



**PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN**

## **OFF THE BEATEN TRACK COLOMBIA: COLONIAL TOWNS TO THE LLANOS**

13 days from **£4,950pp**

**COLOMBIA / BOGOTA / COLOMBIA'S HEARTLAND / THE COLOMBIAN LLANOS**

# WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

## 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

Wander through enchanting colonial towns in the highlands east of Bogotá and spot an array of wildlife on the floodplains of Los Llanos on this tour to Colombia's less-visited regions.

- 1** Arrive in Bogotá and transfer to your hotel
- 2** Walking tour of Bogotá
- 3** Fly to Bucaramanga and continue by road to Barichara
- 4** Hike along the Camino Real to Guane
- 5** At leisure in Barichara.
- 6** Continue by road to Villa de Leyva.
- 7** Discover Villa de Leyva and the surrounding countryside
- 8** Continue by road to Yopal.
- 9** Drive deeper into Los Llanos to the Encanto de Guanapalo reserve.
- 10-11** Wildlife explorations in the Encanto de Guanapalo reserve.
- 12** Return to Yopal and fly to Bogotá
- 13** Transfer to Bogotá airport for your international flight

## ITINERARY

This trip to the lesser-known eastern part of Colombia showcases the country's incredible diversity. From the enchanting colonial towns of Barichara and Villa de Leyva you'll head to the wildlife-rich plains of Los Llanos and hang out with cowboys.

Watch this part of Colombia unfold through scenic drives that take in rolling hills, dramatic canyons, Colombia's largest lake, and Andean high páramo, before descending to the hot and humid plains. In our view, there's no better way to experience this part of Colombia.

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### 1

#### Arrive in Bogotá and transfer to your hotel

You'll be met at the airport and escorted to your hotel in Bogotá.

Founded in 1598, the effervescent capital sits on an upland Andean plateau. It's a city of striking contrasts; skyscrapers and colonial single-storey houses, fast highways and cobbled lanes with chaotic traffic and the occasional mule cart. There are humble homes clinging to the mountainside and affluent tree-lined residential boulevards; crowded alleys and large parks; and a cultured middle class jostling with workers and their families from all over Colombia.

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### 2

#### Walking tour of Bogotá

Explore 'La Candelaria' on foot, Bogotá's atmospheric colonial district, and the setting for many defining moments in Colombia's turbulent and painful history. This is a special opportunity to learn about the country's Peace Agreement in 2016 and sample products from a new breed of 'Peace Weavers', who are using their entrepreneurial spirit and creative flair to help post conflict zones move forward.

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**3****Fly to Bucaramanga and continue by road to Barichara**

Fly to Bucaramanga (1 hour), a major city in the east of Colombia and continue by road to Barichara.

Founded in 1705 in an area once inhabited by Guane Indians, Barichara is an enchanting town with whitewashed colonial houses lining picturesque cobblestone streets, and the lush green Suarez River canyon as a backdrop.

En route, you can stop at the Chicamocha National Park and take a cable car ride across the canyon for dramatic views.

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**4****Hike along the Camino Real to Guane**

A relatively easy two-hour downhill hike (6km) on an ancient path ("Camino Real") leads you from Barichara to the sleepy village of Guane. Not a lot happens in Guane but that is part of its charm. There's a small Archaeology Museum housing interesting artifacts from the Guane culture which you can visit before returning to Barichara by vehicle.

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**5****At leisure in Barichara.**

Translating as 'a place for rest' in the indigenous Guane dialect, you can spend time relaxing at your hotel or wandering around town at a leisurely pace, taking in the pretty churches, tiny squares, restaurants, cafes, art galleries and ceramic and paper workshops.

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**6****Continue by road to Villa de Leyva.**

It's a scenic four-hour drive from Barichara to Villa de Leyva, the road gradually climbing into the highlands of the Boyacá department.

Villa de Leyva is another beautiful colonial town in Colombia that was declared a national monument in 1954 to preserve its architecture. The town's focal point is the massive, yet understated, cobbled Plaza Mayor and the striking Iguaque mountains that rise behind.

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**7****Discover Villa de Leyva and the surrounding countryside**

Take a walking tour of Villa de Leyva, visiting its most significant churches and colonial houses, as well as the Luis Alberto Acuña Museum which features works by one of Colombia's most influential painters, sculptors, writers, and historians.

The area around Villa de Leyva has a rich palaeontological heritage with fossils found in such abundance that they decorate many town buildings and pavements. A short drive away is El Fossil, a 7m petrified skeleton of a large marine reptile that inhabited the region approximately 110 million years ago, as well as the archaeological site of El Infiernito.

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**8****Continue by road to Yopal.**

There are many spectacular and diverse overland journeys in Colombia and today's drive is no exception: leaving Villa de Leyva behind you'll climb even higher into the cold and rugged highlands of Boyacá (3,000m), before descending into Los Llanos, the hot and humid eastern plains.

Yopal is the regional capital and the gateway to Los Llanos. You'll spend one night on the outskirts of the city in a friendly family-run guesthouse set within extensive grounds.

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**9****Drive deeper into Los Llanos to the Encanto de Guanapalo reserve.**

Los Llanos is a yawning, flat plain of seasonally flooded grasslands, almost twice the size of the UK. Jesuit missionaries colonised the region from the sixteenth century onwards, creating hatos, large cattle farms which ever since have been tightly linked to the region's cowboy lifestyle and traditions.

The region seethes with a breath-taking profusion of wildlife: clouds of scarlet ibis return to their roosting trees at sunset, monkeys squabble in the canopy, caiman sprawl on the watery beaches, anacondas lurk in lagoons, and giant capybara and anteaters roam cross the pasture. All the while co-existing happily alongside humpy zebu cattle which graze on the farmsteads composing the hatos.

El Encanto de Guanapalo is a 9,000-hectare private reserve two hours from Yopal, and owned and run as working farms by the grandchildren of Gerardo Zambrano, the founder of the reserve over a hundred years ago.

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**10-11****Wildlife explorations in the Encanto de Guanapalo reserve.**

Whether you embark on a 4WD safari, take a canoe trip on one of the lagoons, or head out on horseback and herd cattle with the llaneros (cowboys) you're bound to observe a real abundance of birds, mammals, and reptiles. Explorations generally take place early in the morning and late in the afternoon when it's cooler and wildlife is more active. You'll return to your hato for lunch and a well-earned siesta before going back out in the late afternoon, returning to your hato as an incendiary sun begins to set.

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**12****Return to Yopal and fly to Bogotá**

Return to Yopal (2 hours) and fly to Bogotá (1 hour) for your final night in Colombia.

If you have time, we recommend visiting Bogotá's Museo del Oro (gold museum), recognised as being one of the best in Latin America. The collection is staggering in its opulence, there are more than 35,000 well displayed exhibits all fashioned with immense skill by pre-Columbian craftsmen.



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Transfer to Bogotá airport for your international flight

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## 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

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## INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Bogotá: Walking tour

Chicamocha Canyon: cable car ride

Barichara: Hike along the Camino Real to Guane

Villa de Leyva: Walking tour and visits to El Fossil and El Infiernito.

Los Llanos: Wildlife explorations

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## 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

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## ESSENTIALS

### SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

13 days, 12 nights: Bogotá 2; Barichara 3; Villa de Leyva 2; Yopal 1; Los Llanos 3; Bogotá 1.

### ACCOMMODATION

We have carefully selected small, mid-range hotels, colonial in style with well-equipped rooms. In Los Llanos, accommodation is on a ranch.

### MEALS

Breakfast: daily

Lunch: days 9, 10 & 11

Dinner: days 8, 9, 10, 11

### TRANSPORT

2 domestic flights (both 1 hour); 3 scenic road journeys.

### TRIP SUITABILITY

This holiday is suitable for most visitors, including families with children. Should you have a disability, please contact us.

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### GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

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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](mailto:tours@journeylatinamerica.com)