



ANDES, TAYRONA, AND CARTAGENA MULTISPORT 9 DAYS



Effort: Moderate – Soft Adventure suitable for any age group.

Activities: Hiking, Rafting, Mountain Biking, Exploring, and Cultural Encounters.

Accommodation: Hacienda, Colonial and Beach Hotels.

Follow the legend to El Dorado while experiencing the best of Colombia in superb active style. Discover the multiple facets of a country filled with nature, adventure and the passion of its people. A complete active experience that explores the rich Andean highlands, perfectly preserved colonial cities, cloud forests, immense gorges, pristine Caribbean beaches, rich rainforest and even a 5th century lost stone city. Colombia is Latin America's best kept secret, a country still waiting to be discovered. Wonderfully un-crowded, this is an ideal opportunity to experience its history, culture and living traditions.

Trip highlights:

- Follow the legend of "El Dorado".
- Discover a 5th century lost stone city.
- Great variety of ecosystems and nature reserves.
- Raft in the Chicamocha Gorge known as the "Grand Canyon of South America".
- Explore incredibly preserved colonial towns.
- Bike in diverse and scenic natural environments.
- Relax in Tayrona's world class beaches and rainforest.
- Be enchanted by the magic of historical Cartagena.
- Try the flavors of local and fusion Colombian cuisine.
- Feel the warm enchantment of the people of Colombia.
- Stay at charming hotels.
- Highly rated naturalist and adventure guides.

DAY 1: BOGOTA CITY TOUR AND EXPLORE VILLA DE LEYVA

Bogota is one of the most important cities in South America, settled in an Andean savanna and connected to the Caribbean by the great Magdalena River. Bogota was once the main trade center between South America and Europe. Visit the colonial city to learn about its Spanish and pre-Columbian heritage. Our city tour includes the Plaza of Simon Bolivar, colonial churches, bohemian La Candelaria neighborhood and the Gold Museum which is regarded as the most important gold museum in the World. In the afternoon, we depart to Villa de Leyva, one of the enchanting patrimonial villages in Colombia. Declared National Monument in 1945, this town has been preserved entirely with cobblestone streets, tiled roofs and whitewashed buildings. As we explore Villa de Leyva, we will discover an area which is an ancient ocean floor where we can find dinosaur fossils, and thousands of ammonites from the Cretaceous period, that have been used to decorate buildings and floors. This is one of the most important paleontological regions in South America. We will spend the night in a colonial hotel. (L, D)

DAY 2: HIKE IN IGUAQUE NATIONAL PARK AND MOUNTAIN BIKE TO EL MONASATERIO

In the morning we visit Iguaque National Park, a 6,750 hectare flora and fauna sanctuary. Iguaque is a sacred place to the Muisca indigenous people, according to their legends mankind originated in the Iguaque Lake. We explore a section of the cloud forest reserve on the lookout for some of the hundreds of species of orchids, bromeliads, lichens and ferns, many of them endemic. We will also be searching for many of the rare tropical birds that we hear during our walk. In the afternoon, we prepare our mountain bikes and explore the area around Villa de Leyva. We ride in the country side through dirt trails and lazy paved roads. We reach the Paleontological Museum which displays the most important assortment of fossils in South America and the most complete Kronosaurus fossil known to date. Our ride ends in El Monasterio a Dominican historic building with a collection of religious and colonial art. Overnight in Villa de Leyva. (B, L, D)



DAY 3: TRANSFER TO SANTANDER & MOUNTAIN BIKE THE BARICHARA VALLEY

We head north on a scenic drive through diverse landscapes over mountains and rivers. On our way we enjoy rich Andean valleys, fertile lands of great natural beauty and a glimpse to traditional Colombian lifestyle. We reach the Santander Department and the town of San Gil which is known as the midpoint for adventure travel. This region is characterized by the huge strands of moss that hang over the local trees. We begin our biking adventure along a verdant transitional forest, where we find coffee and cattle haciendas. We ride mainly downhill, with great views through a mountain

trail surrounded by traditional fruits, coffee and tobacco farms. Once we reach Barichara, we spend the late afternoon exploring this charming colonial town that has been perfectly preserved. Declared National Monument in 1978, Barichara has a magical ambience that has attracted many world personalities. Its cobblestone streets, red tiled roofs, squares, and laid back lifestyle give us the feeling of being transported to another era. The evening is spent in a colonial hotel. (B, L, D)

DAY 4: HIKE THE ROYAL TRAIL TO GUANE AND WATERFALL ADVENTURE

We begin our day on a hike on a historic trail that was originally built by the Guane Indians. During colonial era this trail was rebuilt in stone by the Spanish Crown to gain access to the Atlantic for the export of gold and exotic American products. This scenic road has preserved its authentic feel as it is framed by old stone walls and a classic farmland backdrop. Along the way we get great views to the gorge below and excellent birding, as a high concentration of species feed and inhabit this area. At the end of this 7 km (4 miles) hike we reach Guane, another colonial town that seems lost in time. It has a dreamlike feel and great Spanish architecture. Here we also learn about extinct Guane culture in the local anthropological museum. In the afternoon we visit the Juan Curi waterfall and humid forest area. We follow a short path with lush vegetation to the base of this impressive 50 m (160 ft.) fall where we refresh ourselves under the powerful spray. (We have the option to rappel down this falls—not included.) At the end of the day, we enjoy our last evening in our Barichara Hotel. (B, L, D)

DAY 5: RAFT THE CHICAMOCHA GORGE

This day we explore the depths of one of Colombia's natural wonders: the Chicamocha gorge, also known as the "Grand Canyon of South America". From the edge of the canyon we get incredible views to the Canyon walls and the Chicamocha River down below. As we descend nearly 800 m we will feel the rising heat. This area is an endemic tropical dry forest filled with acacias, prickly pears, agave and bromeliads. Once we arrive to the river banks our rafting adventure begins. The Chicamocha is considered Colombia's best one day run! This section of the river carves through towering limestone walls, is largely isolated, immensely scenic and with constant dry warm weather. This run is a refreshing, big volume; class III+ River with big waves and fun features. After 20 Km of river pleasurable we reach the end of our run. We continue to a charming hacienda hotel on the opposite side of the gorge. (B, L, D)

DAY 6: ORGANIC COFFEE HACIENDA TOUR AND TRANSFER TO TAYRONA

In the morning we tour an award winning organic coffee hacienda located near Bucaramanga. We explore the depths of the Colombian coffee culture contained in its 280 hectares. We tour the estate to see some of the 72 species of coffee, all shaded by a beautiful forest with more than 50,000 trees. During our visit we may also see some of the 122 species of birds that have been registered in the Hacienda. We learn about organic harvesting, peeling, sun drying and bean selection. At end of the tour we get to know the hacienda's catador or



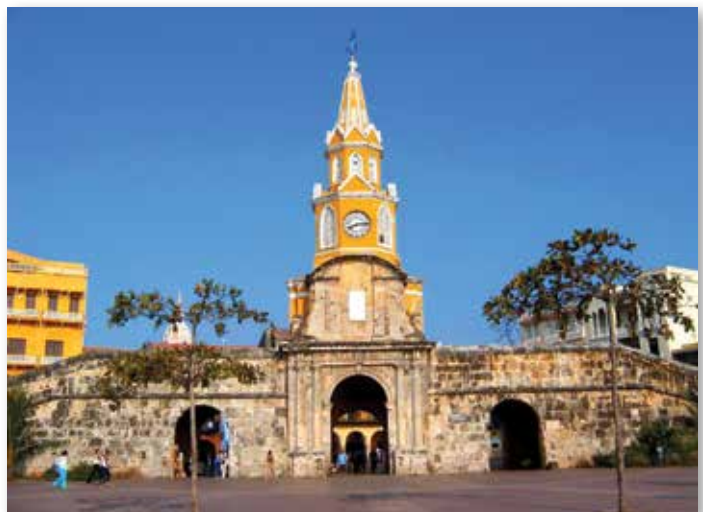
taster who will show us how to recognize aromas and control the quality of every crop. At noon we transfer to Santa Marta. We continue to Tayrona National Park which is considered one of the best nature reserves in the Caribbean. In Tayrona we find a rainforest reserve, an archeological site and white sand beaches with immense limestone rocks which give the park its unique character. Tayrona is located adjacent to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta which is the highest coastal range in the world. The Sierra Nevada is composed of higher altitude ecosystems such as cloud forest, grassland, paramo and even Colombia's highest snow peaked mountain standing at 5,775 m (18,000 ft.). This region is home to the Kogi people, a pre-Columbian culture who are the descents of the Tayrona. The Kogi are one of the few cultures in Colombia that still preserve their traditional way of life. We arrive to Tayrona in the midafternoon and explore its nearby trails and beaches. The end of the day is for a sunset over white sand beaches and crystal clear waters. We stay in a beach hotel. (B, L, D)

DAY 7: HIKE TO EL PUEBLITO ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE

We hike to and explore El Pueblito which is considered one of Colombia's best archeological sites. El Pueblito is the remains of a lost stone city originally built by the Tayrona. To reach this site we walk on a stone trail within the forest for three hours. Along our hike, we come across wildlife such as parrots, toucans, hawks, howler monkeys, colorful lizards and hundreds of butterflies. Upon reaching the site, we will explore and learn about this highly developed culture. We will discover waterways, stone bridges, stairways, and more than 250 terrace structures that supported agriculture, storage, and housing. El Pueblito was built in the 5th century and inhabited until the 16th before being abandoned and engulfed by the jungle. This was part of a network of cities that were connected by stone paved paths. In the afternoon, we begin our return hike to the coast on time for another perfect sunset. We relax in our beach hotel. (B, L, D)

DAY 8: TRANSFER TO CARTAGENA & CITY EXPLORATION

We drive south along the Caribbean coast through fishing towns and coastal cities. We reach Cartagena de Indias, a World Heritage city filled with beauty, charm and history. We settle in a boutique hotel in the colonial center and go out and explore. Cartagena was one of the wealthiest and most influential cities of the Spanish colony. The greatness of the city can be witnessed in its fine architecture, museums, churches, plazas and fortified walls. During our exploration we will



learn about its great history, the guarding of gold of the Americas and the many times it was attacked by enemies and pirates. Cartagena has a romantic and artistic ambience that has been the inspiration of many writers. It is filled with historical sites and beautiful colonial houses now transformed into elegant boutique hotels, cafes and restaurants. We spend the evening in a quality hotel. (B, L, D)

DAY 9: CASTILLO SAN FELIPE AND TRANSFER OUT

This morning we visit Castillo San Felipe de Barajas, a fortress built with brick and stone over an adjoining hill in 1536. The fortress is strategically located to repel enemies and protect the city of Cartagena. We learn about its importance, the many wars it withstood against the English and French, and how the military tactic was executed. We also visit the nearby monuments before returning to the colonial center. In the afternoon we transfer to the airport for our return flight. (B, L)

INCLUDED

Accommodations in tourist superior hotels and haciendas, adventure equipment and gear, land transportation; naturalist and adventure guides, meals as described (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner).

NOT INCLUDED

Flights from Bucaramanga to Santa Marta, or from Cartagena to Bogota; National Park entrance fee; tips.

▶ IMPORTANT INFORMATION

SEASON: All year.

ALTITUDE: 0m – 2800 m (0 – 8,800 ft.) above sea level.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE:

ANDES HIGHLANDS: 60°F to 70°F / 12°C – 20°C.

SUBTROPICAL VALLEYS: 65°F to 80°F / 15°C – 26°C.

CARIBBEAN COAST: 85°F to 100°F / 25°C – 35°C.

SUGGESTED ITEMS TO BRING: Rain jacket, layered clothing, flashlight, water bottle, sun block, hat, and mosquito repellent.

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