

## Colombia Private Journey



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## Welcome!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

### PLEASE SEND US

- **Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- **Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- **Air Schedule:** Send us a copy of your Air Schedule once you've made your flight arrangements. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Trip Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.

### PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- **Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- **Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation

& Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.

- **Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

## QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our website: [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com), or e-mail us at: [info@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:info@wildernesstravel.com)

## Travel Information

### **PASSPORT**

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Colombia. In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. You can request a new passport through [US Passport Services Office](#) (the service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend [Passport Visas Express](#). Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

Note: To apply for tax exemptions in Colombia you must get a TP-5 or TP-10 stamp on your passport, which certifies that you are visiting Colombia for tourism purposes only. Additionally, Canadian citizens must pay a reciprocity fee of USD\$60 or COP\$170.000 upon arrival in Colombia.

### **VISAS**

US citizens do not need a visa for countries visited on this trip. If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

### **MONEY**

The unit of currency in Colombia is the Colombian peso. We suggest you carry some of your spending money in US cash, and the rest in ATM or credit cards. Travelers checks are not recommended as they can be difficult and time-consuming to cash. Make sure your US bills are crisp and clean. Worn, tattered, or torn bills may not be accepted. For valuable items that you need to keep on your person, we strongly recommend carrying a money belt that can be worn under your clothes.

Credit cards are accepted at major hotels and shops, and ATMs are widely available. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, any meals not included in the trip itinerary (approx. \$15-\$20 for lunches and \$20-\$25 for dinners), international and domestic airport departure taxes, and personal items such as beverages.

## **TIPPING**

Tipping is completely discretionary but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward outstanding service. A range of reference would be \$125-\$175 per trip member for the Trip Leader and \$40 total per trip member for the local city tour guides and drivers in Bogota and Cartagena (\$10 each for the guide and driver in Bogota and \$10 each for the guide and driver in Cartagena—the Trip Leader will help facilitate this). During the trip, the Trip Leader takes care of tips for waiters at restaurants and for porters for luggage handling.

## **SPECIAL DIETS**

We will do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, however, please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or limitations due to logistics can make it extremely difficult and at times impossible to accommodate dietary restrictions. Please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a restricted diet. It is important to bring a flexible attitude and supplemental snacks.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Time Zone**

Colombia is 2 hours ahead of California and 1 hour behind New York.

### **Telephone**

The international dialing code for Colombia is 57. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

### **Email & Internet Access**

Email access is available at all of our hotels (not always Wi-Fi, however).

## **ELECTRICITY**

Colombia has 110-volt current. Plugs have two flat-blade pins or one that has an addition round grounding pin. Bring a converter and plug adaptor kit for appliance use.

## Medical Information

The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the [Centers for Disease Control](#). Medical travel products are available from [Travel Health Medicine](#) and from [Magellan's Travel Supplies](#).

### **INOCULATIONS**

No inoculations are required for entry into Colombia. Entry requirements and international health situations are subject to change; check with the Centers for Disease Control for updates. All shots should be entered on your International Health Card (yellow card), which is provided by the facility giving the shots. Keep it with your passport while traveling. This provides an important personal record for you to refer to when making future travel plans. We recommend you discuss the following with your physician:

#### **Yellow Fever**

A Yellow Fever shot is strongly recommended. The vaccination is good for 10 years. Have proof of the shot recorded in your International Health Card and carry the card with your passport. Health officials at borders often (but not always) request proof of the shot. The vaccination is good for 10 years. For more information, refer to the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm).

#### **Polio**

People who have received the primary series of at least three doses of polio vaccine are considered fully immunized. People who are unsure of their status should receive the vaccine (three doses spaced at intervals).

#### **Hepatitis**

The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

#### **Tetanus Booster**

It is very easy to get a small cut. A booster is strongly recommended (effective for 10 years) if you are due for one.

#### **Typhoid**

The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine, Vivotif Berna, a course of four capsules, one every other day for a week, with full effectiveness reached in a week. You may not be able to take the oral vaccine simultaneously with mefloquine (for malaria prevention).

**STAYING HEALTHY**

Don't brush your teeth with tap water; use bottled water, and don't use ice in your drinks unless you are sure it was made with treated water. When in doubt, ask your guide for instruction.

## Helpful Information

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

For most people, a compact digital camera or even a cell phone with a fixed zoom lens works well, and newer point-and-shoots and phones can produce excellent quality pictures. For higher quality images, especially for printing, and the ability to use longer telephoto lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a digital SLR is well worthwhile, though heavier. Lenses of 200mm or 300mm, with image stabilization, allow you to hand-hold the camera with minimal camera shake. A polarizing filter is useful, especially to reduce reflection on water surfaces and to deepen the blue of the sky. Pack your equipment well and use plastic bags to protect it from dust or moisture. Bring wipes and a dust blower to keep your lenses clean. Most digital cameras and phones now have video options, and you may even want to consider bringing a GoPro. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. You may want to consider insuring your equipment. Camera equipment is available for rent from [Borrow Lenses](#) with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients.

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards. If you take a lot of pictures and save them at a high resolution, it can be helpful to bring a digital storage unit or laptop so you can download your pictures and free up your memory cards for reuse on a regular basis. Bring a backup battery or set of batteries so one is always charged and ready to use, and bring your battery charger (and appropriate plug adapter). If your camera uses replaceable batteries, bring spares with you. Note: for trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger.

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate, and always use gestures or simple phrases to ask permission. If people do not wish to be photographed, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which only makes it harder for other travelers to take pictures and to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people.

We find that our clients create wonderful images that really define the unique aspects of our adventures. We would love to make use of your images in our marketing materials and our photoblog, and request that you send us a small sample of your best images and a simple email giving us permission to use the photos. Please email your photos to [wtpphotoblog@gmail.com](mailto:wtpphotoblog@gmail.com). We look forward to receiving them!

### **BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER**

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

# Packing List

## THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- International Health Card ("Yellow Card") with proof of Yellow Fever inoculation within the last 10 years—strongly recommended
- Expense money

## WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our [WT Gear Store](#).

## LUGGAGE

- Soft-sided roller bag with small padlock (must be unlocked for travel. Be mindful of baggage weight limits.
- Daypack, large enough for a fleece jacket, rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want with you during the day
- Small roll-up duffel if you are an avid shopper

## WEIGHT LIMITS

There are baggage weight limits for internal flights within Colombia: 44 lbs.

## NOTES ON CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only. Dress on the trip is very informal, with the exception of two or three city dinners for which you may want to dress up a little (jackets are not required for men). Laundry service is available at some of the hotels.

- Rain gear, such as rain jacket and pants, raincoat
- Light fleece jacket
- Lightweight long pants. Synthetic "travel" fabrics wash and dry easily. Jeans are slow drying and not recommend.
- Walking shorts
- Long-sleeved shirt. Quick-drying "travel" fabrics like nylon are best.
- T-shirts
- Shade hat with wide brim
- Sturdy walking shoes with good traction, or lightweight hiking boots
- Running shoes, Tevas, or other comfortable shoes for city wear
- Underwear, socks; synthetics dry faster
- Sleepwear
- Swimsuit (for hotel pool in Cartagena and the beach at Tayrona)



## **EQUIPMENT**

- Reusable water bottle for the hikes
- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair of sunglasses is invaluable should your first pair be broken or lost.
- Field guides
- Binoculars. If you are planning to purchase binoculars, visit [Eagle Optics](#) for comparison of all major brands, from Nikon to Swarovski.
- Personal toiletries
- Flashlight, extra batteries
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.

## **PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES**

- Sunscreen of SPF #30 or higher
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol, Tylenol PM for sleeping
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts, bites, or sores
- Insect repellent
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing
- Antihistamine such as Benadryl and cold remedy such as Sudafed
- Imodium for diarrhea. If you wish to bring an antibiotic for diarrhea prophylaxis, please consult your physician.
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses
- Feminine protection (not always available for purchase)

## **OPTIONAL ITEMS**

- Converter/plug adaptor for appliance use in hotels
- Down or fleece vest if you easily get chilled (good for colonial towns in the highlands)
- Collapsible walking stick
- Camera, spare batteries, flashcards
- Reading/writing material
- Binoculars
- Travel clock