

COLOMBIA



CULTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIP TO COLOMBIA. THE BEST KEPT SECRET

DATES: SPRING – SUMMER OF 2021

CODE: XPCO01

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INTRODUCTION

Colombia is the fourth largest country in South America and the third country with the largest water resources in the world. Although it only represents 0.7% of the earth's surface, about 14% of the planet's flora and fauna and 7% of the Amazon rainforest are found in Colombian territory.

In Colombia there are 1,860 registered bird varieties that represent 19% of all species in the world and 60% of those existing in South America. It also ranks second among the countries that exhibit the greatest diversity of butterflies in the world (3,000 families and 14 species). And if this were not enough, it has the particularity of being bathed by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and crossed by the spectacular Andes mountain range. In 2006 the prestigious Lonely Planet chose Colombia as one of the top 10 destinations in the world.

In February 2010, Colombia was recognized as "the best destination" in the world at the most prestigious tourist fair in Europe - "Times Destinations Travel Show" in London. According to the New York Times, Colombia was ranked second after Istanbul, and among 1,700 tourist destinations, in the list of the most interesting places to visit in 2011. And despite this, Colombia remains a little tourist destination (except for the areas of the Caribbean and the Coffee Axis), emerging, unknown and very attractive, with great multicultural and ethnic diversity (it has 84 indigenous ethnic groups), a wild and overwhelming nature, colonial cities anchored in the past and pre-Columbian archaeological sites that are UNESCO World Heritage Site.

And although El Dorado was never found, many believe that this great pre-Columbian treasure is actually found in the country itself and in its charming and hospitable people.

Welcome to Colombia!

Trip type:	Private / By request
Category:	Ethnicities
Duration:	16 days
Recommended time:	Spring - Summer
Technical level:	2/5
Comfort level:	2/5
Wilderness level:	3/5

MAP



ITINERARY

DAY 1. FLIGHT TO BOGOTÁ (COLOMBIA)

Arrival at the El Dorado airport in Bogotá, reception and transfer to the Hotel Casa de la Vega or a similar category, and located in the Historic Center of Candelaria.

Hotel accommodation, Bogotá.

DAY 2. FLIGHT BOGOTÁ – PITALITO – SAN AGUSTÍN

Breakfast.

After breakfast we will make a brief visit to Bogotá, the capital and the largest city in Colombia (8 million inhabitants). It is a point of convergence for people from all over the country, it is diverse and multicultural and combines modern buildings with others that evoke its colonial past. We will visit the historic center and the La Candelaria neighborhood. Then we will transfer to El Dorado International Airport (Bogotá) to take a flight to Pitalito. Arrival at Contador airport and transfer to San Agustín. Free afternoon to visit this interesting rural town.

Hotel accommodation, San Agustín.

DAY 3. SAN AGUSTÍN – SAN AGUSTIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Breakfast.

After breakfast we will start our visit to the spectacular San Agustín Archaeological Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. It is one of the oldest necropolises in the world and the largest complex of megalithic monuments in America. Belonging to the San Agustín culture (1000 BC -1500 AD), it is one of the greatest mysteries of the ancient pre-Columbian civilizations. We will start the visit to the Mesitas Archaeological Park composed of the following places: Embankment, Mesitas A, B, C and D, Ceremonial Fountain of Lavapatas, Alto del Lavapatas, Forest of Statues and Luis Duque Gómez Museum. After lunch at noon at a local restaurant, we will continue our tour of the archaeological sites of La Chaquira, El Tablon, La Pelota and El Purutal. After an exciting day visiting the archaeological remains of this culture of jaguar shamans, we will return to San Agustín.

Hotel accommodation, San Agustín.

DAY 4. SAN AGUSTÍN - STRAIT OF THE MAGDALENA RIVER - ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF IDOLS AND ALTO DE LAS PIEDRAS - SALTO DE BORDONES - CASTADA DE MORTIÑO - SAN AGUSTÍN

Breakfast.

After breakfast we will move to the Magdalena River Strait, the most important in Colombia, which for about 1,500 km runs through the country from south to north until it empties into the Caribbean Sea. Here it can be seen in the south of Huila with a width that does not exceed 3 m and in a landscape of great natural beauty.

Then we will visit the Obando Museum Park, Idols Archaeological Park, Alto de Las Piedras, the impressive Salto de Bordones and the majestic Mortiño Waterfall. After lunch at a local restaurant we will return to San Agustín, where we will visit the interesting Pre-Columbian Museum Villa Real.

Hotel accommodation, San Agustin.

DAY 5. SAN AGUSTÍN – POPAYÁN – SILVIA CAUCA

Breakfast.

First thing in the morning we will leave for the city of Popayán, via Isnos and Paletara and we will have breakfast along the way. Crossing the Purace National Natural Park we will stop in the town of Coconuco, where the majority of the indigenous community of the same name is concentrated. We will arrive in Popayán to visit this colonial city, capital of the department of Cauca and also known as "the white city" and which after various earthquakes was rebuilt in the 17th century following a Neoclassical style. The Popayán Easter Processions were declared by UNESCO in 2009 as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. We will go to the Natural History museums, Guillermo León Valencia Museum, Archdiocesan Museum of Religious Art. Then we will take a walk through the historic center, Caldas Park, Morro del Tulcán, Puente del Humilladero and Panteón de los Próceres. Then we will have lunch in a local restaurant where we will taste the Cauca food, made with traditional methods of preparation through oral tradition and that in 2005, UNESCO designated the city of Popayán as a City of Gastronomy for its variety and significance for heritage intangible of Colombians. In the afternoon we will continue our tour through the department of Cauca, where 26 indigenous groups live, until we reach Silvia Cauca. Hotel accommodation, Silvia Cauca.

DAY 6. INDIGENOUS MARKET OF SILVIA CAUCA - TOWN - PYRAMID OF INZA - TIERRADENTRO

Breakfast.

Today will be a day of anthropological cultural immersion. In the morning we will visit the Silvia Cauca peasant and artisan market where the Misak or "Piurek" indigenous people gather every Tuesday to sell their local products. Then we will visit the Silvia Cauca area, known as the Swiss of Colombia, since it is green and mountainous. We will visit the Casa del Taita Payán de los Guambianos: an ancestral space for learning and harmony with others. We will approach Pueblito, a traditional settlement of the Misak located in a bucolic landscape and enjoy the hospitality of the villagers of the Silvia valley. Lunch at a local restaurant. In the afternoon we will travel to Tierradentro through Totoró and Inzá. Here we will stop to visit the mysterious Inzá Pyramid, an important pre-Hispanic religious center of which little is known. After touring the tunnels and interior cavities excavated in the rocks of this site, we will move to the small town of Tierradentro.

Hotel accommodation, Tierradentro.

DAY 7. TIERRADENTRO ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Breakfast.

Today we will dedicate the whole day to visit the spectacular archaeological reserve of Tierradentro, declared in 1995 as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and land of the Paeces or Nasa indigenous people (the largest indigenous group in Colombia with 120,000 individuals). It is the largest concentration of hypogea, monumental underground tombs, in the entire pre-Hispanic era. The culture of Tierradentro (1000 BC -1500 AD), was formed by societies of farmers who carved mortuary chambers, carved stone statues and worked in goldsmithing. We will start the tour visiting the Alto del Aguacate (about 5 hours walk) where 64 tombs have been found with naturalistic representations in some of them. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will continue our visit to the magnificent hypogea of El Duende, Segovia, El Tablon and the Chapel of San Andrés de Pisimbala (about 3 hours walk). Some of these hypogea are considered to be the most elaborate in all of America. Finally we will finish our visit at the Tierradentro Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum.

Hotel accommodation, Tierradentro.

DAY 8. TIERRADENTRO – TATACOA DESERT – NEIVA – ARMENIA

Breakfast.

Departure first thing in the morning. We will drive to Neiva and Villavieja and have breakfast on the way. Before noon we will arrive at the impressive Tatacoa desert that is divided into two areas: red desert and gray desert and where we will see El Cuzco, Los Hoyos and La Piscina el Oasis (there is the possibility of bathing in this natural pool of water). We will return to Villavieja to see the interesting Totumo and Paleontological museums. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will go to the Benito Salas airport in the city of Neiva to take a flight to Armenia. Arrival in Armenia and transfer to the Centenario or similar category hotel.

Hotel accommodation, Armenia.

DAY 9. ARMENIA – FILANDIA – SALENTO. EJE CAFETERO TOUR

Breakfast.

After breakfast at the hotel we will move to the charming town of Filandia to visit its craft center and access the viewpoint with its beautiful views. We will continue our tour through the Coffee Axis to the impressive Cócora Valley where we will trek (3 h) through soft terrain to observe the famous wax palm trees, the tallest in the world and which reach a height of 60 meters. There is the option (check price) to take a one to three hour tour to the Peña de la Virgen or to the waterfalls and cloud forest with an expert guide. After lunch at a local restaurant we will go to Salento, another beautiful town of the Coffee Axis and where we can visit the artisan market and observe its colorful houses.

Hotel accommodation, Salento.

DAY 10. SALENTO - LOS NEVADOS PARK - PEREIRA

Breakfast.

At around 4:00 in the morning we will leave for one of the most impressive places in Colombia, Parque Los Nevados; We will have breakfast along the way. At 9:00 a.m. we will start our tour to enjoy the scenic beauty of the place. We will make the journey from Las Brisas until we reach the Valley of the Tombs located at 4,450 meters above sea level and a place of pilgrimage for the indigenous communities in the area. From here, and in the middle of a desert of earth and lava, we can observe the majestic Nevado del Ruiz volcano (5,311 meters), which is the northernmost of the active volcanoes in the Andes volcanic belt. After lunch at a local restaurant we will move to the city of Pereira. Along the way, there is the option of bathing in the magnificent thermal waters of Santa Rosa de Cabal.

Hotel accommodation, Pereira.

DAY 11. PEREIRA – SAN JUAN DE GIRÓN. SANTANDER TOUR

Breakfast.

After breakfast, we will transfer to Matecaña airport to catch a flight to Palonegro de Lebrija. Then we will move to the beautiful colonial town of San Juan de Girón (National Monument of Colombia), with its cobblestone streets, houses with white walls and clay tile roofs. We will visit the Basilica of San Juan Bautista, Our Lady of the Snows chapel and the Gallineral de Girón Park. Hotel accommodation, San Juan de Giron.

DAY 12. BUCARAMANGA – CAÑÓN DE CHICAMOCHA – GUANE – BARICHARA

Breakfast.

After breakfast, we will travel by car to cross the spectacular Chicamocha Canyon that in 2009 was selected to be part of one of the 7 New Natural Wonders of the Planet. With its 227 km length and 2,000 meters depth, it constitutes one of the largest geographical features in the world. The views from Los Gallinaceos are capable of taking your breath away. During the tour we will pass through the town of San Gil, where there is the option of practicing adventure sports such as rafting down the Chicamocha River (check prices). After so many emotions accumulated we will continue our trip to the charming colonial town of Guane, to visit the church of Santa Lucía de Guane, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and the Archaeological and Paleontological Museum. Then we will make a short trek (5 km) along the Camino Real to know the historical areas of the pre-Columbian Guane culture that disappeared before the arrival of the Spanish. Along the way we will have the opportunity to see some viewpoints and the Salto del Mico that is in the Fonce river canyon. This circuit will take us directly to the beautiful colonial town of Barichara, National Historic Heritage and considered one of the most beautiful towns in Colombia. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will walk the cobbled streets of Barichara, with its 18th century colonial buildings that are preserved in perfect condition, and visit the Park for the Arts, Camino Real, Casa de la Cultura Emilio Pradilla González, and the centers handmade. Hotel accommodation, Barichara.

DAY 13. BARICHARA – VILLA DE LEYVA. BOYACÁ TOUR

Breakfast.

After breakfast, we will go to the town of Villa de Leyva, considered by many to be the most beautiful town in Colombia, National Historical Heritage and which has the largest cobbled square in all of America. After lunch at a local restaurant we will see the historic center to see the old adobe buildings and their beautiful facades. Founded on June 12, 1572, Villa de Leyva is undoubtedly a jewel recognized for its colonial architecture. We will visit the Casa de Juan de Castellanos, the Casona La Guaca, the Casa Quintero, the Plaza Mayor and the Casa Museo de Antonio Nariño.

Hotel accommodation, Barichara.

DAY 14. VILLA DE LEYVA - MONASTERIO DEL SANTO ECCEHOMO - MUISCA ASTRONOMIC CENTER - EL VOLADOR - EL FOSIL - TERRACOTA'S HOUSE - VILLA DE LEYVA

Breakfast.

After breakfast, we will go to the Santo Eccehomo monastery, declared a national monument and inhabited until 2003. Here we can appreciate important works of religious art. Then we will visit the astronomical center of the pre-Columbian culture of the Muisca, the town of the famous myth of "El Dorado". Here we will be able to observe a solar calendar and a lunar calendar formed by 56 columns and some pre-Hispanic tombs that were found in 1990. The phallic columns that complete this site, and which were found in 2006, symbolized the fertilization of "Mother Earth", the Pachamama. Then we will go to El Volador hill, where there is an important archaeological site with truly magnificent ancient pictograms. This place constitutes the most important rock art deposit in the province of Ricaurte Alto, made up of sets of pictographs from apparently different historical periods at heights ranging between 3 and 20 meters above the Sáchica river. Later we will go to the Fossil Museum to observe the 7.5 meter long Kronosaurus Boyacensis Fossil discovered by some farmers in 1977. To end the day we will visit the Terracotta House which is the largest in the world with 3 floors.

Hotel accommodation, Barichara.

DAY 15. VILLA DE LEYVA – SUTAMARCHARÁN – CHIQUINQUIRÁ – ZIPAQUIRÁ – BOGOTÁ

Breakfast.

After breakfast we will go to the municipality of Ráquira to see its precious pottery works and recognized as the artisan capital of Colombia and one of the most beautiful towns in Boyacá. Another must-see place is Sutamarchán where we can savor the delights of chorizos and longanizas. Then we will go through the municipality of Chiquinquirá where you will have the opportunity to visit the promising city of Colombia, the house of the patron saint of Colombians, the Virgin of Chiquinquirá and the cradle of poets, writers and artists of national importance. Then we will move to Zipaquirá in the department of Cundinamarca, where you can have the experience of being in the only temple in the

world located 180 meters underground: the spectacular Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá. In 2007, through a contest to choose the 7 Wonders of Colombia, the Salt Cathedral obtained the largest vote, making it the No. 1 Wonder of Colombia and was proposed to be among the New Seven Wonders of the Modern World. After this spectacular visit, we will have lunch at a local restaurant and return to the city of Bogotá.

Hotel accommodation, Bogotá.

DAY 16: BOGOTA – CITY OF ORIGIN FLIGHT

Breakfast.

After breakfast, we will take advantage of the day to visit the Plaza de Bolívar, Casa de los Comuneros, Plaza Bolívar, Avenida Séptima, the Cathedral, the Fernando Botero Museum, the Gold Museum. Lunch at a local restaurant. We will finish the day at Cerro de Monserrate, which will offer us beautiful views of the city of Bogotá and will allow us to say goodbye to this beautiful and charming country. Then we will transfer to El Dorado International Airport to take a flight back to Spain at night. End of the program.

NOTES

The program will vary depending on the weather, the terrain conditions and the decisions of the local guides at that time. The guide will adapt the program and activities according to the group.

Due to its magnitude, the tours of the San Agustín and Tierradentro Archaeological Park involve walks of between 5-8 hours a day, through easy but sometimes ascending terrain.

In the routes to know San Agustín, Isnos, Popayán, Silvia, Tierradentro and Desierto de la Tatacoa, most of the roads are unpaved, so it is necessary to use 4x4 cars.

Los Nevados National Park. Entrance is only allowed for people between 6 and 70 years old. Recommendations: bring warm clothing (jacket, raincoat, gloves, hat and scarf), good grip shoes and hard soles, water minimum one liter per person, sun cream, lip balm, glasses with UV protection. Also bring change clothes in case it rains (stored in the vehicle), toilet paper, camera and passport.

PRICES

per person:

Group of 2 pax: **2.680 €**

The program can be adjusted to the prerequisites of those interested, it is also important to make reservations in advance to maintain the rates and indicate alternative departure dates taking into account whether it is high or low season.

The price is subject to change due to the fluctuation of the Colombian peso against the euro.

IT INCLUDES

- 15 nights of hotel accommodation
- Diet according to program.
- Spanish-speaking local X-plore guide
- Private transportation by car and 4x4
- Driver throughout the tour
- Gasoline
- Local guides in the main tourist attractions
- Permits and tickets
- Transfer to airports
- Activities mentioned in the program.

DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International and domestic flights
- Airport taxes
- Colombian visa
- Tips and personal expenses
- Drinks and meals not indicated as included
- Travel insurance
- Excess luggage
- Clothing / individual equipment, backpacks, clothing, etc. (contact us for advice)
- All services not specified in the "It includes" section

IMÁGENES DEL VIAJE

