



# MAGIC OF COLOMBIA



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Day	Description	Meals
1	Bogotá: Private Guided transfer from El Dorado International airport in Bogotá to hotel. Free time to rest & settle in.	B
2	<p><b>Full-day city tour including a visit to Paloquemao local market with fruit tasting, Candelaria Historic Centre with street art tour, Botero Gallery, and Gold Museum.</b></p> <p>Bogotá Paloquemao market, abundant with fresh food and flowers, offers a great insight into the life and customs of Bogotanos. The market is the second largest market in the city and one of the most important retailers in the country, where 750 merchants and a labyrinth of stands offer a large variety of fruit, vegetables, dairy products, meats and flowers, one of Colombia's biggest exports.</p> <p>La Candelaria is Bogota's heart and soul, from its humble beginnings this is the oldest part of the city and the Plaza Bolivar (Main Square) are high on any visitor's agenda. The Square is the focal point of this historic part of the city. Surrounding the square are several important Colonial and Republican style buildings including the Palace of Justice and Colombian Congress. The Plaza is also home to the Mayor's office and the Primary Cathedral of Bogota that dominates an entire corner. Standing proudly in the plazas centre is a statue of Simon Bolivar (Founder of Colombian independence) the first public monument to be erected in the city. As you wander the streets of La Candelaria away from the main square, your guide will not only explain the history of Bogota but also the intricacies of current Colombian culture and daily life. There will be time for a refreshment stop in one of the cities coffee houses. The Botero Museum or Donation is a permanent exhibition of works of art by Fernando Botero, Colombia's most famous artist who's "oversized" art is instantly recognisable. There are several rooms over 2 floors with displays of his work both on canvas and sculpture. The museum not only houses work by Botero but also other world-famous artists such as Dali, Monet and Van Gogh. Next door is the Casa de la Moneda which is home to a museum that takes you on a tour of the history of Bogota through the currency and money used in Colombia. With your guide, the next stop will be the Gold Museum which is situated on the northeast corner of the Parque Santander. The Museum is within the premises of the Banco de la Republica and is one of the finest collections of Pre-Hispanic gold in the world. This is a "must see" when in Bogotá, with more than 35,000 pieces of pre-Colombian gold work in the collection. Many of the works are said to be unsurpassed by goldsmiths of today and it's easy to understand when you allow yourself time to study examples such as the Balsa Muisca (Offering boat). This golden raft is one of the focal points of the display and was the driving force in the Spaniards quest to find El Dorado.</p>	B,L

**B= Breakfast**  
**L= Lunch**



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3

**Private Guided transfer from Bogotá to the hotel at Villa de Leyva with a stop at Zipaquirá for Salt Cathedral Tour.**

Some people think that Salt Cathedral is a religious monument, others a celebration of engineering or maybe even an artistic masterpiece. One of the marvels of Colombia, the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá is well worth the visit. For the beauty of its landscapes, the richness of its earth and the hidden jewel beneath the earth's surface, Zipaquirá is somewhat of a must during a stay in Bogotá. Travelling north of the city, through the countryside once occupied by the native Muisca Indians, Zipaquirá is one of the more popular tourist destinations in Colombia. Zipaquirá is most famous for its Cathedral carved underground in still functioning salt mines just west of the town. The subtle lighting pronounces the fourteen Stations of the Cross as you descend into the mine, each station sculpted by a different artist. At the deepest point of the cathedral, 180 m below the earth's surface, you encounter the nave and the north and south aisles dominated by the 16m high central cross. The illumination and execution of the work is a tribute to modern techniques and years of work from the miners and artists. Your guide will explain all about the cathedral's construction and how it and the mine still function in harmony. However, you view this construction, you can't fail to be impressed by its size and grandeur. Around the central square of the town of Zipaquirá, the colonial buildings still hold their charm footed by brickwork paving and overlooked by the Cathedral Diocesana de San Antonio.

Villa de Leyva, is a magical town surrounded by rolling hills, crammed full of atmospheric guesthouses and no shortage of either Colombian history or colonial charm; all just a few hours' drive from bustling Bogota. If it's typical terracotta roofs, 16th century history and myriad hiking trails snaking their way into untouched countryside which comes to mind, when picturing one of the true Colombian experiences; look no further than Villa de Leyva. Having remained largely untouched before the gradual, recent influx of visiting tourists, this sleepy town retains much of its original charm and authentic way of life, with a prestigious history to boot. Originally a settlement of the Muisca civilization several thousand years ago, 'modern-day' Villa de Leyva was founded in 1572 by none other than Andrés Díaz Venero de Leyva himself, the first president of the New Kingdom of Granada. With its moderate climate and surrounding Andean landscape, the town was once a favorite amongst the colonial elite, a fact which today leaves a legacy of fine architecture, one of Colombia's largest plazas and a row of quaint churches.

B,L

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4	<p>Half-day to Desert – 3 Places (Pozos Azules, Fossil Paleontologic place &amp; Infiernito) &amp; afternoon at leisure. The first point of interest during this half day excursion will be the Pozos Azules; this mineral enriched lagoon with its vibrant turquoise waters. Then from the Lagoon you will drive through the desert like terrain towards El Fossil (The fossil). This 120-million-year-old 12 meter Kronosaurus fossil is on show in a small palaeontology museum with other artefacts that have been found in this fossil rich area. From the museum you will continue your journey towards the Astrological site of El Infiernito. This site was once central to the local Muisca Indians and was used by them to predict season and hold rituals. The site has 30 cylindrical stone monoliths sunk vertically into the ground. From the comfort of your vehicle is a great way to see the local area and this half day trip takes in a number of the sites around Villa de Leyva. You will finish the tour back in to town in time for a well-earned refreshment.</p> <p><b>Optional additional activity: Full-day city tour, desert &amp; ceramic activity.</b></p>	<b>B,L</b>
5	<p>Private transfer from hotel to Enrique Olaya Herrera airport in Medellín. Then you will take a domestic flight from Medellín to Armenia or Pereira.</p> <p>Once you arrive you will have a private guided transfer from El Edén or Matecaña International airport to the hotel.</p> <p><b>Introductory Walk in the Hacienda Bambusa.</b> Hacienda Bambusa is set amongst some of the most spectacular countryside in Colombia and you will encounter a plethora of birds and butterflies, see the workers in the plantain and pineapple plantations and walk past the pastures grazed upon by herds of Brahma cattle. A hike in this region of the Coffee region permits you to experience the tranquillity of the countryside and also offers the opportunity for adventure or for friendly encounters with local going people going about their daily lives. The backdrop is always the mountain studded vista and at 1200 meters above sea level the Valle de Maravelez (Maravelez Valley) enjoys an average temperature of 23 degrees and is home to grasslands, dense forest and clear fresh water streams and rural life continues as it has done for centuries with the harvesting coffee, plantains (a type of Banana) and many other fruits such as cocoa and coffee in this lush and fertile land.</p>	<b>B</b>

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6

**Full-day Botanic garden & Coffee experience in a local hacienda.** This tour will give you a true impression of the life, culture and nature encompassed by the Coffee region. Coffee is the heart and soul of this area and today you will see how this simple bean affects every part of the region.

Throughout the Coffee region you will find an impressive variety of Flora and Fauna, of incredible diversity and colour. The botanical gardens in Calarca, Quindío hosts a wide collection of trees, plants and insects that live in and flourish in the three departments of this region and beyond. The butterfly house within the gardens houses thousands of stunning florescent and colourful butterflies. Walking through the different modules of the house with its small waterfalls and abundant blossoms the butterflies around you fill the air with a spectrum of colours. Away from the butterfly house, Heliconias, Ferns and Palms, of which there are 235 different species growing in Colombia, fill the gardens. The garden is home to 71 species of Heliconias of which there are 120 that grow in Colombia. You can walk through the thick bamboo forest by means of a bridge, enabling you to see how high the Guadua species of Bamboo grows. You will be accompanied by a specialised guide throughout your tour in the botanical gardens. After visiting the botanical gardens, the next stop will be lunch and a very interesting visit to a local coffee hacienda. These coffee haciendas take their coffee very seriously, and have built their entire existence around the germination, classification, and preparation of Colombian coffee. If you have ever had the pleasure to experience a wine tasting session, then now is your chance to learn the art of cupping, the tasting and classification of flavours, aromas, and bodies of different types of coffee bean. It can get noisy, but once the slurping commences there are tastes and sensations abound that you probably couldn't imagine. There is even a chance to learn from the expert barista (taster) who will teach you how to make the perfect espresso or cappuccino. You will also walk through the coffee plantations and nursery and there will be an explanation as to how the plant grows and is cultivated before the final bean reaches the coffee cup. At the end of the tour you will be an expert in all things related to Colombian coffee.

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7	<p><b>Full-day tour of the traditional Coffee towns of Filandia, Salento &amp; Cocora Valley.</b></p> <p>This tour will take you from the far northeast of Quindío to the beautiful Valle Cocora where the magnificent Wax palm grows, in one of its few natural habitats, then onto the first settlement in Quindío of the modern era. As you enter into Salento, the first stop, you know you are in the Coffee region of Colombia. The main square has not changed in appearance or in character in decades. Salento does not have an attraction to visit; Salento is the attraction. A coffee break in one of the many small coffee shops will allow you to take in the quaintness of uninterrupted lines of brightly painted houses in this traditional Pueblo of the region.</p> <p>From Salento you will drive to the Valle Cocora (Cocora Valley). Starting at the collection and drop off point for horse riders and jeeps from Salento, the trek heads north and then down into the valley. Passing the trout farm that supplies most of the restaurants in the town. The river crossing is by a stable but sometimes slippery and basic foot bridge. From then on the trek follows the bridle path that grants good panoramic views up along the fringes of the mountains and the wax palm tree. This is an excellent photographic opportunity for taking images of the incredible backdrop of the Wax Palm tree and the central cordillera of Los Nevados National Park. The Valley is the principal location for the Wax palm which is now a national symbol of Colombia and a protected species.</p> <p>From this point the trek ascends into the cloud forest once again. This is an easy ascent in respect to the incline; however, there are several slippery turns, ups and downs over tree roots and traversing the river. The vegetation becomes denser. There are excellent bird spotting opportunities especially when there are less trekker' s in-route. There are several river crossings by basic bridges and stepping stones. Only one person should cross at one time. A short ascent and then you reach the Acaime reserve where there will be the opportunity to get close to between 6 and 12 different species of humming birds. The birds fleet around the bird feeders set out by the friendly reserve manager. Photography of humming birds can be a painfully frustrating experience at the best of times but this is your best opportunity! Hot Coffee and Panela or soft drinks are available at the reserve and snacks.</p>	B,L

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8	<p>Private transfer from hotel to El Edén or Matecaña International airport in Armenia or Pereira. Then you will take a domestic flight from Armenia or Pereira to Medellín. Once you arrive you will take a private Guided transfer from Enrique Olaya Herrera airport in Medellín to the hotel.</p> <p>Once you are settled in you will have a <b>Half-Day Social transformation tour &amp; Street Art</b>. This incomparable social development tour of Medellín provides travelers with a unique opportunity to explore this vibrant community and witness the miraculous transformation of one of the region's most troubled neighborhoods known as "barrios" in Colombia.</p> <p>The Comuna 13 barrio was considered one of the most violent communities in Medellín's history. The tour was developed to showcase the phenomenal transformation of the barrio through innovative and determined social and urban planning by the local government and private investors. The success of Comuna 13' s ambitious makeover can serve as an inspiration and model for troubled and neglected communities around the world. Community leaders from the local organization Casa Kolacho guide you through the streets and pathways of this unique community. Their work with local artists encourages a message of unity through education by using performing modern arts such as hip hop music, graffiti, breakdance and DJ' ing. Most of the live art that you see on the walls and in the streets have been produced by the young people in the area.</p>	B
9	<p><b>Full-day city tour at Medellín &amp; visit to Arvi Park.</b> Medellín is certainly a city with a colourful history; from the cities valiant founding fathers trekking across the Andes, through to the dark days of drug cartels and the city' s more recent rebirth as one of South Americas most vibrant &amp; progressive. A tour of the central part of Medellín can really help to bring the city to life and to help you understand why Medellín is so important to Colombia in terms of both commerce and culture.</p> <p>The city tour will take in all principal sites and locations of this fascinating location. These sites will include the "Plaza Botero" the famous Botero sculpture park where many giant sculptures of Colombia most famous artist and Medellín born sculptor Fernando Botero are exhibited. A ride on the city' s famous metro and cable car system will not only provide great views of the city but will be a chance to understand a bit more about the geography and social make up of Colombia's second city. Then with a cable car ride to Arvi Park a national park set amongst the mountains that encircle the city, or a visit to the Museum of Modern Art and the fascinating cemetery of San Pedro with its many ornate mausoleums.</p> <p><b>Optional additional activity: Full-day tour to visit to Guatapé &amp; el Peñol Monolithic Rock.</b></p>	B,L

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10	Private transfer from hotel to José Maria Cordova International airport in Medellín. Then you will take a domestic flight from Medellín to Santa Marta. Once you arrive, take a private Guided transfer from Simon Bolivar International airport in Santa Marta to the hotel.	B
11	<p><b>Full-day tour to Tayrona National Park.</b></p> <p>Tayrona National Park is everything you could want from a picture post card beach location. Palm fringed beaches and golden sand that stretch out in front of you. This tropical beach paradise has a back drop of lush green rain forest. There are numerous paths that link the various beaches and bays, which make perfect walking trails to while away the days in paradise. Driving north east from the city of Santa Marta you will pass along the foothills of the famous Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta the highest costal mountain range in the world. After passing through the main park entrance and check point you will continue for an additional 10 to 20 minutes along a rough gravel track to the end of the road trail. From here it' s time to get your walking boots on and get ready to hit the costal paths, for those who prefer a more sedate pace horses can be arranged to carry you or your bags. Depending on your exact requirements the walk can be 30 minutes or so to one of the main beaches, where you can sit under hanging palms and watch the waves roll up the shore or a walk of a couple of hours or so to one of the main swimming beaches also located here are a number of great locally run restaurants for a nice lunch.</p> <p>Remember that during your walk you can look out for some of the Kogi tribes' people who still live in the park, plus the array of flora and fauna that you will pass during your trip. As you walk your guide will be on hand to explain not only the culture and history of the park but also about the wildlife that you may see on the way. Wherever you finish your walk you have the same trip back to the pickup point then transfer back to the hotel and time to reminisce over your trip to on one of the most unspoilt beaches of the region.</p>	B,L
12	Private transfer from Tayrona to hotel at Cartagena de Indias.Free time to relax on arrival	B

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13	<p><b>Full-day city tour in Cartagena de Indias:</b> A walk through the heart of the old walled city districts is a great introduction to the history and way of life in Cartagena de Indias. It is impossible not to be drawn-in and inspired by the churches, the cathedral, and the Puerto del Reloj (clock tower entrance) amongst other magnificent buildings. Marvel at the stunning colonial architecture or simply absorb the local atmosphere... it is like stepping through the pages of a Gabriel Garcia Marquez novel. During its 500-plus year history the city has a wealth of myths, legends and stories to enthrall visitors. But this is not a neighbourhood frozen in time: the old town is very much a living part of modern-day Cartagena. The city' s main university has its principal faculty here and during the daytime students rub shoulders with visitors, while local workers hurry along the cobbled streets about their business.</p> <p>Carved from a colourful history rife with piracy, sultry Caribbean heat, and a fascinating fusion of African, indigenous and European culture, Cartagena is truly a living, breathing and pulsating heart of Colombia. Then you will head to the next visiting point; looming over the historic centre of Cartagena, the fortress of San Felipe dominates the city skyline. The largest fortification built by the Spanish anywhere in the Americas, it stands as an imposing example of military might and architecture. The first construction on the site was started in 1586, but work continued and the fortifications and ramparts were strengthened during the next 200 years, mostly by African slave labour. Underneath this amazing structure are a labyrinth of tunnels, many of which are lit and accessible to visitors.</p> <p>Cartagena' s history owes much to this fort and the stories surrounding it are fascinating. Without it the Cartagena and Colombia we know today could well have be a very different place. The other dominant landmark in the city is the hill top convent of La Popa. The hill, at 150m (500ft) above sea level, is the highest point in the city and commands excellent views of the bay, old town and Caribbean Sea beyond.</p> <p>Started initially as a humble wooden chapel it was later replaced by a more solid construction that was fortified two centuries later. The convent still plays an important role in the life of the city' s Catholics and is often full to bursting on religious holidays.</p>	B,L

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14	<p><b>Full-day share island hopping in Rosario Island:</b> This full day tour gives you the opportunity to discover one of the most beautiful archipelagos in the Caribbean. The fast motor boat departs directly from the pier and will take you on a 60-minute ride through the Bay of Cartagena to the beautiful crystal clear waters of the Rosario Island archipelago. This group of 27 islands is surrounded by coral reefs, and is the perfect location to go snorkelling and swimming from the pristine white sandy beaches. It's one of the 46 Natural National Parks of Colombia, created to protect one of the most important coral reefs of the Caribbean Colombian Coast. This marine habitat creates one of the most diverse and richest marine ecosystems in Colombia. The Park has an extension of 120.000 marine and land hectares, and is associated with marine pastures, mangroves and the numerous species of algae and animals that have their habitats in the area, all of which feed the numerous corals and fish life that inhabit the reefs.</p> <p>On arrival at the island you will have time to relax sunbathe and enjoy a swim and refreshment. You will be served a delicious lunch which consists of locally caught fresh fried fish, which is accompanied by coconut rice, plantains and salad, followed by dessert &amp; all washed down with a refreshing soft drink and finished with Colombian coffee. After lunch you will have time to relax and enjoy a final swim in the Caribbean before returning to Cartagena on your speed boat.</p>	B,L
15	After breakfast you will take a private transfer from your hotel to the Cartagena airport for your international departure flight.	B

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## Inclusions:

- ✓ All guides, entrance fees and tours listed on the itinerary
- ✓ Airport transfers
- ✓ Meals listed in the itinerary (14 breakfasts, 8 lunches)
- ✓ hotel accommodation on double or twin basis

## Exclusions:

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Personal expenses & tips
- ✗ Domestic flights (Bogota-coffee region, coffee region-Medellin & Medellin-Santa Marta)
- ✗ Airport departure taxes

### OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Villa de Leyva full-day city tour, desert & ceramic activity: 140 per person.

Guatapé & El Peñol Monolithic Rock day tour: \$350 (1 person). \$195 per person (2 people).

**This tour is available to start on any day throughout the year.**



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