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*Colombia - living with a passion for life
November 8th ~ 18th*

Colombia is a country on the move. With a vastly improved security situation, people are finally beginning to succumb to the charms of this wonderful country. From the warmth of its people to the beauty of its landscapes, from climbing active volcanoes to floating down the Amazon, from historic indigenous statues to colonial towns -Columbia has something for every taste. More importantly, Columbia has the Lost City or Ciudad Perdida—a 5 day hike like no other.

Nov 8 - Arrival into Cartagena and transfer to Tcherassi Hotel and Spa.

Nov 9 - Full day tour including walking tour of the historical centre. Afternoon visit to Castillo San Felipe / Convento La Popa / La Manga. Continue to the Mud Volcano Lodo el Totumo for a dip in its healing waters before returning to Tcherassi for our afternoon massage.

*Meander through Cartagena's picture-perfect streets, and admire the city that is famous for both its beauty and its history. Founded in 1533, Cartagena became the main port on the Caribbean coast during Spanish rule. Treasure was stored in the city until it could be taken to Spain and for this reason, in the 16th century, Cartagena suffered five sieges including one led by Francis Drake in 1586. This is why the Spaniards then built the forts (Fuertes) and walls (Las Murallas) that still encompass the old town. The **Puerta del Reloj (Clock Gate)** signifies the entrance to the inner part of the walled city, also called Calamari. Just behind this is the **Plaza de los Coches** which used to serve as a slave market. The **Plaza de la Aduana** and **Plaza de Bolivar** also have fascinating historical context as well as the numerous churches, museums, convents and monuments.*



Volcán de Lodo el Totumo is 52km northeast of Cartagena and while it is a small 15 volcano, it is in fact the highest mud volcano in Colombia. There are many myths and

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mud legends attached why it spews mud rather than ash or lava. Locals believe that the mud was brought about by a priest to drown the devil that was responsible for the fire, ash and lava erupting from the volcano. A more likely cause however is the pressure of gases emitted underground by decaying organic matter.

Nov 10 - Morning tour of the city. Take a private boat to Hotel El Agua on *Isla de Baru* island for lunch. Relax on the island and return in the afternoon for Cartagena for the start of the festivities.

35km south west of Cartagena lie the Rosario Islands which are an archipelago of 27 islands (including those only large enough for one house) that sit amongst coral reefs and warm turquoise waters. The whole area is a national park - the *Corales del Rosario*. *Caribe Indians* once inhabited the islands but were driven away after the attacks of pirates going to Cartagena. There is a diverse aquatic life consisting of 113 plankton species, 215 fish species, 5 mangrove species, as well as plenty of migrating seabirds and wildlife. *Isla Grande* is the archipelago's largest island (200ha) and has sandy beaches and trails. Other islands include *Isla del Rosario*, *Isla de San Martin de Pajarales*, *Isla de Baru*.



Nov 11- It's 11-11-11 and it's a celebration of Cartagena's independence! We'll take a trip outside Cartagena and enjoy a relaxing ride in a canoe as a *buga* (a canoe driver) paddles you through a mangal (mangrove forest).

Nov 12 - Very early start (around 4.30am) and drive to Santa Marta. Drop off bags. Transfer to Machete Pelao by 4x4 (3 hrs). A guide will take you through El Mamey region, stopping for lunch at a peasant farm. Walk through Buritaca river valley (2hrs 30) until Asario's farm where you can bathe in a natural pool and shower in a waterfall. Overnight in hammocks (with mosquito nets) on Asario's farm.

Nov 13 - Breakfast at 7am, then walk through a small valley formed by the Buritaca river where there are some indigenous constructions forming the small town of Mutanyi. You will have 4 more hours of walking before we reach the farm where you will spend the night. On arrival you can cool off in the natural pools formed by the Buritaca river. Overnight in Mamo Kogui's farm in hammocks.

A Mamo is a spiritual leader of the Kogui people, descendants of the Tayrona people. These Mamos are part of a priesthood who believe that the spiritual balance they keep in their land directly affects the cosmic and ecological balance of the entire world.



Nov 14 - Breakfast at 6.30am, then walk to Lost City entrance. Climb 1200 steps up to the Tayrona terraces (1hr 30) and visit the archaeological zone of the Lost City. Learn about the pre-Hispanic Tayronas, their culture and customs, and how they adapted to their environment. You

can also visit ceremonial houses of the present day Tayronas. En-route it is also possible to take a bath in the Pool of Youth, which, legend has it, has magical powers of preservation. Lunch and free time to explore. Return to Mamo's farm for dinner. Overnight in hammocks on Mamo's farm.

*Around the year 700, the **Tayrona** people arrived in the Sierra Nevada mountains of Colombia from Central America. **Ciudad Perdida** (Lost City) took them 200 years to construct and is 600 years older than Machu Picchu. In the year 1300, it had a population of 300. However, the site was abandoned in the 1600s when trade routes were cut due to the **arrival of the Spanish**. Fish and salt could not get through resulting in the spread of disease. The Tayronas had many unusual customs and beliefs one of which was that they thought they could be **reborn as parrots, bats and jaguars**, hence their prominence in Tayrona art. Another was the relationship between men and women. Men married at 15 after living for 6 months with a women of around 20 years who **taught him about procreation as well as work**. At this stage he built 2 houses, one for himself and one for his wife (large houses were for men and sons, smaller ones for women and daughters). Only chiefs could have 2 wives. **Women were not allowed in men's huts and men only entered the women's house to cut the umbilical cord with a palm tree to prevent infection**. Women would leave food and firewood at the door of the men's huts and a special area in the fields was reserved for procreation. When indigenous women had twins they would suffocate the weaker as they could not go about their work and raise two sons/daughters. Blind and disabled babies were treated the same.*

Nov 15 - Breakfast at 6.30am. Walk along the Buritaca river on indigenous paths to the cabins at Mutanyi where lunch will be served. Then walk for two hours through El Mamey region to Honduras where dinner will be served at Alfredo's peasant farm. Overnight in hammocks on Alfredo's farm.

Nov 16 - Visit of the waterfalls and pools in the morning for bathing. Three hour walk back to Machete Pelao where you will have lunch and meet the 4x4 to take you back to Santa Marta. You will arrive mid afternoon and pick up your bags before transferring to Santa Marta airport for a flight to Bogota (Departure: 17.26 - subject to change). Airport transfer to hotel in Bogota. Overnight in hotel in Bogota to be determined.

Nov 17 - Half day walking tour of Bogota. Afternoon free.

Nov 18 - After breakfast transfer to Bogota airport for outgoing flight.

