



Jewels of Colombia

Bogota, Medellin, Cartagena

Colombia warmly welcomes visitors to experience its wealth of indigenous cultures, Spanish Colonial heritage, and Caribbean vibe. The country beckons – and our small group is poised to discover its many jewels, from Bogota to Medellin to Cartagena, with some hidden gems along the way.

**With an Post-Tour Extension:
Cartagena – On Your Own**

Itinerary

Created on Sep 10, 2024

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Bogota, Colombia

We arrive today in the Colombian capital and transfer to our hotel. As guests' arrival times may vary greatly, we have no group activities or meals planned.

DAY 2: Bogota

After a briefing this morning on the journey ahead, we set out to discover Bogota, one of the largest cities in Latin America. We begin with a walking tour through the colonial district of La Candelaria. Founded in 1538, La Candelaria became the core of Bogota as the city grew up around it. Our tour includes Bolivar Square in the heart of the city, as well as a visit to a local market and the Gold Museum, featuring the world's largest collection of pre-Hispanic gold work. We tour the Botero Museum, housing paintings and sculptures by the late Fernando Botero, one of the country's greatest artists, along with his collection of mid-19th century works by such artists as Monet, Corot, and Renoir. We also visit a *tejo* center, where we try our hand at this immensely popular sport where players toss a steel disc at a target ringed with gunpowder-stuffed paper that explodes when hit. The more explosions, the higher the score. Tonight, we enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Bogota/Zipaquira/Usaquen

We head out of the city this morning for an excursion to the Zipaquira Salt Cathedral, a Roman Catholic church some 600 feet deep in a salt mine. Constructed entirely of salt by miners seeking solace as they labored at their dangerous profession, the cathedral today holds masses and weddings. Above ground, we visit the surrounding town of Usaquen, stopping for lunch at a local restaurant. Early this afternoon, we return to Bogota, where the remainder of the day is free for independent exploration and dinner on our own. We're invited to join our tour director on a walk through the trendy and lively Zona Rosa pedestrian neighborhood, alive with shops, restaurants, and cafés.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4: Bogota/Medellin

We fly this morning to Medellin, Colombia's second largest city known for its welcoming residents, flower-filled parks and plazas, great food, and many cultural attractions. Upon arrival in the "City of Eternal Spring," so named for its temperate climate, we have lunch at a local restaurant then depart for a tour of the popular Manrique neighborhood, with its colorful murals. Late this afternoon, we check in to our hotel and have time to relax before we head out for dinner together.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: Medellin

Today we embark on an in-depth exploration of Medellin, starting with a walk around Botero Square, the inviting plaza melding art, nature, and culture, with 23 outdoor bronze sculptures of human figures, animals, and inanimate objects by Fernando Botero. Next, we visit the Museo de Antioquia, Colombia's second oldest museum with a noted collection of pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern art, as well as paintings and sculpture by native son Botero. We also get a taste of an essential element of Colombia's cultural identity when we participate in a local coffee experience and tasting of the beloved brew (Colombia ranks third in world coffee production, after Brazil and Vietnam). We return to our hotel late this afternoon and dine tonight at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6: Medellin/Santa Elena

We travel today to nearby Santa Elena, a typical – and beautiful – colonial town known for its profusion of flower farms, along with the rich traditions that have accompanied flower growing in the area for generations. We visit a *finca* (farm), where we learn about the cultivation process and see a variety of plants. After lunch at the farm, we move on to Parque Arví, Santa Elena's stunning nature reserve. Here we board the Metrocable, the iconic gondola system that services some of Medellin's steep hillside neighborhoods. Dinner tonight is on our own in this city known for its robust food and restaurant scene.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 7: Medellin/Cartagena

This morning we fly to the port city of Cartagena, an important center of political and economic activity during the Spanish Colonial era and today a commercial center for the Caribbean, as well as a major city and beach resort. We arrive in time for lunch at a local restaurant then embark on a tour of Cartagena's Historic Center, featuring 16th-century San Felipe Fort, now a UNESCO site. Strategically located atop San Lazaro hill to defend against attacks by land or sea, in 1741, San Felipe, considered the most impressive of Spain's New World fortifications, successfully repelled British Admiral Vernon's force of 23,000 men and nearly 200 ships. We also visit historic 16th-century San Pedro Claver Church, now a museum with pre-Columbian, Afro-Caribbean, and religious art. Then we check in at our colonial-style hotel located within the walls of the Old City. We enjoy dinner together tonight.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Cartagena/Rosario Islands

We board a boat today bound for the nearby Rosario Islands, an archipelago comprising 27 small (some tiny) coral islands with pristine white-sand beaches ringed by turquoise Caribbean waters. Part of Colombia's protected national park system, the islands feature prized coral reefs with an abundance of sea fauna and flora. Upon arrival, we embark on a guided walk and a canoe tour, followed by lunch together. Then we're at leisure to enjoy this small patch of paradise as we wish: swim, snorkel, or simply relax on the beach. Late this afternoon we return to Cartagena and our hotel. We're free for dinner on our own tonight in this city known for its fresh seafood, traditional Colombian dishes, and inspired fusion cuisine.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 9: Cartagena

This morning we see local life up close as we explore the vibrant, artsy neighborhood of Getsemani, where friendly residents, street performers, vendors, artists, students, and travelers all meet in an upbeat convergence. The afternoon is free for lunch on our own and independent exploration. Tonight, we get a different taste of Colombia at a rum and chocolate tasting experience; chocolate from Colombia is renowned for its fine quality. Then we toast our Colombian adventure at a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 10: Depart for U.S.

We transfer this morning to the Cartagena airport for our flights to the U.S., where we connect with our return flights home.

Meals: Breakfast

PLEASE NOTE

Bogota's high altitude (8,700 feet) could pose problems for travelers with certain health conditions. You should consult with your physician if you have concerns.

This tour itinerary was generated for Jewels of Colombia on Sep 10, 2024. Please visit the Jewels of Colombia page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/central-south-america/jewels-of-colombia/> for the latest and most accurate information.