



Adventure tours that delve deeper

The Colombia family trip

TRIP LENGTH: 11 days
STARTS: Cali
ENDS: Santa Marta

Discover Colombia's Best: A journey blending city vibes and natural wonders. From Cali's salsa beats to San Cipriano's rainforest adventures, explore Bahía Málaga's pristine beaches and Bogotá's family-friendly allure. Dive into history in Candelaria, play tejo, and embrace Minca's rainforest magic. Round off with beach bliss in Parque Tayrona and Santa Marta's cultural splendor. An unforgettable Colombian escape awaits!

Day 1 Bienvenidos a Cali!

Your trip starts at 1pm when your guide will meet you and you'll all head out for some lunch together, followed by a leisurely afternoon getting a feel for the city. Known as *'el sucursal del cielo'* (a branch of heaven) for its climate, natural setting, and general good vibes, Cali is the world home of salsa music and a vibrant center of Afro-Colombian culture.

It's also perfect to explore on foot, which is what we'll do this afternoon, starting in the historic center with the baroque, elegant architecture and colorful, delicious street food that characterize most South American cities, then branching out into more uniquely Cali experiences, such as bohemian San Antonio and Cali's most iconic creature: *el Gato del Rio* (the cat of the river). *El gato* is a 3.5 meter (11.5ft) bronze statue of a cat, made and donated by a noted local artist and erected in 1996 in a riverside park. Ten years later, it was decided that *el gato* needed some company, and 15 lady-cat statues were erected along the river, each decorated by a different artist. *El parque del gato y sus novias* is the perfect place to round out our afternoon, have a run around, and watch the sun go down!

Accommodation: 4 star hotel in downtown Cali
Meals: Lunch and dinner included

Day 2 Natural adventure in San Cipriano

This morning we'll drive (2.5 hours approx) to San Cipriano Natural Reserve where a crystal clear river punctuated with idyllic waterfalls flows through tropical rainforest. It's the perfect family day in the outdoors: here we'll swim in the river, dive off high rocks into natural pools, wander the trails, and experience the *brujita*, a unique method of motorcycle-powered rail transportation through the jungle!

In the afternoon we'll head to Buenaventura, one of Colombia's main ports, where we'll hop on the outboard-motored boat that will take us to our accommodation at Reserva Agua Marina, a family beach resort in Ladrilleros. Here you can enjoy a dip in the pool and a drink on your private balcony as you watch the sun set over the Pacific!

Accommodation: Reserva Aguamarina, Ladrilleros
Meals: All meals included

Day 3 Beautiful Bahía Málaga

We'll spend today boat-hopping between the amazing aquatic attractions of remote, beautiful Bahía Málaga (Malaga Bay).

At Playa Chucheros we can sit under a waterfall right on the beach. At La Sierpe Waterfall, we can swim between twin waterfalls that drop 65 meters into a jungle pool. At Las Tres Marias, yet another watery adventure awaits: here, we can slide on the rocks from one idyllic river pool to the next.

In between there's plenty of time for beachcombing, swimming, and eating a delicious local seafood lunch on the beach - we'll decide which beaches of the many on offer to visit on the day, based on tide and weather conditions.

From mid-July to mid-October, humpback whales raise their babies in these waters. If you're here in this time, we should definitely include whale watching, either by cutting back on the beaches we visit today, or adding a day before or after this one!

Accommodation: Reserva Aguamarina, Ladrilleros

Meals: All meals included

Day 4 Tailored Cali experience

This morning we'll take the boat back to Buenaventura and rejoin the world of travel by land! From here it's a three hour drive back to Cali, which we will break up with stops to try many delicious snacks, like hot chocolate and cheese, *arepa de choclo* (cheesy savory corn cake), rice pudding, *postre de maracuya* (passion fruit dessert) or a *merengón* (meringue with fruit and whipped cream).

We have one last afternoon in this heavenly Cali, and the choice is yours as to what we do with it! We might explore more of Cali on foot, drive up to the amazing statue and lookout of Cristo Rey for incredible views, or head out to the butterfly sanctuary of Andoka, or the enchanted forest of Bichacue Yath. We might even like to take a cooking, music, or salsa class! By now your guide will know your interests, and will be with you every step of the way to make sure you get the most out of your time in this amazing city.

Accommodation: 4 star hotel in downtown Cali

Meals: All meals included

Day 5 Bogotá, city of children!

This morning we'll take a short flight to Bogotá, a city that officially declared itself a 'city of children' in March 2023. Today we'll see what it has to offer - your family won't be disappointed!

We'll kick off with the massive (16,000 square meter/ 170,000 square foot) Children's Park, with its various different play areas for kids of all ages.

It's part of a complex of three ginormous parks in the middle of Bogotá, and we'll take our time wandering through them, strolling through green space and forests, paddle-boating on a lake, and visiting the Botanic Gardens with its orchid collection and South America's greatest terrarium.

While it's tempting to spend all afternoon in the park, we really can't miss nearby Museo Maloka, one of the finest children's museums in the world. Focussed on science and technology, and fully interactive, Maloka makes learning about everything from space to sea monsters fun for everyone, and is a must-see in Bogota.

Accommodation: 4 star hotel near Parque de la 93, Bogotá.

Meals: All meals included

Day 6 Gunpowder, ghosts and graffiti

We'll spend today in the Candelaria, Bogota's historic colonial center. It's mostly pedestrian and safe for riding so it's up to you whether we get around by bike or on foot!

As well as the expected elaborate churches and imposing government buildings, this area abounds in ghost stories from the Candelaria's long past (the city of Bogota was founded here, nearly 500 years ago!) It's also taken on a new life recently as a center for graffiti... there's a lot more to the Candelaria than history!

Later this afternoon we'll play Colombia's national sport, *tejo* - this entails throwing a metal disc at an envelope full of gunpowder stuck to a clay board - think explosive cornhole! - crazy fun no matter what age you are!

Accommodation: 4 star hotel near Parque de la 93

Meals: All meals included

Day 7 Cable car, funicular, and plane to paradise

This morning we'll take in Bogota's most classic lookout, Monserrate, accessible by cable car or funicular. (What even is a funicular? It's a tiny little train that chugs up and down a very steep mountain!)

Up the top, as well as a waving goodbye to Bogota, which is spread out spectacularly below us, we can wander in the forest, visit an elaborate church, and do a little light souvenir shopping, before we head for the airport and hop a flight to Santa Marta. From here a quick 40 minute drive takes us to Minca, a tiny town nestled in the lush green folds of the Sierra Nevada, known as the ecological capital of Colombia, where we'll spend the night.

Accommodation: Charming accommodations in the rainforest, Minca

Meals: All meals included

Day 8 Magical Minca

Minca is paradise. Today we'll hike through tropical rainforest, refresh ourselves in rivers, and swim in a pool at the bottom of a spectacular waterfall.

We'll fuel our adventures with a delicious traditional lunch - Minca's restaurants are known as the best in Caribbean Colombia - and a visit to the local, indigenous, organic chocolate factory!

Accommodation: Boutique Eco-lodge near Parque Tayrona

Meals: All meals included

Day 9 Crystal beach in Parque Tayrona!

We'll drive through one of the most beautiful and ecologically important areas of Parque Tayrona this morning, catching glimpses of sea and sky through the tropical rainforest all around us, to the poetically named Playa de las Siete Olas (Beach of the Seven Waves), where we'll count waves and catch our breath from a panoramic natural lookout.

Then we'll climb aboard a typical fisherman's boat and head for Crystal Beach where we have plenty of time to explore, swim, snorkel the crystalline water that gives the beach its name, and laze around in this tropical paradise!

This is a classic day between rainforest and beach, and by the end of it, you'll understand why Tayrona is South America's most popular national park.

Accommodation: Boutique Eco-lodge near Parque Tayrona

Meals: All meals included

Day 10 Beach paradise in Bahia Concha

Bahia Concha is the perfect place to spend a day on the beach - enjoying the views from a shady hammock, wandering the beach, paddling in the little river at one side, swimming and snorkeling in the sea.

In the late afternoon we'll drive half an hour to the coastal city of Santa Marta, which is the oldest city in South America - so if we feel like some culture, there's lots to explore... or if we feel like it, we can just hang out by the pool at our resort!

If you'd prefer a more active or cultural day, we can hike between various different beaches or visit a ruin and interpretive center in the jungle instead. Talk to us about the best option for your family!

Accommodation: 4 star resort in Santa Marta

Meals: All meals included

Day 11 Goodbye...

Our time together ends after breakfast today. If you're thinking of heading onwards to Cartagena (or anywhere else in South America!) feel free to hit us up with any questions - we're here to help make sure you have the best family adventure ever in Colombia!

Meals: Breakfast included

What's included

- All accommodation, in shared room, generally in four-star level hotels (see accommodation note below for exceptions to this)
- All transportation, including airport transfers at start and end of trip
- Flights: from Cali to Bogotá, and from Bogotá to Santa Marta
- All attractions and activities specified in itinerary
- Dedicated Aspiring Adventures guide
- All meals, as specified in the itinerary
- Clean, safe drinking water throughout the trip

What's not included

- Single room - add for \$1200 pp
- Alcoholic beverages
- Laundry and room service
- Tips for guides and drivers

Accommodations

The accommodations suggested here are our four-star family favorites in each destination, apart from the two nights at Reserva Agua Marina. Here, accommodation is at three-star level, in a privileged location in the jungle on the beach! If you prefer, you can spend these nights in four-star Hotel Cosmos Pacifico in Buenaventura city with minimal impact on the itinerary - all it means is spending an extra hour or so total on boats on Day 3 to complete the itinerary.