

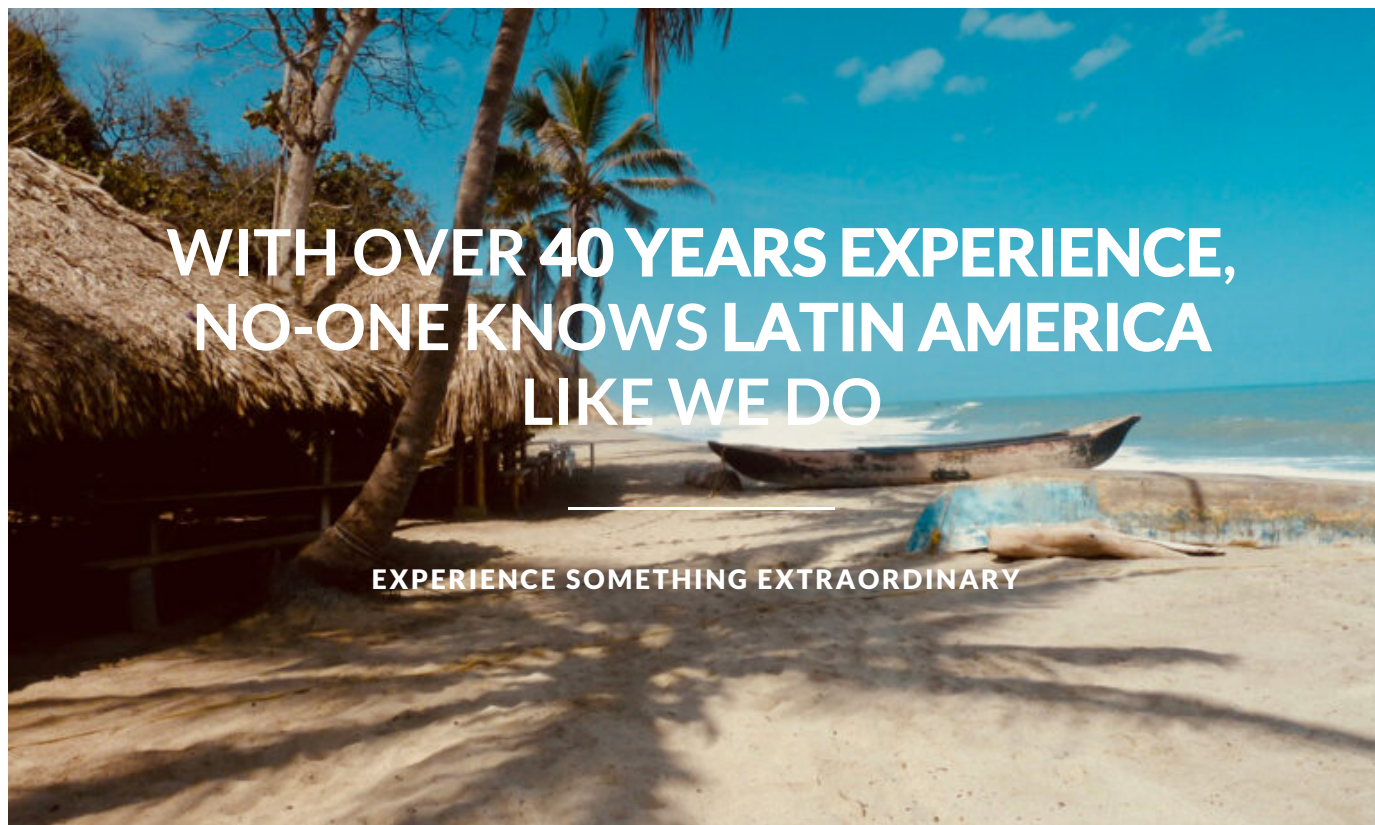


PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

MAGDALENA RIVER CRUISE: COLOMBIA'S HIDDEN GEMS

13 days from **£4,500pp**

COLOMBIA / CARTAGENA / CARIBBEAN COAST AND ISLANDS



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

A passion for the region runs through all we do

All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America

Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Fully bonded and licensed

ATOL-protected

On your side when it matters

Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks

We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions

Let us show you the Latin America we know and love



OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

Available from September 2025!

Enjoy a cruise along Colombia's mythical Magdalena River through historic colonial towns pulsating with Latin rhythms. Begin by exploring historic Cartagena before your enchanting eight-day river cruise, then discover the wildlife-rich jungle of Tayrona National Park and relax on Caribbean beaches.

Arrive in the colonial walled city of Cartagena and discover its fascinating history on a series of walking tours. Then

DAY 1	Arrive in historic Cartagena
DAY 2	At leisure in Cartagena
DAY 3	Cruise on the Magdalena River
DAY 4	Historic towns of Palenque and Calamar
DAY 5	Santa Barbara de Pinto walking tour and live music
DAY 6	Mompox walking tour and Ciénaga Pijiño wildlife
DAY 7	El Banco & live cumbia music
DAY 8	Magangue birdwatching
DAY 9	Nueva Venecia and Barranquilla
DAY 10	Transfer to Tayrona National Park
DAYS 11-12	At leisure in Tayrona National Park
DAY 13	Transfer to Santa Marta airport for international flight home.

ITINERARY

DAY 1

Arrive in historic Cartagena

Arrive in Cartagena and take a private transfer to your hotel.

Caribbean's most exotic and romantic colonial city, Cartagena was founded in 1533, quickly blossoming to become the main Spanish port in the Caribbean, and a gateway to the north of the continent. Treasure plundered from native inhabitants was stored here until the galleons could ship it back to Spain, and it became a tempting target for pirates. To protect their booty, the Spanish constructed an elaborate system of ramparts, which still encircle the town.

Today, while Cartagena has expanded dramatically, the walled centre has changed very little, allowing a glimpse of 16th and 17th-century Spanish architecture. Enjoy the shade provided by the buildings in these labyrinthine, cobbled streets, and explore the monasteries, palaces, churches, plazas, and imposing mansions with flower-filled balconies.

Beyond this, the city opens up: an eclectic and seductive mix of Caribbean and African influences produces a vibrant street life, with fruit stalls lining the roads and pulsating rhythms emerging from cars and houses.

DAY 2

At leisure in Cartagena

Enjoy another day in beautiful Cartagena. Explore the city independently at leisure or consider an optional guided tour of the historic walled city, the forts and battlements to help you soak up the atmosphere of this seductive city.

Alternatively, go further afield and take a speedboat to spend the day on the coral, palm-kissed beaches of the nearby Rosario Islands.

DAY 3

Cruise on the Magdalena River

Take your private transfer from the hotel to the pier to embark on your river cruise boat.

Then enjoy a walking tour through the Getsemani neighbourhood, taking in the vibrant colours of the homes and street art as well as sampling local delicacies.

Upon returning to your boat, enjoy a sundown cruise as your river adventure begins.

DAY 4

Historic towns of Palenque and Calamar

Today you will journey along the river inland to the town of Palenque, the first “free town” in the Americas.

Founded by those who fled a life of slavery in the 17th century, this town’s heritage has been proudly preserved. Immerse yourself in the town’s deeply rooted culture and traditions, which are so distinct that UNESCO declared Palenque to be a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

An important piece of the town’s heritage is the music and rhythmic style developed in this city, which you can enjoy during a special performance by local musicians.

Later in the day, visit Calamar where the Canal del Dique joins the Great Magdalena River, which flows over 1,500km through Colombia to the Caribbean.

The town of Calamar was first settled in 1840. Tour the town by ‘paola’ (a bicycle taxi for two) and visit the historic centre including sites such as the Iglesia de la Inmaculada Conception.

DAY 5

Santa Barbara de Pinto walking tour and live music

Spend your morning in Santa Barbara de Pinto, located on the banks of the Mompox arm of the Magdalena River.

Enjoy a walking tour through this traditional town to see local landmarks such as the Santa Barbara Church, then browse intricate handmade crafts created in the town.

In the afternoon, arrive at the town of Mompox, where you will be welcomed with lively music during an exclusive jazz performance by local musicians.

DAY 6

Mompox walking tour and Ciénaga Pijiño wildlife

A town frozen in time, Mompox retains the appearance of villages during the colonial era.

Founded in 1540, this remote village became an important Spanish trading post and a haven for keeping gold and treasure protected from the pirates that pillaged coastal cities like Cartagena. With this precious metal and the work of skilled artisans from Spain came beautifully crafted artifacts.

Since then, the town has become famous for its incredible filigree jewellery, which you can learn about during a tour of this town in the afternoon.

Journey through the ecological Ciénaga Pijiño region, exploring the huge lake, home to a variety of flora and fauna native to the region.

In the afternoon, take a stroll through this storied town on a guided walking tour. With stunning colonial churches, breathtaking nature surrounding the town, and delicious local delights such as capa cheese and butifarra, Mompox is sure to be a highlight of your journey.

DAY 7

El Banco & live cumbia music

Depart Mompox this morning and cruise down one of the most breathtaking stretches of the Magdalena River through La Mojana region to the town of El Banco, nestled at the intersection of the Magdalena and César rivers. Founded in a location strategic for both indigenous people and the Spaniards, the town was repeatedly destroyed in battles and then rebuilt atop its ashes. In 1749, a freed black slave named José Domingo Ortiz led a group of settlers to this special location, carrying with him a statue of the Virgin Mary, staking this place as their new home. Because of this connection, the Virgin of Candelaria, a special invocation of the Virgin Mary, is specially venerated in this region.

Take a guided walking tour of El Banco and learn more about its history as the birthplace of cumbia, an iconic genre of music and dance now popularised around the world. What began as a courtship dance practiced by African slaves later incorporated American steps and European and African instruments to become a worldwide sensation, especially popular in the Andean region of Colombia.

In the evening, enjoy an exclusive dinner in town and enjoy a cumbia performance by locals.

DAY 8

Magangue birdwatching

Head west today along the Brazo de Loba branch of the Magdalena River. Watch the surrounding wildlife as you spend the day docked near Magangue.

Take a birdwatching tour to see birds only found in this specific part of the country. You can also take a hiking tour through the picturesque Ciénaga.

DAY 9

Nueva Venecia and Barranquilla

In the morning, visit the Floating Village of Nueva Venecia. A charming town filled with inviting locals, Nueva Venecia, or “New Venice,” can only be navigated by boat.

Tour the village to see its beautiful colonial houses, vivid architecture and local sanctuary protecting the native flora and fauna. Enjoy traditional crafts, learn about the techniques the fishermen of Nueva Venecia use, and taste the local delicacies.

Later in the day, continue to the Caribbean city of Barranquilla, a vibrant destination home to notable musicians, writers and artists. Visit famous landmarks such as Bocas de Cenizas, the point at which the magical Magdalena River meets the Caribbean Sea, and the Carnaval Museum, which showcases the unique history of this incredible festival. In the evening, enjoy an exclusive Carnival celebration.

DAY 10

Transfer to Tayrona National Park

As your river cruise comes to an end in Barranquilla, take your private transfer to Tayrona National Park.

Enjoy this enchanting region of thick, humid jungle and unspoilt Caribbean beaches fringed by coconut palms, once home to the indigenous Tayrona people. Jungle paths follow tree-covered trails surrounded by tropical dry forest, with monkeys swinging in the trees.

You'll be staying in a comfortable cabaña with spectacular ocean views.

DAYS 11-12

At leisure in Tayrona National Park

Take a variety of trails through the humid rainforest and tropical dry forests, stopping off at mysterious archaeological sites along the way.

One of the most popular treks is following an ancient stairway to the fascinating archaeological site of Pueblito, reminiscent of the better-known Ciudad Perdida.

Over 100 species of mammals inhabit the region, so keep an eye out for monkeys, sloths and iguanas, as well as a vast array of colourful birds.

You'll have a day at leisure to further explore and enjoy some downtime. Wander barefoot along white sand beaches, unwind in a hammock and sip cocktails as the sun sets over the Caribbean Sea.

DAY 13

Transfer to Santa Marta airport for international flight home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Services of our team of experts in our London office

Services of Journey Latin America local representatives and guides

All land and air transport within Latin America

Accommodation as specified

Meals as specified

Excursions as specified, including entrance fees

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Tips and gratuities

Meals other than specified

International flights to Latin America

Airport taxes, when not included in the ticket

Optional excursions

ESSENTIALS

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

Available from September 2025.

13 days, 12 nights: Cartagena 2; Magdalena River Cruise 7; Tayrona National Park 3.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

GIVE US A CALL

We'd love to chat

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

tours@journeylatinamerica.com