



Colombia

The Hidden Colombia Trek

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

Itinerary

The Hidden Colombia Trek

14 Days • 13 Nights
(trip to start on a Sat)

Bogota – Salento – Cocora Valley Reserve – PNN Los Nevados – Santa Marta – Tayrona – Santa Marta
This trip can be tailored to your interests and requirements

HIGHLIGHTS

- Adventuring through Colombia's leading national park – Parque Nacional Natural Los Nevados
- Trekking over volcanoes and the Páramo of Colombia's Central Cordillera mountain range
- Visiting the UNESCO sites of The Colombian Coffee Region
- Experiencing Tayrona National Park's tropical jungle & relaxing on the stunning Caribbean coast

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Trekking/Adventure
Tour Start	Bogota
Tour End	Santa Marta
Accommodation	Hotels & Camping
Included Meals	13 Breakfasts, 12 Lunches & 10 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Moderate/Difficult

Colombian Hidden Trek



Our The Hidden Colombia Trek will allow you to experience and trek through the very best of Colombia's undiscovered departments and national parks. We'll also embrace much of Colombia's traditions and culture through exploring Colombia's traditional cities, towns and villages. This trip will allow you to trek the peaks of Parque Nacional Natural Los Nevados and experience many of Colombia's hidden highlights including adventuring to find the roof of Colombia, trekking through the outstanding Cocora Valley, conquering Colombia's stunning volcanic landscape and roaming the coast to experience a trek through tropical forest, beaches and ancient ruins at Tayrona National Park with an idyllic Caribbean twist; all with wildlife viewing opportunities along the way.

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. In terms of trekking in Colombia, there are an abundance of hidden spots to be discovered, where eager trekkers can roam Colombia's remarkable variety of landscapes. The **Andean Colombian wilderness** can offer **unique cloud forests, Mountain Rivers, valleys and canyons**. Colombia also features its **Coffee region** which is a never-ending green carpet of vegetation of which encircles the remarkable valleys and peaks. Furthermore, booming cosmopolitan cities like Bogotá and Cartagena can impress anyone with their magnificent views, innovative architecture, rich culture, exceptional restaurants, and enthralling ambience. Colombia has it all: **countless trekking opportunities**, city life, stunning coastlines, some of the world's most diverse landscape and wildlife.

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: Arrive in BOGOTA

Welcome to Colombia! Upon arrival in Bogota, we will be met at the airport by our local guide and transferred to our hotel. Our Colombia trip commences with a tour; 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. We will visit some of Bogota's most important museums such as Botero Museum and the Gold Museum.

Bogota - Founded in 1538 this cosmopolitan city of almost 8 million people, sits high up in the Andes Mountain Range – 8,660 feet (2,640 meters) above sea level. As the third highest capital city in South America. Before the Spanish arrival, various indigenous tribes inhabited Bogota and the region surrounding it. Remnants of these tribes can be seen in Bogota's spectacular gold museum and in the traditions of the small rural communities. Bogota has been the epicentre of Colombia's dramatic yet fascinating history, so visiting it is the best way to understand the country's tough past and recent revival.



Overnight – HAB Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
D



Distance:
30min airport transfer



Activity:
Travel

DAY 2: BOGOTA CITY TOUR

BOGOTA CITY TOUR

You will start the day with an early transfer to Paloquemao market after a light breakfast. This will be a great opportunity to be part of the hustle and bustle of the capital's largest market, learn about rural culture and sample various local foods. After the market, you will be transferred to the Gold Museum, Bogotá's most famous museum and one of the most mesmerizing in South America, containing more than 56,000 pieces of gold and other materials from all of Colombia's major pre-Hispanic cultures. The museum will give you a great introduction and context for what comes later in our trip.

You will continue with a walking tour of the downtown colonial neighborhood of Bogotá, La Candelaria. La Candelaria is considered the city's heart and soul; there you will see the architecture of the old houses, churches, and buildings of Spanish Colonial, Baroque, and art deco styles. Visit Bolívar Square and several important Colonial and Republican style buildings, including the Palace of Justice, Colombia Congress, Mayor's office, and the Primary Cathedral of Bogotá. You will visit the Botero Museum, a permanent exhibition of artwork by Fernando Botero, Colombia's most famous artist, whose "oversized" art is instantly recognizable. The museum not only houses work by Botero but also other world-famous artists such as Dalí, Monet and Van Gogh. You will walk a little bit through the narrow streets of La Candelaria while we admire the great collection of street art to finish our walking tour in one of the typical restaurants of the neighborhood.

Overnight – HAB Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
City tour

DAY 3: SALENTO TOWN AND COFFEE TOUR



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SALENTO TOWN

Salento, considered Quindio’s first modern settlement, is one of the most popular coffee villages to visit in the coffee region and it’s not hard to see why. Stroll the streets, lined with colorful facade houses, each built in the traditional coffee region style, using local Guadua bamboo structures, bright colors and with Spanish-era balconies. Take a walking tour of this historical town, learning about its coffee culture, brightly colored houses, and its high quality handicrafts, before enjoying some down time with an award-winning local brew.

FIANCA EL OCASO

This tour at the beautiful colonial coffee hacienda Ocaso is one where experts will guide you through the perfected process of producing their local specialty coffees. You will discover the important role that coffee has played in the cultural development of the region and much of Colombia. Experience each step in the growing process of coffee beans, starting at the moment the seeds are planted until the red berries are selected and harvested. Walk around the plantations and visit one of the freshwater springs on the farm. It’s the privileged climatic and geographic conditions here which result in the plants producing the sweetest of coffee beans. From here, observe the peeling, washing, drying and roasting processes required to produce a pound of Sustainable ‘Ocaso Coffee’. Round off the tour by tasting different coffee preparation methods, with different grinds and roasts



Overnight – *Hostel Terasu*



Overnight:
Guesthouse



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Short flight
Approx. 2hrs drive



Activity:
Coffee tour

DAY 4: LOS NEVADOS NATIONAL PARK TREK

An authentic mountain adventure, in which we will enjoy the incredible landscape of the Los Nevados National Natural Park and experience its great variety of ecosystems, starting with the humid montane forest at 2100 meters above sea level, until we reach the moor that welcomes us with the incredible view of the Lagoon. of Otún and the magical forest “El Edén”; We will also have the opportunity to experience the mountain night in different ways, mountain refuges, peasant farms, camps and finally, the most spectacular mountain hotel in Colombia.



COCORA VALLEY & CARDENAS CREEK



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This stunning valley is home to the world's tallest palm and Colombia's national tree: the endemic Colombian Wax Palm. Spend time exploring the spectacular green mountain landscape of Cocora, named after the local pre-Hispanic chieftain's daughter of the region, catching a traditional Willys Jeep to take you there from Salento. From this spectacular place we will start our hike into the cloud forest of Los Nevados National Park. We will start walking along Cárdenas Creek which comes from the "páramo" ecosystem, we will cross it repeatedly and will accompany us during the whole day. As we move forward, and leave the valley behind we see how in the distance, the majestic wax palm still stands out among the vegetation as we enter the high Andean forest, characterized by its great biological diversity, and vegetation. Every meter we climb, the vegetation changes, the weather gets colder and more humid, we start realizing that we are really far from civilization, in the middle of the mountains experiencing one of the most impressive adventures in Colombia. Today we will reach 3,500 m.a.s.l (11,480 f.a.s.l), we will spend the night in a beautiful mountain farm and where we will have a nice rest to prepare for our next day -

Overnight – Camping



*Overnight:
Camping*



*Meals:
B, L, D*



*Distance:
Varies*



*Activity:
Trekking*

DAY 5: BERLIN PARAMO

Today we enter the páramo, we will keep ascending for 5kms (3miles) until we reach El Berlín ridge at 4,250 m.a.s.l (13,9490 f.a.s.l), an stunning view of a páramo valley, covered with frailejones and typical vegetation of this ecosystem will appear in front of our eyes - only if it's clear!- Páramo ecosystem its well known for being the water factory of Colombia because of its high humidity, forming creeks, rivers lakes, that finally reach the towns and cities and bring life to one of the most biodiverse countries in the world; so the probability of rain it's high, but this is also its magic, its misty and cloudy environment makes of this ecosystem something unique that will continue to grow in us the sensation of being in a magical place, experiencing nature at to the fullest. Finally we will arrive at the farm "El Berlín", located at 3,810 m.a.s.l(12,500 f.a.s.l), between the imposing mountains of the paramo and surrounded by frailejones, right next to the Paramillo del Quindío, once one the 4 glaciers that adorned the park with its white peaks, today only 3 of them remain frozen but losing their white peaks day by day. Today we will have the opportunity to share and stay in the house of a typical mountain peasant family and we will learn about their way of life in the extreme conditions of the moor.



Overnight – Camping



*Overnight:
Camping*



*Meals:
B, L, D*



*Distance:
N/A*



*Activity:
Trekking*

DAY 6: Discover LAKE OTUN



Today we begin with a short, but strong ascent to "Alto del Agrado" located at 3,900 m.a.s.l (12,795 f.a.s.l), to then descend to "El Bosque"

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village, where we will find the school of the region and the most inhabited area of this sector of the National Park. Passing El Bosque, we will cross the "Quebrada Azul" and begin the ascent again to reach the majestic Laguna del Otún, which provides drinking water to the entire department of Risaralda. Today we will spend the night in a paramo camp on the shore of the largest and most imposing lagoon in Los Nevados National Natural Park, so spend our last night feeling the peace and connect with the nature of this magical place in the middle of the central mountain range..

Overnight – Camping



*Overnight:
Camping*



*Meals:
B, L, D*



*Distance:
N/A*



*Activity:
Trekking*

DAY 7: POTOSI & TRANSFER TO TERMALES LA QUINTA

Today we will start leaving the lagoon towards the magical forest of "Eden", named for its incredible colors and variety of vegetation; From there we will continue our way towards the exit of the park surrounded by paramo and with an incomparable view of the Lagoon, if we are lucky, we will be able to spot in the distance the summits of Paramillo de Santa Rosa, Nevado Santa Isabel and Nevado del Ruiz before leaving the National Park. At the end of our journey, we will be transferred to the Hacienda Termales La Quinta, located at 2,600 m.a.s.l (8,530 f.a.s.l), in the middle of the mountains and the andean forest, where we can relax in its private thermal pool in front of the most magical waterfall and spend an incomparable night in one of the most beautiful and unique mountain hotels in Colombia.

Overnight – Termales La Quinta



*Overnight:
Hotel*



*Meals:
B, L, D*



*Distance:
Varies*



*Activity:
Trekking*

DAY 8: HACIENDA TERMALES LA QUINTA

Today we will have the morning to relax at the Hacienda Termales La Quinta, one of the beautiful places that Colombia has in the middle of the mountains of the central mountain range, in the vicinity of the Los Nevados National Natural Park. This 130-year-old country house, heated with pipes that carry thermal water throughout the house, and with a thermal pool in the middle of it, is a wonderful place where we will spend the morning enjoying not only the thermal pool, but of its landscape, adorned by mountains covered with vegetation and wax palms and a waterfall of more than 200 meters that will leave us amazed in the morning while we recover our body from the demanding walk of the previous days. If you are still have energy and feel stron after 4 days in the mountain, there are two optional hikes around the farm, to visit waterfalls, forests and get amazed once again with the diversity of flora and fauna of the Central Mountain Range

Overnight – Termales La Quinta



*Overnight:
Hotel*



*Meals:
B, L, D*



*Distance:
N/A*



*Activity:
Exploring*

DAY 9: Transfer to SANTA MARTA

Today you will arrive in Santa Marta, the first Spanish settlement in what is today Colombia, and the first city to be founded. Santa Marta is a city of great cultural wealth and marked by the cultural and natural influence of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, an ancient and magical territory, and the highest coastal tropical mountain in the world, rising from under the ocean floor up to 5,700 meters above sea level. As it's isolated from the Andes mountain range, we can find all the thermal floors and almost every ecosystem of Colombia, characterized by high levels of endemism of flora and fauna. Four Indigenous communities inhabit this territory, the Koguis, Arhuacos, Cancuamos and Wiwa, all descendants of the Taironas, who settled in the highest places in the Sierra to escape from the Spanish colonizers. Today, depending on the time of arrival, we will visit the Tayrona Gold Museum, in its archaeological rooms, the museum houses a spectacular collection of relatively recent finds of artifacts and gold ornaments that allow us to make



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interpretations of the Nahuange and Tairona periods of the Sierra Nevada, a beautiful place to start contextualizing what we are about to experience over the following days.

Overnight – Casa de Leda



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L,



Distance:
Short flight
Approx. 5hr drive



Activity:
Travel

DAY 10: BUNKUANI & TAIKU KOGUI TOWNS

BUNKUANI

We will start with a 4x4 transfer from Santa passing through the town of Bonda, an important place for the indigenous resistance in times of the Spanish conquest, where a 16th century doctrinal church is still preserved, we will make a short stop at the church and the monument to the indigenous Tayrona before continuing on the vehicle to the stones of Donama, a sacred site to the indigenous communities of the Sierra Nevada, we will stop here to ask permission to enter the territory and have a good experience (shala).

We will continue by vehicle to the village of La Lisa and El Boqueron, where the trail begins. We will start today's hike climbing the low mountains of the Sierra, a great altitude for coffee plantations, which we will pass through before we descent to the lost city of Bunkuany, one of the many different archaeological sites built hundreds of years ago by the Tayronas, we will visit the complex and learn about the traditional organization of the site and its importance for the indigenous. We will have lunch here before we continue walking along a beautiful trail that will take us to the farm La Playita, where we will spend the night, a beautiful place by the Piedras River where we will recharge our body and soul for our next day.

Overnight – La Playita Farm



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 2hr drive



Activity:
Trekking

DAY 11: TEIKU KOGUI TOWN

After a recharging night in the middle of nature by Piedras River, we will have a delicious breakfast before we start exploring the farm, a beautiful self-sustainable farm where most of the food is produced there or by other farmers of the region, we will spend part of the morning learning about beekeeping and honey production and we will get to try the delicious honey produced in the farm. After enjoying the river, we will start our hike to the town of Calabazo, where we will have lunch. In the afternoon we will start our second half of the hike to the indigenous village of Teiku, where we will spend the night with the company of one of the most spiritual and powerful indigenous of the Sierra. 3.5 kms climb until reaching the community, where we will have a night chat with the Kogi about their role in caring for the Heart of the World (the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta).

Overnight – Teiku



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Exploring

DAY 12: 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



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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 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:
B, L



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Exploring

DAY 12: TAYRONA NATIONAL PARK



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Overnight – Maloka Barlovento



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Exploring

DAY 13: DAY AT LEISURE

MALOKA BARLOVENTO

Located at the base of the majestic Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Villa PLayera 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



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Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Relax

DAY 14: TRANSFER TO AIRPORT

End of Expedition



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Travel

Important Information

INCLUDED

- All transfers and road transport
- All accommodation
- All entrance fees to all museums, parks and reserves
- Bilingual Trek Leader
- Local bilingual guides in major cities
- Bilingual accompaniment during airport transfers
- Tours as included in this itinerary
- All meals as noted in itinerary
- All snacks and water on day tours

NOT INCLUDED

- Any internal flights
- 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

When to go

- 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.



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- 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).

Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	5 – 7 hours per day.
SEASON	These parts of Colombia are best explored from December to March or June to September.
BEST TIME TO GO	December - March & June - September.
GROUP SIZE	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 'moderate-difficult level' (5 – 7 hours of activities per day. This means you will need a good level of fitness and some specific training may be required.



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.

