



Gastroenterology Journey to Colombia

Bogotá, Salento, Medellín & Cartagena

September 15-25, 2024

\$5,899 (double occupancy w/ flights)

\$999 single supplement

Focus on Health Care & Education

- **Meaningful interaction** between travelers and a healthcare professional in Colombia will allow the opportunity to discuss the healthcare industry in Colombia. Better understand the challenges Colombia faces with health care delivery and access to care.
- Meet with representatives from the **Hospital de La Misericordia in Bogotá** or *similar*, as well as a clinic or hospital in Medellín, one of the largest and most developed cities in Colombia.
- Interact with a **traditional medicine practitioner** in Palenque to learn about the Afro-descendant culture of this historic community. Traditional medicine combines elements of herbalism, spirituality, and careful observation of nature to treat a wide range of physical and emotional ailments.
- **Accompanying guest program** – *alternate activities will be provided for guests who do not wish to attend the professional meetings.*

Focus on Community & Culture

- Take part in a **drum workshop** in Palenque, where you can learn to play the drums and learn about the traditional rhythms and percussion patterns that are fundamental in Afro-Colombian music.
- Take a private **salsa class** where dancers will teach you the steps to learn how to dance this fantastic and iconic rhythm of the Caribbean.
- Enjoy **city tours** in Bogotá, Salento, Medellín & Cartagena with your local guide. This will include some stops at local museums like the **Botero Art Museum**, Bogotá's **Gold Museum** and more.
- Visit a local **coffee plantation** to learn why Colombia's temperate Andean slopes are famous for its superior quality coffee, being exported worldwide. Enjoy a coffee tasting with a barista.
- Enjoy a **rum tasting** to sample and learn about the rich history of sugar cane and the local rum made from it in the Caribbean.
- Take a boat ride headed toward the **Rosario Islands** south-west of Cartagena. Relax on the beach at Majagua Island and take in the sites and enjoy a local lunch.
- Enjoy the food of Cartagena's through a **foodie tour**, with visits to local restaurants to taste various specialties.

What's Included:

- 10 nights deluxe accommodations
- Roundtrip flights from **Miami** and group transfer on arrival and departure
- Activities as outlined in the itinerary
- English-speaking national guide
- Pre travel support & 24/7 support during travel
- Refillable water bottle
- Internal flights within Colombia, *economy seats*

Not included:

- Personal expenses
- Meals not specified and additional beverages as personally ordered
- Passport renewal or issuance
- Tips to housekeeping staff and national guide



DAY 1, Sunday, September 15, 2024
Depart for Colombia

Depart Miami for **Bogotá** today with arrival the same day. Bogotá is situated high in the Andes, and as the capital of a diverse country, truly has something for everyone.

After clearing Immigration and Customs procedures, travelers arriving on the group flight will be met by your **Guide** to transfer to your hotel for check-in. *Private transfers can be arranged for those arriving separately.*

Altitude Sickness - We recommend you check with your personal physician to see if altitude sickness medication is right for you. *Those who live at sea level, or a lower elevation should pay particular attention. Bogotá is at 8,660 feet.*

The **Hotel de la Opera** is beautifully restored, in a magnificent historical setting including onsite dining and a spa. Their 42 rooms are decorated with fine Italian-made furniture, Wi-Fi, cable TV, safe and more.

Freshen up, before venturing out for a **welcome dinner** at Santa Clara Restaurant. Located on top of Monserrate Hill, with the beautiful city of Bogotá as the main landscape, this restaurant offers visitors the opportunity to taste Colombian dishes such as the mero costeño, Tamales from Tolima, Bandeja Paisa, curd cheese with mamey sweet, or their famous barbecued chuletitas or chops. Enjoy a local beer before heading back to the hotel for the night.

Overnight: Hotel de la Opera (or similar)

Included meals: Dinner*

**Dinner will be moved to the following day as needed dependent on flight arrival times.*

📍 Bogotá, Colombia

DAY 2, Monday, September 16

Your local guide leads the way this morning as you have a visit to an **emerald workshop**. Colombia is known as the coffee country, but they have a longer history linked to what they call “green gold”. Over 60% of the world’s emeralds are originally from Colombia. The emerald tour in Bogotá begins at the main emerald trading center, guided by local professional staff with over 20 years of experience in this field you will learn about extraction, history, and the emerald trade, as well as how to recognize a genuine emerald. The goal of the tour is for you to be able to distinguish between a genuine emerald and one that is not. *You will have a chance to create a ring with your own hands if you like – additional cost.*

This afternoon professional members will have lunch and then meet with a local physician at a facility like **Hospital de La Misericordia**, one of the most renowned and largest hospitals in the city, providing a wide range of medical and healthcare services to the community and playing a significant role in the provision of healthcare services in the region.

Accompanying guests will enjoy a *culinary tour. Colombia is the second most bio-diverse country in the world. This diversity is expressed in their cuisine. They have thousands of varieties of vegetables, tubers, meats, and spices that are incorporated into local dishes. In this tour, you will have eight different foods from different Colombian regions: Amazon, Andes, Caribbean coast, Pacific coast and Orinoquia. Join your specialized guide in this delicious and cultural experience learning about the gourmet background of each region. All restaurants you visit are in Candelaria District (walking tour) for your convenience.*

Return to the hotel late this afternoon with dinner on your own arrangement.

Overnight: Hotel de la Opera (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch



📍 Bogota, Colombia

DAY 3, Tuesday, September 17

After breakfast today you will explore the **Colombian capital of Bogotá** during a **walking tour** with your national guide. The area of modern Bogotá was first populated by indigenous groups who migrated from Mesoamerica. Among these groups were the *Muisca* who settled in what are now the neighborhoods of Cundinamarca and Boyacá. With the arrival of the Spanish, the area became a major settlement, founded by Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada. The city later became the capital of the Spanish provinces and the seat of the Viceroyalty of New Granada. When independence came, Bogotá became the capital of Gran Colombia known today as the Republic of Colombia.

Explore Bogotá's **historic city center "La Candelaria"** with its impressive churches, the State Palace, and Plaza Bolívar. Your guide will explain each building's history before you head on to visit the world-famous gold museum **"Museo del Oro"**. The museum has an exhibition of jewelry and pottery from the indigenous cultures of the pre-Columbian period to present-day Colombia. It has more than 34,000 pieces and works of gold, 20,000 stone objects, ceramics, precious stones, and textiles that belonged to the Quimbaya, Calima, Tayrona, Zenú, Muisca, Tolima, Tumaco and Magdalena cultures.

Lunch will be provided today as you explore.

Completing the day visit the museum of famous **Colombian artist Botero**. In the year 2000, Fernando Botero donated an art collection of 208 pieces. 123 of these were his personal artwork and 85 from his private collection of renowned international artists.

Later this afternoon head to the airport for your flight to Armenia. Transfer on arrival to your local resort. **Mocawa Resort** is in Quindío and surrounded by the valleys and mountains of this charming region. Guest rooms have AC, LED TV, safe, iron and board, hairdryer, bathroom amenities and more.

Dinner will be provided this evening.

Overnight: Mocawa Resort (or similar)
Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



📍 Salento, Colombia

DAY 4, Wednesday, September 18

Head out this morning after breakfast for a full day tour of **Salento Town and Cocora Valley**.

Salento is the oldest municipality in Quindío; therefore, its traditional architecture and craft workshops make it an unforgettable place. Here you can see colorfully painted colonial houses, balconies full of flowers and even better, you will enjoy the warmth of its people.

Lunch will be provided this afternoon.

You will also enjoy a **hike in the Cocora Valley**, where the national tree of Colombia, the Wax Palm, is located. The palm's height is up to 70 meters, being one of the tallest in the world. Allow yourself to be amazed by all the beauty of the landscape in the walk through the trails of the valley. The hike in the valley lasts around 2 hours. You will finish the afternoon enjoying a delicious lunch and playing traditional games such as the "Tejo" or the "Rana", accompanied by a Colombian beer.

Return to the hotel late this afternoon with dinner on your own arrangement.

Overnight: Mocawa Resort (or similar)
Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch

📍 Salento, Colombia

DAY 5, Thursday, September 19

After breakfast, check out and head out for your **coffee farm tour**. Discover the important role of coffee in the cultural development of the region. Follow step by step the growth of the coffee beans from the time the seed is planted until the ripe beans are selected and harvested. Learn about the delicate process of milling the sustainable coffee grown in the region and the manual selection of the beans. Let yourself be tempted by the taste and aroma during a tasting with a barista.

Part of your visit will include a **dance performance**. Amidst lush mountain landscapes and coffee plantations, you can enjoy a performance of Bambuco, a traditional dance that embodies the joy and passion of the region's inhabitants. Dancers adorned in vibrant costumes and hats will transport you to a world of rhythm and tradition, showcasing the characteristic movements of this dance. You are welcome to join in!

Lunch will be provided this afternoon. Head to the airport late this afternoon for your flight to **Medellin**.

On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel where dinner will be provided while enjoying a local beer. **Estelar Square** is a new hotel in El Poblado, Medellin. The hotel has onsite dining, a bar, heated pool, spa, gym and more. Guest rooms have AC, iron and board, hairdryer, free Wi-Fi, 24-hour room service, desk, minibar and more.

Overnight: Estelar Square Hotel (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

📍 Medellin, Colombia

DAY 6, Friday, September 20

This morning the group will enjoy a **city tour**. Get to know the social interventions of Medellin today: its transport system, escalators, and the attitude of its people as you explore the historic city center. Experience what the people of Medellin think about the history of the city. Explore the iconic tourist sites like **Plaza Botero**, **Parque Berrío**, **Santo Domingo**, and take a **graffiti tour** in Comuna 13.



Take the metro cable up to **Santo Domingo**, which was once a notorious area of gang violence in Medellin. The cable car was constructed to make the inner city more accessible to people from the outskirts and allows visitors a glimpse into the lives of the marginalized population. At **Comuna 13** district with its unique escalators you will have a chance to observe another innovative project that improved the quality of life of the people of Medellin.

Lunch is on your own, but some snacks will be included including a Colombian coffee and *Pandebono* or *Pandeyuca*, which is a type of bread made of cassava starch and cheese typical of western Ecuador and southern Colombia.

This afternoon the professionals will enjoy a **meeting with someone from the medical community**. Medellin is one of the largest and most developed cities in Colombia, and it boasts a well-established medical infrastructure and a highly qualified medical community, with a wide range of medical services and highly skilled specialists. The medical community is dedicated to excellence in healthcare and medical research. Medicine in Medellin is an essential part of the city's life and significantly contributes to the well-being of its residents and patients from other regions.

Accompanying guests will explore Antioquia Art Museum, a cultural treasure with a varied collection that houses many works by Medellin native Fernando Botero and Pedro Nel Gómez. They have a variety of exhibitions to explore including those on permanent or temporary display. Perhaps visit their ceramics collection in the Mud Has a Voice room.

Dinner is by individual arrangement this evening.

Overnight: Estelar Square (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast & Snacks

📍 Medellin, Colombia

DAY 7, Saturday, September 21

Today you will head out on a daytrip to explore the **Santa Elena** flower region. Santa Elena region is a group of villages up in the hills (*high altitude of around 9,000 feet*). You can feel the temperature drop as you head up the hill. Halfway up, as you marvel at the orange-flowered, black-eyed creeping plant that covers every wall and cliff, you're reaching for a sweater. Cultivated flowers are the heart and soul of Santa Elena, the home of the *silletero*, the grower, who would walk the streets with huge displays of his blooms on his back.

At the center of the group is the town of Santa Elena itself, a steep little town with small shops, cafes, and a couple of restaurants where lunch will be provided this afternoon. Certain times of year you might find a cafe proprietor making a rough wooden blaze in the fireplace that many buildings have but few use. Despite being chilly due to its elevation, it never snows and is often sunny.

Your guides will show you around with some time to explore the gift shops, cafes, and parks. Halfway between Parque Arvi and Santa Elena itself is La Montaña Magica (the magic mountain), while back down in the town, opposite the little library it's a short walk, through beautiful country lanes to El Mosaico, a hotel where you can grab a hot chocolate and a piece of cake.

Dinner is on your own today.

Overnight: Estelar Square Hotel (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch



Image: *Silletero at annual flower festival*

📍 Cartagena, Colombia

DAY 8, Sunday, September 22

After an early breakfast, check out and head to the airport for your flight to **Cartagena**. Located on the shores of the Caribbean Sea, the city has colorful streets full of charm that make it the gateway to South America. It is in the north of the country and is the capital of the Bolívar region. 'La Heroica', as they call it, is surrounded by several archipelagos and islands that are paradises for true rest.

On arrival meet your local driver and head out for a **city tour of Cartagena**. The tour begins with a visit to the **Fort of San Felipe de Barajas**, the largest fortification built by the Spanish in their colonies. In a one-hour visit you will be able to appreciate this masterpiece of military architecture in coral stone and learn about the defense strategy of the city in relation to its topography. Next head to historical center to visit the **San Pedro Clavér Convent Museum**, a former Jesuit Cloister (1605) and home of the so-called "Slave of the Slaves". To finish, wander through the main squares, churches, and streets of the city. Walk over the **city walls** to have the best views of the city and to know the most important bastions.

Bring your appetite and an adventurous attitude. Hit the streets to **experience food the way Cartageneros do**. Whether you are searching for a stopover snack or something more substantial, a healthy platter or a sweet dessert, Cartagena's streets provide everything! One of the very best ways to gain an insight into the daily lives and culture of the locals is to experience their culinary culture. This 2-hour tour will get you up close and personal with the real Cartagena as the street sellers tempt you with their delicacies and warm hearts with their hospitality. Treats may include fried arepas, papas rellenas, empanadas, caribañolas and much more.

Enjoy a **Private Salsa Class** at Crazy Salsa bar. A team of dancers will teach you the steps to learn how to dance this fantastic and iconic rhythm of the Caribbean.

Dinner is on your own today.

Overnight: Hotel Ananda (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast & Foodie Tour



📍 Cartagena, Colombia

DAY 9, Monday, September 23

Head out today for a full day in **San Basilio de Palenque**. A corner of Africa in America! Benkos Bioho, a runaway slave who, accompanied by 36 other male and female slaves, hid in the area found what is now known as San Basilio de Palenque, the first slavery-free town in Colombia. Their palenquera language, traditions and rituals remained intact since they had no connection with the main road and the city and remained isolated until the seventies when the famous boxer "Kid Pambelé" placed this settlement on the map and brought with him access roads to the village.

Located an hour and a half's drive from Cartagena, this African corner, declared by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, offers to visitors a window on Afro-descendant history in Colombia and America.

Learn a little of the Palenquero dialect, history, and culture of this great town. Through craft arts such as the work of the **Spinners**, who with their strong movement prepare the corn to feed their families, and the beautiful art of weaving through the hands of artisans who tell their stories through their handicraft we get even closer to the culture.

During the workshop, attendees can learn to play the drums and experience the excitement and energy of Palenque's music. They are taught traditional rhythms and percussion patterns that are fundamental in Afro-Colombian music. They can also learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of music in the community, as drums play a vital role in local celebrations and rituals.

After exploring the village and its surroundings we will enjoy a delicious typical lunch in the palenquera way.

Meet later today as a group with a **local healer/medical person** to learn about traditional medicine in the region. Traditional healing is a deeply rooted practice within the Afro-descendant culture of this historic community. Based on ancestral wisdom passed down from generation to generation, Palenquera traditional medicine combines elements of herbalism, spirituality, and careful observation of nature to treat a wide range of physical and emotional ailments. Traditional healers, known as "Palenquero curanderos," use a combination of local medicinal herbs, spiritual rituals, and consultation with ancestral spirits to diagnose and treat conditions. The central belief is that illness can have both physical and spiritual causes, and harmonizing both is essential for healing.

Enjoy a **rum tasting** later today! Join an expert to learn about the most famous drink of the Caribbean, Rum. Walk to the bar, where a mixologist will tell you about the history and characteristics of this alcohol. This journey of flavors will take you to taste different Colombian rums, some of them cataloged as the best in the world. You will learn their secrets and discover how wide and rich the world of Rum can be and how small changes in the process give life to so many different flavors and emotions.

Head back to the hotel where dinner is on your own.

Overnight: Hotel Ananda (or similar)

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch





📍 Cartagena, Colombia

DAY 10, Tuesday, September 24

Today you will visit **Rosario Islands**, which are located approximately 1 hour by boat south-west of Cartagena. They consist of 27 islands with 20 hectares of coral reefs. Explore the impressive, beautiful landscapes of the Rosario Islands with their clear waters, gentle breezes, and maritime life such as dolphins. Today, the entire surrounding area, including the Islas de Barú and the Islas de San Bernardo, are officially protected sites.

During this day trip on Majagua Island you will have enough time to explore the beautiful nature and relax on the beach.

Lunch will be provided this afternoon before you make your return to Cartagena. Return to the hotel for some time relax and get ready for dinner.

Enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant this evening as you say goodbye. Delight your senses with flavors, aromas and colors in a romantic setting, where history, architecture and the feel of Colombian culture come together in one of Cartagena’s historic city center restaurants.

Overnight: Hotel Ananda (or similar)
Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

📍 Cartagena, Colombia

DAY 11, Wednesday, September 25

Your Colombian adventure ends today! Your guide will accompany you to the airport. We hope you have enjoyed your journey.

Included meals: Breakfast



Cartagena



Palenque



Coffee region

ITINERARY | DAY-BY-DAY

📍 Bogotá

Hotel de la Opera

Cl. 10 #5-72, La Candelaria
Bogotá, Colombia

Telephone: +57 601 3362066

<https://www.hotelopera.com.co/en>



📍 Salento

Overnight: Mocawa

Kilómetro 2.6 La Tebaida - Quindío
Salento, Colombia

Telephone: +57 300 912 4676

<https://www.hotelmocawaresort.com/>



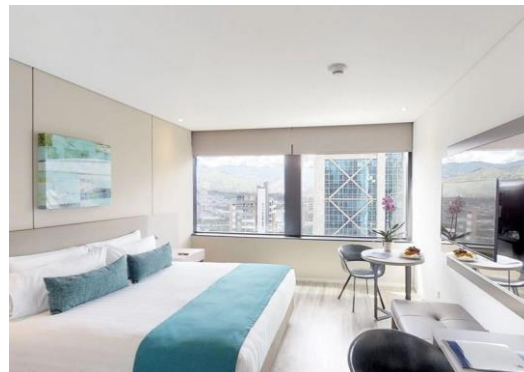
📍 Medellín

Estelar Square Hotel

Carrera 43 # 9 Sur 105
Medellín, Colombia

Telephone: + 57 604 607111

<https://en.estelarsquare.com/>



📍 Cartagena

Hotel Ananda

Cra. 5 #36 77, El Centro
Cartagena, Colombia

Telephone: +57 605 6786464

<https://www.anandahotelboutique.com/>

