



COLOMBIA DISCOVERY

Classic Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 2
Bogota - Pereira - Medellin - Santa Marta - Cartagena

One of Latin America's most alluring destinations, Colombia pulses with a sultry rhythm all its own. Hopping between cosmopolitan cities, colonial heritage, coffee haciendas and the Caribbean coast, this tour highlights everything there is to love about this enchanting and jaw-droppingly beautiful nation.

- Admire Zipaquirá Salt Cathedral
- Tour a coffee hacienda
- Explore the Valle del Cocora
- Discover the rainforest of Tayrona
- Cruise to the beautiful Playa Cristal
- Wander the streets of the UNESCO listed Cartagena

To book call **0800 936 3998** or visit your local travel agent Visit wendywutours.co.nz

TOUR MAP



COLOMBIA DISCOVERY TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g., drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Latin America on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis, so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

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PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Colombia Discovery' is rated as a physical level 2 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time.
- To reach the top of "El Penol", it requires climbing some 700 steps for breathtaking views.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 16 days in duration including overnight international flights on the way back, as this is the most likely flight option from New Zealand. Please note, some flights may depart and arrive on Day 1.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to info@wendywutours.co.nz so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 1 in Bogota and end the tour on Day 14 in Cartagena. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 1 of the itinerary.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It's our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly to Bogota

Meals: D

Fly to Colombia's vibrant capital, Bogota. You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. Spend the rest of the day at leisure, taking some time to relax and prepare for the adventure ahead.



Destination Information

Bogota - Colombia's beating heart, Bogota remains as the cultural epicentre of the vibrant country. La Candelaria, a historic neighbourhood in Bogota, features traditional colonial architecture with a modern twist and is home to an array of museums, galleries, churches and convents offering a captivating blend of history and art. With over 500 cultural institutions to explore, Bogota is a must-visit for any explorer.

Day 2: Explore Bogota

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will discover the sights and rhythms of Bogota. Begin at La Plaza de Mercado Paloquemao, one of Bogota's biggest produce markets. Browse stalls heaving under the weight of traditional products, local foods and flowers before stopping to taste some of Colombia's delicious native fruits. Continue to the historic centre, La Candelaria, and wander the Plaza de Bolivar, admiring the grand colonial architecture and stopping by the impressive cathedral.



Go on to visit the Botero Museum with its collection of fine art before admiring the shiny artefacts of the pre-eminent Gold Museum. Enjoy some local delicacies for lunch before riding the cable car up to Santuario de Monserrate, a monastery perched high on a mountain in the centre of Bogota. Here, enjoy spectacular views over the city.

Sightseeing today will last approximately 8 hours.

Destination Information

La Plaza de Mercado Paloquemao – This vibrant marketplace offers a wide variety of fresh produce, food items, flowers, and crafts. Known for its lively and colourful atmosphere, attracting both residents and visitors.

Plaza de Bolivar - Central square located in the heart of Bogotá, named after Simón Bolívar, a key figure in South American independence. The square is surrounded by significant buildings such as the Cathedral of Bogotá, the Palace of Justice, and the Capitol.

Botero Museum – A cultural gem renowned for its impressive collection of art curated by Fernando Botero, one of Colombia's most celebrated artists. Along with his own works, it houses a diverse array of international art, including works by renowned artists like Picasso, Monet, and Dalí.

Monserate - Monserrate, a pilgrim destination, is the hill that looms over Bogota and has been considered sacred since pre-Colombian times. Home to the shrine of Our Lady of Monserrate, the basilica features the image of the Fallen Lord of Monserrate, an effigy of Christ that is believed to have performed miracles.

Day 3: Zipaquirá Salt Cathedral

Meals: B, L, D

Travel 1h30min hours outside of Bogota, to one of Colombia's most unusual attractions; the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá. Built 200 metres below ground in a former salt mine and beautifully illuminated, this cavernous space is considered an outstanding example of modern Colombian architecture.



Enjoy a traditional lunch before returning to Bogota. Sightseeing will last 6 hours before you board your 1hour flight to Pereira where on arrival you will transfer 15 minutes to your hotel.

Destination Information

The Salt Cathedral - An underground Roman Catholic church, constructed within the tunnels of a salt mine, located 200 meters below the surface in a halite mountain near the city of Zipaquirá. It houses over 3000 people for Sunday worship.

Day 4: Valle del Cocora

Meals: B, L, D

Head into the Central Mountains and admire the beautiful landscapes of the Valle de Cocora, a lush valley surrounded by high hills. Part of the Parque Nacional de los Nevados, you'll set out on an easy 1 hour hike through a wax palm forest to learn about the diverse range of flora and fauna that calls it home, including the Quindío wax palm, Colombia's national tree.



Then it's time for a typical lunch before an afternoon in the traditional towns of Salento and Filandia, both full of colourful colonial architecture and handicraft shops. Pay a visit to a workshop where they weave the stems of the bejucos plant to make the baskets used to harvest coffee beans – while here, one of the professional basket weavers will teach you how that weaving is done and let you have a try! Sightseeing today will last approximately 8 hours.

Appropriate dress/shoes: We suggest bringing a rain jacket and walking shoes.

Destination Information

Cocora Valley – Located in the central cordillera of the Andean Mountain, the valley is part of the Los Nevados National Park and is famous for its wax palms, some of which reach 60 metres.

Day 5: Coffee Region

Meals: B, L, D

Nestled in the foothills of the Andes, Pereira is part of the Colombia's 'Coffee Axis' and the UNESCO-listed 'Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia' – where better to learn all about cultivating, harvesting, and producing coffee?



Spend the morning out exploring the landscapes of the coffee estates and pay a visit to a typical hacienda where you'll enjoy a tour. Start with an introductory talk before getting out onto the plantations to learn about the production process.

Finishing with a tasting session, guided by a master taster. Sightseeing today lasts 5 hours.

Destination Information

Coffee Region - A captivating area nestled in the heart of the country, renowned for its lush landscapes and picturesque coffee plantations. The Coffee Cultural Landscape reflects the cultural significance of coffee in shaping the identity of this region.

Day 6: Travel to Medellin

Meals: B, L, D

This morning after breakfast, transfer 15 minutes to the airport for your 40-minute flight to the hillside city of Medellin. On arrival you will be met and transferred to a local restaurant for lunch.

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure to explore your surroundings, before dinner this evening.



Destination Information

Medellin – Nicknamed the City of Eternal Spring due to its year-round spring like climate, Medellin is the capital of the Antioquia province. The city boasts a cable car system that is modern and efficient, and locals commuting to work often find themselves sharing a car with tourists eager to get a glimpse of the city's impressive skyline. Medellin is also well known for its colourful street art, with certain neighbourhoods being decked in elaborate patterns and colours.

Day 7: Discover Medellin

Meals: B, L, D

Colombia's second largest city Medellin, set in a valley and backed by mountains, is a leafy, progressive, and innovative metropolis. Spend the day seeing the city's sights while learning of its turbulent history and how it has transformed since the death of the notorious Pablo Escobar.

Board the Metro Cable to San Javier and head to Comuna 13. Here you'll learn to play the rhythms and patterns of batucada led by instructors of the Afro-Colombian community with percussion instruments made from recycled materials. After, there will be a brief introduction to a local project Las Berracas that empowers women who are victims of violence to improve their community. There'll be a cooking demonstration and a typical lunch to enjoy while here.



Visit Cerro Nutibara and its 'Pueblito Paisa' for some history and panoramic views before exploring Berrio Park and admiring the sculptures of Colombian artist Fernando Botero at Plaza Botero.

Sightseeing lasts 8 hours today.

The Metro Cable to San Javier takes approximately 25 minutes, which you will have to queue for prior to boarding. Hopefully this won't take long as each cabin accommodates 6 - 8 people.

Destination Information

Comuna 13 - Transformed from a historically challenging neighborhood into a symbol of resilience and positive change. Once plagued by crime, this community now stands as a testament to revitalization efforts. The vibrant street art of the "Comuna 13 Graffiti Tour" narrates the community's story of transformation.

Day 8: Around Medellin

Meals: B, L, D

Travel out of the city to explore the surrounding region. Stop at La Piedra del Peñol, a towering rock monolith that was once worshipped by the local indigenous community. The approximate 700-step climb to the top is optional, but those who do it will be rewarded with views across a huge reservoir created by a hydroelectric dam built in the 1970s.



Continue to the town of Guatapé where you'll wander the streets lined with vividly coloured buildings. Return to Medellin. Touring today lasts 8 hours.

Destination Information

La Piedra Del Peñol - A towering rock monolith, La Piedra de El Peñol was once worshipped by the local indigenous community.

Guatapé – Famous for its colourful buildings, cobbled streets, and picturesque lake, Guatapé is a town that is full of character and charm. Popular as a day trip with both locals and tourists alike, it is all too easy to fall in love with this lakeside town getaway.

Day 9: Santa Marta

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Medellin and fly 1h15 minutes to the Caribbean seaside city of Santa Marta. On arrival, you'll explore the beautiful old colonial district before heading out of the city to the Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino to view the beautiful gardens.



End the day with a scenic tour of the bays of Rodadero and the fishing village of Taganga. Sightseeing here lasts 4 hours.

Santa Marta can be very hot so wear light comfortable clothing.

Destination Information

Santa Marta – In the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, whose peaks can be seen from the beach, Santa Marta was founded in 1525, making it one of Latin America’s oldest cities.

Day 10: Tayrona National Park

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the exotic coastline of the Parque Nacional Natural Tayrona today, winding through tropical forest before arriving at the ‘Sea of the Seven Waves’, a natural viewpoint from which to enjoy the beautiful landscapes. Walk a short way along a stretch of golden sand backed by lush rainforest to reach the boat which will take you on a 10-minute trip over to Playa Cristal, a beach of extraordinary beauty where you can take a refreshing dip. Touring takes 7 hours today.



Please wear comfortable shoes and light clothing, and we suggest you pack mosquito repellent. Today will be an early start to avoid crowds and the heat of the sun. Please note that the boat trip is a shared service with other travellers.

Destination Information

Tayrona National Park – From the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to the Caribbean coast, the national park is packed with rainforest and rich biodiversity.

Day 11: Travel to Cartagena

Meals: B, L, D

Travel by road this morning from Santa Marta to the Caribbean port of Cartagena, taking 4 hours, where the afternoon will be spent exploring the city and its vibrant historic centre. Part of the walking tour, covering 1,5km, will be seven stops to help you discover Cartagena’s typical, and delicious food, with tastings of different snacks and drinks prepared by local chefs at their street stalls.



Sightseeing today is approximately 3 hours.

Destination Information

Cartagena - Declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1984, Cartagena encapsulates all the charm of Spanish colonial architecture, with the old town being a joy to explore. Cartagena is also rich in history, with the British Royal Navy's attempted invasions between 1739 and 1748 ultimately ending in failure (thus forming a key turning point in Colombia's history). Nowadays, the city is a Caribbean tourist hub yet still retaining its colonial splendour.

Day 12: The 'Jewel of the Andes'

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, your tour will start with panoramic views from the Monasterio and Iglesia de La Popa. Continue to San Felipe Fortress, used to defend the city from pirates and the Convent and Church of San Pedro Claver in the Ciudad Vieja (old town). Then, browse the wares of the artisan centre housed in the Bovedas.



Lunch is at a local restaurant and will be followed by a rum tasting session, where you will have a guided tasting of a range of rum flavours, over a 2-hour period. Your day will continue, as you embrace the local rhythms with a 1-hour salsa dancing class, a popular form of entertainment and exercise in Colombia! Touring today lasts approximately 8 hours.

To reach the la Popa Convent, groups will be divided in two, as big buses are not allowed to enter this site.

Destination Information

San Felipe Fortress – Having been sacked in 1586 by Francis Drake, the city made the decision to construct the iconic city walls and fortress to defend itself from future attacks from piracy and foreign powers.

Museum of San Pedro Claver – The museum houses information about San Pedro Claver, who was an advocate for the fair treatment of slaves in the 17th century, and archaeological finds from the area.

Day 13: La Boquilla

Meals: B, L, D

Head to the fishing village of La Boquilla, where the community of Afro-Colombian fishermen are keeping their traditions alive! Through the playing of drums, you'll learn about age-old folk music and the rhythms of this minority community, as well as the history of the drums themselves.



Later, take to Cartagena's tropical waters by catamaran for a glorious 2 hour sunset cruise before a farewell dinner at a restaurant at the heart of the old walled city. Here you'll enjoy a mix of culture, music and traditional gastronomy – the perfect way to say goodbye.

Destination Information

La Boquilla – This Afro-Caribbean fishing village is in the northern most point of Cartagena, known for its colonial architecture and engineering.

Days 14 - 16: Depart Cartagena

Meals: B

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home, arriving back to New Zealand two day later, due to travelling across the international timeline.

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.



Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

COLOMBIA DISCOVERY TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

New Zealand passport holders currently do not require a visa to enter Colombia. Your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN COLOMBIA:

Colombian cuisine is extremely diverse and will vary depending on the region you're in. In some places you'll find delicacies like cooked ants or guinea pigs, whilst in others, you may come across dishes with less adventurous ingredients like rice, beans, plantain and tomatoes. Whilst most dishes do feature meat, there are plenty of vegetarian options. Along the coast, you'll find a great variety of seafood like fish and lobster, prepared with coconut milk sauces. Breakfast is quite important in Colombia and will consist of lots of juices made from all the fresh fruit available throughout Colombia – there are so many varieties that you most likely haven't heard of many yourself! A typical main meal is ajiaco, a chicken soup with a special herb guasca, partnered with arepa, a bread made from cornmeal, the traditional side dish to any meal. Whilst we strongly recommend trying as many local dishes as possible, Colombia also has a wide range of international foods available.

Please note that Colombians eat later than you may be used to, with restaurants often only opening around 8pm or later. On occasion your evening meal may be organised for later than you would eat at home.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

ALTITUDE IN COLOMBIA:

On this tour you will be spending one day at altitude – in the Cocora Valley up to 2,400 metres. At this altitude, Altitude Sickness is a risk. Symptoms may include dizziness, fatigue, nausea, and shortness of breath. It is recommended that travellers utilize their first day in high-altitude destinations to acclimatise. To help you acclimatise we have designed our tours to be at a slower pace with more convenience stops and more free time, during the first few days. Staying hydrated, eating light meals, and following a very light schedule will all help. We recommend that any symptoms that are unusual should be brought to the attention of your guide. Your guide will be extremely well-trained in dealing with its effects – taking it easy and taking some time to acclimatise are the best ways to prevent and combat it. Serious cases, meaning that you must descend immediately, are rare. We have adapted the itinerary to make sure that your time at these heights is as relaxed and easy as possible.

There is medication that can help treat and prevent altitude sickness. Consult a doctor before taking any of these medications, before engaging in strenuous activity at high altitude and regarding any necessary vaccinations in plenty of time before travelling.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and Colombia. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance. There are plenty of interesting bits and pieces to buy as souvenirs in Colombia, such as indigenous textiles, handicrafts and artworks, coffee and chocolate, carved wood and products made of alpaca wool, such as gloves, scarves, and socks. There will be some opportunities during your tour to pick up souvenirs.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Colombia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portage is not included on our tours in Costa Rica. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner-city roads in Colombia have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in Colombia have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Within Latin America flights are often changed multiple times before departure, both timings and flight numbers. The utmost care will be taken to ensure that your final documents will have the latest information, however your local guide will confirm this in destination. Boarding passes can be collected directly at the airport. The flights booked as part of your itinerary will always reflect the best timings to suit the touring itinerary, with direct flights wherever possible, however due to limited schedules some flights may require an early departure or late arrival.

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

On this tour, you will be travelling through various regions of Colombia with quite diverse climates especially in the Coffee Region – in Colombia you will experience all four seasons in one trip. An average moderate temperate in Bogota, humid and often damp in the Coffee region to the tropical climate in Cartagena. It is recommended to bring lots of layers including the following: T Shirts made of breathable materials, hiking trousers, with the option to turn into a short, a fleece jacket for colder parts and the evenings and a waterproof jacket as shell layer or a light rain jacket. The climate in Cartagena is tropical, humid, and warm and we recommend wearing lightweight breathable clothing. A small backpack that fits into your main hand luggage to carry your daily essentials should also be taken.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

- Updated: December 2024