



Colombia

Colombian Wildlife Discovery

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

Itinerary

Colombian • Wildlife Discovery

14 Days • 13 Nights

Bogota – Paramo – Hato Montana – Bogota – Tarapoto River – Cartagena

Optional extensions available

This trip can be tailored to your interests and requirements.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Fundacion Maikuchiga, where captured primates from the illegal animal trade are nurtured back to health
- Searching for the Andean Bear
- Hummingbird observatory

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Wildlife Tour
Tour Start	Bogota
Tour End	Cartagena
Accommodation	Hotels & Lodges
Included Meals	12 Breakfasts, 11 Lunches & 12 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium

Colombian Wildlife



'Colombian Wildlife Discovery' will allow you to experience the very best of Colombia's wildlife as well as much of its colourful culture. Take in Bogota's unique merge of cosmopolitan and rich history, birdwatch amongst the largest amount of bird species in the world, witness the rehabilitation of rescued primates from the illegal animal trade and the captivating Lake Tarapoto Pink and Grey River Dolphins. Furthermore, discover the nocturnal Llanos wildlife with both all-morning and night safaris.



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Colombia, an overview

Colombia is in the midst of a new era in its history. It has one of the top regional economies and is one of the most politically stable countries in Latin America. The significant improvement in the country's safety has also positioned Colombia as a **top travel destination** that people from all around the globe are eager to discover. Colombia boasts the stunning **Andes mountain region** and the legendary **Amazonian rainforest**; the country is the second most **bio-diverse** country in the world. Furthermore, booming cosmopolitan cities like Bogotá and Cartagena can impress anyone with their magnificent views, innovative architecture, rich culture, exceptional restaurants, and enthralling ambience. A much-loved destination for bird watchers, Colombia is **home to over 1,900 species of birds** (more than the amount of bird species found in North America and Europe combined). Additionally, **450 mammal species** live in Colombia with approximately 22% considered either endangered or critically endangered. Colombia has it all: city life, stunning coastlines, **diverse landscape and wildlife** as well as countless trekking opportunities.

Why Pioneer Expeditions?

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures. The team have a real passion for wildlife and adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the world for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventures.

We like to introduce our clients to unique, the different, and the incredible. Whether it is through wildlife tracking, sea kayaking, snorkelling, trekking, rafting, cycling or observing wildlife in its natural environment, we want to give you the real Pioneer experience.

From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until you return back home, you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.

Itinerary



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DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN BOGOTA

BOGOTA

Located at 8,530 ft above sea level and surrounded to the east with its imposing Cerros Orientales (eastern hills) we find the capital and largest city of Colombia, Bogotá. With average temperatures of 62°F throughout the year, Bogotá leans towards being a cool weather city for its 8 million or so inhabitants; a population that brings together people from all over the country, making Bogotá a multicultural city with a good representation of each region of Colombia. Bogotá offers visitors a vast variety of options for all kinds of activities related with culture, nature, history and nightlife. It boasts Colombia's best museums, among them the world-renowned Gold Museum and an excellent gastronomic scene that is developing into an unmissable attraction. Having been the most important city since the Spanish colonial times, Bogotá is full of history and tales, where many of the most important moments of Colombia's recent history have occurred. Also, the night life of Bogotá is amazing, its wide variety of bars & restaurants makes Bogotá a place to live and enjoy, and staying more than 3 nights, you'll start to 'get' Bogota's local vibe.

Overnight – HAB Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
D



Distance:



Activity:
City tour and travel

DAY 2: BOGOTA CITY TOUR



PALOQUEMAO MARKETS

"Be part of the hustle and bustle of the capital's largest fresh produce market, 'Paloquemao'. Here you will learn about Colombia's rural or 'campesino' culture and enjoy the diversity and sheer abundance of produce grown in Colombia's varied climates. Open seven days a week, this market supplies the ingredients for the majority of the city's best restaurants. You'll have the chance to wander the heaving, colorful stalls, sample this country's vast number of exotic fruits (some of which are unique to Colombia and the Andes) and any other traditional local foods that take your fancy. Enjoy the dazzling display of exotic cut flowers too - one of Colombia's top exports on spectacular display in this sprawling market."

BOGOTÁ CITY TOUR

Today we will have a tour through Bogota's colonial neighborhood, La Candelaria, the capital's heart and soul. With its colorful houses, pretty balconies and village-y vibe, it's the city's cultural heart, too, with plenty of museums, the city's main library and a picturesque church on every second street corner. Home to artisans and musicians, it has plenty of bohemian cafes and restaurants, making it ideal for strolling and exploring its streets. Visit the capital's main square, the imposing Plaza Bolívar, with its magnificent Colonial and Republican style buildings, including the stately Palace of Justice, Colombia's Congress and Bogota's Primary cathedral. Enjoy the architectural mix of old adobe houses, churches, and buildings of the Spanish Colonial period, alongside Baroque and art deco styles. Visit the Botero Museum, showcasing the 'oversized' artwork of Fernando Botero, one of Colombia's best-known artists. The museum not only houses work by Botero but also other world-famous artists such as Dalí, Monet and Van Gogh.

GOLD MUSEUM

The capital's fascinating Gold Museum boasts the largest collection of pre-Columbian gold in the world, with tens of thousands of gold pieces displayed over three floors from all of Colombia's major pre-Hispanic cultures. Colombia is the birthplace of El Dorado, a mythical city the Spanish conquistadores believed was home to untold riches of gold and jewels. Colombia's pre-Hispanic cultures and their incredible mastery of gold is displayed here in spectacular fashion - you'll gasp at the advanced techniques that were used and the incredible craftsmanship required to produce these intricate and elaborate pieces that were typically made for tribal chieftains. You may be surprised to find out that gold



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itself had no monetary worth as such and was instead used in ceremonies, often to revere and represent their most important deity, the Sun.

Overnight – Hotel Casa Deco



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Short Flight
Approx. 30min drive



Activity:
City tour and travel

DAY 3: PARAMO & HUMMINGBIRDS

HUMMINGBIRD OBSERVATORY

You will spend the morning in Ecopalacio trying to spot the bear and on the way back to Bogotá, you will have a stop in the hummingbird observatory. This 'Hummingbird Observatory', high up in the mountains of La Calera, is a flower-filled sanctuary for these winged messengers, as they are known by indigenous cultures. Colombia is home to over 160 hummingbird species and here you can observe as many as 18 species, including the Coppery-bellied Puffleg (near-endemic), the Blue-throated Starfrontlet (near-endemic), the Glowing Puffleg, the Great Sapphirewing, the unbelievable Sword-billed Hummingbird, delicate Black-tailed and Green-tailed Trainbearer among many others. If you're lucky, you may spot the Silvery-throated Spinetail (endemic) and Red-crested Cotinga.



EASTERN ANDES HIGHLANDS

Today we will visit the High-Andean forest, the predominant ecosystem of Chingaza National Park and its buffer zones, certainly one of the most beautiful neotropical landscapes and home of the Andean Bear, the only bear in South America. Depending on the bear trail, followed days before by our local guides we will visit the National Park or buffer areas between 2,700 – 3,100 masl / 8,800 – 10,200 ft.

Overnight – Ecopalacio Reserve



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 3-4hr
drive



Activity:
Bird watching

DAY 4: IN SEARCH FOR THE ANDEAN BEAR



ECOPALACIO

Today you will wake up in the middle of the páramo in one of the most beautiful reserves of the park, Ecopalacio, a place that has been dedicated to conservation since before the national park was declared. Here the bear found a small area to feel safe when limestone mines worked in the area and were destroying its ecosystem. Now, Ecopalacio is one of the best spots to sight the bear.

The Andean Bear or Spectacled Bear, is the only bear in South America and is currently in the category of vulnerable species. Its presence is also a powerful indicator of the health of ecosystems and energizes the life of the forests when it knocks down bushes and branches to find food. For conservation of biodiversity, the spectacled bear functions as an umbrella species, that is, its conservation benefits the protection of the páramo ecosystem, the cloud forests and dozens of



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species that inhabit it. For numerous indigenous groups, the spectacled bear is also a sacred animal, a magical being that in some cultures was a link between heaven and earth, a mediator between good and evil, or an older brother. At this colder, high altitude climate we will have also the chance to spot also a great varieties of birds such as the stunning Blue-throated Starfrontlet (near-endemic) and the Amethyst-throated Sunangel hummingbirds, the raucous Brown-breasted Parakeet (endemic), diminutive Rufous-browed Conebill (near-endemic), the Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, shy Rufous Antpitta, Green-and-black Fruiteater and many more birds that are typical of the high-Andean ecosystems of Colombia.

Today you will drive through the park to Laguna de Chingaza, trying to find the bear. After a long day you will be back to Bogotá to spend the night.

Overnight – Movich Buro 26



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 25-30mins



Activity:
Bird watching

DAY 5: ARRIVAL TO THE EASTERN PLAINS

Today we'll fly to Yopal and transfer to Hato Montana, located 2hrs 30mins from the airport, deep in the heart of Colombia's Llanos region. Along the way the group will be able to note changes in the landscape as the ecosystem becomes more typical of the Eastern Plains, with opportunities to start wildlife watching from the cars. This may extend the journey time depending on what is seen along the way. After a nice drive, you'll arrive at the 'Hato' (Llanero term for 'ranch') Montana, one of the many Hato's that have been changing their activity from cattle ranching to tourism, with the aim to restore and preserve thousands of hectares of this region. This 9,000 hectare reserve and fully working cattle ranch has had a hunting ban in place for decades and the abundant wildlife that habits the savannah, forests, rivers and lagoons that make up the Llanos, has flourished with startling results.. Wildlife here abounds and during the dry season, where watering holes are less expanse and the wildlife is concentrated into smaller areas, it is not uncommon to rack up over 150 species of bird with many riparian specialities along with large mammals such as capybara, white-tailed deer, red howler-monkey, collared peccary and even the enigmatic giant ant-eater and smaller tree-bound tamandua. Reptiles here include the giant anaconda and black caiman amongst others. A typical lunch 'a la Llanera' (stake-in-the-ground roasted veal) will be served on arrival, before heading out for an afternoon safari with our host. The afternoon will be dedicated to a boat ride or 4x4 drive near the lodge to begin the wildlife watching here.



Overnight - Hato Montana



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Two short flights
Boat transfer



Activity:
Travel

DAY 6: HATO MONTANA



Today will be a full day dedicated to exploring the Hato in the search of the main targets such as the giant Jabiru stork, Nacunda Nighthawks and Orinoco Goose and the two Llanos restricted endemics – Pale-headed Jacamar and White-bearded Flycatcher. The hato, given that it is so large, cannot be covered in a day or even 3 so discussions will be held with the group at the beginning of the visits to see what the wildlife tendencies

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have been like in the days leading up to the visit so the group can then make choices as to how time is best spent and what the best mode of transport is – by boat in search of the Anaconda or by 4x4 in search of other hidden gems. Lunch will be eaten at lodge before the group will have the choice to continue searching during the afternoon or after watching a legendary Llanos sunset, choose to wait for a nocturnal outing to try and find some of the Hato's more reclusive residents, such as the Armadillo and various cats, among them Jaguarundi, Ocelot, difficult Puma and of course Jaguar.

Overnight – Hato Montana



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Wildlife

DAY 7: HATO MONTANA

Our last complete day will be a day to finish exploring the Hato in the search of the species we haven't seen yet. You will have lunch at the lodge and the afternoon to enjoy the surroundings of the property, activities at the ranch such as, monkey search, tour of the stable, artisan cocoa process, tour of the archaeological zone, crafts Workshop, etc. and of course, enjoy the last beautiful llanero sunset, before we head to the next destination of the trip.



Overnight – Hato Montana



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Flora and Fauna

DAY 8: FLIGHT TO BOGOTA

After an amazing stay in the eastern plains, we'll leave for Yopal airport for our flight to Bogotá. During your stay leaving the plains behind to start entering again to the mountains of the eastern range.

Overnight – Mocich Buro 26



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
**Boat transfer
Short Flight**



Activity:
Exploring and travel

DAY 9 : THE AMAZON



Today we'll leave the hotel nice and early ready for the next leg of our Wild Colombia adventure. Our flight to Leticia, the main city of Colombia's Amazon region, which covers almost a third of the country, we'll be transferred to the pier that reaches out to the mighty Amazon River. It's hard to believe that this river – over 3km wide at this point, is but a stream compared to its size further down into the basin. Either way, this enormous, churning brown body of water that drains various regions both Andean and Amazonian into the Atlantic, is gigantic to say the least. Boarding the private launch you'll head up-river for nearly 2 hours, or some 80km to the small car-less town of Puerto Nariño, Colombia's first sustainable tourism destination. This small town is populated by the various dialects of the local Ticuna indigenous culture. Upon arrival in Puerto Nariño there'll be some



time to rest after checking-in to our delightful, local jungle lodge. Dinner will be had at a local restaurant and then an after-dark walk out of town will ensue, to one of the many trails that head off into the endless expanse of jungle. We'll look for nocturnal wildlife such as frogs, insects and if fortunate, mammals scurrying along their trails. An early night will be ready for an early rise the next day.

Overnight – Calanoa Reserve



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



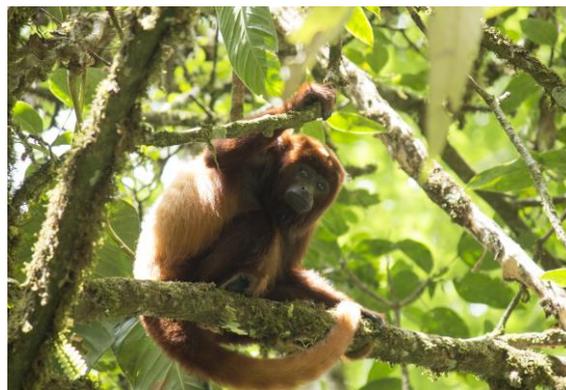
Distance:
Short flight
Short car transfer



Activity:
Wildlife

DAY 10: MAIKUCHIGA FOUNDATION

An early start and packed breakfasts will be needed to ensure that we make the most of the day. A 5am rise will allow the group to transfer 30mins by launch and arrive at the Maikuchiga Foundation ready to set out at first light on the trails into the foundation's investigation area. We'll begin by walking through a secondary tropical forest looking out for the common Squirrel Monkey, tiny Pygmy Marmoset (among the world's smallest primates), deeply coloured Yellow-handed Titi and if fortunate, Spix's night monkey. After continuing further into the forest and as we start to see more primary growth, we'll start to look out for large groups of Red-howler Monkeys and the large and impressive Humboldt's Woolly Monkey – whose populations have increased since the community declared a self-imposed hunting ban back in 2003, when the foundation was created. Depending on the group's ability a packed lunch will be either had on-trail or at the NGO's base camp, about 1hr 30mins from the foundation main house.



Fundacion Maikuchiga - meaning 'the monkey's story' – is located in the Ticuna community of Mocagua. This NGO was helped set up by the American biologist and all-round legend Dr. Sara Bennett, regarded as one of Colombia's foremost primatologists. The foundation's main function is to nurture and rehabilitate monkeys that have either been seized from the illegal animal trade or from people who once housed them as pets. Along with environmental education projects and scientific investigation, Maikuchiga has been a leading voice fighting the illegal animal traffickers that unfortunately haunt the Amazon's abundance. After returning from Maikuchiga to Puerto Nariño, and after some rest in the hotel, you'll be off again to visit the local NGO Natutama where some of the town's conscientious locals have put together a real showcase of their handicraft abilities in order to create awareness for the delicate Terra Firme and Varzea ecosystems and the importance of protecting them. After this visit you'll be invited to the most important building in any Amazonian community – the Maloka, to be with the elders and learn and hear about their culture and beliefs that span back over 10,000 years. After the Maloka visit we'll head back to the hotel.

Overnight – Calanoa Reserve



Overnight:
Lodge



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Wildlife

DAY 11: TARAPOTO RIVER

Today will begin with a relatively short boat ride to one of the Colombian Amazon's main attractions – Tarapoto Lake. This ancient (and massive) oxbow lake is around 14km in length and surrounded by virgin jungle. You'll make your way



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across the 'Correo' canal into the lake looking out for species of monkey, bird and if fortunate, river otters. Along the river we'll be looking for soaring raptors that dominate the skies and those that also perch typically by the riverside such as the massive Black-collared Hawk and Laughing Falcon. Abundant riparian wildlife dominates with Great Egrets, Cooi Herons and Black-capped Donacobious lining the reedy banks.

Lunch will be had at the lake before heading out in search of the famous Amazonian Pink River Dolphins, which on occasion can be quite inquisitive and start to burst the surface quite close to the boats. These are a marvel of evolution, almost blind due to their perfect adaptation to the Amazon's murky and silt-filled rivers. It's worth noting that these dolphins hold massive cultural importance for the Ticuna and are considered sacred to most if not all Amazonian cultures. Grey River Dolphins also occur and will be looked for. After finishing the rounds of the lake and after looking for Black Caiman and other waterborne specialities, we'll walk a trail or two, exploring the lake's pristine surrounding forests, looking for the legendary and immense Ceiba tree, owner of many legends and myths among the Ticunas. Along the way our local guide will also spot and describe uses for local medicinal plants – a wealth of fascinating knowledge, passed down over thousands of years, verbally from generation to generation. Without doubt as we walk, we'll be on the lookout for the amazing diversity of birds – particularly antbirds, tanagers and parrots and other animals that hop around quietly in the understory and high above in the canopy. We'll return to Puerto Nariño for dinner and then head for our activity prepared with the local community this evening.

Overnight – Calanoa Reserve



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Short flight
Approx. 1hr of driving



Activity:
Birding, culture and fishing

DAY 12: FLIGHT TO SANTA MARTA

MALOKA BARLOVENTO

Located at the base of the majestic Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Villa Playa Tayrona is one of the most beautiful beaches of Magdalena department. Thanks to its wonderful location in which beaches and forests converge, you will not have to walk far to enjoy nature right at the border with Tayrona National Park. Close to the beach, is also the mouth of the Piedras River, where the cool crystal clear waters flow down from the Sierra flow into the sea. There you can enjoy freshwater and saltwater beaches a few meters away from each other. Today is a transfer day and arrive at your hotel at the beaches of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and enjoy the stunning and unique view of the mountain rising from the ocean, a tropical beach surrounded by green nature, a landscape only possible under the "magical realism" of Colombia

Overnight – Maloka Barlovento



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Culture and heritage

DAY 13: TAYRONA NATIONAL PARK

TAYRONA NATIONAL PARK

The perfect combination of tropical rainforest, paradise beaches and Caribbean sea, it's no surprise that Tayrona National Park is the most visited national park in the country. The park extends from the mountains of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta down to the white sand beaches of the Caribbean sea. Take a morning trek to Arrecife (1hr aprox.), or La Piscina, the latter a beautiful, natural pool formed on the bay, making it a great place for a relaxing swim. This hike along the beaches of Tayrona gives a clear idea as to why they were voted the 'world's most beautiful' by Discovery Channel. PNN Tayrona and its combination of humid tropical forest and stark dry forest to the south, harbors a stunning array of flora and fauna, much of it unique to this wetter stretch of Colombia's Caribbean Coastline. Gorgeous sandy beaches, punctuated by smooth rocky outcrops that all emerge from the jungle-laden hills that descend to the sea. This tropical paradise is explored on foot, weaving in and out of jungle, mangroves, small rivers and beaches up to one of



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Tayrona's most popular bathing sites – La Piscinita. For those who want to, the hike continues for another couple of km towards Cabo de San Juan, arguably Tayrona's most photogenic spot.

Overnight – Maloka Barlovento



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
30min airport transfer



Activity:
Tour

DAY 14: Time to say GOODBYE to COLOMBIA

Our final day on this Colombian Wildlife Discovery, you will have the morning at your leisure or to transfer to Cartagena airport for your flight back home via Bogota to your final destination.



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B



Distance:
30min airport transfer



Activity:
Travel

Extension

DAY 15: FLIGHT TO CARTAGENA

After a number of long days and some early starts, this morning will be at leisure for those who want to stroll around this delightfully quiet and unassuming town, maybe adding to their Amazon bird list before we sit before our private boat will take us back to Leticia where we'll catch our flight to Cartagena.

Overnight – Ananda



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Culture and heritage



DAY 16: CARTAGENA CITY TOUR

Today will begin in the heat of the Caribbean morning, or better – a Cartagena morning which could well be a little hotter. The UNESCO site of Cartagena de Indias – a stunning walled city and port that once was the main thoroughfare for most of the gold, silver and slaves that arrived and left the continent during the Spanish colonisation. The old city, which has the most extensive fortifications of the Spanish conquest in the Americas, was given UNESCO World Heritage Site status back in 1984 for its original architecture and cultural symbols, beautifully preserved and recently restored and typical of Spanish colonial times. Numerous attempts through history to take the city had failed, but it wasn't until the famed Sir Francis Drake (considered a ruthless pirate by Colombian historians) attacked and took, ransacked and almost destroyed part of the city in 1586, did the Spanish crown invest in the impressive walls that still stand today.



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The architecture ranges in antiquity - the older buildings, such as the cathedral, date back to the 16th century. All are prime examples of colonial times, with their intricate woodwork, small balconies, terracotta roofs and brightly coloured facades. The tour takes you through Isla de Manga or Barrio Manga where the Spanish 'casonas' can be viewed - immense and ornate mansions - many of them declared national monuments. The tour continues to the Popa Monastery that has panoramic views of the city both old and new. You will also visit Saint Philip's castle (Castillo de San Felipe) which is regarded as the greatest military fortress that the Spanish have ever built. From here you'll be taken back to the walled city, along the stone streets and plazas, soaking up the atmosphere which is undoubtedly Caribbean in its style. The rest of the evening will be at leisure where local culinary and cultural delights can be found wandering the intimate streets and beautiful plazas of this living museum.

After returning to the hotel or continuing to walk the tight streets of the walled city, you'll have a farewell dinner and get together, but not before enjoying the beautiful sunset of Cartagena from the comfort of the Café del Mar.

Overnight – Ananda



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
30min airport transfer



Activity:
Tour

DAY 17: Time to say GOODBYE to COLOMBIA

Our final day on this Colombian Wildlife Discovery, you will have the morning at your leisure or to transfer to Cartagena airport for your flight back home via Bogota to your final destination.



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B



Distance:
30min airport transfer



Activity:
Travel

When to go



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- Due to Colombia being on the equator, temperatures are fairly stable at 24°C throughout the year, getting cooler if you move higher inland.
- Colombia wet seasons vary depending on where you are in the country. In the North, there are 2 rainy seasons, between April and June, and between September and November. However in the South the rain is more constant but the showers never last that long.
- As for when to avoid the tourists! The busy tourism season tend to be between December to February and Easter Week (the week before Easter weekend).

Important Information

INCLUDED

- Including internal flight
- Bilingual Birding Guide (for Llanos and Central Andes legs of tour)
- Local guides at every destination
- All transfers and road transport
- All accommodation
- All entrance fees to all museums, parks and reserves
- Tours as included in this itinerary
- Meals as included in this itinerary

NOT INCLUDED

- Any internal flights (aside from Expeditions Tour Leader – see ‘Inclusions’)
- Any international flights
- Laundry
- Personal expenses
- Tips
- Visa
- Items of a personal nature
- Drinks or beverages
- Meals not specified in the meal plan, as detailed in the itinerary.



Optional Extension

Day 14: Eastern Andes Birding Tour

There is great birding available in and around Bogota (maximum 1hr 30mins by car to the farthest locations) that will rack up all of the Eastern Andes endemics and rarities which are isolated to this range, such as the elusive Bogota Rail, rare and local Green-bearded Helmetcrest, stunning but difficult to spot Brown-breasted Parakeet amongst many, many others. Ventures to the western slope that leads down the Middle Magdalena River Valley will also pick up a number of Magdalena Medio specialities and endemics such as Indigo-capped and Ruby-topaz Hummingbird.

Day 15: The Lost City Trek

Trek to one of the world's great archaeological sites that literally emerges from the jungle after a strenuous 2-day hike through the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta foothills – recently declared as the most irreplaceable natural reserve on Earth. Pioneer Expeditions has adapted this excellent trek to allow for more comfort and an optional private beach hotel stay to relax tired muscles. Treks can be done in either 4 or 5 days.

Day 16: El Dorado Birding & Northern Colombia Birding Trail

Birding at El Dorado lodge, located high up in the San Lorenzo ridge in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is a dream come true for avid birders. In a 2 to 3-day stay it is not uncommon to rack up over 20 endemic species of the 24 that inhabits this isolated range. With one of the world's highest concentrations of endemic biodiversity, these mountains and the reserve lodge - with the new addition of the stunning Kogihabs - has taken this already excellent accommodation to another level. For those wanting to stay a little longer, the recently launched Northern Colombia Birding Trail – an initiative funded and led by the USAID and National Audubon Society in partnership with Colombia's Calidris NGO, has led to the formalisation of one of Colombia's best birding trails, where we get to visit dry forest, mangroves, desert scrub, humid tropical forest and two isolated ranges and a number of national parks and flora and fauna sanctuaries full of recently described endemics, some of which are new to science.

Day 17: San Jose del Guaviare

Not yet found on the international tourism map, Pioneer expeditions is very proud to be pushing what will become one of Colombia's most fascinating destinations. Surrounded by Amazonian forest on the divide between Colombia's 'Eastern Plains' or tropical savannah ecosystem and Amazon basin, San Jose del Guaviare has it all. Amazing diversity of flora and fauna, typical of both of these immense bio-regions; indigenous reserves that have so much to offer where the visitor can interact and learn about their ways of life; ancient rock formations that are part of the Guyana Shield and that leave visitors wondering about their creation and maybe most remarkable of all – ancient rock art that dates back to over 20,000 years ago that emerges from the jungle. The discoveries here are just beginning.

Day 18: PNN Los Nevados trek

Here we can disappear into the high-Andes on a full-service mountain trek or expedition, depending on your ability level. PNN Los Nevados is one of Colombia's most famous and most beautiful national parks, home to 8 volcanic structures. We will climb through pristine Andean cloud forest through various ecosystems as the oxygen slowly dissipates leaving the paramo, an ecosystem so unique it is only found in 4 countries on Earth, of which Colombia is home to over 50% of. Glacier-capped volcanoes and plateau lakes await in a landscape that has to be seen to be believed.



Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	3 – 7 hours per day
SEASON	This trip is best experienced from November to March, but can run (with minor amendments) throughout the year
BEST TIME TO GO	November – January
GROUP SIZE	2-8pax and Tailor-made
RESPONSIBILITY	As part of our commitment to responsible travel, we propose activities that are respectful of the environment and communities working at the same time exclusively with local partners.
DIFFICULTY LEVEL	Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'Medium' level (3-7 hours of activities per day). This means that you will need an average level of fitness.



The Pioneer Booking Process

Where do you go from here? Well, you can feel free to email us at info@pioneerexpeditions.com if you're interested in this trip, or any of our other expeditions from around the world. Visit our website www.pioneerexpeditions.com to unearth all of our other equally amazing trips and destinations.

1. Contact us -

We will be happy to answer any questions or enquiries you may have. From here we will begin to plan and put together your dream adventure holiday! Alternatively, on our website you will find our booking and enquiry forms; once filled in, we will be notified of your enquiry and will get back to you ASAP.

2. Leave everything to us -

Everything will be arranged and booked by us, but we will make sure to keep you updated every step of the way. In addition, we can arrange your international flights if needed, as we have access to competitive airfares. We can also arrange any additional tours or additional night's accommodation.

3. Wait for your adventure to begin -

Sit back and count down the days until your trip of a lifetime with Pioneer Expeditions. We'll handle all of the last minute preparations and provide you with everything you need. All practical information will be sent out to you, prior to your trip.

If you feel like altering this itinerary to suit your personal preferences, we can arrange all of that and more – just get in contact with us and let us know your requirements and wishes. From here, we can simply tailor-make your dream holiday.

