



## Colombia

**Bogotá - Caño Cristales - Tatacoa - San Agustín - Popayán - Cartagena -  
Tayrona**

16 Days

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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- Day 2 City tour
- Day 3 Transfer Hotel - Airport

### Bogotá - La Macarena

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- What to bring?

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### Tatacoa Desert

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- Day 14 Free day
- Day 15 Transfer hotel - airport



## Santa Marta - Bogotá

Day 15 Flight Santa Marta - Bogotá

## Bogotá

Day 15 Transfer Airport - Hotel

Day 16 Transfer Hotel - Airport



## ITINERARY

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### Bogotá

In the Andes, at 2600 meters altitude, we find Colombia's capital, Bogotá, with an estimated 9 million inhabitants. With residents from all around the globe and a thriving cultural scene, Bogotá is a city that has a lot to offer. The metropolis has several museums, such as the Gold Museum, the National Museum and the Botero Museum, where you can immerse yourself in Colombian history and culture. In addition, Bogotá is known for its graffiti street art. Amazing murals that often portray a political or historical message can be found throughout the city. Bogotá is also a popular city among cycling enthusiasts; nowhere else in Latin America will you find more bike paths in the city, and consequently the bicycle is a frequently seen means of transport. Most travellers go to the Candelaria district, the beautiful colonial centre of Bogota where it is enjoyable to stroll around the sloping streets with their colourful colonial houses. To the north, there are more posh, modern neighbourhoods, with world-class restaurants, as well as cocktail bars and cafés.

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### Transfer Airport - Hotel

#### Day 1

Arrival at Bogotá airport. When leaving, look for a sign with your names. Transfer to your hotel (+/- 40 min, +/- 20 km).

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### Hotel Casa Deco

#### 2 Nights



Casa Deco is located in the colonial neighborhood of La Candelaria, within walking distance of Plaza Bolívar, the Gold Museum and many cafes and restaurants. The hotel rooms are decorated with wooden floors and furniture, and mosaics. The hotel also has a restaurant, bar and a rooftop terrace with views of the mountains and the Church of Monserrate.

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### City tour

#### Day 2

You will be picked up at the hotel by a local guide and start your city tour. First, you will walk through La Candelaria, Bogotá's historic center, and afterwards you will visit the famous Gold Museum as well as the Botero Museum. You will also take the cable car up to Cerro Monserrate, which has a great view over Bogotá at an altitude of 3000 meters. You will head back to the hotel in the afternoon.

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### Transfer Hotel - Airport

#### Day 3

You will be picked up from your hotel for your transfer to Bogotá airport.

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## Bogotá - La Macarena

### Charterflight Bogotá - La Macarena

#### Day 3

The Bogotá - La Macarena is a charter flight. This means that there are no fixed departure times. For this reason you will be picked up at your hotel early in the morning. You will be taken to the Terpel gas station, located near the Bogota airport, where you will meet the staff in charge around 5:00 am. From there you will be taken to Catam, a nearby private airport where the charter flight will depart between 6:30 and 7:00 am.

The baggage allowance is 10 kilos. You may also carry a small bag in the cabin. You can leave the rest of your luggage at your hotel in Bogota. If you are not returning to a hotel in Bogota, there is the possibility to store your luggage at the airport.

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## La Macarena

The Caño Cristales River, in the vast Sierra de La Macarena Natural Park, is undoubtedly the most remarkable river in Colombia and one of the most beautiful in the world. The 'River of Five Colors' owes its nickname to a special natural phenomenon in which the algae located at the bottom of the river give the water its red, blue, green, yellow and brown hues. The National Park itself is also an iconic place, located on the plateau of the Sierra de La Macarena, a natural reserve of 6200 square kilometers where no less than three different ecosystems come together: the Amazon rainforest, the forests of the Andes and the savannah of Los Llanos. The result is a natural reserve with great biodiversity, with more than 2000 species of plants, 550 species of birds, 8 species of monkeys, jaguars and pumas. For a long time the area was inaccessible due to the Colombian conflict, but since 2010 the park has been safe for tourists to visit.

Note: the yellow fever vaccine is recommended in this area.

Recommended clothing: Since the use of bug sprays and sunscreen is not allowed in Caño Cristales to avoid damaging the river's ecosystem, it is recommended long-sleeved clothing and a hat that covers the entire head and neck, as well as hiking boots.

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### 3-Day Tour Caño Cristales

\*Please note that the itinerary may vary according to the dispositions of National Parks and/or Cormacarena.

#### Day 1

Today you will start your journey to see one of the most representative natural wonders of Colombia, the Serranía de La Macarena, home of the river of the 5 colors. A driver will pick you up at your hotel and take you to the Bogota airport. Through an alternate gate next to the airport you will depart on a charter flight to La Macarena. At La Macarena airport you will be met by a local guide and receive a brief introduction to the environmental regulations that apply in this area. After the introduction, you will go to the hotel to register and prepare for the first hike, then you will leave the village to visit one of the 4 sites below (see table 1) which is subject to a permit granted by the local environmental authorities (Cormacarena or National Parks). During the activity, you will be given a packed lunch wrapped in bijao leaves to take with you. Around 15:00 you will return to the town of La Macarena, where you will have dinner and spend the night, the guide will inform you about the schedule for the next day, the rest of the day is free to rest.

<b>Route 1</b> Cristalitos and Viewpoint	<b>Route 2</b> Caño Piedra	<b>Route 3</b> Rio el Lozada
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#### Day 2

Today you will have a unique landscape in front of you, the river of the 5 colors. After breakfast, you will leave at the time indicated by the local authorities for a visit to the Caño Cristales River. During a boat ride of approximately 20 minutes on the Guayabero River you will be able to appreciate the local flora and wildlife. After the boat trip, you will take a short (20 minutes) 4x4 ride to the Cajucho spring. This is the starting point of an ecological hike with four possible routes (See Table 2). The route you will follow is subject to the authorization of the local environmental authorities. Also today, during the hike, you will carry a lunch wrapped in bijao leaves. The final destination is the amazing Caño Cristales River and its tributaries where you can enjoy a refreshing swim in its crystal clear waters surrounded by beautiful scenery. Finally in the afternoon you will return to the town of La Macarena to have dinner and participate in a cultural integration program, the Parrando Llanero. This activity will present the folklore, gastronomy and typical music of the region. This activity only takes place with a minimum of 8 people (from the same group or mixed with other groups).

**Note:** The routes during both days depend on the number of visitors in the park, the physical condition of the visitor and the permission granted by the local authorities.

<b>Trail 1 Los Pianos (High difficulty level)</b> Caño Escondido, Cascada de la Virgen, Cascada Los Pianos, Piedra de la Macarena, Paso Mojado	<b>Trail 2 Salto del Águila (High difficulty)</b> Stairs, Pozo Cuadrado, Piedra Negra or Cascada Negra, Cascada Salto del Aguila, Tablas de la Ley
<b>Trail 3 Los Pailones (Medium difficulty)</b> Monte de las Marimbas, Los Estrechos, Pailón Pool	<b>Trail 4 Caño Escondido (Low degree of difficulty)</b> Karol Cristal Pool, Piscinas del Turista, Los Ochos, Los Cuarzos, Tapetes

#### Day 3

After breakfast, you will travel to Caño Cristales in the same way as the previous day (20 minutes by boat on the Guayabero River + 20 minutes by 4x4) and then follow again one of the 4 possible routes. The route you will follow

will depend on the flight time and the permission granted by the local authorities. You will return to the village for lunch. The return flight to Bogota (Cessna or DC3) is between 12:00 and 17:00.



### What to bring?

- "- Enough cash (there is only one ATM available in La Macarena and it does not always work)
- +/- 6,000 COP airport tax (per person)
- +/- 40,000 COP emergency tax (per person)
- +/- 200,000 COP national mark tax (per person)
- Reusable hard water bottle (plastic bottles are not allowed in Caño Cristales)
- Sunscreen and mosquito repellent (only to use in the town of La Macarena, they are not allowed when you go to swim in Caño Cristales)
- Sturdy walking shoes that can get wet
- Extra pair of shoes or flip flops
- Raincoat
- Enough socks
- Clothes for hot and humid weather, and for the night when it cools down a bit
- Long-sleeved clothing (sun protection and mosquitoes)
- Swimsuit and towel
- Possible swimming / snorkeling gear (in certain parts of the river you can swim)
- Camera
- Flashlight"

## La Macarena - Neiva

### Charterflight La Macarena - Neiva

#### Day 5

The flight La Macarena is a charter flight. This means that there are no fixed departure times. The authorities in La Macarena will let you know how at what time you will be picked up at the hotel for the flight back to Neiva.

## Tatacoa Desert

Characterized by its ochre and gray colors, the Tatacoa Desert is the second largest arid zone in the country. It is located in the department of Huila near the Villavieja municipality. This desert is a dry tropical forest that covers a total of 330 km<sup>2</sup> and has an average temperature of 40 °C throughout the year. Here you can find snakes, rodents, spiders, scorpions and dry land among which cacti grow up to 4 and 5 meters high. Because of its privileged location close to the Equator, from the desert you can perform astronomical observations and see at least 88 constellations, meteor showers, shooting stars, etc.

### Transfer airport - hotel

#### Day 5

Arrival at Benito Salas Airport in Neiva. When leaving the airport, look for the person holding a sign with your names. Transfer to the hotel.

### Hotel Sueño Real Tatacoa

#### 2 Nights



Sueño Real Tatacoa is located on the outskirts of Villavieja. The hotel has a garden, bar, swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna and parking. It offers rooms ranging from single rooms to family rooms, with air conditioning or fan.

### Tour Tatacoa Desert

#### Day 6

A driver and a local guide will pick you up to visit the Tatacoa Desert. After a 15-minute drive, you will start the hike through the Cuzco canyon, which is the red part of the desert. The guide will explain you about the special geological formations of this area, and about the local flora and fauna. Afterwards, you will visit the surreal lunar landscapes of the grey part of the desert, where you will also have the opportunity to cool off in a natural pool in the middle of the landscape. You will be taken back to the hotel afterwards.

### Transport Villavieja - San Agustín

#### Day 7

Transport from Villavieja to San Agustín. A (+/- 7 hours, +/- 280 km) trip through Neiva as well as the Andean landscapes of the department of Huila, passing through various towns and along the Magdalena River.



## San Agustín

The town of San Agustín, in the southwest of the department of Huila, is world famous thanks to the San Agustín Archaeological Park, an archaeological site with hundreds of statues of animals, people and monsters carved out of volcanic rock. These statues and tombs are believed to have been made by pre-Columbian people who inhabited this area, somewhere between 50 and 400 A.D. Along with San Agustín Archaeological Park, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1995, there are two other sites a few kilometers away near the town of Isnos: Alto de los Ídolos and Alto de las Piedras. Further away from these sites there are even more mysterious archaeological sites that you can visit. In short, this area is a must-see for archeology lovers. If that is not enough, you can also admire the second tallest waterfall in Colombia, Salto de Bordonos, which falls from a dazzling height of 490 meters. In addition, the Andean mountain landscapes of Huila are also known for their excellent coffee.

### Hotel Akawanka Lodge

2 Nights



Akawanka Lodge is located in the green Andes in San Agustín, a 750-meter walk from the archaeological park of the same name. The hotel is a farmhouse with typical architecture of this region, with white walls, wooden terraces and a tile roof, surrounded by a large garden and forests. The hotel has comfortable rooms and suites decorated in a rustic way with lots of wood and pieces of local artisans, and private bathrooms. Guests can relax in the spa with a sauna and massage treatments, go hiking

on the trails of the hotel's private grounds and enjoy the views with a drink at the bar. Here you will also find a restaurant that uses fresh produce from its own garden.

### Tour Archaeological Park & horseback riding

Day 8

A local guide and a driver will pick you up at the hotel for the 15-minute drive to the entrance of San Agustín Archaeological Park. During this half-day tour, you will walk through the Sculpture Forest, which is a cloud forest where various statues have been placed along the way. You will also visit the park's museum and the Lavapatás fountain, where rock drawings were carved into the stone riverbed. You will also walk through different plains with statues and tombs of mysterious pre-Columbian communities, and climb a hill to have a nice view of the entire area. After the visit to the archaeological park you will continue to explore the area of San Agustín on horseback. Afterwards you will be taken back to the hotel.

### Transport San Agustín - Popayán

Day 9

Transport from San Agustín to Popayán, a drive of approximately (+/- 5 hours, +/- 150 km). You will be taken directly through Puracé National Park and enjoy views of the páramos and volcanoes of this nature reserve. Because the road is largely unpaved, the duration of the journey will depend on road conditions.

## Popayan

Popayán, known as "the White City" of Colombia, is one of the most beautiful colonial cities in the country, founded in 1537 by the Spanish. The city, located at an altitude of 1737 meters in the Pubenza Valley, is located between two mountain ranges. Thanks to its mild climate, it has been a haven for wealthy (sugarcane) plantation owners in recent centuries. Plantation owners from Valle del Cauca began building houses, monasteries, and churches in Popayán in the 17th century. Today, Popayán is a friendly city with colonial architecture, a great environment and excellent cuisine: the city was declared a UNESCO City of Gastronomy in 2005.

### Hotel Camino Real

2 Nights



Hotel Camino Real is a traditional hotel located in the historic center of Popayán, just around the corner from the main square. Located in a colonial building from 1591, the hotel was the first school for women in Colombia at that time. The hotel has spacious and comfortable rooms, some with a balcony as well as a patio and a restaurant with regional dishes of a high gastronomic level.

### City tour

Day 10

A local guide will pick you up at the hotel for a nice walk through Popayán. You will explore the old center of the whitewashed colonial city on foot and enter various churches, monasteries and the museum of religious art, among other things. Learn about the history of the White City, which for a long time was considered the most important city in southern Colombia, and try the pipián empanadas with a champús drink, both local specialties. The 3-hour tour ends back at the hotel.

### Transport Popayán - Silvia - Cali

Day 11

A driver will pick you up from the hotel in Popayán for your transport to Cali (+/- 5 hours, +/- 210 km), a trip through the mountains to the lower Cauca Valley. If you travel on Tuesday, you can make a stop in the town of Silvia, at an altitude of 2,600 meters in the mountains. Silvia is known for its market on Tuesdays, when native Guambianos from the area travel to the town to sell their products on the market. The Guambianos are one of the most traditional indigenous communities in Colombia, with their own costumes, agricultural techniques, and language. If you want to take a photo, ask for permission in advance. At the end of the tour you will continue your trip to Cali.

## Cali - Cartagena

### Flight Cali - Cartagena

#### Day 11

Flight from Cali to Cartagena with Avianca.

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Baggage policy:

- 1 piece weighing a maximum of 23 kilograms (50 pounds)
  - 1 carry-on piece weighing a maximum of 10 kilograms (22 pounds)
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## Cartagena

Cartagena de Indias is by far the most beautiful city in the Caribbean. Its centuries-old walled-in city center, that has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, seems to have been made for people to wander around for hours. It's a maze of colorful colonial houses on narrow streets and alleys ending in shadowy squares where, in the afternoon, street musicians and dancers show the best of the swinging Caribbean culture. But there is also plenty to do outside the city walls. The archipelago Islas del Rosario is at an hour's boat ride from the port city. And of course they have the pearl white beaches and turquoise-colored sea that the Caribbean is famous for. Even closer are the beaches of Cartagena, where you can end the day with a swim in the sea and by watching the enchanting sunset.

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### Transfer Airport - Hotel

#### Day 11

Arrival at Rafael Núñez airport in Cartagena. A driver will be waiting for you at the exit to take you to the hotel, a short 15-minute drive.

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### Anandá Hotel Boutique

#### 2 Nights



Anandá Hotel Boutique is an elegant 4-star hotel in the historic center of Cartagena. The hotel is a renovated colonial house with colonnades from the 16th century and just a few minutes from the Caribbean sea. Its rooms are classically decorated with wood, furniture and other natural materials, and all of them have airconditioning. The hotel has a swimming pool in the courtyard and a jacuzzi on the rooftop terrace where you can relax, as well as a restaurant-bar and spa.

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## Free day

### Day 12

Enjoy a day off in Cartagena. Both in the old, walled-in city center and in Getsemaní, the city district just outside, there is always something new to discover. Marvel at the remarkable murals in the streets, drink a fruit juice prepared by the Palenqueras in their African dresses, eat coconut rice with fresh fish in one of Cartagena's many good restaurants, dance salsa and drink a cocktail overlooking the sunset. The beach is also pretty close by, for those who prefer to rest.



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## Transport Cartagena - Santa Marta

### Day 13

The transport from Cartagena to Santa Marta takes (+/- 5 hours, +/- 240 km) It's a nice drive along the coast, during which you can look out over the ocean and the Ciénaga of Santa Marta. The city of Barranquilla is also on this route.

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## Tayrona

Tayrona National Park is undoubtedly one of the most important natural reserves in Colombia. Its pristine clear blue beaches in the Caribbean Sea, lined with palm trees and rocks that resemble huge bird eggs, are impressive. Plus, at sunset, you can hear the sounds of howler monkeys from the nearby rain forest. The natural reserve, just 35 kilometers from the city of Santa Marta, has 15,000 hectares, of jungle and the most beautiful beaches in Colombia. For thousands of years, the area has been inhabited by the Tayrona, whose descendants still live in the park. The yellow fever vaccination is recommended in this area.

For your information:

There are no ATMs or Wi-Fi in this area, also, since the climate is hot all year round, it is common that most hotels do not have hot water. However, this is not the case in the higher category hotels. We also recommend that you bring a bottle of water, sunscreen, mosquito repellent and a hat during your visit to be more comfortable.

## Senda Koguiwa

2 Nights



Located near the Tayrona Park, the Senda Koguiwa Hotel is a paradise in the middle of nature. It has cabins for couples and families, as well as a swimming pool, a restaurant-bar, spa, ecological trail and yoga classes.

## Free day

### Day 14

Enjoy a day off in the beautiful nature of the Tayrona National Park. Swim in the turquoise blue sea and rest in one of the many beaches. Explore the coral reefs with a snorkel, and spot three different species of monkeys and colorful birds with a walk through the jungle. The village of Arrecifes is located at a 45 to 90-minute walk from the park entrance. Look out for the signs at the beaches. Swimming is not always allowed due to the high waves and strong currents. From the Arrecifes sector, it's only a 15-minute walk to the next village, La Piscina, where you can swim in natural pools and where the many coral reefs provide perfect scenery for snorkeling. Another 15 minutes away you will find the beach of El Cabo San Juan, where you can also swim and snorkel, and eat fresh fish in one of the restaurants. Please take into account that the park is open from 8 AM to 5 PM, and you have to leave the park before closing time. Payments at the entrance have to be done in cash: +/- 87.000 COP entrance fee per person, and 10.000 COP per person for park insurance (2024) prices depending on the travel period, and you have to show a copy of your passport. After the main entrance of El Zaino, there's a shuttle option (+/- 10.000 COP pp, one way) to the beginning of the trail. In general, it's suggested to have enough cash (low denomination notes) with you to pay for ice cream, fresh coconut water, lunch and hydration to the vendors in the park.



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## Transfer hotel - airport

### Day 15

Pick-up at the hotel for your transfer to Simón Bolívar International Airport in Santa Marta.

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## Santa Marta - Bogotá

### Flight Santa Marta - Bogotá

Day 15

Flight from Santa Marta to Bogotá with Avianca.

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Baggage policy:

- 1 piece weighing a maximum of 23 kilograms (50 pounds)
  - 1 carry-on piece weighing a maximum of 10 kilograms (22 pounds)
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## Bogotá

### Transfer Airport - Hotel

Day 15

Arrival at Bogotá airport. When leaving, look for a sign with your names. Transfer to your hotel (+/- 40 min, +/- 20 km).

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### Hotel B3 Virrey

1 Night



B3 Virrey is a modern boutique hotel in the elegant area of Chicó, in the north of Bogotá. At 700 meters from the hotel you will find the popular Zona Rosa entertainment district, with many restaurants and the Andino shopping center, near the green El Virrey park. The entire facade of the hotel is a vertical green garden. It also has a business center, a gym and the Cuatro Cocina Casual restaurant that serves local dishes and that, from Monday to Saturday, has DJs who play live music.

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### Transfer Hotel - Airport

Day 16

You will be picked up from your hotel for your transfer to Bogotá airport.

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## ACCOMMODATIONS

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### Bogotá

2 nights Hotel Casa Deco

[website](#)

### La Macarena

### Tatacoa Desert

2 nights Hotel Sueño Real Tatacoa

[website](#)

### San Agustin

2 nights Hotel Akawanka Lodge

[website](#)

### Popayan

2 nights Hotel Camino Real

[website](#)

### Cartagena

2 nights Anandá Hotel Boutique

[website](#)

### Tayrona

2 nights Senda Koguiwa

[website](#)

### Bogotá

1 night Hotel B3 Virrey

[website](#)

**Flight(s):**



## TRAVEL CONDITIONS

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### Including:

- National flights
- Accommodation in private double rooms (standard, if not mentioned otherwise) with breakfast
- Meals as mentioned
- Transfers and transport as mentioned with Spanish-speaking drivers
- Tours and activities as mentioned with entrance fees and English-speaking guides
- 24/7 assistance

### Not included:

- Services mentioned as optional
- International flights
- Insurance
- Meals and drinks not mentioned
- Voluntary tips for guides, drivers, etc.
- Personal expenses

*\* Please note that the price might have to be adjusted, depending on the constantly changing USD-COP exchange rate, flight prices, availability of services, etc.*

*\*\*If domestic flights are included in the booking, regardless of the time of cancellation 100% of the flight price will be charged.*

*\*\*\*Hotels are only suggestions and will only be reserved at the time of booking. If there is no availability, a similar or equivalent alternative will be offered.*