

DISCOVER **COLOMBIA!**

MARCH 7-19, 2022: 12 Nights/13 Days



Itinerary at a Glance:

- **3 nights: Sofitel Victoria Regia, Bogota**
- **2 Nights: Mocawa Resort, Armenia (Coffee Region)**
- **2 Nights: Dann Carlton, Medellin (Superior)**
- **1 Night: Hotel Los Recuerdos or Hotel Mansion, Guatapé**
- **4 Nights: Sofitel Legend Santa Clara, Cartagena**



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Map Routing:



Full Itinerary:

Day 1 (Monday, March 7, 2022): Depart from Home/Arrive in Bogotá
 Begin your journey from Canada, as you depart from your desired airport gateway. Best flights to get to Colombia connect through Toronto and arrive into Bogotá same day and in the evening. Upon arrival proceed through customs and collect your luggage. We will be waiting for you to transfer you to your hotel, the charming Sofitel Victoria Regia, in the northern section of Bogotá located in an area known for its great restaurants.

Day 2 (Tuesday, March 8, 2022): Bogotá

Enjoy a day at leisure in Bogotá. Walk around the neighbourhood, sit at a cafe or enjoy an afternoon drink and grab a lunch on a patio in "Parque Virrey" (El Virrey Park). This afternoon we are offering an optional half day excursion to Zipaquirá to visit its salt mine and underground cathedral. At night, transfer to Andres D.C. restaurant for welcome dinner. The most original restaurant in Colombia due to its eccentric decoration and great party environment, Andres Carne de Res restaurant and night club captures Colombian traditional food and samples it with one of the best party times in town. With a menu of Colombian cuisine, the restaurant specializes in grilled food and meat which is accompanied by actors and musicians that make this a fun dining and entertainment experience. (B, D)



Day 3 (Wednesday, March 9, 2022): Bogota - Full Day City Tour with visit to local markets

Start the day with a visit to "La Plaza de Mercado Paloquemao", one of the largest and most recognized local markets in Bogotá, where all traditional products and ingredients of Colombian cuisine can be found. Try some of the exotic fruits, local pastries, and Colombian cheese. Visit the flower market and the popular food stalls to get a true local experience.

Continue with the visit to the Sanctuary of Monserrate, a symbol of Bogotá. Take the cable car or funicular up to Monserrate. Monserrate rises to 3,152 metres (10,341 ft) above sea level. The site offers an incredible panoramic view of the entire city. Transfer to the historic centre of Bogotá, La Candelaria, time at leisure to do the Gold Museum, which has a permanent exhibition of pre-hispanic pieces of gold, 20,000 stones, ceramics and textiles all precious to the Quimbaya, Calima, Tayrona, Sinu, Muisca, Tolima, Tumaco and Magdalena cultures. The Gold Museum is considered one of the most important museums of its type internationally and it has been operating since 1939.

On the way enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, you will see the graffiti area, a great variety of colorful graffiti's, murals and street art on its walls, that can be found in the historical center and are an artistic, social and political form of expression.

Continue with lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch, enjoy time of leisure to walk around "La Candelaria", or visit the Botero Museum, a colonial house exhibiting some of Fernando Botero's works of art and in addition pieces from his own personal collection that includes works by Picasso, Renoir, Dalí, Matisse, Monet and Giacometti. The historic centre of Bogotá known as La Candelaria is an archaic suburb that has great significance in the country's history due to its cultural heritage and is also a great example of Spanish colonial time architecture. Visit the main square Plaza de Bolívar, where a statue of the great emancipator Simón Bolívar is located. Return to the hotel for your overnight stay. (B, L)

Day 4 (Thursday, March 10, 2022): Bogota – Coffee Region – Visit Hacienda San Alberto

After breakfast, transfer to El Dorado airport for a short domestic flight to the coffee region (Pereira). Upon arrival, we will be transported to "Hacienda San Alberto" an award-winning coffee estate typical of this region.

The tour begins with an introductory talk about coffee, its preparation, roasting, the characteristics of quality and the properties that allows for such a variety of coffees in the world. Walk through the coffee plantations and learn about the production system which includes the harvest. This region has been along the Central Andes Mountain Range which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, offers the perfect climatic conditions for coffee growing.



At the end, enjoy a coffee tasting session, guided by a Master Taster from “Hacienda San Alberto” who will bring all his coffee knowledge to the table. At the end, you will taste two cups of coffee. Afterwards enjoy lunch overlooking the coffee plantation. Then make our way to our hotel, Mocawa Resort (located in Armenia) for two nights. (B, L)

Day 5 (Friday, March 11, 2022): Full Day Valle del Cocora, Salento & Filandia

After breakfast, leave for the Valle de Cocora which is located in the central mountains of the department of Quindío. This comprises of the Parque Nacional de los Nevados and is the ideal place to marvel at the “Quindian wax palm” (*Ceroxylon quincense*), the national tree of Colombia. This tree can reach a staggering height of 60m..

Upon arrival in the valley, either hiking or on horseback (not included), head into the cloud forest to enjoy the biodiversity of the flora and fauna. On the return journey, cross the River Quindío while walking along an ecological pathway which takes one past the tallest wax palms in the world. Learn why the indigenous people here worshipped this tree. Then you will have a typical Colombian lunch and enjoy some free time here in the area. In the afternoon, continue 10km towards the traditional town of Salento to enjoy a city tour that visits the Plaza de Bolívar with its colourful balconies, the Calle Real, the handicrafts shops and the Cocora viewpoint. Then, transfer to the nearby village of Filandia to enjoy a stroll around this charming town. Here, enjoy some time soaking up the regional atmosphere and perhaps some local spirits before returning to the hotel. (B, L)

Day 6 (Saturday, March 12, 2022): Armenia – Medellín

Travel by coach from Armenia to Medellín and experience the landscape of the Colombian countryside. Upon arrival drive through the longest tunnel in South America and come out the other side seeing the beautiful view of the city which lies nestled in a valley. Be transferred to the most affluent suburb of Medellín, called “El Poblado”. We will do a brief orientation tour of the neighbourhood before checking into the Dann Carlton hotel. Enjoy some time at the hotel's pool and have the rest of the day at leisure to explore the area.. (B)

Day 7 (Sunday, March 13, 2022): Medellín – Half Day Social

Transformation tour

Half day tour to visit those places that best represent the social transformation that has taken place in Medellín. The tour will show the symbolic areas of Medellín from the 1980s, when the city was one of the most dangerous in the world, up to today many projects that fostered the city's change.

Enjoy an exciting tour by learning about the history and present-day life in Medellín and learn more about the transformation of this fascinating metropolis. Since 2002 Medellín began to change. Intelligent local politicians started to invest heavily in infrastructure and public education. Today the “City of Eternal Spring” is one of the most innovative



metropolises in the world.

Visit the barrio San Javier, which used to be one of the most unsafe suburbs of Medellín
Located some 7km from the city centre, it is a clear example of the social transformation that has taken place in the last few years. Arrive here by the metro cable car that joins the north-east area with the city centre, which has been life changing to many of the inhabitants of Medellín. Learn more about the city's transformation after the death of Pablo Escobar.

Explore Medellín's newest invention: the electric stairways of the district Comuna 13, discover stories about its past by visiting the most important places marked by historical events and see some graffiti that symbolizes a form of expression of the community. Here it is possible to have a beautiful view over the city from the balconies of San Javier.

Then, go on to La Plazoleta located in the city centre, in an area that fell into decline in the 1980s and today houses 23 sculptures of Fernando Botero, donated by this famous local artist in year 2000. Since that time, the city has undergone a social and cultural transformation around these works placed in a public space. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. This evening enjoy an included dinner at a local restaurant close to our hotel. (B, L, D)

Day 8 (Monday, March 14, 2022): Medellín – Guatapé

Leave Medellín and head to the town of Guatapé in order to visit the enormous rock. The drive takes around two hours, during which you can appreciate the outstanding landscape of Antioquia. Guatapé has a reservoir created by the Colombian government for a hydro-electric dam. In the middle of the reservoir is the Peñol Rock. Walk up the stairs if you are full of energy (OPTIONAL - there are 654 steps to get to the top – entrance fee not included), to view the entire Guatapé reservation, this is an optional activity.

**Then visit the picturesque village of Guatapé where all of the houses are painted in quaint pastel colours. After lunch (included), tour the Guatapé reservoir by boat (30 minutes). Continue to the hotel in Guatapé for dinner and overnight stay.
(B, L, D)**

Day 9 (Tuesday, March 15, 2022): Guatapé – Medellín – Cartagena

Transfer to Medellín airport for your flight to Cartagena. Upon arrival, you will be transferred to the Sofitel Legend, an iconic property in Cartagena and your home for 4 nights. It used to be a monastery and has been converted into a luxury hotel that has retained its historic feel. This property is written about in Gabriel Garcia Marquez famous book titled "One Hundred Years of Solitude". (B)

Day 10 (Wednesday, March 16, 2022): Cartagena – Half Day city tour – Street Food

Start with a panoramic view of the city from the Monasterio and Iglesia de La Popa. Formerly known as the "Popa del Galeon" and famous for resembling the stern of a galleon, it was





constructed in 1606. From here you can enjoy 360° views of the city and the sea as well as the port zone, one of the most important in the Caribbean.

Continuing to the San Felipe Fortress, erected in honor of the poet from Cartagena, Don Luis Carlos López, made famous for his sonnet “A mi ciudad nativa” It was built on San Lázaro hill to defend the city from pirate attacks. Walk around the fortress and learn how the castle was constructed, the engineering feats, the tunnels, underground galleries and passageways. Then continue on to the Ciudad Vieja (old city) to visit the Convent and Church of San Pedro Claver which was built in the middle of the XVII century and owes its name to the “apóstol de los esclavos”. Lastly, continue to the handicrafts zone of the Bovedas, a collection of archways built into the city wall of Cartagena and that were used until the end of the 1700s to house armaments and then later as a prison in the XIX century. Nowadays it’s an artisan center where one can appreciate local handcraft.

Then, bring your appetite and an adventurous attitude during the 2 hour Street Food Tour. This experience will take you on a culinary walk through the old town and you will get up close with the real Cartagena, as the street sellers fill you with their delicacies and their hospitality. Whether you are searching for a snack, a healthy start or a sweet dessert, Cartagena’s streets provide everything. (B, L)

Day 11 (Thursday, March 17, 2022): Day at leisure OR Optional excursion to Rosario Islands

Today is a full day of leisure, enjoy all that Cartagena has to offer and experience the city on your own. Optional Excursion: Rosario Islands – Located approximately one hour (45km) by boat from Cartagena. Upon arrival to one of these islands, you will have free time to enjoy the beach, snorkel (not included) and relax. Lunch is served on the island and in the afternoon you return to Cartagena. The Rosario and San Bernardo National Park are located in the Caribbean Sea and are ringed by coral reefs and lapped by clear blue waters and is the habitat for a large variety of marine fauna. Three ecosystems thrive here: coastal lagoons, the mangroves surrounding them, and the tropical forest. Covering 120,000 hectares, the park consists of 23 coral islands and islets and were formed some 5000 years ago, due to ancient volcanic activity that pushed up the continental shelf and create these coral reefs. During the colonial period, the islands were inhabited by African slaves who dedicated their time to fish and gather mollusks. Nowadays, the islands are a tourist destination known for their natural wealth and beaches. (B)

Day 12 (Friday, March 18, 2022): Cartagena – Cocktail, Salsa Lesson and Farewell Dinner

Enjoy the day at leisure.

5:30 pm to 6:30 pm: We will gather in the lobby and make our way to a special location to enjoy a beautiful sunset as we sip on a cocktail.





6:30 pm: We will walk through the walled city to the Salsa Academy. The evenings in the walled city of Cartagena are magical. The sound of the horse's hooves, the feel of the refreshing breeze, the night time colours, the architecture and the generally beautiful atmosphere makes the visitor feel as if they're in a movie. Appreciate the many squares of the historic district and pass by the elegant colonial houses with their balconies filled with tumbling bougainvillea flowers.

6:45 pm to 7:45 pm: Salsa Lesson. Upon arrival to the Salsa Academy we will take part we will take part in salsa lessons, to know the traditional rhythm and dance that is so rooted in the Colombian culture throughout the nation. Cartagena has a strong presence of African descendants, who've been largely influenced by Cuban music and Salsa.

7:45 pm to 8:00 pm: Walk to the 1968 Salsa Show.

8:00 pm to 10:00 pm: Arrive at the 1968 restaurant that pays tribute to Cali city highlighting its cuisine, music, and dance. The restaurant offers authentic cuisine and cocktails from the Colombian Pacific and dishes on the menu have representative names of the culture in Cali. Enjoy the show during the dinner with dancers and live music.c. (B, D)

Day 13 (Saturday, March 19, 2022) Cartagena – Depart for Home

After making many great memories, transfer to the airport for your departure flight home or extend your stay with an Optional extension to Tayrona National Park or Providencia Island. (B)

Rate per person, based on double occupancy, is as follows:

- **\$4399 CAD (includes taxes) Early Booking Rate**
- **After September 30th, 2021: \$4699 CAD**
- *** *Single rate:* Add \$1600 CAD – we are limited to 5 single rooms for this departure. If you are a single traveler and you want to be matched up with another single traveling companion, we can assist with that.**

Includes:

- **All sightseeing and meals as per itinerary (22 meals)**
- **All tipping for driver and guides**
- **All entrance fees as per itinerary**
- **All arrival and departure transfers**
- **Private English-Speaking guide throughout the entire trip**
- **Local guides**
- **All taxes**





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Journeys

Excludes:

- **International airfare**
- **2 Domestic Flights within Colombia approximately \$400 (Bogota to Pereira | Medellin to Cartagena)**
- **Out of Country Cancellation and Medical Insurance (proof of insurance coverage will be required)**
- **Any extras not mentioned in the itinerary**
- **Optional excursions (*listed: Zipaquirá and Rosario Islands)**
- **Trip Merchant is happy to assist you with booking the international airfare from your preferred gateway*



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Accommodations:

3-Nights: Sofitel Bogota Victoria Regia, Bogota

<https://sofitel.accor.com/hotel/0561/index.en.shtml>



2-Nights: Mocawa Resort, Armenia (Coffee Region)

<https://www.hotelmocawaresort.com/>



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2-Nights: Dann Carlton, Medellin

<https://www.hotelesdann.com/dann-carlton-medellin/?lang=en>



1-Night: Hotel Los Recuerdos, Guatapé

<http://hotellosrecuerdos.com/inicio>



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4- Nights: Hotel Sofitel Legend Santa Clara, Cartagena

<https://sofitel.accor.com/hotel/1871/index.en.shtml#origin=sofitel>



Optional Excursions Available (as mentioned in itinerary):

- Zipaquirá: **Half day tour from Bogota to visit the salt mine and underground cathedral - \$129 CAD**
- Rosario Islands: **All day excursion to one of the islands of the Archipelago del Rosario, located approximately one hour by boat from Cartagena - \$169 CAD**

Optional Post Extensions Available:

1. **Tayrona National Park, Colombia | 3 Nights/4 Days**



Tayrona National Park is located on the Colombian Atlantic coast a few kilometres from Santa Marta. The park's boundaries extend from just beyond the bay of Taganga to where the Piedras River opens out into the sea. The National Park covers



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an area of 15,000 hectares, 75% of which are of land and the remaining are marine. Climate oscillates between temperate and hot with an average temperature of 25 to 30 degrees Celsius. One of the main entries to the Park is found at El Zaino, 34km from Santa Marta, from here one can gain access to the bays, natural beaches, coral reefs, mangroves, mountains and exuberant vegetation found within. Many types of animal inhabit this area including more than 100 mammals, 200 birds and numerous reptiles. It makes up part of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, a mountain range separate from the Andes that makes for a unique ecosystem that rises up from absolute sea level where there are beaches of fine white sand through tropical forests to snow-capped altitudes of 5,770 meters above sea level.

Day 1: Cartagena – Santa Marta – Tayrona (Saturday, March 19, 2022):
After breakfast we will transfer by private vehicle along the coast to Tayrona National Park (about a 5-hour drive). We will pass by Baranquilla where two of Colombia's most famous celebrities are from; Shakira and Sofia Vergara. We will pass by Santa Marta before arriving at our Jungle Lodge called Villa Maria. (B)

Day 2: Tayrona – Hiking in Tayrona National Park (Sunday, March 20, 2022):
After breakfast we will drive about 10 minutes to the entrance to the trail of Tayrona National Park. Our guided trail walk will begin as we leave from Cañaveral. Walking through the forest we will experience different microclimates. Tropical birds are in abundance and it's common to spot monkeys playing in the trees. After roughly 45 minutes of walking, we arrive at Arrecifes, one of the park's most scenic and beautiful areas. Witness the waves crashing on huge boulders. Continue by walking along the coast to La Piscina, a naturally calm stretch of beach ideal for bathing. Then, head on to El Cabo de San Juan de Guía which leaves an indelible mark on your memory due to its enormous boulders. Enjoy free time on the beach to rest and perhaps jump into the warm waters. Return to Cañaveral in the afternoon. Overnight stay. (B)

Day 3: Tayrona – Day at leisure (Monday, March 21, 2022): Enjoy a day at leisure. (B)

Day 4: Tayrona (Tuesday, March 22, 2022): Transfer to Santa Marta airport for your departing flight back to Bogota to continue your homeward journey back to Canada. (B)

What's Included:

- **Private transportation from Cartagena to Tayrona National Park**
- **English-speaking National Park Guide for Tayrona Trail Hike**
- **Tipping for all drivers, guides**
- **Hotel luggage handling**
- **Daily breakfast**
- **3 night's accommodation at Villa Maria (www.kalihotels.com)**



Not Included:

- **Extra expenses not indicated in description**
- **Internal flights**
- **Airport Tax**

Price:

- **Twin Share Rate: \$999 CAD per person (based on 6+ guests), \$1399 CAD per person (based on 2-5 guests)**
- **Single Rate: Add \$500 CAD**

Deposit:

- **\$250 CAD per person at time of booking**

2. Providencia, Colombia | 3 Nights/4 Days



Providencia offers a beautiful landscape; it is the second largest coral reef in the northern hemisphere. The island is known for its colonial history, its inhabitants, its Caribbean style colourful wooden slat houses and its tranquility. The island is a 20 minutes flight from San Andres or an 8-hour boat ride. The 17 square km of empty bays found here make this an ideal location or enjoying the sea and the beach, perfect for relaxing or water sports such as scuba diving or snorkeling (not included). Santa Catalina is another small island in the Caribbean and is connected to Providencia by a colorfully painted wooden bridge. There are 57 different types of coral here, 12 species of mangrove, three types of marine plants and four types of sea turtles that lay their eggs in this area. It is as if the island is situated surrounded by some of the most beautiful and complex coralline formations in the world. Providencia is declared a protected biosphere by UNESCO this is one of the most accessible and well-preserved coral reefs.

Day 1: Cartagena – San Andres – Providencia (Saturday, March 19, 2022): Transfer to Cartagena airport for a domestic flight to San Andres. Then,



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take another flight to arrive in Providencia. Arrive and transfer to the hotel.
Overnight stay.

Day 2: Providencia – Day at Leisure (Sunday, March 20, 2022): **Enjoy a day at leisure. (B)**

Day 3: Providencia – Day at Leisure (Monday, March 21, 2022): **Enjoy a day at leisure. (B)**

Day 4: Providencia (Tuesday, March 22, 2022): **Transfer to airport for departing flight. (B)**

What's Included:

- **Daily breakfast**
- **Private transfers & excursions with bilingual speaking guide**
- **Tips for porters at the airport and the hotel**
- **3 night's accommodation at the Deep Blue Hotel**
(www.hoteldeepblue.com)

Not Included:

- **Extra expenses not indicated in description**
- **Internal flights**
- **Airport Tax**

Price (per person):

- *Twin Share Rate:* **\$699 CAD per person (based on 6+ guests)**
- *Single Rate:* **Add \$600 CAD**

Deposit:

- **\$250 CAD per person at time of booking**

Full Program Deposit and Final Payment:

A deposit of \$500 CAD per person is due upon reservation. Reservations are made on a first come, first served basis. Final payment due January 7th, 2022 (100% non-refundable after final payment). Deposits are fully refundable up until September 30th, 2021. After this, standard terms and conditions apply for any cancellations (please see bottom of page for further details). *Important Conditions: Prices are subject to increase should the government increase/extend VAT charges on accommodations, transport, services, entrance fees and goods; due to inflation and/or to fluctuations in the exchange rate.





Cancellation Policy:

- **\$500 CAD per person Initial Land Deposit (100% refundable until September 30th, 2021 / non-refundable after September 30th, 2021)**
- **Trip Merchant will be booking the internal flights, but not prior to September 30th, 2021. Once space and price is confirmed, full payment will be required for these flights and will be 100% non-refundable once purchased**
- **Final Balance: Due January 7th, 2022 (100% non-refundable after final payment)**

**We hope you'll join us on this adventure through colourful
Colombia!**



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