

COLOMBIA

DETAILED ITINERARY

Sep 14/23



Includes "In the Footsteps of Pablo Escobar" tour in Medellín

Colombia is now ready to welcome adventure travelers! This beautiful country is primed to share its ancient and colonial heritage, its abundant natural beauty and a sincere warmth that makes everyone feel genuinely welcome. ElderTreks' 20 day Colombia adventure takes you from the colonial gems of the Andes to mysterious ancient statues and pristine coastal regions. We spend a few days in the remote Pacific Coast region of El Almejal where we will have the opportunity to search for whales. A trip to Colombia would not be complete without a visit to a coffee plantation and hacienda. Savor the beautiful surroundings of Pereira, one of the premier coffee regions in the world. Enjoy a day of hiking (or optional horseback riding) in the spectacular Cocora Valley. Visit a traditional Andean market in Silvia, and be impressed by superb sites and colonial architecture in the Andean towns of Villa de Leyva, Bogota (including the Gold Museum),

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 20 land days • Start in Bogota and finish in Cartagena
- Includes all meals • Includes 4 internal flights • Visit the Gold Museum in Bogota • Enjoy whale watching on the remote Pacific Coast • Learn about coffee production at a coffee plantation • Visit a traditional colorful Andean market • Explore the mysterious, ancient stone statues of San Agustin • See the colonial gems of Villa de Leyva, Popoyan, and Barichara • Explore Cartagena - arguably the most beautiful colonial city in the Americas • Follow the footsteps of Pablo Escobar in Medellín

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

Mar 04 - Mar 23, 2025 - \$7295 USD

Activity Level: 2

Comfort Level: Some long drives on dirt roads.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable hotels with private bathrooms. Due to limited rooms, single rooms may not be available day 7 - 9.

ELDERTREKS



SMALL GROUP
EXOTIC ADVENTURES
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

Popayan, and Barichara. The crown jewel is Cartagena on the coast, which is arguably the most beautiful colonial city in the Americas.

Get insights into the controversial life and work of Pablo Escobar in Medellín from a historical perspective. The story of his rise to fame and eventual demise was portrayed on Netflix's popular series Narcos.

The ancient statues of San Agustin are numerous (over 600 in total) and mysterious. No one knows who created them or why. Dating from 1000 to 5000 years old, the statues depict people, animals, pregnant women, monsters and even combines people and animals. The tallest is 21ft high and there are many burial sites.

Enjoy meeting the friendly local people and relax in beautiful and tranquil settings on your adventure through Colombia.



DAY 1 • ARRIVAL IN BOGOTÁ

Upon arrival in Bogotá Colombia's capital, we are met and transferred to our hotel. This evening, we have our welcome dinner.

Dinner and overnight in Bogotá.

DAY 2 • EXPLORING THE GOLD MUSEUM & COLONIAL BOGOTÁ

After breakfast we will be transported downtown where we will explore the very impressive Gold Museum, home to one of the largest collections of pre-Columbian gold work in the world. We then see Plaza de Bolívar (the city's main square), government buildings, the old colonial district known as La Candelaria and San Francisco Church.

We conclude our activities with a ride in a funicular railway or cable car to the top of Monserrate Hill, offering spectacular views of the city. In the afternoon, we return back to the hotel.

Dinner and overnight in Bogotá.



Salt Cathedral



DAY 3 • BOGOTÁ, ZIQAUIRA, VILLA DE LEYVA

Today we start an overland trip to the north of the eastern range of the Colombian Andean region. We begin our day right in the outskirts of Bogotá with a visit to the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá, a church built within the tunnels of a salt mine 200m (655ft) underground. Then we will continue our road trip to reach one of the oldest and loveliest towns in Colombia, Villa de Leyva, where we will spend two nights.

Dinner and overnight in Villa de Leyva.

DAY 4 • VILLA DE LEYVA

Today we explore Villa de Leyva and surroundings. The large plaza of this small town is surrounded by the church and white-washed buildings, many dating back to the late 1500s. We explore its history through its colonial structures in a walking tour. We will also drive to a 160 million year old fossil, an old monastery called Ecce Homo and some other attractions in the middle of a beautiful view.

Dinner and overnight in Villa de Leyva.

DAY 5 • VILLA DE LEYVA - BARICHARA

Today we continue our overland trip to another lovely small town in the region of Santander, land of goats

and brave people. Founded in 1741, Barichara's colonial architecture of white-washed buildings and red-tiled roofs is simply stunning and has a very pleasant temperature.

Dinner and overnight in Barichara.

DAY 6 • BARICHARA - BUCARAMANGA - MEDELLÍN

Early in the morning we will take a path with heritage value and we will hike to the small village of Guane where a transport will be waiting for us. Then we will continue our overland trip going down through the mountains to reach the airport of Bucaramanga, the capital of Santander region. During this journey we will have the chance to enjoy the spectacular view of the Chicamocha canyon. At arrival we will take a flight to Medellín city, located in the central range of the

Colombian Andes. Upon arrival we will be met and transferred to our hotel.

Dinner and overnight in Medellín.

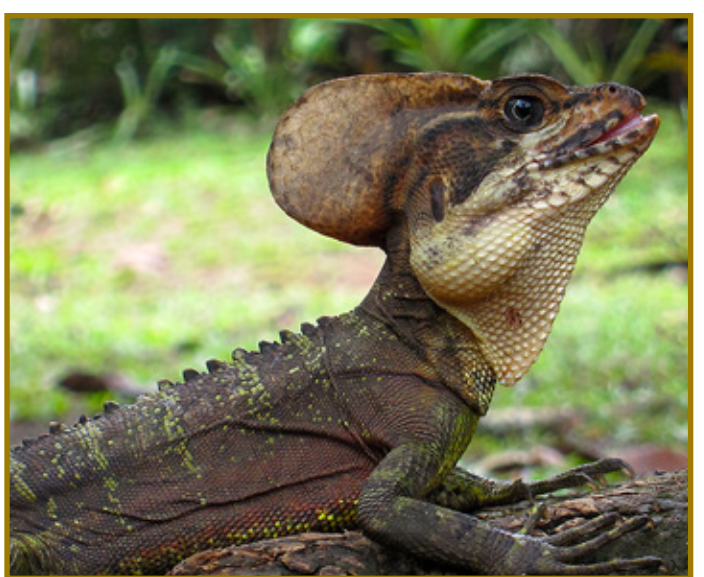
DAY 7 • MEDELLÍN TO EL ALMEJAL RESERVE

After breakfast, we will take a domestic flight to Bahía Solano in the Pacific Colombian coast, one of the most biodiverse regions in the world. A tropical jungle in front of the ocean with ethnic Afro and Indigenous populations will wait for you. After arrival at the small and simple airport of Bahía Solano we will transfer by different simple cars towards El Valle, where the beach "El Almejal" and the lodge are located. We will have a small introduction with important information concerning your stay at the lodge.

Dinner and overnight in El Almejal.

El Almejal, whale watching





DAY 8 • WHALE WATCHING - EL ALMEJAL RESERVE

At this time of the year humpback whales come to this warm waters to give birth to their calves. Early in the morning, we'll take a boat for a day tour where we will have the opportunity to see the whales. If we are lucky we'll be able to admire their spectacle when they blow out 7 meters high water fountains and show us their massive tail fins. The boat ride goes to the National Park Utria where we will take a beautiful and comfortable path over the mangrove to enjoy the ecosystem. After lunch we will continue the boat ride to visit a white beach and then we will take our boat again to return to the lodge.

Dinner and overnight in El Almejal.

DAY 9 • CANOE ON TUNDÓ RIVER - EL ALMEJAL

After breakfast we will walk to El Valle town for a canoe ride along the Tundó River. We will have the

chance to appreciate the nature of the mangrove ecosystem and if we want we will take a bath in the river. Then we'll return back to the lodge to have lunch. In the afternoon we will do a hike in the Almejal reserve. In the night, a cultural show.

Dinner and overnight in El Almejal.

DAY 10 • FLY TO MEDELLÍN - CITY TOUR

After breakfast we return back to the airport for our flight to Medellín. At arrival reception and transfer to the hotel. In the afternoon city tour.

Immersing ourselves in the hustle and bustle of downtown Medellín we reach Botero Plaza, a park dedicated to Fernando Botero, Colombia's most famous sculpturer and painter. The exhibition of a number of his proportionally exaggerated sculptures has become a popular landmark of the city. We take the modern Metro Cable up to Santo Domingo, once a notorious area of gang violence in Medellín. The cable car was constructed to make the inner city more



Andean Market at Silvia





Ancient statue at San Agustin.

Barichara



accessible to residents of the deprived outskirts, and now also allows visitors to get a glimpse into the lives of the marginalized population. While enjoying the spectacular view across Medellín we learn more about the transformation of a city once doomed to a metropolis now deemed. A true phoenix, Medellín has risen from the ashes of its past to become Colombia's most innovative, modern and vibrant city - a hub of the arts, culture, business, fashion and technology. (Note: Depending on the schedule of the flight, this tour or part of it will be done next day.)

Dinner and overnight in Medellín.

DAY 11 • MEDELLÍN - IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PABLO ESCOBAR

Pablo Escobar Gaviria is probably Medellín's most famous son. The story of Escobar and the Medellín cartel is an astounding example of how organized crime can have an impact on a whole country. In the 1980's Escobar controlled huge parts of the global cocaine

dealing. Because of the enormous amounts of money he dealt with, he was able to establish a powerful network of corruption and social control over Medellín's inhabitants. In the early 1990's when Pablo Escobar was prosecuted throughout the entire country, the Medellín cartel was at the peak of its power, which ended with Escobar's death in 1993. Still today Pablo Escobar is viewed as one of the most controversial protagonists of the younger Colombian history. Get insights into the controversial life and work of Pablo Escobar in Medellín from a historical perspective. The story of his rise to fame and eventual demise was portrayed on Netflix's popular series Narcos.

Dinner and overnight in Medellín.

DAY 12 • MEDELLÍN - COFFEE REGION

In the morning we will start an overland trip through the mountains going to the south to reach the heart of the coffee region where we will spend two nights. Dinner and overnight in Pereira.

DAY 13 • COCORA VALLEY – SALENTO AND OCASO COFFEE TOUR

In the morning transfer to one of the most beautiful valleys in Colombia. Here we will find the impressive “Palma de Cera”, the official Colombian national tree and one of the tallest species of palm trees in the world. We will have time to visit Salento, a picturesque village with artisanal shops. Afterwards visit ‘El Ocaso’, a coffee growing farm. This visit includes a technical and practical introduction to the whole coffee cultivation and the production process, from harvest to the cup. In the afternoon transfer back to the hotel.

Dinner and overnight in Pereira.

DAY 14 • TO POPAYÁN

After breakfast, we will continue our land trip to the south, going down the mountains and crossing the Cauca River Valley to reach Popayán, one of Colombia’s most beautiful colonial cities, well known for the celebrations during the holy week.

Dinner and overnight in Popayán.

DAY 15 • POPAYÁN AND INDIGENOUS ANDEAN MARKET OF SILVIA

Very close to Popayán, on Tuesdays, the Guambiano people come together dressed in their native costumes to offer and buy their products at the market, and to meet with each other. This takes place at the famous market in Silvia, which creates a special opportunity to see and meet these ancestral groups that are proud of their culture.

In the afternoon we will take a walking tour in Popayán historic center.

Dinner and overnight in Popayán.

DAY 16 • POPAYÁN TO SAN AGUSTIN

After breakfast, we drive from Popayán to San Agustín, crossing the central Colombian Andes range through the marvelous Purace National Park. In the afternoon, we will visit the famous strait of the Magdalena River. Here, the longest river in Colombia crosses a narrow throat just 2 meters wide.

Dinner and overnight in San Agustín.

DAY 17 • SAN AGUSTIN - ANCIENT & MYSTERIOUS STATUES OF SAN AGUSTIN

The Statues of San Agustín are an ancient wonder of Colombia. Spread over a vast area and clouded in mystery, the approximate 600 statues date from 1000 - 5,000 years old. The statues vary from small to giant (21’), from human figures to animals to part human and animal, and even pregnant women.

After breakfast, we will visit several sites in the San Agustín Archaeological Park including the Archaeological Museum.

Dinner and overnight in San Agustín.

DAY 18 • SAN AGUSTIN TO CARTAGENA

In the morning we will leave the beautiful and mysterious region of San Agustín and drive through the Magdalena River Valley to Neiva city airport where we will take our flight to Cartagena city in the northern Caribbean coast (vía Bogotá). Upon arrival we will be met and transferred to our hotel.

Dinner and overnight in Cartagena.

DAY 19 • CARTAGENA - COLOMBIA'S COLONIAL GEM

Today, we will explore Cartagena, arguably the most beautiful colonial city in the Americas. Our exploration includes the Convent of La Popa, the highest point of the city with its impressive views of Cartagena. We will continue to the massive fort of Castillo de San Felipe, with its history and mysteries hidden in its stone-walled tunnels. However, most impressive is the huge defensive walls that surround the old city, which overlooks the sea and its well-preserved colonial architecture within these walls. During your exploration,

we will see cathedrals, museums, plazas, restaurants and cafes. Cartagena has the best shopping in Colombia. Cartagena proudly deserves its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as we will never forget this wonderful destination.

Dinner and overnight in Cartagena.

DAY 20 • DEPART CARTAGENA

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your departing flights.





Cartagena: fort of Castillo de San Felipe





QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (portage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. Although we visit many historical sites and although we have talks and discussions on many aspects of Colombian history and culture, this is only one aspect of what we do. We believe that it is equally educational to meet new people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes, and even try to learn a few words in the local language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are spent sipping a cold drink in a street market.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL?

All land transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We use mini-vans or Microbuses, 4x4 vehicles, local ferries, motorized boats, planes and of course by foot. The trip cost also includes 4 internal flights.

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We always stay in very good hotels, guesthouses and lodges that have been chosen on the basis of location, atmosphere and local charm.

7. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1, and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of

settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best. On long travel days, we often take box lunches.

8. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

This adventure covers a great deal of territory and travelers should expect, in general, hot, humid weather on the coast, more moderate and occasionally colder temperatures in the highlands. You should also be prepared for rain.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

**Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

11. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you want it) is due as soon as you decide to go and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment in full of the land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and these are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.



