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# COLOMBIA

## The Phoenix of South America

Don't judge a book by its cover or a country by what has happened in the past.

If you have certain preconceptions about Colombia, we've found the perfect way to reconfigure them. This adventure will take you to the country's heart as you wander through museums, explore its national parks, and get a firm grasp on the Colombian way of life.

☎ (03) 8319 4962

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### **Day 1 Bogota**

Drive to Bogota for a walking tour of the city and an introduction to the history and intricacies of current Colombian culture. You'll see the Botero Museum, a permanent exhibition of works by Colombia's most famous artist; the Casa de la Moneda, where you'll learn the history of Bogota through the currency; and the Gold Museum, which houses one of the finest collections of pre-Hispanic gold in the world.

Overnight: Hotel Morrison 84 or similar

### **Day 2 Botoga**

Get ready for a full day's trekking in Chicaque National Park. Explore oak forests and waterfalls as you transverse part of the 18-kilometre track. The park is home to spectacled bears, deers, tapirs, pumas, Andean condors, jaguars, turkeys, woolly monkeys, ocelots and toucans.

Overnight: Hotel Morrison 84 or similar

### **Day 3 Villa de Leyva**

Head to Villa de Leyva, one of the few towns in Colombia to have preserved much of its original colonial architecture. On route, stop at Zipaquirá, famous for its Salt Cathedral carved underground in a functioning salt mine. You'll also visit a tejo parlour, where you'll learn to play this Colombian sport and watch locals in action.

Overnight: Hotel Getsemani or similar

### **Day 4 Villa de Leyva**

During a full-day tour of Iguaque National Park's you'll see its eight lakes and numerous plants and animals that call it home. Watch out for the famous frailejon, a high-altitude succulent that's endemic to the Andean region.

### **Day 5 Villa de Leyva to Medellín**

Transfer to José María Córdova International Airport for your flight to Medellín. The rest of the day and evening is at your leisure.

Overnight: Hotel Florencia Plaza or similar

### **Day 6 Medellín**

Today is spent exploring Arví Park and Santa Helena atop the mountains that surround Medellín. At Santa Helena, visit a farm growing flowers for export – it's one of Colombia's most important industries.

Overnight: Hotel Florencia Plaza or similar

### **Day 7 Santa Marta**

Witness the transformation of one of the region's most troubled neighbourhoods, Medellín's barrios. Explore the working-class neighbourhood of San Javier then transfer to the airport for your flight to Santa Marta, the first Spanish settlement in Colombia.

Overnight: Hotel Santa Maria Real or similar

### **Day 8 Santa Marta**

Transfer to Tayrona National Park for a full day of trekking to El Pueblito, where you can still see some of the original paths and foundations of dwellings from the indigenous tribes inhabiting the area. During your walk you can look out for some of the Kogi tribes-people who still live in the park. Your guide will explain the culture and history of the park and point out any wildlife.

Overnight: Hotel Santa Maria Real or similar

### **Day 9 Santa Marta**

Today's hike will take you through the village of Mincahi, with its 500 inhabitants. Swim in natural river pools and spy some of region's different bird species. This area was once home to the ancient Tairona culture, whose traditions still exist today among the highland indigenous peoples, including the Kogi, Arhuaco, Wiwa and Kankuamo tribal groupings.

Overnight: Hotel Santa Maria Real or similar

### **Day 10 Cartagena**

A half-day expedition to La Boquilla fishing village will let you meet the locals and experience their community. You'll also explore the mangroves by canoe, learning about life on the water and identifying the wealth of flora and fauna that inhabits this rich ecosystem.

Overnight: Bantu Hotel Boutique or similar

### **Day 11 Cartagena**

Visit the Colombia National Aviary, which features 2000 birds representing 140 species. Here you'll see toucans, herons, harpy eagles, flamingos and Colombia's national bird, the Andean condor. Then visit the San Pedro Claver Cloister Monastery and Museum, built in homage to the protector of slaves, San Pedro.

### **Day 12 Cartagena**

You can spend today however you like, although there is the option to join a tour to Gente de Ma, a resort in the Rosario Islands, one of the most beautiful archipelagos in the Caribbean. This group of 27 islands is surrounded by coral reefs, and is one of the 46 Natural National Parks of Colombia.

Overnight: Bantu Hotel Boutique or similar

### **Day 13 Depart Colombia**

The morning is yours until it is time to transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

## **Inclusions**

- Return airport transfers
  - 12 nights' accommodation
  - Private transportation
  - Meals as per the itinerary
  - Domestic flights as per the itinerary
  - Services of local bilingual guides
  - Entrance fees and sightseeing as per the itinerary
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## **Exclusions**

- International flights to/from Colombia
- Visas
- Items of a personal nature
- Tipping