

Capital to Cartagena

10 days | Bogota to Cartagena



Trace the turbulent history and admire the progress of Colombia as you get acquainted with some of its major cities. Be blown away by Bogota, marvel at Medellin and be captivated by Cartagena as you delve deep into the most fascinating parts of Colombian culture on this 10 day adventure.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Medellin - Famous for its pleasant weather, it earns the nickname "the City of Eternal Spring"
- Bogota – Enjoy a tour of Colombia's capital city, taking in Paloquemao's Market, the colonial quarter of La Candelaria and the prominent Plaza de Bolivar. Also visit the Museo del Oro and Museo de Botero
- Zipaquirá – Marvel at the spectacular Salt Cathedral and Stations of the Cross, all hewn from the salt mine tunnels under the Halite Mountains
- Sutatausa – Admire the excellently preserved paintings in the town's colonial church, dating back to the 17th century
- Raquira – Visit this artist town, famous for its pottery colourful buildings and colony of artisans. Nearby is the Monasterio La

Candelaria, the first convent built in Latin America

- Villa de Leyva – Explore this colonial town and its beautiful architectural features, from wooden balconies and arches to heavy wooden and brass laden doors
- Filandia – Overlook the city from the Colinda Iluminada view point
- Cocora Valley – Sample the local cocktail of canelazo and plant a wax palm, Colombia's national tree and the tallest variety of palm tree in the world
- Salento – Visit this charming town with its preserved colonial bahareque architecture and streets lined with restaurants, bars and shops
- Hacienda Combia – Join a shared tour of this coffee farm, allowing you the opportunity to learn about the elements, conditions and the technical processes needed to go Colombian coffee
- Botanical & Butterfly Garden – Stroll through this garden home to over 1500 butterflies and a variety of local flora and bird species
- Cartagena – Join a walking tour including stops at the Convento de la Popa, the Castillo de San Felipe and a stroll through the markets of La Bovedas
- Food Tour – Join a culinary tour of Cartagena, stopping off at seven authentic food stops to sample the local cuisine

What's Included

- 9 breakfasts and 5 lunches
- 9 nights STANDARD accommodation. Upgrading to SUPERIOR or DELUXE accommodation options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 10
- Services of local English-speaking specialist guides
- Entrance fees to all sites and activities as described in the itinerary
- All relevant transfers and transportation

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture
- Laundry, drinks and items of a personal nature

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Bogota

After touching down at the El Dorado International Airport, you will be transferred to your hotel. After check-in you can freshen up and relax before starting the real fun tomorrow. **Overnight - Bogota**

Capital to Cartagena - 10 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

updated on 21-04-2021 11:41:22

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Capital to Cartagena

Day 2 : Bogota City Tour



Today starts with an early wake-up call followed by a visit to the Paloquemao Market, one of the largest and most important markets in the country. You will be able to peruse stalls selling everything from fruit and vegetables to cheese and seafood as well as some medicinal herbs. You'll have the chance to top off this cultural experience by tasting one or two authentic Colombian snacks. From the market you will walk to the historical colonial quarter of La Candelaria, an excellent spot to snap a few photos and do some quality people watching in Plaza Bolivar.

Continuing the tour, you will be taken to the top of the forested mountains in the East to Cerro de Monserrate, home to a stunning white Catholic Church. The Museo del Oro (Gold Museum), which holds one of the largest displays of pre-Colombian gold in the world and the Museo de Botero conclude the tour. **Overnight - Bogota** (B, L)

Day 3 : Zipaquirá & Raquira



Bogota - Zipaquirá - Villa de Leyva. Today you will be driven through the residential part of Bogotá and out towards the fertile plateau to Zipaquirá. Here, you will get a chance to witness the magnificent architecture of the Stations of the Cross and the Three Naves, sculptures that have been hewn from the salt mine tunnels under the Halite Mountains. The

next stop is in Sutatausa, the site of a beautiful colonial church that contains a collection of stunning paintings.

After a stop at a traditional Andean restaurant, where you can purchase a bite to eat, you will be taken to Raquira, a small town that has gained fame for its pottery and colourful buildings. You will get the chance to visit a clay pot factory and learn about the traditional production processes of this handicraft. A tour through the Monasterio La Candelaria, a nearby convent, winds up the day before you are whisked off to Villa de Leyva, where you will spend the evening. **Overnight - Villa de Leyva** (B)

Days 4-5 : Medellin



Villa de Leyva - Medellín. From Villa de Leyva you will be picked up from your hotel and taken to the airport in Bogotá in time for a short flight across the country to Medellín. On arrival, you will be met at the airport by one of our representatives and taken to your hotel.

The following day you will be picked up from your hotel and taken on a Social Transformation Tour, an eight hour journey that will take you through Medellín's progress as a city, from its drug trafficking days in the 80s and 90s through to its modern successes. The tour starts by visiting the Monaco Building, la Virgen de los Sicarios and Pablo Escobar's Tomb in the Central Cemetery. These three sites form an introduction to Pablo Escobar and the social problems created by his cartel. Various parks and museums crop up throughout the rest of the day, along with a cable car journey before you head to one Medellín's trendiest zones for some bar-hopping and merry-making. **Overnight - Medellín** (B:2, L:1)

Day 6 : Zona Cafetera

Medellin - Zona Cafetera. It's time to learn all about one of Colombia's most popular crops – coffee. Follow the path that the Antioquian colonisers took as they transported coffee from Medellín across to the Andean West region of Colombia. You will be driven through the south of the Aburra Valley, where breathtaking scenery will become the norm and the coffee plantation reigns supreme. A tour through Jardín breaks up the day as a guide details the history of the town and shows you its main spots. **Overnight - Zona Cafetera** (B, L)

Day 7 : Filandia, Salento & Cocora Valley



Get ready for an action packed day as we set off for the traditional village of Filandia, where you will get a chance to tour the colonial streets and check out Quindío's Viewpoint for stunning vistas of the Coffee Triangle. Next, you get a dose of natural beauty in the Cocora Valley, home of the wax palm, Colombia's national tree. After drinking your welcoming cup of canelazo you will be guided through the misty forest and taught about the different plants. Finish up by planting your own wax palm as part of the region's conservation efforts. The day ends with you perusing the restaurants and boutiques of Salento. **Overnight - Zona Cafetera** (B, L)

Day 8 : Coffee and butterflies

Zona Cafetera - Cartagena. Start the day with a hearty breakfast before being taken to Hacienda Combia for a Coffee Tour, where you will learn all about the essential elements of coffee production and engage in some hands-on activities. After lunch it's time to check out the beautiful butterflies at Quindío's Botanical & Butterfly Garden. This magical reserve is filled with hundreds of different

Capital to Cartagena - 10 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Capital to Cartagena

plants and butterflies so be sure to pack some extra batteries for your camera. Next, you will be transferred to the airport in time for a flight to Cartagena. **Overnight - Cartagena** (B, L)

Day 9 : Cartagena Sightseeing



Today, you will get to explore Cartagena, one of Colombia's most popular, vibrant and charming cities. Experience the people, food and sights of the city, along with your English speaking guide, starting at the Convento de la Popa, the city's highest point. From there you will visit a hilltop castle (Castillo de San Felipe) and stroll through the vaults of Las Bovedas before embarking on a tasting tour of some of Cartagena's most delicious gastronomic delights. **Overnight - Cartagena** (B)

Day 10 : Cartagena

Today marks the end of your Colombian adventure. After breakfast and check-out you'll be transferred to Cartagena airport for your flight home. (B)

Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD\$5-6 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we'd recommend USD\$2-3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Accommodation ratings

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the "included" section on the first page of this

document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category, this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the "hotels" tab on our website. Here we rank hotel's in their respective country (REGIONAL CATEGORY) - but we also tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY).

STANDARD - Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant.

SUPERIOR - Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre.

DELUXE - Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care.

LUXURY - Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard - the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Colombia Country Guide

Colombia - Fact File

Official Name: Republic of Colombia
 Capital: Santa Fé de Bogotá
 Population: 44.5 million
 Total Area: 1.1 million square kilometres
 Official Language: Spanish, Quechua and Aymara
 Religions: Roman Catholic 95%
 Voltage: 110 volts, double flat-pin plug (same as USA)
 Dialling Code: +57
 Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4. For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com

Colombia - Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement

is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Colombia.

For stays of up to 90 days, USA, British, Irish, New Zealand and Australian citizens do not require a tourist visa to visit Colombia. Canadian citizens have to pay a reciprocity fee to enter Colombia, which can be paid upon arrival into the country. The fee is approximately \$88 CAD (OR 160,000 Colombian pesos), and this can be paid by international credit card, debit card or cash. If made in cash, the payment must be in Colombian pesos. You will receive an immigration card, which you must retain and show when you leave the country.

Please note that South African citizens need to apply for a visa online, we recommend one month in advance, and can take up to 10 working days to process. All visas must be applied for online, for visa requirements please visit:

http://www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/procedures_services/visa/requirements

Colombia - Climate

Colombia has an equatorial climate and therefore does not have dramatic seasonal changes. The best time for the country as a whole is December-March as it rains the least then.

The rainy season is May-July and October-December, when heavy rains can fall (though they're usually followed by bright sunshine). The elevation in the country ranges from sea level to 3,050 metres, so temperatures can vary greatly. Coastal cities have day temperatures from 23-32°C, with nights at about 17-27°C year-round. The inland cities' year-round day temperatures are generally around 17-27°C (nights can get down to 5-16°C in the winter). A sweater is needed along the coast at night and a jacket in the mountains (this includes Bogotá, which lies at 2,650 metres).

Capital to Cartagena - 10 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Capital to Cartagena

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Colombia - Money

The official currency in Colombia is Colombia Peso.

For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.oanda.com or www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

US dollars (cash) are accepted for some purchases in Colombia (particularly when the dollar is strong) however, you will need pesos for most purchases. Even if you have the choice of paying for things in US dollars it will be in your favour to use the local currency.

US dollars and travellers cheques can be changed at casas de cambio (exchange bureau), banks and border crossings. Your tour leader will give you details of when and where best to change money. Casas de cambio are privately owned, usually have longer opening hours and attend to you faster than banks. The rate may be slightly lower but you must weigh this up against the convenience of not having to queue. In Colombia you get the best exchange rates in the cities of Bogotá and Cartagena where the casas de cambio offer about the same rate as the banks. Also, these places will quite often exchange other currencies and cheques. Hotels/restaurants will sometimes change US dollars, but at a much poorer rate.

Often the easiest way to obtain local currency is to use the ATMs ('cajeros automaticos') located in every city throughout the country. Visa, Plus, MasterCard and Cirrus/Maestro are accepted in most Colombian ATMs, as long as you have a four-digit pin number. Although bank cards are often the easiest way to go, there are times where they will not work for you even if your bank at home tells you it will! Do not rely on your card as your only source of money. Always have a few back-ups with you.

You should also be able to get a cash advance at the bank (usually only possible for Visa and sometimes Mastercard) although most banks will require a copy of your passport and quite often take your photo.

In Colombia they can be very particular about the condition of the US dollar bank notes. You will quite often NOT be able to use notes which are torn or marked even slightly. If your notes are at all damaged you may use them in Ecuador, but probably NOT in Colombia, so save them until then.

Remember that once you leave Colombia you will generally not be able to use or exchange pesos (so please change all left over pesos at the border).

Colombia - Entrance Fees

Generally speaking most museums in Colombia cost between US\$2 and US\$5. There are many interesting museums to visit, but please bear in mind that many museums close on Mondays.

The many beautiful churches and cathedrals of Colombia are always free to enter, but flash photography is strictly forbidden, and opening hours vary greatly. There are sometimes cultural events going on and galleries/exhibitions which are free to enter. Your tour leader will give you more details on these.

Colombia - Shopping

Shop for hand-worked silver, emeralds, pottery, "chiva" pottery buses, leather, textiles, hammocks, wall hangings, gold, large mobiles (not the phone variety) and ponchos.

Each different region has its own regional handicrafts/ jewellery etc. so if you like something, buy it! You may never see it again (or if you do it will probably be more expensive). Bargaining is expected while shopping in the markets, but in shops it is usually considered rude to bargain. You may however ask for a 'discount' ("descuento" in Spanish).

Bear in mind that it can be very expensive and not always reliable to send packages home so try to buy only what you can carry home!

Colombia - Tipping

A 10% service charge is added on to the restaurant bill throughout most of Colombia. If it is not added on, it is still expected (especially in the more expensive restaurants). There

should be no other charge on top of this. However, if IVA is said to be included on the menu then it should NOT be added onto the end of the bill. You are not expected to tip taxi drivers unless they go out of their way for you although you should tip anyone who helps with your luggage, approx 50 cents. Tipping guides at the end of tours/excursions is always appreciated and your tour leader will advise you on this.

Colombia - Local Transport

Taxis are recommended for all journeys within cities. Most taxis have meters if not you may have to haggle with the driver to agree upon the fare. This can be fun, but it is a good idea to find out in advance, from your tour leader or the hotel receptionist, approximately how much the fare should be. It will also help if you can speak a few words of Spanish. You will almost certainly have to accept that you will pay more than the Colombians do.

Local buses are interesting and usually very crowded. The new TransMilenio buses that ply back and forth on dedicated lanes from south to north are good and regular, like an outdoor metro system using buses.

One of the most fun ways to explore Colombia's cities is by "Chiva" bus, which is a truck chassis with brightly coloured wooden open-sided body with bench seating (these are the old typical type buses which are still used in many places in the countryside today for the locals – chicken buses, as we call them). Most cities have these tours, mostly in the evening where they will have a band/group on board playing live music and take you to many of the night spots plus hand out drinks en-route, mostly "aguadiente" (firewater, a kind of ouzo which is quite delicious once you've had one or two).

Colombia - Food & Drink

Food

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants. You will find a range of international and local cuisine to suit every budget. Excellent seafood is available along all coastal regions and chicken, pork and beef are available throughout.

Capital to Cartagena - 10 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

Capital to Cartagena

In Colombia the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. Some of the most popular and typical dishes are: “frijoles” (kidney beans in a delicious sauce with lumps of pork), “ajiaco” (lovely soup type dish with chicken breast, maize, potato and is served with avocado, rice), “bandeja paisa” (minced beef with beans, egg, fried plantain, chorizo sausage, rice, manioc, huge meal), tomas (which is like a boiled corn dumpling filled with chicken and wrapped in banana leaf). These are just a few of the local favourites, there are many more.

Typical snacks are “empanadas” (little fried pasties usually filled with meat, chicken, cheese or even prawns) and “patacones” (fried vegetable banana chips, served as a side dish).

Much of Colombia’s food is not hot and spicy but you will find a bowl of “aji” (which is a chilli or hot pepper sauce) on most tables which can be added to spice things up.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. You might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other egg dishes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times.

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Please note however that fruit juices are sometimes made with unboiled tap water and could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order juice “con leche” (with milk) instead. The choice of different juices in Colombia is incredible e.g. mora (blackberry), piña (pineapple), naranjilla (mixture between mandarin and orange), maracuya (passion fruit), tomato de arbol (tamirillo or 'tree

tomato’), guanabana (a soursop, like acustard apple) and curuba (which has a great taste).

In Colombia some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be a bar within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums, agudiente (a kind of ouzo) and you can get imported Chilean wine can sometimes be found quite cheaply at supermarkets. There are various brands of beers including Costeña, Aguila, Bavaria and Leona. Please don’t forget the coffee, some of the best in the world but pick a nice café style establishment with an espresso machine.

Colombia - National Holidays

1 January - New Year’s Day
 12 January - Epiphany
 22 March - San José
 March/April (variable) - Samana Santa (Easter)
 1 May - Labour Day (national holiday)
 24 May - Ascension
 14 June - Corpus Christi
 21 June - Sacred Heart
 5 July - St.Peter & St.Paul
 20 July - Independence Day
 7 August - Boyaca Battle
 17 October - Columbus Day
 1 November - All Saints Day
 15 November - Cartagena’s Independence
 8 December - Immaculate Conception
 25 December - Christmas Day

Please remember that on public holidays, banks, museums and shops will be closed and often public transport is less frequent than usual.

Capital to Cartagena - 10 days

www.onthegotours.com
 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

updated on 21-04-2021 11:41:22

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.