

Kat's Great Adventures

Colombia - Best of Colombia Culture and Nature Tour 2023

Guided Tour

20 days / 19 nights



This journey is a perfect choice for the traveler who wants to see a little of everything, and experience the diversity of this amazing country. The tour takes you to some of the most ancient cultures in the country, but also to areas where the development has not taken place and where the people still live in a traditional way adapted to the natural settings. As a contrast you will also see some of the most developed areas of the country. The tour includes a lot of natural experiences during the entire trip and ends with a stay in a nice hotel within the Tayrona Natural Park.

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TICO # 50022092

Itinerary Day to Day

Day 1: Arrival in Bogotá

Reception at the airport and transfer to the hotel. The hotel is located in the tourist area of Parque 93 known for its great restaurants and great atmosphere. At arrival you will receive a welcome call from one of the team members.



Day 2: Bogotá – Full day city tour Duration 6-7 hours

Full day private city tour to the historic part of Bogotá. After breakfast, enjoy the historic center of the city on foot. Meeting with the guide in the hotel lobby. Start the tour in the charming colonial area known as La Candelaria. From here visit the world famous gold museum, the Plaza Bolivar and go by cable car to the Monserrate Sanctuary, at 3152 meters, overlooking the city. A quick visit to the museum of the famous Colombian artist Botero is also an option.

Day 3: Guatavita Lake & Zipaquirá's Salt Cathedral

Early departure and drive to the legendary Lake Guatavita, one to two hours from Bogotá. Hike around the rim, while exploring the legend of the Muisca Indians and discuss the greed of the former Conquests. Afterwards we will continue to Zipaquirá's Salt Cathedral, an underground illuminated church built in an ancient and huge working salt mine. Then lunch in Zipaquirá before continuing to Villa de Leyva. Arrival in the late afternoon.

Day 4: Villa De Leyva

During the morning hours there will be a short city walk in Villa de Leyva to appreciate the colonial architecture of this "manchegeo" style town, reminiscent of the Don Quijote era. If it is Saturday, you will have the chance to visit the colourful local market full of fruits, typical gastronomy and local farmers. Later, visit the surroundings of Villa de Leyva such as the ancient solar observatory and the Paleontological Investigation Center. In the afternoon return to Bogotá.



Day 5: Los Llanos – Juan Solito Farm

After breakfast, transfer to airport in Bogota. From here, a flight to Yopal. Meeting with the transfer service that takes you on a four hour drive out in the real countryside of Colombia. On this ride, you will experience how the land becomes more and more remote, and the only interruption in the lowland is the herds of cattle. The isolated location makes for an adventurous experience and good chances to see wildlife. Arrival to Juan Solito for lunch. Juan Solito is a traditional former cattle farm accommodated to receive tourism. It is part of Hato la Aurora, a reserve that covers 16,000 hectares. Given the remote location, the lodge offers some great wildlife viewing, especially of native and migration birds, caiman, wild pigs, deer, capybara, anteaters and cats such as puma, jaguar, ocelot and jaguarundi. Reptiles such as iguanas and huge anacondas (five to seven meters in length) are abundant too. During the stay at Juan Solito, you'll get a feel for the way of life in Los Llanos too, with its distinctive traditional music, food and cowboys.



Day 6: Wildlife Safari

Activities will be arranged at the lodge the night before and the activities depend on the season. Today we recommend doing a wildlife Safari in a 4x4 vehicle. The tour starts after breakfast with an exciting river crossing in canoes. Once safe on the other side, the Safari tour in a pickup van begins. During the tour in the natural reserve we will observe the flora and get to spot some wildlife such as capibaras, white tail deer, crocodiles, wild horses, herons, curlews, little owls, double striped thick knee curlews, jabiru storks and a wide variety of ibises among many other bird species. A popular stop during the safari is by a beautiful lake, where the local staff will feed the caimans. We might also be lucky to see other reptiles such as iguanas and/or

turtles. Afterwards we will continue our tour in the reserve while spotting some more wildlife and birds. The landscape is green savanna and there will be plenty of photo opportunities during the tour. Lunch in the nature. Before returning to the lodge, we will do stop to do some fishing in the local way by the river bank.

Day 7: Hato Aurora & Ranching

Today we recommend horseback riding to the Hacienda "Hato Aurora". At the Ecolodge Juan Solito, there are beautiful well tamed horses, completely familiar with their land, which denotes more safety for our riders during their adventure. This is an activity suited for all ages and you don't need to be a trained rider. The tour might go to the hacienda Hato Aurora, where the ranching is still been done in the traditional way. Here we will enjoy lunch and also get a glimpse of the daily at the farm. "Siesta" in a hammock in the garden, before returning back to the lodge.

Day 8: Return to Bogota

Morning departure from Juan Solito, then flight from Yopal to Bogota. Transfer to hotel.

Day 9: Tatacoa Desert

Transfer to the airport and a flight to Neiva. Meeting with the guide and drive to Villavieja. Check in to hotel and some time to relax before heading into the Tatacoa desert. Explore the desert with stops at different sites of interest. In case of clear skies, we will also visit the astronomic observatory. Return to Villa Vieja in the evening.

Day 10: San Agustín

During the morning hours we drive to San Agustín. It's a five hour long drive that takes us through beautiful natural sceneries. Arrival to the countryside hotel in the afternoon.



Day 11: San Agustín's Archeological Parks

After breakfast, a private excursion to the archeological park of San Agustín and the surroundings. We will start with the visit to the San Agustín Park. This is one of the most important archeological sites of Colombia with many huge stone figures of a civilization that already disappeared when Europeans arrived to America. In the afternoon we will continue exploring by visiting Alto de los Idolos and Alto de las Piedras. Return to the hotel by the end of the day.

Day 12: Popayan

We will continue the journey to Popayán. The city is right in the middle of the rolling green hills of the Valle de Cauca. Popayan is also known as the "White City" due to the elegant whitewashed colonial buildings. The spirit of the city is centered around the bustling university life. At arrival we check in to the hotel. In the afternoon, we will do a short city tour visiting all the major sights of the old city including beautiful churches (Iglesia San Francisco and Iglesia La Ermita) and visits to the old colonial mansion, Casa Mosquera, where Colombia's liberator Simón Bolívar once stayed. Finally we will end the day with an ascent to the peak of El Morro del Tulcán to enjoy the view over the city.



Day 13: Popayan – Salento (with optional visit to Silvia Market)

Early departure from Popayan towards Salento. Arrival in the afternoon to the hotel in the outskirts of Salento located in a stunning setting in a convenient distance to the town. Afternoon free to enjoy the settings. Optional visit to SILVIA MARKET: If you are lucky to be here a Tuesday, we will make a visit to the Silvia Market. This is a very authentic market, mainly staffed by the indigenous Guambiano Indians, who live in the nearby areas and have largely maintained their traditional way of life. It is, by no means, touristy and it's a great opportunity to learn more about the life style in the country site. Continue to journey to Salento. It is a relaxed, colorful village surrounded by green mountains, and is the gateway to the Cocora Valley.

Day 14: Cocora Valley

Full day excursion to the Cocora Valley. The guide will meet you in the morning and take you on a very interesting hike to the Cocora Valley. During this private tour you will get familiar with Colombia's national tree, the wax palm (*Ceroxylon Quindiuense*). It's the biggest palm in the world with heights up to 60 meters. The wax palm was qualified by the Alexander Von Humbolt Institute as "endangered" as well as the yellow eared parrots that only make their nests in these palms. The length and strength of the tour depends on the physical shape of the visitor and therefore the exact route will be determined together with the guide according to the interests. Whether you are a nature enthusiast or not, this day is very likely going to be one of the most beautiful memories you will bring back home. Lunch is included.



Day 15: Coffee Tour

After a well-deserved rest, it's time to find out why the Colombia coffee is considered to be one of the finest in the world. Pick up from the hotel in the morning and transfer to a traditional coffee farm in the area. Here you will learn a lot about the entire coffee production from seed to the final product. It also includes a very pedagogic coffee tasting to learn about the different types and qualities of the local coffee. The tour lasts approximately two hours. Afternoon free for your own plans.

Day 16: Cartagena and City Walk

We leave the coffee farm and head for the Caribbean! Transfer to the nearest airport and domestic flight to Cartagena. From the airport you are picked up and driven 20 minutes to a hotel in the historic part of Cartagena. In the late afternoon/early evening, walk the old town of Cartagena with a private English speaking guide. It is a romantic city, full of legends and history, immaculately preserved by an impressive 13 km long stonewall. The old part of the city is a declared World Heritage Site, with its maze of cobble alleys, huge balconies, massive churches and charming plazas. There will be plenty of photo opportunities and the chance to appreciate the beautiful evening illumination of this romantic city.



Day 17: Cartagena and City Tour 4 hours

In the morning, meeting with the guide and continue exploring historic Cartagena. Start the tour by visiting the San Felipe Fortress, the most technically advanced military building during Spanish colonial times, then visit the old "Popa" Monastery where you will have a wonderful view of the city. Between these two places, visit the popular marketplace of Bazarro where fruits, vegetables and fish are traded by the locals, most of them descendants of the slaves of the colonial times. Cartagena is perhaps Colombia's most beautiful and interesting town. It was founded in 1533 and was, during the colonial period, the main Spanish port on the Caribbean coast and primary gateway to South America to receive slaves and to send treasures to Europe. In the evening there will be free time for shopping, and perhaps to enjoy a drink on the old fortress walls, overlooking the sunset on the Caribbean.

Day 18: Tayrona National Park

Morning transfer to Tayrona National Park. This is one of the most famous natural parks in Colombia with some of the most beautiful beaches of the Colombian Caribbean coast, right at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the world's highest coastal mountain range. The park has a protected area of 150 km² of land and 30 km² of sea, being the second most visited park in the country. Due to its privileged location, there is a huge biodiversity and also archeological ruins like "Pueblito". Stay at an Ecohotel inside the Natural Park. Arrival to the Park around lunch time. Check in and afternoon to enjoy the beaches.



Day 19: Tayrona National Park

Full day to explore the beaches on your own within the Natural Park. The park has well-marked paths which makes it very easy to explore and enjoy the iconic Caribbean beaches such as "Arrecife", "La Piscina" and "El Cabo San Juan" and the nature of the place. Lunch and dinner can be held at the restaurants within the park or at the hotel.

Day 20: Departure

Pick up at the hotel and transfer out to Santa Marta's Airport (one hour). Flight to Bogota for international connection or extra night in Bogota. End of services.



Route



Technical Characteristics:

Route Profile: Easy. Sightseeing and cultural activities designed for people who are generally fit and are comfortable walking up to 6 hours per day. Light hiking on two days, where some previous conditioning would be beneficial.

Travel Season: Any date on request from January 2 to December 31, 2023

Tayrona National Park Closure: Due to new local indigenous communities' regulations, the Tayrona National Park will close three times a year in the following periods: February 1 -15; June 1 - 15 and October 19 - November 2



Prices per Person

Double Occupancy	\$ 3999.00 USD
Single Supplement	\$ 535.00 USD
Domestic Flight Tickets**	\$ 500.00 USD

*Group rates available for this tour. As this is a guided tour, the pricing improves with more people participating. Please ask us for details

**Approximate price per person for all the needed domestic flights in the program. Please note that the final price of the tickets will be confirmed upon reservation.

Accommodation:

3* hotels and Ecolodges, charming Coffee Hacienda

Included:

- English speaking local guide during all tours (in Juan Solito, only Spanish speaking guide)
- Private transfers out and in in Bogotá
- Private transportation throughout the entire program
- All activities with entrance fees
- National Park entrance fees & archeological sites
- 4 nights in shared double rooms in hotel in Bogota
- 1 night in shared double rooms in hotel in Villa de Leyva
- 3 nights shared double rooms in hacienda in Yopal
- 1 night in shared double rooms in hotel in Villa Vieja
- 2 nights in shared double rooms in hotel in San Agustin
- 1 night in shared double rooms in hotel in Popayan
- 3 nights in shared double rooms in hotel in Salento
- 2 nights in shared double rooms in hotel in Cartagena
- 2 nights in shared double rooms in eco-hotel in Tayrona National Park
- Included meals specified in the day to day itinerary (19 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 3 dinners)
- Shared coffee tour at coffee farm

Not Included:

- Domestic and international flights
- Meals not mentioned in the program
- Optional visit to Silvia Market (\$70.00 USD per person)
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Personal expenses
- Tips
- Everything not mentioned in the “Included” list