



ABOUT COLOMBIA

history

The territory of what is now Colombia was originally inhabited by indigenous peoples, including the Muisca, Quimbaya and the Tairona. The Spanish set foot on Colombian soil for the first time in 1499, and in the first half of the 16th century initiated a period of conquest and colonization. This ultimately created the New Kingdom of Granada with the capital Santafé de Bogotá. Independence from Spain was acquired in 1819, but by 1830 the "Gran Colombia" Federation was dissolved. What is now Colombia and Panama emerged as the Republic of New Granada. The new nation experimented with federalism as the Granadine Confederation (1858), and then the United States of Colombia (1863), before the Republic of Colombia was finally declared in 1886. Panama seceded in 1903. Since the 1960s, the country has suffered from an asymmetric low-intensity armed conflict, which escalated in the 1990s but then decreased from 2005 onward. Colombia is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse countries in the world, and thereby possesses a rich cultural heritage. The urban centers are mostly located in the highlands of the Andes mountains.

country information

- **Time:** GMT -5
- **Population:** 49 million
- **Area:** 1,141,748 km²
- **Capital:** Bogotá
- **Borders:** Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador
- **Languages:** Spanish is the official language of Colombia, but there are 68 ethnic languages and dialects.
- **Ethnic Groups:** Mestizo and White (86%), Black (10.6%); Amerindian (3.4%)
- **Government:** Unitary Presidential Constitutional Republic
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic (70.9%), Protestant Christian (16.7%), Agnostic or Atheist (4.7%), Other (7.7%)
- **Country Calling Code:** +57
- **Money:** Colombian Peso
- **Average Income:** \$41,842 per year

weather

Colombia's proximity to the Equator means its temperature varies little throughout the year. However, the temperature does change with altitude which creates various climate zones from hot lowlands to freezing Andean peaks. You can experience different climates within just a couple of hours of travel. As a general rule the temperature falls about 11 degrees with every 3,280 feet increase in altitude. For example: If the average temperature at the sea level is 86 F it will be around 75 F 3,820 feet; 64 F at 6,560 feet and 53 F at 9,840 feet.

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culture

ART

Colombian art has 3500 years of history and covers a wide range of media and styles ranging from Spanish Baroque devotional painting to Quimbaya gold craftwork to the "lyrical Americanism" of painter Alejandro Obregón (1920–1992). Perhaps the most internationally acclaimed Colombian artist is painter and sculptor Fernando Botero (1932).

MUSIC

Music is an expression of Colombian culture, which contains diverse music genres, both traditional and modern, according with the features of each geographic region, although it is not uncommon to find different musical styles in the same region. The diversity in musical expressions found in Colombia is the result of African, native Indigenous, and European (especially Spanish) and modern American influences.

SPORTS

Tejo, which involves launching projectiles to hit a target, is Colombia's national sport. However, soccer is by far the most widespread game in Colombia. Roller skating, cycling, boxing, and baseball are also popular in certain regions.

FOOD

Colombia's varied cuisine is influenced by its diverse fauna and flora as well as the cultural traditions of the ethnic groups, so dishes and ingredients vary widely by region. Some of the most common ingredients are cereals (rice and maize), tubers (potato and cassava), legumes, and meats (beef, chicken, pork, goat, fish). Colombian cuisine also features a variety of tropical fruits, and Colombia is one of the world's largest consumers of fruit juices.

AJIACO COLOMBIANO (Makes 6-8 servings)

Ingredients

3 Chicken breast, skin removed
12 cups water
3 ears fresh corn, cut into two pieces
¼ teaspoon salt
Pepper to taste
2 chicken bouillon cubes
3 scallions
2 garlic cloves, minced
3 tablespoon chopped cilantro
2 cups papa criolla (Andean Potato)
3 medium white potatoes, peeled and sliced
3 medium red potatoes, peeled and sliced
1/3 cup guascas
1 cup heavy cream for serving
1 cup capers for serving

Directions

1. In a large pot, place the chicken, corn, chicken bouillon, cilantro, scallions, garlic, salt and pepper. Add the water and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and cook for about 35 to 40 minutes, until chicken is cooked and tender. Remove the chicken and set aside.
2. Continue cooking the corn for 30 more minutes. Discard green onion and add red potatoes, white potatoes, and the guacas. Cook for 30 more minutes.
3. Uncover and add the frozen papa criolla and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, season with salt and pepper.
4. Cut the chicken meat into small pieces and return to the pot. Serve the Ajiaco hot with capers and heavy cream on the side.

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holidays and festivals

Rio de Oro Carnival: March 12-16th

Every year in March, the city of Rio de Oro holds a Carnival, a tradition that originated between the 1920s and 30s as a legacy of the people who settled in the shores of the Caribbean. The festivities include floats created by artisans, parades, and a beauty pageant.

Fiesta de la Virgen de las Mercedes: September 24-26th

Every year, at the end of September at La Playa de Belén, the festival takes place in homage to the Virgen de las Mercedes, the patron saint of the municipality of Norte de Santander. The celebration takes place during dawn, at 5:30 a.m., when the municipal band accompanies the inhabitants on a tour through the streets of Bethlehem and San Diego, among others.

The Cuadrillas de San Martín Festival: November 11-17th

Every November 11th since 1735, San Martín de los Llanos, a municipality located 41 miles south of Villavicencio, is home to the Cuadrillas de San Martín, a festival featuring 48 horsemen distributed in 4 groups of 12 riders. This exhibition, which has been characterized as an “equestrian ballet,” constitutes a choreographed representation of the struggles between both Moors and Christians, and indigenous peoples on the one hand, and between indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians on the other.

Genitores Parade: December 28-29th

Proof of the reverence of the inhabitants of the town of Ocaña, located 25 km west of Bethlehem Beach, towards their ancestors can be seen in the Forefathers' Parade. This is an event which combines the musical and theatrical elements to recreate history of the city. During the celebrations, 1000 people parade through the streets.

orphan statistics

- **An estimated 577,000 children are orphaned in Colombia**
- Over ½ of Colombia's children do not attend elementary school
- 13% of children from 5-14 years of age are involved in child labor
- 8% of the population lives on under \$1.25 a day
- Almost 6 decades of conflict displaced 7.5 million people
- Colombia has traditionally been one of Latin America's most unequal countries with the highest poverty and inequality rates in the region.



ABOUT COLOMBIA

resources

Here is our recommended reading list. Of course, there is so much more, but this will get you started.

BOOKS

- *100 Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- *The Open Veins Of Latin America* by Eduardo Galeano
- *Footprint Travel Guides, Colombia*
- *Short Walks from Bogota* by Tom Feiling
- *Colombia: A Comedy of Errors* by Victoria Kellaway & Sergio J. Lievano

WEBSITES

- <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/colombia>
- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Colombia.html>
- <http://www.colombia.travel/en>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html>
- <http://www.bbc.com/travel/south-america/colombia>

“Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction; pay attention and gain understanding.”
Proverbs 3:24 NIV

LANGUAGE BASICS

GREETINGS / CONVERSATIONAL PHRASES			
Good morning	Buenos días		
Good night	Buenas noches		
Hello	Hola		
How are you?		¿Cómo estás? (<i>Informal</i>)	¿Cómo está? (<i>Formal</i>)
Fine, thank you	Bien, gracias.		
What is your name?	¿Cuál es su nombre?	¿Cómo te llamas?	
Goodbye	Adiós		
Please	Por favor		
Thank you (<i>very much</i>)	(<i>Muchas</i>) gracias		
You're welcome	De nada		
Yes	sí		
No	no		
So-So	Asi Asi		
Pardon me	Perdón		
I don't understand	No entiendo.		
Sorry	Lo siento		
I am a vegetarian.	Soy vegetariano.		

QUESTIONS			
Do you speak English?	¿Hables inglés?		
Is there someone here who speaks English?	¿Hay alguien aquí que hable inglés?		
Where is the toilet?	¿Dónde está el baño?		
How much does it cost?	¿Cuánto cuesta?		

LANGUAGE BASICS

NUMBERS	
0	Cero
1	Uno
2	Dos
3	Tres
4	Cuatro
5	Cinco
6	Seis
7	Siete
8	Ocho
9	Nueve
10	Diez
11	Once
12	Doce
20	Veinte
21	Veintiuno
30	Treinta
40	Cuarenta
50	Cincuenta
60	Sesenta
70	Setenta
80	Ochenta
90	Noventa
100	Cien
200	Doscientos
300	Trescientos
1000	Mil
2000	Dos Mil

DAYS	
Sunday	Lunes
Monday	Martes
Tuesday	Miércoles
Wednesday	Jueves
Thursday	Viernes
Friday	Sábado
Saturday	Domingo

MONTHS	
January	Enero
February	Febrero
March	Marzo
April	Abril
May	Mayo
June	Junio
July	Julio
August	Agosto
September	Septiembre
October	Octubre
November	Noviembre
Decemeber	Diciembre

LANGUAGE BASICS

COLORS	
Black	Negro
White	Blanco
Red	Rojo
Blue	Azul
Green	Verde
Yellow	Amarillo
Brown	Marrón, Café
Purple	Morado
Orange	Anaranjado
Light blue	azul claro
Dark blue	azul oscuro

FOOD	
Bread	oan
Juice	jugo
Meat	carne
Chicken	pollo
Vegetable	vegetal
Spicy	picante
Mild	suave
Coffee shop	El café

DIRECTIONS	
Right	Derecho/a
Left	Izquierdo/a
Straight ahead	Recto/a
Next	Próximo/a
Near	Cerca
Turn left	Gira a la izquierda
Turn right	Gira a la derecha

ACCENTUATION

Words ending in a vowel, or n or s, the next to last syllable is stressed. For words ending in a consonant other than n or s stress falls on the last syllable. If the word has an accent mark, then that syllable is stressed, ignoring the rules above.

