

**The Roots of Colombia**

10 days – 9 nights

**Bogota, Popayán, Silvia, San José de los Isnos, San Agustín, Tierradentro, Neiva, Villavieja, Tatacoa  
Heritage, Archeology, Culture, History****This program is fully customizable and may be operated for individuals, pods and groups**

*Land of diversity par excellence, Colombia is the cradle of several indigenous communities which continue to perpetuate traditions dating back several millennia. Discover the Guambianos of Silvia who have survived the ages and upheavals and who are often the guardians of an exceptional nature. The number of Guambiano in Colombia is estimated at around 12,000 people. They speak Nasa Yuwe among themselves. The name of the Guambianos comes from the word "Guambia", meaning a traditional bag used by women to carry their weaving kit. Indeed, Guambianos women are known to excel in the art of weaving. The sale of their produce is the main source of income for the tribe. But the Guambianos are also famous for their agricultural work, following ancestral farming methods, but also for herding. Although the Guambiano people are quite reserved by nature, they are renowned for their kindness and their smile.*

**Day 1: Bogota**

Upon arrival at Bogota's airport you'll be met and escorted to a hotel in the city. Some time to rest and relax. In the afternoon enjoy a tour of the colonial area and a trip to Montserrat that provides a fantastic view over the city. Overnight at the hotel.

**Day 2: Bogota, Popayán**

Transfer to the airport to take your flight to Popayán. At the Guillermo León Valencia Airport, you'll be met and driven to your hotel. After settling down start the discovery of this beautiful city. Although most of the buildings in the historic center date from the colonial period, Popayán continued to beautify itself during the republican period with the completion of the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Cathedral and the construction of the Belén Sanctuary as well as the opening of several museums showcasing the rich history and cultural heritage of this Andean city. Built in 1681, the Belén Sanctuary provides a beautiful panoramic view of Popayán. Located on the mountain of the same name it's accessible by paved stairs on each side of which stand sculptures reminiscent of the stations of the passion of Christ.



An important pre-Columbian monument of the Poebans is the Morro de Tulcán, a truncated pyramid built between 500 and 1600 BC, a period known as "the late sachemic societies". In 1937 an equestrian statue was installed at the top of the hill in homage to the conqueror Sebastián de Belalcázar, founder of the city. Before returning to your hotel stop at Rincón Payanés, also called Pueblito Patojo, which has small copies of the most representative monuments of the Cauca capital, among which are the Puente del Humilladero, the Clock Tower, the Chapel of La Ermita and the Chiquito Bridge. Right here you may taste typical dishes of the region and buy crafts and books. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

**Day 3: Popayán (Silvia)**

Breakfast at the hotel and departure to Silvia to learn about the Guambiana (or Misak) culture and observe the lives of indigenous people in Cauca by visiting their communities in Cajibío and Silvia. The indigenous people still wear traditional dress and preserve their cultural belief of respect for the Earth. In the Quizgó Reserve, tourists can get in touch with the native Paeces and Guambianos. Among the attractions of this site is the lagoon of Quizgó, considered a sacred site by the inhabitants of the region, and the district of the same name where we observe the work of local craftsmen and the practice of fish farming. If your visit is on a Tuesday do not miss the typical market where you can find typical handcrafts. Back to the hotel in Popayán for dinner and overnight [B/D]

**Day 4: Popayan, San Agustín**

Breakfast at the hotel before a 4-hour drive to San Agustín on our pursuit of the roots of Colombia.

**Estrecho de Magdalena**, or Strait of Magdalena, is located just outside of city. Take a moment to appreciate the wonder of Mother Nature while you explore this area. Much of the landscape was formed by the river as it narrowed down to flow through the rock formations. Here, the water is a clear, cool green and you can easily see the bottom of the river bed. The trip from San Agustín takes about 30 minutes.



**Obando** is a small village located north of San Agustín. Obando Archaeological Park is not as large as others in the area. Located in the park are about 15 burial mounds and a small museum. The museum contains remnants of old pottery and tools that were found in the area. This is the only site that allows you to go inside the burial mounds and explore. After the tour, continue to the hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

### Day 5: San Agustín

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before taking a journey back in time when you visit San Agustín, located in an area of archaeological sites surrounded by an air of peace, magic, and mystery. You will get a small glimpse into the lives of an ancient civilization and their connection to their deities. It is easy to be awed by the many stone statues and the wonder of how they were created.



The statue standing on a hilltop has a smile carved across his lips and wears the coat of a jaguar, the big cat's head resting on his. On top of the jaguar, lies the skin of a grinning caiman. This volcanic rock statue is a representation of an ancient indigenous ritual, when the young men dressed in animal hides to absorb their powers. This elegant and brilliantly sculptured statue is one of hundreds that inhabit Colombia's San Agustín national park, called by UNESCO "the largest group of religious monuments and megalithic sculptures in South America". These magnificent pieces are all that remain of an aesthetically advanced civilization that lived and disappeared in mystery 1,500 years ago, leaving only these statues to speak for it. Many of the pieces, which range from 6 ¼-foot to 23-foot and can weigh more than a ton, dwell on life's duality; the sun and the moon, death and birth. Archaeologists estimate that the statues were created between 100 BC and 800 AD. Gazing at the elaborate designs can be a hallucinatory experience; the grinning demon, the glaring eagle with the snake in its beak, the man pulling a lizard from his mouth. According to archaeologists, the trippy nature of the relics was the result of heavy use of natural psychotropic drugs.



**La Pelota** is within walking distance of San Agustín, or you can choose to visit the site on horseback. This site is smaller than most of the others in the area. What makes it unique and worth the trip is it is the only site where you can see ancient painted stones. Not much is known about the people who created them, but they are beautiful to look at.



**El Purutal** is located about a 660-foot (200-meter) walk from La Pelota. The path is covered in grass and not accessible by car. Here, you will find the shrine of an ancient burial mound formed by two dolmen temples guarded by stone statues. The statues represent the main rulers of the society who lived there once upon a time. Also, one of the statues has a painted mask believed to represent King Gallinazo.

For the next two sites we'll ride a horse or take a hike if you prefer.



**El Tablon** located on the way to La Chaquira is a small site difficult to attain by car, but it is possible to walk there. Located at El Tablon are five statues that were found in the main archaeological park and relocated to this site. There is also a small ethno-museum with relics and artifacts contained within. Wonder around and learn the known history of the relics. One of the most notable statues depicts an ornament worn by the early civilization. You will notice the details of a nose ring, headdress, and necklace.



**La Chaquira** is about 2 miles (3 kilometers) from the town of San Agustín. La Chaquira is a large woman carved in stone. She faces the east with her arms upraised. Before you get to this magical stone, you will pass old cottages and a small shop where you can buy water and snacks to take on your exploration. Besides La Chaquira, you will find many stone carvings of animal figures and human faces. What makes this site unique is that these stone monuments are not used as burial markings.

After the visit we return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

### Day 6: San Agustín, San Jose de los Isnos, Tierradentro

This morning, take a short drive to San Jose de los Isnos to visit two important archeological sites.



The **Alto de los Idolos** Archeological Park was consolidated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1995. The site is comprised of 32 acres distributed between Table A and Table B consisting of a community settled in its surroundings between 1000 BC until approximately 1530 AD. There, you find a large number of statues in stone, tombs in stones and ceramics with figures of colors, still in good condition, that survived looting of the guaqueros. The area connects you with part of Colombia's origins and you can appreciate the exhibitions of domestic utensils and funerary sarcophagi carved in stone by the natives of the area.



The **Alto de las Piedras** is a sacred site and was a ceremonial center shaped like a crescent, similar to the Alto de los Ídolos. Follow a route of approximately 30 minutes to observe statuary and funerary monuments. This place was a sacred site, a center with a wide radius of action where people came from distant lands to bury their dead and worship their divinities.

In the afternoon we have a long drive to Tierradentro where we arrive in time for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

### Day 7: Tierradentro, Neiva

Breakfast at the hotel and departure to the archeological site.



**Tierradentro**, nestled at the bottom of an isolated valley, is an archaeological site unique in the size and number of funerary tombs that can be admired is a World Heritage Site by UNESCO since 1995, located in the village "paece" of San Andres de Pisimbala. The site of Tierradentro includes monumental statues of human figures and contains many hypogea built between the sixth and tenth century. These vast underground tombs (some burial chambers reach 40 feet wide), unique in America, are adorned with motifs reproducing the interior decorations of the dwellings of the time. They offer an exceptional testimony to the social complexity and funerary rites and customs of a pre-Hispanic society that has disappeared, in a sumptuous landscape.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and continue to Neiva, on the banks of the Magdalena River, located in the middle of large plains where agriculture and livestock are the main economic resources. Among the most remarkable buildings of Neiva are its Colonial Temple dating from the 17th century, the elegant Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the old Railway Station built in 1915 which, today houses the House of Culture. We will also discover the Monument to the Gaitana, an Indian which symbolizes the resistance of the natives against the Spanish conquistadors in 1539 and 1540. Overnight in Neiva. [B/L]

### Day 8: Neiva (Villavieja, Tatacoa)

Leave Neiva, this morning for a day tour of Villavieja, the gateway to the Tatacoa Desert. This village located 24 miles north of Neiva was founded in 1550. It has retained a certain colonial stamp, as evidenced by La Casona, in the central square, where Simón Bolívar stayed. Do not miss the visit of the Paleontological Museum located in Casa de la Cultura. This museum presents in its three rooms a collection of mammoth fossils and mammoth reptiles found in the region and dating back to the Miocene (more than 20 million years ago). From Villavieja, we drive 2 ½ miles to a viewpoint, from where you can enjoy a breathtaking view of the Tatacoa Desert, a site of spectacular beauty, before continuing to the desert itself. There, everything is red, calm and voluptuous. We walk in impressive geological labyrinths. The Observatory is at the entrance of the site, stop there to



observe the stars and enjoy an informative tour of the constellations. Because the environment is so natural and the absence of pollution you'll have an uncluttered view of the universe! 2 ½ miles further, in Los Hoyos sector, a change of scenery: gray colors dominate, because of the potassium, magnesium and sulfur present in the soils. Several figures are drawn, shaped by our imagination. Around here you'll find natural of mineralized water, a pure delight in a beautiful setting. Take advantage of this unexpected refreshing bliss as you're allowed to swim in some of them. In the afternoon return to Neiva for overnight [B]

**Day 9: Neiva, Bogota, USA**

Breakfast at the hotel and transfer to the airport for you connecting flight to Bogota where you'll board you flight back home. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [B/L] = Breakfast and Lunch | [D] = and Dinner

**Your Tour includes:**

- Airfare Miami, Popayan//Neiva, Miami
- Arrival and departure transfers
- Accommodation at selected class hotels
  - Bogota 1 night
  - Popayán 2 nights
  - San Augustin 2 nights
  - Tierradentro 1 night
  - Neiva – 2 nights
- Meals:
  - Daily breakfast
  - 1 lunch
  - 5 dinners
- Tour of Popayán
- Visit Morro de Tulcán
- Visit Rincón Payanés
- Immersion in Guambiana culture in Silvia
- Obando
- Estrecho de Magdalena
- Visit San Agustin Archeological Park
- Visit San Agustin's other archeologic sites:
  - La Pelota

- El Purutal
- El Tablon
- La Chaquira
- Visit Alto de los Idolos and Alto de las Piedras in Isnos
- Tour the World Heritage Site of Tierradentro
- Discover Neiva
- Excursion to Tatacoa DeserT
  - Panoramic tour of Villavieja
  - Visit the Observatory
  - Tour the desert
- Tour escort during the tour
- Air-conditioned deluxe transportation

**Tour does not include:**

- Airport taxes and fees
- Expenses of personal nature
- Travel insurance
- Optional tours
- Any services not included in the tour
- Tips to restaurants, guides and drivers

**Hotels in your Tour:**

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
<b>Superior Tourist (***)</b>		
Bogota	Hotel de la Opera	4.5
Popayán	La Plazuela	4
San Agustin	Akawanka Lodge	4
Tierradentro	La Portada Hotel	4.5
Neiva	GHL Hotel Neiva	4,5
<b>First Class (****)</b>		
Bogota	Sofitel Victoria Regia	4.5
Popayán	Dann Monasterio	4
San Agustin	Monasterio San Agustin	5
Tierradentro*	La portada Hotel	4.5
Neiva*	GHL Hotel Neiva	4.5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

\*Best available

**Tour Prices:**

No. in Party	2-3 Pax	4-5 Pax	6-7 Pax
<b>Superior Tourist</b>			
Double	\$3,005	\$2,149	\$1,989
Single	\$3,445	\$2,589	\$2,425
<b>First Class</b>			
Double	\$3,159	\$2,305	\$2,145
Single	\$3,679	\$2,819	\$2,659

Prices are per person and may change without notice

Prices are minimum for low season. Please call for other periods

These programs can be customized for individuals and for groups

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

• **Airfare**

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

• **Program**

You may add or remove;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

• **Other options**

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

• **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Prices are minimum for low season. Please call for other periods

**Tour Code:** CO07PPN21PU

**Options:**

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.
- Car can be upgraded upon request

**Group Quotations**

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.

We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.