



Colombia in Style

Nature & Culture

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

Itinerary

Colombia • Nature & Culture

11 Days • 10 Nights

**Bogota – Chingaza National Park – Salento – Valle Del Cocora –
Filandia – Cartagena – Rosario Islands - Cartagena
Optional : Tayrona Region Extension**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Bogota & Cartagena with history experts
- Visit a traditional coffee hacienda
- Explore Cocora Valley and its 60-meter palm trees
- Go island hopping aboard a private speedboat in the Rosario Islands archipelago

TOUR ESSENTIALS

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tour Style | Exploration Tour |
| Tour Start | Bogota |
| Tour End | Cartagena |
| Accommodation | Hotels & Private Bungalows |
| Included Meals | 8 Breakfast, 7 Lunch, 4 Dinner |
| Difficulty Level | Medium |

COLOMBIA IN STYLE



This expedition takes travellers through the most contrasting destinations in Colombia: Bogota's cosmopolitan restaurants and neighbourhoods, the Coffee Region's verdant hills and lush nature, Cartagena's streets lined with colourful colonial mansions, and the Rosario Islands' turquoise waters. Get a taste of the Colombia's incredible diversity and breath-taking landscapes, through authentic and personalized experiences with local experts.



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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. Boasting beaches on the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, as well as the stunning Andes mountain region and the legendary Amazon rainforest, Colombia is proud to be the second most bio-diverse country in the world. Furthermore, booming cosmopolitan cities like Bogotá, Medellín, and Cartagena can impress anyone with their magnificent views, innovative architecture, rich culture, exceptional restaurants, and enthralling ambience.

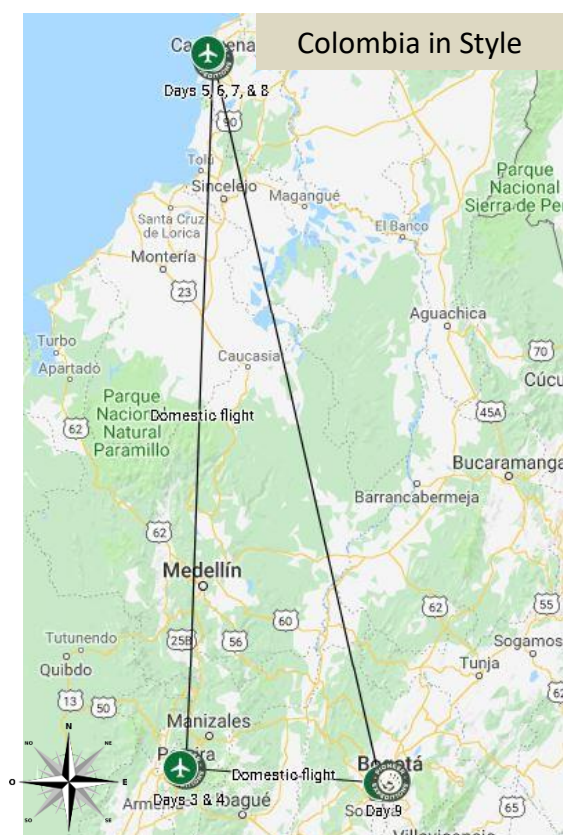
Why Pioneer Expeditions?

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 and 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:
Approx. 30min drive



Activity:
Travel

DAY 2: BOGOTA CITY TOUR



BOGOTÁ 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 Bogota. 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.



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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 neighbourhood.

Overnight – HAB Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Culture and Discovery

DAY 3: CHINGAZA NATIONAL PARK



CHINGAZA NATIONAL PARK

Chingaza is located in the eastern mountain range of the Andes, northeast of Bogotá, it has 76,600 hectares and was one of the first areas in Colombia to be declared a natural national park. Chingaza is mainly known for its paramo ecosystem, which plays a very important role in the production of water for the 8 million Bogota citizens who live in the Capital. In Colombia, this ecosystem is responsible for the production of 80% of the country's drinking water, the reason why most of the páramos are protected.

Páramos are located above 11,000ft (3,400mts), very close to the clouds, which makes its climate very cold and humid most of the time, all the vegetation traps water from the fog and the rain creating creeks, rivers and lakes that finally are directed to big reservoirs to supply water to the cities. The importance of this ecosystem relies also on the uniqueness of its flora and fauna, being home to many endemic species of birds, mammals and vegetation.

ABOUT TODAY'S ACTIVITY

Today we will be transferred for about 1.5 hours to the entrance of Chingaza, here, depending on the group's interests we can choose between different short hikes or simply take it easy in the car and have a panoramic tour of the páramo getting out of the car from time to time to feel the environment, enjoy the view and take some photos.

At this colder, high altitude climate we will have the chance to spot stunning birds such as the 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. But this páramos is also home to many mammals such as deers, many rodents and the majestic Andean Bear or Spectacled Bear, the only bear in South America, its presence is 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.

Overnight – HAB Hotel



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L



Distance:
Short flight
Approx. 30min drive



Activity:
Coffee Farm

DAYS 4: FLIGHT TO THE COFFEE REGION & SALENTO



SALENTO

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.

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Stroll the streets, lined with colourful facade houses, each built in the traditional coffee region style, using local Guadua bamboo structures, bright colours and with Spanish-era balconies. Take a walking tour of this historical town, learning about its coffee culture, brightly coloured houses, and its high quality handicrafts, before enjoying some down time with an award-winning local brew.

ABOUT TODAY'S ACTIVITY

Today, after arriving in Pereira, you will depart to Salento, one of the most beautiful and iconic towns in the coffee zone; you will enjoy its typical architecture, its colourful streets, restaurants, cafes, among which is Jesús Martín, where you will taste one of the best coffees in Salento and you will be surprised with a demonstration of art latte. After a visit to the town, "a few rounds of the traditional village game, 'Tejo', is highly entertaining and well worth seeking out to play with locals, usually enjoyed while having a few beers at the local corner shop. An old throwing game whose origins appear lost in the mists of time, Tejo involves throwing a metal puck or disc (the 'tejo') from a set distance onto a small sand-covered area in which some gunpowder targets are buried. Small explosions sound when the tejo hits the target, providing the buzz in this otherwise gentle rural game.

Overnight - Terasu



*Overnight:
Hotel*



*Meals:
B,L,D*



*Distance:
Varies*



*Activity:
Coffee and culture*

DAYS 5: VALLE DEL COCORA

COCORA VALLEY

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. Today, after breakfast, we will be transferred to Valle del Cocora, as you get closer, you will begin to see how on both sides of the road, the majestic Palma de Cera starts to make a presence, one of the only species of palms in the world that managed to adapt to the altitude to adorn the mountains of Colombia. In Cocora Valley we will have the opportunity to choose between two beautiful hikes through the Andean forest to understand the importance of this ecosystem and enjoy the spectacular scenery.

Overnight - Terasu



*Overnight:
Hotel*



*Meals:
B,L*



*Distance:
Short flight
Approx. 30min drive*



*Activity:
Travel*

DAY 6: COFFEE TOUR & FILANDIA

COFFEE TOUR AT FINCA 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 fresh water 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.

FILANDIA



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After the walk you will go to Filandía, a colorful coffee village of Filandia in the far northeast of Quindío. Your guide will explain the culture of this coffee-growing region and how small villages such as Filandia form the backbone of rural agricultural life. You'll stroll the pretty streets of this quiet village before climbing the town's observation tower for an impressive 360° view of the Quindio department and its small villages, as well as a view of the Central and Western Andes. You will have lunch in a delicious restaurant and continue towards Hacienda Venecia where we will spend the night.

Overnight - Terasu



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Culture

DAY 7: FLIGHT TO CARTAGENA



Today we will fly to 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.

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.

Overnight - Nacar



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,D



Distance:
Short speed boat



Activity:
Flight / Explore

DAY 8: CARTAGENA CITY TOUR

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.

Overnight - Nacar



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Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,L,



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Culture and heritage

DAY 9: BARU ISLAND

While Cartagena's city beaches may be nothing to write home about, the string of islands - the protected Islas del Rosario - just a few miles offshore are another story. The Islas del Rosario are picture-postcard perfection with their white sand and turquoise seas. Today you will be transferred to the beautiful and exclusive 5-star hotel Las Islas to enjoy some Caribbean island vibe with optional kayaking or snorkeling to get a close up of the coral reef ecosystem that make up this national park.

Overnight – Las Islas



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Relax

DAY 10: DAY AT LEISURE IN BARU

Day at leisure.

Overnight – Las Islas



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Relax

DAY 11: TRANSFERS TO AIRPORT



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
**Approx. 30min
drive to airport**



Activity:
Travel

Accommodation, at a glance

Subject to availability

| NIGHTS | DESTINATION | ACCOMODATION |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Nights 1, 2, 3 | Bogota | HAB Hotel |
| Nights 4, 5, 6 | Salento | Terasu |
| Nights 7, 8 | Cartagena | Nacar |
| Nights 9, 10, 11 | Baru Island | Las Islas |



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Important Information

INCLUDED

- Hosting services in Bogota, Coffee Region, Cartagena and extension (if applicable)
- All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Accommodation as described
- All transfers
- Internal flight ticket
- All entrance fees

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Meals other than mentioned
- Alcoholic and soft drinks (water included)
- Tips
- Personal expenses
- Optional tours/activities and extensions

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.
- 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

2 – 5 hours per day. This is a tailor-made trip so can be as active as you wish it to be

SEASON

This part of Colombia is best explored from December to April, but can be visited at any time

BEST TIME TO GO

December – April, July - August

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.



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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 (2 – 5 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.

