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**COLOMBIA  
TRAVEL GUIDE**

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# A WORD FROM THE FOUNDERS

SouthAmerica.travel is proud of its energetic Team of travel experts. Our Travel Partners are based in 7 South American countries, have traveled extensively throughout South America and work "at the source" from their operations headquarters in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia & the Guyanas.

We are passionate about South America Travel, and we're happy to share with you our favorite Buenos Aires restaurants, our insider's tips for Machu Picchu, or our secret colonial gems of Brazil, and anything else you're eager to know.

The idea to create SouthAmerica.travel first came to Co-Founders Juergen Keller and Bradley Nehring while traveling through Brazil's Amazon Rainforest. The two noticed few international travelers, and those they did meet had struggled to arrange the trip by themselves. Expertise in custom travel planning to Brazil was scarce to nonexistent. This inspired the duo to start their own travel business to fill this void and help travelers plan great trips to Brazil, and later all South America.

With our local tour operator partners throughout South America as well as local telephone numbers in multiple countries worldwide, the SouthAmerica.travel Partners have helped hundreds of thousands of travelers fulfill their unique dream of discovering the marvelous and diverse continent of South America. Where will your dreams take you? Let's start planning now...



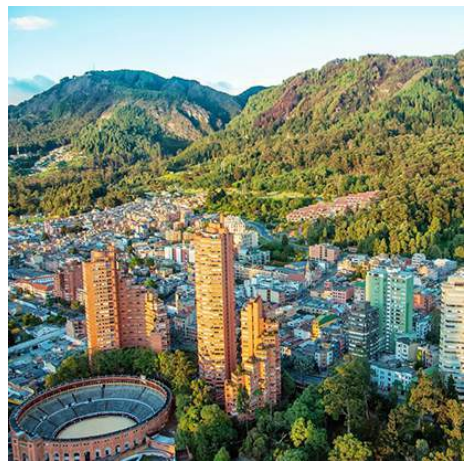
Juergen Keller  
*Co-Founder*



Bradley Nehring  
*Co-Founder*

"Our goal is to create memories that will last our clients a lifetime."

*Juergen Keller*



# COLOMBIA TRAVEL GUIDE

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# ESSENTIAL COLOMBIA TRAVEL TIPS

## Colombia is the up-and-coming destination in South America

The tourism industry is booming and people around the world are intrigued by the warm climate, gorgeous landscapes and friendly locals. Sway in a hammock in San Andres with the sun-kissed Caribbean breeze and ocean waves crashing against the shore. Explore the historic port city of Cartagena, now named one of the most romantic cities in South America. Visit Bogotá and dance the night away in some trendy bars and finish in the coffee region where you can sip world-famous espresso. Colombia's options are endless.

## Best Times to Visit Colombia

Colombia is a great destination to visit year-round. The country sits near the equator, so the climate remains consistently warm throughout the year. Closer to sea level, the temperature hovers around 80 °F (26.6°C). In the city of Medellín, slightly above sea level, the temperature sits around 70°F (21°C). Bogotá is slightly colder with an average temperature of around 50°F (10°C). No matter when you choose to visit you are likely to experience warm and relaxing weather. **Please note before making arrangements to visit Colombia; you must have 6 months validity on your passport to enter the country.**

Read More: [Best Times to Travel to South America](#)

## Staying Safe in Colombia

Safety and security in Colombia has improved significantly over the past 20 years, specifically in Bogotá, Cartagena and Medellín. Use common sense while traveling and stay aware of your surroundings. We recommend leaving your valuables in the safe at your hotel.



## Recommended Foods & Drinks

Calling all foodies! Bogotá is the up-and-coming culinary capital of South America. Eat like a local and try an **envuelto**, a tamale wrapped in wet palm leaves, often served with hot chocolate made of cinnamon and cloves. Order a bowl of **ajiaco soup**, as an appetizer, a rich and creamy soup made with varieties of potatoes, chicken and the herb guasca. For the main course, try **bandeja paisa**, the typical Colombia meal of rice, beans, meat, sausage, arepa, plantane, eggs and avocado. Along the Caribbean, try the different tropical fruits and juices, such as tamarind, guayabas guanabananas, lulos and mangosteens. As for cocktails, Colombia's national drink is **aguardiente**, an anise-flavored liquor that some say is an acquired taste. And of course, no trip to Colombia would be complete without sampling their world-famous **coffee**.

Read More: [Culinary Highlights of Bogotá](#)



# MAP OF COLOMBIA

- Providencia Island 
- San Andrés Island 

Caribbean Sea

Santa Marta ●   
Tayrona National Park ●

Cartagena ●

● Mompox

VENEZUELA

● Medellín

● Villa de Leyva

Manizales ●   
Pereira ●  
Armenia ●

● Bogotá

COLOMBIA

Pacific Ocean

San Agustín ● 

BRAZIL

ECUADOR

PERU



Colombia Travel Guide



Beaches

Coffee Region

Ruins & History

# HIGHLIGHTS OF COLOMBIA

## Bogotá

Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, is often referred to as the "beating heart of the country," because of its central location and vibrant culture. Bogotá is the perfect starting point for tourists visiting Colombia's beaches, colonial gems or the Andean Rainforest.

Stay in the picturesque neighborhood of La Candelaria, nestled in the historical downtown neighborhood. Walk down winding cobblestone streets to the famous Cathedral of Plaza Bolivar to see the Presidential Palace and the Gold Museum. Admire the Baroque art and art deco architecture. On a clear day, go on a cable car ride up Mount Monserrate and enjoy a panoramic view of the city.

After sight-seeing, indulge in authentic Colombian cuisine and live like a local. Bogotá is South America's newest culinary capital. Try some of the different soups like ajiaco, changua or mondongo. If you are feeling adventurous, order the **chiguiri** (capybara), traditionally served with other meats, arepa, plantain and avocado.

[View Bogotá Tours >>](#)





## Coffee Region

Follow the scent of freshly brewed espresso to the coffee region of Colombia. Armenia, Pereira and Manizales make up the "coffee triangle." With each destination located relatively close to one another, it requires little effort to visit all three destinations. Stroll through quaint local villages, take in the picturesque rolling hills and marinate in the aroma of coffee beans.

On a Colombia coffee tour, stay in charming haciendas and discover the welcoming culture. Tour some of the coffee farms and learn how the beans are cultivated, dried and exported. Due to the differences in soil composition and the diverse climate, each coffee region of Colombia has its own signature flavor and aroma profile. Be sure to try a few to determine which espresso bean is your favorite!

In the **Cocora Valley** near **Salento**, is a verdant forest where you can see the largest palm trees in the world. These wax palms trees can grow over 200ft (60 meters) high!

No trip to Colombia would be complete without some time in the coffee region. Sip delicious espresso and bring some of the world's best coffee home for your friends and family.

[View Colombia Coffee Tours](#)



## Medellín

Medellín attracts visitors from around the world for its temperate climate, architecturally impressive buildings, and progressive attitude. A wave of construction has passed through neighborhoods bringing parks and libraries, and newly designed buildings, yet the charming aspects of Medellín remain.

Spend a few days in Medellín and take the gondola over Santo Domingo for an unobstructed view of the city and its surrounding greenery. Also visit Arvi Park, just east of the city and go on a short hike to the butterfly exhibit.



Medellín is a popular destination to visit during the annual Flower Festival, known as one of the most culturally famous events in the country. For ten days in August, the city celebrates with fireworks, the Paso Fino horse parade and more. Visit during the Flower Festival and see for yourself why Medellín is nicknamed, "the city of eternal spring."

Getting there: Jose Maria Cordoba is the International Airport and main point of entry for most international flights into Medellín.

Read more: [A Great Reason for a Medellín Tour](#)





## Santa Marta

Santa Marta is one of the oldest, surviving cities in South America. Tourists love the now nicknamed, "Parque de Los Novios," or the "park of newlyweds," for its piercing blue water, lively restaurants and bars, and its close proximity to Tayrona National Park.

The secret to the charming town is its beautiful hotels and magical sunsets. Plan a fancy dinner overlooking the water at Tierra Negra and enjoy traditional Colombian cuisine, Ouzo for Mediterranean style dishes, or Agave Azul for a kick of Mexican. During the day sit back and relax at the beach. Go on a boat ride around the bay and just take in the spectacular scenery. After relaxing at the beach, visit Parque de Los Novios, a newly restored park showing the history of the town.

The weather is warm year-round with a cool sea breeze. Walk along recently restored seaside areas, now spotted with greenery and dotted with historic statues. Start at the Simon Bolivar Plaza and continue to the Bank of Republic Library, a host of fascinating gold pieces that are centuries old.



## Tayrona National Park

Tayrona National Park, in northern Colombia, grips the Caribbean coast at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and for many it is the greatest attraction. The combination of coastal mountains, the cloud rainforest and crystal clear Caribbean waters attracts guests from around the world. Take a dip in the ocean and say hello to the underwater sea on a snorkeling adventure.

Be sure to add Cabo San Juan del Guia to your list as it is one of the most beautiful beaches in Tayrona National Park.



Spend a day visiting El Pueblito ruins, home to the Tayrona people who occupied the region for centuries. After soaking in the sun, explore the jungle to spot marine life such as iguanas, Titi monkeys, howler monkeys, parrots and even land crabs.

Getting there: from Cartagena it is a scenic two-hour drive along the coast. You can also fly from Bogotá or Medellín to Santa Marta and transfer to Tayrona.

Read more: [Tour of Tayrona National Park](#)

### *Insiders Tip*

*High season (December through February) attracts huge numbers of travelers! The best time to visit is during the low season (February to November). Otherwise, prepare for the fuss of large crowds.*



## San Andres & Providencia Islands

San Andrés is a coral island in the Caribbean Sea, best appreciated outside of the downtown hub. People add San Andrés to their bucket list for the fun water activities including, snorkeling and diving near coral reefs, sailing, wind surfing and swimming with the marine life. Adjust to a slower pace of life on the island.

Check out the idyllic Johnny Cay, one of the most popular beaches on the island. Although it can get crowded during high season, the scenery and the terrain are well worth the trip. La Loma and San Luis are two nearby towns on San Andres that are less crowded and can be more relaxing. Both towns boast unique English-Caribbean architecture and scuba-diving and snorkeling. Once the sun sets, explore the town, dance to reggae and learn the history of the island. On the island, paradise is no more than a splash away.

**Providencia** is another mountainous Caribbean island about 90 km north of San Andres. The only way to reach Providencia is by catamaran (3-hour ride) or by small plane (20-minute flight) from San Andres. Its remoteness, superb diving and the friendly locals make it the perfect relaxing and Rastafarian getaway.



## San Agustín

Nestled between lush green hills and the Magdalena River is San Agustín. San Agustín was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its pre-Columbian artifacts dating back to the 1st - 8th centuries. Here you will find the largest group of religious monuments in all of South America with sculptures of gods and mythical animals depicting ancient legends.

This mysterious culture flourished for some time before leaving their mark in a number of tombs, burial chambers and large sculptures.



We recommend at least 3-hours in the park. Go on a tour and walk along the historical trails and learn about the indigenous people that once inhabited this land.

Besides visiting the Archaeological Park of San Agustín, travelers enjoy horseback riding, experimenting with the traditional cuisine at some of the local restaurants and exploring the surrounding areas.

**View our favorite:** [Recommended Hotels in San Agustín](#)



# COLONIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## Cartagena

Cartagena sits along the Caribbean coast of Colombia and is known as being one of the most romantic cities in South America. Grab your loved one and succumb to the laid back atmosphere and passionate nature of the city.

In 1984 Cartagena was declared a UNESCO cultural site for its colonial architecture and charm. Old Town is where you will find the historical churches, plazas, palaces and mansions with their Spanish influenced colors and balconies.

Visit the highest point in Cartagena, Convento de la Popa and enjoy beautiful vistas of the water and the city. Stroll past Castillo San Felipe de Barajas, a historical military fort and walk through the secret tunnels and bunkers towards another hilltop viewing point.

As a major port and gateway to the Caribbean Islands, seamlessly combine Cartagena and Parque Nacional Corales del Rosario, San Bernardo, Parque Tayrona, or the sleepy town of Mompox.

View More: [Cartagena Tours](#)



### Insiders Tip

*Some of the greatest painters like Alejandro Obregon and Dario Morales lived in Cartagena, because of its history, light and energy. You can see why, as you explore the city's elegant plazas and candy-colored homes.*





## Villa de Leyva

The tranquil town of Villa de Leyva is one of Colombia's most picturesque colonial cities just 3.5-hours by car, north of Bogotá. Stroll down the beautiful stone streets and wander past the old churches, convents and monasteries to one of the largest town squares in South America, Plaza Mayor.

Nearby excursions include El Fossil, a museum about 3 miles from town where you can see dinosaur fossils. Or go on a challenging hike at Iguaque Sanctuary and National Park.

## Mompox

Mompox was founded in 1540 and could be one of the best preserved Spanish cities in northern Colombia. The city played a significant role in Spanish colonization and to this day, the historical buildings are still used for their original purposes. Stroll through the town and transport back in time as you admire the 16th-century Spanish architecture.

The combination of urban landscape and harmony of the past makes Mompox a charming destination that is sure to captivate any visitor who ventures off the beaten path.



# TOP COLOMBIA TRAVEL PACKAGES

## Colombia Coffee and Caribbean Tour

**14 Days — Bogotá, Nuqui, Colombia Coffee Region, San Agustín, Cartagena**

This Colombia coffee and Caribbean tour is geared for those who want to see a variety of landscapes and cultures. This 14-day tour will take you from the capital, Bogotá to the Pacific Coast, where fabulous beaches and thick tropical forests entice every visitor. Travel to the coffee growing region, and continue towards the archaeological zone of San Agustín. Over deep abysses and high Andean Mountain peaks, the trip will then take you to the lively Caribbean Coast, visiting Cartagena, one of the most beautiful and fascinating cities in the whole of Latin America.



[VIEW FULL ITINERARY](#)

## Highlights of Colombia Tour to Bogotá & San Agustín

**8 Days — Bogotá, Villa de Leyva, and San Agustín**

Bogotá is the capital of Colombia, located at an altitude of 2600m above sea level, along the central chain of the Andes mountains. This urban center pulsates with a combination of colonial and modern styles, and over time, has transformed into a world-class cosmopolitan city. It is as if time has stood still in Villa de Leyva, the small colonial town of cobbled streets and wooden balconies. And just outside the village of San Agustín, the assortment of archaeological remains dating from before the Spanish conquest can be found.



[VIEW FULL ITINERARY](#)

## Boyaca Colombia Tour Package

**5 Days — Colonial Andes Towns in Colombia's Countryside**

Step back into the past, as you visit this small colonial town of cobblestone streets and handcrafted wooden balconies, only 4 hours out of Bogotá. Villa de Leyva is set in spectacular countryside and is the departure point for trips to Iguaque National Park, with its stunning views of the Andes and mystical lake, also called Iguaque. On this 5-day tour, you will depart from Bogotá, head towards Tenza, followed by Paipa; a quiet, small town, until finally reaching the charming Villa de Leyva.



[VIEW FULL ITINERARY](#)

## Colombia Coffee Region Tour

### 5 Days – Colombia Coffee Zone

The Colombian Coffee Region, situated on the western slopes of the Andes, is composed of 3 main areas: Quindío, Risaralda, and Caldas, their capital cities are Armenia, Pereira, and Manizales. On this Colombian Coffee Region Tour, you can spend 5 days exploring the Colombian coffee zones in Armenia or Pereira. Spend the night at coffee plantations, and can wake up to fresh java each morning.



[VIEW FULL ITINERARY](#)

## Colombia Archaeology Tour to San Agustín Ruins

### 8 Days – San Agustin

Just outside the village of San Agustín can be found a well known (yet at the same time relatively unexplored), assortment of archeological remains dating from before the Spanish conquest. Here, between the 6th and 14th centuries AD (a period approximately concurrent with the development of the Inca and Maya empires), a mysterious culture grew and flourished, leaving its mark in many tombs, burial chambers and large sculptures of carved stone.



[VIEW FULL ITINERARY](#)

## Santander Colombia Tour Package

### 4 Days – Santander

Santander is a major mountainous region of Colombia, with incredibly beautiful landscapes, very friendly people, easy access from Bogotá and charming villages. It's a perfect place for almost all kinds of adventure, honeymoons, and ecological trips.



[VIEW FULL ITINERARY](#)

## Colombia Gourmet Tour

### 8 Days – Bogotá, Cartagena, Coffee Region, Gourmet Restaurants

Taste the delicious Caribbean and Andean Colombian cuisine on this Colombia gourmet tour. We can create a personalized tour of Colombia that includes visits to local markets, cooking classes, typical restaurants, coffee-growing regions, and more. Whether you want to sip some Colombian Aguardiente brandy, try the Caribbean-infused seafood in Cartagena, or taste gourmet cuisine in a restaurant, we can arrange those tours that most interest you.



[VIEW FULL ITINERARY](#)



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