



Colombia Discovery

Worldwide Tour | 18 Days | Moderate

Bogotá – Cali – Armenia – Medellín – Santa Marta – Cartagena

Colombia is South America's rising star, a charismatic country full of passion! Explore its treasures, from coffee and colonial splendour to Caribbean beaches and all that is in between on this exciting tour.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the unique Salt Cathedral
- Learn to dance the Salsa
- Tour a coffee hacienda with tasting
- Hike the Caribbean coast of Tayrona Park
- Delight in colonial Cartagena
- Relax on the beaches of Isla del Encanto



Colombia Discovery tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- Touring with English speaking Local Guides and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

Personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping (USD210 per person for the entire trip is customary), early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary are at your own expense.

Worldwide Tours

With our selection of Worldwide tours, you can expect exactly the same Wendy Wu Tours experience. You'll get to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of South America on an excellent value group tour, whilst enjoying the company of like-minded people. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional Local Guides throughout, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Moderate Tour

'Colombia Discovery' is a **moderate** tour. This means that the itinerary requires a good level of fitness.

- Bogotá sits at 2,650 metres above sea level. Activity at these altitudes will be at an easy pace.
- You will be required, on several occasions, to climb on and off boats without assistance and spend an extended amount of time on boats in open water.
- There will be several days of sightseeing on foot for a period of time and in some cases for an extended period of time.

Of course, our Local Guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Joining Your Tour

Colombia Discovery is 18 Days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on Land Only, the tour price still includes your arrival and departure airport transfers. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day Two in Bogotá and end the tour on Day 16 in Cartagena. Please refer to your final itinerary for more detailed information pertaining to the start and conclusion of your tour.

Colombia Discovery Itinerary

DAYS 1-2: FLY TO BOGOTÁ

Fly to Colombia's vibrant capital Bogotá, arriving the following day. You will be met at the airport and transferred approximately an hour and half to your hotel to relax and refresh before a welcome dinner this evening.

Meals Included: Dinner

Destination Information

Bogotá – Colombia's beating heart, Bogotá is an engaging and vibrant capital. The cultural epicentre is La Candelaria, home to museums, galleries, historic old homes, churches and convents; nearly all of Bogotá's traditional attractions are based here.

DAY 3: BOGOTÁ

Explore the sights of the city, starting in the historic centre of Plaza de Bolívar, where you can wander some of the surrounding streets to admire the impressive colonial architecture. Take a look at some of the most historic buildings in the city before marveling at the exhibitions of the Gold Museum. After, ascend Monserrate, the symbol of the city, for excellent views and to visit the 17th century church at its peak. Within is a sacred shrine dedicated to El Señor Caído (the Fallen Lord). Your afternoon will be at leisure. Today's sightseeing will be approximately five hours.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Destination Information

Monserrate – Monserrate is the hill that looms over Bogotá and has been considered sacred since pre-Colombian times.

DAY 4: BOGOTÁ TO CALI

This morning you will be transferred approximately two hours through La Sabana de Bogotá to the town of Zipaquirá. Tour one of Colombia's most unusual attractions; the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá. Built 200 metres below ground in a salt mine and beautifully illuminated, this cavernous space is considered an outstanding example of modern Colombian architecture. This afternoon transfer to the airport for your flight to Cali, the hub of Colombia's salsa dancing scene. The flight is approximately an hour and 15 minutes, and on arrival you will be transferred an hour to your hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Destination Information

Cali – Rich in Afro-Colombian heritage, Cali is where Colombia's diversity and peacefulness is the most apparent.

DAY 5: CALI

Cali has a rich Afro-Colombian heritage and, as a city, exudes a lively, passionate atmosphere. Begin the day exploring, visiting the Sebastián de Belalcázar monument and the quirky El Gateo del Río park, before admiring the baroque cathedral and colonial stucco La Merced church. Also visit Plaza de Caycedo, the Gobernación and others. Your tour of Cali will last approximately four hours. This afternoon, get your dancing shoes on for an exciting two hour salsa class, where you'll learn the basic moves of this classic Latin American dance.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

Destination Information

Sebastián de Belalcázar monument – A monument to the city's founder, the statue overlooks the city of Cali.

Salsa – The salsa style in this region has become very popular worldwide and Cali is now known as the capital of Salsa as the World Festival of Salsa takes place here every year.

DAY 6: CALI TO ARMENIA

Depart Cali this morning and drive for around four hours into Colombia's lush coffee region, to a hacienda for a half day coffee tour. With a welcome cup of java in hand, learn all about growing and processing of coffee. Enjoy an introductory talk, exercises in tasting and smelling coffee, and a tour of the factory. At the end of the tour, you'll not only have a greater appreciation for coffee but also a farewell brew to sip on. Later transfer approximately one hour to your hotel to check in for a two night stay.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Destination Information

Armenia – Named the 'miracle city' for its high growth and urban development in a brief period, Armenia is a familiar city surrounded by beautiful landscapes and interesting museums.

DAY 7: CORCORA VALLEY

Travel one hour to the quaint agricultural town of Filandia; the tower viewpoint gives spectacular views over the surrounding countryside. Drive in Jeep Willys for approximately 30 minutes into the beautiful landscapes of Corcora Valley. An eco-guide will introduce you to the Cocora Natural Reserve and lead you through the cloud forest, full of a diverse range of flora and fauna – keep an eye out for palma de cera, Colombia's national tree. Experience the ritual of the wax palm of Quindio, and get hands on with planting palm seedlings. Opt for additional activities or just wander freely until lunch. Later, transfer to the quaint town of Salento, where you will have a walking tour to see the typical paisa architecture and visit the workshops of craftsmen and artisans. This day is at altitude.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Destination Information

Cocora Valley – Located in the central cordillera of the Andean mountain, the valley is part of the Los Nevados National Park and is famous for its wax palms.

DAY 8: ARMENIA TO MEDELLÍN

Today drive to the hillside city of Medellín, the six hour journey will be broken up with a stop at La Romelia Farm, set in a magnificent natural landscape. Enjoy a guided tour of the nurseries of orchids, tropical plants (some carnivorous!) while spotting many colourful birds. Enjoy a traditional local snack back at the main house before continuing on to Medellín. Please note today will be a long day of driving.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Destination Information

Medellín – Nicknamed the city of eternal spring due to its year-round spring like climate, Medellín is the capital of the Antioquia province.

DAY 9: MEDELLÍN

Set in a valley and backed by mountains, Colombia's second largest city is a leafy, progressive and creative metropolis. Have a full day tour here starting at the Zen-inspired Bare Foot Park, and admiring the sculptures of Colombian artist Fernando Botero. Visit the Metropolitan Cathedral before heading to Nutibara to see a reconstruction of a pueblito paisa. Enjoy Parque de los Deseos and the Botanical Gardens, before embarking on a fascinating walking tour of

some of the city's street art. Today's touring will last approximately five hours.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 10: MEDELLÍN

Today will be a full day of touring. Venture out of the city, about an hour and 40 minutes drive, to explore the surrounding region. Pass through the town of Marinilla, where you'll find colonial buildings and a fervent religious tradition; to La Piedra del Peñol. Climbing the 700 plus steps to the top is optional, but those who do it will be rewarded with views across a huge reservoir created by a hydroelectric dam built in the 1970s. Continue to the town of Guatapé, where you'll wander the streets lined with vividly coloured buildings.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Destination Information

La Piedra del Peñol – A towering rock monolith, La Piedra del Peñol was once worshipped by the local indigenous community.

DAY 11: MEDELLÍN TO SANTA MARTA

Transfer about an hour and a half to the airport and fly to the Caribbean Sea-side city of Santa Marta. Transfer from the airport to your hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Destination Information

Santa Marta – In the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, whose peaks can be seen from the beach, Santa Marta was founded in 1525, making it one of South America's oldest cities.

DAY 12: TAYRONA NATIONAL PARK

Drive approximately one hour from your hotel to start an hour-long walk along the exotic coastline of the Parque Nacional Natural Tayrona to Arrecifes. Continue the walk, and find yourself on stretches of golden sand, amongst lush rainforest and passing natural pools to reach Cabo San Juan Del Guía, a beach where you can take a refreshing dip. The total duration of the walk is approximately three hours and today's excursion will be a full day.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Destination Information

Tayrona National Park – From the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to the Caribbean coast, the national park is packed with rainforest and rich biodiversity.

DAY 13: SANTA MARTA TO CARTAGENA

Travel five hours by road to the Caribbean port city of Cartagena, where the afternoon will be at leisure.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

Destination Information

Cartagena – Declared part of the UNESCO World Heritage in 1984, Cartagena encapsulates all the charm of Spanish colonial architecture, the republic period, and today.

DAY 14: CARTAGENA

Cartagena is Colombia's most popular destination. Vibrant and colourful, located on the Caribbean coast and home to a beautifully preserved UNSECO World Heritage-listed old town, it's easy to see why! This morning, venture to the neighbourhoods of Bocagrande and Manga. Wander the cobbled alleys of the old town visiting the House Museum of San Pedro Claver, and see the Castillo de San Felipe. Transfer back to your hotel for the afternoon at leisure. Today's touring will last around four hours.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Destination Information

Museum of San Pedro Claver – The museum houses information about San Pedro Claver, who was an advocate for the fair treatment of slaves in the 17th century, and archaeological finds from the area.

DAY 15: ROSARIO ISLANDS

Spend a dreamy full day on Isla Del Encanto, one of the islands that make up the coral archipelago of Rosario. Transfer by speedboat for approximately an hour and 15 minutes and relax on the beautiful beach or, for the more active, kayak or snorkel (at your own expense), to explore the beauty further. This evening, back in Cartagena, enjoy a farewell dinner.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Destination Information

Isla Del Encanto – Part of the Corales del Rosario National Park, Isla Del Encanto is a small slice of paradise off the coast of Cartagena.

DAY 16-18: DEPART CARTAGENA

This morning after breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for our flight back to Australia, arriving home in 2 days due to crossing the International Date Line.

Meals Included: Breakfast (on Day 16)

COLOMBIA DISCOVERY TRAVEL INFORMATION

Visas

Australian passport holders currently do not require a visa to enter Colombia for a stay of up to 90 days. Your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to Australia. You may need to provide evidence of return or onward travel upon arrival to Colombian Immigration. Wendy Wu Tours does not provide a visa service for Worldwide tours. To stay up to date with the latest visa requirements, visit www.smartraveller.gov.au.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your Local Guide should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance.

Eating In Colombia

Colombian cuisine is extremely diverse and will vary depending on the region you're in. In some places you'll find delicacies like cooked ants or guinea pigs, whilst in others, Colombians would never consider eating this. Most Colombian dishes feature a lot of meat, so it is not always easy for vegetarians. Along the coast, you'll find a great variety of seafood like fish and lobster, prepared with coconut milk sauces. Breakfast is quite important in Colombia and will consist of plenty of juices made from all the fresh fruit available throughout Colombia – there are so many varieties that you most likely have not heard of many yourself! A typical main meal is ajiaco, a chicken soup with a special herb guasca, partnered with arepa, a bread made from cornmeal, the traditional side dish to any meal.

Whilst we strongly recommend trying as many local dishes as possible, Colombia also has a wide range of international foods available.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to rainforest lodges. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality may exist between Australia and South America. All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning where needed. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers between destinations. Roads in South America have generally been improved over recent years, but please be aware traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. There may be sections of road where the surface may be comparatively bumpy but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Altitude

On this tour you will be spending one day at altitude – in the Cocora Valley up to 2,400 metres. At this altitude, Altitude Sickness is a risk. Symptoms may include dizziness, fatigue, nausea and shortness of breath. It is recommended that travellers utilize their first day in high-altitude destinations to acclimatise. To help you acclimatise we have designed our tours to be at a slower pace with more convenience stops and more free time, during the first few days. Staying hydrated, eating light meals and following a very light schedule will all help. We recommend that any symptoms that are unusual should be brought to the attention of your guide. Your guide will be extremely well-trained in dealing with its effects – taking it easy and taking some time to acclimatise are the best ways to prevent and combat it. Serious cases, meaning that you must descend immediately, are rare. We have adapted the itinerary to make sure that your time at these heights is as relaxed and easy as possible.

There are no specific factors, such as age or fitness, that can cause you to suffer from Altitude Sickness. It can affect anyone at any time and symptoms may vary. There is medication - that can help treat and prevent symptoms. Consult a doctor before taking any of these medications, before engaging in strenuous activity at high altitude and regarding any necessary vaccinations in plenty of time before travelling.

Clothing

On this tour, you will be travelling through various regions of Colombia with quite diverse climates especially in the Coffee Region. In Colombia you will experience all four seasons in one trip. An average moderate temperate in Bogotá, but humid and often damp in the Coffee Region to the tropical climate in Cartagena. It is recommended to bring lots of layers including the following: T Shirts made of breathable materials, hiking pants, with the option to turn into a short pant (rain pants optional), a fleece jacket for colder parts and the evenings and a waterproof Jacket as shell layer or a light rain jacket, a scarf and hat, warm socks. The climate in Cartagena is tropical, humid and warm we recommend to, wear lightweight breathable clothing. A small backpack that fits into your main hand luggage is useful to carry your daily essentials.

Souvenirs

There are plenty of interesting items to buy as souvenirs in Colombia, such as indigenous textiles, handicrafts and artworks, coffee and chocolate, carved wood and products made of alpaca wool, such as gloves, scarves and socks. There will be some opportunities during your tour to pick up souvenirs.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by Local Guides. There will usually be no more than 29 travellers in each group. However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in South & Central America. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much. For your convenience, with years of experience in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on your Group Tour so your Local Guide will look after this aspect of the trip for you. This ensures the amounts paid are reasonable for you and still fair to the local people. The suggested total amount is specified for each Group Tour and will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is paid in USD or other local currencies if specified. Any additional tipping you feel is appropriate is welcomed at your discretion.

After booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately two weeks prior to departure.

Before You Leave

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au.

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

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