air, one or two people, 80,000 COP. Check with hostel for High Season prices. (www.chillhousebackpackers.hostel.com).

Expensive

Hotel Boutique Cochera de Hobo, Calle Cochera de Hobo No. 38-55, (035-664-3384,). This hotel is an excellent stay for high quality comfort. Get the suite upstairs, it's incredible. The hotel comes with an amazing roof that you can spend your whole vacation on. **Prices Nov. 2011:** **Standard - Single/Double**, 160,000 COP; **Suite, Single/Double**, 222,000 COP. Both the standard and suite have air conditioning. Check with hotel for High Season prices. (www.hotelboutiqucocheradehobo.com, contact mail on site).

Hotel MS Casa los Puntales, Calle de los Puntales No. 37-36, (660-0862, reservascalospuntales@hotelesms.com). Casa los Puntales is a beautiful hotel that offers all the amenities you need. **Prices Nov. 2010:** **Single**, air, 170,000 COP; **Double**, air, 210,000 COP. Check with hotel for High Season prices. (www.hotelcasalospuntales.com).

SAN DIEGO - RESTAURANTS

Eating in this area can be expensive, but there are also some good budget choices. Around the corner from Chill House there is a food stand that has good, cheap local food.

Budget

Pizza en el Parque, Calle Segunda de Badillo #36-153, Centro Historica, (Cell - 301-748-9877) Pizza en el Parque is an excellent option for pizza in the San Diego area. Grab a pie, chill in the park and people watch. Under 10,000 COP for a pizza.

Mid-Range

Plaza Majagna Restaurante and Bar, Calle de la Tablada No 7-12 (035-664-7958). This restaurant is right on the plaza and is a great place to eat outdoors. It has a beautiful bar and has live music on Friday nights. Carne Asada 11,800 COP; Spaghetti Pomodoro 16,800 COP; 18 Oz. T-bone Steak 27,800 COP.

SAN DIEGO - NIGHTLIFE

There are many little places to drink in the area. Many restaurants have bars.

EL CENTRO - HOSTELS/HOTELS

El Centro has a few choices for hotels and a hostel named La Casa de la Chicheria.

Casa del la Chicheria - (www.casadelachiceria.com). This hostel opened after Explore Travel Guides visited Cartagena, but has gained a reputation from many sources as being a great place to stay. Please check their website for more information.

Mid-Range

Hostal Santo Domingo, Calle Santo Domingo No. 33-46 (035-664-2268, hsantodomingopiret@yahoo.es). Lobby and courtyard looked nice, but all the rooms were occupied and were not available for viewing. This hostel is in a good location near everything. Travelers have reported they enjoyed staying here. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, air, 86,000 COP; **Double**, air, 124,000 COP. Call hostel for High Season prices.

Hotel El Porvenir, Calle del Porvenir Cra. 6 No. 35-77 second floor (035-664-9954, WiFi). Hotel El Porvenir is a clean and decent hotel in a good location in El Centro. **Prices Nov. 2010: Low Season - Single**, fan, 40,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 50,000 COP; **Single**, air, 50,000 COP; **Double**, air, 60,000 COP. **High Season - Single**, fan, 50,000 COP; **Single**, air, 70,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 70,000 COP; **Double**, air, 80,000 COP.

Hotel El Viajero, Calle del Porvenir No. 35-68 2nd floor (035-664-3289, WiFi). Hotel El Viajero is a nice choice for your stay in El Centro. Nice location and nice amenities. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, fan, 50,000 COP; **Double**, air, 60,000 COP; **Single**, fan, 80,000 COP; **Double**, air, 80,000 COP. **High Season** prices are around double. (www.hotelesviajero.com, contact mail on website).

EL CENTRO - RESTAURANTS

El Centro has numerous restaurants to choose from. Most are in the mid to upper price range, Café Suiza is an excellent budget choice for all meals.

Budget

Casa Suiza, Calle de la Soledad, No. 5-38, Centro Historico (035-660-2766). **Casa Suiza is a gem in the El Centro area.** Owned by a Swiss chef who has lived in Colombia for over 17 years. The lasagna is amazing and the 6,000 COP price makes it even better. For breakfast try the granola with fruit and milk for 8,000

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COP. **Mon. - Wed.**, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM, **Thurs. - Sat.**, 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM **Closed Sundays.**

Mid-Range

Algeria, corner of Calle Gasterbondo and Calle Factoria. Algeria has very well-priced ceviche and local food. Algeria also sells quality ice cream and drinks that you can enjoy in their upstairs Café. There is huge flag above this restaurant which is very popular for pictures at night with horse carriages. Double shrimp cocktail, 9,000 COP.

Colombia es asi, on the Plaza de Santo Domingo. Colombia es asi has six tables on the plaza. It serves pizza, fish, and other dishes. Its prices are much lower than the other restaurants on the plaza. It also has a beautiful Colombian flag.

Expensive

Hard Rock Café, Cra. 7 No. 32-10, Plaza de la Aduana (035-660-2655). Hard Rock Café Cartagena is for those with thick wallets who are looking for an upbeat atmosphere. It has a very friendly staff and all that comes with all Hard Rock Cafés. Memorabilia and other great objects pertaining to rock. **On Friday nights, there is live music while you dine.** Chicken Wings, 24,500 COP; Hard Rock Café Burger, 21,500 COP; Legendary 10oz. Burger (Premium Bragas Certificada) 33,500 COP.

EL CENTRO - NIGHTLIFE

Bar in L'Petit Hotel, Calle del Candilejo No. 32-34 - El Centro, (035-664-3645, **4:00 PM - 4:00 AM, cover charge when a band is playing**). This bar is extremely lively on Friday and Saturday nights where people dance everywhere and have a great time. It's very nice inside and well decorated. Highly recommended to check out on Fridays and Saturdays.

Cafe del Mar, Centro Avenida Santander, up on the back wall by the ocean, (035-664-6513, **5:00 PM - 2:00 AM**). Bring plenty of cash, because you're going to need it. Although expensive, it's a fantastic place to drink, watch the sunset, and take in all that is special about Cartagena. A drink at Cafe del Mar is a must on your visit to Cartagena.

Donde Fidel, El Portal de los Dulces. Right on the main route, this bar is a popular spot for dancing and some serious drinking. There is a huge outdoor section, which is perfect for people watching. Salsa music blaring makes this spot a great place to throw back a few.

Tu Candela, El Portal de los Dulces, a very popular place with both locals and foreigners. Nicely decorated with the feeling you're hanging out in a cave.

BOCAGRANDE - HOSTELS/HOTELS

Bocagrande is more suited for the higher end traveler, but there is one decent hostel and other mid-range hotels in the area.

North Star Backpackers, Carrera 3 No. 8-96 (035-673-8689, WiFi, las puertas 2005@hotmail.com). North Star Backpackers is the place to stay in Bocagrande for budget travelers. North Star Backpackers has the same owners as the Chill House. North Star Backpackers has a very mellow atmosphere as well. The front desk staff is very friendly and will help you get to where you need to go. It's a great place to enjoy the beach style of Cartagena for fewer pesos. There are many food choices in the area. It has a surf house feeling to it. They also give windsurfing, kitesurfing and surfing lessons. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm**, 8 beds, fan, 16,000 COP; **Dorm**, 6 beds, air 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, 7 beds, air, bath 20,000 COP. Check with hostel for High Season prices.

Hoteles Ibatama, Av. San Martin No. 7-46 (Cell- 316-381-3140 hotelesibatama@yahoo.com). Hotel Ibatama is a pleasant surprise with all the amenities

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it offers. Nice clean rooms, and only two blocks from the beach at a great price. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, air, T.V., 55,000 COP; **Double**, air, T.V., 80,000 COP. **High Season**, Dec. 15- Jan. 15, **Single**, 150,000 COP, **Double**, 180,000 COP.

BOCAGRANDE - RESTAURANTS

There is a large selection of restaurants for all budgets. It's best to walk on the first few streets to find the restaurant of your liking.

Mid-Range

Taqueria-Mexico, Plaza La Masion. Good Mexican food can be found in a small food-court with many other options. You can find a great burrito here, but it's going to cost you. Burrito and coke 19,000 COP.

Restaurante Arabe Internacional, Cra 3 No. 8-63 (035-665-4365). Arabe serves Arabic dishes and local food. It has a very pleasant ambience within a courtyard. Dancers perform on the weekends. Restaurante Arabe Internacional is highly recommended by locals. **Mon. - Sat.**, NOON - 3:00 PM, 7:00 - 10:00 PM. **Sun.**, NOON - 10:00 PM.

BOCAGRANDE - NIGHTLIFE

Most people looking to party head over to the old city for a more lively club and bar scene. Here are two places you can grab a few drinks and relax.

Mr. Drink Liquor - Store, Centro Comercial la Manson Local No. 24, (035-665-3917). Mr. Drink Liquor-Store is decked out with flat screens, nice decor, lots of booze, a web site under construction and even a scooter to bring you more. The word is this is a great place to drink on Fridays and Saturdays.

Bareke, Cra. 2 and Calle 8. This is a locally recommended bar that has a good scene on **Fri./Sat.**, 10:00 PM - 4:00 AM.

GREAT PLACE TO ENJOY THE BEACH IN BOCAGRANDE

El Laguito Beach Club, Cra. 1 No. 1A 23 (035-665-1975). El Laguito Beach Club has multiple options for your visit. It has an upper level with a row of beach chairs and hammocks. People who eat or drink can use these and hang out there. This upper level offers great protection from the vendors and it's a comfortable place to relax. El Laguito Beach Club also serves booze 24 hours a day. This gives you a place to drink all night long. There is a disco that may or may not be jumping. Most importantly they have hammocks.

DEPARTING CARTAGENA

Santa Marta or Barranquilla door to door service. This service picks you up at your location and takes you directly to where you want to go. Cartagena to Barranquilla, 21,000 COP; Cartagena to Santa Marta 43,000 COP; Cartagena to Parque Tayrona 65,000 COP. (2013 prices). Contact Marsol in Cartagena, 035-656-0302/035-656-4270.

Buses, ALWAYS try to negotiate during the low seasons.

TOLÚ

Hidden away on the Northwestern side of the Caribbean is a town that has long ago been discovered by Colombian tourists. Foreign tourists only visit Tolú in small numbers, but this town has tremendous appeal due to its quiet beach atmosphere. The town has an island feeling, where things take time and there is not much of a hurry to get to your destination. The locals are very friendly and are always up for a conversation to pass the time. The main leisure activity is hopping into a boat to visit the Islas de San Bernardo. These islands are breathtaking and a one-day trip can make the trek to Tolú worth it. Other activities can include a boat trip into unique mangrove swamps. Kitesurfing, windsurfing and parasailing are also available for lessons and equipment usage. The beaches in the town are not the nicest, but they can be pleasantly calm at times. At about five to ten minutes outside of town, the beaches become much more appealing.

GETTING TO TOLÚ

There are direct buses from Medellín, Cartagena and Barranquilla. You can connect to Tolú from these cities.

NAVIGATION

Tolú runs in a simple carrera and calle system. Tolu's buildings on the most part don't have addresses posted. You need to keep track of the streets or it can become slightly confusing.

CLIMATE

Tolú is very hot, but you do have a refreshing nearby ocean to jump into.

TOLÚ IS FOR WHO?

Tolú is for anyone wanting to escape to a town with a beach feeling, without the crowds (outside of the high season). Tolú is not a place for singles looking to meet other travelers. Tolú has high potential as romantic a getaway for couples. Tolú as a beach town, is the anti-Taganga.

TIPS

Tolú may appear boring at first, but the place grows on you very quickly. It may appear there is not much to do there, but there is much to discover. Try to talk with the locals. They are very friendly. Keep an open mind, as it can be an amazing place to visit.

TIME

Two to six days. This depends on your personal agenda, but many travelers have reported staying much longer than anticipated.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Walking is by far the best way to travel in the city. A bike taxi can take you anywhere for a 1,000 COP or so. To get to the beaches between Coveñas and Tolú, just grab a bus.

BASIC SERVICES

Bank

Bank Bancolombia on the plaza.

Internet

Internet Corner of Calle 17 and Carrera 2.

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Supermarket

Carrera 2, No. 16-40.

DAY TOUR

Tours to the Islas de San Bernardo. The main activity in Tolú is taking a tourist excursion to the Islas de San Bernardo. The trip is approximately one hour on a small boat. There is a stop at an aquarium. If you opt out for the aquarium trip, you pretty much hang out for an hour while the rest of the group takes the tour. If you're lucky, you will get to watch a dolphin show for twenty or so minutes from the boat outside a resort. You will get to drive by a small island which may be the most densely populated island in the world. When arriving at your destination most people eat or hit the beach. It's recommended you take an amazing hike that takes you through a fishing village where you can chat with some of the locals. Start the hike by facing the ocean and take a right along the coast. A quick turn on the trail takes you to an incredible property named Punto Fara (ask a local where to turn). This resort is a good visit if you like large, beautiful properties. You can pay 100,000 COP to use their facilities for the day, but it's nice just to take a self-tour.

Tour operator to the Islas - Club Náutico Tolumaria - Av. El Malecon La Playa No. 11-40.

Low season - Try to negotiate, there is competition.

35,000 COP transportation only.

55,000 COP with lunch and aquarium.

High season - Check with operator.

ATTRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES

Ciénaga de Caimanera

You can take a bus or taxi to a bridge from where you can go on a tour of a mangrove swamp. As you take a lazy trip through the mangroves you will see different birds and creatures that live in these swamps. Many fishermen are collecting oysters, which grow on the mangroves. This tour is about seeing nature and helping out the local economy with your boat fees. This trip is also perfect for practicing your negotiating skills. 25,000 COP may get you there, but it's up to you to find the right price. The guides will be hanging out on the bridge waiting for customers, ask for the bus or taxi to let you off at Ciénaga de Caimanera

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Kitesurfing, Windsurfing, and Parasailing

Cabañas la Candelita (totysan@yahoo.com). This beachside property offers the above extreme water sports and others. Lessons are offered and equipment is available for rental. The owner can also direct you to an adventure park that offers numerous other activities. There are cabins for bigger groups for rent on the property. (www.lacandelita.com).

Bike Tour

A great way to see Tolú, is to take a 30 to 40 minute bike tour of the town. This is a great way to see the sights and let someone else do the work. All you need to do is jump in the bike operator's passenger carriage and he will do the peddling. For 3,000 COP - 5,000 COP you can make this happen. Find a local bike operator on the street and make a deal.

ACCOMMODATIONS

There are numerous hotels to choose from. Tolú gets very crowded during the holidays and festivals. It's best to reserve ahead of time during these times.

Budget

Hotel Ibatama Del Mar, Avenida 1a. No. 19-45 (035-288-5110, saesgo.turismo@hotmail.com). Great location, close to the beach, decent rooms, an interesting lobby and great low prices makes this hotel worth a peek. **Prices Sept. 2010: Low season - Single**, fan, 15,000 COP; **Single**, air, 25,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 30,000 COP; **Double**, air, 50,000 COP **High season - Single**, fan, 35,000 COP; **Single**, air, 55,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 70,000 COP; **Double**, air, 110,000 COP.

Villa Babilla, Calle 20 No. 3-40 (035-288-6124, info@villababillahostel.com). Babilla is the most popular choice for foreigners in Tolú. Babilla has large rooms and a community kitchen. It has a fantastic rooftop terrace with gorgeous views of the sea and of Tolú, relaxing hammocks and a T.V. lounge. **ASK** for the room on the terrace, it has the best location. **CALL or EMAIL for reservations.** Babilla **DOES NOT** accept guests who want to check-in late at night. Entrance is not marked with a sign. **Prices Sept. 2013: Garden level rooms, Low Season**, one person, 35,000 COP, 2 people 50,000; **Jun./ Aug.**, one person, 60,000 COP, two people, 60,000 COP; **Dec./Jan.**, one person, 70,000 COP, two people, 80,000 COP. **Rooms with balcony, Low Season**, one person, 40,000 COP, two people, 60,000 COP; **Jun./Aug.**, one person, 70,000 COP, two people, 80,000 COP, **Dec./Jan.**, one person, 80,000 COP, two people, 90,000 COP. (www.villababillahostel.com).

Hotel Caribe Royal, Avenida 1a. No. 18-12 (035-288-5115, hotelcaribe1@yahoo.com). Decent hotel with nice grounds close to the beach. The air conditioner's full abilities are suspicious, so make sure you test it before you pay. **Prices Sept. 2010: Single**, fan, 20,000 COP; **Single**, air, 35,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 40,000 COP; **Double**, air, 70,000 COP; Rates skyrocket during the High Season.

Mid-Range

Cabañas El Tesoro - Eight KM from Tolú to Coveñas (035-352-3300, www.hotellagotours.com.co). This place is an excellent place to stay and enjoy the beach. Cabañas El Tesoro is directly located on a beautiful beach. The price includes three meals per day. It even has a pool table and ping-pong table. Tell the taxi driver it's 8 KM from the circle in Tolú towards Coveñas. This place is a steal. **Prices 2010: Low season**, per person 51,000 COP with three meals. High season, per person - 67,000 COP with three meals.

RESTAURANTS

Tolú restaurants are focused more on Colombian dishes that revolve around fish. You can find food carts and chicken off the plaza.

Budget

Con Aroma de Café, Carrera 1 - between Calle 11 and 12. A good choice for breakfast before embarking on the boat. Typical breakfast 6,000 COP, lunch 8,000 COP.

La Red, Calle 20 with Carrera 2. La Red is highly recommended by many locals. Fresh fish, meat, and local food. Starting at 8,000 COP.

Terraza La 15, Carrera 1 and Calle 15. Serves simple local food with a great beach view. Fish dinner starting at 8,000 COP.

Varadero, Avenida 1a and Calle 1. Another great place for breakfast before you take off for the islands. Typical breakfast with a smoothie type jugo, 8,000 COP.

NIGHTLIFE

Tolú does not have much of a nightlife during the low season. There is a huge disco/club on the road towards Coveña, and more places around Tolu.

200 TOLÚ

Territorio, Carrera 2 and Calle 15. This is the place to party during the high season and holiday weekends in Tolú.

DEPARTING TOLÚ

This bus information is from the Tolú office of Expreso Brasilia (Jan. 2011).

Please be aware it can change at any time.

DESTINATION	PRICE	TRAVEL TIME	DEPART TIME
Barranquilla	41,000 COP	5 hours	Every hour 7AM-6PM
Bogotá	125,000 COP	20 hours	8AM & 5:45PM
Cartagena	30,000 COP	3 hours	Every hour 7AM-6PM
Medellín	97,000 COP	10 hours	8, 1030 AM, 5:45, 7PM

SANTA CRUZ DE MOMPOX

When you arrive into Mompox the slow pace of life is clearly evident. Mompox is all about slowing down and taking in the sights. Numerous colonial churches, beautiful streets, an interesting cemetery, and the Magdalena River are the main attractions. Mompox is not a place for rock and rollers. Taking long strolls down by the river is as exciting as it gets, but they are fabulous walks. If you're lucky, you can grab a tour into the swamps and explore waters that go on forever, filled with wildlife. Mompox was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1995.

HISTORY

Santa Cruz de Mompox or Mompós was founded by the Spaniard Don Alonso de Heredia, the brother of Cartagena's founder Pedro de Heredia. The city was founded on May 3, 1537, after hard struggles against indigenous resistance by the Quimbaya tribe. During the colonial period, the convent of St. Augustine was founded in Mompox. Mompox's location on the shores of the Magdalena River helped the city develop into an important commercial center. During the struggle for independence from Spain, Mompox was used to transport arms and gunpowder into the country. Mompox was declared a national monument in 1959.

GETTING TO MOMPOX

Mompox is an isolated destination, which takes more than five hours of bus travel to get to depending on where you're coming from. Traveling to Mompox is done in different forms from different directions. Please consult this website for the best explanation.

(www.lacasaamarillamompos.com/english/Transport.html).

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NAVIGATION

Mompox is easy to navigate. Use the river as a reference point.

CLIMATE

Mompox has an extremely hot climate.

FESTIVALS

Holy Week in Mompox is considered a special event in Colombia. Processions and ceremonies are performed throughout the entire week. A special ceremony called the Serenade to the Dead is observed to honor deceased loved ones.

MOMPOX IS FOR WHO?

Mompox is for couples who like romantic walks and colonial architecture. It's a good place for single travelers who are looking for total solitude, groups who want to bond in the middle of nowhere, and travelers who don't mind long, bumpy bus rides to get to destinations that are isolated and low-key.

TIPS

BRING BUG REPELLENT!!! Bring a book. You need to bring a walking mentality that wants to explore the city. It would be wise to make reservations during holidays and festivals.

TIME

Four days minimum.

One travel day to arrive.

Two full days to relax.

One travel day to depart.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

It's easy walk to all destinations in Mompox. Moto-taxis are the main form of paid transportation within Mompox.

BASIC SERVICES

Bank

You can find a BBVA is on the corner of Carrera 2 and Calle 18.

Internet

Club Net, Carrera 1 No. 16-53. 1,200 COP for one hour of internet. **Mon. - Sat.** 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM, Sun., 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM.

DAY TOUR

Casa Amarilla can arrange a tour into the swamps on a small motorized boat. This is an excellent trip where you can observe a large variety of birds, iguanas and possibly even monkeys. Cost is based on the amount of people, but it is affordable. If this trip is being offered, it's highly suggested you join the tour.

WINE SHOP

There is a very unique wine shop that sells different types of locally made wine. The location is on Calle 18 close to Carrera 3. This shop specializes in fruit flavored wine.

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SWIMMING POOL

There is a pool that can be used for a 6,000 COP. The pool is in Hostal Doña Manuela. Hostal Doña Manuela is an interesting property to view. At the time of this writing, many other guests staying at La Casa Amarilla enjoyed the pool to cool down and swim some laps.

ACCOMMODATIONS

There are a few choices in Mompox for accommodations. La Casa Amarilla is the best choice for all travelers. All rates increase drastically during holidays and festivals for all accommodations.

La Casa Amarilla, La Albarrada con Santa Barbara Cra 1 #13-59 (035-685-6326, lacasaamarillamompos@gmail.com). La Casa Amarilla is a beautiful Spanish colonial building a few steps away from the river. La Casa Amarilla has very comfortable rooms, common areas, and kitchen. Every amenity that a traveler needs is available. The casa has a very pleasant feeling and the staff is committed to an enjoyable stay for the traveler. **Prices 2013: Dorm**, 4 beds, WiFi, air, bath, 22,000 COP; **Dorm**, 3 beds, bath, 16,000 COP; **Dorm rates are 30,000 pesos during Semana Santa. Casa Amarilla Colonial, Double**, fan, bath, 50,000 COP, **High Season**, 65,000 COP, **Semana Santa**, 80,000 COP; **Casa Amarilla Colonial, Double**, air, bath, 65,000 COP, **High Season/Semana Santa** 100,000 COP; **Casa Amarilla Suites**, air, fan, new bathrooms, LCD Cable TV, WiFi and breakfast: 135,000 per couple (85,000 Single) - Enquire for High season rates. **Master Suite**, air, fan, new bathroom, private roof terrace and sala, cable TV LCD, WiFi, breakfast, 200,000, **High Season/Semana Santa** 300,000. (www.lacasaamarillamompos.com).

Casa Hotel La Casona, Carrera 2 No. 18-58 (035-685-5307, eusedeal@yahoo.es). A decent option if Casa Amarilla is full. **Prices Sept. 2010: Single**, fan,

25,000 COP; **Single**, air, 40,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 40,000 COP; **Double**, air, 50,000 COP.

Hotel San Andres, Carrera 2a No. 18-23 (035-685-5886, hotelsanandres@hotmail.com). Another decent option if Casa Amarilla is full. **Prices Sept. 2010:** **Single**, fan, 25,000 COP; **Single**, air, 35,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 50,000 COP; **Double**, air, 60,000 COP.

RESTAURANTS

Mompox has many small restaurants serving local food. There are more mid-range choices available, ask your hotel for recommendations. You can also find many food carts around Carrera 3 and Calle 18.

Budget

Asadero Donde Memin, Carrera 2 and Calle 15. Simple chicken and meat restaurant. Pollo frito with coke 8,200 COP.

Crepes D' La Villa, Carrera 2 - between Calle 17 and 18. Crepes and ice cream shop. The ice cream and fruit is very refreshing.

Mondongo and Algo Mas, Carrera 3 and Calle 15. Basic chicken and meat restaurant.

Pastelitos y Algo Mas, Calle 18 con Carrera 3. Pastelitos y Algo Mas has excellent chicken lasagna, but it tastes like chicken casserole. For only 5,000 COP this is a good meal.

NIGHTLIFE

Mompox has a part of town where four or more bars come together and share extremely loud music with combinations of reggaeton, salsa, vallenato, pop and

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other musical genres. Luna de Mompox stands out as the best place for a few drinks.

Luna de Mompox, Carrera 1 and Calle 17ish, Luna de Mompox is the type of bar that draws foreigners. Nicely decorated, it may be your first and last drinking spot in Mompox.

DEPARTING MOMPOX

Please refer to this site for information.

(www.lacasaamarillamompos.com/english/Transport.html).

BARRANQUILLA

Barranquilla is Colombia's fourth largest city and an important industrial and commercial center. It also serves as a port city where much of Colombia's imports and exports are facilitated. Barranquilla is also known for holding the second largest carnival in the world. The city turns into a non-stop, week-long party. Barranquilla is not known as a foreign tourist hot-spot, but many tourists still visit it anyway. Foreigners are surprised with a lively nightlife and fine dining choices.

Barranquilla is also the childhood home to Shakira, the international singing and dancing superstar.

GETTING TO BARRANQUILLA

All major cities have buses to Barranquilla. Aeropuerto Internacional Ernesto Cortissoz has flights directly from the U.S. and other countries to Barranquilla.

NAVIGATION

Barranquilla is a large city of mostly concrete. Most of your movements are done by taxi, unless you have time to learn the bus system. It's an easy and interesting walk from the budget hotels to El Prado.

Climate - Average High Temps and Precipitation

	J.	F.	M.	A.	M.	J.	J.	A.	S.	O.	N.	D.
C.	32	32	32	33	34	33	33	33	32	32	32	32
F.	90	90	90	92	93	91	91	91	90	90	90	90
mm.	5	1	1	25	91	104	70	102	143	178	79	24
ln.	.2	.04	.04	1	3.6	4	2.7	4	5.6	7	3.1	1

FESTIVALS/EVENTS

Barranquilla Carnaval - The dates for Carnaval de Barranquilla 2014 are March 1th to March 4th. In 2003 the carnival was declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. The Barranquilla Carnaval has a reputation for being one of the world's biggest parties. Parades, processions, music, and cultural activities turn the city into a week-long celebration. It's best to reserve your room months ahead of time, the quicker the better. It's possible to find last minute accommodations, but you're not doing yourself any favors by waiting. Some travelers have reported staying awake for the whole night and slipping back to Santa Marta without worrying about a hotel room. More information in Spanish can be found at (www.carnavaldebarranquilla.org).

Barranquijazz, Yearly jazz festival that takes place in September.

BARRANQUILLA IS FOR WHO?

Barranquilla is for people who have friends to visit in the city and for those who want to party at the world famous carnival. If you want to check out world class clubs and be one of the only foreigners around, Barranquilla is a great place. Many travelers who are in transit find themselves visiting Barranquilla. Barranquilla is not a highly visited tourist destination for foreigners, but some foreigners find themselves in Barranquilla for one reason or another.

TIPS

Bring your walking shoes and check out the contrast as you walk from El Centro to El Prado. Bring decent clothes for the clubs, as they may be selective when it comes to customers. If you come to party, plan your stay for a Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Try to make friends. Even though Barranquilla is a big city, the people are still extremely friendly and are open to conversation. If you have time, try to visit the Hotel El Prado and its glorious swimming pool.

TIME

You can visit all the sites in two days. The travel time from Santa Marta and Cartagena is very short, so it's convenient to visit.

SPANISH SCHOOL

Universidad del Norte Spanish for Foreigners Program, The Instituto de Idiomas hosts three different programs for foreigners. Visit their site for more info. (www.uninorte.edu.co).

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Taxi

Rates vary on the distance traveled. It's important that you confirm the rate before starting your ride. Ask your hotel for the proper rates before you get a cab.

To Bus Terminal

By Bus

It costs 1,450 COP pesos from anywhere on Carrera 45. You need to take a bus that says Terminal. Approximately 30 minutes travel time.

By Taxi

A taxi ride costs between 10,000 COP to 15,000 COP from El Prado.

To Airport

By Bus

It costs 1,450 COP pesos from anywhere on Carrera 43, You need to take a bus that says "Aeropuerto". Approximately 45 minute travel time.

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By Taxi

A taxi costs around 20,000 COP from Prado.

BASIC SERVICES

Bank

Banco Popular ATM. Can be found on the corner of Avenida 72 and Carrera 49.

Internet

Compunet is located on Cra. 48 No. 70-212.

Malls

There are several malls throughout the city, please check the map for locations.

Laundry

Check with your hotel for laundry services.

Avianca Office

Please check the map for the location.

Aires Office

Please check the map for the location.

Copa Office

Please check the map for the location.

DAS

DAS is located on Calle 54 No. 41-133m, **Mon. - Fri.**, 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM/ 2:00 PM - 4:00 P.M.

ATTRACTION/ACTIVITIES

Boca del Cienaga. For an entertaining half day trip, a visit to Boca del Cienaga may be a great choice. At this spot the Magdalena River and the ocean meet at one point. You need to take a wooden train ride that is powered by a lawn mower type engine. When you get to the end of the line there is a 30 minute hike to the end of the trail. **If you like simple things like:** a shabby wooden train, hiking to a destination just to see what is there and seeing a river and ocean divided by 20 feet of land, this might be the place for you. This is great outdoor fun where you least expect it.

Zoological, Calle 77 #68-40 (035-360-0314). A trip to the Barranquilla Zoo may be a pleasantly surprising visit. It's very small, but there are some very interesting animals. Monkeys, a lion and a gorgeous leopard which may be a Colombian native. Your 9,500 COP entrance comes with the satisfaction of knowing you just helped feed an animal. You can visit the whole zoo in 30-40 minutes. Check out their very colorful site. (www.zoobaq.org). **Open every day,** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

MUSEUMS

There are three small museums in Barranquilla.

Museo Romantico, Carrera 54 59-199 (035-344-4591) **5,000 COP entrance.** This place may be the strangest of museums, but yet it is entertaining at the same time. Museo Romantico houses a collection of Barranquilla's history filled with old carnival costumes, city plans, historical papers, and interesting paintings. **Mon. - Fri.,** 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM, 2:30 PM - 6:00 PM.

Museo Antropologico, Carrera 54 and Calle 68 (035-356-0067) **FREE.** This small museum presents the history of the coast, pre-columbian gold objects and culturally interesting tid-bits. **Tues. - Fri.,** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, **Sat. -** 9:00 - 4:00.



Barranquilla

Map 1

SERVICES

1. INTERNET (map 2)
2. BANCO POPULAR ATM (map 2)
3. AVIANCA (map 2)
4. AIRES (map 2)
5. COPA (map 2)
6. DAS (map 2)

Hotels

7. AMERICAN GULF (map 1)
8. BARAHONA 72 (map 2)
9. HOTEL CHARRITHON (map 1)
10. HOTEL PRADO (map 2)
11. GRANADA INN (map 2)
12. HOTEL JAZAHI (map 2)
13. HOWARD JOHNSON (map 2)

RESTAURANTS

14. Fobon Quillero (map 2)
15. La Torre De Piza (map 2)
16. Narcobollo (map 1)
17. CACTUS TEX MEX (map 1)
18. Oz RESTAURANTE (map 1)

Nightlife

19. Agua Helada (map 1)
20. COCO BEACH (map 1)
21. FROGJEGS (map 1)
22. HENRY CAFE (map 1)
23. PKDOS Rumba Bar (map 1)
24. Tropical Cocktails (map 1)

ATTRACTIONS

25. Zoological (map 1)
26. MUSEO ROMANTICO (map 2)
27. MUSEO DE ANTROPOLOGIA (map 2)
28. MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO (map 2)

Shopping

29. BUENA VISTA MALL (map 1)
30. PORTA DEL PRADO MALL (map 2)
31. EXITO COMMERCIAL CENTER (map 1)



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Barranquilla

Map 2

SERVICES

1. INTERNET (map 2)
2. BANCO POPULAR ATM (map 2)
3. AVIANCA (map 2)
4. ALRES (map 2)
5. COPA (map 2)
6. DAS (map 2)

Hotels

7. AMERICAN GULL (map 1)
8. BARRAHONA 72 (map 2)
9. HOTEL CHARFON (map 1)
10. HOTEL PRADO (map 2)
11. GRANADA INN (map 2)
12. HOTEL JAZAHÍ (map 2)
13. HOWARD JOHNSON (map 2)

RESTAURANTS

14. Fobon Quillero (map 2)
15. La Torre De Pizza (map 2)
16. NARCObollo (map 1)
17. CACTUS TEX MEX (map 1)
18. Oz RESTAURANTE (map 1)

Nightlife

19. Agua Helada (map 1)
20. COCO BEACH (map 1)
21. Froglegs (map 1)
22. HENRY CAFÉ (map 1)
23. PKDOS Rumba Bar (map 1)
24. Tropical Cocktails (map 1)

ATTRACTIONS

25. Zoological (map 1)
26. MUSEO ROMANTICO (map 2)
27. MUSEO DE ANTROPOLOGIA (map 2)
28. MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO (map 2)

Shopping

29. BUENA VISTA Mall (map 1)
30. PORTA DEL PRADO Mall (map 2)
31. EXITO COMMERCIAL CENTER (map 1)



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Museo de Arte Moderno, Carrera 56 74-22, FREE. Exhibits contemporary art from Colombian artist. **Mon - Fri.**, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM/3:00 PM - 7:00 PM, **Sat.** 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM.

ACCOMMODATIONS

At the time of this writing, a hostel had not been located. The cheapest options are off Carrera 43. The neighborhood is semi-shady, but safety is not an issue if you play it smart. There are tons of upper end hotels scattered throughout the city. You must take a glance at the map before choosing your hotel, as Barranquilla is a large city.

Budget

Hotel Jazahi, Calle 42 No. 41-26 (035-351-2250, WiFi). Hotel Jazahi is a simple hotel between the downtown area and Prado. The room comes with air conditioning, cable, and a fully stocked mini-bar. This is not a bad choice for the price. **Prices Sept. 2010: Single**, air, 30,000 COP; **Double**, air, 40,000 COP.

Hotel Granada Inn, Carrera 43 No. 41-27 (035-351-9801, WiFi, hotel.granada@hotmail.com). Hotel Granada Inn is a comfortable hotel found in between the downtown area and Prado. Rooms have cable with tons of channels, and comfortable beds. Most importantly it has great air conditioning. **Prices Sept. 2010: Single**, air, 40,000 COP; **Double**, air, 50,000 COP.

Mid-range

Barahona 72, Carrera 49 No. 72-19 (035-358-4600, WiFi mmuvdi0705@yahoo.es). A decent hotel with a nice price for the area and a great location on Calle 72. Nice sized rooms too. **Prices Sept. 2010: Single**, air, 86,000 COP; **Double**, air, 111,000 COP, includes breakfast.

Hotel Charthon Barranquilla, Carrera 46 No. 90-40 (035-377-5333, WiFi, reservas@hotelcharthonbarranquilla). This may be the best hotel, at the best

price in Barranquilla. The weekend rate for two people is amazing. Spacious rooms are beautifully furnished and decorated. Perfect for the business traveler or couple. **Prices Sept. 2010: Weekends - Single**, air, 102,500; **Double**, air, 106,000 **Mon. - Thurs. - Single**, air, 124,500; **Double**, air, 155,000.

Expensive

Howard Johnson/Versalles, Carrera 48 No. 70-188 (035-368-2183, WiFi). Pleasant hotel with pool, restaurant and other convenient amenities. Conveniently located on Calle 72. **Prices Sept. 2010: Standard - Mon.-Thurs., Single**, 136,000 COP; **Double**, 178,000 COP, **Standard - Fri. - Sun., Single**, 103,000; **Double**, 138,000 COP. (www.hojobarranquilla.com).

American Gulf Hotel, Calle 82 No. 58-41 (035-336-5400, WiFi, info@hotelamericangolf.com). American Gulf is an upper-class hotel for those with deep pockets. Spacious well-furnished rooms and a nice sized pool. **Prices Sept. 2010: Standard - Single**, 145,000 COP; **Double**, 183,000 COP; **Deluxe Single**, 205,000 COP, **Double**, 260,000 COP. Includes breakfast.

El Prado Hotel, Carrera 54 No. 70-10 (035-369-7777, WiFi, ventas@hotelespradosa.com). El Prado is the premier hotel in Barranquilla. A beautiful property, with even a more beautiful pool. This is a great location in El Prado. **Prices Sept. 2010: Standard Single**, 165,000 COP; **Double**, 195,000 COP. (www.hotelespradosa.com).

RESTAURANTS

Barranquilla is filled with various types of restaurants where you can find many choices from budget to fine dining. Here is a short list of a few of the many choices.

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Budget

Narcobollo, Carrera 43 No. 84-188 (031-359-0596). Very popular Colombian restaurant. Has branches in Barranquilla, Bogotá, Cartagena, and Miami. Serves typical Colombian cuisine at a great price. Cerdo Asado 9,000 COP; Quibbe 2,200 COP; Buna Maiz 1,700 COP. Open every day from 7:00 AM - 10:00 PM.

Hotel Granada Inn Restaurant, Carrera 43 No. 41-27 (035-351-9801). This place is good if you're looking for a quick simple breakfast or lunch while you're staying in this area. Typical breakfast 6,000 COP, lunch 7,000 COP.

Oz Restaurante and Bar, Carrera 46 No. 90, Grab some fast food with a cocktail before heading out to Froglegs. Popular with students from the university down the street.

La Torre De Pizza, Calle 72 No. 53-53 Second Floor (035-345-9883). La Torre de Pizza is an enjoyable Italian restaurant which features good pizza and pasta. It has a great ambiance with salsa music blending perfectly with Italian food. Pizza and a Coke 13,000 COP. **Mon. - Fri.** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, **Sat.** 10:00 AM - 1:00 AM.

Mid-range

Fobon Quillero, Cra 53 No. 72-57 (035-368-7607) Right off Calle 72 is a Colombian restaurant and bar. By the looks of the punto gorda, the portions are generous and looks quite tasty. Very nice staff. Chicken with Rice 8,500 COP; Punto Gordo 12,000 COP; Huge Steaks 25,000 - 40,000 COP. **Mon. - Sat.,** 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM, **Sun.** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

Cactus Tex Mex, Cra. 53 # 76-239 second floor L222 (035-360-2250) Cactus is a very appealing and recommended Mexican restaurant. The staff is very friendly and the Colombian owner speaks perfect English after spending time living in Houston. The chicken taco plate, 20,000 COP, is excellent. **Mon. - Thurs.** 12:00

PM - 3:00 PM, 6:00 - 10:00 PM, **Fri. - Sat.** 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM, 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM.

NIGHTLIFE

Barranquilla is legendary for its nightlife and there are plenty of clubs to experience it all. All six of the following night spots scream a good time. All are recommended by locals and the staffs are all extremely friendly. Thursdays and Fridays are the best nights, but Saturdays are still very active.

Agua Helada, Grand Boulevard Centro Comercial. Barranquilla's fanciest club, located within one of the most lavish malls. Make sure you wear your best outfit or you're not getting past what looks like the offensive line of the Steelers. **Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 20,000 COP cover**, 10:00 PM - 4:00 AM., Dress nicely.

Coco Beach, Grand Boulevard Centro Comercial. Within footsteps to Agua Helada sits Coco Beach. It seems this is the perfect bar for a warm-up to Agua Helada. Slightly smaller bouncers, but if you cause a problem, it seems that they work as a team. It's best to make good decisions. **There is no cover**. Dress nicely.

Froglegs, Calle 93 Carrera 43 (035-378-6929). In the middle of a residential street right between two houses sits what many claim to be Barranquilla's best disco/club. Froglegs is the place to be on Fridays and Saturdays. **Cover 10,000 COP**. Dress nice.

Henry's Café, Calle 80 No 53-18. (035-345-6431). This bar is popular with expats and Colombians alike. Has a T.J.I Fridays feel to it and serves an American menu.

Tropical Cocktails, Carrera 53 No. 79-141. Tropical Cocktails is the official rumba starting location of Explore Travel Guides Colombia in Barranquilla. A very relaxing setting with what may be one of the most friendly staffed nightlife

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locations in Colombia. Very well decorated and with a vibe that guarantees a great night out. Tropical Cocktail plays techno music most of the time.

DEPARTING BARRANQUILLA

Santa Marta or Cartagena door to door service. This service picks you up at your location and takes you directly to where you want to go. Barranquilla to Cartagena, 20,000 COP. Barranquilla to Santa Marta, 19,000 COP. Contact Marsol in Barranquilla, 035-369-0999/035-368-3272. You can find buses from Barranquilla to all over Colombia. Make sure you try to negotiate especially during the low season. Prices change drastically throughout the year, consult your hostel or hotel for price information.

Estimated hours are from buses that depart from Barranquilla.

DESTINATION	HOURS OF TRAVEL
Bogotá	19 hours
Cartagena	2 hours
Medellín	17 hours
Riohacha	5 hours
Santa Marta	1 1/2hour
Valledupar	5 hours

SANTA MARTA AREA

The Santa Marta area is located on the North Coast of Colombia. Santa Marta's tourism industry is currently exploding and the area is quickly becoming an extremely popular destination for many different types of travelers. With five distinct areas, Santa Marta has much to offer to satisfy tourists' interests. New hostels and restaurants are opening very quickly and the guidebook industry will have its hands full keeping up with the current progress.

FIVE DISTRICTS OF THE SANTA MARTA

Santa Marta can be broken down into five distinct areas. Other smaller tourist locations can be found close to these areas:

EL RODADERO

El Rodadero is located a few minutes outside of Santa Marta. El Rodadero is home to luxurious high rises, restaurants, hotels, and discos that cater mainly to Colombian tourists.

SANTA MARTA

Santa Marta is a bustling city that is popular with both foreigners and Colombians. Fine hostels, hotels, restaurants, nightlife, a beach and a vibrant energy can be found in this dynamic city. Santa Marta is also used as a transition point to Parque Tayrona and other areas.

TAGANGA

Taganga is a small fishing village that is very popular with backpackers. It also fills up with Colombian tourists during holidays and weekends. Many backpackers use Taganga as a place to learn how to dive or to find a guide for the Lost City, or as a jump off point to Parque Tayrona.

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PARQUE TAYRONA

Many visitors view a visit to Parque Tayrona as the highlight of their Colombian vacation. Tayrona is blessed with stunning beaches that are accessed by gorgeous hikes. Visitors can find accommodations from hammocks to plush cabins.

MINCA

A small mountain town 45 minutes above Santa Marta, Minca is perfect for those looking for a temperature change and a very peaceful environment.

ARACATACA, PALOMINO, AND BEACHES EAST OF TAYRONA

On the edges of the Santa Marta area there are a few interesting destinations. Aracataca is a good destination for a day or overnight trip for those looking to visit this small, quiet Colombian town, which has the distinction of being the childhood home of famed author Gabriel García Márquez. East of Tayrona, and in Palomino, there are stunning beaches with simple amenities that offer a more secluded feeling for visitors.

Santa Marta or Taganga?

When a traveler decides on traveling to the Santa Marta area, one question always arises: Where should I choose to my base of operations and why? The choices are usually between Santa Marta and Taganga. While we don't have the answer, the best we can do is give you hints and leave it to you to choose the best destination for your tastes. Many travelers who have the time get to sample the best of both worlds. When you plan your Colombian vacation, it's critical you take a long look at your Santa Marta area game plan.

SANTA MARTA

Santa Marta is a city with fine dining, a variety of hostels for all types of visitors and a beach that is more for strolling than swimming. A visitor can relax while enjoying comfortable amenities at all times. The city has gone through some

recent renovation efforts and many areas are more developed than others. It has numerous plazas where you can relax, people watch and enjoy the evening. There are clubs, bars and places to sit outside and have a drink. One can find sketchy areas among the nicer, more inviting ones. There are a few interesting museums to visit. The city of Santa Marta is something you need to see for yourself before making your own opinion. Over the past year, government of Santa Marta has committed itself to creating a more tourist-friendly town and, thanks in part to recent renovations; Santa Marta is becoming more appealing for all types of tourists.

GETTING TO SANTA MARTA

Santa Marta is accessible by bus from most Colombian cities. There is also an airport where you can fly directly from Bogotá.

NAVIGATION

Santa Marta is easy to navigate within the main tourist areas. The streets are in a basic calle and carrera pattern. If you go out of El Centro, getting around may become complicated if you are not familiar with the area.

CLIMATE

Santa Marta has a very hot climate. All of its areas have similar weather patterns except Minca, which is cooler due to its elevated mountain location.

CLIMATE - Average High Temperature and Precipitation

	J.	F.	M.	A.	M.	J.	J.	A.	S.	O.	N.	D.
C.	31	31	32	32	31	31	31	31	30	30	30	31
F.	88	89	90	90	89	89	89	88	87	87	87	88
mm.	7.6	2.5	1	10.2	41	61	56	48	66	94	43	10

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FESTIVALS

Las Fiestas del Mar is an annual festival that takes place in late July. There are events including parades, music and beauty pageants.

SANTA MARTA IS FOR WHO?

Santa Marta is for those looking for a city vibe, but also the intrigue of the "developing world". It is for travelers who want various options for restaurants and nightlife, and those who want specific types of accommodations that offer an atmosphere to their personal taste.

TIPS

Have a plan ready when you come to Santa Marta. This will allow you to maximize your days to their fullest potential. Pick your accommodations carefully and make sure you reserve your rooms in advance. Ask your hostel owners for tips. The hostel owners in the Santa Marta are very helpful and active members of their community and understand the area well.

TIME

This is a very difficult issue to address. Plan a minimum of one week to spend in the Santa Marta area. Three weeks to a month is not unrealistic if you're a beach person and your agenda is packed with diving, trekking, partying and finding that special hammock.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

From El Centro

Within Santa Marta

Taxi: 3,500 COP during the day/ 4,000 COP after 6:00 PM.

To Aracataca

From the Santa Marta terminal, you can take a bus to Aracataca: 8,000 COP, 1.5 hours.

To El Rodedero

Taxi: 6,000 COP - 8,000 COP

To Taganga

Taxi: 7,000/8,000 COP during the day, 8,000 COP after 6:00 PM. Bus: approx. 1,300 COP. The bus stop is on Ave. La Quinta.

To Tayrona

Catch a bus at the market at Calle 11 and Carrera 11, 4,000 COP. If you want to go to Buritaca or Palomino, tell the driver your desired destination. This will cost a few more pesos.

To Minca

Catch a **collectivo taxi** at Calle 11 with Carrera 13, 5,000 COP

BASIC SERVICES

Internet

In Calle del Correo, check map.

Bank

There is BBVA location on the map.

Laundry

Inquire at your hostel for laundry service.

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Fundación Mariposas Amarillas is dedicated to providing support to underprivileged families and children in the Santa Marta area. Volunteers from the Fundación bring educational information on nutrition, education and childcare to Santa Marta's poorest neighborhoods. Fundación Mariposas Amarillas is in need of volunteers and donations to support their operations. The volunteer positions offer short hours which allow volunteers to explore the surrounding areas. Volunteers work at one of the learning centers in the Santa Marta area. Information is available on their website, (www.fmacolombia.weebly.com).

TOUR OPERATORS

Las Pleyades, 14th Street No. 6-66, Historic City Centre (Cell - 321-522-1292, info@santamarta-hotels-tours.travel). Las Pleyades offers tours of the Santa Marta area and the Colombian North Coast. The operators practice socially responsible tourism and have gained an extremely positive reputation as tour operators. Las Pleyades also operates a tourism information website that offers hotel and tour bookings. (www.santamarta-hoteltours.travel).

Turcol Turismo Colombiano, Calle 13 N. 3-13 (035-421-2256, Turcol_24@hotmail.com). Turcol is a major operator to the Lost City. Turcol has an office in Santa Marta and an office close to Casa de Felipe in Taganga.

Magic Tours, Calle 16 No. 4-41 (035-421-9472, magictour@hosteltrail.com). Magic Tours operates in Ciudad Perdida, Parque Tayrona, Cabo de Vela and many other North Coast attractions. Magic tours has offices in Santa Marta and Taganga.

SURF CAMP

Costeño Surf is operated by an American surfer who has been surfing and teaching novice surfers in the Santa Marta area for a few years. He has recently purchased a new property and, at the time of this writing, he had started building a surf camp. He offers camping, surfing lessons and board rental at this time at the property. For more information check out his website, (www.costenosurf.com).

ATV EXCURSIONS

ATV RENTALS VAN DEN ENDEN, Km 5 en Neguanje, Troncal del Caribe, in the gas station, (317-436-6930, atvrentals@hotmail.com.) About 20 minutes outside of Santa Marta, there is an ATV rental and tour company. If you want to get deep into the bush and go fast, this may be your way. They offer tours that range from 4 to 7 hours starting at 230,000 COP. They also arrange mountain and beach tours. This is not an ATV racing service, but more an exploratory experience of natural settings.

HIKE

Cascadas de Quebrada Valencia is a waterfall hike about forty-five minutes from Santa Marta. It's a gorgeous 20 to 40 minute hike through the forest, depending on your speed. **Bring hiking sandals or water shoes.** You must walk through numerous rivers to get to the falls. Walking in the rocks is very painful and very slow if you go barefooted. You can take the bus to Palomino and tell the driver to let you off at the Cascadas. This is a great hike to get you out of the city and into beautiful natural settings.

MUSEUMS

For museum buffs there are a handful of informative and interesting museums to check out. The following three are within walking distance in the historic district area.

Centro Cultural San Juan Nepomuceno (Check map for directions) **(5,000 COP entrance)**. This building houses a small art museum. The 5,000 COP may be worth it or not, depending on your appreciation for art. The museum is staffed with local high school students who give very informative tours. They are performing their community service for their future graduation. This type of community service is very common in Colombian schools. The museum has a monthly rotating schedule for its main exhibit. At the time of this writing in July, the museum housed a stunning exhibit of twenty or so paintings of Colombia's liberator Simon Bolívar.

Museo Etnográfico de la Universidad del Magdalena (check map for directions) **(5,000 COP entrance)**. This museum is dedicated to culture, history and the archaeology of Colombia and the local area. Once again you can find local student guides for free.

Museo del Oro Tairona (check map for directions)(FREE, 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM). This is an interesting museum that displays artifacts of the Pre-Columbian local indigenous population. The museum has very interesting information displays in both English and Spanish on the history of the Taironas and the local area. Student guides can be found here for tours.

MUST VISIT

Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino, in Mamatoco on the edge of the town, **12,000 COP entrance**. The Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino was the final resting place of the liberator Simon Bolívar. If you're saving your money for one museum, this

is your best choice. The attraction is spread out over an estate that houses an art museum, botanical gardens, walking paths, statues, and colonial architecture. The Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino is a beautifully maintained historical property that is well worth the visit. The Liberator's remains are now in Venezuela, but there are numerous exhibits to visit. Check out their website in Spanish. (www.museobolivariano.org.co). Grab a small bus (ten minutes) to Mamatoco and tell the driver to let you off at the Quinta, the cost is around 1,200 COP.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Santa Marta has excellent choices for hostels and hotels for foreigners. The first three listed and the Aluna are Santa Marta's newer and most appealing. The hostels and hotels listed afterwards are time honored backpacker locations. There is also the Miramar, for ultra-thrifty travelers, which can't be overlooked.

Budget

Hostal El Noctambulo, Calle 20 No 6-55 Centro Historico (035-431-7643, WiFi, hostalnoctambulo@yahoo.com). Noctambulo opened in 2010 and the hostel is one of the best options for chill backpackers. It's owned and operated by a young French couple who have quickly grasped the concept of how to run an excellent hostel. The couple, who provide outstanding customer service, have a great understanding of the general Santa Marta area and go out of their way to make your stay special. The house that they converted into a hostel is perfect for the concept they are selling. El Noctambulo is an excellent place to meet other travelers who are looking for a low-key but entertaining place to stay. El Noctambulo has a beautiful back area that has a small pool to cool down in, tables, and a hammock. It's a very social hostel where the owners have created a more chill atmosphere where you can lightly party. El Noctambulo also serves a very simple economical breakfast and has a huge washing machine to help you catch up on your laundry for a great price. Hostal El Noctambulo is highly recommended for backpackers and other travelers looking for this type of

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atmosphere. **Prices 2011: Low Season - Dorm**, fan, 15,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 38,000 COP. **High Season - Dorm**, fan, 18,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 43,000 COP. (www.hostalelnoctambulo.com).

La Brisa Loca, Calle 14 N3-58 (035-431-6121, WiFi, info@labrisaloca.com). La Brisa Loca is owned and operated by two Northern California brothers. The two Americans have quickly become Santa Marta tourism legends. Starting with a vacant building, they have built an amazing hostel, which only downfall is that many of its guests may never leave its confines to explore Santa Marta. Highlights include a refreshing courtyard pool, a relaxing second floor bar with a pool table, a gorgeous rooftop terrace, and comfortable private and dorm rooms. The staff is made up of very friendly and highly knowledgeable locals, who possess outstanding information for excursions. Next door is their very well priced Mexican restaurant that offers huge portions and is operated and co-owned by an American chef. The food is outstanding and the restaurant is filled with both travelers and locals. La Brisa Loca is an excellent hostel to meet fellow travelers. **Leave your parents at home. La Brisa Loca is a party hostel**, rock and roll to its core. **Prices Nov. 2010: Low Season - 10 bed dorm**, fan, 18,000 COP; **10 bed dorm**, air, 25,000 COP; **6 bed dorm**, fan, 20,000 COP; **6 bed dorm**, air, 25,000 COP; **4 bed dorm**, fan, bath, 25,000 COP; **Single/Double**, fan, no bath, 50,000 COP, with a loft extra 18,000 COP per person; **Single/Double** air, no bath 60,000 COP; **Single/Double**, fan, bath, 60,000 COP; **Single/Double**, air, bath, 70,000 COP. Inquire with the hostel for their high season rates. (www.labrisaloca.com).

The Dreamer, Carrera 51, 26D-161, Diagonal 32 Los Trupillos (035-433-3264, WiFi, thedreamerhostel@hotmail.com). The Dreamer's name sums it all up. The property is a beautiful creation that sets a high standard. It's a French owned walled property on the outskirts of town that offers the perfect place to relax between your adventures. The property resembles a small estate with a refreshing swimming pool in the middle. Highlights include multiple common areas, an Italian restaurant, hammocks everywhere, multiple activities and an

extremely friendly front desk. The Dreamer's is location a bit off the track, but it's only a quick 4,000 COP taxi ride into town to explore the restaurants and nightlife. The location is perfect to jump off to Parque Tayrona and the stunning beaches that are East of Tayrona. **Prices 2013: Low Season - 10 bed mixed dorm**, fan, 18,000 COP; **8 bed mixed dorm**, fan, 23,000 COP; **8 bed dorm**, air, 23,000 COP; **Private Room** (double bed/twin bed) shared bath, fan, 65,000 COP; **Private Room** (double bed), bath, fan, 70,000 COP; **Private Room** (double bed), bath, air, 80,000 COP. **Suite**, bath, air, cable T.V., 90,000 COP. Inquire with hostels website for their high season rates. (www.thedreamerhostel.com).

El Miramar, Calle 10C No 1C-59 (035-423-3276, elmiramar_santamarta@yahoo.com). El Miramar is the budget travelers' dream. Miramar is the oldest hostel in Santa Marta and is a legend in the hostel industry. It could use a fresh coat of paint and some scrubbing, but you're only paying 15,000 COP for a bed. Miramar has personality and a long history. The owner is very friendly and runs a tour agency that takes groups to the Lost City. If you like to meet people, party, and only dish out a few bucks to crash, this is your place. **Prices 2013: Low Season - Dorms**, 4/5 beds, 15,000 COP; **Single**, no bath, 15,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 20,000 COP; **Double**, bath, 30,000 COP, two people; **Double**, bath, 35,000 COP, two people. **High Season - Dorms**, 15,000 COP; **Single**, no bath, 15,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 20,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 35,000 COP, two people; **Double**, bath, 40,000 COP.

Hospederia Casa Familiar, Calle 10C No. 2-14 (035-421-1697, Wifi, hcasafamiliar@hotmail.com). Hospederia Familiar is a good budget choice with hammocks on a few terraces. It's a friendly, family-run business only a few blocks from the beach. All the rooms have fans. **Prices 2011: Low Season -Dorm**, 15,000 COP; **Single**, 22,000 COP; **Double**, 34,000 COP; **Triple**, 48,000 COP. **High season** (Jan 1st- Jan. 15th), **Dorm**, 25,000 COP; **Single**, 28,000 COP; **Double**, 54,000 COP; **Triple**, 66,000 COP.

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Hotel Las Vegas del Caribe, Calle 11 No. 2-08 (035-423-0479, hotellasvegasdeldelcaribe@hotmail.com). If you're looking for a single room at a cheap price, this is your place. Not many opportunities for socializing, but it could be the perfect crash pad if you're looking for privacy. **Prices Aug. 2010: Single**, fan, 20,000 COP; **Single**, air, 25,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 35,000 COP; **Double**, air, 40,000 COP. Prices almost double during Semana Santa, Las Fiestas del Mar, and between Dec. 20th - January.

Hotel Saboy, Calle 11 No 2-22 (035-421-0926, WiFi, saboyasantamarta@hotmail.com). The Saboy is for those looking for a cheap private room. A few blocks from the beach. **Single**, fan, 25,000 COP; **Single**, air, 30,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 35,000 COP; **Double**, air, 40,000 COP. Prices almost double during Semana Santa, Festival del Mar, and from Dec. 20th - Jan. 15th.

Mid-Range

Casa Aluna, Calle 21 No. 5-72, Centro Histórico (035-432-4916 info@alunahotel.com). Casa Aluna has gained a reputation as the best place to stay in Santa Marta for a guest house experience. The owner is an Irish expat who has lived in the Santa Marta area for many years. An architect by trade, he designed his own casa to cater to the needs of travelers who want peace, quiet and outstanding service. The rooms are very comfortable and perfect for the mature traveler. Casa Aluna has a Café for a bite to eat and something to drink. Casa Aluna has a high occupancy rate due to its excellence and the type of stay it offers. If you would like to stay at Casa Aluna, it's recommended you reserve in advance. Casa Aluna is highly recommended for the traveler seeking a great night's sleep at a reasonable price. **Prices 2011: Low season - Dorm**, 4/6 beds, 20,000 COP; **Single/Double**, fan, bath, 60,000 COP; **Single/Double**, air, bath, 80,000 COP. **High season - Dorm**, 25,000 COP; **Single/Double**, fan, 80,000 COP; **Single/Double**, air, 100,000 COP. (www.alunahotel.com).

Hotel Nueva Granada, Calle 12 No. 3 - 17 (035-431-2568, informacion@hotelnuevagrana.com). Granada has a relaxing feeling with a large center area with

a small pool, an area for breakfast, a few hammocks, and a cafe bar. **Prices Aug. 2010: Single**, fan, 65,000 COP; **Single**, air, 80,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 95,000 COP **Double**, air, 110,000 COP. Prices nearly double during Semana Santa, Las Fiestas del Mar, and between December 20th - January 20th.

(www.hotelnuevagrana.com).

RESTAURANTS

Santa Marta has an amazing choice of restaurants that gets better by the month. The following restaurants were recommended by many locals and expats. There are also many other excellent restaurants that are not listed that are waiting to be discovered. Food carts can be found down by the beach and also around the corner by the police station.

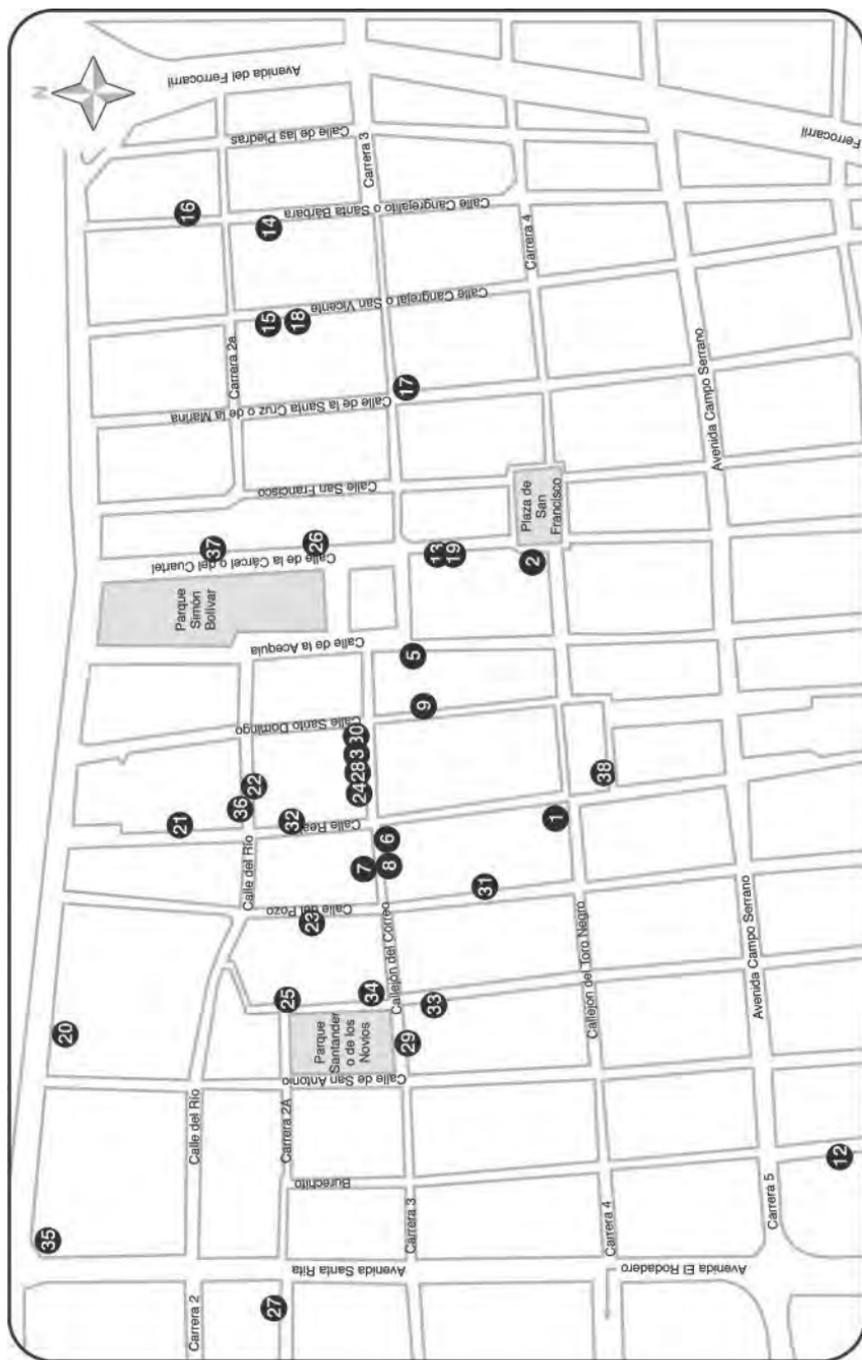
Budget

Lulo Café + Bar de Jugo, Cra 3 #16-34 Callejon del Correo, Centro Historico (035-423-2725, lulocafebar@gmail.com, **Mon. - Sat.**, 8:00 AM - 11:00 PM). **Lulo Café + Bar de Jugo is an extremely good choice for breakfast, lunch, juice and smoothies.** Lulo's is owned by a very friendly American and a Colombian. It is always filled with repeat customers, from locals to travelers. Coupled with WiFi, Lulo Café + Bar de Jugo is a highly recommended visit while visiting Santa Marta. Wrap Desayuno (Eggs, tomato, ham, cheese, cebolla), 7,000 COP. (www.lulocafebar.com).

Pacifico-Li, Calle 22 and Carrea 4. This is a simple Chinese restaurant with huge portions. You can split one order with a friend or take home the leftovers. Chicken fried rice and a coke, 11,000 COP.

Tropical Chicken, Calle 23 and Carrera 5. Tropical Chicken is a great place for all types of chicken.

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SERVICES

- 1. TOURISM OFFICE
- 2. BBVA
- 3. INTERNET
- 4. YE-YE ELECTRIC
- 5. AVIATUR
- 6. COPA
- 7. DEPRESA (Shipping)
- 8. AIRES
- 9. PAQUELERO
- 10. PAQUELERO

HOTELS

- 11. HOSTEL Noctámbulo
- 12. ALUNA CASA
- 13. LA BRISA LOCA
- 14. CASA FAMILIAR
- 15. LAS VEGAS
- 16. MIRAMAR
- 17. NUEVO GRANADA
- 18. HOTEL SABOY

RESTAURANTS

- 19. AQUIVE AGUA
- 20. BEN and JOSEPS
- 21. CAFÉ DEL MAR
- 22. CREPES EXPRESSO
- 23. LA TASCACÁ
- 24. LULO CAFÉ + Bar de Jugo
- 25. DONDE CONCHIA
- 26. JUAN VALDEZ
- 27. FOOD CARIS
- 28. SOL A SAZÓN
- 29. OUSO

NIGHTLIFE

- 30. BAUHAUS
- 31. CRABS
- 32. LA PUERRA
- 33. DISTRICT
- 34. PARQUE DE NOVIOS

HISTORICAL

- 35. HISTORY
- 36. ART
- 37. GOLD
- 38. CATHEDRAL

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Mid-Range/Expensive

Aguave Azul, Calle 14 No. 3-58 (Cel - 318-598-1858). Aguave Azul is next door to La Brias Loca. This amazing Mexican restaurant serving large portions and well-priced has quickly become a Santa Marta favorite for both travelers and locals. The lunch menu is very generous with portions and prices are low. The quesadilla plate is highly recommended. Aguave holds a happy hour every night from 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM with 2 for 1 drinks (normally mojitos, Cuba libres, or tequila sunrises). The same owners of Aguave Azul have **another restaurant on the Parque de los Novios, called Ouzo** that serves brick-oven pizza, seafood and other dishes that have received rave reviews from both travelers and locals.

Ben and Josep's, Cra. 1ra No. 18-67 (Cell - 317-280-5039). Ben and Josep's is known for its excellent steaks. Across from the beach, this restaurant draws a large local crowd. **Open Mon. - Sat. 4:00 PM - 1:00 AM.**

Café del Mar, Calle 17 between 1 cra. and 2 cra. (035-423-0423). Cafe del Mar is a very charming restaurant and cocktail bar owned by two Italians. With multiple areas to enjoy your food and drinks it is a very relaxing place to dine. The food is excellent and the drinks are big and pack a punch. Cafe del Mar has great service and an evening of dining and/or drinking is highly recommended. **Open** from 5:00 PM to 1:00 AM or up to 3:00 AM if there are late night customers.

Inca-Inca, CRA 3 N 18-26 (035-431-3454). This is a well decorated restaurant that comes highly recommended by locals. Inca-Inca serves Colombian and international cuisine.

El Santo, Calle 21, 2A-52 (035-423-6170). El Santo is a very popular Argentinean restaurant that serves steaks, pasta and pizza.

La Tasaca (Tapas Bar) Calle 18 2-72 Centro Historico (035-423-4283). This restaurant is owned by a Spaniard and serves tapas in a cozy atmosphere. This restaurant has received great reviews from locals.

Donde Concha, Calle 19 No 2-17 (035-421-4663). Donde Concha is an upscale seafood restaurant which has received rave reviews. Donde Concha is a nicely decorated restaurant with outdoor seating right by a park.

NIGHTLIFE

Santa Marta has a great choice of different types of nightlife. Clubs, bars, discos, Café bars, and other choices are available. There are numerous places to drink around the Parque de Novias. The following are highlights, but it's wise to explore, as there are many more options in Santa Marta.

Bauhaus, Callejon de la Corre con Calle 16 esquina (Cell - 310-631-3382). Bauhaus is a beautiful new club on the Santa Marta scene. The scenery behind the bar is hard to describe, you must see it for yourself.

Crabs, Calle 18 No. 3-69 Calle del Pozo (035-421-9585). Crabs has become a very popular bar in Santa Marta. Crabs moved from Bogotá four years ago and has built a solid reputation as a great place to drink in Santa Marta. It is a rock and roll bar that plays classic rock and similar music. Expect a big crowd on Fridays and Saturdays.

Distrito is a popular club with university students and others. Distrito is nicely decorated and has a good vibe. If you want to sit down, you better call ahead as this places fills up quick.

La Puerta, Calle 17 No. 2-29 (www.ohlalalapuerta.com). La Puerta is a legendary bar in Santa Marta for good reasons. From the minute you walk in, an extremely positive energy takes hold of you. All types of music are played with very happy and excited Colombians enjoying the night out. It's hard to describe, but it has multiple areas where large groups socialize, dance, and blow off steam from a long week of work or studying. Mixed in are foreigners who live in or are visiting Santa Marta.

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Around the Parque de Novios there are several outdoor bars and clubs. This is a very lively area on the weekends.

DEPARTING SANTA MARTA

Santa Marta or Barranquilla door to door service. This service picks you up at your location and takes you directly to where you want to go. Santa Marta to Cartagena, 43,000 COP. Santa Marta to Barranquilla, 19,000 COP. Contact Marsol in Santa Marta, 035-421-2121/431-6139. (www.marsolsa.com).

Buses, ALWAYS try to negotiate during the low season.

Below estimated time are to destinations from Santa Marta on bus.

DESTINATION	HOURS OF TRAVEL
Barranquilla	1 ½ hours
Bogotá	18 hours
Cartagena	3 ½ hours
Riohacha	2 ½ hours
Valledupar	4 hours

EL RODADERO

A few short minutes outside of Santa Marta sits El Rodadero. This area is a very popular vacation spot with Colombians. Families and friends come to El Rodadero in masses during the high season. It's a beach town where everything can be found close by. Restaurants, hotels, clubs, bars and stores are all within a short walking distance. Although it is not a very popular destination with foreigners, certain foreign travelers do like to visit this area anyway. There are two budget options for backpackers.

GETTING TO EL RODADERO

The best way to get to El Rodadero is from Santa Marta by taxi, which costs around 7,000 COP - 8,000 COP.

NAVIGATION

It's almost impossible to get lost in El Rodadero. There is a map included just in case the impossible happens.

EL RODADERO IS FOR WHO?

El Rodadero is a place for people who like to be in an area where everything is very close. A place for people who like to be on the beach with large amounts of other people. El Rodadero is more of a family and friend-oriented vacation spot for Colombians. El Rodadero is not a good place for single travelers due to the above reasons.

TIPS

Prices skyrocket during the high season. If you come during the off-season you can get a great place by the beach. The rental apartment listed in the private rental section is a great place to stay during the off-season.

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LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Everything in El Rodadero is at a walking distance. If you feel lazy, you can take a horse carriage or taxi.

ACTIVITIES

El Rodadero is all about going to the beach, eating, drinking, being with friends and not worrying about transportation. There is a beach called Playa Blanca which you can access with a ten-minute boat ride which many visitors enjoy. There is also an aquarium in the area. Both of these activities can be arranged in El Rodadero with vendors in the street or in your hotel.

ACCOMODATIONS

The following is a summarized list of what is available in Rodadero. There are many more higher priced hotels available. It's easy to find an apartment for a few days just by walking in the street where you'll find people with signs that advertise short-term rentals.

Budget

Camping Cantamar, Calle 21 No. 1-16, (Cell - 316-273-3081). Camping Cantamar is your solution for low-cost housing in El Rodadero. It's a pleasant, peaceful camping facility with bathrooms and showers. There is a beach close to the campground, but you will want to walk a few blocks to a nicer beach, as there is a somewhat polluted river that empties into the sea near the campground's beach. **Prices Aug. 2010: With your own tent** - 10,000 COP low season; **High Season**, 15,000 COP, **if you need a tent** it's 2,000 COP more per person.

Hostal Tima Uraka, Calle 18 No. 2-59, (035-422-8433, WiFi, mitch9918@hotmail.com). This hostel is a perfect budget option in El Rodadero. It is a long walking distance from where the action is, but it has a very relaxing and

appealing feeling. The owner is very friendly and can direct you where to play beach soccer and volleyball. **Prices Aug. 2010: Dorm**, 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, High Season, 35,000 COP; **Double**, 40,000 COP; **Double**, High Season, 70,000 COP.

Expensive

Hotel La Sierra, Cra. 1 No. 9-47 (035-422-7960/035-422-7197,WiFi, reservas@hotelasierra.com). Hotel La Sierra is a great option. It's right on the main street and fronting the beach. **Low Season - Standard Room, Double**, 212,000 COP, 90,000 COP additional person. **High Season - Standard Room** (Dec 22- Jan 23, Semana Santa) **Double**, 298,000 COP, 138,000 COP additional person. (www.hotelasierra.com).

PRIVATE RENTAL

There are two apartments for rent in El Rodadero. One of the apartments is directly on the beach. The owner also has a house for rent on the edge of Tayrona Park and a property with a pool for rent in Taganga. Contact Frank, (English), Cell - 331-665-8064, franktayrona@hotmail.com.

RESTAURANTS

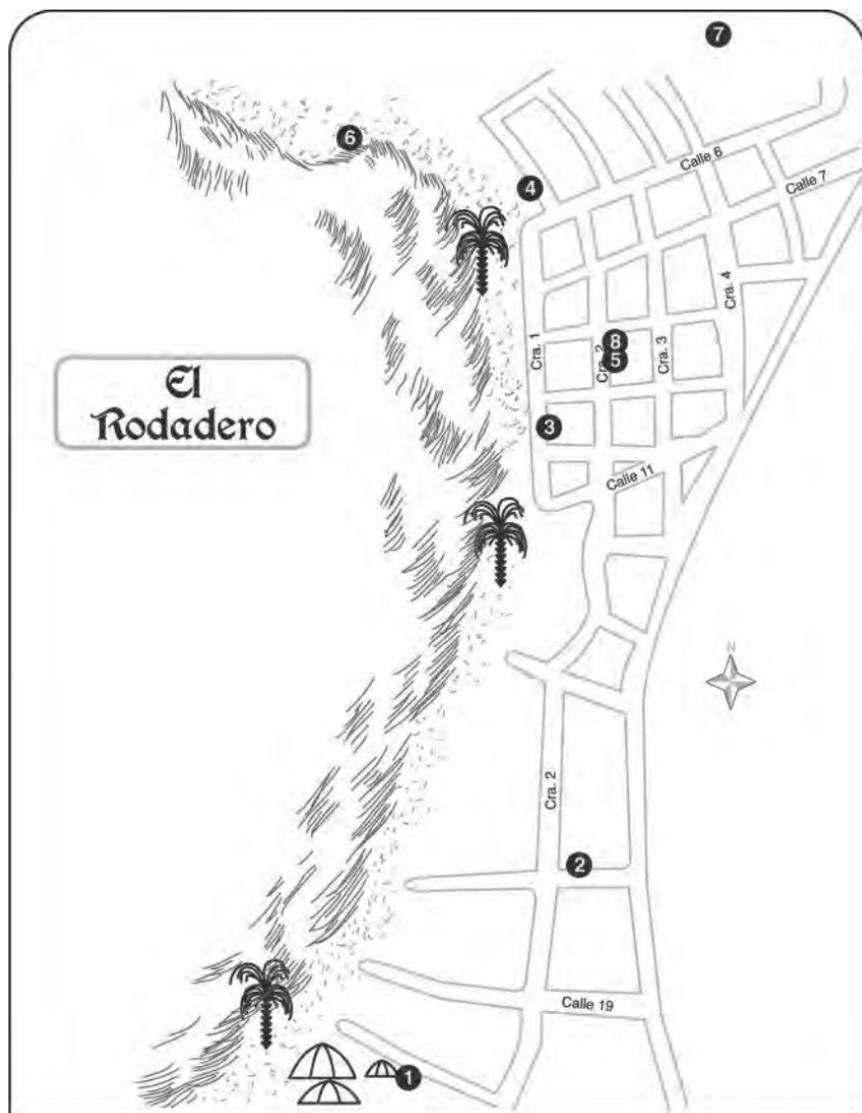
There is a wide selection of restaurants in El Rodadero. They are found all over the first three carreras.

Budget

Delicias Suiza, Cra. 2 No. 7-63 (035-422-7073). Delicias Suiza serves Colombian food that is good and quick. A great budget choice in El Rodadero.

Expensive

Burukuku, This restaurant sits up on a hill, on the far right side of El Rodadero, facing the beach. It was a little too expensive for this writer, but the word is this place has great steaks. With a million dollar view, this restaurant has the perfect ambience for a great night out.



Hotels

1. CAMPING CANTAMAR
2. HOSTAL TIMA URACA
3. HOTEL LA SIERRA
4. PRIVATE RENTALS

RESTAURANTS

5. DELICIAS SUIZA
6. BURUKUKU

Nightlife

7. LA ESCOLLERA
8. SAN ALJEJO DISCO BAR

NIGHTLIFE

There are many places to drink and party in El Rodadero. During the high season the clubs get very crowded. Bring your wallet and make sure it's stuffed with plenty of cash.

La Escollera, Cra 4 calle 5 No 4-107 - Isla de Rodadero (035-422-9590). El Rodadero's higher end club is on a small island. The cover charge varies depending on the event.

San Alejo Disco Bar, Kra- 2 # 7-36. San Alejo is a nicely decorated disco that fills up on the weekends.

DEPARTING EL RODADERO

You need to make your back to Santa Marta for connections to other cities. Santa Marta is a five-minute ride away.

MINCA

Minca is a gorgeous, small mountain town about 45 minutes from Santa Marta. Minca is the perfect vacation getaway if you're looking for a change of climate and a chance to commune with a natural mountain setting. There are many hiking opportunities throughout the area. Minca is also a birdwatchers' paradise as over 300 species live in the area. Minca should be considered as a destination if you're looking for a quiet and a unique destination. Budget accommodations can be found in the area. Minca is a highly recommended destination to visit if you like to hike and spend time in the mountains.

GETTING TO MINCA

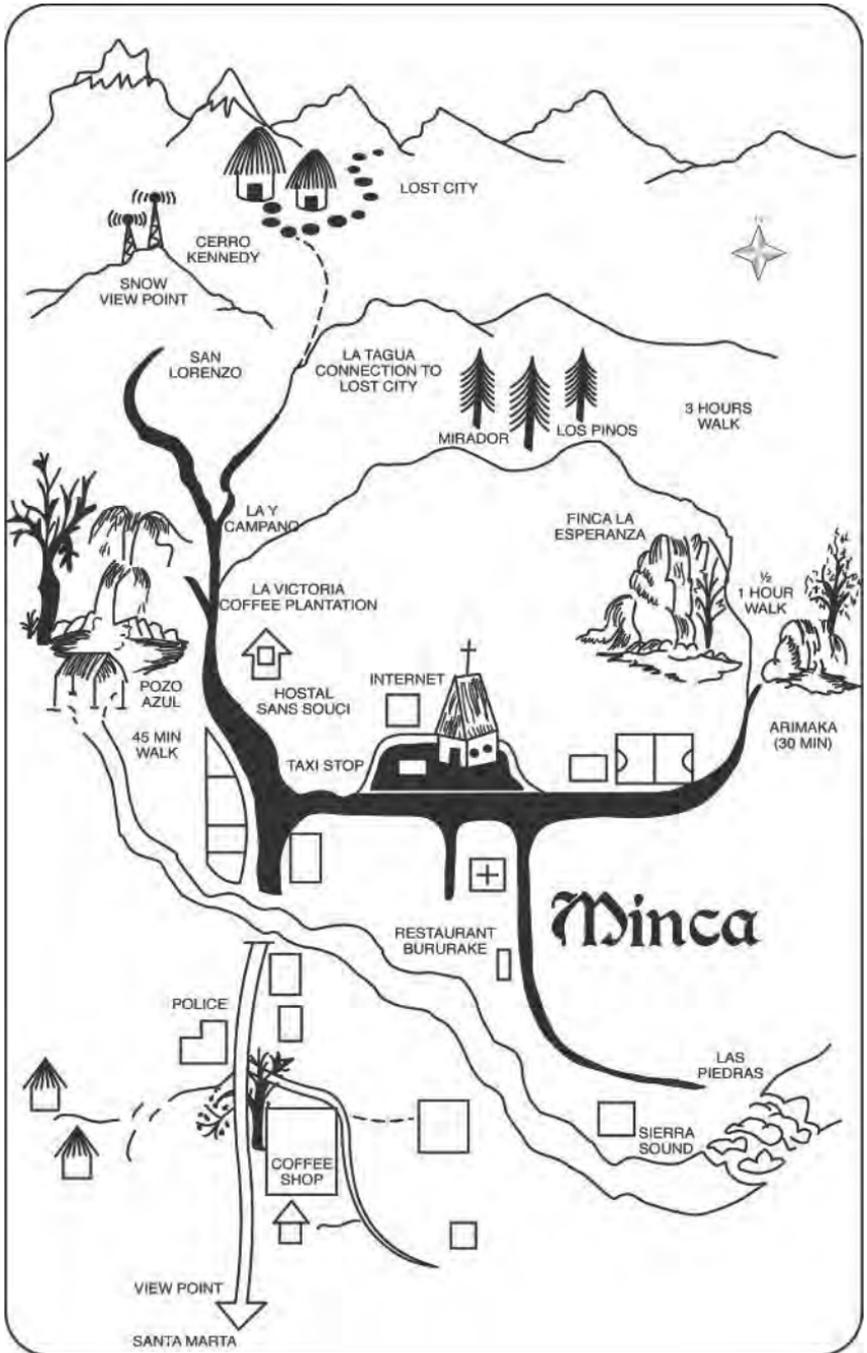
From Santa Marta you need to catch a colectivo taxi at Calle 11 with Carrera 13, 7,000 COP.

NAVIGATION

The town of Minca is very easy to understand. Our map is a custom remake of a map that was donated by Lizette from Tienda Café. Upon arrival into Minca it's important to stop at Tienda Café and speak with Lizette for directions and information. She also facilitates rentals for many local cabins and rental bikes.

CLIMATE

There is a noticeable change of climate from Santa Marta. Minca is a cool mountain town with nights that can very chilly. It's wise to bring a sweatshirt and pants when visiting.



MINCA IS FOR WHO?

Minca is for those who love nature and the mountains. Minca could be a romantic destination for couples. Minca is not a place to meet other travelers, but more of a place for solitude and reflection for single travelers.

TIPS

Make sure you bring warm clothes and your hiking boots. Bring your binoculars if you're a birdwatcher.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Your feet should do most of the work, moto-taxis are available to get you up to Sans Soui.

BIRDWATCHING

Among the many terrific birdwatching opportunities in Minca is a reserve above Minca called the ProAves Nature Reserve at El Dorado. (www.ecoturs.org).

ACTIVITIES

Hiking is the main activity in Minca. There is also a river to swim in, but it can get quite cold.

Pozo Azul is a 45 or so minute hike from the coffee shop to a waterfall and swimming holes. It's reported to be a beautiful hike, which is better to do on the weekdays when there are few visitors.

La Victoria Coffee Plantation is a private coffee farm above Minca. It covers 1000 hectares and was founded by an Englishman in the 1880s. The farm still

uses much of the original equipment from back in the old days. There is a man who gives free tours, but he is not always on the premises. You can take a moto taxi to the farm for 5,000 COP from the town or go on a nice hike for an undetermined distance. Please ask Lizette at the Tienda Café or inquire at San Souci for more information.

Arimaka is a sacred indigenous waterfall where you can practice hydrotherapy by using the mud to scrub yourself. There is a 2,000 COP entrance fee. It's a 30 minute walk from the road.

La Cascadas (Finca la Esperanza) is a 20m/60feet waterfall. It's a developed tourist site and is accessed by a hike. Ask Lizette for hiking times.

Horseback riding tours are available for **15,000 COP per hour** for a minimum of 2 hours. This is a great way to enjoy the beautiful natural setting without wasting much precious energy. Inquire at Tienda Café.

Simultaneous ocean and mountain view is possible by going to San Lorenzo by 4 x 4. There are cabins to stay there overnight. The next morning, it's a 45 minute journey to Cerro Kennedy where the view is rumored to be spectacular. This view is only possible if Mother Nature allows it. Once again inquire at Tienda Café.

ACCOMODATIONS

The choice for backpackers is San Souci's, which is a short walk up past the town. Sierra Sound is a great middle-range choice and Lizette can arrange stays at multiple cabin rentals in the area.

Budget

Hostal Sans Souci, is a ten minute walk up from the town, (Cell - 313-590-9213, sanssoucimica@yahoo.com). Sans Souci is the place to stay for backpackers.

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Great views, hammocks, and a pool can be found there. San Souci also comes equipped with a ping-pong table, soccer field and a badminton court. (What more do you need?). **Prices Aug. 2010: Dorm**, 3 beds, 15,000 COP; **Single** 20,000 COP; **Double** 30,000 COP; cabin, **Single**, 30,000 COP; **Double**, 50,000 COP, 10,000 COP additional each person for cabin; **Camping**, 10,000 COP. 5,000 COP discount if you assist in garden work, inquire with owner for more information.

Mid-Range

Sierra Sound, Check map (035-421-9993). Sierra Sound is a comfortable property that sits directly on a river. It's the perfect hotel to stay in Minca if you're looking for a relaxing setting with all the amenities. There is a restaurant on the property. The suite on the river is really nice if you're looking for something special. Rooms go for around 40,000 COP, please check for exact prices for the suite and various rooms at the hotel.

RESTAURANTS

There are a few decent restaurants in Minca. For Colombian food there are a few choices within the town. There is also a simple pizza place by the church. Minca is perfect for walking around and finding the restaurant that is right for you. Notable restaurants are listed below.

Sierra Sound has a restaurant that serves Italian food and breakfast.

Tienda Café serves breakfast and juices. The perfect place to load up on eggs, bread and mora juice before hiking.

Bururaka is known for being the best restaurant in Minca. Locals claim the Argentinean steak is amazing. The food is very creative and a meal will set you back between 20,000 COP - 30,000 COP, with desert. Many locals raved about this restaurant. Open only later during the week and the weekends.

El Mox Mucia is a little restaurant around the corner from Tienda Café. Its serves pasta and crepes for around 15,000 COP.

NIGHTLIFE

Nightlife in Minca is more about enjoying the cool night air and the solitude. If you want to party, you need to get creative.

DEPARTING MINCA

When departing Minca, you must return back to Santa Marta by the same way you came.

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PARQUE TAYRONA

Just 30 minutes east of Santa Marta sits one of Colombia's destinations that is most visited by foreigners. Parque Tayrona is an amazing area of jungle and beach. Parque Tayrona possesses spectacular beaches that get better around every corner. Parque Tayrona can only be accessed by a beautiful adventurous hike or by boat for the lazy ones. Many accommodations can be found throughout the park from budget to very expensive. Parque Tayrona can be divided into eastern and western sections. The eastern side is the more tourist visited area with more accommodations and accessibility. The western side is more of an adventure to reach and with few amenities. **If you like the outdoors and the beach, Parque Tayrona MUST be visited on your Colombian vacation.**

GETTING TO PARQUE TAYRONA

From Taganga

Boat

Go down to the beach and go to the second or third hut on the left if you're facing the beach. There are a few men running boats for tourists. The cost should be in the neighborhood of 35,000 COP. This is each way and you must pay the park entry fee upon arrival.

Shuttle

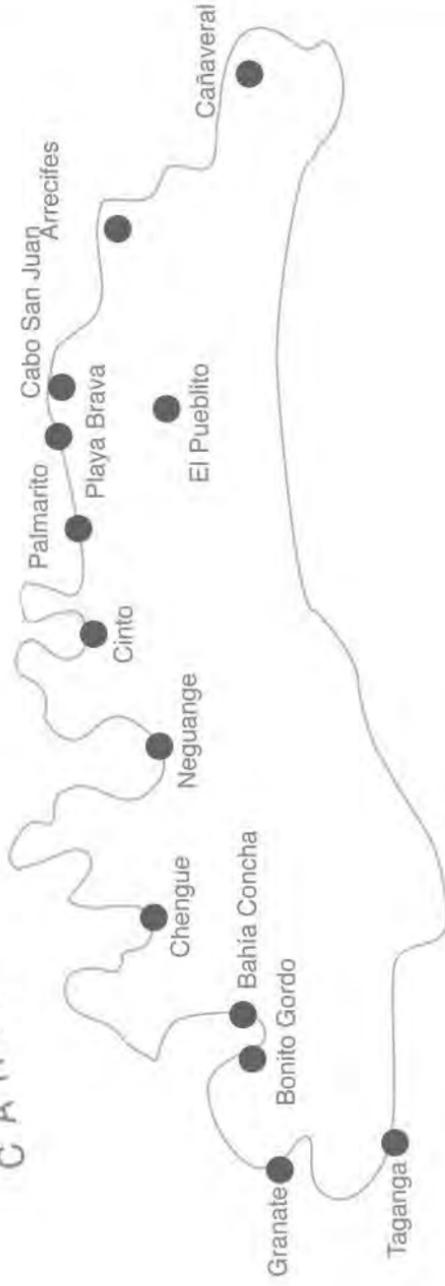
Jose Cadena runs a shuttle that picks up travelers at their hostels and takes them to Tayrona every day for 15,000 COP, contact Jose or ask at your hostel for help, 310-721-8777.

Taxi

Get a small group and pay in the neighborhood of 60,000 COP for four people.

Tayrona Park

CARIBBEAN SEA



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From Santa Marta

Bus

Catch a bus at the market at Calle 11 and Carrera 11, 4,000 COP.

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

By law you need to have received the yellow fever vaccination before entering Parque Tayrona. It may or may not be checked, but if there is a law, there is a reason. It's better for your long-term health to have taken this precaution.

WARNING

You will be searched. **DO NOT bring drugs into Parque Tayrona.** You may be subject to arrest. Do not bring in any alcohol either. It will be confiscated.

PARK ENTRY FEES

Foreigners - 37,000 COP

EASTERN TAYRONA

From the Zaira Gate

After you have been searched, you will need to pay the fee to enter the park. When you enter the park, you will need to ride on a shuttle that will take you up close to the trails. You may have to wait for the shuttle. You could walk, but this would be like adding a pre-hike to your hike, so why kill yourself.

There are different sections of the park, but the most popular ones are easily the Cabo San Juan and Arrecifes areas. The trail head starts in the Canaveral section.

Canaveral

Parque Tayrona's concessions are operated by Aviatur. In Canaveral, Aviatur operates the Eco-Habs at Tayrona. The Eco-Habs are high-end rooms in the form of huts with all the bells and whistles. There are many different price ranges and packages. You can expect to pay a minimum of 450,000 COP for one night at the Eco-Habs. A nice restaurant and spa are two of the other benefits offered here. Aviatur's website is very descriptive about their service in English. (www.concesionesparquesnaturales.com). There is a campground around the corner, but it's very close to the horse stable, which is not a good thing.

Arrecifes

From Canaveral there is a trail that will take you to areas where people with less of a budget feel more at home. On a nice sunny day the trail will take 45 minutes or so to get to Arrecifes. When it rains, the trail turns into a mud pit and it can make it quite challenging. There are donkeys available to make it easier to travel. Inquire at the stables about acquiring a ride. When you're about 35 minutes or so on to the trail you will come to a campground which could be an option for your stay.

Camping Don Pedro charges 10,000 COP per person for hammocks, inquire for prices if you have a tent. They have a restaurant which charges 12,000 COP for chicken and meat meals. You can get breakfast for 6,000 COP and a beer for 3,000 COP. It's a 20 minute walk to the closest beach where you can swim.

Five minutes past Camping Don Pedro you will come to a point where a few more accommodation options present themselves.

Yuluka at Arrecifes, This campground is operated by Aviatur. They have **luxury cabins** for rent for **337,000 COP** in the low season and **462,000 COP** in the **high season**, for up to five people (August 2010 prices). They have **hammocks available** for **17,000 COP**. This hammock area is more comfortable than the other campgrounds. If you plan on staying in a hammock in the Arrecifes area

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this may be your best option. You can also camp here for **11,500 COP**, in the low season; 15,500 COP in the high season, but you must provide **your own tent**.

Finca El Paraíso is around the corner and provides hammocks and **camping space**. There is also a restaurant which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There is a small store with items for higher than normal prices. Inquire at Finca El Paraíso for prices.

A campground with an unknown name is directly next to Finca El Paraíso. If you're facing the beach it's to the left. **Low season - hammock**, 15,000 COP with a net; own tent, 10,000 COP per person; their tent, 30,000 COP single, 50,000 COP double; Prices are slightly higher for the **high season**. This campground has breakfast for 7,000 COP and dinner from 15,000 COP - 40,000 COP.

WARNING

Do not swim at the beaches at Arrecifes. They are very **DANGEROUS!!!** There is a very strong current and swimmers have drowned in this area in the recent past. If you plan on staying at Arrecifes you must walk at least 15 minutes to a swimmable beach.

To leave Arrecifes to go towards Cabo San Juan you must walk on the beach. Face the beach and take a left. After five minutes or so, you will see a house with a sign advertising as a panaderia. This house serves **the best chocolate ball of dough in the universe**. You must stop and buy two for your trip. They cost 2,000 COP or however much the guy thinks he can get from you.

After you buy your **chocolate greatness**, you should be back on the trail heading towards Cabo San Juan. You will start to pass by some amazing beaches and start to feel very happy about your decision to make this effort to reach your destination. 45 minutes past Arrecifes, you will reach your final destination, Cabo San Juan.

Cabo San Juan

Camping Cabo San Juan is situated on a stunning beach that is just one of the many gorgeous beaches in the area. It's a very popular area for Colombians and foreigners. It can get very crowded during holidays and the weekends. It has a party atmosphere and those seeking more peace should think about remaining at Arrecifes. **BUT the beaches are amazing and you can jump right in them.** They are safe and you don't have to worry about hiking to go swimming. There is a restaurant which has way too many customers, so you may have to easily wait an hour or more for food. There is also a wood structure on some rocks overlooking the water. There are hammocks and a few rooms for rent in the structure. There is no bathroom, so don't drink too much if you sleep up here. **Prices August 2010: Hammocks**, 20,000 COP - 25,000 COP; **Cabin**, 50,000 COP, Per person; **Own tent**, 15,000 COP; Their tent 25,000 COP. **Breakfast** - 9,000 COP, spaghetti 7,000 COP, chicken 12,000 COP - 18,000 COP.

WESTERN TAYRONA

During the rainy season, this area is very difficult to navigate. If you wish to discover these destinations, it's advised you visit with Expotur in Taganga or with another local tourism professional.

Teyumakke is a remote area by a beach called Playa Bravo. There is a campground that has hammocks and tents. You can reach Teyumakke by a trail that starts in Cabo.

Bahia Concha and Playa Neguanje can be accessed by a road. There are reportedly a few beaches worth visiting there.

Bahia Cinto has a beach nearby called Playa Cristal. It's reported to be beautiful and unspoiled of the crowds that are found in the Eastern part of Tayrona. You can arrange to visit by boat. Enquire with the boatmen in Taganga, they can drop you off in the morning and pick you up on the way back from Cabo. It may cost a

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little more, but I met a party of four travelers that loved this beach and found it worth the cost.

Pueblito is a small ancient indigenous village that can be accessed from Cabo San Juan. Inquire at the Cabo San Juan campground for the directions to Pueblito.

GUEST WRITER DR. T

Explore Travel Guides history writer Dr. T has added his experiences with Pueblito.

The stone path up to Pueblito and the foundations for the wood huts were constructed centuries before the arrival of the Spanish. This hike is only about an hour, but it is strenuous. Begin the hike early in the morning to avoid direct sun. Make sure that you bring lots of liquids, since there is no guarantee that you can buy anything once you arrive. The site has been recently begun to be reinhabited by the Arhuacos. Pueblito looks like a smaller version of Ciudad Perdida, and well worth the hike to get a sense of the region before colonization. You may encounter chameleons and monkeys on the path.

DEPARTING TAYRONA

You need to make your way back to the main road to catch a bus. You can also arrange to take the boat back to Taganga from Cabo San Juan.

TAGANGA

Taganga is a small fishing village over a hill nearly just a few minutes from Santa Marta. Taganga is a place that a traveler either loves or hates, there are few who are in between. Its streets are dusty and there is a general vibe of a slight disorder is in the air. It's a town that reduces you to the point of only wanting to eat, drink, sleep, party, read a book and sit in a hammock. Between these activities, you can pencil in a killer hike, the beach, diving, Spanish classes, and treks.

GETTING TO TAGANGA

You need to pass through Santa Marta to get to Taganga. **Taxi**, 7,000 COP day/8,000 COP after 6:00 PM; **Bus**, approx. 1,300 COP. Catch on Ave. La Quinta.

NAVIGATION

Taganga is easy to navigate. There is a main beach block where most of the action takes place. Hostels and hotels are spread out all over Taganga. If you're in Taganga for a long period of time its best to familiarize yourself with the map and take a self-tour around the town to maximize your stay.

INFORMATION

Upon entering town there is an information office for basic orientation. A young Colombiana has literature and information about local hostels, hotels, tours, activities, and other tourist related information. When you first enter Taganga look for the information office a little past the police station, there is a white sign and her area is inside the front of a house.

TAGANGA IS FOR WHO?

It's hard to pinpoint exactly who will love and who will dislike Taganga. People who are very active will like Taganga. People who are very lazy will also like it. It's impossible to say who Taganga is best suited for. It's just a place you have to experience. Hippies seem to love Taganga and people who are very social and like to party love it as well.

WARNING

It is no secret in Colombia that drugs are a major part of Taganga's culture. Taganga may be the only place in Colombia where foreigners are searched without probable cause. The police have this right in order to combat the proliferation of drugs and weapons. Cooperate with the police at all times. If you're caught with drugs, you must suffer the consequences. You may face jail time and deportation.

TIPS

In Taganga, your choice of accommodations is critical. You need to decide if you want to be close to the beach or higher up on a small hill. For some people, the beach is not a big deal and they like the confines of their hostel. It may be a good idea to stay in a hostel for only one night and check out others, as there are so many choices. At the time of this writing, there were over 40 hostels of different types.

GO on the hike to Playa Grande, but then turn around; there is not much to see or do at the destination. It's an amazing hike that is easy to miss. The views are spectacular.

Try to stay on a weekend. The nightlife is extremely lively. Find an activity and make the stay more enjoyable. Go to the highly recommended restaurants; they are worth it.

TIME

Since people have such different reactions to Taganga, this is impossible to address. It's not uncommon for people to stay for 3 months or until their visa time limit expires.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Everyone walks everywhere.

BASIC SERVICES

ATM

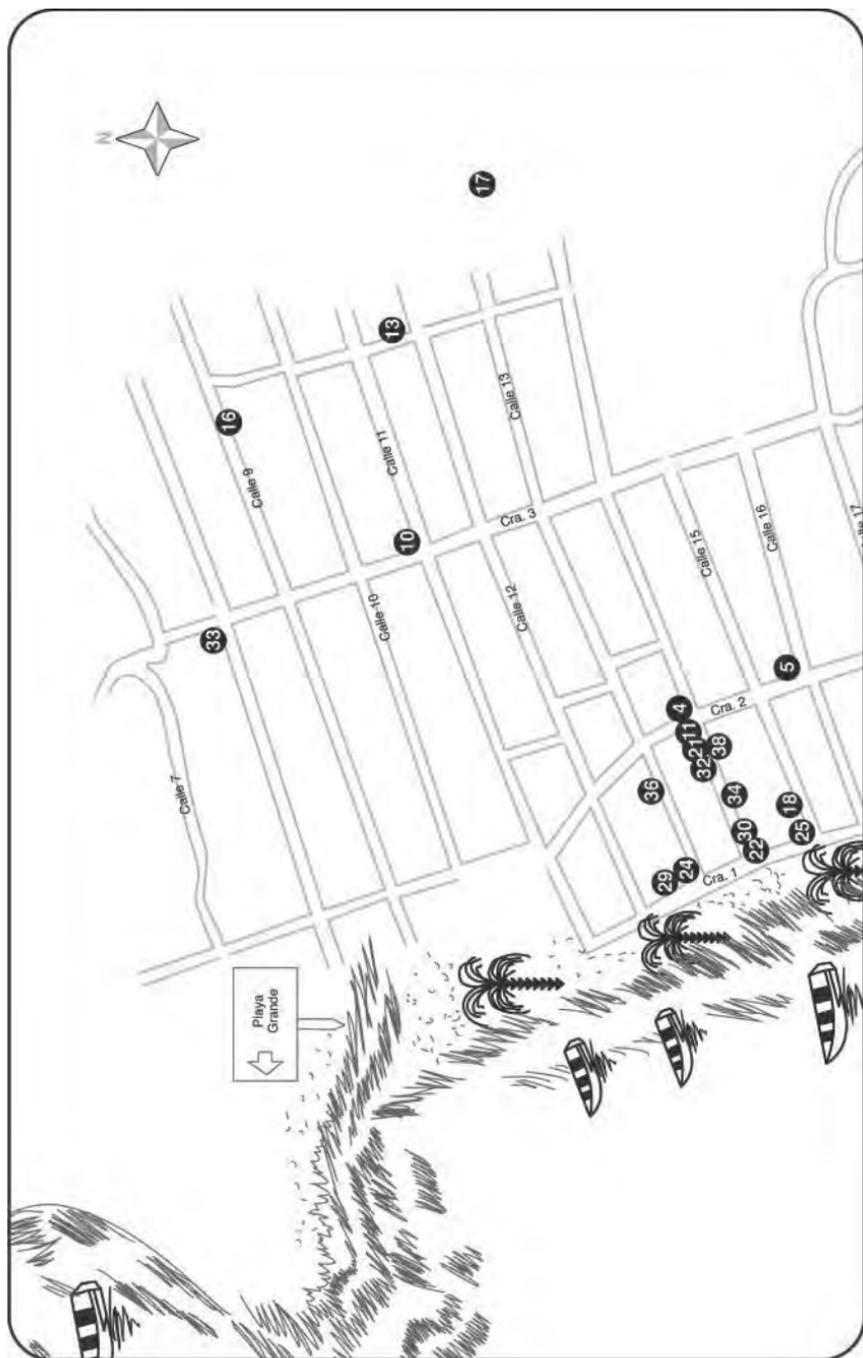
There is only one ATM in Taganga. This machine has been known to run out of cash during busy times.

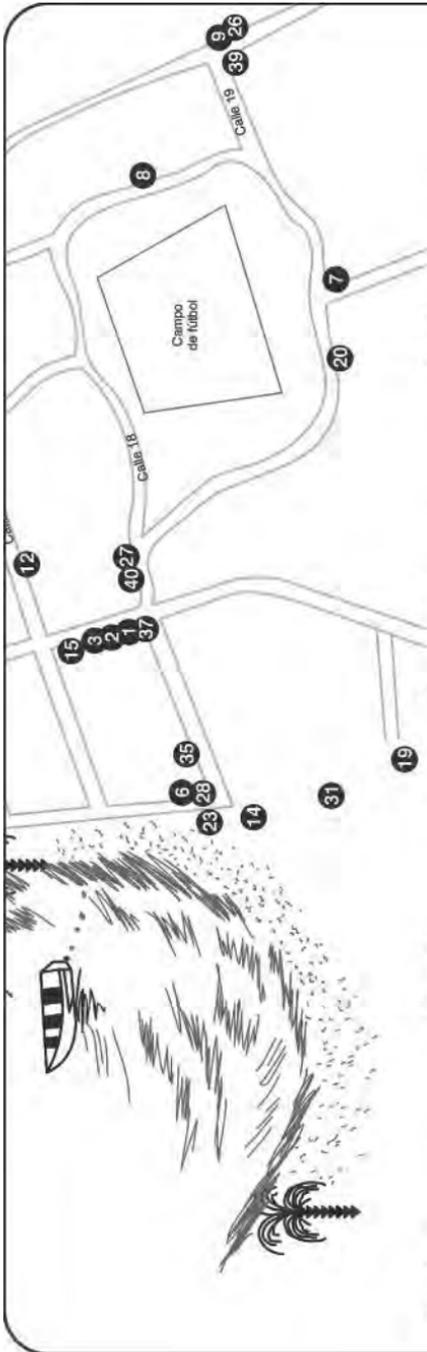
Internet

There are several internet cafes in Taganga. Two are identified on the map, and Mojitos restaurant and bar has an internet cafe.

Laundry

Ask your hostel about laundry services. The point of information house has a laundry service.





SERVICES

1. ATM
2. POLICE
3. Point of Info
4. ACADEMIA LATINA
5. INTERNET
6. INTERNET
7. BOOK STORE
8. BAYVIEW
9. Casa de Felipe
10. Casa Divanga
11. Casa Holanda
12. Casa Oso Perezoso
13. HOTEL DIVANGA
14. La Ballena
15. PÉLIKAN
16. TORTUCA
17. HOSTAL CASA JAMAICA
18. SWENS
19. BLUE TECHOS
20. Mr. Wilson's

HOTELS

21. Casa Holanda
22. EXTREME
23. FAST FOOD CART
24. CAFE BONSAI
25. EL REEF
26. RESTAURANTE de PATRICK
27. POMODORO
28. La Crepería
29. Super Pollo
30. SENSATIONS
31. Mirador
32. Mojitos
33. GARAJES
34. GREEN COCKTAIL

RESTAURANTS

35. AQUANTIS
36. Calipso
37. Poseidon
38. Magic Tour
39. Jurcol
40. Exportur

Guides

Taganga

SPANISH CLASSES

Academia Latina

Academia Latina is operated by the owner of Casa Holanda. The instructors are local Colombian teachers. The registration fee includes: coffee or tea during classes, a full grammar list, a complete tense (6 to choose from), notebook and pen. A part of the fee is donated to local charities. For more information please take a look at Academia's Latina's website. (www.colombiaspanish.com).

MASSAGE

Just past the pizza place on the way to Casa de Felipe's is a house with a sign for massages. Its 30,000 COP for a half-hour, but you can negotiate for 40,000 COP for an hour. This is still a lot of pesos for this type of massage operation in Colombia, but the masseuse is good. If you're exhausted from your trek or your body needs help, this may be perfect for you.

CAMPING

Mr. Wilson's Guest House is behind the soccer field, (035-421-9265). This barber shop and house has camping in its yard. It's not a natural setting, it's just a simple place to pitch a tent. For 5,000 COP for one person and 10,000 COP for two people, it's most likely the most economical accommodation option in Taganga. Double the price during the high season.

BOOK STORE

There is a book exchange named Litera-Te behind the soccer field. There is a fair sized collection of English books. There is also a large selection of used guidebooks from all over Latin America. There are some great bargains to discover. Maybe one day an Explore Travel Guides Colombia will make the

shelf. There is an apartment rental in the back, inquire with the owner of Litera-Te.

KAYAK RENTAL

Taganga Extreme, Cra. 1ra. No. 14 (035-421-9350). Taganga Extreme rents kayaks by the hour. They also serve salads, smoothies and other food items.

HIKE

There is a great hike from Taganga to Playa Grande. Playa Grande is nothing special, but the hike is well worth the energy spent. It offers great views of the ocean and Taganga. Use our nifty map for directions. It's a short hike for thirty minutes each way.

DIVING

Taganga is known as an excellent place to learn how to dive. There are eight or so dive shops in Taganga. The following two are highlighted based on their reputations and creativity of programs. Open water course rates vary by company. Prices can range between 500,000 to 670,000 COP (**2010**).

Calipso Dive Center, Calle 12 No. 1-40 (035-421-9146, Cell- 315-684-3075, contact email on site). Calipso is the only company that offers dives inside Parque Tayrona. They participate in a garden coral rehabilitation program. Divers spend three days in Bahía Gairaca, where they dive and help with the corals. Calipso offers different courses for divers of various levels.

(www.calipsodivecenter.com.co/secpages/cursos.php).

Poseidon Dive Center, Calle 18 No. 1-69, (035-421-9224 info@poseidondivecenter.com). Poseidon is the most expensive of the dive shops, but it's also considered the most experienced. Poseidon has its own pool for training. Their

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open water courses are 670,000 COP (Aug. 2010). They have instructors who speak German, French, and English. They also have the biggest boat in Taganga and can go out the furthest. Poseidon offers a variety of courses from open water to master scuba dive. (www.poseidondivecenter.com).

TAGANGA DIVE SCHOOL 101

This interview was with Ashley (Australia) and JC (Malaysia) directly after they completed the PADI ocean water course.

Why Taganga? "We wanted the best dive company at the best price".

How Much? "580,000 COP (in August, 2010) the price included books. We realized that there were cheaper classes, but we felt most comfortable and there were only three students in the class."

Methods? "We learned step by step, it felt natural and nothing was rushed. The instructor was always there."

How Long? "The course is over a three day period. You must also study at least 3 or 4 hours a day, but it's not rocket science."

Stressful? "If you relax and enjoy the process your anxiety lowers."

Overall? "It was a great experience and I'm looking forward to diving more."

Day 1 - "Confined water dive, to gain an understanding of the gear."

Day 2 - "Two dives to 12 meters and other exercises."

Day 3 - "Two dives to 18 meters and final exam."

Payoffs

- "1. Eels, angel fish, barracudas, lobsters, and a turtle."
- "2. The ability to dive in Honduras and Belize in a few months."

CIUDAD PERDIDA/LOST CITY

The Lost City is a major attraction for backpackers and adventurers. This trek is for those who love the outdoors and who are intrigued by other cultures. People have reported that if you're in shape the trek is not a problem. If you are out of shape, you may be in a world of hurt. Horrible mosquito problems are normal; prepare to be attacked.

Lost City Five Day Trip

Here is a sample trip led by a major company. Times are approximate and the itinerary may change.

Day One

The trekkers are picked up at their hotels around nine in the morning. The ride up is on a smooth road for an hour. This turns into a bumpy road for an hour and half. The ride ends at the Lost City starting point, Machete Pelao. After a lunch to build up some energy, the group starts off at around one in the afternoon. After three and a half hours of walking, the first camp is reached. The sun is very hot and it's recommended that trekkers bring a liter and a half of water at the start of the adventure. To resupply, water is found in pipes that is purified with tablets. The evening's accommodations include hammocks, mosquito nets and blankets. Make sure you bring a bathing suit as there are multiple opportunities to swim.

Day Two

The group leaves the camp at around seven in the morning. The trek goes through an indigenous town of about 50 houses. The people are shy, but friendly. This stop allows a chance for some photos and a brief glimpse into their culture. The group arrives at camp at around one or two in the afternoon. There

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will be time to visit waterfalls and pools. There may be a bed or a hammock; this will be a surprise.

Day Three

There are multiple river crossings on this day. Be prepared to get wet. One hour from the Lost City, the group stops for a night at an indigenous camp. You can visit waterfalls and pools to relax. There may be a chance to meet the village's Mamo, the chief who lives there.

Day Four

The group arrives at the Lost City and must go up 1,200 steps which takes an hour or so. Four hours are spent in the area with a guide. After the visit, the group heads back to camp two for the night.

Day Five

The group leaves at seven in the morning and heads back to the entrance by noon. The trip is over when everyone returns to Santa Marta or Taganga between 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM.

Trekkers should remember that porters carry almost everything, but your clothes, water and personal items. You should carry only the bare minimum to make the trek more enjoyable.

Lost City Operators

Taganga is the launch point for most Lost City expeditions. There are a few major companies and many smaller operators. You must visit each company and go with the one you feel can give you the best experience. When you spend five/six days with a company, you want an operator that is thoroughly prepared and professional. The way they handle their front office is a good sign. Many times when numbers are low the companies work together and consolidate into one group. Cost for the Lost City trek fluctuates, but plan around the 600,000 COP range (2013).

Expotur, Calle 18 no. 2A-07, (035-421-9493, info@expotur-eco.com). This tour operator guides travelers primarily to the Lost City. They offer other smaller tours, but this is their specialty. Expotur has received excellent reviews from multiple travelers and has gained a solid reputation for the Lost City trek. The office manager speaks good English to help assist in your planning. Expotur is socially active by donating part of each trek fee to Fundación Mariposas Amarillas. (www.expotur-eco.com).

Magic Tours, Calle 14 # 1B-50, (035-421-9472, magictour@hostaltrail.com). Magic Tours is a very popular company that leads Lost City treks. They have offices in Santa Marta and Taganga. They also lead tours to other north coast destinations.

Turcol Tours, Calle 19 N 5-40(035-421-2256, Turcol_24@hotmail.com). Turcol Tours is one of the other major companies that has been a major operator to the Lost City. They have offices in Santa Marta and Taganga.

LOST CITY VETERAN

MICHELE D., MALE, ITALY, 24, EXCHANGE STUDENT

Overall Lost City experience

"My experience was special, one of my favorite in Colombia. I really enjoyed the walk, it was gorgeous. My group was amazing and very festive. Our company was very organized and very professional, but very friendly at the same time. I felt very safe and was provided very comfortable hammocks and blankets. The city is really special and I liked it a lot. I learned about the area from the guides. Bring repellent."

On being an exchange student in Colombia

"I attend University at U. Distrital "Francisco José de Caldas". I'm here in Colombia for one year. I study mechanical and electrical engineering. I choose Colombia because of the mystique. I thought when I came to the university it

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would be easy, but I was wrong. It's very difficult, but I've learned a lot and recommend students study in Colombia. I love the party scene and the people are great."

ACCOMMODATIONS

Taganga has a very wide range of hostels and more are being added almost every week.

Budget

Hostal La Casa de Felipe (035-421-9101, WiFi, check map for location info@lacasadefelipe.com). Casa de Felipe is a masterpiece of a property that can't be duplicated. Hammocks, terraces, rooms of all sorts, beautiful grounds, and what many consider the best restaurant in the whole Santa Marta area. It's a trek from the beach, but this is not an issue as the whole operation screams success and there are happy faces all around. **Prices from April - Dec. 19th, 2013: Dorms**, 5/6 beds, 20,000 COP; **Dorms**, 3 beds, 25,000 COP; **Dorms**, 8 beds, 16,000 COP; **Singles**, with breakfast, 50,000 COP; **Double**, 50,000 -80,000 COP; **Apartment**, 2nd floor 2 people 130,000 COP with breakfast; **Apartment**, 1st floor, 2 people, 100,000 COP with breakfast, 20,000 COP more for every extra person in apartments. Contact for high season rates. (www.lacasadefelipe.com).

Bayview, Carrera 4 #17b-57 (035-421-9560, WiFi, Carrera 4 #17b-5, bayviewhostel@gmail.com). The Bayview is a very colorful hostel about 5 long blocks from the beach. It's owned and managed by a Colombian couple. This hostel has a good sized pool to cool down in and you could even turn a few laps. It has a great TV room where many people nurse their hangover away. Bayview has foosball and other table games to entertain travelers. There are a lot of nice extras as well. It has been reported to be a party hostel. Many travelers enjoy staying here. **Prices Aug. 2010: Dorm** 20,000 -25,000 COP; **Double**, twin beds, 44,000 COP; **Double**, one bed 50,000 COP.

Casa Divanga, Calle 11 No. 3-55 (WiFi, divanga@hotmail.com). Casa Divanga is a nice hostel owned by a French woman. If you stay here you get full use of the pool at Hotel Divanga, a few blocks up the street. Guests seemed very happy with their stay here. **Prices Aug. 2010: Dorm**, 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, with breakfast, 25,000 COP; **Single/Double**, 45,000 COP. (www.divanga.com).

Hotel Oso Perezoso, Calle 17 #2-36 (035-421-8041, WiFi, hotelosoperezoso@yahoo.com). Oso Perezoso is an interesting hostel that may live up to its name, "sloth". It has a fantastic rooftop view that allows for a relaxing meal. At Perezoso, movies are often shown on a large screen on their rooftop. Overall, a night at here appears to be a very good choice. **Prices Aug. 2010: Hammock with breakfast**, 14,000 COP; **Hammock without breakfast**, 10,000 COP; **Outdoor bed with covering**, single, 14,000 COP; **Outdoor bed with covering, double**, 28,000 COP; **Single**, first floor, 20,000 COP; **Single**, second floor, 26,000 COP, great view; **Twin room**, 36,000 COP; **Double bed**, first floor, 40,000 COP; **Double bed** second floor, 44,000 COP, **Great view**; **Triple room**, 60,000 COP or 44,000 COP for two. All rooms have private bathroom and include breakfast.

Pelikan, Entrada Principal Cra. 2 No. 17-04 (Cell - 316-756-1312, WiFi, peli.k@hotmail.com). Pelikan is a well-run simple budget hostel operated by a Colombian couple. It has been in Taganga for over a decade. The service is professional and they take care of business. Hammocks are out front and a cold beer is only a few steps away. It's a relaxed hostel with opportunities to meet other travelers while taking it easy outside. **Prices Aug. 2010: Dorm**, fan, 17,000 COP; **Single**, fan, 35,000 COP; **Double**, fan, bath, 50,000 COP; **Double**, air, bath, 70,000 COP.

Tortuga Hostel, Calle 9 # 3-116 (Cell - 312-456-1493, WiFi, tortugahostel@yahoo.com). Up in the hills sits a hostel with what may be one of the most stunning views in all of Taganga. Nice rooms with very friendly owners. Tortuga has an extremely inviting rooftop terrace with a bar. If you don't mind the 5-8 minutes hike and being so far from the beach, this may be a great place for you.

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Prices Aug. 2010: Dorm, 20,000 COP; **Double**, 60,000 COP. (www.tortugahostel.com). Site is under construction.

Hostal Casa Jamaica, check map (Cell - 311-665-8064, franktayrona@hotmail.com). This property is five minutes off the beach up into the hills. Hostal Casa Jamaica has a small pool, hammocks, and barbeque. This is perfect for people who want to be removed from town and have more privacy. There is a spot for tents and hammocks to sleep in. Contact owner for more information.

Mid-Range

Hotel Divanga, 12 No 4-07 (421-9092, WiFi, divangacolombia@yahoo.fr). Hotel Divanga is a charming hotel about a five minute walk up from the beach. Hotel Divanga has a very appealing pool and inviting hammocks, and it appears to be an excellent choice. **Prices Aug. 2010: Dorm**, with breakfast, 29,000 COP; **Single/Double**, with breakfast, 60,000 COP. (www.divanga.com).

Hotel Taganga Casa Holanda, Calle 14 No.1B-75, (035-421-9390, WiFi, info@tagangahotel.com). Casa Holanda is an extremely well-run bed and breakfast catering to mid-range travelers who are looking for a quiet relaxing stay. The owner is a very friendly expat from Holland. Rooms are very clean and comfortable with cable television. There is a restaurant and bar with well-priced meals named KTORSE. The owner also offers very well priced Spanish classes taught by local teachers with university degrees. Casa Holanda is highly recommended for all of its services. Accepts Visa, MC, and American Express. **Prices Aug. 2013: Single**, fan, 40,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 60,000 COP; **Double**, with breakfast, air, 80,000 COP. (www.tagangahotel.com).

Expensive

La Ballena Azul Hotel, Cra. 1 Calle 18 Taganga, (035-421-9009, WiFi, caballero_1958@hotmail.com). High rollers looking for the ultimate beach pad, here is your place. On the beach, with suites facing the ocean, a few equipped with Jacuzzi. Bring your wallet if you want to live the highlife. **Prices Aug. 2010:**

Single, fan, 107,000 COP; **Double**, fan, 129,000 COP; **Single (suite)**, air, 170,000 COP; **Double (suite)**, air, 258,000 COP.

Svahns, Calle 16 No 1 B-04 (Cell - 318-539-9098, 316-481-9687, WiFi, svahnapartamentos@gmail.com). Svahns rents apartments on a daily basis. The apartments are beautifully designed and include a huge bed, flat screen and a mini-fridge. They are perfect for travelers wanting total privacy. When visited the owner was personally constructing additional rooms. Svahns is highly recommended if you're looking for high comfort and an apartment feeling. It is conveniently located steps away from the beach and restaurants. Please check with the owners for their current rates. (www.svahns.com).

RESTAURANTS

Taganga has a nice choice of budget and finer restaurants throughout the town. On the beach, there are several restaurants in huts that serve fresh fish.

Taganga's many excellent restaurants may make you a regular customer.

Budget

Café Bonsai, Calle 13 #1-07 (421-9495, info@cafebonsai.com). Café Bonsai is a must visit during your trip to Taganga. **This Café is recommended as one of the best places to eat in this book.** Everything that comes out of this place is excellent. Sandwiches, breakfast, deserts, juices and other freshly made products. Great variety of music, great staff and a great place to relax and start the day. Superfast WiFi and a small book exchange. **Mon. - Sat.** 9:00 AM - 8:30 PM, closed Sundays. (www.cafebonsai.com).

KTORSE, In front of the casa there is a pleasant place to eat outside. KTORSE serves a variety of breakfasts for around 7,000 COP. The restaurant also serves different types of main dishes throughout the week. KTORSE consistently serves good food. (www.ktorse.com).

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El Reef, (check map). For those with a sweet tooth and breakfast lovers: your dream is about to become a reality. El Reef has excellent food with a low cost. The bowl of fruit, yogurt, and granola is amazing. El Reef is also a great place to have a drink before you go party.

Fast Food Cart, (check map). In front of the second hut facing the beach on the left. If you want to go the opposite of healthy, late at night, here is your place. Great burgers, fries, pizza, hotdogs and other foods that will surely augment your waistline. Open late to help even out all the booze you've been drinking.

Pomodoro, Calle 18, next to Expotur. Pomodoro has excellent thin-crust pizza and pasta. This restaurant is owned by a very friendly Italian and Colombian couple. Pomodoro is a casual place to relax and dine. This restaurant is highly recommended for a visit. Small veggie pizza, 10,000 COP.

Super Pollo A La Brasa (Check Map). This place is amazing. Located on the local side of the beach, but worth the two minute walk. You receive HUGE portions that will feed your adventures and replenish your energy after all your hard day of work. Super Pollo is highly recommended for those with big appetites. The food tastes very good and is served in a great location with salsa music blaring from a store next door. Dancing in broad daylight in this area is highly acceptable.

Mid-Range

El Restaurante de Patrick, at Casa de Felipe, check map (035-421-9149). Many claim this restaurant to be the best restaurant in the Santa Marta area, and there is a good chance this is true. The food here is amazing and very well-priced. The outdoor ambience, service and food are all top-notch. If you're not staying at Casa de Felipe, it's worth the trip up the hill to eat here. Plan your visit carefully as the hours are short. Steak, vegetables, and soup, under 20,000 COP. Open Wednesday - Sunday, 6:30 PM - 10:30 PM.

Mojitos Restaurant, Calle 14 Entre la Iglesia y la Playa (035-421-9149). Mojitos serves Peruvian, Mediterranean, and other regional food. There are many main dishes to choose from starting at 15,000 COP. Saltado with beef, chicken, pork or seafood are a few options. Mojitos has a wide array of choices of wine and beer in the bar. Mojitos also has live music every night of the week.

La Creperia, Carrera 1 and Calle 18. Burgers, crepes, steaks, and chicken with a great location off the beach. This place has a nice steady crowd of foreigners and locals.

NIGHTLIFE

Taganga is known for a very lively nightlife. Locals, foreigners and visiting Colombians come together and party at a few different locations. The party in Taganga can shift to different spots but, at the time this was written, two different spots were holding the best weekly parties. There are a few other bars that are great to kick back in and have a few drinks.

El Mirador, check map. Up a hill, on the edge of the entrance to town, sits a bar with a terrace that throws one hell of a party. El Mirador has transformed itself into one of Taganga's hottest party spots. With crowd of mostly foreigners mixed with locals, El Mirador has gained a reputation as a place to party hard with no messing around. A beautiful terrace bar has opened up and has become a must-visit spot for partiers. El Mirador also operates a hotel and restaurant serving American style burgers. If you stay here, make sure you bring your party hat and don't plan on sleeping until the next day. Friday and Saturday nights are the best nights.

Sensations - Disco Bar, Calle 14 No 1-04 2do piso, Get ready to rumba. Sensations is all about dancing, happiness, and letting loose. A mostly local crowd mixed with foreigners dancing with their new Colombian friends. Sensations is in an excellent location, directly across from the beach on the

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rooftop of Taganga Extreme, with a great terrace overlooking the town. A highly recommended stop when you're out partying in Taganga. Friday and Saturday nights are the best nights.

Mojito Restaurant, Cocktail and Music Bar, Calle 14 - Entre la Iglesia y la playa. Mojito's is owned by a very nice Italian gentleman. He offers live music every night of the week. Different genres of music from piano, jazz, a total fusion DJ, traditional Costeña, music of Taganga, Cuba and rap.

El Garaje (Check Map). This bar is a Taganga classic, but with the arrival of the terrace at the Mirador and Sensations, the party has moved to the beach. Many locals still enjoy the more mellow scene here.

DEPARTING TAGANGA

You must travel to Santa Marta when you depart Taganga. Please refer to the Santa Marta transportation section for information.

OUTSIDE OF SANTA MARTA

ARACATACA

You can take a bus to a small town called Aracataca an hour and a half from Santa Marta. This is the birthplace of famed Nobel Literature Prize Winner Colombia author Gabriel García Márquez. There is a museum in the house where he grew up. The original house was in very poor condition so it was demolished and a nice replica was built in its place. Aracataca is widely known to be the model for the town “Macondo”, the main setting in García Márquez’s, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. After visiting the house, a walk to the downtown and the river can be very interesting. It’s a wonderful town that allows for glimpses into a less visited Colombia. It’s not exactly small, with a population over 50,000, but it has a character that you can’t find in destinations on the main tourist track. It’s suggested to visit if you have plenty of extra days to burn. The best plan is to just wander around. There is a small house named The Gypsy Residence, which is highly recommended by many travelers. **The Gypsy Residence** has bikes available for use. Aracataca is the perfect Colombian town to explore by bike. The Gypsy also conducts full day tours of Aracataca for 99,000 COP, which includes breakfast and lunch. The tour includes guided visits to the town museums, the river, and several monuments in town. There is a shorter tour on the back of a motorbike where guests visit the tiny Colombian towns of El Prado Sevilla and Macondo. 3 hours - 35,000 COP. **The Gypsy Residence**, info@thegypsyresidence.com, Calle 6 No. 6-24 (Cell – 321-251-7420). **Dorms**, 20,000 COP; **Budget Double**, 60,000 COP; **Junior Suite**, 90,000 COP. (www.thegypsyresidence.com).

EAST OF TAYRONA

Directly East of Tayrona there are a few areas of interest. Within minutes of Parque Tayrona's Zaira gate are two beautiful beaches with accommodations and camping. Further down there is a nice hike to a waterfall and Palomino a

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town that has great secluded beaches. If you're looking for beautiful, easily accessed beaches without the price of Tayrona's admission, these places are worth checking out.

GETTING TO EAST OF TAYRONA

To access all of these locations you need to take the bus to Palomino and ask the driver to let you off at the entrance of where you want to go. La Sirena is a twenty minute walk from the main road.

BEACHES EAST OF TAYRONA

Playa Los Angeles. Is a gorgeous beach about 10 minutes past the Parque Tayrona Zaira gate. You can camp, sleep in a hammock, or rent a room in a nice guest house. The beach is incredible and this is the perfect location for a backpacker or a group of friends who want to enjoy the beach, but do not want to enter Parque Tayrona. Tell the bus driver to let you off at Playa Los Angeles from the bus to Palomino. **Prices August 2010: Camping (need tent) 12,000 COP; Hammock 15,000 COP. There is a guest house,** please inquire at property for information. There is a restaurant at Playa Los Angeles, but bring food and water as there is not a store nearby.

Playa Grande. Casa Grande is 15 minutes outside of the main gate from Tayrona. Casa Grande has small cabins, camping, hammocks and a restaurant to help you relax by the beach. With a stunning beach, Casa Grande is a great getaway location. Don't swim alone as the currents can be very strong. This is the perfect place to get lost in your own thoughts. Tell the bus driver to let you off at Casa Grande on the bus to Palomino. **Prices August 2010: Camping own tent, 12,000 COP; Camping with tent rental, 17,000 COP; Cabin, 60,000 COP,** for up to four people.

Palomino is a town a just past a hour from Santa Marta. It has many beaches with facilities. The beach on Palomino is gorgeous and you can walk on it forever.

The Dreamer Hostel on the Beach is a new hostel in Palomino. **Prices 2013: 8 bed dorm**, fan, bath, 29,000 COP; **Deluxe double bed**, bath, fan 110,000 COP. (www.onthebeach.thedreamerhostel.com).

La Sirena Eco Hostel and Retreat Center is a simple property right on the beach. Check out their website, (www.ecosirena.com). The website replicates how relaxing this place could be. There are directions on the site to get there once you're in Palomino. **Hammock** 20,000 COP; **Bedroom in the main cabana**, 40,000 COP; **Bedroom in a private cabana** 60,000 COP. These accommodations are at the most 25 meters from the beach. This is the best price seen for a bed this close to the beach in Colombia during the entire writing of this book. There is also a restaurant on the grounds.

DEPARTING EAST PARQUE TAYRONA

Head back to Santa Marta by bus or the other way by bus to Riohacha. Go to the main road and flag a passing bus down with either one of the two towns name on it.

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RIOHACHA

Riohacha is located in the department of La Guajira. Riohacha is used as the main staging and transition point to Cabo de Vela and Punta Gallinas. Riohacha is increasingly finding itself on the foreigner map as a place to relax for a few days after long stays in the region of Santa Marta and other areas. Its downtown area has a very lovely stretch of beach with a nice walkway only 25 meters off the beach. Many Wayúu women sell their bags and wares alongside hippies who sell bracelets and other crafts. Riohacha has the feeling of a chaotic small city, but under this energy is a very calm town with extremely friendly and open people.

GETTING TO RIOHACHA

Buses run from Santa Marta and Valledupar to Riohacha. Avianca has a direct flight from Bogotá, but it's one of Colombia's most expensive domestic flights.

NAVIGATION

Riohacha is extremely easy to navigate. The ocean is your best tool for navigation. Most of the services are along the first two streets that run along the beach.

CLIMATE

CLIMATE - Average High Temperature and Precipitation

	J.	F.	M.	A.	M.	J.	J.	A.	S.	O.	N.	D.
C.	31	31	32	32	31	31	31	31	30	30	30	31
F.	88	89	90	90	89	89	89	88	87	87	87	88

FESTIVALS

Festival Francisco El Hombre, late January, 2014. This yearly festival celebrates Vallenato music through performances, contests and other cultural activities. (www.festivalfranciscoelhombre.com).

RIOHACHA IS FOR WHO?

Riohacha is for people who like adventure and unique places. Riohacha is the last city before going off the path into La Guajira. If you're a traveler and find yourself in Riohacha, you should fit the above description or you're in the wrong place.

TIPS

The best place for a foreigner is to stay at Castillo del Mar. Make sure you reserve ahead of time. If you're there on the weekend, go out for a drink, there are a few fun places to go. The beach on the main drag is a good place to relax and meet people. In September and October, the area experiences high volumes of rain, so do plan accordingly.

TIME

Most visiting foreigners are just passing through and only spend the night. Others like to rest or take a trip to the Flamingo Park. It's really a matter of your own agenda, but there is not a lot to do in Riohacha unless you know someone who lives there.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Your feet should be sufficient to get around Riohacha. If you want to go to the air-conditioned mall, it's a standard 4,000 COP taxi ride that applies for taxi rides

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all around the whole city. The bus terminal is at Calle 15 and Carreras 11/12; it's a 4,000 COP taxi ride to the city's hotels.

BASIC SERVICES

Laundry

It's smart to do your laundry prior to your arrival. Doing laundry in La Guajira is very expensive. If it's an emergency ask at your hotel.

Bank

BBVA is located on the corner of Calle 2 and Carrera 8.

Internet

Internet can be found inside the corridor between Carrera 8 and Carrera 9, **Konekta2 Internet Café, Mon. - Sat. 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM.**

DAS

A DAS office with very friendly employees is located at Calle 5, 4-50.

OUTDOOR

Kitesurfing and windsurfing locations can be found in Riohacha, Cabo de la Vela and Punta Gallinas. Information can be found on Kai Eco Travels website, (www.kaiecotravel.com), look under planes. For more information, contact Kai directly.

DAY TRIP

Santuario de Flora y Fauna Los Flamencos - There is a flamingo reserve about 20 minutes outside of Riohacha. It's quite an adventure to get to the flamingos. A few hikes and at least one boat ride are needed. Even if the flamingos are a let-down, the scenery is stunning and the boat ride is relaxing. The whole process

from Riohacha and back may take four to six hours, depending on the speed of your progress. There are a few ways to get to Camarones where you can arrange for a guide with a boat.

1. Take a colectivo at the market in Riohacha, to the town of Camarones and either get dropped off at the beach across from the park or at the entrance to town. The market in Riohacha is at Calle 14 between Carreras 7 and 8.
2. If you get dropped off at the town's entrance, it's a three km walk from the road to the beach or you can take a moto-taxi (1,000 COP - 2,000 COP).
3. At the beach across from the park, you will need to take a canoe for 1,000 COP over a break in the beach.
4. Once there, you need to get a guide to take you on his boat. The price is around 30,000 COP for the boat. This price is not a bad deal for two or three people. Fisherman may offer their services outside the park, but there are guides inside too. When you find a fisherman you must barter for yourself. Overall with taxi and boat fees, one person could be looking at 40,000 COP to 50,000 COP, but it's worth it. The trip will be much cheaper as a group. Make sure you negotiate for the price. If the flamingos are in more distant bays they may charge more for the extra work.

ACTIVITIES

Avenue 1 (beachfront) - It's worth the long stroll down the main street that runs along the beach. This is where you can find many bars and restaurants. It's a very lively scene in the evening on the weekends. The walkway will have many Wayúu vendors selling bags and other items.

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Parque Jose Prudencio Padilla - This is a very nice plaza where many people socialize. The square is a great place to relax and people watch. The plaza's church is lovely and worth a visit.

TOUR OPERATORS

There are many tour operators in Riohacha that can get you into La Guajira. Most tours take travelers to Cabo de Vela and Punta Gallinas.

Solero Viajes and Turismo, Calle 9A N. 15-35 (cell - 316-525-1295, 312-655-3999, gerenciacomercial@soleratravels.com). This tour operator runs out of Castillo del Mar. They provide tours to Cabo and other points of interest in La Guajira.

Cabo de la Vela Tours, Calle 1ra No. 9-95 Local 1 (035-728-3684, turismoyelis.gomez@hotmail.com). Cabo de la Vela Tours offers full package tours to Cabo de la Vela and Punta Gallinas. The company has different packages for each location.

Kai Eco Travel, Calle 9A N. 15-35, ask for Fransisco at Castillo del Mar (cell - 311-436-2830, info@kaiecotravel.com). Kai Eco Travel is a well-known agency in La Guajira that promotes the community and responsible tourism. (www.kaiecotravel.com).

ACCOMMODATIONS

Riohacha's tourism industry is not geared specifically to foreigners. There are many low quality hotels which charge over 50,000 COP for a single room. Castillo del Mar is the best choice for foreigners. It's extremely hot in Riohacha and if you can afford air conditioning, this is the place to get it.

Budget

Hotel Castillo del Mar, Calle 9 A 15-352 (035-727-5043; 035-727-0728 hotelcastillodelmar@gmail.com). Hotel Castillo del Mar is by far the best option for foreigners in Riohacha. You can grab a dorm on the ocean which is more like an apartment. Many times you may have the entire place to yourself. Castillo has nice peaceful grounds and a great staff. **Prices Nov. 2010: Dorm**, fan, 20,000 COP; **Single**, air, 60,000 COP; **Double**, air, 90,000 COP.

Hotel Almirante Padilla, Cra. 6 No. 3-29 (035-727-2328). This is not the fanciest hotel, but it's a good option for budget travelers. **Prices Aug. 2010: Single**, fan, shared bath, 25,000 COP; **Single**, fan, bath, 42,000 COP; **Single**, air, bath, 62,000 COP; 20,000 COP each extra additional person.

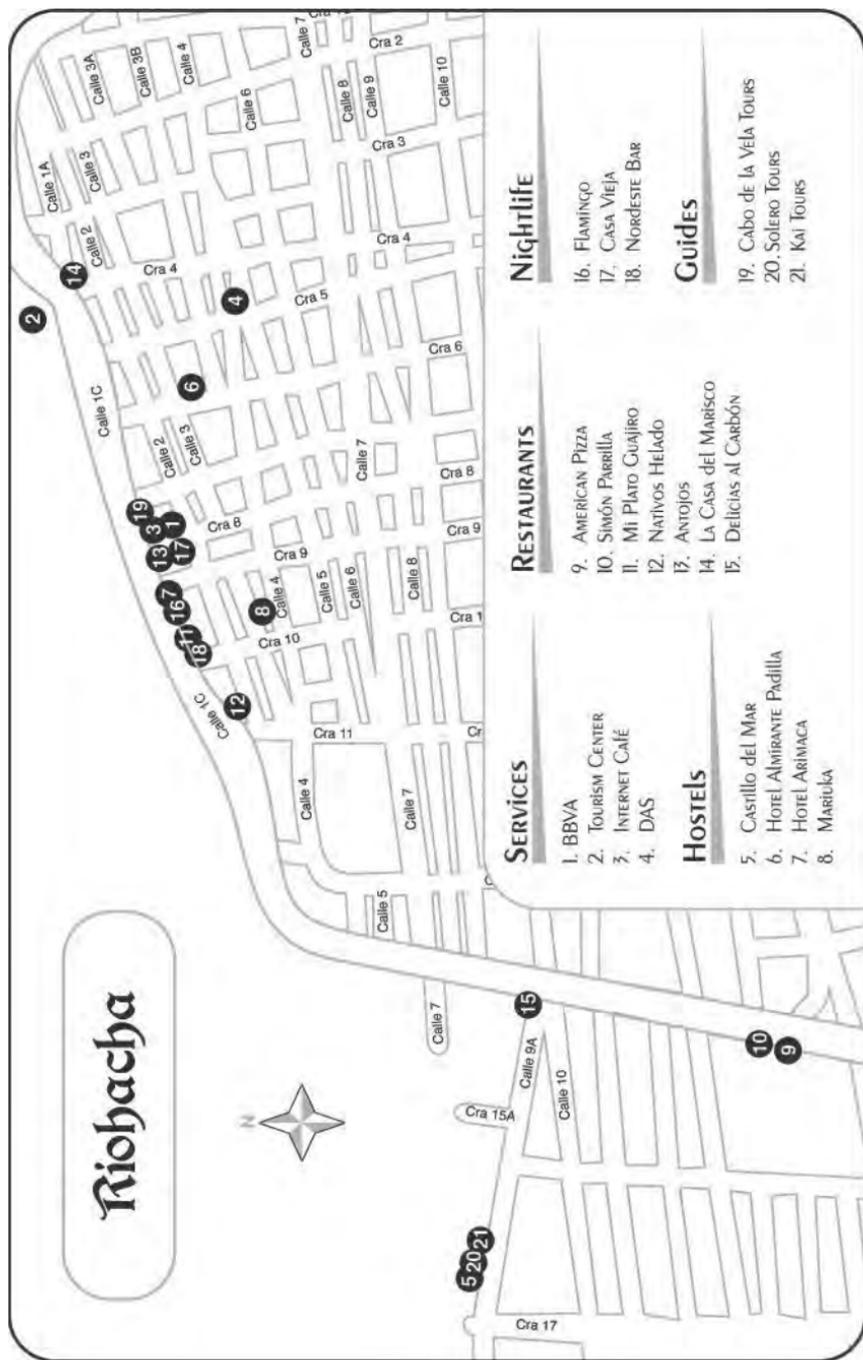
Mid-Range and Expensive

Hotel La Makuria, Calle 3 No. 9-69 (035-728-8390, cell - 300-808-7247, Hotelamakuiria23@yahoo.es). Hotel La Makuiria is a decent and clean hotel. It can be an option if necessary. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, air, 98,000 COP; **Double**, air, 114,000 COP.

Hotel Arimaca, Calle 1 No 8-75 (035-727-3481, arimaca@msn.com). This may be Riohacha's finest hotel. Directly across from the beach with a pool, the town's best disco, and an up-scale restaurant. **Prices Nov. 2010: Single**, air, 136,000 COP; **Double**, air, 178,000 COP.

RESTAURANTS

Riohacha has numerous restaurants with most focusing on fish and typical Colombian food. There is a row of food stalls across from the beach where you enter the downtown area. You can get a shrimp cocktail and juice for a very low price.



Riohacha



SERVICES

1. BBVA
2. TOURISM CENTER
3. TOURISM CENTER
7. INTERNET CAFE
4. DAS

HOSTELS

5. CASTILLO DEL MAR
6. HOTEL ALMIRANTE PADILLA
7. HOTEL ARINIACA
8. MARITIKA

RESTAURANTS

9. AMERICAN PIZZA
10. SIMÓN PARRILLA
11. MI PLATO GUAJIRO
12. NATIVOS HELADO
13. ANTOJOS
14. LA CASA DEL MARISCO
15. DELICIAS AL CARBÓN

NIGHTLIFE

16. FLAMINGO
17. CASA VIEJA
18. NORDESTE BAR

GUIDES

19. CABO DE LA VELA TOURS
20. SOLERO TOURS
21. KAI TOURS

Budget

Americans Pizza, Kra 15N 12-36 Av. Los Esudiantes (035-728-3733). Americans Pizza offers great tasting pizza with very friendly service from a local family. A personal pizza is perfect for one person and you most likely will have left overs for a snack. The panzerotties are amazing and will fill you up quite nicely. A personal pizza and coke cost under 10,000 COP.

Antojos, Located In the corridor between Carrera 8 and Carrera 9. Antojos serves breakfast, pasta, crepes and Colombian food. It tends to be a busy restaurant with many locals, which is a good sign. Breakfast is 7,000 COP.

Delicias al Carbon, Calle 9a and Carrera 15. Superfast grilled chicken, potatoes, soup and salad for 7,000 COP. This restaurant is very busy because it's popular with locals.

Mi Plato Guajiro, Calle 1 no. 9-63, (cell - 300-551-6686). Mi Plato offers typical Colombian meals in a family setting and has very friendly service. Typical plate from 8,000 COP.

Mid-Range

Simon Parrilla, Kra 15 No 1234 Av. Los Estudiantes (035-728-9924). Simon Parrilla offers a very relaxing environment to enjoy high quality seafood and meats. The lobster has been reported by travelers to be excellent.

La Casa del Marisco, Calle 1 4-43 (035-728-3445). Many locals recommended this seafood restaurant for a more upscale meal. It's run by a friendly owner whose family also owns a sister restaurant serving Colombian food in Spain. Cazuelas, 21,800 COP; Grilled Fish, 16,200 COP; Camarones al Gusto, 22,900 COP.

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NIGHTLIFE

Flamingo Bar, Riohacha's finest bar is found in the Hotel Arimaca. It's very well decorated and a great place to mingle with the locals. Friday and Saturday are the best nights to enjoy this bar.

Nordeste Bar, Av. La Marina Calle 1a No. 9-67. Nordeste Bar is a nice little bar across the beach to kick back and have a drink.

Casa Viejo, located in the corridor between Carrera 8 and Carrera 9. Casa Viejo is a good place to drink with friends. There is a good local crowd on the weekends with different types of music.

TRANSPORTATION

To Cabo de la Vela

You need to speak with your hotel to arrange a shared **taxi to Uribia**. The **cost is approximately 12,000 COP**. The taxi will drop you off where the daily caravan loads and prepares for the trek to Cabo. **Here you can arrange a ride for 12,000 COP - 15,000 COP**. If you haggle well, it could be 12,000 COP. **The last ride leaves at around 1:00 PM. It's best to get there early, by 10:00 AM**. There are people looking to give rides to cover their gas expenses. When returning to Riohacha from Cabo de la Vela, you need to reverse these directions. Talk with the posada owner to arrange a ride back. The bad news is that the caravan back to Uribia **leaves very early**. The vehicles scheduled to **depart Cabo do so at around 4:30 AM**.

To Punta Gallinas

During the rainy season (Sept. - Nov.) it's very difficult to reach Punta Gallinas. It's only possible by water. One way is to charter a boat at over 1,000,000 COP or connect with Francisco of Kai Tours for his assistance. It's possible to catch a ride on a small fishing boat out of Cabo for 50,000 COP each way. The boat will drop

you off at Punta Gallinas and will return in three days. It's suggested that if you want to go to Punta Gallinas, do it by organized tour operators. Multiple seasoned and professional operators offer this excursion from Riohacha.

DEPARTING RIOHACHA

When going to Valledupar it's possible to take a colectivo taxi for 25,000 COP. Ask your hotel for assistance in booking this ride.

Buses departing Riohacha go through Santa Marta and Valledupar.

DESTINATION	HOURS OF TRAVEL
Barranquilla	5 hours
Bogota	21 hours
Cartagena	7 hours
Santa Marta	3 ½ hours
Valledupar	3 ½ hours

CABO DE LA VELA

Cabo de la Vela is a small Wayuu fishing village on Colombia's upper North Coast which is known for its beautiful natural settings and a slow pace of life. Outside of town, there are popular hiking trails that lead to majestic lookout points. There are gorgeous beaches that connect with the desert. Lodging is found in posadas, where you can live side-by-side with local families. Meals can be found in the posadas or in restaurants.

GETTING TO CABO

Most people access Cabo from Riohacha. If you bypass Riohacha you need to get to the caravan at Uribia.

NAVIGATION

It's impossible to get lost in Cabo de la Vela because of its small size, just don't go wandering in the desert.

CABO DE LA VELA IS FOR WHO?

The people who travel to Cabo are searching for breathtakingly different natural environments, areas off the beaten path and glimpses into other cultures. These people only need a hammock, a book, and hiking boots to be happy. Think twice before you make the trip to Cabo de la Vela, the area is quite desolate.

TIPS

Make sure you plenty of bring sunblock and other necessities. Bring a book, a sense of adventure and be ready to kiss civilization goodbye. Cabo de la Vela is a calm area most of the year, but during the holiday season, it turns into a popular

vacation spot for Colombians. Plan your trip accordingly if you're seeking the peace and the purity of Cabo.

TIME

The only way to depart Cabo de la Vela is in a daily **4:30am** caravan of 4 by 4's. Many travelers arrive to Cabo de la Vela around 1pm. **If you explore quickly** you can see everything and leave early the **following morning**. If you want to relax and take it slow, plan at least two nights. Many people get bored staying two nights, so make sure you have a plan.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

In Cabo de la Vela there is no need for transportation. Everything is within walking distance. Cabo de la Vela is so small there is no public transportation.

BASIC SERVICES

At Hosteria Jarrinapi you can find internet from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The hotel's internet room also has air conditioning which offers a great way to cool down. There are little stores where you can buy water, snacks and other items, but the prices are higher due to the isolation, so stock up on these items beforehand.

ATTRACTIONS

There are two hiking trails that lead to look-out points. **El Faro** is a 45 minute to one hour hike that takes you to a beautiful viewing point. The hike is along a dusty road. There is a small lighthouse at the top of the trail which has some interesting graffiti on it. From here, you can see Cabo on one side and the **Ojo del Agua beach** on the other. Ojo del Agua is a great beach to just sit and take in the pure beauty of Cabo. Another hiking trail at about the same distance from town leads to a hill called **Pilón de Azúcar**. There is a small statue at the top.

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From this elevated lookout point, you can enjoy great views of the beach, ocean, and desert. If you have never seen this type of landscape, it can be quite stunning the first time. There is also a somewhat challenging, but enjoyable rock scramble back down. Nearby Playa de Azúcar is a beautiful beach, especially when it's empty. Make sure you bring plenty of water for these hikes. It's very hot and there are no stores or services along the way.

ACCOMODATIONS AND RESTAURANTS

Lodging in Cabo is exclusively in the form of posadas, which were initiated as part of a nationwide governmental program to create economical opportunities for local families. These posadas offer simple accommodations from a hammock to a little room. A posada is the equivalent of a guest house. There are over 130 posadas in Cabo. Each posada serves meals for approximately 10,000 COP - 20,000 COP. A highly recommended posada is called Pujuru and is run by a woman named Nena. There, you can get a hammock for 15,000 COP or a room for 25,000 COP. Nena is helpful, attentive and she is in contact with Kai Ecotours if you need assistance. A higher end choice is the Hostería Jarrinapi. It has nice rooms for 30,000 COP and hammocks for 15,000 COP. It has a full menu, a small store, and slow internet in the evening. (Prices Sept. 2010).

DEPARTING CABO DE LA VELA

Make sure to arrange your departure to return to Uribia through your posada. There is a daily 4:30am caravan of 4 x 4's. It is very important that you clearly establish a pick-up time for departure. **The daily departure time is 4:30 AM and there are no other options.** The caravan most likely won't leave until 6:00 AM, but you still need to wake up at 4:30 AM to wait.

VALLEDUPAR

Valledupar is a landlocked city in the department of Cesar in the northeast part of Colombia which is known as the home and birthplace of the world-famed Vallenato music. Every year, hundreds of thousands of fans from all over Colombia and the world come to Valledupar for the annual Vallenato Festival. Where they are treated to shows from the best Vallenato artists and from top names from other musical genres. The 2013 festival takes place over April 26 - 30th.

Valledupar has a beautiful river flowing through the outskirts of the city. The river area has bike paths and walking paths for exercise or to take a nice stroll. On weekends and during festivals, the river comes alive when families and friends barbeque, swim, and socialize all to the tune of blaring Vallenato. Gorgeous natural settings can also be found upriver at a local favorite swimming hole called La Mina.

Valledupar is a bustling town that offers mid-size city amenities as well as a small town pace of living. Centro Commercial Guatapuri offers a nice air conditioned retreat with interesting shops, a Carrefour, a movie theater, a Panamericana, a full food court, and occasional live music. Within the city, there are many fine accommodation choices. Throughout the week and on the weekends, Valledupar also offers numerous options for nightlife.

Valledupar is the staging point for trips into the mountains to visit Nabusimake. This area is a natural wonderland of mountains, rivers and an eternal state of peacefulness. Nabusimake is an important spiritual center for the Arhuaco culture.

Valledupar has been completely overlooked by the foreign tourism industry. A lack of information and its physical isolation has left Valledupar off the radar.

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Travelers who are looking for a more genuine Colombian experience may find Valledupar to be their perfect destination.

GETTING TO VALLEDUPAR

All major cities offer bus service to Valledupar. Avianca and LAN have direct flights from Bogotá to Valledupar.

NAVIGATION

Valledupar's El Centro is very easy to understand. It's designed in a simple calle and carrera pattern. Outside of El Centro it's possible to get lost, but if you stay aware of your bearings it's not difficult to get around.

CLIMATE

Valledupar's climate is extremely hot. It lacks ocean breezes which eases the heat on the rest of the coast. When it rains, the place sometimes cools down.

VALLEDUPAR IS FOR WHO?

Valledupar is for those people wanting to experience a mid-size city with a slow small town appeal. It's for people who want to relax, but at the same time have options for entertainment and activities. Valledupar is perfect for people who want to meet locals and practice their Spanish. People who enjoy the outdoors will enjoy Valledupar.

TIPS

Take long walks through El Centro and to the Rio Guatapuri. Visit the Parque de la Leyenda Vallenata. Stay at Provincia Hostel and use their free bikes to explore the city. Go out with friends and enjoy the many bars and clubs. Make a trip to

Nebusimake and La Mina to discover the natural areas. Relaxing in a hammock with a book is a popular activity in Valledupar. There are not many foreigners here, so don't plan on meeting fellow travelers. Try to meet as many local people as you can. Vallenatos may be the friendliest people in Colombia. If you need to go to DAS, do it here; there are no lines and the staff is very friendly.

TIME

Plan four to seven days for your visit to Valledupar. Many people only plan on a few days, but stay longer. If you are looking to relax and enjoy a very unique part of Colombia, make sure you give yourself some time. People who don't like nature, culture or meeting local people may get bored in Valledupar after a few days.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A taxi ride to all locations within town is 4,000 COP. The city is spread out, but it's a good walking city. It's a 4,000 COP ride from the bus station to El Centro.

BASIC SERVICES

Bank

Please check the map for the BBVA location.

Bank

Please check the map for the Banco de Occidente ATM location.

Internet

There is a shop on the corner of Calle 16 and Carrera 6 with internet.

DAS

Please check the map for the DAS location.

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Supermarket

There is a huge Exito in the El Centro area that has everything a person needs to buy.

FESTIVAL VALLENATO

The Festival Vallenato takes place every year in the last week of April in Valledupar. For five days the city becomes an enormous party full of parades, shows, contests and multiple forms of music. The festival is covered by over two hundred members of national and international media outlets.

The main topic of the festival is the music of Francisco el Hombre. Folklore tells that Francisco el Hombre defeated the devil by singing the apostle's creed in reverse while playing the accordion. This story is told by Gabriel García Márquez in his book One Hundred Years of Solitude.

The festival holds three main contests:

Vallenato music in three different categories: professional, amateur and children.

Contest of amateur accordion players.

Contest of the unpublished song.

In addition to the yearly winners, every ten years a "King of Kings" is chosen from among the winners of the preceding decade. The best artist is awarded with "La Pilonera Mayor" prize, the highest possible award for a Vallenato musician. "Piquerías" also take place which is a singing dialogue or duel, where participants confront each other through verses and rhymes. The winner is determined by who is the fastest and most creative.

An art contest takes place before the festival, from which the promotional poster for the year is selected. Each year the festival hosts top name performers from all over the world. The 2013 festival takes place from April 26th to April 30th.

SPANISH LESSONS

Private Teacher

David Ariza is a highly recommended language instructor in Valledupar. David has been a director and the lead teacher at a local language institute for the past five years. David is a highly respected member of the very large language community of Valledupar (over twenty language schools). David is offering private and small group lessons. **One student's classes cost 20,000 COP an hour and, for two, the price is 30,000 COP total.** David is offering weekly rates for students interested in developing a short term Spanish program. David can arrange for you to be assigned a local Colombian student for an exchange of lessons. Participating in exchanges is an excellent way to make friends, rapidly improve your Spanish and learn about another culture. The student who you exchange with will be ecstatic for this experience, as native English speakers are very rare in Valledupar. A traveler can easily arrange classes with David, a language exchange with students and a stay at Provincia Hostel. This could be a low cost, high-reward opportunity to learn Spanish and experience a very unique city for a few weeks to a month. **It could easily be one of the best experiences of your trip.** Contact David directly at 301-501-0799 or at davidrariza@hotmail.com.

TOUR OPERATOR

Miguel from **Provincia Hostel** can arrange low cost tours of the Valledupar area. He can take you on day trips to La Mina and to the Los Besotes Ecopark and Reserve. Miguel can also lead hiking and biking tours for small groups in the Valledupar area.





SERVICES

1. BBVA
2. BANCO DE OCCIDENTE
3. DAS
4. INTERNET
5. EXITO

HOTELS

6. PROVINCIA HOSTEL
7. VAJAMAR
8. HOSTAL LO PERENA
9. MIZARE HOSTAL

RESTAURANTS

10. RESTAURANTE BUFFALO
11. CAFÉ PLAZA MAYOR
12. CALICHE CEVICHE
13. MURELLA CHINA
14. LAS PALMAS
15. MAMPANOS
16. EL TATO
17. VITAL VEGETARIAN
18. FRESAS Y CEREZAS
19. CAFÉ DE LAS MADRES

Nightlife

20. IQUANA
21. K-SA
22. DISCOTECA KANKURUA



Valledupar

ATTRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES

Most activities around Valledupar are very low-key. It's more about chilling and being part of the environment.

Guatapuri River is on the edge of the town. The area has very nice walking paths and places to eat. It's a very popular location during the weekends. Music, drinking, swimming and friendship are the standard Saturday or Sunday activities at the river. There are also numerous places to jump off the rocks into the river.

La Mina is an area on a river that is a popular swimming location. There are large rocks that you can jump off into the water. The river and the rocks make a very interesting combination. You can walk around on trails next to the river or up to villages. You can take a truck or go on a tour with Miguel from Provincia Hostel. La Mina is about a forty five minutes ride up into the mountains.

Taking a self-bike tour of Valledupar should be a mandatory activity. It's a bike friendly city with many places to roam. **Provincia Hostel offers free bike usage for its guests.** Make sure you visit **El Parque de la Leyenda Vallenata**. It's a very peaceful place and worth a look to see the place where some of the world's biggest musicians perform.

Plaza Alfonso Lopez is a beautiful plaza with a large stage for events. Every day and night, there is constant activity in the plaza. Food, things to buy, large crowds and benches to relax on, can be found in the plaza. There is also a small church on the plaza. This may be one of the most active plazas in Colombia.

Casa de Cultura is Valledupar's cultural department's music and art program center. It's a three story building that houses numerous classrooms for art and different types of music. The center is very active with children and the adults who teach them. If you go into the office and ask politely, they will assign a

student to take you for a quick tour. It's a very vibrant and energetic environment when students are practicing.

NABUSIMAKE

A major attraction and highly recommended overnight trip in the Valledupar area is a visit to **Nabusimake**, the spiritual center of the Arhuacos. This trip is broken down into two traveling parts. Part one takes you from **Valledupar to Pueblo Bello** in a small bus. The cost is **8,000 COP for a one hour ride**. For part two, you must take a **4 x 4 from Pueblo Bello to Nabusimake**; the cost is **12,000 COP**, for a **two to three hours ride**. The second part is on a road that can be quite a journey. The road is not well maintained and can be a rough ride, but it's worth it if you like adventure. You have a few options for lodging when you get to Nabusimake. You can either tell the driver where you want to go or just ask to be taken to a place for lodgings. In Nabusimake, there are four or so such establishments and the area is rather small. For **35,000 COP, at Casa María**, you get three meals and a bed. María offers fish, meat, chicken and eggs. María and her husband have lived on this property for over fifty years. The room is simple and easy to sleep in. It's like staying at your grandparents' house, but without T.V. or electricity; bring a headlamp or flashlight. They are very kind hosts. Another option is to stay at Casa Mila down the way. Mila runs a school off her property with a small class size of about fifty students to one teacher. Mila's is a more modern property and there may be some better chances for interaction with more people. For **50,000 COP, at Mila's, you get three meals and a bed**. Mila has a small store with candy and other small important items. If you want to enter Nabusimake, **you must pay 10,000 COP for permission**. Mila and María will direct you to where you take care of this payment. Nabusimake is a five minute or so walk from the lodgings. At the front, there is a gate that is locked and you must walk over rocks to get inside. **It's best, out of respect, not to take pictures of Nabusimake**. It's a quick visit and be prepared to show your permission paper. You may be asked for more money if there are Arhuaco at the gate. Show your paper and be polite, but don't pay more, you have already paid

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the fee. Going in both directions is a large path/road that you can hike for hours. The area has stunning scenery and is extremely quiet. You need to tell your host you need to be picked up by a truck to return the next day. Most people stay a night and hike after the morning of their travels and the morning before they leave. If you are seeking more solitude or have a great travel partner, you may want to stay a few nights, but many people may get bored if they stay too long.

DO NOT go to Nabusimake if you don't like to hike or to be in a place cut off from the world. It's highly recommended for you to consult with Miquel and Cristina at Provincia Hostel for updated and exact instructions before taking this trip.

ACCOMMODATIONS

There are only a few budget options in Valledupar. Provincia Hostel and Vajamar Hotel are two excellent choices.

Budget

Provincia Hostel, Calle 16A No. 5 - 25, Centro (035-580-0558, WiFi, info@provinciavalledupar.com). **Provincia Hostel is the best place for foreign and budget Colombian travelers to stay in Valledupar.** Provincia Hostel has an air conditioned and non-air dorm. It has every amenity possible. One of its greatest features is the free use of its bikes. There are many hammocks and a few couches to relax in. The entire hostel is beautifully decorated. There is a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere within the hostel. The Colombian owners are very dedicated to the travelers' visit. Provincia Hostel offers a highly personalized service that caters to each traveler. There are not many foreigners, but there are always interesting Colombians visiting for great conversation. **Prices 2011: Dorm**, 6 beds, fan, 18,000 COP; **Dorm**, 2 beds, fan, 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, six beds, air, 22,000 COP; **Single**, Bath, fan, 40,000 COP; **Double**, bath, fan 50,000 COP; **Single**, bath, air, 45,000 COP; **Double**, bath, air, 55,000 COP. (www.provinciavalledupar.com).

Mid-Range

Hostal lo Popereña, Calle 16A #9-63 (Cell- 312-643-2935). This is a simple place to stay for two or more people if Provincia is full. **Prices 2011: Single/Double**, 50,000 COP; **Triple**, 75,000 COP; **Quad**, 100,000 COP.

Mizare Hostel, Cra. 6 No. 13-39 Barrio Novalito (035-580-9341, mizarehostal@hotmail.com). Mizare has a guest house feeling on a more quiet side of town. Mizare is well decorated with comfortable rooms. **Prices 2011: Single**, air, 80,000 COP, **Double**, air, 90,000 COP, with breakfast.

Vajamar Hotel, Carrera 7 No. 16A-30 (035-574-3939, reservas@hotelvajamar.com). Hotel Vajamar has it all. Comfortable rooms, friendly staff, a pool from heaven, great food, one of the city's best discos and the perfect downtown location. Vajamar also has a spa which offers great massages, sauna and a beauty salon. The rooms are very well priced. It feels like a little mini-resort. **Prices 2011: Weekends - Single**, 91,000 COP; **Double**, 94,000 COP. **Weekdays - Single**, 118,000 COP; **Double**, 160,000 COP. **All rates include breakfast and taxes. (www.hotelvajamar.com).**

RESTAURANTS

Valledupar has a wide choice of budget and mid-range restaurants.

Budget

Café de la Madres, Calle 15 No 8-07 Local 9, Cafe de las Madres is a very charming cafe on a small park. It has a great feeling to it and is a great place to drink coffee with a book or chat with a friend. Coffee 1,000 COP; Capucchino 5,000 COP.

Caliche Ceviche Cocteles, Calle 16 No. 7-57, Specializes in ceviches in many different sizes. 3,000 COP x-small Cup; 5,000 COP small cup; 10,000 COP medium cup; 15,000 COP large cup.

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Fresas y Cerezas, Carrera 9 # 12-29. Amazing ice cream and fruit salads.

Mampanos, Carrera 11 con 13B Esquina. Mampano's is a good place for great tasting semi-greasy pizza. The small portion consists of two huge slices for 6,500 COP.

Muralla China, Carrera 6 No. 15-70 Plaza Alfonso Lopez. If you're looking to load up with as much food as possible on the cheap, here is your place. Typical Chinese take-out that comes in big quantities. Chicken fried rice 11,000 COP.

Restaurante El Tato, Calle 16A No. 7-64 (035-574-3212). Tato's specializes in typical Colombian food starting at 6,000 COP to 15,000 COP. Try the Bandeja Paisa, 15,000 COP, Rice, eggs, carne molida, chorizo, frijol cargamanto, papa fritas, tajada, arepa, aguacate. **Open every day** from 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

Vital Vegetarian, Carrera 9 No. 16A-03 (035-570-5874). Vegetarians will enjoy a nice selection of meals at this restaurant. Health is the concept of the menu.
Mon. - Fri., 8:00 AM - 6:30 PM.

Mid-Range

Las Palmas Restaurant (Hotel Vajamar). Las Palmas has a full menu including Colombian and international food. There is a daily breakfast buffet with fruit, eggs, meats, breads, juice and more for only 10,000 COP.

Café Plaza Mayor, Carrera 6 No 15-70, Café Plaza Mayor has an excellent location across from the Plaza Alfonso Lopez. Café Plaza is a beautifully decorated restaurant and bar. The food is excellent with dishes from Colombia and many other countries. A visit to Café Plaza Mayor is highly recommended. Filet Mignon 24,000 COP; Chicken 16,000 COP; Shrimp Cocktail 12,000 COP.
Mon. - Sat., 8:00 AM - 2:00 AM., **Sun.** 7:00 AM - 9:00 PM.

Restaurante Buffalo, Carrera 9 and Calle 12 Local 117 (035-585-3535). Buffalo is like a toned down TJI Friday's. Menus are in English and Spanish with American memorabilia and rock and roll playing. This restaurant receives good reviews from locals. Chicken Cesar Salad 15,500 COP; Quesadillas 11,900 COP; Picada Buffalo (2 people) 19,000 COP includes: BBQ wings, sausage, black pudding, grilled cheese, ripe plantain, creamy potatoes, and sour cream.

NIGHTLIFE

Valledupar has a very active nightlife. It's a university town which supports many clubs. You can find clubs and bars of all types. Check out this website to get an idea of some of the great options. (www.tuvalle.net).

Cafe Plaza Mayor, Carrera 6 No 15-70 (035-571-2526), Cafe Plaza Mayor is a great place to drink with friends. It has comfortable sofas indoors and outside. Different types of music and in general a great ambiance. The entire restaurant and bar is extremely well-decorated.

Discoteca Kankurua, Located on the Hotel Vajamar property. Discoteca Kankurua is Valledupar's most expensive nightclub, but worth the extra money. Perfect for dates and groups who are ready to drink and dance.

K-Sa Club, Corner Calle 11 and Carrera 9. K-SA Club is a popular club for dancing to reggaeton, Vallenato, salsa and other music. A similar crowd to Iguana.

Iguana Club, Carrera 9 in between Calle 10 and 11. Iguana Club may be Valledupar's most popular club. Nicely decorated and classy, Iguana Club always has an entertaining party. Friday and Saturday nights are the best nights for dancing and drinking. Cover is around 10,000 COP, depending on the night and event.

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DEPARTING VALLEDUPAR

Door to door collective taxi is 25,000 COP to Riohacha. Ask your hostel or hotel for assistance.

The following estimates are for bus departures from Valledupar.

DESTINATION	HOURS OF TRAVEL
Barranquilla	5 hours
Bogotá	17 hours
Bucaramanga	9 hours
Santa Marta	4 hours
Cartagena	6 hours
Medellín	12 hours
Mompox	5 hours
San Gil	11 hours
Santa Marta	4 hours

OTHER POPULAR DESTINATIONS IN COLOMBIA

There are many destinations that are not in this travel guide that are very popular with travelers.

This section includes hostels and hotels visited before this project started in Bucaramanga, San Gil, Villa de Leyva, Salento, and Manizales.

The hostels south of Armenia (Cali, Popayan, San Agustin and Leticia) have been highly recommended by seasoned travelers.

BUCARAMANGA

Bucaramanga is a large city that is very appealing for travelers. A progressive city with nightclubs, restaurants, outdoor activities and a recommended hostel. Many foreigners stay longer than anticipated due to its beautiful climate and the many paragliding opportunities.

Hostel

Kasa Guane, Calle 49 No. 28-2 (037-657-6960, info@kasaguane.com). Kasa Guane is a hostel that opened in 2008. For more information on Kasa Guane please check their website. **Prices 2011: Dorm**, 20,000 COP; **Single**, 35,000 COP; **Double** 50,000 COP. (www.kasaguane.com).

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Paragliding

Colombia Paragliding, (Cell-312-432-6266). This company offers paragliding lessons and other outdoor activities. (www.colombiaparagliding.com).

SAN GIL

San Gil is an outdoor adventurer's paradise. White-water rafting, caving, rappelling, hiking and many other outdoor activities can be found in San Gil. San Gil is a hilly town that offers good restaurant and bar choices for entertainment.

Hostels

Macondo Hostel, Carrera 8 No. 10-35 (037-724-8001, info@macondohostel.com). Macondo Hostel is a popular backpacker hostel in San Gil. This is a good hostel to meet other travelers. The hostel can arrange guides and tours for all of San Gil's outdoor adventures. (www.macondohostel.com).

Sam's VIP Hostel, Carrera 10 No. 12-33 (037-724-2746, samshostel@gmail.com). Sam's VIP Hostel is a backpacker hostel that opened in 2010. Sam's VIP Hostel can arrange adventure guides and activities for its guests. **Prices 2013: Dorm**, 17,000 COP, **Single**, shared bath, 35,000 COP; **Double**, shared bath, 50,000 COP; **Double**, private bath, 70,000 COP. (www.samshostel.com).

VILLA DE LEYVA

Villa de Leyva is a beautiful colonial town about 4 hours north of Bogotá which has cobblestone streets and an enormous plaza. It receives high numbers of Colombian and foreign tourists. Outdoor activities can be found including rappelling, hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking.

Hostels

Colombian Highlands, Carrera 9 No. 11-02 (038-732-1379, info@colombianhighlands.com). Colombian Highlands is a guesthouse a few minutes outside of town that offers pleasant accommodations in a relaxing setting. The facilities include a bonfire area, an open plan kitchen (with a pizza oven), T.V. room, bio-pool, breakfast/dinner service and an area to pitch a tent. Colombian Highlands can help organize activities ranging from rappelling, canyoning, horse-back riding, hiking, city tours, and bird watching. The owner is a bilingual biologist who has built a solid reputation in Colombia as a true eco-tourism operator. **Prices 2013:** **Dorm**, 4 beds, 20,000 COP; **Dorm**, 6 beds, 18,000 COP; **Private rooms**, 65,000 COP; **Other larger rooms** for small group/family, 25,000 COP per person. (www.colombianhighlands.com).

Casa Viena, (hotel@casaviena.com). Casa Viena Villa de Leyva is owned by the same European of the Casa Viena in Cartagena. You can find a reasonably priced bed here; it also has a bakery and a restaurant that serves Indian and Austrian food. **Prices 2013:** 3 bed dorm, 17,000 COP; single, shared bath; 28,000 COP; Double, shared bath, 40,000; double w/terrace, bath, 50,000 COP. Prices decrease when you stay more than one night. Check for these decreasing prices and a slight high season increase on their website (www.casaviena.com).

MEDELLÍN

Medellín is one of Colombia's most popular destinations. Its climate is considered to be one of the most comfortable in Colombia, earning it the nickname "City of Eternal Spring". Medellín is a modern city that offers world class night-life and restaurants, as well as numerous accommodation options for all levels of travelers. The Medellín area has many opportunities for day and overnight trips. Many foreign travelers fall in love with Medellín and spend their entire vacation in the city.

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Hostels/Hotel

Palm Tree, Carrera 67# 48 D 63 (034-260-6142, cell - 300-241-9209, info@palm-treemedellin.com, WiFi). Palm Tree is Medellín's original hostel, located three blocks from the Metro. Lockers, kitchen, book exchange, BBQ, hammocks, hot showers and many other amenities. **Prices 2011:** **Dorm**, 18,000 COP; **Single**, no bath, single or double bed, 28,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 40,000 COP.

Casa Kiwi, Carrera 36 # 7-10 (034-268-2668). Casa Kiwi is a popular hostel in the El Poblado area. The hostel completed a renovation project a few years ago that added a roof top terrace with a small pool. It is owned by an Australian motorcycle adventurer. (www.casakiwi.net)

Hostal Tamarindo, Calle 7 #35-36 (034-268-9828, cell - 315-451-6268, hostaltamarindo@gmail.com). Hostal Tamarindo is a comfortable and clean hostel, located three blocks from Lleras Park in El Poblado. **Prices 2011:** **Dorm**, bunk beds, 18,000 COP; **Dorm**, single bed, 20,000 COP; **Single**, shared bath, 40,000 COP - 55,000 COP; **Single**, private bath, 60,000 COP; **Double**, shared bath, 50,000 COP - 65,000 COP; **Double**, private bath, 70,000 COP. Check with hostal for triple and quad rates. (www.hostaltamarindo.com).

Black Sheep, Transversal 5a No. 45-133 (034-331-1589, cell - 311-341-3038, kelvin@blacksheepmedellin.com). Black Sheep is a popular hostel close to the bars in El Poblado. It has a barbeque every Sunday for its guests. **Prices 2013:** **Dorm**, 8/10 beds, 21,000 COP; **Dorm**, 6 beds, 22,000 COP; **Dorm**, 4 beds, 23,000 COP, **Single**, shared bath, 45,000 COP; **Double**, shared bath, 60,000 COP; **Single**, private bath, 60,000 COP; **Double**, private bath, 75,000 COP. (www.blacksheepmedellin.com).

MANIZALES

Manizales is a beautiful modern mountain town in the Coffee Region. Manizales has several universities and a very youthful population. There is a good selection

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of restaurants and a great nightlife. Manizales has several fincas (farms) in the area for you to visit. Many travelers go to Manizales to climb the nearby Nevada del Ruiz. Manizales is highly recommended for a visit.

Hostel/Hotel

Mountain House, Calle 66 # 23 B 137 (036-887-4736, cell - 300-439-7387, info@mountainhousemanizales.com). Mountain House is a recommended hostel at a very close walking distance to restaurants, bars and many universities. This hostel has many amenities and is well-managed.

Regine's Hotel, Calle, 65A # 23B-113 (036-887-5360 regineshotel@alta vista.net). Regine's is a charming hotel within walking distance of the restaurants, bars, and universities. Regine's offers a quiet and private atmosphere. It is highly recommended as a mid-range option.

For higher end hotel options in Manizales take a look at this website. (www.hotelesmanizales.com).

Outside Manizales

Hacienda Venecia, call for directions (cell - 320-636-5719). Hacienda Venecia is located on a beautiful coffee finca about fifteen minutes outside of Manizales that offers coffee tours on its farm. The hacienda has a small pool and serves meals. They provide transportation service from Manizales. Hacienda Venecia is highly recommended for travelers who want to spend a quiet time in the country. (posada@haciendavenecia.com, www.haciendavenecia.com).

SALENTO

Salento is a small charming tourist town that is very popular with both Colombians and foreigners. Many consider the hikes in nearby Valle de Cocora to be the best in Colombia. Salento's streets fill up with tourists on the weekends

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and holidays. The town is very calm and has a unique feeling. Salento is a highly recommended destination if you enjoy hiking and small mountain towns.

Plantation House, Calle 7 1-04 (English - Cell - 316-285-2603, Spanish - Cell - 315-409-7039, theplantationhousesalento@yahoo.co.uk). The Plantation House is a popular hostel in the town of Salento. It's frequently booked and calling ahead for reservations is recommended. (**www.theplantationhousesalento.com**).

La Serrana, call for directions (cell - 316-296-1890, cell - 318-783-7771, laserranasalento@gmail.com). La Serrana is a unique hostel in a farmhouse that opened up in March of 2010. This hostel is a gorgeous fifteen minute walk outside of Salento. La Serrana serves food or you can use their kitchen. This is an excellent place for travelers who are looking to relax in the country. You can even milk the farms cows. (**www.laserrana.com.co**).

CALI

Hostels

Casa Blanca, Avenida Sexto Bis Calle 26N #57(032-396-3849, booking@casablancahostel.com). Casa Blanca is owned by a European and his Colombian wife. The hostel opened in 2008 and is building a solid reputation as a good place to stay. Casa Blanca is located a few blocks from restaurants and bars. The owner has motorcycles and ATVs for rent and for tours. **Prices 2011:** For the full list of 2011 prices check with this link.

(**www.casablancahostel.wordpress.com/prices**).

Calidad House, Calle 17 Norte # 9AN-39, Barrio Granada (032-661-2338, calidadhouse@yahoo.com). Calidad House has been in Cali for over 18 years and has built a solid reputation with good service and a great location. Hostal Calidad offers salsa lessons and is a short walk to the bars and restaurants. The hostel has an outdoor area with hammocks for relaxing, a kitchen, coffee, free WiFi,

OTHER POPULAR DESTINATIONS IN COLOMBIA 311

hot shower, T.V., movie zone and free internet. **Prices 2013:** **Dorm**, 20,000 COP; **Twin room**, 35,000 per person; **Single**, 30,000 COP; **Double**, 45,000. (www.calidadhouse.com).

Iguana, Avenida 9N No. 22N-46 (032-660-8937, cell - 313-768-6024, iguana_cali@yahoo.com). Iguana is known as one on Cali's best hostels. Iguana is a few blocks from bars and restaurants, and offers salsa lesson packages. It publishes an informative blog on Cali. (www.iguanacali.blogspot.com). **Prices 2011:** **Dorm**, 4 beds, 18,000 COP; **Single**, shared bath, 32,000 COP; **Double**, shared bath, 40,000 COP; **Single**, 40,000 COP, private bath; 50,000 COP, private bath. (www.iguana.com.co).

POPAYÁN

Hostel Trail Popayán, Carrera 11 No. 4-16 (032-831-7871, cell - 314-696-0805, popayan@hosteltrail.com). Hostel Trail is a popular hostel that opened in Popayán in 2007. The hostel can arrange thermal and biking tours. **Prices 2013:** **Dorm**, 18,000 COP; **Single**, no bath, 28,000 COP; **Single**, bath, 38,000 COP; **Double**, no bath, 45,000 COP; **Double**, bath 55,000 COP. (www.hosteltrailpopayan.com).

The owner of Hostel Trail Popayán also operates a highly informative travel website, (www.hosteltrail.com).

Hostel Caracol, Calle 4 No. 2-21, Centro Historico (311-626-8840, info@hostelcaracol.com). Hostel Caracol is a hostel in a small colonial building that is operated as the same owner of Hostel Trail Popayán. There is a coffee shop inside the hostel. **Prices 2013:** **Dorms**, 19,000 COP; **Singles**, 32,000, no bath; **Doubles**, 50,000, bath. (www.hostelcaracol.com).

MOTORCYCLING

Riding a motorcycle across Colombia is an amazing way to see the country. Road conditions vary, but if you stay on the main routes you'll have an enjoyable ride. Large motorcycles are uncommon in most of Colombia, but there are many in bigger cities, where services can be found for large bikes.

The risks of riding in Colombia can be reduced greatly if caution is used at all times. Animals, reckless drivers, dangerous buses, trucks and bad road conditions are found throughout the country. Riding a big motorcycle in big cities can be challenging. Riders must always keep their motorcycles secured overnight in safe parking lots, which can be found in all cities. Motorcyclists must inspect the parking lots and judge security practices themselves to make proper decisions. Large motorcycles are generally safe from theft, since they are so uncommon. Thieves would have a difficult time hiding or selling a stolen large motorcycle. At the same time motorcyclists must make sure their gear and equipment is secured and monitored frequently if they are not in a secure location.

Mechanics can be found all over Colombia. It's better to find a mechanic who works out of an organized and efficient shop. Many mechanics have little experience with larger bikes, but are good at trouble shooting simple problems. A certification called Auteco is used to designate shops of higher standards.

MOTORCYCLE RENTALS

Cali

Motolombia, Ave. 6bis, Calle 26N, 57, (032-668-9986, mike@motolombia.com). Motolombia is owned by an adventure motorcyclist who has traveled through over 70 countries by motorcycle. Tours of Colombia can be arranged with Motolombia, they also rent motorcycles to riders of all levels. The owner Mike also offers many motorcycle related-services, including arranging shipment of a motorcycle to and from Colombia. He also buys and sells used motorcycles. Mike also owns the Casa Blanca Hostel which has become a popular hostel for motorcyclists when passing through Cali. Check his website for information on his services and on motorcycling in Colombia. (<http://www.motolombia.com>).

Bogotá

Trip Colombia, Diagonal 127 No. 9B - 53, (031-620-10-37, motouribe@hotmail.com). Trip Colombia rents KTM's through their Bogotá office. Information on their services is available on their website in Spanish. (www.tripcolombia.com.co).

MOTO FRIENDLY HOSTELS/SECURED PARKING AREAS

Barranquilla

There is a parking lot across the street from Hotel Granada Inn that offers secure parking. The location is on the map for Barranquilla.

Bogotá

Cranky Croc has a secure parking lot for motorcycles. There is also a parking lot on Calle 16 identified on our La Candelaria map that is secure and near many hostels.

314 MOTORCYCLING

Cali

Casa Blanca Hostel is a great place for motorcyclists to stay. Motorcycle services can be arranged by the owner. They offer secure parking and storage for motorcycles.

Cartagena

There is an indoor parking lot that is secure for motorcycles and within walking distance to many hostels and hotels. The location is on the Cartagena map.

Medellín

Casa Kiwi, Tamarindo, and Black Sheep all have access to a secure parking area for motorcycles.

Mompox

La Casa Amarilla has an indoor area to park a motorcycle.

Popayán

Hostal Trail can arrange for secure parking of a motorcycle.

Riohacha

Across the street from Hotel Castillo del Mar, there is a private house that charges 4,000 COP to park for one night of secured parking.

Santa Marta

The Dreamer has an area to put a motorcycle. There are two secure parking lots in Santa Marta's El Centro highlighted on the Santa Marta map.

Taganga

There is a parking lot in front of a house around the corner from the police station. They will put your bike in a secured spot if you go to Parque Tayrona for a few days.

Tolú

Villa Babilla offers safe parking on its property.

Valledupar

Provincia Hostel has a secure area to park a motorcycle.

MECHANICS/DEALERS**Bogotá**

Kawastore, Av. Calle 127 No. 45 - 61. Kawastore sells Kawasakis and motorcycle accessories. There is an Auteco-certified mechanic right next door.

Harley-Davidson, Carrera 13 No. 82-36, Zona Rosa. Harley-Davidson Bogotá, (in the middle of a posh section of the Zona Rosa) has a huge inventory of Harleys in their storeroom. The store has a shop with highly experienced mechanics. If you are not buying or fixing a motorcycle you can buy Harley-Davidson accessories and merchandise. If you like motorcycles this is a great place to visit. (www.harley-davidson.com.co).

Cali

Asturias, Avenida 6 an 24an 50, sory@asturias.com.co. Asturias has a highly experienced mechanic who works on Harleys, BMW and other brands of motorcycles. (www.asturias.com.co).

For more options of mechanics in Cali, check with Mike at Motolombia.

Medellín

Ruta 40, Carrera 43A No. 30-26 (034-448-18-40). Ruta 40 specializes in BMWs, but can work on all large motorcycles.

Kawasaki, Calle 10A No. 40-13 (034-268-86-88). This dealer has a shop across the street that works on Kawasakai and other models.

316 MOTORCYCLING

In Medellín there are many shops and dealers that work on large motorcycles in the El Poblado area.

Riohacha

Guajimoto, Calle 16A No. 8-27 (037-280-577). This small shop is good for small problems. The mechanic does not see many large motorcycles, but he has skills that can be relied upon if you're having problems.

Valledupar

Leonardo Gomez Mototaller, Calle 16B No. 9-59, (035-574-9058). This shop has extensive experience with large motorcycles. The owner is a rider and understands that foreign riders need quick attention. This is a highly recommended shop for any type of work you need. They can arrange for hard to find parts to be shipped from Medellín.

WEBSITES FOR MOTORYCLISTS

HUBB - www.horizonsunlimited.com. The HUBB is an excellent website for long distance motorcyclists. It includes sections of information for countries throughout the whole world. There is a "for sale" section that usually includes a few motorcycles that are in Colombia.

Tu Moto - www.tumoto.com.co. Tu Moto lists motorcycles that are for sale throughout Colombia. You can get an idea of the high costs of buying a motorcycle in Colombia. Both new and used motorcycles can be 40% higher than U.S. prices due to high import taxes.

ENGLISH – SPANISH DICTIONARY

INTRODUCTION

Spanish language is very similar to other romance languages (French, Italian, and Portuguese). When someone is traveling it is important to try and talk to the people to have a real experience. To begin you will make mistakes, but you will learn from those mistakes. Make an effort to speak with as many locals as possible and you will not regret the results.

If you are looking to increase your vocabulary a great strategy besides talking to locals is to read in Spanish. A great way to practice is to get a newspaper or magazine and try to read using a dictionary to help with unfamiliar words. Another great idea is to watch T.V. Many American shows are subtitled in Spanish offering a great opportunity to learn common phrases. If you want a more direct approach you may want to enroll in the many Spanish language schools or hire a tutor to help you learn.

Communicating in a person's language is the best way to have truly authentic experience in the country.

LANGUAGE

Most verbs in Spanish are conjugated. That means they will use different endings depending on what tense the verb is to be used. For example, Spanish uses a present indicative, past preterit, past imperfect, future, conditional, and

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different forms of the subjunctive and perfect tenses. All verbs will end in either AR, ER, or IR (some may be reflexive and end with SE). To form the verbs you drop the endings (AR, ER, IR) and add the appropriate tense. The subject pronouns will determine which ending you will use.

Singular	Plural
Yo – I	Nosotros (as) – We
Tú - You (familiar)	
Él – He	Ellos - They (at least 1 male)
Ella - She	Ellas - They (all females)

Then endings will be used with different tenses. They are formed by dropping the AR, ER, or IR at the end of the verb. The endings for the present tense AR verbs are:

Yo – o	Nosotros(as) - amos
Tú – as	
Ella/Usted – a	Ellos/Ellas/Ustedes - an

Other endings for different tenses are:

Present Indicative: (happening right now)

ER verbs: o, es, e, emos, en

IR verbs: o, es, e, imos, en

Past Preterit: (happened at a specific time in past)

AR verbs: é, aste, ó, amos, aron

ER/IR verbs: í, iste, ió, imos, ieron

Common preterit irregulars:

Hacer (to do/make): hice, hiciste, hizo, hicimos, hicieron

Ver (to see): vi, viste, vio, vimos, vieron

Dar (to give): di, diste, dio, dimos, dieron

Ir/Ser (to go, to be): fui, fuiste, fue, fuimos, fueron

*Both have the same conjugation

Decir (to say): dije, dijiste, dijo, dijimos, dijeron

Noun-Adjective Agreement

Most Spanish nouns have a gender and a number. For example some verbs are feminine and some are masculine. There is no real reason why, it is something you have to memorize. Most nouns that end in (o) will be masculine and those that end in (a) are feminine. The noun and the adjective will need to agree in number and gender. That is if the noun is masculine and plural the adjective will be masculine and plural. **For example:**

Singular

Plural

El hombre guapo

Los hombres guapos

La chica bonita

Las chicas bonitas

Start reading down the left two columns and work your way back up to the top right and then back down the right two columns.

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ENGLISH	SPANISH	ENGLISH	SPANISH
BASIC PHRASES		Please	Por favor
Hello	Hola	Your welcome	De nada
Good Bye	Adiós	Thank you (very much)	(Muchas) Gracias
Good morning	Buenos días	Please repeat	Repite por favor
Good afternoon	Buenas tardes	Slower	Más despacio
Good evening	Buenas noches	CALENDAR	
How are you? Familiar	¿Cómo estás? ¿Qué tal?	What day is it?	¿Qué día es hoy?
		Monday	lunes
How are you? Formal	Cómo está usted?	Tuesday	martes
Good	Bien	Wednesday	miércoles
Bad	Mal	Thursday	jueves
Very good/bad	Muy bien/mal	Friday	viernes
OK	Así así / Regular	Saturday	sábado
And you? Familiar	¿Y tú?	Sunday	domingo
Mr. / Sir	Señor	Christmas	Navidad
Mrs.	Señora	New Year's	Año Nuevo
Miss	Señorita	Independence Day	Día de Independencia
Nice to meet you	Mucho gusto	Holy Week	Semana Santa
His/Her name is...	Se llama...	Birthday	Cumpleaños
Name	Nombre	Anniversary	Aniversario
Last (family) name	Apellido	Day	Día
Delighted	Encantado	Today is...	Hoy es...
It's a pleasure	Es un placer	Tomorrow	Mañana
Who is it?	¿Quién es?	Yesterday	Ayer
He/She/it is...	Es...	Day before last	Anteayer
Where are you from?	¿De dónde eres?	Week	Semana
What's your phone number?	¿Cuál es tu número de teléfono?	Weekend	Fin de semana
		Month	Mes
Excuse me (accident, oops, mistake)	Perdón	January	enero
		February	febrero
Excuse me (in crowd)	Permiso	March	marzo

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ENGLISH	SPANISH	ENGLISH	SPANISH
April	abril	Forty (40)	Cuarenta
May	mayo	Fifty (50)	Cincuenta
June	junio	Sixty (60)	Sesenta
July	julio	Seventy (70)	Setenta
August	agosto	Eighty (80)	Ochenta
September	septiembre	Ninety (90)	Noventa
October	octubre	One hundred 100	Cien
November	noviembre	Two hundred 200	Doscientos
December	diciembre	Five hundred 500	Quinientos
NUMBERS		One thousand 1000	Mil
One (1)	Uno	One Million 1,000,000	Un Millón
Two (2)	Dos	DESCRIPTION	
Three (3)	Tres	I am	Soy....
Four (4)	Cuatro	Tall	Alto (a)
Five (5)	Cinco	Short	Bajo (a)
Six (6)	Seis	Young	Joven
Seven (7)	Siete	Old	Viejo (a)
Eight (8)	Ocho	Big	Grande
Nine (9)	Nueve	Small	Pequeño(a)
Ten (10)	Diez	Student	Estudiante
Eleven (11)	Once	Traveler	Viajero(a)
Twelve (12)	Doce	Teacher	Maestro(a)
Thirteen (13)	Trece	You are....	Eres...
Fourteen (14)	Catorce	He/She/it is...	Es...
Fifteen (15)	Quince	We are....	Somos
Sixteen (16)	Diez y seis	They are...	Son
Seventeen (17)	Diez y siete	FEELINGS	
Eighteen (18)	Diez y ocho	I am	Estoy...
Nineteen (19)	Diez y nueve	Happy	Feliz/alegre
Twenty (20)	Viente	Sad	Triste
Thirty (30)	Treinta	Angry	Enojado(a)

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ENGLISH	SPANISH	ENGLISH	SPANISH
Excited	Emocionado(a)	Bank	El banco
Confused	Confundido(a)	Embassy	La embajada
Drunk	Borracho(a)	Library	La biblioteca
Busy	Ocupado(a)	Museum	El museo
QUESTIONS		Bookstore	La librería
Question	Pregunta	Bakery	La panadería
To question	Preguntar	Café	El Café
Answer	Repuesta	Hospital	El hospital
To answer	Contestar	Stadium	El estadio
Why?	¿Por qué?	Monument	El monumento
What?	¿Qué?	Park	El parque
Where?	¿Dónde?	Beach	La playa
To where?	¿Adónde?	Mountains	Las montañas
How much?	¿Cuánto?	Church	La catedral
How?	¿Cómo?	Church	La iglesia
Who?	¿Quién?	Restaurant	El restaurante
Whom?	¿Quiénes?	Bar	El bar
Is/are there?	¿Hay?	Movie theater	El cine
AROUND TOWN		Theater	El teatro
Downtown	Centro	Hotel	El hotel
Countryside	Campo	Hostel	El hostel
Historic District	Centro histórico	Street	La calle
Marina	La marina	Neighborhood	El barrio
Mall	El centro comercial	ATM	El cajero automático
Supermarket	Supermercado	Avenue	La avenida
Market	El Mercado	Pharmacy	La farmacia
Plaza	La Plaza	DIRECTIONS	
School	La escuela	Where is...	¿Dónde está...?
University	La universidad	Here	Aquí / acá
Store	La tienda	There	Allí
Butcher Shop	Carnicería	Left	Izquierda

ENGLISH – SPANISH DICTIONARY 323

ENGLISH	SPANISH	ENGLISH	SPANISH
Right	Derecha	Terminal	Terminal
Next to	A lado de	Gate	Puerta
Close	Cerca	Departures	Salidas
Far	Lejos	Arrivals	Llegadas
Blocks	Cuadras	Travel agent	Agente de viaje
Follow	Siga	Passport	Pasaporte
Turn	Doble	Customs	Aduana
Until	Hasta	Security	Seguridad
From	Desde	Backpack	Mochila
Under/Beneath	Debajo de	I have nothing to declare	No tengo nada que declarar
Behind	Detrás de		
In front of	En frente de	I don't speak Spanish	No hablo español.
TRANSPORTATION		I'm here for a vacation	Estoy aquí de vacaciones
Airplane	Avión		
Bus	Autobús / Bus	I lost my passport	Perdí mi pasaporte
Train	Tren	I'm leaving the country in 60 / 90 days	Salgo del país en sesenta/noventa días
Taxi	Taxi		
City bus	Micro	A stamp	Un sello
Collective Taxi	Colectivo	Visa	La visa
Car	Auto/carro	Take me to...	Me lleve a....
Truck	Camión	FOOD	
Motorcycle	Moto	Food	La comida
Bicycle	Bicicleta	Breakfast	El desayuno
Boat	Barca	Lunch	El almuerzo
To hitchhike	Hacer autostop	Dinner	La cena
How much do I owe?	¿Cuánto le debo?	A drink	Una bebida
How much does it cost?	¿Cuánto cuesta?	Cereal	Cereal
Round-trip ticket	Boleto de ida y vuelta	Eggs (scrambled)	Huevos (revueltos)
One-way ticket	Boleto de ida	Bacon	Tocino
Taxes	Impuestos	Yogurt	Yogur
Baggage claim	Reclamo de equipaje	Rice	Arroz

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ENGLISH	SPANISH	ENGLISH	SPANISH
Beans	Frijoles	Glass	Vaso
Fruit	Fruta	Table	Mesa
Fish	Pescado	Kitchen	La cocina
Lobster	Langosta	Chef	Cocinero(a)
Shrimp	Camarones	Can I smoke here?	Se puede fumar aquí?
Sandwich	Sándwich	DRINKS	
Chicken	Pollo	Coffee with milk	Café con leche
Ham	Jamón	Black	Negro
Meat	Carne	Orange juice	Jugo de naranja
Cheese	Queso	Water	Agua
Salt	Sal	Tea	Té
Potatoes	Papas	Smoothie	Licudo
RESTAURANT		Rum	Ron
I would like...	Quisiera...	HOTEL/HOSTEL	
Well done	Bien cocido	Hotel	Hotel
Rare	Crudo	Hostel	Hostal
A box to go	Una caja para llevar	Room	Habitación
Bring me the bill (check) please.	Me trae la cuenta por favor	Double	Doble
		Bed	Cama
Where is the bathroom?	¿Dónde está el baño?	Private bathroom	Baño privado
		Do you have hot water?	¿Tiene agua caliente?
Men (gentlemen)	Caballeros / Hombres	Shower	Ducha
Women (ladies)	Damas / Mujeres	Sheets	Sábanas
Push	Empuje	A safe	Una caja fuerte
Waiter, Waitress	Mesero(a)	Can I see a room?	¿Podría ver una habitación?
Napkins	Servilletas		
Fork	Tenedor	Do you have space	¿Tiene espacio?
Knife	Cuchillo	MEDICAL	
Spoon	Cuchara	Doctor	El doctor(a)
Plate	Plato	It hurts here	Me duele aquí

ENGLISH – SPANISH DICTIONARY 325

ENGLISH	SPANISH	ENGLISH	SPANISH
Head	La cabeza	Call the police	Llama a la policía
Leg	La pierna	I need to leave	Necesito irme
Throat	El Brazo	Someone robbed me	Alguien me robó
Back	Espalda	Could I speak with a lawyer?	¿Podría hablar con mi abogado?
Foot	Pie		
Knee	Rodilla	Could I speak with my embassy?	¿Podría hablar con mi embajada?
I'm sick; can you take me to the hospital?	Estoy enfermo; ¿Puede llevarme al hospital?	I am a resident of... The United States	Soy un residente de... Los Estados Unidos
Call the ambulance	¡Llame a la ambulancia!		
Do you know a good doctor?	¿Conoce un buen doctor?	France	Francia
		England	Inglaterra
		Germany	Alemania
Visión	Visión	Israel	Israel
EMERGENCY		I have nothing to do with what happened.	No tengo nada que ver con lo que pasó
Help!	¡Socorro! Ayúdame		

NOTES

A blank sheet of lined paper with a rounded top and bottom. The paper is white with horizontal lines spaced evenly down the page. The word "NOTES" is printed at the top center in a bold, sans-serif font. The lines are thin and light gray, providing a guide for writing.

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Taganga	257
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Explore Travel Guides Colombia provides in-depth information on Bogotá and 12 beautiful natural and cultural destinations on the North Coast of Colombia - including Cartagena, Santa Marta, Barranquilla, Valledupar, Parque Tayrona and other unique locations. With detailed descriptions of hostels, hotels, restaurants, nightlife, guide services, activities, and volunteer opportunities, you will have all you need to start your Colombian adventure.

