

# **Colombia**

## **Country Facts**

### **The People**



#### **Nationality**

Colombian(s)

#### **Ethnic Composition**

Mestizo	58%
White	20%
Mixed (black and white)	14%
Black	4%
Amerindian-Black	3%
Amerindian	1%

#### **Religious Composition**

Roman Catholic	90%
Other and nonaffiliated	10%

#### **Languages Spoken**

Spanish

#### **Education and Literacy**

*Definition:* age 15 and over can read and write

*Total population:* 92.8%

*Male:* 92.9%

*Female:* 92.7%

#### **Labor Force**

*Total:* 20.81 million

*By occupation:*

Services	58.5%
Agriculture	22.7%
Industry	18.7%

#### **Land Mass Total**

1,138,910 sq km (439,735 sq mi)

**Note:** Includes Isla de Malpelo, Roncador Cay, Serrana Bank, and Serranilla Bank

**Land**

1,038,700 sq km (401,044 sq mi)

**Water**

100,210 sq km (38,691 sq mi)

**Land Boundaries**

*Total:* 6,309 km

*Border countries:* Brazil 1,644 km, Ecuador 590 km, Panama 225 km, Peru 1,800 km, Venezuela 2,050 km.

**Coastline**

3,208 km (1,993 mi) - Caribbean Sea 1,760 km (1,093 mi), North Pacific Ocean 1,448 km (899 mi).

**Maritime claim**

*Territorial sea:* 12 nm

*Exclusive economic zone:* 200 nm

*Continental shelf:* 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

**Climate/Weather**

Tropical along coast and eastern plains; cooler in highlands.

**Terrain**

Flat coastal lowlands, central highlands, high Andes Mountains, eastern lowland plains.

**Elevation extremes**

*Lowest point:* Pacific Ocean 0 m

*Highest point:* Pico Cristobal Colon 5,775 m

*Note:* nearby Pico Simon Bolivar also has the same elevation.

**Natural Resources**

Petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, nickel, gold, copper, emeralds, hydropower.

**Land use**

Arable land	2.01%
Permanent crops	1.37%
Other	96.62%

**Natural hazards**

Highlands subject to volcanic eruptions; occasional earthquakes; periodic droughts.

**Environment - current issues**

Deforestation; soil damage from overuse of pesticides; air pollution, especially in Bogotá, from vehicle emissions.

**Geography Note**

Only South American country with coastlines on both North Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea.

**Population**

44,379,598 (July 2007 est.)

**Age structure**

0-14 years:	29.8%	Male: 6,696,471	Female: 6,539,612
15-64 years:	64.8%	Male: 14,012,140	Female: 14,732,874
65 years and over:	5.4%	Male: 1,042,645	Female: 1,355,856

**Growth Rate**

1.433%

**Life Expectancy**

Total population: 72.27 years

Male: 68.44 years

Female: 76.24 years

**GDP Per Capita**

Purchasing power parity

US\$8,400

**Infant Mortality**

Total: 20.13 deaths/1,000 live births

Male: 23.86 deaths/1,000 live births

Female: 16.28 deaths/1,000 live births

**Sex ratio**

At birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

Under 15 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 0.95 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.77 male(s)/female

Total population: 0.96 male(s)/female

**Net migration rate**

-0.29 migrant(s)/1,000 population

**Capital and Major Cities**

Capital with population : Bogota: 7,363,494

Other important cities with population: Cali: 2,498,074; Medellin: 1,042,093; Barranquilla: 1,429,031

**Birth Rate**

20.16 births/1,000 population

**Death Rate**

5.54 deaths/1,000 population

**Economy & Trade**

Colombia's economy has experienced positive growth over the past three years despite a serious armed conflict. The economy continues to improve in part because of austere government budgets, focused efforts to reduce public debt levels, an export-oriented growth strategy, an improved security situation in the country, and high commodity prices. Ongoing economic problems facing President Uribe range from reforming the pension system to reducing high unemployment, and to achieving congressional passage of a fiscal transfers reform; furthermore, new exploration is needed to offset declining oil production. However, the government's economic policy,

democratic security strategy, and the signing of a free trade agreement with the US have engendered a growing sense of confidence in the economy, particularly within the business sector.

### **Unemployment**

11.1%

### **Inflation Rate**

4.3%

### **Exports**

US\$24.86 billion f.o.b.

### **Imports**

US\$24.33 billion f.o.b.

### **Total Trade**

Purchasing power parity

US\$366.7 billion

### **Top Export Partners**

US 41.8%, Venezuela 9.9%, Ecuador 6.3%

### **Top Import Partners**

U.S. 28.5%, Mexico 8.3%, China 7.6%, Brazil 6.5%, Venezuela 5.7%

### **Top Exports**

Petroleum, coffee, coal, nickel, emeralds, apparel, bananas, cut flowers.

### **Top Imports**

Industrial equipment, transportation equipment, consumer goods, chemicals, paper products, fuels, electricity.

### **Industries**

Textiles, food processing, oil, clothing and footwear, beverages, chemicals, cement; gold, coal, emeralds.

### **Debt - external**

US\$37.21 billion

### **Economic aid**

N/A

### **Fiscal Year:**

Calendar year

## **Business Workweek**

	<b>Monday - Friday</b>	<b>Saturday - Sunday</b>
<b>Offices</b>	8a.m. to noon and 2p.m. to 5:30 or 6p.m. Some offices and most international firms have adopted a continuous workday from 8a.m. to 5p.m.; 7:30a.m. to 4:30 or 5:30p.m. for manufacturing operations	Closed
<b>Retail</b>	9a.m. to 12:30p.m. and 2:30p.m. to 8 or 9p.m.	Saturday 9a.m. to 12:30p.m. and 2:30p.m. to 8 or 9p.m.
<b>Banks</b>	9a.m. to 3p.m. (to 3:30p.m. on Fridays)	Closed
<b>Government</b>	8a.m. to 12:30p.m. and 2p.m. to 5:30p.m.	Closed

**Note:** Firms in the warmer towns such as Cali tend to start at 7a.m. and finish earlier.

**Note:** Offices are generally open to the public only in the afternoon.

**Note:** On the last Friday of the month, banks only stay open until noon.

**Note:** Some stores are open for a few hours on Sundays. Hours in rural areas may differ significantly....

**Official Holidays**

Holidays	2005	2006	2007
New Year's Day	January 1	January 1	January 1
Epiphany	January 6	January 6	January 6
St. Joseph's Day	March 19	March 19	March 19
Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) <sup>1</sup>	March 24	April 13	April 5
Good Friday <sup>2</sup>	March 25	April 14	April 6
Easter <sup>3</sup>	March 27	April 16	April 8
Easter Monday	March 28	April 17	April 9
Labor Day	May 1	May 1	May 1
Ascension <sup>*1</sup>	May 6	May 25	May 17
Corpus Christi <sup>*2</sup>	May 26	June 15	June 7
Sacred Heart of Christ (Sagrado Corazon) <sup>*3</sup>	June 3	June 23	June 23
St. Peter and Paul	June 29	June 29	June 29
Independence Day	July 20	July 20	July 20
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	August 15	August 15	August 15
Dia de la Raza (Day of the People)	October 12	October 12	October 12
All Saints Day	November 1	November 1	November 1
Independence of Cartagena	November 11	November 11	November 11
Immaculate Conception	December 8	December 8	December 8
Christmas Day <sup>**1</sup>	December 25	December 25	December 25

<sup>1</sup> Observed the Thursday before Easter. This feast commemorates the institution of the Eucharist, and is one of the oldest rituals of Christian Holy Week. Maundy, or Holy Thursday also marks the beginning of Passover.

<sup>2</sup> Christian feast marking the anniversary of the Crucifixion of Christ, based on the Gregorian calendar.

Easter, a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the first Sunday after the full moon and the vernal equinox (fixed in the Gregorian calendar at March 21), and often observed with Good Friday and Easter Monday. In the West, Easter is predicted using the Gregorian calendar, while Eastern Orthodox Christians use the much older Julian calendar, and celebrate 13 days later. Easter coincides with Spring Break, a school holiday. Some people take the whole week before Easter off.

<sup>\*1</sup> The feast of Ascension takes place 40 days after Easter in both the Christian and Orthodox faiths and celebrates the ascent of Christ into Heaven.

<sup>\*2</sup> Western Catholic feast commemorating the Eucharist, takes place 60 days after Easter, and is typically the time when believers take their first communion.

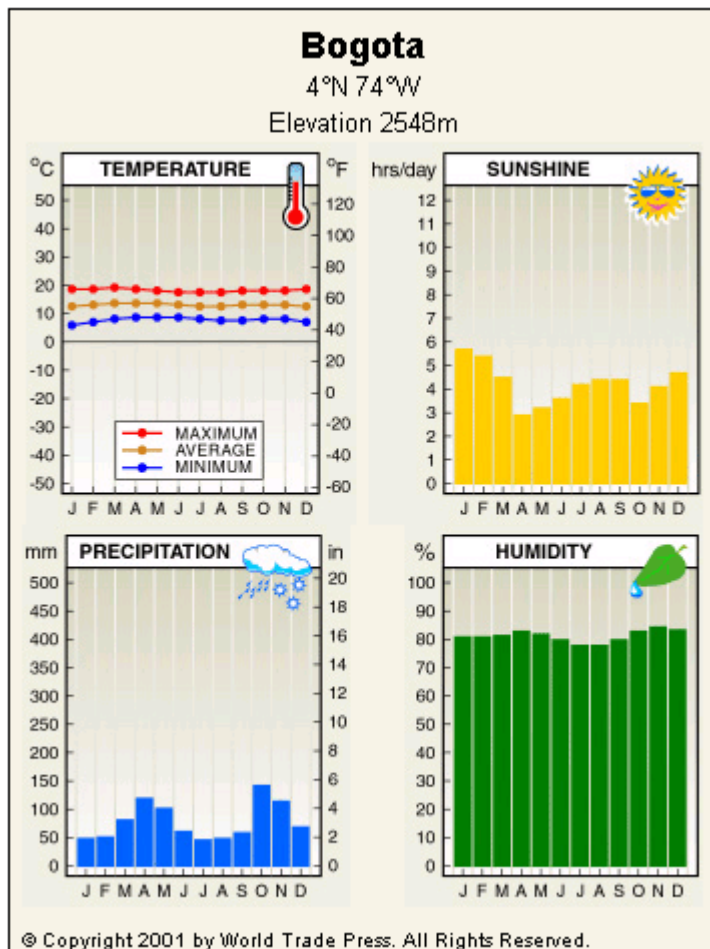
<sup>\*3</sup> Catholic observance of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, takes place in June.

<sup>\*\*1</sup> Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. In A.D.320, Pope Julius I fixed the date at December 25 based on the Gregorian calendar. The Orthodox church calculates Christmas using the Julian calendar and celebrates 13 days later on January 7.

**National Holiday**

Independence Day, 20 July (1810)

## Climate



### Seasons

The climate in Colombia, depending on altitude, varies considerably from place to place. There is little seasonal variation in temperature, but December, January, and February are the driest months. The dry season is called *verano*, and the wet season is referred to as "winter" (*invierno*).

### Regions



Weather-wise, Colombia can be divided into two areas. The coastal front and the eastern plains get extremely hot and damp. Meanwhile, the central inland region, including Bogotá, remains cool for the most part. An intermediate

climate exists in the rest of the country. Rainfall is heaviest on the west coast of the country. Bogotá has temperatures of around 20°C (68°F) in the summer, which will fall to 8°C (46°F) in the winter. Barranquilla, in the north, stays around 32°C (91°F) in the summer and 24°C (75°F) in the winter.

## Money and Banking

### Currency

Currency Name: **Columbian Peso**

Sub Currency: **Centavo**

Division: **1 Peso = 100 Centavos**

Symbol: **Col\$**

Currency Codes (ISO 4217)

Alpha: **COP**

Numeric: **170**

Denominations

Banknotes: **1000, 2000, 5000, 10000, 20000, 50000** (Pesos)

Coinage: **5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000** (Peso)

### Banknotes

Denominations: **1000, 2000, 5000, 10000, 20000, 50000** (Pesos)

Click on an image to enlarge

#### 1000 Pesos

Front (Obverse)



Issue Date: March 2005

Size: 65 x 130 mm

Color: Orange

(F) Detail: A standing crowd of people with a portrait of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in the foreground.

(B) Detail: An image of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, standing and waving, with a crowd of people and flags in the background.

Back (Reverse)





**2000 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)

**Issue Date:** 2001**Size:** 65 x 130 mm**Color:** Green

**(F) Detail:** A portrait of General Francisco de Paula Santander over a background of a river and a bird in flight.

**(B) Detail:** An image of Casa de la Moneda, Bogota.



Back (Reverse)

**5000 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)

**Size:** 70 x 140 mm**Color:** Green / Blue

**(F) Detail:** An image of poet José Asunción Silva (1865-1896) over a background of receding lines of trees. At the left, the image of a frog.

**(B) Detail:** An image of a full moon and receding line of trees, a pale female figure, monument and urn; surrounded by stylized foliage and on each side, a black feather.



Back (Reverse)

**10000 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)

**Issue Date:** 1997**Size:** 70 x 140 mm**Color:** Violet / Brown

**(F) Detail:** Portrait of Policarpa Salavarrieta (1795-1817), heroine of the Colombian independence movement.

**(B) Detail:** An historic image of the main plaza of Graduas, birthplace of Policarpa Salavarrieta.



Back (Reverse)

**20000 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)

**Issue Date:** 2001**Size:** 70 x 140 mm**Color:** Blue

**(F) Detail:** A portrait of Julio Garavito (1865-1920), astronomer, mathematician, economist, and engineer.

**(B) Detail:** An image of the earth showing weather patterns, over a background of plotted angles and constructs.



Back (Reverse)



**50000 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)

**Size:** 70 x 140 mm**Color:** Blue / Green / Orange

**(F) Detail:** A portrait of Jorge Isaacs (1837-1895), writer and politician; above him, to the left of the bill, a drawing of a woman holding a book, over a background of a winding river and mountains.

**(B) Detail:** An image of a spreading tree near a white house; above, a portrait of Jorge Isaacs with printed text.

Back (Reverse)

**Coinage**

Denominations: **5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000 (Peso)**

[Click on an image to enlarge](#)

**5 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 17.3mm**Weight:** 2.6g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Copper-Aluminum-Nickel alloy

**(F) Detail:** The Coat of Arms; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.

**(B) Detail:** The coin's value framed by laurel branches.

**10 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 19mm**Weight:** 3.3g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Copper-Nickel-Zinc alloy**(F) Detail:** The Coat of Arms; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value framed by laurel branches.**20 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** 2004**Diameter:** 17.0mm**Weight:** 2.3g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Brass**(F) Detail:** An image of a bust of Simon Bolivar (1783-1830), independence fighter; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value.**20 Pesos (old)**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 20.0mm**Weight:** 3.6g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Copper-Aluminum-Nickel alloy**(F) Detail:** The Coat of Arms; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value framed by laurel branches.

**50 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** 2003**Diameter:** 22.0mm**Weight:** 4.48g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Copper-Nickel-Zinc alloy**(F) Detail:** The Coat of Arms; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value framed by laurel branches.**100 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 23.0mm**Thickness:** 1.55mm**Weight:** 5.31g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Copper-Aluminum-Nickel alloy**(F) Detail:** The Coat of Arms; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value framed by laurel branches.**200 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** 1994**Diameter:** 24.4mm**Thickness:** 1.7mm**Weight:** 7.08g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Copper-Zinc-Nickel alloy**(F) Detail:** An image of the steering wheel of a bobbin of the Quimbaya culture.**(B) Detail:** The value of the coin; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.

**500 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Issue Date:** 1993**Diameter:** 23.5mm**Thickness:** 2.0mm**Weight:** 7.43g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Inner: Copper-Aluminum-Nickel;  
Outer: Copper-Zinc-Nickel**(F) Detail:** An image of the "Saman of Guacari" (Rain tree of Guacari); above it, "Republica de Colombia;" below, "El Arbol de Guacari."**(B) Detail:** The coin's value; the year of minting.**1000 Pesos**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 21.67mm**Thickness:** 2.76mm**Weight:** 7.3g**Shape:** Round**Material:** Copper-Aluminum-Nickel alloy**(F) Detail:** The inferior half of the coin features an image of a piece of "orfebrería Sinú," (an ornament of the Sinú culture), consisting of 3 semicircular filigree sections. The top portion of the coin is smooth.**(B) Detail:** The coin's value; "Republica de Colombia;" the year of minting.**Traveler's Checks, Credit Cards, and ATMs****Currency**

Generally, foreign exchange is offered at banks and hotels and at money exchange bureaux (*casas de cambio*) located in airports, cities, and border towns (in Bogota: on Avenida Jimenez in the surroundings of the Plazoleta del Rosario, in the Centro Internacional, and in most of the shopping malls). Visitors are warned to avoid changing money on the black market in the streets.





### ATMs

In the main towns and cities ATMs are becoming more prevalent, but use them with caution for security reasons. Withdraw money in daylight hours and be aware of your surroundings when doing so. Most high street banks in Bogotá will have ATMs inside the branch, much preferable to using one outside. ATMs can be found in major cities and are becoming more widespread by the day. In rural areas, transactions will be cash only.

Most all banks charge foreign transaction fees. Check with your bank just before departure to assess what those are as they change often. Costs to consider include: foreign exchange fees (usually a percentage of the transaction amount) and foreign ATM usage fees (US\$1 to \$5 per transaction). If you bank with a large, international bank, ATM usage fees may not apply if you use their ATMs or those of associated banks in other countries. Check with your bank before departure for ATM locations at the destination to which you plan to travel.

When using your ATM card internationally, take the following steps:

- Notify your bank that you will be using the card outside the country.
- Take bank contact numbers with you in case of problems and make sure the numbers are accessible from overseas (i.e., U.S. "800" numbers are usually not accessible from overseas).
- Ensure that your PIN number is operational; also, many foreign ATMs only accept four-digit PIN numbers
- Have a back-up card with you, or an alternative form of getting cash

**Warning:** Armed robbery and other violent crimes are common in major Colombian cities. Several recent robberies of American citizens have occurred after using ATMs on the street. In some cases, robbers have used motorcycles to approach their victims and later flee the scene. Travelers are urged to use ATMs only during daylight hours and only inside shopping malls or other protected locations. Driving to and from the location – rather than walking – provides added protection. When using an ATM, you should be on the lookout for anyone who may be watching or following you.

Robbery of people hailing taxis on the street is a particularly serious problem in Bogotá. Typically, the driver – who is one of the conspirators – will pick up the passenger, and then stop to pick up two or more armed cohorts, who enter the cab, overpower the passenger, and take his/her belongings. If the passenger has an ATM card, the perpetrators will often force the passenger to withdraw money from various ATM locations. Such ordeals can last for hours.

### Traveler's Checks

Banks have no fixed policy on exchanging cash and travellers cheques. Some provide the service, some not, and different banks can differ on this from day to day. U.S. Dollars are preferred, and in some cases the only currency accepted, for both cash and traveler's check exchanges. The dollar also garners the best exchange rate. Aside from international airports and major hotels, traveler's checks are difficult to exchange outside of Bogotá and Cartagena.

### Credit Cards

Credit cards, especially Visa, are becoming more widely accepted and are welcome at top hotels and restaurants, high-end shops, travel agencies, and car rental agencies. American Express, Visa, Diners Club, and MasterCard are accepted in most large hotels and retail outlets in the main cities.

Your credit card company translates purchases into your own currency when it appears on your credit card statement. However, be aware that most credit card companies now charge a "foreign transaction fee" for converting foreign currency into U.S. dollars—sometimes up to 2% of each purchase transaction! This could add up quickly. Read the fine print of your card disclosure paperwork or call your credit card company to verify. For details regarding merchant acceptability and other available services, you must check with your credit or debit card company.

Travelers should also notify their credit card company when they travel out of the country. Cards and the requisite funds can suddenly be frozen without any notification if credit card security notices unusual activity and flags it as

suspicious. In this case, your card will be declined if you attempt to use it, i.e., at the end of an otherwise successful business deal in a restaurant. If this does occur, notify your card company immediately, as it may take 24 hours to reinstate! Have other payment options on hand in case such an occasion does occur.

**American Express***Bogota***Expreso Viajes Y Turismo**

Calle 85 No. 20-32

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 593-4949

Fax: [57] (1) 611-3053

Web: [www.expresoviajes.com](http://www.expresoviajes.com)Email: [info@expresoviajes.com](mailto:info@expresoviajes.com)

Hours: Monday to Friday 8a.m. to 7p.m., Saturday 9a.m. to 2p.m.

*Cali***Panturismo**

Calle 18n 8n-27

Tel: [57] (2) 668-2255

Hours: Monday Friday 8a.m. to noon and 2p.m. to 6p.m., Saturday 8a.m. to 1p.m.

*Medellín***Panturismo**

Aeropuerto Jose Maria Cordoba

Local 2do Piso

Tel: [57] (4) 562-2914, 536-0550

Hours: Monday Saturday 5a.m. to 9p.m.

Additional locations may be found on the AmEx website:

[www.travel.americanexpress.com/travel/personal/resources/tso](http://www.travel.americanexpress.com/travel/personal/resources/tso)**MasterCard/Maestro/Cirrus ATM Locations***Bogota***Centro Comercial**

CL. 187 # 50-40

Bogota

**Oficina Colpatria**

CR. 7 # 70A-44

Bogota

**Supermercado**

CR. 9 # 13-02

Bogota

For other MasterCard ATM locations, see their website at:

[www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html](http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html)**Visa ATM Locations***Bogota***Servibanca**

Ave. 68 No 101-22

Bogota

Hours: 24 hours

Ave. 9 No 128-36

Bogota

Hours: 24 hours

Ave. CALLE 3 NO 31-78

Bogota

Hours: 24 hours

**Lost or Stolen Cards and Checks**

Most non-local telephone numbers are toll-free or collect; if not, the call is generally reimbursable. Inquire of your agent.

American Express Card and Traveler's Checks	(01) 800-912-3054
Diners Club	Within the country: (01) 800-011-00-56 Outside the country: [57] (1) 606-9090
MasterCard	(01) 800-912-1303 To the U.S.: [1] (636) 722-7111
Visa	(01) 800-912-5713 (Cards) For Traveler's Checks: Call England collect at [44] (20) 7937 8091, or contact Visa via fax in Peterborough, U.K.: [44] 1733-503-670 Collect to the U.S.: [1] (410) 581-9994

### Money Wiring

The following contact information is derived from listings by MoneyGram and Western Union and is not intended to be complete. Inquire of these agents, or at your hotel or bank, for reference to an agent most convenient for you.

#### **MoneyGram**

##### *Bogotá*

##### **Almacen Carulla Cedritos**

Calle 140 23 61  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 649-1005

##### **Almacen Carulla Country**

Carulla Country  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 644-2920

##### **Cambiamos**

CC HDA S Barbara L C116  
Bogota 99999  
Tel: [57] (1) 612-4447

##### **Cambiamos**

Calle 119 #13A-08  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 213-0555

##### *Cali*

##### **Bancolombia**

Carrera 100 16-24; Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 333-2371

##### *Medellín*

##### **Cambiamos**

C.C. Unicentro Millin L260; Medellin  
Tel: [57] (4) 351-4413

MoneyGram locations, see their website at: [www.moneygram.com](http://www.moneygram.com).

#### **Western Union**

##### *Bogotá*

##### **Colmena Carrera Septima**

CRA. 7 16 36 39  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (2) 685-5555

**Colmena Centro Suba**

CALLE 140 91 19 LOCAL 4 101

Bogota

Tel: [57] (2) 685-5555

**Caja Social Venecia**

Diag 45 Sur 51 55

Bogota

Tel: [57] (2) 685-5555

**Giros Y Finanzas CFC S.A.**

Transversal 7 Id Numero 25 19 Sur

Diagonal Plaza de las Americas

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 420-7587

*Cali***Giros and Divisas S.A.**

Ave. 6A No. 25 Norte 37,

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 660-2013

*Medellín***Giros and Divisas S.A.**

Carrera 50 No. 57-72

Centro Comercial Villanueva Local 241

Medellín

Tel: [57] (4) 513-7416

Western Union locations, see their website: [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com).**Banks***Bogotá***ABN-AMRO Bank**

Carrera 7, No. 115-33, Piso 16

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 287-9300

Fax: [57] (1) 592-3379

Web: [www.corporates.abnamro.com/corporates/docs/country/colombia.jsp](http://www.corporates.abnamro.com/corporates/docs/country/colombia.jsp)**Agrario de Colombia**

Cra. 8 No.15-43

Piso 13

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 594-8500

Toll Free: 018000 915000

Web: [www.bancoagrariodecolombia.gov.co](http://www.bancoagrariodecolombia.gov.co)**Alide**

Calle 16 No. 6-66 Piso 14

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 444-2491

Fax: [57] (1) 334-2459

Web: [www.alide.org.pe](http://www.alide.org.pe)**Bancafe** (Banco del Estado)

Calle 94, No. 14-13

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 256-6041

Web: [www.bancafe.com](http://www.bancafe.com)

**Banco de Bogotá**

7-47 Calle 36 Piso 3

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 332-0032

Fax: [57] (1) 332-4642

Web: [www.bancodebogota.com.co](http://www.bancodebogota.com.co)

Email: [defensoriadelcliente@bancodebogota.com.co](mailto:defensoriadelcliente@bancodebogota.com.co)

**Bancolombia**

Centro Internacional

Cra 7 No. 30A-28

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 234-6479

Web: [www.bogota-dc.com/dir/bancos.html](http://www.bogota-dc.com/dir/bancos.html)

**Banco de la Republica de Colombia**

Carrera 7, No. 14-78

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 343-1111

Fax: [57] (1) 286-1731

Web: [www.banrep.gov.co](http://www.banrep.gov.co)

Email: [wbanco@banrep.gov.co](mailto:wbanco@banrep.gov.co)

**Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (IDB)**

Ave. 40A No. 13-09 Piso 8

Apartado Aereo 12037

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 288-0366, 288-6816

Fax: [57] (1) 288-6336, 6481

Web: [www.iadb.org](http://www.iadb.org)

**Banco Mundial (World Bank)**

Diagonal 35 No. 5-98

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 320-3577

Fax: [57] (1) 245-5744

Web: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

Email: [Mlaverde@worldbank.org](mailto:Mlaverde@worldbank.org)

**Banco Popular SA**

Calle 17 7-43, Piso 3

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 339-5500

Fax: [57] (1) 282-4246

Web: [www.bancopopular.com.co](http://www.bancopopular.com.co)

Email: [vpinternacional@bancopopular.com.co](mailto:vpinternacional@bancopopular.com.co)

**Banco Santander Colombia**

Calle 12 No. 7-46

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 284-2765

Web: [www.bancosantander.com.co](http://www.bancosantander.com.co)

**BBBA (Banco Ganadero)**

Calle 72 # 10-34, L 137

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 401-0000

Web: [www.bbva.com.co](http://www.bbva.com.co)

**Citibank**

Carrera 9A, No. 99-02, P. 2

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 638-2420

Web: [www.citibank.com.co](http://www.citibank.com.co)

Web: [www.citibank.com/locations/la/co/co/co.htm](http://www.citibank.com/locations/la/co/co/co.htm) (branch locations)

**Colpatría**

Cra 15 No. 93-60

Centro

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 257-1362

Web: [www.colpatría.com.co](http://www.colpatría.com.co)

**JP Morgan**

76-49 Carrera 9, Oficina 301, Piso 3

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 326-3300

Fax: [57] (1) 326-3310

Web: [www.jpmorgan.com](http://www.jpmorgan.com)

**Lloyds Bank TSB**

Carrera 8, 15-46, Piso 3

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 286-3155

Fax: [57] (1) 281-8648

Web: [www.lloydstsbbank.com](http://www.lloydstsbbank.com)

Email: [contactenos@lloydstsbbank.com.co](mailto:contactenos@lloydstsbbank.com.co)

**Royal Bank of Canada**

Edificio Teleport Business Park

Cl 114 No. 9-01

Oficina 801

Torre A

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 629-1660

Web: [www.rbcprivatebanking.com](http://www.rbcprivatebanking.com)

**Standard Bank London Ltd.**

115-33 Carrera 7, Ofician 704

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 604-0624

Fax: [57] (1) 523-3410

Web: [www.stanbic.com](http://www.stanbic.com)

**Wachovia Bank NA**

Calle 100 Number 8A - 49

Torre B Oficina 511, World Trade Center

Santa Fe

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 611-2898

Fax: [57] (1) 218-8122

Web: [www.wachovia.com](http://www.wachovia.com)

## **Travel Essentials**

### **Visa and Passport**

<b>Passport<sup>1</sup></b>	Yes
<b>Visa<sup>2</sup></b>	Yes/No
<b>Return Ticket<sup>3</sup></b>	Yes
<b>Restrictions</b>	Yes

#### **<sup>1</sup>Passport**

A passport that is valid for six months beyond date of travel is required by all travelers.

#### **<sup>2</sup>Visas**

##### **Types of visas:**

Tourist, business

##### **\*Length of stay:**

Visas are generally valid for 90 days, with stays up to 30 days per entry, but vary according to nationality and purpose of visit. Extensions are available.

#### **1. Tourist Visa**

##### **Required for:**

- Nationals of the following countries must have a visa regardless of the purpose of their visit: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of (North) Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, São Tomé e Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovak Republic, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Vietnam, Taiwan, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- All other nationals not listed below

##### **Not required for:**

- (Stays up to 90-days):**  
Nationals of Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Dominica, East Timor, Ecuador, El Salvador, European Union countries, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Liechtenstein, Japan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Norway, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, The Philippines, Slovak Republic, San Marino, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom (except nationals of the Republic of Ireland who DO require a visa), United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

**Duration:** Visas are generally valid for 90 days, with stays up to 30 days per entry. Extensions are available.

**Required documents:** A valid passport, 2 applications, 3 passport photos, return ticket or proof of onward travel, a bank statement proving sufficient funds to cover stay, plus a fee. For further information, check with your consulate or embassy in Colombia, or contact the nearest Colombian consulate or the Embassy of Colombia in your country. Embassy of Colombia in the United States: [www.colombiaemb.org](http://www.colombiaemb.org)

**Note:** When exiting Colombia by land or air, there must be an exit stamp in your passport from the Colombian Immigration Agency (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, Jefatura de Extranjería, "DAS Extranjería"). It is advisable to get the stamp while in a major city or upon arrival at the airport, as it may be more difficult to obtain in smaller towns.

#### **2. Business Visa**

##### **Required for:**

Anyone entering and remaining in the country for business purposes.

**Duration:** Depending on reason for visit, visas are generally valid for 90 days, with stays up to 30 days per entry. Extensions are available.

**Required documents:** A valid passport, 2 applications, 3 passport photos, return ticket or proof of onward travel, a bank statement proving sufficient funds to cover stay, letter from employer attesting to financial responsibility for the duration of stay. For further information, check with your consulate or embassy in Colombia or contact the nearest Colombian consulate or the Embassy of Colombia in your country. Embassy of Colombia in the United States:

[www.colombiaemb.org](http://www.colombiaemb.org)

**Note:** When exiting Colombia by land or air, there must be an exit stamp in your passport from the Colombian Immigration Agency (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, Jefatura de Extranjeria, "DAS Extranjeria"). It is advisable to get the stamp while in a major city (or upon arrival at the airport), as it may be more difficult to obtain in smaller towns.

### **Return Ticket**

A return ticket or proof of onward travel is necessary for entry into Colombia.

### **Restrictions**

Anyone suspected of being HIV-positive will not be admitted without a waiver from a Colombian consulate.

**Note:** Cost for specific visas varies according to nationality, type of visa, and length of stay. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements and for more specific types of visas available, check with your consulate or embassy in Colombia, or contact the nearest Colombian consulate, or the Embassy of Colombia in your country. Embassy of Colombia in the United States: [www.colombiaemb.org](http://www.colombiaemb.org)

## **Immunization**

### **Vaccinations required**

None

### **Vaccinations suggested**

Hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus-diphtheria, measles, chickenpox, yellow fever

A yellow fever vaccination is recommended for all travelers who may travel outside major cities.

### **Yellow-fever-infected areas:**

The foothills of the Cordillera Oriental (both eastern and western), from the Ecuadorian frontier to the border with Venezuela, the Magdalena River middle valley, Urabá, the Sierra Nevada foothills, Amazonia, and the eastern plains (Orinoquia).

### **Duty Free**

- **Tobacco:**  
200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, and 500 g of tobacco
- **Alcohol:**  
2 bottles of wine or spirits
- **Perfume:**  
Reasonable quantity of perfume for personal use
- **Other:**  
Emeralds and articles made of gold or platinum need a receipt from the place of purchase which must be presented to customs on departure, personal electronic or camera equipment

### **Prohibited or Restricted**

#### **Prohibited**

- Narcotics
- Firearms, weapons, ammunition
- Pornographic material
- Police or military uniforms or equipment

#### **Restricted**

- Foodstuffs
  - Fresh meat, grains, fruits, vegetables
- Alcohol and tobacco products in large quantities
- Sporting guns
- Electrical appliances



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## **Departure Formalities**

Travelers leaving by plane must pay an exit tax of approximately US\$56 at the airport. Some airlines include a portion of this tax in the cost of your airline ticket; check with your airline to find out how much of the tax you will have to pay at the airport.

### **Taxi**

Tipping is customary, and it is always appreciated.

### **Porters**



Porters at hotels and airports expect about 100 pesos per piece of luggage.

### **Hotel**

A 10 to 15 percent service charge is usually included in the bill. Other moderate tips may be left for particularly helpful staff.

### **Restaurant**

A 10 to 15 percent service charge is often included in the tab. Otherwise, tip this same percentage to waiters and bartenders.

### **Other**

Chambermaids: 200 pesos per day.

Barbers, beauticians: 10 to 15 percent.

Doorpersons, attendants, and small services: 200 pesos.

Bogotá's shoeshine boys depend on their tips for survival, and expect about 300-500 pesos.

Lots of people tip the little children who juggle for drivers at traffic lights. About 500 pesos is appropriate. While this is not a necessary tip, it is greatly appreciated.

## **Emergency Information**

### **Police and Crime**



Colombia is one of the most dangerous countries in the world. Crime goes well beyond petty theft, and violence is common. Based on the Colombian government's own statistics, the murder rate of 77.5 per 100,000 inhabitants is almost 900 percent that of the United States. Narcotics and rebel guerrilla violence account for much of this, but common criminals commit an estimated 75 percent of reported murders.

Theft of hand-carried bags and travel documents is common, particularly at airports, and especially at El Dorado Airport in Bogotá. Taking irregular taxis, which are often distinguishable by a driver with a companion and nonstandard markings, is unsafe. Getting into a cab that is already conveying one or more persons is not a good idea. Travel by bus can also be dangerous. Extortion and kidnappings, particularly on rural buses, are not uncommon. Bars and nightclubs are often scenes of violence.

Drugging of tourists occurs often and is most commonly done with the drug scopolamine (burundanga). It can incapacitate its victim within a few seconds. It may be administered as liquid, spray, dust, or smoke. Drinks, cigarettes, even chewing gum may be considered dangerous if offered by strangers in public places or transport. The most frequent drugging incidents take place in bars and nightclubs, and may also occur in buses and cabs. Concentrate on your belongings and your surroundings, and do not get distracted in crowded areas.

Take basic, common sense precautions when out and about, and try to blend in with the populace. Do not walk about alone and preferably go with a Colombian native. Avoid flashy displays of wealth, and dress and behave conservatively. Leave most of your cash, traveler's checks, jewelry, and your camera in your hotel safe. Many South Americans carry "mugging" money with them, in case of such an event, and stash the rest of their necessary cash in a sock or a shoe.

Carry photocopies of your passport instead of the original. Use credit cards or traveler's checks for most of your transactions. Walk with your bag under your arm and away from the street to avoid having it snatched or cut away. Never exchange money in the street or carry a package for a stranger. Punishment for crime, especially drug trafficking and possession, is severe.

One common scam has a local who is posing as a policeman approach an obvious foreign visitor, saying he needs to "check" the visitor's currency for the possible presence of counterfeit U.S. dollars. The person hands over the money, is given a receipt, and then the "policeman" disappears.

One of the most terrifying realities is the existence of *sicarios*, Medellín's teenage assassins. Police say that there are about 2,000 of these prepubescent killers on the streets of Medellín. Typically, they are hired by the Medellín cartel, other drug dealers, and even businessmen and police to slay their rivals. Independent sources contend that there are between 5,000 and 7,000 young people living in the city who have been hired to commit murder at least once.

Terrorist and guerrilla groups often target foreign executives, especially Americans, for kidnappings and bombings. High-level executives should take necessary security precautions. If planning to travel within Colombia, check with your embassy for current travel warnings. There is no such thing as too much security in Colombia. As a note, hundreds of visitors have come and gone to the country unharmed. The basic recommendation dictates that you do not travel alone at night, or without the attendance of a Colombian native that you trust, and that you keep your wits about you during the day.

**Emergency Numbers**

Metropolitan Police	112
Tourist Police	337-4413 (Bogota only)
Medical Emergencies	125
Fire	119
Information	114
Security Police-Emergency	153

**In Cali:**

Judicial Police	889-5277
Metropolitan Police	883-9004
Civil Defense	665-5826
Fire	667-8826
Ambulance	101 or 103

U.S. Embassy (Bogota)	<b>From Bogota:</b> 315-1566 <b>From elsewhere in Colombia:</b> 09-1-315-1566 <b>From outside Colombia:</b> [57] (1) 315-1566
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## **Bogota: City View**



Bogotá is the epitome of all things Colombian--beautiful churches, futuristic architecture, and excellent museums, plus vast shantytowns, thieves, drug dealers, and terrible traffic. Fascinating but sometimes dangerous, the city bustles with noise and aggressive activity, and most visitors are not neutral; they either love it or hate it.

As capital of Colombia, the city's official name is Santa Fe de Bogotá, although no one refers to it as such.

European settlement began in 1538, but Colombia did not achieve independence until 1821, when Bogotá became the capital. Struggles for power stunted its growth until 1958; but with industrialization, the city has grown 20-fold in the last 50 years to a current population of six million. Sitting in an upland plain 2,640 meters (8,660 feet) above sea level in the Northern Andes mountains at the base of the Guadalupe and Monserrate mountains, Bogotá is laid out in a grid pattern. The city centers around three districts: Candelaria, the city's old colonial center; Centro Internacional, the financial center; and North Bogotá, the modern upscale section. The city enjoys a temperate climate year-round, with cold nights and warm days. The dry season runs from December to March, with a semidry period in July and August. Take it easy your first day, as the altitude takes getting used to.

Home to the country's tire, chemical, and pharmaceutical industries, Bogotá's chief activities are commercial. The city hosts the stock exchange and the main banks and serves as a railroad and air travel hub. Poised for moderate growth after a severe recession in 1999, the government is taking steps to keep the recovery on track, such as lowering interest rates and shoring up the financial system. Many challenges to growth remain, particularly the 20 percent unemployment and the extreme inequality in income distribution. Lack of security makes investors jittery. The city suffers from severe automobile air pollution. The transportation system is on the verge of collapse, although taxis are an excellent value; just insist that the meter be used. Bogotá is not a safe city; robbery is commonplace. Guard your luggage closely at the airport. Do not walk around at night, and only carry a small amount of money at a time. Colombia has struggled with a 40-year insurgency against the government, funded in part from the drug trade, and although visitors can consider Bogotá one of the safer areas, wandering about without identification is an arrestable offense.

The city enjoys a more vibrant and diversified cultural and artistic life than any other city in Colombia and has a number of restaurants and modern shopping areas. With everything from oppressive poverty to sparkling prosperity, Bogotá's contrasts stand out.

## **Bogota: Hotels**

### **Top-end**



#### **Casa Medina**

Carrera 7 No. 69A-22

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 217-0288

Fax: [57] (1) 249-3170

Web: [www.hotelescharleston.com/casamedina/default.php](http://www.hotelescharleston.com/casamedina/default.php)

Email: [casamedina@relaischateaux.fr](mailto:casamedina@relaischateaux.fr)

58 rooms and suites; located in new international and business center; national monument; restaurant; bar; meeting rooms (up to 60), business center (fax, copying, PCs, Internet, cell phone rental); secretarial and translation services; in-room antique furniture, 21-inch color cable TV, stereo with CD/cassette, dual phone lines; suites with fax and fireplace; 24-hour room service; laundry; babysitting; concierge; doctor on call; taxi transport; airport pickup with notification; fitness; massage, Turkish bath; sauna; pedicure, manicure on call.

#### **Hacienda Royal**

Calle 114, No. 6A-02

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 657-8900 (Reservations)

Tel: [57] (1) 657-8950

Fax: [57] (1) 657-8912

Web: [www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/home.htm](http://www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/home.htm)

Email: [haciendaroyal@hotelesroyal.com](mailto:haciendaroyal@hotelesroyal.com)

82 rooms; located near World Trade Center; restaurant; bar; conference facilities; 24-hour business center; wireless Internet in all public areas; in-room climate control, high-speed wireless Internet, dataport, alarm clock, minibar, iron/ironing board, movies, daily newspaper, radio, safe, smoke alarm, desk, sofa bed, bathrobe, hairdryer, cable TV, coffee/tea maker, desk, key card; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; non-smoking rooms; concierge; doctor; beauty salon/barber; barber; newsstand; babysitting; boutiques/shops; currency exchange; front-desk safe; security; shoe-shine service; airport transportation; free parking; fitness; sauna; massage; jogging track.

#### **Hotel Bogota Royal**

Carrera 8A 99-55

World Trade Center

Bogota 094077

Tel: [57] (1) 634-1777

Tel: [57] (1) 657-8787 (Reservations)

Fax: [57] (1) 218-3261

Web: [www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/home.htm](http://www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/home.htm)

Email: [bogotaroyal@hotelesroyal.com](mailto:bogotaroyal@hotelesroyal.com)

143 rooms and suites; downtown financial district in World Trade Center complex; restaurants; bar; meeting rooms; business center; temporary offices; translation and secretarial services; wireless Internet in all public areas; in-room Ving Card system lock, dataport, high-speed wireless Internet access, IDD phone, radio alarm clock, cable TV, hairdryer, robe, minibar, sofa bed, safe, a/c; business suites with fax machine, meeting room; room service; laundry service; concierge; security; 24-hour external and internal security; video gatekeepers; luggage storage; airport transportation; free parking; fitness club; steam bath; massage.

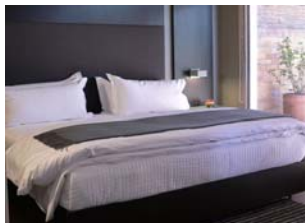


Photo: Courtesy Hoteles Charleston, S.A.

**Hotel Charleston Bogota**

Carrera 13, 85-46

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 275-1100

Fax: [57] (1) 616-0687

Web: [www.hotelescharleston.com/bogota/default.php](http://www.hotelescharleston.com/bogota/default.php)

64 rooms and suites; in walking distance of commercial district; sister hotel of Casa Medina; restaurant; conference facilities (up to 30); business center with secretarial and translating services, cellular phone rental; in-room climate control, direct-dial phone, Wi-Fi Internet access, radio/alarm, LCD cable TV with CNN, movies, minibar, hairdryer; room service; valet/laundry; concierge; babysitting; doctor on call; private car and driver for hire; airport pickup with advance notification; free parking; fitness; massage; steambath.



Photo: Courtesy Radisson Hotels

**Hotel Radisson Royal Bogota**

Calle 114 No. 9-65

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 629-5559

Fax: [57] (1) 629-5021

Web: [www.radisson.com/bogotaco](http://www.radisson.com/bogotaco)

Email: [radisson@hotelesroyal.com](mailto:radisson@hotelesroyal.com)

Business hotel located in Teleport Business park complex; 2 restaurants; bar; conference facilities (up to 250); 24-hour business center; secretarial service; wireless Internet access in public areas; cellular phone rental; in-room wireless Internet access, daily newspaper, refrigerator, minibar, alarm/clock radio, phone, speakerphone, voicemail, cable flat-screen TV, work desk with dataport, safe, hairdryer, climate control, smoke detector, sprinkler; laundry/dry cleaning service; business suites with coffee maker, sofa bed, living room, fax machine, conference table; non-smoking rooms available; medical service; currency exchange; wheelchair; advanced security system; penthouse gym with views; personal trainer; steam room; massage; indoor pool; whirlpool.

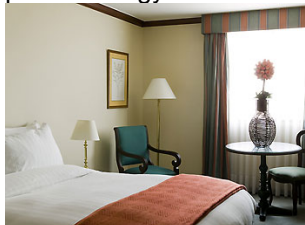


Photo: Courtesy Sofitel Hotels

**Sofitel Bogota Victoria Regia**

Carrera 13 No. 85-80

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 621-2666

National toll-free: 01-8009-10201

Fax: [57] (1) 622-0692

Web: [www.sofitel.com](http://www.sofitel.com)

99 rooms and suites; European-style boutique hotel; French restaurant; bar; conference facilities (up to 100); business center; 24-hour business services; cellular phones; secretarial service; translation services; in-room a/c, satellite/cable TV, Wi-Fi Internet access, high-speed transmission line, safe, minibar, hairdryer, smoke detector, direct-dial phone, voicemail, clock radio, fax machine on request; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; non-smoking rooms and rooms for the handicapped; doctor on call; concierge; babysitting services; travel

agency; car rental; advanced security systems; complimentary airport shuttle on request; underground parking; fitness; Turkish bath; massage; sauna; Roman pool; Jacuzzi.

### **Expensive**



#### **Bogota Plaza Summit Hotel** (a Summit Hotel)

Calle 100 No. 18-A-30

Bogotá AA90827

Tel: [57] (1) 632-2200

Fax: [57] (1) 218-4050

Web: [www.bogotaplazahotel.com/index\\_eng.html](http://www.bogotaplazahotel.com/index_eng.html)

210 renovated rooms and suites; restaurants; cafe/bar; conference facilities (up to 400); business center; secretarial service; in-room a/c, fax machine, minibar, movies, newspaper, direct-dial phone, high-speed Internet access, cable TV, VCR, voicemail, work station; 24-hour room service; laundry/valet; porter/bellhop; doctors on call; beauty salon/barber; currency exchange; gift shop; American Airlines ticket office; newsstand; shoe shine; security system; car rental; parking; fitness; sauna; steam bath; tanning chamber; Jacuzzi; golf.



Photo: Courtesy Boheme Royal.

#### **Boheme Royal**

Calle 82, No. 12-35

Santa Fe de Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 644-7100 (Reservations)

Tel: [57] (1) 644-7132

Fax: [57] (1) 618-0003

Web: [www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/](http://www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/)

Email: [bohemeroyal@hotelesroyal.com](mailto:bohemeroyal@hotelesroyal.com)

66 rooms and suites; restaurant; bar; conference facilities (up to 40); 24-hour business center; cellular phone rental; secretarial service; wireless Internet access in public areas; in-room a/c, high-speed Internet access, dataport, IDD phone, minibar, cable/remote TV, pay movies, hairdryer, daily newspaper, robe, work desk, safe, sofa bed, smoke detectors; business suites with fax machine and microwave for 15-day or longer stays; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; advanced security system; concierge services; luggage deposit; babysitters; airport transportation; valet/free parking; hotel has nearby fitness center access.

#### **Crowne Plaza Hotel Tequendama**

Carrera 10, #26-21, P.O. Box 240112

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 382-0300

Fax: [57] (1) 282-2860

Web: [www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/cp/1/en/hotel/BOGHA/whats-nearby](http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/cp/1/en/hotel/BOGHA/whats-nearby)

Email: [bogota@interconti.com](mailto:bogota@interconti.com)

543 rooms; located in the international business center; 3 restaurants, complimentary buffet breakfast; lounge; pub; casino; conference facilities (up to 1,600); business center; in-room cable/satellite TV, analog dial-up, work desk with lamp, minibar, hairdryer, 2 direct-dial phone, voicemail, speakerphone, fax/printer, robes, safe; 24-hour room service; laundry/valet; shopping arcade; travel agent; beauty salon; gift shop; concierge; health club, fitness, sauna, steam room, whirlpool.



#### **Embassy Suites Hotel Bogota-Rosales**

Calle 70, No. 6-22

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 317-1313

United States tel: 1-800-EMBASSY

Fax: [57] (1) 317-0464

Web: [http://embassysuites1.hilton.com/en\\_US/es/hotel/BOGESES-Embassy-Suites-Bogota-Rosales/index.do](http://embassysuites1.hilton.com/en_US/es/hotel/BOGESES-Embassy-Suites-Bogota-Rosales/index.do)

96 two-room suites; financial district; breakfast included; cafe; lounge; conference facilities (up to 180); VIP services; fax; modem lines; in-suite living room, bedroom, coffee maker, refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker,



work desk with lamp, cable TV, 2 phones with dataport, alarm radio, bathrobe, bath amenities, hairdryer, iron/ironing board, trouser press, wet bar, electronic locks, safe; non-smoking suites; 2 suites for handicapped; room service; laundry/valet service; non-smoking rooms; weekday newspaper; gift shop; travel agency services; concierge desk; elevators; florist; currency exchange; luggage storage; rental car; airport transportation; valet parking; gym.

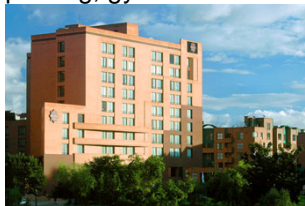


Photo: Courtesy Starwood Hotels.

#### **Four Points by Sheraton Bogota**

Avenida Eldorado 69C-80

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 210-5000

Fax: [57] (1) 210-5003

Web: [www.starwoodhotels.com/fourpoints](http://www.starwoodhotels.com/fourpoints)

Email: [reservas.sheratonbogota@ghlhoteles.com](mailto:reservas.sheratonbogota@ghlhoteles.com)

248 rooms; 2 restaurants; piano bar; conference facilities; business center; in-room climate control, TV, phone, radio/alarm clock, coffee maker, hairdryer, iron/ironing board, refrigerator; 24-hour room service; Sheraton club rooms; beauty salon; concierge; free airport transportation; free parking; indoor pool.

#### **GHL Hamilton Court**

Carrera 14 No. 81-20

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 621-5455

Fax: [57] (1) 218-8890

Web: [www.ghl.com.co/hotel.php3?id=6](http://www.ghl.com.co/hotel.php3?id=6)

41 rooms; located in the Zona Rosa; 2 meeting rooms (up to 60); business center; secretarial service; in-room minibar, safe, TV, work table, hairdryer, air conditioning, alarm clock, bathroom, coffeemaker, dataport, iron/ironing board, direct-dial phone, soundproofing; room service; laundry/valet; non-smoking rooms; 24-hour doctor on call; nursery; luggage hold; car rental desk; valet parking.



Photo: Courtesy GHL Hotels.

#### **GHL Windsor House Hotel**

Calle 95 No 9-97

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 634 3630

Tel: [57] (1) 634 3630 (Reservations)

Fax: [57] (1) 617 0993

Web: [www.ghl.com.co/hotel.php3?id=2](http://www.ghl.com.co/hotel.php3?id=2)

127 suites; boutique-style hotel; buffet breakfast; restaurant; lobby bar; conference facilities (up to 300); business center; room service; laundry service; currency exchange; fitness.

#### **Hotel Andino Royal**

Calle 85 No. 12-28

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 651 3092

Guest Switchboard: [57] (1) 651-3100

Fax: [57] (1) 651 3090

Web: [www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/andino/index.htm](http://www.hotelesroyal.com/ingles/andino/index.htm)

Email: [andinoroyal@hotelesroyal.com](mailto:andinoroyal@hotelesroyal.com)

Restaurant; bar; business center; business center; wireless Internet access in public areas; cellular phone rental; in-room high-speed Internet access, dataport, cable TV, climate control, refrigerator, IDD phone, minibar, bathrobe,



safe, hairdryer, Ving Card lock, living room, work desk, daily newspaper, robes, sofa bed, smoke detector, sprinkler; business suites with coffee maker, living room, voicemail, fax machine; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning; concierge services; babysitting; security systems; luggage hold; airport transportation; free parking; top-floor fitness room; steam bath; barber/hair stylist; massage.

**Hotel Bacata**

Calle 19 No. 5-20

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 283-8300

Fax: [57] (1) 281-7249

Web: [www.hbacata.com.co](http://www.hbacata.com.co)

Email: [bacatacomercial@tutopia.com](mailto:bacatacomercial@tutopia.com)

207 rooms and suites; located in financial center; restaurant; bar; convention and banquet facilities (up to 500); business center; Internet connection; confidential fax; secretarial service; in-room cable TV, direct-dial phone, radio, hairdryer, minibar; room service; laundry; valet; beauty salon/barber; newsstand; concierge; porter/bellhop; daily newspaper; airport transportation; parking; gym; sauna.

**Hotel de la Ville**

Calle 100, No. 13-55

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 611-8064

Tel: [57] (1) 6 500-720 (Reservations)

Fax: [57] (1) 611-1791

Web: [www.hotelesdelaville.com.co](http://www.hotelesdelaville.com.co)

Email: [ventas@hotelesdelaville.com.co](mailto:ventas@hotelesdelaville.com.co)

32 rooms; restaurant; business services, wireless Internet for meetings; cell phones and modems available; bilingual secretarial services; translators and interpreters; in-room hairdryer, safe, TV/VCR, two phone extensions, minibar, clock radio, smoke detectors; car and limo rental.

**Hotel Maria Isabel Bogota**

Ave. 33 (Calle 11), No. 15-05

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 288-0399, 287-3426

Fax: [57] (1) 288-6563

Web: [www.mariaisabel.com](http://www.mariaisabel.com)

Email: [info@mariaisabel.com](mailto:info@mariaisabel.com)

70 rooms; restaurant; bar/grill; meeting rooms; conference facilities (up to 100); banquet hall; business center; in-room direct-dial phone, Internet connection, minibar, TV, alarm radio, hairdryer; non-smoking floor; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; non-smoking floor; express check-in/out; currency exchange; florist; beauty parlor/barber shop; babysitting; concierge; airport pickup; secure parking.

**Hotel Melia Santafe**

Av. Pepe Sierra (Calle 116), No. 17-65

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 629-0029

Fax: [57] (1) 629-0039

Web: [www.meliasantafe.com](http://www.meliasantafe.com)

Email: [melia.santafe@solmelia.com](mailto:melia.santafe@solmelia.com)

53 rooms and suites; 20 minutes from city center; restaurant, breakfast buffet; meeting hall; business center; executive services; in-room satellite TV, direct-dial phone; 24-hour room service; parking.



Photo: Courtesy Hotel Estelar.

### **La Fontana Estelar**

Avenida 127, No. 21-10

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 615-4400

Toll Free: 1-866-599-8703 (U.S. and Canada)

Toll Free: 018000-514000 (Colombia)

Fax: [57] (1) 216-0449

Web: [www.hotellafontana.com](http://www.hotellafontana.com)

Email: [reservas@hotelesestelar.com](mailto:reservas@hotelesestelar.com)

193 rooms and suites; restaurant; cafe; bar; conference facilities (up to 250); business center; Internet access; secretarial service; simultaneous translation; in-room satellite TV, Internet connection; dual-line phone, voicemail, minibar, safe; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; medical facilities; 24-hour check-in/out; express check-in/out; concierge; valet; babysitter; newspapers/magazines; airport transportation; gym; massage; Jacuzzi; pool tables.

### **Park House 101**

Transversal 21 101-10

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 600-0101

Web: [www.101parkhouse.com/english/](http://www.101parkhouse.com/english/)

Email: [info@101parkhouse.com](mailto:info@101parkhouse.com)

68 suites; restaurant; business center; in-room living room, fireplace, CD player, cable TV, kitchenette, high-speed Internet access (cable or wireless), hairdryer, phone, electronic key cards; transportation service; access to Bodytech gym; sauna; Turkish bath; squash court; weekend bicycle rental.

### **Von Humboldt Grand Hotel** (formerly Holiday Inn Select)

Convention Center

Calle 74 #13-27

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 317-0566

Reservations: [57] (1) 317-0455

Fax: [57] (1) 317-1817

Email: [info@holiday-bog.com](mailto:info@holiday-bog.com)

430 rooms; restaurant; bar; auditorium, ballroom; 12 meeting and conference rooms; convention center; in-room coffeemaker; 24-hour room service; beauty parlor; travel agency; complimentary airport shuttle; fitness center.

### **Moderate**



Photo: Courtesy Abadia Colonial.

### **Abadia Colonial**

Calle 11 No. 2 -32

La Candelaria

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 341 1884

Fax: [57] (1) 342 2672

Web: [www.abadiacolonial.com](http://www.abadiacolonial.com)

Email: [abadiacolonial@gmail.com](mailto:abadiacolonial@gmail.com)

12 rooms; located in colonial center; 24-hour fax/photocopy/courier service; in-room safe, cable TV, direct-dial

phone; laundry; room for handicapped; airport transportation.

### **Dann Av 19 Hotel**

Avenida 19 No. 5-72

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 284-0100

Fax: [57] (1) 282-3108

Web: [www.hotelesdann.com/content/category/2/5/10/](http://www.hotelesdann.com/content/category/2/5/10/)

Email: [centralreservas@hotelesdann.com](mailto:centralreservas@hotelesdann.com)

144 rooms; located downtown; conference facilities (up to 120); fax facilities; secretarial service; in-room air conditioning, satellite TV, direct-dial phone, alarm clock/radio, minibar, safe, smoke alarm; room service; laundry/valet service; concierge; doctor; beauty salon; florist; porter/bellhop; airport transfer. (**Note** : Dann Hotels also runs the the Dann Norte Hotel in Bogota; see their website for details)

### **GHL Comfort Belvedere**

Carrera 17 A No. 100-16

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 257-7700

Fax: [57] (1) 610-2468

Web: [www.ghlhoteles.com/hotel.php3?id=5](http://www.ghlhoteles.com/hotel.php3?id=5)

39 rooms; restaurant; bar/lounge; conference facilities (up to 50); dataport; fax service; in-room direct-dial phone, satellite TV, radio, minibar; laundry/valet; safe box; concierge desk; luggage hold.

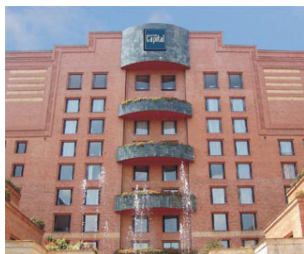


Photo: Courtesy GHL Hotels.

### **Hotel Capital (former Forte Travelodge Hotel Capital)**

Avenida El Dorado No. 69A 51

Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 423-3000

Tel: [57] (1) 423-3001 (Reservations)

Fax: [57] (1) 423-3003

Web: [www.ghl.com.co/hotel.php3?id=3](http://www.ghl.com.co/hotel.php3?id=3)

215 rooms; 2 restaurants; lobby bar; meeting rooms (up to 250); business center; secretarial service; in-room a/c, phone, color TV, bathroom, direct-dial phone, hairdryer on request, key cards; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning; non-smoking rooms available; 24-hour physician on call; tour desk; luggage hold; airport shuttle; fitness; massage; sauna; Jacuzzi; squash.



Photo: Courtesy Hotel de la Opera.

### **Hotel de la Opera**

Calle 10 No. 5-72, La Candelaria

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 336-2066, 336 5285

Web: [www.hotelopera.com.co](http://www.hotelopera.com.co)

Email: [sales@hotelopera.com.co](mailto:sales@hotelopera.com.co)

29 rooms;

Halifax Hotel

Calle 93, No. 15-93

**Bogotá**

Tel: [57] (1) 622-5521, 616-3098

Fax: [57] (1) 610-9754

Web: [www.orquidea.com/halifax](http://www.orquidea.com/halifax)Email: [halifax@orquidea.com](mailto:halifax@orquidea.com)

20 rooms; dining room; self-service breakfast; living room with fireplace; computer with Internet connection; in-room bathroom, desk, phone, cable TV; self-service laundry room; garden; courtyard.

**Hotel Santa Monica**

Carrera 3a No 24-11 Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 336 8080, 336 3601

Mobil: 300 386-8497

Web: <http://hotel-santamonica.com/>

35 rooms; located in international city center in quiet area; restaurant; lounge; in-room minibar, phone, radio, cable TV, soundproofing; maid service; laundry/valet; elevators; luggage hold; airport transportation for a charge.

**La Casona del Patio Amarillo**

Carrera 8, No. 69-24

**Bogotá**

14 rooms; courtyard hotel; computer with Internet access; free wireless Internet with your own computer; in-room desk, cable TV, small closet;

**Suites Travelers**

Diag. 127 A no. 20-36, Apt. 120

**Bogotá**

Tel: [57] (1) 216-9843

Fax: [57] (1) 274-8775

Web: [www.travelers.com.co](http://www.travelers.com.co)Email: [traveler@colomsat.net.co](mailto:traveler@colomsat.net.co)

Two-bedroom apartments; meeting facilities; fax/photocopy/email services; in-room bathroom, living and dining room, kitchen, direct-dial phone; laundry/dry cleaning; safe boxes; 24-hour reception; concierge; security department; currency exchange; underground parking; gym; sauna; daily and monthly rates.

## **Bogota: Restaurants**

**Note:** Use country code [57] when dialing from outside Colombia.

**Carbon de Palo**      \$\$

Grill

Av. 19, No. 106-12

Tel: (1) 214-0450

Lunch and dinner for the business set.

**Casa Brava**      \$\$\$

Steakhouse

V'a La Calera, Km 4.5; view.



**Casa Vieja**      \$\$

Traditional Bogota fare

Av. Jimenez 3-73 in old town

C116, No 20-50 in North Bogota.

**Cordon Bleu**      \$\$\$

French

Casa Medina Hotel, Carrera 7, No. 69A-22

Tel: (1) 217-0288

Old-world atmosphere.

**El Patio**      \$\$

Italian

Carrera 4A, No. 27-86

Tel: (1) 282-6141

Closed Sunday.

**Friday's**      \$\$

American

C 82, No. 12-18.

**Hatsuhana**      \$\$

Japanese

Cra 13, No. 93A-27.



**Houston's**

Mexican

Carrera 17 No. 93-17

Tel: (1) 236-5417

**La Cava**      \$\$\$

French

In the Sofitel Victoria Regia Hotel, Carrera 13, No. 85-80

Tel: (1) 621-2666

**La Fragata** \$\$\$

International

12th Floor in World Trade Center, Calle 100, No. 8A-55

Revolving restaurant.

**L'Epicurien** \$\$

French

Cra 30, No. 89-56.

**Restaurant SEAP** \$\$

Colombian

Av. 19, No. 106-12

Tel: (1) 214-0450

Lunch only; political and executive establishment.

**Tierra Colombiana** \$\$\$

Colombian

Cra 10, No. 27-27

Floor show.

**Toy Wan** \$\$

Chinese

Calle 100 No. 13-83

Tel: (1) 218-0483, (1) 611-3253

## **Security Briefing**

### **Street and Organized Crime**

Violence has continued to decrease markedly in most urban areas, including Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, and Cartagena. The level of violence in Cali, Buenaventura, and the surrounding areas remains high, largely as a result of the illicit drug trade. Many rural areas of Colombia remain extremely dangerous due to the presence of narcoterrorists and Colombian government operations against them.

Terrorist groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other criminal organizations, continue to kidnap civilians for ransom or as political bargaining chips. No one can be considered immune from kidnapping on the basis of occupation, nationality, or other factors. The FARC have held three American official contractors hostage since February 2003.

U.S. government officials and their families in Colombia are permitted to travel to major cities in the country, but only by air. They are not allowed to use inter- or intra-city bus transportation. They also are not permitted to travel by road outside of urban areas at night. All visitors to Colombia are urged to follow these precautions.

Exercise caution, especially after dark, in the Zona Rosa and Parque 93 districts of Bogotá. Violence occurs frequently in bars and nightclubs. Major airports, especially El Dorado Airport in Bogotá are also target areas for theft of hand luggage and travel documents.

You should avoid, where possible, hailing taxis on the street but should book them through hotels or by phoning a reputable taxi company. Taking illegal taxis, which are sometimes characterized by a driver and a companion and irregular markings, is risky. Getting into a taxi that already has passengers is not advisable.

Avoid entering deprived areas of all Colombian cities. In Bogotá, you should be vigilant in areas to the south of Candelaria and to the west of the airport road, as these parts of the city are particularly dangerous. Homicide rates in the city of Cali are especially high. You should be cautious on city streets, especially after dark. You should be particularly vigilant when taking money out of cash dispensers.

Incidents of "quickie kidnappings" are becoming more frequent. Victims are usually picked up from the street and forced to withdraw funds from various bank machines (ATMs). Uncooperative victims have been injured. There have also been reports of individuals misrepresenting themselves as police officers approaching foreigners to "check" documents or foreign currency in order to rob them.

Another common scam is an approach to an obvious tourist by an alleged "policeman," who says he wants to "check" the foreigner's money for counterfeit U.S. dollars. The person gives the criminal money, receives a receipt, and the "policeman" disappears.

Criminals sometimes use the drug scopolamine to incapacitate travellers in order to rob them. The drug is administered through drinks, food, aerosols, cigarettes, gum, or in powder form. (Travelers are approached by someone asking directions; the drug is concealed in a piece of paper and can be blown into the victim's face.) The drug disorients the victim and can cause prolonged unconsciousness and serious medical problems. It takes effect extremely quickly and can take several days to wear off.

Colombia has one of the highest kidnapping rates in the world, and while this is primarily aimed at other Colombians, foreigners can be targeted. Foreigners working in rural areas have been kidnapped. Those intending to work in Colombia should carefully consider the risks. Persons working for, or perceived to be working for, oil and mining companies have been especially targeted for kidnapping by both of Colombia's principal guerrilla groups, the ELN and the FARC.

### **Organized Crime**

Colombia is an illicit producer of coca, opium poppy, and cannabis. It is the world's leading coca cultivator, and the world's largest producer of coca derivatives. It supplies cocaine to most of the U.S. market and the great majority of other international drug markets. In 2005, aerial eradication dispensed herbicide to treat over 130,000 hectares, but aggressive replanting by coca growers means Colombia remains a key producer. In addition, a significant portion of non-U.S. narcotics proceeds are either laundered or invested in Colombia through the black market peso exchange. Colombia is also an important supplier of heroin to the U.S. market. Colombia's National Police report that its drug cartels now have dealings with Russian mafia groups and Eastern European crime groups.

### **Social Unrest and Cultural Conflicts**

Narcotics traffickers, paramilitary groups, guerrilla and terrorist organizations, armed forces, and right-wing vigilante groups help ensure Colombia still has the highest death rate in Latin America. Murder is the major cause of death for men between the ages of 15 and 45. Violence resulted in 250,000 deaths in the 1990s. In addition to deaths due to guerrilla warfare, 10% of homicides have been politically motivated. The security situation in Colombia is

volatile. Violence by widespread and increasing. Travel by road outside the major cities is especially dangerous because of guerrilla activity in rural areas.

Some terrorist groups have targeted foreigners, multinational companies, and other foreign interests, and this pattern is expected to continue in the future. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the National Liberation Army (ELN) have kidnapped U.S. citizens on a number of occasions. Three U.S. citizens kidnapped by the FARC were murdered in March 1999. Random bombings have occurred in and around major urban areas.

In 2000, the U.S. unveiled Plan Colombia, a massive military support program for the Colombian armed forces. Although portrayed as the latest phase of the war on drugs, the program is clearly directed at destroying the FARC and its allies. In May 2002, President Alvaro Uribe was elected, favoring all-out war against the left. He was reelected in 2006. However, in July 2007, the government admitted that drug cartel and FARC members had infiltrated government security forces by bribing officials.

## **Travel Warnings**

### **June 04, 2007**

This Travel Warning updates ongoing security concerns in Colombia and reminds American citizens of those concerns. This supersedes the Travel Warning issued January 18, 2006.

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the dangers of travel to Colombia. Violence by narcoterrorist groups and other criminals continues to affect all parts of the country, urban and rural.

Violence has continued to decrease markedly in most urban areas, including Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, and Cartagena. The level of violence in Cali, Buenaventura, and the surrounding areas remains high, largely as a result of the illicit drug trade. Many rural areas of Colombia remain extremely dangerous due to the presence of narcoterrorists and Colombian government operations against them.

Terrorist groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other criminal organizations, continue to kidnap civilians for ransom or as political bargaining chips. No one can be considered immune from kidnapping on the basis of occupation, nationality, or other factors. The FARC have held three American official contractors hostage since February 2003. Although the U.S. government places the highest priority on the safe recovery of kidnapped Americans, it is U.S. policy not to make concessions to or strike deals with kidnappers. Consequently, the U.S. government's ability to assist kidnapping victims is limited.

U.S. government officials and their families in Colombia are permitted to travel to major cities in the country, but only by air. They are not allowed to use inter- or intra-city bus transportation. They also are not permitted to travel by road outside of urban areas at night. All Americans in Colombia are urged to follow these precautions.

As the Department develops information on potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threats through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. U.S. citizens should consult warden messages for Colombia at <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwsc093.shtml>, as well as the Department of State's Consular Information Sheet for Colombia and Worldwide Caution Public Announcement at <http://travel.state.gov>. U.S. travelers can also get up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 in the U.S. or Canada or on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.

### **January 18, 2006**

This Travel Warning updates ongoing security concerns in Colombia and reminds travelers of those concerns. This supersedes the Travel Warning issued May 4, 2005.

The Department of State warns travelers of the dangers of travel to Colombia. Violence by narcoterrorist groups and other criminal elements continues to affect all parts of the country, urban and rural, including border areas. Foreigners continue to be victims of threats, kidnappings, and other criminal acts.

Violence in recent years has decreased markedly in most urban areas, including Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, and Cartagena. The level of violence in Cali and its surrounding areas remains high, largely as a result of the illicit drug trade. Many rural portions of Colombia also remain extremely dangerous due to the presence of narcoterrorists and Colombian government operations against them.

At least five Americans were kidnapped in 2004, and at least one in 2005. No one can be considered immune from kidnapping on the basis of occupation, nationality, or other factors. Terrorist groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other criminal organizations, continue to kidnap civilians for ransom or as political bargaining chips. The FARC have held three American official contractors hostage since February 2003. Although the U.S. government places the highest priority on the safe recovery of kidnapped Americans, it is U.S. policy not to make concessions to or strike deals with kidnappers. Consequently, the U.S. government's ability to assist kidnapping victims is limited.

Official Americans and their families are permitted to travel to major cities, but only by air, and may not use inter- or



intra-city bus transportation. They also are not permitted to travel by road outside of urban areas at night. All Americans in Colombia are urged to follow these precautions.

As the Department develops information on potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threats through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. U.S. citizens should consult Warden messages for Colombia at <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwsc093.shtml>, as well as the Department of State's [Consular Information Sheet](#) for Colombia and [Worldwide Caution Public Announcement](#) at <http://travel.state.gov>. Travelers can also get up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 in the U.S. or Canada or on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.

#### **October 13, 2004**

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens against travel to Colombia. Terrorist and criminal violence by narcotics traffickers, guerrillas, illegal self-defense (paramilitary) groups and other criminal elements continues to affect all parts of the country, urban and rural. Foreigners continue to be the victims of threats, kidnappings, domestic airline hijackings and murders. Threats targeting official and long-term resident Americans are expected to continue and possibly increase in response to U.S. support for Colombian drug eradication programs. Colombian groups have been known to operate in the border areas of neighboring countries, creating similar dangers for travelers in those areas.

Travel to Choco, Putumayo, Meta, and Caqueta departments as well as to rural areas of Antioquia, Cauca, Narino, and Norte de Santander departments is especially discouraged because of high risk to personal safety. Foreigners must seek permission to enter 27 special zones designated "Zones of Rehabilitation and Consolidation" by the government that took office in 2002. For the 24 zones in Bolivar and Sucre, travelers must seek permission from the Ministry of the Interior. For the 3 zones in the Arauca department, travelers should seek permission from the Governor of Arauca. Of all 27 zones, only the provincial capitals of Sincelejo (in Sucre) and Arauca (in Arauca) are accessible by air.

Tourists and business visitors can still travel to major cities and business centers in Colombia including Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla, Bogota, Bucaramanga, and Cartagena using sensible precautions. Travel to and from the country by air only and avoid land borders. Aircraft at secondary airports, however, have experienced hijackings due to lesser security standards than those at the major city airports.

Please note that on occasion, the Government of Colombia has declared a modified state of emergency. During these times, foreigners may find their movements or civil liberties restricted due to curfews, registration requirements, or other security-related measures. Travelers are advised to be alert to changes in the emergency status. Bombings have occurred throughout Colombia, including attacks on civilian targets in urban areas, and some foreign interests have been among the targets. The latest bomb attack in Bogota occurred on February 7, 2003.

## **Health and Medical**

### **Health Notes**

#### **General Conditions**

In Colombia, most good hotels have an in-house doctor or access to one. Otherwise, contact your embassy or consulate. Both doctors and hospitals will often demand immediate cash payment. All travelers should acquire a travel insurance package for health services, including an evacuation policy. Most illnesses are preventable either through vaccination, or by taking the necessary precautions against infection. All travelers should visit either a travel health clinic or their personal physician four to eight weeks before departure for regular vaccinations and any specific medications needed for travel.

#### **Vaccinations**

**Required:** none

**Suggested:** Hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus-diphtheria, measles, chickenpox, yellow fever (a yellow fever vaccination is recommended for all travelers who may travel outside major cities.)

#### **Immediate Concerns**

- **Health risks**

Malaria, travelers' diarrhea, altitude sickness, and exposure to: Dengue Fever, bartonellosis (Oroya Fever), louse-borne typhus, tick-borne relapsing fever, Venezuelan and Eastern equine encephalitis, Mayaro virus disease, cutaneous, mucocutaneous and visceral leishmaniasis, Brucellosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, fascioliasis, onchocerciasis, paragonimiasis, coccidioidomycosis

- **Food and Water**

Do not drink tap water unless boiled or chemically treated, and avoid drinking anything with ice in it; avoid fruits and vegetables unless they can be peeled or are pre-cooked; and stay away from un-pasteurized dairy products, including ice cream. Do not eat raw or undercooked meat or fish, it may contain harmful poisons or parasites.

- **Insects**

Ticks, fleas, and mosquitoes are the most common cause of insect-borne diseases.

#### **Medical Precautions**

It is important for all travelers to bring medications for malaria and travelers' diarrhea, along with a personal medical kit complete with necessary medications, including syringes and a physician's letter documenting their medical usage. This kit should include extra pairs of contact lenses and glasses, as well as any specific medications for travelers' diarrhea, allergies, motion sickness, or other over-the-counter medication, as supplies are often limited and expensive.

Insect repellents are also recommended in conjunction with other measures to prevent insect bites, such as protective clothing, bed-netting, and DEET-based repellent. For additional protection, apply permethrin-containing compounds to clothing, shoes, and bed nets. Avoid contact with stray animals, especially farm animals. If bitten, clean wound thoroughly with soap and water, and seek medical attention immediately.

HIV/AIDS is present. Use condoms for all sexual encounters, and avoid blood transfusions or injections.

#### **Women's Health Issues**

Women should pack a personal medical kit to cover a broad range of personal health requirements, including birth control pills and specific medications. Note that differences in climate can cause changes in a woman's pH balance. If prone to bacterial infections, women should pack any necessary supplies to counteract this problem. Women should also consider taking extra vitamin, mineral, and food supplements to ensure optimum physical health. See Women's Health Issues.

### **Medical Care**

#### **Bogota**

##### *Hospitals and Clinics*

##### **Clínica Barraquer**

av. (Calle) 100 #18A – 51

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 218 7077

Fax: [57] (1) 610 4406

Web: [www.barraquer.com.co](http://www.barraquer.com.co)

Email: [contactenos@barraquer.com.co](mailto:contactenos@barraquer.com.co)

**Clínica Bochica**

Calle 69 #14-29

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 211 3365

Fax: [57] (1) 211 0585

**Clinica De Maternidad David Restrepo**

Carrera 9 #61 06

P. O. Box 3487070

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 348 7063

Web: [www.clinicadavidrestrepo.com](http://www.clinicadavidrestrepo.com)

Email: [informacion@clinicadavidrestrepo.com](mailto:informacion@clinicadavidrestrepo.com)

**Clinica de Marly**

Calle 50 #9-67

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 343 6600

Web: [www.marly.com.co](http://www.marly.com.co)

Email: [atncliente@marly.com.co](mailto:atncliente@marly.com.co)

**Clinica Del Country**

Carrera 16 #82-57

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 530 0470

Tel: [57] (1) 530 1270

Tel: [57] (1) 530 1720

Fax: [57] (1) 413 8359

Web: [www.clinicadelcountry.com](http://www.clinicadelcountry.com)

**Clinica El Bosque S.A.**

Atencion al Usuario

Calle 134 #12-55

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 274 0577

Fax: [57] (1) 614 6969

Web: <http://clibosque.tripod.com>

Email: [sugerencias@clinicaelbosque.com.co](mailto:sugerencias@clinicaelbosque.com.co)

**Clínica Reinoso**

Carrera 14 # 104-10

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 214 8871

Tel: [57] (1) 629 8059

Web: [www.clinicareinoso.com](http://www.clinicareinoso.com)

Email: [info@clinicareinoso.com](mailto:info@clinicareinoso.com)

**Fundación Abood Shaio**

Diagonal 110 #53-67

Apartado Aéreo 85369

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 624 3211

Tel: [57] (1) 624 5399

Fax: [57] (1) 271 4950

Web: [www.shaio.com](http://www.shaio.com)

Email: [info@shaio.com](mailto:info@shaio.com)

**Fundación Cardio Infantil**

Calle 163 A #28 – 60

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 667 2727

Fax: [57] (1) 667 2828

Web: [www.cardioinfantil.org](http://www.cardioinfantil.org)Email: [coord.sistemas@cardioinfantil.org](mailto:coord.sistemas@cardioinfantil.org)**Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá**

Calle 119 #9 - 33

A.A. 110246

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 603 0303 (Ext 376)

Fax: [57] (1) 619 6317

Web: [www.fsfb.org.co](http://www.fsfb.org.co)Email: [arritmias@fsfb.org.co](mailto:arritmias@fsfb.org.co)*Pharmacies***Acuña**

Cl.19 #10-50 Piso 3

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 336 6611

Fax: [57] (1) 243 7314

**CAFAM**

Cr.19 #153-62

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 674 3138

Tel: [57] (1) 674 2938

**Drogas El Condor**

Cl.161 #37A-06

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 670 3192

Tel: [57] (1) 673 0277

**Drogas La Rebaja**

Cr. 100 # 25-96

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 298 6510

Tel: [57] (1) 418 0789

**Drogeria Rosas**

Cr.24 #67-00

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 345 7184

Tel: [57] (1) 249 1597

**Dromayor Bogotá S.A.**

Cl.19 #68D -72

Bogota

Fax: (57-1) 411 1543

Email: [dromabt@impsat.net.co](mailto:dromabt@impsat.net.co)**Febor**

Tr. 41 # 42-21

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 221 2751

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*Dentists***Becerra Diaz Marlon**

Calle 91 #15-15  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 236 3294  
Tel: [57] (1) 621 7179  
Tel: [57] (1) 621 7168  
Email: [publicidadued@gmail.com](mailto:publicidadued@gmail.com)

**Becerra G. Camilo A**

Calle 134 #13-83 Consultorio 806  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 626 7868  
Tel: [57] (1) 520 0108  
Email: [cbecerra@cable.net.co](mailto:cbecerra@cable.net.co)

**Breton Juan Manuel**

Carrera 13 A #89-38 Consultorio 530  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 618 0228  
Tel: [57] (1) 618 5705  
Tel: [57] (1) 618 5152  
Email: [jumabre@yahoo.com](mailto:jumabre@yahoo.com)

**Caipa R. Juan Carlos**

Carrera 15 #79-36 Consultorio 201  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 236 8218  
Tel: [57] (1) 236 2696  
Email: [jcarlozcaipa11@yahoo.com](mailto:jcarlozcaipa11@yahoo.com)

**Dr Pedro Díaz, DDS**

Calle 135 N 14 – 41  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 258 4479  
Web: [www.implantesycoronas.web.com.co](http://www.implantesycoronas.web.com.co)  
Email: [citas@implantesycoronas.web.com.co](mailto:citas@implantesycoronas.web.com.co)

**Cali***Hospitals and Clinics***Centro Medico Imbanaco**

Carrera 38A #5A - 100  
Cali

**Clinica Bautista**

Carrera 38 con calle 71 esquina  
Barranquilla  
Cali

**Clinica Centri Imbanco**

Carrera 38 N. 5A-100  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 558 8355  
Fax: [57] (2) 558 5783

**Clinica De Occidente**

Calle 18 #534  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 660 3000

**Clínica La argeranza**

Calle 9 #44-05  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 552 752  
Fax: [57] (2) 553 2747

**Clinica Nuestra Senora de los Remedios**

Avenida 2 Norte #24 – 157  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 608 1000  
Tel: [57] (2) 608 1001  
Tel: [57] (2) 668 2855 (emergency)  
Fax: [57] (2) 667 2787  
Email: [clirem@colnet.com.co](mailto:clirem@colnet.com.co)

**Clínica Versalles**

Ave. 5A Norte #23-45  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 668 2036

**Hospital Universitario Evaristo Garcia**

Calle 5, #36-08  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 556 1131  
Tel: [57] (2) 556 1444

**Fundacion Valle del Lili**

Carrera 98 # 18-49 Aut  
Simon Bolivar  
Cali

*Pharmacies***Comfandi**

Ave. 3 Norte #51N-24  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 665 5238  
Tel: [57] (2) 666 1052

**Drogas La Rebaja**

Cl. 5 #35-40  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 889 2524  
Tel: [57] (2) 882 1350  
Tel: [57] (2) 557 1000

**Drogueria Brisas De Guadalupe**

Cr. 56 #7-30  
Cali  
Tel: [57] (2) 551 1212  
Tel: [57] (2) 551 3636

**Drogueria Cauquita**

Cr. 28 F #72u-74  
Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 437 0719

Tel: [57] (2) 448 3270

Tel: [57] (2) 448 3162

**Droguerías Brisas Del Lili**

Cr. 100 #16-174

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 332 1178

**Farmacia San Jorge**

Cr. 2 #14-34

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 880 1216

Tel: [57] (2) 881 1191

Tel: [57] (2) 514 1543

Email: [sanjorge@col2.telecom.com.co](mailto:sanjorge@col2.telecom.com.co)

**Servidrogas**

Dg. 23 #16A-05

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 881 0922

Tel: [57] (2) 885 1691

**Unidrogas De Occidente**

Cr. 6 #11-32 ( Centro )

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 880 6841

**Medellin***Hospitals and Clinics***Centro de Ortopedia El Poblado**

Cr. 41 #9-05

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 266 2027

Fax: [57] (4) 266 2128

**Clinica de Fracturas Medellín**

Carrera 45, #53-38

Medellín

Tel: [57] (4) 514-1516

Email: [clinifract@dpm.net.co](mailto:clinifract@dpm.net.co)

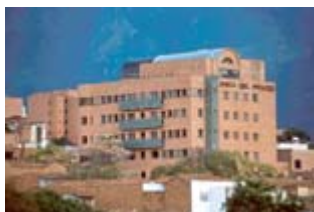
**Clínica Conquistadores**

Carrera 65 #34A-16

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 350 4200

Fax: [57] (4) 235 1302

**Clinica del Prado**

Carrera 50 A No. 64-42

Medellín

Tel: [57] (4) 211-4545, 263-2211

Fax: [57] (4) 576-5713

Gynecology and obstetrics 24 hours; neo-natal care; mammograms; laboratory; pathology; pediatrics.



**Clinica El Rosario**

Carrera 41 # 62 - 5 Apartado 4397

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 295 9000

Fax: [57] (4) 284 5622

Web: [www.clinicaelrosario.com](http://www.clinicaelrosario.com)Email: [clinicaelrosario@clinicaelrosario.com](mailto:clinicaelrosario@clinicaelrosario.com)**Clinica Las Américas**

Diagonal 75 B #2 A 120 oficina 309

Centro Comercial Plazoleta Las Américas

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 341 6060

Fax: [57] (4) 341 0504

Web: [www.pmamericas.com](http://www.pmamericas.com)Email: [info@pmamericas.com](mailto:info@pmamericas.com)**Clinica Las Vegas** Avenida Las Vegas

Calle 2 Sur #46-55

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 315 9000

Fax: [57] (4) 311 1713

Web: [www.clinicalasvegas.com](http://www.clinicalasvegas.com)Email: [serviciosapoyo@clinicalasvegas.com](mailto:serviciosapoyo@clinicalasvegas.com)**Clinica Medellin**

Sede Centro

Calle 53, #46-38

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 444 1555

Fax: [57] (4) 514 0554

Web: [www.clinicamedellin.com.co](http://www.clinicamedellin.com.co)Email: [info@clinicamedellin.com](mailto:info@clinicamedellin.com)**Clinica Oftalmologica de Antioquia SA**

Calle 57 #46-25

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 513-3531

**Clínica Universitaria Bolivariana**

Carrera 72A #78B – 50

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 445 5900

Web: [www.upb.edu.co](http://www.upb.edu.co)Email: [clinica@upb.edu.co](mailto:clinica@upb.edu.co)**Hospital Pablo Tobon Uribe**

Calle 78B #69 - 240

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 441 5252

Fax: [57] (4) 441 1440

Web: [www.hptu.org.co](http://www.hptu.org.co)Email: [hptu@hptu.org.co](mailto:hptu@hptu.org.co)**Las Vegas Clinica**[Avenida Las Vegas](#)[Calle 2 Sur No. 46-55](#)[Tel: \[57\] \(4\) 311-1000](#)[Emergency: \[57\] \(4\) 315-9588](#)

[Web: www.paginasmarillas.com/clivegas.htm](http://www.paginasmarillas.com/clivegas.htm)

[Email: Clivegas@epm.net.co](mailto:Clivegas@epm.net.co)

[24-hour emergency care, maternity unit, diagnostic, surgery, 24-hour lab.](#)

*Pharmacies*

**Central de Drogas**

Cra.74 53-145

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 260 3790

**Distribuidora Pasteur S.A.**

Cl.49 57-35

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 511 3202

**Drogas Al Kosto**

Cra.74 #53-145

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 260 7050

**Drogas Alejandra**

Cl.35 76-17

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 411 0018

**Drogas Calidad**

Caracas #47-29 (Parque Bolívar)

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 251 6156

Tel: [57] (4) 513 5036

Fax: [57] (4) 513 5036

**Drogas Cóndor**

Cra.52 #49-89 (Colombia con Carabobo)

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 231 4382

Tel: [57] (4) 512 9159

**Drogas Induamerica**

Cra.50A 36-20 (Itagüi)

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 374 0103

**Drogas La Promoción**

Cl.50 46-15

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 231 3764

**Drogas La Salud**

Cl.81A 50A-85 (Itagüi)

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 285 2036

**Hiperdrogueria (Pharmacy)**

Calle 33 No. 63B-06

PBX: [57] (4) 235-2200

*Dentist*

**Centro Odontologico (Maria Cristina Fernandez A.)**

Edificio Futurama

Cra. 65 NO. 42-145

Cons: [57] (4) 230-0597

Res: [57] (4) 413-4913

## Transportation

### Air Travel

The internal air network is excellent, linking all major cities and including the Caribbean coastal area. Domestically, Colombia is served by Avianca, Aces, SAM, Intercontinental, West Caribbean, Satena, and Aires airlines. The larger cities have daily connections, and the smaller ones have less frequent service, sometimes just once a week. Avianca and American Airlines offer regular flights to Bogotá from Cali and Barranquilla. San Andrés is a standard stopover point for Avianca, Lacs, and Sahsa airlines.

Flights originate from most major Colombian cities providing connections between the mainland and San Andrés and Providencia islands. Local helicopter flights are also available from many locations. Inquire locally for more information. Your hotel is a good source of information.

Travelers in Bogota should know for convenience sake that Satena and Aires both fly in and out of Bogota's city airport, which can save them the 45-minute trek to Rio Negro Airport outside the city..

One cautionary note: drug smugglers and rebels sabotage many ground-tracking and radar stations in order to protect illicit drug shipments. Over a thousand people have perished in Colombian air incidents since 1986. As with most things in this country, safety cannot be assumed.

### Airport



*Bogotá*

#### **El Dorado International Airport (BOG)**

##### ***Transportation to City Center***

The airport is located 7.5 miles (12 km) northwest of the city center and handles all domestic and international flights. Bus service exists between terminals. Although there are several buses available to Bogotá's center, it is best to use registered taxis or hired cars with drivers, especially at night or if you are carrying valuables. The fare from the airport to the center is fixed at about US\$6. All taxis have meters and a chart of fares should be posted in the cab. Look for the taxi stand outside the terminal. Make sure to carry smaller bills as drivers do not like making change.

##### ***Taxis***

Proturismo [57] (1) 223-2111

Taxi Libres [57] (1) 311-1111

##### ***Car Rentals***

It is not advisable to rent a car and drive yourself. Road conditions are poor and risk of carjacking is high.

Arrencar [57] (1) 214-1413

Avis [57] (1) 414-8278

Hertz [57] (1) 413-9302

National [57] (1) 621-1173

##### ***Airport Amenities***

Facilities include a tourist information desk, money exchange, post office, car rental, duty free shops, fast food restaurants, and bar. ATM machines that also accept debit cards are located on the second floor. Arriving passengers should exit immigration, go back inside and up the escalator to the departures hall.

The airport has two terminals, El Dorado and Puente Aereo, which lie one kilometer apart. Check in advance which terminal your flight will use. As a general rule, Avianca's international flights to New York and Miami and domestic flights to Cali, Medellin, Monteria use Puente Aereo. Buses run between the two terminals.

**Note:** Beware of theft and petty crime in the airport. Only use uniformed porters. However, in general, the airport itself is clean and efficient, with helpful employees.

**Departure Tax** : US\$28 on international flights for passengers who have been in the country less than 60 days

**Revenue Stamp** : US\$19 for residents and for travelers who have stayed in the country longer than 60 days; US\$5 for domestic flights.

Fees may be paid in Colombia pesos.

***Airport Contact Information***

El Dorado International Airport

Santa Fe de Bogota

Columbia

Tel: [57] (1) 413-5339, 413-9500

Fax: [57] (1) 413-8091

Puente Aereo: [57] (1) 413-8103

*Cali*

**Alfonso Bonilla Aragon Airport (CLO)**

***Transportation to City Center***

The airport lies 10 miles (19 km) from Cali in the town of Palmaseca. Taxis cost about US\$30 to the city. Fares are posted and cabs have meters.

A 'colectivo' minibuses are a much cheaper alternative and one is usually waiting outside the domestic area of the airport. It travels to the Cali bus terminal every 10 minutes from 6a.m. until 9p.m. It costs US\$2.70 and takes about 20 minutes to reach the city center. Travelers can exit the bus at the north Cali bus terminal, La 14 Calima, and then take a cab from there to your city destination. A city bus from the airport costs US\$0.10.

***Car Rentals***

Avis [57] (2) 883-6027

Hertz [57] (2) 882-2428

***Airport Amenities***

The airport in Cali offers a money exchange, restaurant, shops, and the Hotel Aeropuerto Palmaseca. One may also find a tourist office (tel: [57] (2) 660-5000).

***Airport Contact Information***

Alfonso Bonilla Aragon Airport

Cali Airport

Cali, Valle, S.A.

Tel: [57] (2) 442 2624, 441-7041

Fax: [57] (2) 441-7041

*Medellín*

**Aeropuerto Jose Maria Cordoba (MDE)**

***Transportation to City Center***

The airport lies 24 miles (38 km) from the city center. A taxi ride downtown will cost about US\$12, fixed fare, and takes 45 minutes. Travelers exiting the airport will likely find a throng of confusion in the taxi area. You are not necessarily obligated to take the first taxi in the line. Most drivers know all of the hotels and you simply need to tell them the name. The road to Medellin is heavily traveled and patrolled by military, so travel between airport and city is safe. However, if you still feel uncomfortable about taking a cab at night, spend the night at the Santiago de Armas hotel located across from the airport. A bus, costing US\$3, and a minibus, costing US\$2, run frequently but take about an hour to reach the center. Purchase tickets from a booth in the terminal.

***Airport Amenities***

Medellín's airport offers a tourist office, a bank, fax office and Telecom, restaurant, and shops. There is no luggage storage room.

***Airport Contact Information***

Aeropuerto Jose Maria Cordoba

Tel: [57] (4) 562-2885

## **Airline Numbers**

**Note:** The country code is [57] if dialing from outside the country.

**Bogota**

<b>Airlines</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>URL</b>
AerOasis		<a href="http://www.aeroasis.com.co">www.aeroasis.com.co</a>
Aeroexpreso Bogota	(1) 547 4266	<a href="http://www.apsa.com.co">www.apsa.com.co</a>
Aerolineas argentinas	(1) 319 0860	<a href="http://www.aerolineasargentinas.com">www.aerolineasargentinas.com</a>
AeroRepublica	(1) 320 9090	<a href="http://www.aerorepublica.com.co">www.aerorepublica.com.co</a>
Air France	(1) 413 9590	<a href="http://www.airfrance.com">www.airfrance.com</a>
AIRES	(1) 413 9142	<a href="http://www.aires.aero">www.aires.aero</a>
Alitalia	(1) 317 2907	<a href="http://www.alitalia.com">www.alitalia.com</a>
American Airlines	(1) 439 7777	<a href="http://www.aa.com">www.aa.com</a>
British Airways	800 934 5700	<a href="http://www.britishairways.com">www.britishairways.com</a>
Copa Airlines	800 550 7700	<a href="http://www.copaair.com">www.copaair.com</a>
KLM	800 952 0454	<a href="http://www.klm.com">www.klm.com</a>
Lufthansa	(1) 296 6333	<a href="http://www.lufthansa.com">www.lufthansa.com</a>
Satena	(1) 900 331 7100	<a href="http://www.satena.com">www.satena.com</a>
TAC Colombia	(1) 414 7913	<a href="http://www.tacolombia.com">www.tacolombia.com</a>

**Cali**

AerOasis		<a href="http://www.aeroasis.com.co">www.aeroasis.com.co</a>
AeroRepublica	(2) 660 1212	<a href="http://www.aerorepublica.com.co">www.aerorepublica.com.co</a>
Aexpa	(2) 666 3244	<a href="http://www.aexpa.aero">www.aexpa.aero</a>
AIRES	(2) 660 4777	<a href="http://www.aires.aero">www.aires.aero</a>
American Airlines	800 522 555	<a href="http://www.aa.com">www.aa.com</a>
Avianca	800 321 3434	<a href="http://www.avianca.com">www.avianca.com</a>
British Airways	800 934 5700	<a href="http://www.britishairways.com">www.britishairways.com</a>
Copa Airlines	800 550 7700	<a href="http://www.copaair.com">www.copaair.com</a>
Delta Air Lines	(2) 892 0222	<a href="http://www.delta.com">www.delta.com</a>
Lineas Aereas Suramericanas		<a href="http://www.lascargo.com">www.lascargo.com</a>
Satena	(2) 885 7709	<a href="http://www.satena.com">www.satena.com</a>

**Medellin**

AerOasis		<a href="http://www.aeroasis.com.co">www.aeroasis.com.co</a>
AeroRepublica	(4) 352 4400	<a href="http://www.aerorepublica.com.co">www.aerorepublica.com.co</a>
AIRES	(4) 361 1331	<a href="http://www.aires.aero">www.aires.aero</a>
American Airlines		<a href="http://www.aa.com">www.aa.com</a>
Avianca	800 444 3434	<a href="http://www.avianca.com">www.avianca.com</a>
British Airways	800 934 5700	<a href="http://www.britishairways.com">www.britishairways.com</a>
Copa Airlines	800 550 7700	<a href="http://www.copaair.com">www.copaair.com</a>
Delta Airlines	(4) 381 0056	<a href="http://www.delta.com">www.delta.com</a>
Lineas Aereas Suramericanas		<a href="http://www.lascargo.com">www.lascargo.com</a>
Satena	(4) 361 4056	<a href="http://www.satena.com">www.satena.com</a>

**Taxi**



Taxis are plentiful, but use only well-marked cabs. Do not share or get into a taxi carrying another person unknown to you, even when the driver tells you that your companion is for protection. Take only metered taxis, if possible. A taxi in town will cost about US\$1 per mile. Cabs cost about 30 percent more at night. Passengers should always insist that the meters are used, or agree on a price before leaving. Some cabs do not have meters; these are not recommended. Travelers are advised to book taxis through their hotel and not to hail them on the street. At hotels, you can either order by phone, or find the taxis that have green and cream paint jobs standing by outside. The green and creams prove more costly than the others but are safer and cleaner.

Although most people have safe rides in taxis in the major cities, remain alert when using them, as some may work hand-in-hand with criminal gangs. One of the more popular taxi scams involves the driver feigning a mechanical breakdown. He then requests the assistance of the passenger to get out and help push the cab to a "jump-start," separating the passenger from his luggage. The driver then starts the car and drives away.

Businesspeople may do best to order cabs for city travel through their hotel concierge. Women travelers should not ride alone at night.

### **Bogotá Taxis**

Radio-Telephone Service

Tel: (1) 211-1111, (1) 311-1111, (1) 411-1111, (1) 611-1111

## **Auto**

Road travel can be hazardous throughout Colombia and is particularly dangerous in the countryside due to guerrilla activity. Carjackings have also occurred on city streets.

Traffic laws and signal lights are frequently ignored, especially late at night and during early morning hours. Speed limits are generally nonexistent. Pedestrians are almost never given the right of way.

Automobile travel after dark is dangerous because of poor illumination, unmarked roadwork, potholes, stalled vehicles, wandering livestock, and motorists driving without using their headlights.

### **Road Conditions**

Traffic laws are sporadically followed and rarely enforced, a chaotic and dangerous reality for travelers in the major cities. Colombian authorities estimate that a traffic accident occurs every ten minutes; urban pedestrians constitute the largest category of traffic-related casualties. Public transportation is not a safe alternative; buses and, to a lesser extent, taxis are frequent targets for criminals.

Although road security has improved in some areas, such as around the capital, Bogotá, for security reasons the U.S. Embassy strongly recommends against most rural road travel. The Government of Colombia has instituted special programs to promote road travel during holidays, but outside of these periods, the strong presence of guerrilla and paramilitary groups and common criminals in rural areas makes travel on these roads dangerous. In regions where the government has not established full authority, guerrilla groups frequently establish roadblocks in order to rob and/or kidnap travelers. The geographic scope of government or guerrilla control is subject to change, sometimes without notice. Any inter-city travel should be done by airplane.

For specific information concerning Colombian driving permits, vehicle inspection, road tax and mandatory insurance, contact the Colombian Vice-Ministry of Tourism at the following address and/or phone numbers:

### **Viceministerio de Turismo**

Calle 28 No. 13a-15, Piso 17

Santa Fe de Bogota, COLOMBIA;

### **Rules of the Road**

Although limited laws exist in Colombia to protect the safety of travelers on the roads, they are rarely enforced. Seat belts are mandatory for the two front-seat passengers in a vehicle. Car seats are not mandatory for children, but a child under ten years old may not be seated in the front seat. Urban speed limits range from 28 to 37 mph (45 to 60 kph); rural speed limits are usually 50 mph (80 kph), unless otherwise indicated. If an accident occurs, the involved parties must remain at the scene until the authorities arrive; leaving the scene of the accident constitutes an admission of guilt.

**Auto Rental**

Cars and motorbikes can be rented in urban locations, but they are only recommended for experienced visitors to Colombia. Avis, Hertz, Budget, and National have rental offices in major cities and at airports. An International Driving Permit is required. Cars with responsible drivers and security teams can be hired for daily and weekly usage; however, it may be best to let your hotel concierge or local business associate set up this type of transportation.

**Auto Club/Automovil Club de Colombia**

Cr 13 10-01

**Auto Rental Numbers**

Travelers should reconcile the dangers of crime in Colombia before deciding to rent a car; be certain to take out some insurance and park in guarded lots if available.

**Hertz**

Domestic reservations

Tel: [57] (1) 268-8956

Intl. reservations

Tel: [57] (1) 215-3500

*Bogota*

*Aeropuerto Internacional El Dorado*

Muelle Internacional 1er Nivel

Monday to Saturday 8a.m. to 5:30p.m., Sunday Closed

*Main Office*

Cra. 14 No. 27-21,

Monday to Saturday 8a.m. to 5:30p.m., Sunday Closed

Web: [www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)

**Train**

Rail services, for the most part, carry only freight. Air travel remains the quickest and most comfortable way to get around the country for intercity travel.

**Subway**

Medellín now boasts three lines on its metro system, the only in the country. During peak hours (see schedule below) trains come and go at more frequent intervals. The metro operates Monday to Saturday between the hours of 4:30a.m. and 11p.m. and Sundays and holidays from 5a.m. to 10p.m. A single ticket costs 1150 pesos, a double 2050 pesos, a 10-ticket multi-trip (Tiquete Multi 10) \$10000 pesos, and a 25-ticket multi-trip (Tiquete Empresarial de 25 viajes) costs \$24,200 pesos. Passengers over the age of 60 receive a discount.

**Line A**

Peak hours: 6a.m. to 8a.m. and 4p.m. to 7p.m. (3-minute intervals)

**Line B**

Peak hours: 5a.m. to 8p.m. (6-minute intervals), and 4p.m. to 7p.m. (5-minute intervals)

**Line C**

variable

**Medellín Metro**

Commuter: [57] (4) 452-6000

Metro Police: [57] (4) 511-6688, ext. 4070

Library: [57] (4) 455-5332

Web: [www.metrodemedellin.org.co/metropping.asp](http://www.metrodemedellin.org.co/metropping.asp)

**Bus**



Bogotá has an extensive bus, trolleybus, and minibus system, as well as a funicular railway. The network operates on a flat-fare basis. If you are feeling good about security, you may want to try one of the shared taxis (*busesta*), which are inexpensive and will stop on demand. There is a supplementary charge for airport and out-of-town destinations.

Most cities have fairly comprehensive bus and *busesta* systems. VELOTAX minibuses are efficient, but most other buses suffer frequent breakdowns. Generally, it is not recommended that businesspeople use the bus systems if other modes of transit are available.

It is recommended that travelers use only air transportation between cities for safety reasons. However, modern, air-conditioned coaches connect most major cities. Police stops may occur along the way, though, and the potential for a bandit or guerrilla attack is never remote.

Buses run on fairly precise schedules and do not wait to reach passenger capacity before embarking as is the case in many other South American countries.

Reportedly, the best coach lines are Flota Magdalena, Expreso Boliviano, and Expreso Palmita. About 42 separate companies run modern buses and minibuses between towns and cities along the coast.

### Water Travel

Colombia has 3,000 km of ocean coastline (Atlantic and Pacific), as well as an extensive river transport system along the Amazon and Choco rivers. The Magdalena, though, is the main river artery for commerce in Colombia. Some cargo boats will take passengers, but this is not a fast way to travel.

A ferry service links the mainland with the San Andrés and Providencia islands, embarking from the Muelle de Pegasus. This trip is long (three days) but cheap. Contact the Maritima San Andrés office for information regarding other maritime connections to San Andrés.

Security risks are high for foreign passengers; water transport should only be used for reaching otherwise unapproachable regions.

### Travel Assistance



#### **Corporacion Nacional de Turismo**

Apdo Aereo 8400  
Calle 28, #13A-15  
161/4-181/4  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, DC  
Tel: [57] (1) 283 9466  
Fax: [57] (1) 284 3818

#### **Ministerio de Desarrollo Economico**

Carrera 13, #28-01  
Pisos 5-9  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, DC  
Tel: [57] (1) 320 0077  
Tel: [57] (1) 287 4865  
Fax: [57] (1) 287 6025

#### **Bogota**

##### **ABC Turismo**

Carrera 14 # 86A - 45  
Oficina 105  
Aptdo Aereo Number 059614  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 313 0500  
Fax: [57] (1) 313 3558

##### **Asturismo LTDA**

Calle 63 #13-37

Santafé de Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 610 2899

Tel: [57] (1) 623 5199

Fax: [57] (1) 611 2908

**Escaribe Turismo**

Cra. 14 # 94a -44 Oficina 303 Edif. Classic

Santafé de Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 623 3130

Fax: [57] (1) 623 3047

**Viajes Chapinero (FUERZO DELTA Mayoreo Internacional)**

Calle 63 #13-37

Santafé de Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 348 3434

Fax: [57] (1) 211 6407

Fax: [57] (1) 210 2951

**Medellin**

**A Fondo Ltda.**

Carrera 39 #8-45 Parque Lleras

Tel: [57] (4) 381 2525

**AB Travel**

Calle 43 #68A 50 Of.205

Tel: [57] (4) 260 4024

**Agencia de Viajes Bolivar Ltda.**

Centro Comercial Monterrey L.380

Tel: [57] (4) 268 3111

Fax: [57] (4) 268 5510

**Agencia de Viajes Millenium Travel**

Cr. 43A #8-63 Locales 6 y 7 Multicentro Aliadas Parque El Poblado

Tel: [57] (4) 311 2311

Fax: [57] (4) 312 5884

**Agencia de Viajes Orienturismo**

Cr. 20 #18-78 Ed. Bancolombia Of.201

Tel: [57] (4) 553 1706

Tel: [57] (4) 553 7874

Fax: [57] (4) 553 6077

**Agencia de Viajes Over Trayectos**

Carrera 43B #16-80

Tel: [57] (4) 266 0086

Fax: [57] (4) 268 2472

# Communications

## Quick Start

### Country Code 57

(Code used to call Colombia from another country)

To call Colombia dial your International Access Code + 57 + area code + local number

#### Examples

From USA 011 + 57 + area code + number

From UK 00 + 57 + area code + number

From Hong Kong 001 + 57 + area code + number

### International Access Code 005 (Orbitel) or 007 (ETB) or 009 (Telecom)

(Prefix used to make an international call from Colombia)

To call a country from Colombia dial 005, 007, or 009 + country code + area code + local number)

#### Examples

To USA 009 + 1 + area code + number

To UK 009 + 44 + area code + number

To Hong Kong 009 + 852 + number

### Domestic Access Code 05 (Orbitel), 07 (ETB), or 09 (Telecom)

(Prefix used to make a call between cities in Colombia)

To call between cities in Colombia dial 05, 07, or 09 + area code + local number

#### Examples

To Bogotá from outside the city 09 + 1 + number

**Ring Tone** Equal tones, separated by long pauses

**Busy Tone** Short equal on and off tones

**Capital** Bogotá

**Predominant Language** Spanish (official)

**Online Directory** Business Directory: [www.paginasamarillas.com](http://www.paginasamarillas.com), [www.quehubo.com/cat/html](http://www.quehubo.com/cat/html)

## Dialing Guide

How To Call Colombia	Calls Within Colombia	International Calls From Colombia
Dial your country's IAC + country code for Colombia + area code in Colombia + local number.	<u>Local Calls</u> : Dial the local number. <u>Long Distance</u> : Dial the DAC for Colombia (05, 07, or 09) + area code + local number.	Dial Colombia's IAC (005, 007, or 009) + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number.
<u>Example</u> A call from the USA to Medellin, Colombia: <b>011 + [57] + (4) + local number</b>	<u>Example Long Distance</u> A call from Bogota to Medellin: <b>09 + (4) + local number</b>	<u>Example</u> A call from Colombia to San Francisco USA: <b>009 + [1] + (415) + local number</b>
<b>IAC</b> (International Access Code) Prefix to get international access from a country. <b>DAC</b> (Domestic Access Code) Prefix to call between cities within a country.		

## City/Area Codes

### Access Codes

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Orbitel (domestic)	05
Orbitel (international)	005
ETB (domestic)	07
ETB (international)	007
Telecom (domestic)	09
Telecom (international)	009

**Selected Area Codes**

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Arauca	7
Armenia	6
Armero	8
Barichara	7
Barranquilla	5
Betulia (Santander)	7
Betulia (Antioquia)	4
Bogotá	1
Boy	8
Bucaramanga	7
Cachira	7
Cali	2
Cartegena	5
Cartago Valle	2
Casablanca	8
Cerrito (Santander)	7
Cerrito (Valle del Cauca)	2
Chiquinquirá	8
Concepcion (Santander)	7
Concepcion (Antioquia)	4
Contratacion	7
Cucuta	7
Curiti	7
El Centro	7
Florencia	8
Honda	8
Ibague	8
Landazuri	7
Lebrija	7
Leticia	8
Manizales	6
Matanza	7
Medellin	4
Miraflores	8
Mitu	8
Mocoa	8
Mogotes	7
Monteria	4
Neiva	8
Oiba	7
Palmira	2
Pasto	2
Pereira	6

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Popayan	2
Providencia	8
Puerto Boyaca	8
Puerto Carreno	8
Puerto Inarida	8
Quibdo	4
Riohacha	5
Sabana de Torres	7
San Andres Santander	7
San Gil	7
San Jose de Guaviare	8
Santa Marta	5
Saboya	8
Sincelejo	5
Socorro	7
Toca	8
Tunja	8
Valledupar	5
Villa de Leyva	8
Villanueva (Santander)	7
Villavicencio	8
Yopal	8

### **Emergency and Assistance Numbers**

Metropolitan Police	112
Tourist Police	337-4413 (Bogota only)
Medical Emergencies	125
Fire	119
Information	114
Security Police-Emergency	153

#### **In Cali:**

Judicial Police	889-5277
Metropolitan Police	883-9004
Civil Defense	665-5826
Fire	667-8826
Ambulance	101 or 103

U.S. Embassy (Bogota)	<b>From Bogota:</b> 315-1566 <b>From elsewhere in Colombia:</b> 09-1-315-1566 <b>From outside Colombia:</b> [57] (1) 315-1566
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### Unusual Calling Features

1. Area code + subscriber number in Colombia always totals eight digits.
2. City / Area codes in Colombia contain one digit.
3. Subscriber numbers in Colombia are seven digits.
4. When dialing between cities within Colombia, dial the Domestic Access Code '05', '07', or '09' before the area code; the two-digit code will determine the carrier. Do not dial these access codes when calling from another country.
5. There are three carriers in Colombia that provide international access. Callers need to dial one of three International Access Codes to place an international call from Colombia: 005 (Orbitel) or 007 (ETB) or 009 (Telecom)
6. Cell phone numbers in Colombia contain ten digits. The first three digits signify the cellular network to which the number belongs and are followed by seven digits.
7. Calls from a land line in Colombia to a cell phone are prefixed by '03', whereas calls from cell phone to cellphones do not use this prefix; calls from a cellular telephone to a fixed line dial '03' before the area code.
8. Toll-free numbers start with the prefix 01 + 800 (formerly '980').
9. Premium numbers start with the prefix 01 + '90X' and always total 10 digits.
10. Collect calls cannot be made from public telephones.
11. Dial '0' or '9' to get access to an outside line if you are calling from a business or other self-contained (PBX) telephone system.
12. Subscribers can use call forwarding and call waiting; Telecom provides translators' services for international calls; Orbitel and ETB have multilingual operators for establishing connections only.
13. No PCS services are available; countrywide automatic roaming is in place for cell phone users.

### Local Calls

Calls to smaller areas can be difficult to dial and often require the help of an international operator.

### Long Distance Calls

Calling within Colombia has been enhanced by automated systems connecting larger towns. If a private phone is not accessible, an intercity call must be placed at a TELECOM office or a long-distance telephone booth.

### International Calls



Long-distance phones can be found at TELECOM offices, airports, or bus stations, but expect to pay a possible deposit of US\$18 to US\$36. The surest way of calling out of the country is dialing a home-country direct service, which can also help place calls to other countries.



Canada Direct	980-19-0057
BT Direct	980-944-0057
U.S. MCI	980-16-0001
U.S. ATandT Direct	980-11-0010

Calling from a public telephone requires a coin or a telephone card to get a dial tone. If calling from a hotel phone, check with the hotel operator for access instructions and, perhaps more importantly, surcharge information to save yourself a trip to the shock ward.

### Cell Phones

Fixed line to Cell Phone	Cell Phone to Fixed line	Cell Phone to Cell Phone
<p><b>Local Calls:</b> Dial '03' + 3-digit cellular carrier code* + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a fixed line in Bogotá to a 'BellSouth' cell phone in Bogotá: <b>03 + '315' + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number</b></p>	<p><b>Local Calls:</b> Dial '03' + area code + the local number.</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a cell phone in Bogotá to a fixed line in Bogotá: <b>03 + (1) + local number</b></p>	<p><b>Local Calls:</b> Dial 3-digit cellular carrier code* + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a fixed line in Bogotá to a 'BellSouth' cell phone in Bogotá: <b>'315' + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number</b></p>
<p><b>Long Distance:</b> Dial '03' + 3-digit cellular carrier code* + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a fixed line in Bogotá to a 'BellSouth' cell phone in Cali: <b>03 + '315' + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number</b></p>	<p><b>Long Distance:</b> Dial '03' + area code + local number.</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a cell phone in Bogotá to a fixed line in Cali: <b>03 + (2) + local six-digit number</b></p>	<p><b>Long Distance:</b> Dial 3-digit cellular carrier code* + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a fixed line in Bogotá to a 'BellSouth' cell phone in Cali: <b>'315' + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number</b></p>
<p><b>International Calls:</b> Dial Colombia's IAC** + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number.***</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a fixed line in Colombia to a cell phone in San Francisco, USA: <b>009 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit number</b></p>	<p><b>International Calls:</b> Dial Colombia's IAC** + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number.*</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a cell phone in Colombia to a fixed line in San Francisco, USA: <b>009 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit number</b></p>	<p><b>International Calls:</b> Dial Colombia's IAC** + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number.***</p> <p><b>Example</b> A call from a cell phone in Colombia to a cell phone in San Francisco, USA: <b>009 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit number</b></p>
<p><b>*Note:</b> Different cell phone carriers have different cell phone prefixes.  <b>**Note:</b> Three carriers provide international access: 005 (Orbitel), 007 (ETB), 009 (Telecom)  <b>***Note:</b> Some countries have a unique dialing sequence for incoming calls to cell phones. Refer to the Cell Phone Dialing Guide for the country you are calling.</p>		



1. Cell phone numbers in Colombia contain ten digits. The first three digits are 300, 310, 311, 312, 313, 315, or 316. These 3-digit codes are shared among the several cellular carriers.
2. Calls from a land line in Colombia to a cell phone in Colombia are prefixed by '03'; calls from a cellular telephone to a fixed line dial '03' before the area code.
3. When making an international call to a cell phone in Colombia, dial: Colombia's country code [57] + three-digit prefix (300, 310, 311, 312, 313, 315, or 316) + remaining seven digits of local cell phone number.

## Traveling Cell Phones

### 1. Will My Cell Phone Work in Colombia?

Check with your home country service provider to find out if it offers a roaming agreement for the country to which you are traveling. Click [here](#) to find out how. **Note:** Colombia's cell providers offer digital GSM 1900 technologies. Travelers from GSM 900/1800 countries who wish to use their own phone in Colombia should make sure their phone is "tri-band" (900/1800/1900).

### 2. Receiving Calls

When traveling with your cell phone, your cell phone number travels with you. Your calls get through even if people don't know your location.

### 3. Making Calls

Dialing procedures are the same as for local cell phone users. Refer to the Cell Phone Quick Start.

### 4. Local SIM Cards

Colombia's GSM 1900 networks allow the use of SIM cards. Cards with various payment options are readily available for use; however, before making a purchase, ensure that your cell phone is not locked to a specific network. [Click here](#) for more details on how SIM cards work.

## U.S. Service Providers

Your phone must be compatible with the frequency band/range your mobile service supports in the country. A GSM quad-band phone supports the four major frequencies used globally. If a multi-band phone is not available to you, check below or with your service provider for specific frequency ranges in the country to determine if your phone is compatible.

Due to the dynamic nature of the cellular communications industry, this information changes rapidly. **Always** confirm service with your provider prior to departure.

Company	Service in Colombia	Frequencies	Contact Information
<a href="#">Cingular Wireless</a>	Yes	GSM/GPRS 850/1900	Tel: [1] (916) 843-4685 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (800) 331-0500 (In U.S.)
<a href="#">Sprint-Nextel</a>	Yes	Contact Sprint-Nextel.*	Tel: [1] (817) 698-4199 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (888) 226-7212 (Sprint Worldwide Care)
<a href="#">T-Mobile</a>	Yes	GSM/GPRS 850/1900	Tel: [1] (505) 998-3792 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (800) 937-8997 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)
<a href="#">Verizon Wireless</a>	No	Not applicable.	Tel: [1] (880) 922-0204 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (800) 922-0204 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)

\* Sprint-Nextel and Verizon Wireless operate on CDMA technology. Sprint/Verizon users are required to have a hybrid or GSM-compatible phone. Check with your service provider for details.

## Local Service Providers

### Renting a Cell Phone

Travelers wishing to rent a cell phone may choose one of two options:

1. **Before departure:** Rent a locally compatible phone (short-term rental) *before* departure and have the advantage of cell service immediately upon arrival.
2. **After arrival:** Ask at your hotel for a local cellular phone rental service.

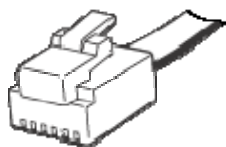
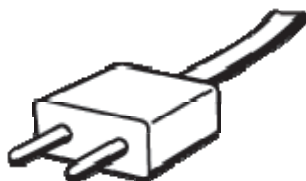
Click for a comprehensive listing of [Cellular Rental Services Worldwide](#).

### Setting Up a Local Account

Another option for cellular phone service is signing up with a local provider in Colombia. This may be the most cost effective option if you intend to stay for an extended period.

Cellular Systems Available in Colombia			
Company (Network)	Digital	Analog	Contact
Movistar (Telefonica Moviles (formerly BellSouth S.A. (Celumovil)).	TDMA 800 CDMA 1800	AMPS	Calle 71A and 6 - 30 P. 17 Santa Fe de Bogotá Tel: [57] (1) 313-8210 Fax: [57] (1) 211-8166 Web: <a href="http://www.movistar.com.co/">www.movistar.com.co/</a>
Comcel	TDMA 800 GSM 850	AMPS	Calle 90 14-37 Bogotá Tel: [57] (1) 616-9797 Fax: [57] (1) 616-9975 Web: <a href="http://www.comcel.com">www.comcel.com</a>
TIGO (Columbia Moviles)	GSM 1900	n/a	Toll-free: 01 800 3 000 000 Web: <a href="http://www.tigo.com.co">www.tigo.com.co</a>

## Phone/Modem Plugs



### Illustrations (c) Copyright 2008 by World Trade Press.

Telephone / modem plug adapters are available through [Magellans](#) and other suppliers. Please visit the supplier's list found in the sidebar of the [Mobile Connectivity Problems and Solutions](#) section of the Global Road Warrior.

## Public Phones

Public payphones can be found almost everywhere in major cities, but some may not always operate. In urban areas, you will find most pay phones operate by the use of a pre-paid calling card. Coin-operated phones (which most often are not in service) may be found in rural areas. Most hotels and restaurants have phones that are operational, although there may be a service charge for use.

The coin-operated telephone is a rare sight to those visiting Colombia, unless you travel into the rural areas of the country. Coin-operated telephones do not allow collect calls and take 100-, 200-, 500-, and 1000-peso pieces.

Public phones operated by a magnetic pre-paid calling card (available in denominations of 5000, 10,000, 25,000, and 50,000 pesos) are prevalent in urban areas. Similar to other card-operated phones in South America,

instructions for use are relatively simplistic.



#### **Coin Telephone Instructions**

1. Lift receiver
2. Listen for tone
3. Insert appropriate peso amount for local call
4. Dial number
5. When call is finished, replace receiver



#### **Card/Coin Telephone Instructions**

1. Pick up the receiver
2. Insert local, long-distance, international calling card (a LCD screen on the phone will display peso amount remaining on card)
3. Dial number trying to be reached
4. When call is completed, hang up receiver and retrieve calling card



#### **Coin Telephone Instructions**

1. Lift handset
2. Listen for dial tone
3. Insert coins
4. Dial number
5. Replace handset when call is complete

6. Collect any unused coins



#### **Coin Telephone Instructions**

1. Lift receiver
2. Listen for dial tone
3. Deposit coins, screen will display amount of credits
4. Dial number
5. Screen will indicate when you need to add coins
6. Upon completion of call replace receiver

**Note:** Credit Card charges are possible by swiping your card along the right side of the phone. Then wait for instructions from an operator. To place a new call do not replace the receiver, simply push the button below the receiver hanger. Country codes are listed directly on the phone.

### **Calling Cards**

There are three types of calling cards available in urban Colombia. Purchase cards for local, long-distance, and international calls at shops and markets, newsstands, some bookstores and, of course, telephone company offices. Calling cards are available in denominations of 5000, 10,000, 25,000, and 50,000 pesos.

In general, there are three fundamental types of cards:

1. Local prepaid phone cards
2. International phone cards
3. Home operator calling cards

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Click for more detailed information about [phonecards and calling cards](#).

#### **International Calling Card Suppliers**

Click for a comprehensive listing of [International Calling Card Suppliers](#).

### **Call Back Services**

While you are abroad, a callback company connects you to your home country telephone network to take advantage of rates at home, which are often cheaper.

Travelers must designate a specific location (such as a hotel phone number) prior to departure. While abroad, users phone the callback service office, which will call you back at your location. It will then connect you to the telephone network in your home country and you can dial any number you wish to reach.

The process helps you to take advantage of telephone rates at home. Fees for call back services vary widely, depending on the company and the type of service required. Always check rates first; it may, in fact, be cheaper to call direct and have your associates or family call you back at a designated number.

#### **Call Back Services Worldwide**

Click for a select listing of [Call Back Services](#).

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## Fax

Fax services are only available at top-end hotels, and the service is not cheap.

## Telegram

Facilities are available at top-end hotels in Bogotá or through national ENDT telecommunications offices. Telex services also exist at major hotels throughout the country.

## Postal Service

Post offices are marked "Correos". There are two types of service: urban post (green letter boxes) and international (yellow boxes). Letters and packets sent by airmail normally take five to seven days to reach their destination. Airmail is much more reliable than surface mail. Airmail takes between seven and 14 days to reach Europe or the U.S. Most people in Colombia have post office boxes to avoid theft. If you are planning for a long stay, you'll want to get one.

### Hours of Service

Monday to Saturday 8p.m to 12p.m.

#### *Bogota*

#### **Servicios Postales Nacionales S.A.**

Diagonal 25 G Not 95 To A-55

P.O. Box 4199292

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 419-9299

Web: [www.serviciospostalesnacionales.com](http://www.serviciospostalesnacionales.com)

Email: [atencionalcliente@serviciospostalesnacionales.com](mailto:atencionalcliente@serviciospostalesnacionales.com)

#### *Cali*

#### **Servicios Postales Nacionales S.A.**

Cali

Tel: 800-011-1210

Web: [www.serviciospostalesnacionales.com](http://www.serviciospostalesnacionales.com)

#### *Medellin*

#### **Servicios Postales Nacionales S.A.**

Medellin

Tel: 800-011-1210

Web: [www.serviciospostalesnacionales.com](http://www.serviciospostalesnacionales.com)

## Courier Services

### **Airborne Express De Colombia**

Trav. 93 No. 62-46, Int. 4, Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 545-5001

Fax: [57] (1) 224-5488

### **DHL**

Import/Export

Trans 93 No. 62-70, Interior 17 Alamos, Santa Fe de Bogotá, D.C.

Tel: [57] (1) 321-0707

### **TNT**

Servientrega International, S.A.

Calle 64, No. 89A-83, Santa Fe de Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 545-2700, 546-4000

Fax: [57] (1) 545-2802 ext. 212

### **UPS (T.G. Express)**

Calle #50 #79-94 Interior #10, Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 416-6166

Fax: [57] (1) 416-0500

### **World Courier de Colombia S.A.**

Carrera 103, No. 47-85, Office 103, Bogotá

Tel: [57] (1) 413-8588

Fax: [57] (1) 548-8620

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**World Trade Center****World Trade Center Bogotá**

Calle 100 #8A - 49. Torre B. Mezzanine  
Bogotá, Colombia, S.A.  
Tel: [57] (1) 218-3206  
Fax: [57] (1) 611-3712  
Web: [www.wtcbogota.com](http://www.wtcbogota.com)  
Email: [wortrade@colomsat.net.co](mailto:wortrade@colomsat.net.co)

**Chamber of Commerce**Bogotá**Camara de Comercio de Bogotá**

Bogotá Chamber of Commerce  
Carrera 9 No. 16-21, P8  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (1) 334-7900, 334-7799  
Fax: [57] (1) 284-7735

Cali**Camara de Comercio de Cali**

(Cali Chamber of Commerce/Trade Point)  
Calle 8 No. 3-14  
Cali, Valle, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (2) 882-3271  
Fax: [57] (2) 889-6672

Medellín**Camara de Comercio de Medellín**

(Medellín Chamber of Commerce/Tradepoint)  
Avenida Oriental Carrera 46 No. 52-82  
Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (4) 511-6111  
Fax: [57] (4) 231-8648



## **Technical/Internet**

### **Internet Connection**



#### **Steps to Getting Connected**

1. **Get Proper Hardware**  
Ensure you have the proper equipment for the country you are visiting.
2. **Configure Operating System**  
Your operating system may need configuring in order to hook up.
3. **Determine Internet Service Provider (ISP)**  
Make sure you have service where you plug in (and check costs). Options to connect to the Internet include:
  - Global Internet Roaming Service
  - Your own ISP
  - Local ISP
  - Internet Cafe
  - Hotel Business Center or in-room connection (i.e. data-port)
  - Personal computer of a personal contact (friend, colleague)
4. **Plug in**  
When all of the above are checked plug in your modem.
5. **Dial**  
You are now ready to dial your access number (hopefully, a local number exists).

### **Global Internet Service Providers**

Companies that offer global roaming services have partnerships with local Internet service providers in many different countries. As such, Internet access is provided through a local call. These companies often provide local access in countries where your home Internet service provider does not. Service and rate plans vary greatly. Make sure to do your research prior to departure. Some options include:

- User pays only when using the service
- User pays a subscription rate with added usage fees when in the destination country.

Click [here](#) for a list of global Internet roaming service providers.

**U.S. Internet Service Providers**

Company	Service in Colombia	Local Access Numbers
<a href="#">America Online</a> / <a href="#">Compuserve</a> AOL Intl. Tech Support [1] (703) 264-1184	Yes AOL Globalnet US\$6/hour surcharge	<b>Barranquilla</b> (95) 360-4448 (9.6 baud) <b>Bogota</b> (91) 622-4111 (28.8 baud) <b>Bogota</b> (91) 638-2600 (28.8 baud) <b>Bucaramanga</b> (97) 632-9244 (28.8 baud) <b>Cali</b> (92) 885-8377 (28.8 baud) <b>Cartagena</b> (95) 665-9190 (28.8 baud) <b>Medellin</b> (94) 321-2100 (28.8 baud) <b>Pereira</b> (09) 6 333-0330 (9.6 baud)

<a href="#">ATandT GlobalNet</a> Help Desk Number: 01-800-700-1473	Yes  **The availability of XN7 numbers is limited to ATandT Remote Access customers who are enabled for ATandT's Extended Access dial-up services, which does include all BIS customers.	<b>Armenia</b> 6-7460870 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Armenia</b> 6-746-0860 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Barranquilla</b> 5-361-7500 (SLIP/V.90/LIG) <b>Barranquilla</b> 01947-947-5690 (SLIP/V.90/LIG) <b>Bogota</b> 800-521777 ** (V.34/XN7) <b>Bogota</b> 1-6369155 ** (V.34/XN7) <b>Bogota</b> 01947-947-2308 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG) <b>Bogota</b> 0800-0519700 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG) <b>Bogota</b> 1-601-2121 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG) <b>Bucaramanga</b> 7-6329244 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1) <b>Bucaramanga</b> 7-643-5500 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Bucaramanga</b> 194-7947-5767 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Bucaramanga</b> 019489483788 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Bucaramanga</b> 7-643-9000 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Bucaramanga</b> 7- 019479475757 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Bucaramanga</b> 7-6527280 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Buenaventura</b> 2-241-1522 (V.34/TOLL/XN1) <b>Cali</b> 2-685-4700 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG) <b>Cali</b> 01947-947-6100 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG) <b>Cartagena</b> 5-6659190 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1) <b>Cartagena</b> 019479473114 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Cartago</b> 2-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Cucuta</b> 2-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Ibague</b> 8-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Ibague</b> 8-019479474635 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Ibague</b> 019479474601 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Ibague</b> 8-019479474646 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Manizales</b> 6-889-6330 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Manizales</b> 6-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Manizales</b> 6-019479474747 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Manizales</b> 019489483788 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Manizales</b> 019479475106 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Medellin</b> 4-576-0700 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG) <b>Medellin</b> 01947-947-5455 (SLIP/V.90/ISDN/LIG) <b>Nationwide</b> 018000914280 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Neiva</b> 8-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Neiva</b> 019479474330 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Paipa</b> 87-851070 (V.34/TOLL/XN1) <b>Palmira</b> 2-271-7460 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Pasto</b> 2-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Pereira</b> 6-3330330 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1) <b>Pereira</b> 6-313-9500 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Pereira</b> 6-316-8900 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Pereira</b> 6-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Pereira</b> 6-3169700 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Popayan</b> 2-8203602 (V.34/TOLL/XN1) <b>Popayan</b> 2-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Sincelejo</b> 019479475106 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Tulua</b> 2-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Tulua</b> 019479474010 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Tunja</b> 019479475106 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Valle del Cauca</b> 019489485202 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Valledupar</b> 019479474121 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) <b>Villavicencio</b> 8-019479473736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) <b>Villavicencio</b> 8-019479475152 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)
<a href="#">Earthlink</a>	No	None*
<a href="#">Microsoft Network</a> (MSN)	No	None*
<a href="#">Verizon Business</a> (regular Verizon accounts do not apply; requires Verizon Business account)	Yes	<b>Bogota</b> 1-313 6400 (ISDN V.34+ K56flex V.90)
*Requires dialing a neighboring country where your service offers local access numbers. International dialing charges apply.		

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**Local Internet Service Providers**

Provided below is a list of ISPs servicing this country.

**Note:** We advise that you check with any ISP company before you leave to ensure that it still exists.

**Colnodo**

Ave. 39 14 66

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 232-4246

Fax: [57] (1) 338-0264

Web: [www.colnodo.org.co](http://www.colnodo.org.co)

Email: [info@colnodo.apc.org](mailto:info@colnodo.apc.org)

Coverage: capital city

**COLOMSAT S.A**

Cra 7 Nro 60-93, 60-93, G912

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 369-3025

Web: [www.colomsat.net.co](http://www.colomsat.net.co)

Email: [colomsat@colomsat.com.co](mailto:colomsat@colomsat.com.co)

**Effectel**

Carrera 13 No.93 68

Bogota 1111

Tel: [57] (1) 640-1344

Web: [www.effectel.com](http://www.effectel.com)

**EMCALI EICE ESP.**

Carrera 1A Oeste 1 24

Telesonica Penon

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 898-6300

Fax: [57] (2) 892-2020

Web: [www.emcali.net.co](http://www.emcali.net.co)

Email: [dblandon@emcali.net.co](mailto:dblandon@emcali.net.co)

**EPM net**

Tel: [57] (4) 380-2921, 380-3240

Fax: [57] (4) 250-9178

Email: [adminternet@epm.net.co](mailto:adminternet@epm.net.co)

Coverage: capital city

**Impsat - Colombia**

Ave. 13, (Paralela autopista Norte), No.122-35 P. 4,5,6,7

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 611-9000

Web: [www.impsat.net.co](http://www.impsat.net.co)

Coverage: capital city, secondary cities; commercial

**INDEXCOL Ltda.**

Carrera 9A No.97A - 53 Floor 5

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 636-2828

Fax: [57] (1) 636-2810

Web: [www.indexcol.com](http://www.indexcol.com)

**Netco Ltda.**

Carrera 13A No.28-38

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1).565-7954

Fax: [57] (1).336-8651

Web: [www.netcolombia.com](http://www.netcolombia.com)

Email: [reyesjairo@hotmail.com](mailto:reyesjairo@hotmail.com)

**Telefonica Data Colombia**

Calle 101A No.28-37

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 638-0342

Fax: [57] (1) 638-0300

Web: [www.telefonica.com.co](http://www.telefonica.com.co)

ISDN, 33.6, 28.8, 56K, Frame Relay, T1

Coverage: capital city; commercial

### Internet Cafes

For an updated listing of internet cafés in Colombia, [click here](#) prior to departure, or, upon arrival, ask your hotel concierge.

*Bogota*

#### @ DE CAFÉ.COM

Carrera 15 No.74–18

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 211-6327

Email: [decafeom@hotmail.com](mailto:decafeom@hotmail.com)

#### Baralibre

Floor 53 No.63 A 31 P.1

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 416-4872

Email: [plotter@007mundo.com](mailto:plotter@007mundo.com)

#### Cafe Mail

Centro Comercial Boulevard L-330

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 226-0377

Email: [cafe\\_mail\\_bulevar@yahoo.com](mailto:cafe_mail_bulevar@yahoo.com)

#### Cafe Ole Internet

Carrera 15 No.95–55

Bogota

Tel. [57] (1) 691-3823

Email: [cafeoleinternet@cable.net.co](mailto:cafeoleinternet@cable.net.co)

#### Coffemail

Hacienda SantaBarbara Local A-123

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 612-0740

Email: [coffeemail@007mundo.com](mailto:coffeemail@007mundo.com)

Hours: 10a.m. to 8p.m.

8 computers, printer, scanner, video conference, AOL

#### Copixnet

Cedritos Floor 140 No.20-50 Local 12 Centro Comercial

La puerta Del Sol

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 216-9889

Email: [lav@usa.net](mailto:lav@usa.net)

Hours: 9a.m. to 9p.m.

3 computers, printer, scanner, video conference, AOL

#### El Cafe De Bogota

Carrera 15 No.72–63

Bogota

Tel. [57] (1) 217-5395

Email: [elcafede bogota@hotmail.com](mailto:elcafede bogota@hotmail.com)

#### Punto Virtual Internet

Floor 64 No.11–37

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 211-9652

Email: [puntovirtual@hotmail.com](mailto:puntovirtual@hotmail.com)

**Webxpress**

Floor 14 No.5-46 OF 203

Bogota 30472

Tel: [57] (1) 380-0420

Email: [webxpress@uol.com.co](mailto:webxpress@uol.com.co)

**Cybertown**

Floor 81 No.11-16

Bogota

Tel: [57] (1) 616-3444

Email: [cybertw1@cable.net.co](mailto:cybertw1@cable.net.co)

7 computers, printer, scanner

*Cali***Abraxas Cafe Internet**

Floor 4 No.35A-08

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 514-2081

**Ciber Café Matrix**

Chpichape Shopping Local 523 - Cosmocentro Local C-105

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 659-2169

Email: [correo@latincompactinc.com](mailto:correo@latincompactinc.com)

Hours: 9:30a.m. to 11p.m.

20 computers, printer, scanner, video conference, AOL

**Cyan Café**

Ave. 6 N No.13-23

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 668-8395

Email: [cyancopias@hotmail.com](mailto:cyancopias@hotmail.com)

**Internet igil**

Ave. Roosevelt No.30-05

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 558-3188

**Top Music and Videos Cafe Internet**

Ave 4 Oeste No.3-88

Cali

Tel: [57] (2) 896-0139

Email: [topmusic@topmusic.com.co](mailto:topmusic@topmusic.com.co)

*Medellin***Café Internet Oviedo**

Carrera 43A No.6 Sur 15, Centro Comercial Oviedo

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 321-3644

**Data Internet**

Floor 34 No.43-66

Medellin

Tel: [57] (4) 262-0457

**Online**

Carrera 37 No 10a-54  
Medellin 00723  
Tel: [57] (4) 311-2955  
Email: [cafeonline@cafeonline.com.co](mailto:cafeonline@cafeonline.com.co)

**Punto Web Cafear Internet**

Floor 43 Cra 69A Esquina  
Medellin  
Email: [puntoweb@col3.telecom.com.co](mailto:puntoweb@col3.telecom.com.co)

**Hardware/Software Vendor Support****Apple**

*United States:*  
Tel: [1] (408) 996-1010  
Web: [www.apple.com/la/support](http://www.apple.com/la/support)

**Dell**

*Columbia:*  
Tel: 09 80 15 3978 (Notebook warranty support)  
*United States International Access:*  
Tel: [1] (512) 723-6309  
Fax: [1] (512) 728-3653  
Tel: [1] 512-728-7424 (International Queue: Latitude or Inspiron / toll call)  
Toll Free: 800-285-1653 (Latitude or Inspiron / in U.S. and Canada)  
Web: <http://support.dell.com/us/en/home.asp>

**Fujitsu**

*United States:*  
Tel: [1] (901) 259-5790 (Notebooks, Tablets, Desktops and Workstations)  
Tel: [1] 408-746-6304 (Software)  
Web: [www.fujitsu-siemens.com/support/helpdesk.html](http://www.fujitsu-siemens.com/support/helpdesk.html)  
Web: [www.computers.us.fujitsu.com/www/contact.shtml?contact](http://www.computers.us.fujitsu.com/www/contact.shtml?contact)

**Gateway**

*United States:*  
Tel: [1] (605) 232-2191  
Web: <http://www.gateway.com/about/contactus/index.php>  
Web: <http://support.gateway.com/s/faq/c-custserv/cs9v9.shtml>

**Hewlett-Packard/Compaq**

*Columbia:*  
Tel: 01-8000-51-474-68368 (Product support)  
Tel: 571-602-9191 (Product support ) (Bogota)  
Web: [http://welcome.hp.com/country/co/es/contact/phone\\_assist.html](http://welcome.hp.com/country/co/es/contact/phone_assist.html)  
*United States:*  
Tel: 1 800-474-6836 (HP products) (No direct international line to HP in United States)  
Web: [www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact\\_us.html](http://www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact_us.html)  
Web: [www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact/phone\\_assist.html#section](http://www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact/phone_assist.html#section)

**IBM**

*Columbia:*  
Tel: 1-800-912-3021 (ThinkPad and ThinkCentre) (Spanish)  
*United States:*  
Tel: 1-800-426-7378 (Hardware and software support)  
Tel: 1-800-426-4968 (General information)  
Web: [www-307.ibm.com/pc/support/site.wss/document.do?Indocid=YAST-3P2QY&Landsitestyle=lenovo](http://www-307.ibm.com/pc/support/site.wss/document.do?Indocid=YAST-3P2QY&Landsitestyle=lenovo)

**Microsoft**

*United States:*  
Tel: [1] (650) 526-6950 (Microsoft Office)  
Tel: 1-866-452-4755 (Microsoft Office / U.S. and Canada Only)  
Tel: 1-800-936-3500 (Support Customer Care / U.S. and Canada Only)



Web: <http://support.microsoft.com/?LN=en-us&dx=9&dy=13>

Web: <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/hublist>

**NEC**

*International:*

Tel: [1] (801) 578-5103 (UltraCare Intl. Warranty Service Program)

*United States:*

Tel: 1-800-632-4662 (NEC Display Solutions Monitors)

Tel: 1-866-632-8061 (PowerMate eco systems, MobilePro 780, 790, 900 handhelds, Versa Litepad Tablet PCs)

Web: <http://support.neccomp.com>

**Novell**

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (801) 861-1329 (International Access)

Tel: 1-800-529-3400 (Toll-free in U.S. only)

Web: [www.novell.com/support/supportcentral/supportcentral.do?id=m1](http://www.novell.com/support/supportcentral/supportcentral.do?id=m1)

**Palm**

*Columbia:*

Tel: 01-800-554-1001

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (813) 313-4913 (LifeDrive, Palm Handhelds, Tungsten, Zire, Handspring)

Web: [www.palm.com/us/support/using.html](http://www.palm.com/us/support/using.html)

**Sony**

*United States and Canada:*

Tel: [1] (239) 768-7676

Tel: 1-888-476-6972 (Vaio Computers)

Web: <http://esupport.sony.com/US/perl/support-contacts.pl>

Web: <http://esupport.sony.com/EN/info/software-support.html> (Software Support Numbers)

**Toshiba**

*United States:*

Tel: [1] (949) 583-3000 (International access)

Tel: 1 800 457-7777 (Toll-free in U.S. only)

Web: [www.toshibadirect.com](http://www.toshibadirect.com)

Web: <http://w.askiris.toshiba.com/ToshibaSupportSite/supportcentral/supportcentral.do?id=m1>

## **Electrical**

### **Voltage**

110/220 volts AC, 60/50 Hz are the most common, although 150-volt supplies may be found.

### **Electric Plug**

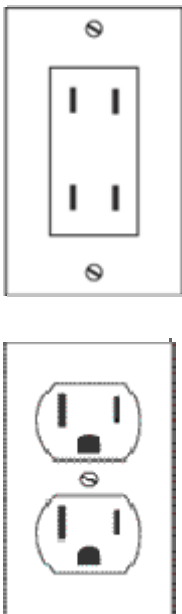


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Electrical plug adapters are available through [Magellans](#) and other suppliers. Please visit the supplier's list found in the sidebar of the [Mobile Connectivity Problems and Solutions](#) section of the Global Road Warrior.

### **Socket**

Typical sockets.





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## **Business Culture**

### **Historical Notes**



Alonso de Ojeda, a companion of Christopher Columbus, landed on the Guajira Peninsula in 1499, and for 30 years the native people coexisted peacefully with the Spanish. When the colonists tried to enslave them and take their land, the natives rebelled, but these uprisings were quickly crushed and the Spaniards took over the entire region. Independence from Spain was achieved after Simon Bolívar defeated the Spanish troops at the Battle of Boyacá in 1819, and the republic of Gran Colombia was established. The remainder of the 19th century was filled with over 50 insurrections and eight civil wars, finally ending in the murderous War of a Thousand Days in 1899. Colombia's name and boundaries changed often, with Argentina and Ecuador establishing their own governments in 1830. With strong support from the United States, Panama declared itself independent in 1903 to allow construction of the Panama Canal. After a period of relative peace and stability, La Violencia, the most cruel and destructive of Colombia's many civil wars, broke out in 1948. Close to 300,000 died as liberals fought conservatives. Eventually, both sides agreed to share power. The political monopoly lasted until 1974 when fully competitive elections were implemented.

The 1980s saw the rise in power of the Medellín and Cali drug cartels and a number of violent guerrilla movements. Violence and terrorism abounded as death squads from all sides of the political and economic spectrum took revenge. In response to this violence, a new constitution came into effect in 1991, which provided greater judicial powers and strengthened government control. A number of high profile arrests and trials received international attention, but when some drug lords "escaped" and others were acquitted, investigations discovered that many politicians were financed by the competing drug cartels.

Despite strong economic growth (the "underground" drug trade nets five billion U.S. dollars annually) "things" continue to go wrong for Colombia. International observers rank the internal conflict in Colombia as the second most bloody in the world (losing the dubious first-place distinction to Yugoslavia). Andres Pastrana, son of a former president and an independent candidate, became president in 1998 with a pledge to end the country's internal conflict, re-igniting the economy, and promoting social justice for all Colombians. He was voted out of office in May 2002 and replaced by Alvaro Uribe who won on a reform ticket. Uribe made economic progress, but the nation is still plagued by corruption and crime. Uribe re-forged bonds with the U.S. for the purposes of fighting terrorism and the wealthy drug cartels. Uribe was re-elected to office in May 2006 with a popular mandate and a majority in Congress. Rural attacks by insurgents continue to distract the country. A negotiated end to the conflict with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) is unlikely.

### **Greetings and Courtesies**



Men shake hands with each other and with women; women grasp each other's forearms. Men and women friends may kiss each other on the cheek, and men may hug. If meeting lower-level workers, shake hands with those closest to you when you are first introduced and then again upon leaving. Business cards in Spanish are not considered necessary, although always be sure that your card contains your title. Status distinctions are very important in Colombia, and people will want to know yours immediately. When presenting a business card, hold it

by the end between the index and middle fingers so the print faces the recipient and no print is obscured. At social gatherings, the host or hostess will introduce you individually to guests; when leaving, take time to say goodbye individually to anyone to whom you have been introduced.

### **Business Ethic and Framework**

Colombians are proud of their *rumbero* spirit of both working and playing hard. Both family and business are a great source of pride, and solidarity and mutual support are important. Individuals always take precedence over punctuality and schedules. Colombians value honesty, loyalty, a good sense of humor, and education.

Childishness, selfishness, arrogance, and dishonesty are distasteful; as such, they might be cynical and suspicious of outsiders that adhere to a different set of standards. Rather than a lack of courtesy, it is a tactic for survival. Colombians are aware of the tremendous problems their country faces but do not appreciate unwanted outside interference in trying to correct the problems. despite the past violence and political turmoil, Colombians are positive and upbeat about their future and the future of their country.

### **Decision Making**



Actual decisions are almost always made at a high level of authority. Although Colombians will want to know your standing within the hierarchy and will wish to match you with someone of similar rank, always try to approach the most senior person. Not only are senior people likely to be more internationally oriented, but they will also be able to play host while assessing you in order to pair you with the correct Colombian counterpart. It is important to cultivate personal relationships with both superiors and peers because the quality of these relationships may strongly influence the actual decision maker.

### **Meetings**

Introductions are very important. If you do not have a mutual business acquaintance to make an introduction, consult your embassy for a referral. Many foreign businesspeople find it highly useful to have a local contact to serve as a go-between and to handle local arrangements. Make appointments at least one week in advance. Be punctual for appointments, but do not expect Colombians to be on time (although punctuality is becoming more valued in larger cities and internationally oriented firms). Expect to be offered coffee at the beginning of every meeting; always accept graciously, even if you only take a sip. Never attempt to plunge directly into a discussion of business--social topics must always be addressed first to establish the necessary personal connection. In fact, social preliminaries may consume several meetings before business matters can be broached--always allow more time for business in Colombia than you would elsewhere, even in South America.

## Business Entertaining



Because the midday meal remains largely a family occasion when many businesspeople return home, working breakfasts at hotels and private clubs have become common practice in most Colombian cities. Breakfast dishes vary by region and may include juice, coffee, hot chocolate, fruit, eggs, bread, or *changua* (egg and potato soup). Dinner meetings tend to be less formal and are essentially social occasions. Colombian cooking has been strongly influenced by a combination of Spanish, native, and African flavors. Each region in the country has developed its own cuisine according to what is grown locally. Some typical Colombian dishes include *ajiaco* (a potato and chicken stew), *lechona* (pork dish), *sancocho* (fish or meat stew with vegetables) *frijoles con chicharon* (pork and beans) and tamales. A large variety of fresh tropical fruit juices are served throughout the country.

Business cocktails and official receptions are common events and are used as opportunities to make contacts and discuss outstanding business. Colombian trade associations, government entities, and private firms are hosting an increasing number of national and regional conventions, conferences, and seminars in the country. These events offer excellent opportunities for meeting Colombian businesspeople and key government officials as well as for assessing market potential.

## Women



Women in Colombia generally occupy a somewhat secondary status in this traditionally male-dominated society, although many operate businesses and are generally accorded considerable personal freedom. Colombian women are becoming more common and accepted in business, and foreign businesswomen should experience few problems. Nevertheless, in Colombia foreign businesswomen are expected to be highly professional, appropriate, and not aggressive or confrontational. They should also avoid any behavior that might be construed as flirtatious, as Colombians can engage in extremely macho behavior. Women should take taxis and be escorted at night.

## Business Attire

Colombians judge people by their appearance and how well they are dressed. Visitors should dress impeccably to make a favorable impression. Men's hair should be short and conservatively cut. A dark, conservatively cut suit and tie represents proper attire for men; women should wear a dark suit or an elegant businesslike dress. Climate varies by altitude, but men should always wear a jacket, regardless; if it is hot, men will probably be invited to remove it, but let your Colombian colleague suggest it. A suit or dress is appropriate attire for a social occasion,

such as a dinner invitation.

### **Politics and Graft**

The independent watchdog group Transparency International ranked Colombia as one of the 20 most corrupt countries in the world.

Following are some recent news stories from CNN:

In March, the government chief prosecutor launched an investigation into a \$2.8 million corruption scandal in Congress. At least five of President Andres Pastrana's former Cabinet ministers have been linked to accusations of high-level graft.

In April, U.S. government officials said they were investigating a multimillion-dollar graft scandal in the Colombian army and navy a month after the U.S. Congress approved a record \$1.3 billion package of mostly military aid for this war-torn Andean nation.

In June, Colombia's interior minister quit as the government backed away from its plan to call a July referendum aimed at dissolving the nation's corrupt Congress and electing new lawmakers.

Nestor Humberto Martinez announced his resignation just minutes before he was due to face a no-confidence motion in Congress. He and other cabinet ministers are accused of fostering congressional graft to win backing for key government legislation.

In his resignation speech, Martinez said his departure and radical changes in the referendum plan would "lead Colombia into the 21st Century with a clean democracy at the helm." It prompted President Andres Pastrana to submit a proposal to Congress asking it to approve a referendum for July that would close it down and elect entirely new legislators.

### **Business Fraud**

The potential for a fraudulent business deal is just as high in Bogotá as it is in Los Angeles, Rome, or Tokyo. For this reason, people in Colombia stress great importance on cultivating a business relationship on a long-term personal basis. There is, of course, no guarantee that knowledge about a person's hobbies, wife, and family will at all help one determine how truthful he may be, or if he is only interested in the "fast buck."

Do your homework. Examine everything carefully. Have a representative, agent, or lawyer on-site in Colombia who can assist you with many little problems before they erupt into big ones. To the outside observer, the court process in Colombia is somewhat capricious, and little hope exists that losses will be covered.



## **Embassies & Consulates**

### **Australia**

Australian Honorary Consulate  
Carrera 18, No. 90-38  
Santa Fe de Bogota, D.C.  
Tel: [57] (1) 218-0942  
Fax: [57] (1) 610-9707

### **Belgium**

Embassy of Belgium  
Calle 26 - 4 Apartado Aereo 3564  
A45 piso 7  
Bogotá  
Apartado postale, Apartado Aereo 3564  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (1) 282-8702, 8881, 8882, 8901  
Fax: [57] (1) 282-8862  
Email: [Bogota@diplobel.org](mailto:Bogota@diplobel.org)

### **Canada**

Embassy of Canada  
Cra. 7, No. 115-33 Apartado Aereo 53531  
Bogotá  
Tel: [57] (1) 657-9800, 9951  
Tel: [57] (1) 657-9800 (Emergency); [1] (613) 996-8885 (in Canada)  
Fax: [57] (1) 657-9912  
Web: [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/colombia/](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/colombia/)

### **Cartagena**

Bocagrande Edificio Centro Ejecutivo  
Oficina 1103  
Carrera 3, No. 8-129  
Cartagena, Bolivar, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (5) 665-5838  
Cellular Tel: [57] (3) 657-0814  
Fax: [57] (5) 665-5837

### **China**

Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
Carrera 16 No. 98-30  
Bogotá  
Tel: [57] (1) 622-3215, 235-4168 (24 hours)  
Tel: [57] (1) 622-3213 (administrative office)  
Tel: [57] (1) 622-3126 (consular office)  
Fax: [57] (1) 217-8985  
Email: [embchina@uol.com.co](mailto:embchina@uol.com.co)

### **France**

The French Embassy  
Carrera 11, 93 - 12 Apartado Aereo 29611  
Bogotá  
Tel: [57] (1) 638-1400  
Fax: [57] (1) 638-1430  
Web: [www.consulfrancebogota.com.co](http://www.consulfrancebogota.com.co)

### **Germany**

German Embassy  
Carrera 69 No. 43 B - 44, Piso 7, Edificio World  
Business Port, Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 423-2600  
Fax: [57] (1) 429-3145  
Email: [embajalemana@andinet.com](mailto:embajalemana@andinet.com)

**Japan**

Embassy of Japan  
Edificio Avenida Chile  
Carrera 7 No.71-21, Torre B(Piso 11)  
Bogotá  
Apartado Aereo 7407, Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (1) 317-5001  
Fax: [57] (1) 317-4989

**Taiwan**

Oficina Comercial de Taipei  
Carrera 7, #79-75, Of.501  
Bogotá  
Apartado Aereo No. 51620 (Chapinero), Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (1) 235-4713  
Fax: [57] (1) 314-5237

**United Kingdom**

*British Embassy*  
Edificio ING Barings,  
Carrera 9 No. 76 - 49, Floor 8 and 9  
Bogotá  
Tel: [57] (1) 326-8300  
Fax: [57] (1) 326-8302 (Management); 326-8305 (Commercial); 326-8303 (Visa/consular section)  
Web: [www.britain.gov.co](http://www.britain.gov.co)  
Email: [britain@cable.net.co](mailto:britain@cable.net.co)

*British Honorary Consul - Medellin*

Carrera 42, No. 53-26  
Itagui, Medellin  
Tel: [57] (4) 377-9966  
Fax: [57] (4) 377-9787  
Email: [embajadabr@geo.net.co](mailto:embajadabr@geo.net.co)

*British Honorary Consul - Cali*

Avenida 4 No. 5N-20  
Cali  
Tel/Fax: [57] (2) 653-6089  
Email: [britaincali@uniweb.net.co](mailto:britaincali@uniweb.net.co)

**United States**

*The U.S. Embassy*  
Avenida El Dorado and Carrera 50  
Bogota  
Tel: [57] (1) 315-0811  
Tel: [57] (1) 315-2109 / 2110 (for emergencies during non-business hours)  
Fax: [57] (1) 315-2196 / 2197  
Web: <http://usembassy.state.gov/bogota>  
*The Consular Agency in Barranquilla*  
Calle 77B, No. 57-141, Piso 5

Centro Empresarial Las Americas  
Barranquilla, Atlantico, Colombia  
Tel: [57] (5) 353-2001  
Fax: [57] (5) 353-5216  
Email: [conagent@metrotel.net.co](mailto:conagent@metrotel.net.co)  
Provides some limited consular services

## **The Businesswoman**

### **Women on the Global Road**



Now an established presence in the management workforce and as traveling executives, women may find themselves on the road as much as their male counterparts in seeking to further business opportunities. However, specific gender concerns do need addressing when it comes to conducting business and travel in a country, place, or culture other than one's own. Arming oneself with information in advance will do wonders in overcoming many a difficult situation. The best sources from which to derive helpful hints are other female travelers. Seek them out and inquire of them what to expect, most especially those who have been to the destination to which you will travel. In a pinch, their tips may turn out to be your saving grace. Similarly, upon arrival it is in a woman's interest to observe female behavior in the country of travel to learn what is appropriate and how best to blend in with the locals.

### **Advice for Female Travelers**

The wise traveler takes her cues from other women. For example, in Colombia, women rarely travel alone. As a result, a single woman will find herself an object of attention, sometimes benign and sometimes otherwise. *Machista* attitudes, which emphasize masculine virility and identity, pervade the culture. This attitude is often expressed in boastful or flirtatious attitudes towards women. There are thousands of subtle "clues" a Colombian male senses when meeting or even just watching a woman. How she dresses, walks, moves, sits, stands, shakes hands, laughs, smiles, and even how she sneezes can immediately arouse the male's erotic interest. Having not been raised in this society, the female traveler often unknowingly elicits unwanted attention. Most often she won't know why but she will have no doubts as to when it happens. Males are not subtle. A polite but firm, "Thanks but no" will work most of the time. Some unmarried female travelers even wear a wedding ring and use the promise they have made to their "husband" to decline any offers.

Pickpockets and petty thieves are everywhere but especially in crowded situations. Travel guides used to suggest hiding valuables in your shoes, but purse snatchers must have read the advice. Shoe snatching has become popular. There are increasing incidents of female travelers being violently robbed and even raped and murdered, but normal safety precautions greatly lessen this possibility. With the cocaine wars, all travelers are advised to avoid rural and mountain areas. Also, women have been kidnapped from bars and social activities after taking drugged cigarettes, drinks, or pills. If you are raped, contact a doctor and your embassy before reporting the incident of attack to the police. Colombian policemen often behave as though the victim "brought it on herself" through her actions, location, or attire.

### **Cultural Considerations**

In general, women traveling to a foreign country should adopt conservative tone and behavior to keep any unwanted attention at bay, at least until familiar with the specifics of female roles in the country.

#### **Cultural Tips**

- State your wishes clearly so that mixed signals do not become a problem.
- Wear a wedding band and carry a photograph of a husband and children (even if you have none) to stave off harassment.
- Try and look for other women to sit near on public transport; all-women compartments or areas are designated for this purpose.
- To repel harassment, ignore sexual advances, exposed genitalia, whistles, and various forms of catcalls; avoid eye contact and do not engage in any conversation.

## Business Attire

Colombians judge people by their appearance and by how well they are dressed. Visitors should dress impeccably to make a favorable impression. Women should wear a dark suit or an elegant businesslike dress. Climate varies by altitude. A suit or dress is appropriate attire for a social occasion, such as a dinner invitation.

## Women's Health Issues

Traveling involves extra stress and health concerns to consider. Change of diet, time zone, and living conditions will take up an enormous amount of physical reserve. Women should consider taking extra vitamin, mineral, and food supplements to ensure optimum physical health. Since many travelers avoid meat in developing countries, supplements are further encouraged. Other points to consider:

- Expect to experience irregular menstrual cycles or none at all due to jet lag, stress, and new and irregular eating and sleeping habits.
- Bring any female hygiene products that you use at home, i.e.: tampons, pads, medication, prescriptions, etc. as they may not be readily available at the time of your arrival or even at all.
- Birth control pills may not work properly if you experience stomach upset or diarrhea. If you vomit within three hours of digesting a pill, take another to ensure proper protection.
- Yeast infections become more problematic in hot, humid climates. Stick to cotton undergarments and clothing that is loose fitting to allow maximum airflow to your body. Nylons and tight pants may also induce yeast infections. Come prepared with medication.
- Carry the telephone number or email of your gynecologist at home in case you have urgent questions. Try and steer clear of gynecological examinations in developing countries due to hygienic conditions.

## Helpful Resources

### Advancing Women

Web: [www.advancingwomen.com](http://www.advancingwomen.com)

### Canasian Businesswomen's Network

Email: [cabninfo@apfc.apfnet.org](mailto:cabninfo@apfc.apfnet.org)

### The International Alliance (TIA)

Email: [info@t-i-a.com](mailto:info@t-i-a.com)

### Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT)

Web: [www.owit.org](http://www.owit.org)

### Women in Technology International (WITI)

Web: [www.witi.org/Center/Offices/About](http://www.witi.org/Center/Offices/About)

Email: [info@witi.org](mailto:info@witi.org)

### Women's Institute of Management (WIMNET)

Web: [www.iaring.my/wimnet](http://www.iaring.my/wimnet)

### Working Woman

Web: [www.workingwoman.com](http://www.workingwoman.com)

## Business Strategies for Women

1. Prepare in advance what to expect, not only in terms of business, but attitude of the local culture towards women.
2. Behave and dress conservatively; it is your first and basic step toward gaining respect.
3. Anticipate equality issues as they will likely surface.
4. Maintain a sense of humor. A foreign country has many oddities, your presence possibly being one of them. Relieve some of the stress with a humorous outlook.
5. Brush off sexual innuendos and comments about appearance and carry on with the business at hand. Keep a cultural outlook on such remarks. If a member of the other delegation becomes a problem or nuisance, take him aside and inform him that it makes you uncomfortable, or tell another member of his delegation to put a stop to it.
6. Exhibit tolerance and understanding for the other culture. Questions about your marital status and family may prove ubiquitous as it interests people how things work for you.
7. If you are a team leader, prepare your delegation in advance to treat you in a matter-of-fact, supportive fashion. A reaction from a delegation unaccustomed to working with females in authority may be derailed a bit if they observe your role is nothing but routine.

8. Generational attitude differences may exist towards women. Prepare to adjust to them.
9. Professional behavior, a respect for local traditions, and an in-demand service or product will assist you as a businesswoman.

### **General Safety Tips**

1. Prearrange transportation for your arrival. In many countries, hagglers and touts will approach you at the airport offering transportation options. If you have none, decline and find the transportation booth in the airport; or, if possible, befriend someone on your flight with whom you might share a cab.
2. If you are being dropped off in an unlit area, ask your driver to wait until you are safely inside. Women should avoid traveling alone at night.
3. Find out from your hotel staff where it is safe to go alone and what areas merit avoiding.
4. If you plan on meeting with a stranger, do it in a busy place outside of your hotel.
5. If you encounter someone gesturing or honking for you to stop, do not stop until you have found a busy public place with plenty of lighting before determining the problem.
6. If you find yourself on a crowded bus, subway, or train with a male pressing up against you in an obviously sexual way, try embarrassing him by shouting in English. Public shame or humiliation will often keep further advances at bay.
7. Try and look for other women to sit near on public transport. If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, get out of it.

### **Hotel Safety Tips**

1. Women should ask for a room on the second floor or higher and near the center of the hallway corridor away from fire exits where would-be assaulters can lurk and escape with more ease.
2. Don't feel shy about asking to see your room before deciding to take it.
3. Do not let anyone except the front desk clerk see or overhear the number of your room.
4. Do not show your room key in public, and keep it under tight security.
5. Avoid stairwells, an easy place for assaulters to hide, and don't travel in elevators alone with male strangers about whom your instincts send you a warning bell. If a stranger is wandering the halls when you plan to enter or exit your room, wait until he leaves. If he doesn't, report him to the front desk.
6. Do not open the door for anyone who knocks whom you do not expect. Use the peephole. Call the front desk if necessary to verify the presence of any hotel staff wishing to enter.
7. When leaving the room, put out the "do not disturb" sign, and leave the TV on if you wish to deter possible thieves.
8. Pack a flashlight should the lights suddenly go out.
9. Take the business card of your hotel before going out in case you get lost. Do not give out the name of your hotel unless absolutely necessary, and do not share with anyone that you are alone. Use your creativity and make up a story if you must.
10. Always lock the door when you are inside the room. A portable extra door-locking device may prove a prudent pre-trip purchase. A rubber doorstopper is also an easy item to pack.

## Essential Terms

ENGLISH	SPANISH (click to listen)
Yes	<a href="#">Sí</a>
No	<a href="#">No</a>
Good morning	<a href="#">Buenos Días</a>
Hello (daytime)	<a href="#">Buenas Tardes</a>
Hello (evening)	<a href="#">Buenas noches</a>
Hello (telephone)	<a href="#">¿Hola?</a>
Good-bye	<a href="#">Adiós</a>
Please	<a href="#">Por Favor</a>
Thank you	<a href="#">Gracias</a>
Pleased to meet you	<a href="#">Encantado (a) de conocerle</a>
Excuse me; I'm sorry	<a href="#">¿Perdóneme?</a>
My name is _____	<a href="#">Me llamo _____</a>
I don't understand	<a href="#">No entiendo</a>
Do you speak English?	<a href="#">¿Habla usted in-glés?</a>

## BASIC TERMS

ENGLISH	SPANISH (click to listen)
Help!	<a href="#">Ayuda!</a>
Emergency	<a href="#">Emergencia</a>
Stop!	<a href="#">Pare!</a>
I am sick	<a href="#">Yo estoy enfermo</a>
Food	<a href="#">Alimentos</a>
Water	<a href="#">Agua</a>
Money	<a href="#">Dinero</a>
Credit card	<a href="#">Tarjeta de crédito</a>
Currency	<a href="#">Moneda nacional</a>
Coins	<a href="#">Monedas</a>
Map	<a href="#">Mapa</a>
Address	<a href="#">Dirección</a>
Baggage	<a href="#">Equipaje</a>
Clothes	<a href="#">Ropa</a>
Car rental	<a href="#">Agencia de alquiler de autos</a>
Interpreter	<a href="#">Intérprete</a>
Stamp	<a href="#">Sello</a>
Be (verb)	<a href="#">Ser</a>
Have (verb)	<a href="#">Tener</a>

## INTERROGATIVE TERMS



ENGLISH	SPANISH (click to listen)
How?	<a href="#">Cómo?</a>
How much?	<a href="#">Cuánto?</a>
What?	<a href="#">Que?</a>
When?	<a href="#">Cuando?</a>
Where?	<a href="#">Dónde?</a>
Who?	<a href="#">Quién?</a>
Why?	<a href="#">Porqué?</a>

### PLACES

ENGLISH	SPANISH (click to listen)
Airport	<a href="#">Aeropuerto</a>
Bank	<a href="#">Banco</a>
Bus station	<a href="#">Estación de autobuses</a>
Consulate	<a href="#">Consulado</a>
Doctor	<a href="#">Médico</a>
Downtown (city center)	<a href="#">Centro de la ciudad</a>
Embassy	<a href="#">Embajada</a>
Foreign exchange	<a href="#">Tipo de cambio</a>
Hospital	<a href="#">Hospital</a>
Hotel	<a href="#">Hotel</a>
Pharmacy	<a href="#">Farmacia</a>
Police station	<a href="#">Estacion de policia.Comisaria</a>
Post office	<a href="#">Oficina de correos</a>
Railway station	<a href="#">Estación de tren</a>
Restaurant	<a href="#">Restaurant</a>
Taxi/Taxi stand	<a href="#">Taxi/Parada de taxis</a>
Telephone	<a href="#">Teléfono</a>
Toilet	<a href="#">Retrete, W.C.</a>
Tourist information center	<a href="#">Centro de información turística</a>

### OPPOSITE TERMS

ENGLISH	SPANISH (click to listen)
Cheap	<a href="#">Barato</a>
Expensive	<a href="#">Caro</a>
Fast	<a href="#">Rápido</a>
Slow	<a href="#">Lento</a>
Easy	<a href="#">Fácil</a>
Difficult	<a href="#">Difícil</a>
Near	<a href="#">Cerca</a>

Far	<a href="#">Lejos</a>
Good	<a href="#">Bueno</a>
Bad	<a href="#">Malo</a>
Hungry	<a href="#">Hambrieto</a>
Thirsty	<a href="#">Sediento</a>
Warm	<a href="#">Caliente</a>
Cold	<a href="#">Frio</a>
Open	<a href="#">Abierto</a>
Closed	<a href="#">Cerrado</a>
Free	<a href="#">Libre</a>
Occupied	<a href="#">Ocupado</a>
Before	<a href="#">Antes de</a>
After	<a href="#">Después de</a>
In	<a href="#">En</a>
Out	<a href="#">Fuera</a>
In front	<a href="#">Delante de</a>
Behind	<a href="#">Detrás de</a>
Enough	<a href="#">Bastante</a>
Too much	<a href="#">Demasiado</a>
Entrance	<a href="#">Entrada</a>
Exit	<a href="#">Salida</a>
Right	<a href="#">Derecha</a> (o)
Left	<a href="#">Izquierda</a> (o)
Straight on	<a href="#">Todo derecho</a>
Above	<a href="#">Arriba</a>
On	<a href="#">Sobre</a>
Under	<a href="#">De bajo de</a>
Yesterday	<a href="#">Ayer</a>
Today	<a href="#">Hoy</a>
Tomorrow	<a href="#">Manana</a>
Past	<a href="#">Pasado</a>
Present	<a href="#">Presente</a>
Future	<a href="#">Futuro</a>
Always	<a href="#">Siempre</a>
Often	<a href="#">A menudo</a>
Sometimes	<a href="#">Algunas veces</a>
Rarely	<a href="#">Rara vez</a>
Never	<a href="#">Nunca</a>

## Maps



## **Society and Culture**

### **Time & Punctuality**

#### **General Attitudes**

Colombians have the stereotypical Latin American attitude toward time where things get done when they get done and not beforehand. The uncertainties of doing business in a country where many areas are accessible only by plane or boat, kidnappings are routine, and much of the country is a war zone, make attempts to conduct business according to schedule a difficult proposition.

#### **Business Engagements**

Meetings should be scheduled at least two or three weeks in advance. If you are going to Bogota you should arrive a day early to adjust to the high altitude. Though Colombians are not great sticklers for punctuality, they expect their foreign counterparts to arrive on time. If you do run late, be sure to excuse yourself as great stock is placed in politeness. When you arrive at your meeting place don't be surprised if the meeting starts as much as two hours late. Set schedules with two to three hours between appointments to account for meetings that run late and the time it takes to safely get from one place to another.

Colombians give great importance to personal relationships. It will take time for you to develop a cordial relationship with them that will allow you to be considered trustworthy. Let your Colombian counterparts bring up the subject of business first, and understand that this may take quite a while.

Always follow up on meetings with reminders summarizing the main points of your discussions. It may take several trips before the business deal can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Lunch is the main meal of the day and a popular choice for business meals.

#### **Social Engagements**

Colombians' relaxed attitude towards punctuality becomes more pronounced in social settings. They will typically arrive up to 30 minutes late for social engagements, so foreign visitors shouldn't feel guilty about emulating their practice. A 10p.m. party will typically begin a half hour to one hour late.

### **Women in Business**

#### **General View**

The conservative Colombian culture's concept of *machismo* relegates women to the traditional role of homemakers, and it remains true that women, especially those from the lower classes in rural areas, still face many obstacles in trying to expand their horizons. Limited access to higher education, the responsibility of being single mothers and head of households, unemployment, and low pay have all driven women into poverty, and sometimes even prostitution. Despite these pressures, however, Colombian women have made great strides in recent years. Urban, educated women, in particular have found success climbing the corporate ladder.

The mayor of Bogotá, for instance, appointed women to all "minor mayor" posts in his city because he considered them honest and effective administrators.

#### **Legal Rights**

While Colombian law recognized women's suffrage in 1954, it was only in 1957 that amendments to the constitution provided women with the same political and legal rights as men. Amendments protecting against discrimination were not adopted until 1991. Other vestiges of legal discrimination persist to this day, including the fact that a married woman below the age of 18 can only be legally represented by her husband.

Under the law, parents can will their property to their children of both sexes in equal shares. In rural families, sons and daughters who continue to work the land are entitled to inherit property. In urban centers, parents may pass on a family business to their children to share and run.

The law also entitles women to equal pay for equal work, but women still receive lower pay than men (29.5% less in 1992). More than 80 percent of women workers in Colombia earn less than the legal minimum wage. A labor law adopted in 2002 mandated a reduction in labor costs to generate more employment but only contributed to job growth of less than 1 percent and had the effect of forcing women to work longer hours for less pay.

#### **Women in Professions**

Traditional jobs for women lie in agriculture, textile, food processing, oil extraction, clothing, and footwear sectors, where their dexterity with the intricate work of pruning, harvesting, sorting, selecting, sewing, and packaging gives them an advantage over male employees. The large Colombian flower industry in particular is dominated by women

who make up 80 percent of the 80,000 workers engaged in this industry.

While women constitute 43 percent of economically active population, the formal sector includes a relatively small proportion of women workers, and women seldom hold higher paid managerial positions or higher paying jobs.

Colombia has a few female executives, business owners, and other leaders; they include: Maria Cristina Caballero, former director of investigations at *Semanan* newspaper; Defense Minister Marta Luisa Ramírez; Sandra Ceballos, president of the Human Rights Commission; Education Minister Cecilia María Vélez; María Clara Baquero Sarmiento, president of the Trade Union of Public Servants of the Ministry of Defense, Military Forces, and National Police; María Elvia Domínguez Blanco, a member of the Presidential Office for Women's Equality; and Claudia Mejía Duque, the executive director of Sisma-Mujer.

Colombian women are legally prohibited from working in underground mining, working at night in any industrial business (unless the business is owned and operated solely by members of her family), in any business where they might encounter any materials containing pigment or other dangerous chemicals (like paint factories), or in any type of work classified as dangerous, unhealthy, or which requires great strength.

Women are visible participants in Colombian politics, representing over 10 percent of Congressional seats and consistently leading a few of the country's 14 ministries. To increase the participation of women in government, the Colombian Congress passed a quota law requiring that women make up 30 percent of the highest government positions and that at least one woman be in each list of nominees for appointment to higher offices. This can be misleading, however, since many elected women act as placeholders for the male members of politically powerful families, who are prevented from re-election or appointment by incumbency laws. Also the ministerial positions granted are typically the less powerful ones, although there are major exceptions to this rule.

Women make up the majority of employees in public administration (60%), but only hold 8 percent of the highest level offices. There are no women magistrates in any of the three highest courts in the country, although many female judges hold court at lower levels.

Colombian women wear dresses or long skirts and long blouses. They do not have any dress code restrictions in the work place.

Generally, older siblings or other relatives (including men) look after the children of working mothers. High-income families appoint nannies or babysitters to care for their children. Working women can take assistance from community homes run by "community mothers," who take neighborhood children into their own homes. Colombia also has a large number of childcare and daycare facilities run by government and non-governmental organizations.

### **Women as Business Owners**

Colombian women own a few businesses in the fields of small-scale and handicraft industries, agricultural products, and design. Generally women choose businesses that involve minimal risk and liability.

### **Foreign Businesswomen Visiting the Country**

Foreign businesswomen can expect to be treated the same way as their male counterparts. Business visitors should greet with a handshake upon introduction and departure. Expect business negotiations to run at a slow pace, so remain patient and persistent. Finally, foreign businesswomen should be aware that Colombia is one of the most violent countries in the world, with a murder rate eight times that of the United States and where narcotics trafficking and kidnapping for ransom are growth industries. Although many visitors have passed through the country without any problems, one should still take precautions.

## **Women in Culture**

### **General View and Position in Society**

Colombia is more egalitarian today with regard to gender issues than it has ever been. Educated women are entering the fields of politics, law, medicine, and business in increasing numbers. As more and more women have entered higher-paying jobs and prominent positions in society, the role of *machismo* (whereby historically dominant male roles are propagated) is weakening in urban centers, although it remains strong in rural regions.

The country's poor socioeconomic conditions and political unrest, however, have led to an increase in the number of single mothers, female-headed households, and women who have been driven into prostitution as a means of survival. Colombian women, particularly among the low-income sectors, have a higher rate of unemployment than men, and their representation in the formal sector jobs is low.

Colombian women have been relatively successful in both politics and the public sector. They generally hold more than 10 percent of seats in Parliament (despite the quota system designed to increase this to 30 percent) and consistently hold four or five of the country's 14 ministerial positions. Two of the country's 23 Supreme Court justices are women. They also make up 60 percent of the total public sector employment, although they hold only 8

percent of public sector management positions.

Generally, upper- and middle-class women are more active socially, economically, and politically. On the other hand, women from lower- and lower-middle class families often hold outside jobs, contributing to the family income and earning the respect of their male partners. When a family owns a farm, this also confers a certain degree of authority upon the wife. Furthermore, migration from rural to urban areas has helped to blur gender roles, although women are still very much solely responsible for the household.

Women of African and indigenous descent face significantly more discrimination and economic hardship than other Colombian women. Partly this is a function of geography because much of the indigenous population resides in areas held by rebel groups, but this is compounded by overt racism against black citizens and traditions of male domination in many indigenous societies.

There is no particular dress code restriction for women in Colombia. Women generally wear European style clothing in a somewhat more flamboyant Latin American manner.

### **Legal Rights**

The Constitution of Colombia guarantees equal rights and protection to all citizens irrespective of gender. Women have the right to vote, to pursue higher education, and to independently own, manage, and inherit property. In 1996, Congress passed a law requiring the signatures of both spouses when transferring immovable property belonging to the family. Women were given equal political rights in the 1950s, but they still hold only a small minority of top positions in business and government.

Couples from civil marriages won the right to divorce in the 1970s, but the issue of allowing the dissolution of Catholic marriages remains unresolved. The dissolution of civil marriage through divorce entails dissolution of the co-ownership of property, if any. The judge determines alimony and child custody, taking into consideration the best interests of the child.

Abortion is totally illegal in Colombia and is a criminal offense. The penalty is reduced in cases of pregnancies caused by rape, incest, or nonconsensual artificial insemination. Colombian women have the freedom to use contraceptives for birth control.

### **Education**

The Colombian Constitution accords equal rights to education. The literacy rate of women and men is practically the same at 92.6 percent and 92.4 percent respectively. Today, about 50 percent of university graduates are women, and many of them go on to become accomplished professionals.

Rural women have less access to education than men. To remedy this, the Colombian government initiated the “Education for Equality” project, whose main objective is to remove obstacles to girls’ obtaining an education. Classrooms are shared by boys and girls at the primary level, but are segregated at the secondary level. Private schools also run many same-gender schools.

### **Dating, Marriage and Family**

Arranged marriages are no longer practiced among the upper-middle and upper classes, although these groups strongly prefer to have their children marry within their own class. Generally women are free to choose their life partners.

Dating begins at about 15 years of age and progresses into courtship in the late teens or early twenties. Courting usually lasts for at least a year before marriage. Young people have lots of opportunities to meet each other in religious and school settings, as well as group or community activities. Online dating websites have become quite popular, too.

Women can marry when they have attained 18 years of age, and they have the right to decide whether or not to adopt their husband’s surname. Generally, Colombian women do not change their names after marriage.

The new Penal Code prohibits polygamy and illegal marriages. Civil marriages in Colombia can be dissolved by a judicial decree of divorce, which gives directions on child support, custody of children, parental authority, and visitation rights. After the divorce, any jointly owned property is liquidated and each spouse receives an equal share.

There are no legal restrictions against women in Colombia’s inheritance and succession laws. The Civil law accords equality between spouses and full legal capacity to a married woman. However, as a practical matter, men make all the major decisions in the house.

There is a social stigma associated with childless couples that gives them lower social standing.

### **Health**

The Colombian Constitution recognizes healthcare as a public service and grants all individuals equal access to health services. In the past decade, the situation of women’s health in Colombia has seen some positive changes,

owing to improved healthcare services and more time between births. The life expectancy for women is 72 years, which is an increase of 20 years between 1950 and the 1990s. The infant mortality rate also has improved from 79 per 1,000 in the 1960s to 19 in 2002.

Women in Colombia can make their own decisions regarding health care, although most of them need their husband's consent in issues relating to abortion, sterilization, and other major medical problems. Many rural women still give birth with the assistance of midwives. Catholic prohibitions against birth control have traditionally limited the use of contraceptives, but their use has increased in recent years.

## **Gift Giving**

### **General**

Colombians do not attach much significance to gift giving. They dislike shows of greed or materialism, and this limits their gift-giving practices. It is also the reason Colombians unwrap gifts in private. Just the same, Colombians do exchange presents on some special occasions.

### **Personal and Family Gifts**

Birthdays are small, family celebrations in Colombia, but a girl's 15th birthday is normally an important event. If invited to the party, the traditional gift is gold jewelry. When invited to any other birthday celebration, a modest present like flowers or chocolates is appropriate.

Colombians do celebrate Christmas, and family and close friends exchange gifts on December 25th. Colombian Christmas gifts are normally chosen to suit the tastes of the recipient. Neighbors may exchange food items.

Guests at weddings usually deliver gifts at a party held before the actual wedding. Household items of all kinds make appropriate gifts.

### **Business Gifts**

Business gift giving is an accepted way to build relationships in Colombia. Gifts need not be exchanged at the first meeting. Get to know your Colombian colleague a little before offering a present. Although one should avoid lavish gifts, choose high-quality items. Good pens and other desk accessories, crafts or books from your home country, and imported wines and spirits are all appreciated gifts in Colombia. If you offer a gift that has your company logo on it, make sure it looks very discreet. Gifts should be wrapped neatly, and are not opened in the presence of the giver. When you receive a present, express your thanks verbally and at some length and put the gift aside to open later. Thank-you notes are not commonly used in Colombia.

### **Hospitality Gifts**

When a Colombian invites you home, bring a gift. Pastries, chocolates, nuts, or fruit all make welcome hostess gifts. Flowers are best sent ahead of time, and roses are usually appreciated. You may also bring a potted plant as a hospitality gift. One might also consider imported wine or liquor as another possibility.

If your host has children present at the event, then a gift for them would be appropriate. Sweets or games from your home country serve as good choices.

If you cannot bring a gift to the event, send flowers or chocolates the next day, along with your thanks.

### **Taboo Gifts**

Avoid giving lilies and marigolds, which are associated with funerals. Colombians also consider clothing and cosmetics as too personal to offer as gifts. Also avoid sharp objects like knives and scissors.



**Holidays & Festivals**

Holidays	2005	2006	2007
New Year's Day	January 1	January 1	January 1
Epiphany	January 6	January 6	January 6
St. Joseph's Day	March 19	March 19	March 19
Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) <sup>1</sup>	March 24	April 13	April 5
Good Friday <sup>2</sup>	March 25	April 14	April 6
Easter <sup>3</sup>	March 27	April 16	April 8
Easter Monday	March 28	April 17	April 9
Labor Day	May 1	May 1	May 1
Ascension <sup>*1</sup>	May 6	May 25	May 17
Corpus Christi <sup>*2</sup>	May 26	June 15	June 7
Sacred Heart of Christ (Sagrado Corazon) <sup>*3</sup>	June 3	June 23	June 23
St. Peter and Paul	June 29	June 29	June 29
Independence Day	July 20	July 20	July 20
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	August 15	August 15	August 15
Dia de la Raza (Day of the People)	October 12	October 12	October 12
All Saints Day	November 1	November 1	November 1
Independence of Cartagena	November 11	November 11	November 11
Immaculate Conception	December 8	December 8	December 8
Christmas Day <sup>**1</sup>	December 25	December 25	December 25

<sup>1</sup> Observed the Thursday before Easter. This feast commemorates the institution of the Eucharist, and is one of the oldest rituals of Christian Holy Week. Maundy, or Holy Thursday also marks the beginning of Passover.

<sup>2</sup> Christian feast marking the anniversary of the Crucifixion of Christ, based on the Gregorian calendar.

Easter, a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the first Sunday after the full moon and the vernal equinox (fixed in the Gregorian calendar at March 21), and often observed with Good Friday and Easter Monday. In the West, Easter is predicted using the Gregorian calendar, while Eastern Orthodox Christians use the much older Julian calendar, and celebrate 13 days later. Easter coincides with Spring Break, a school holiday. Some people take the whole week before Easter off.

<sup>\*1</sup> The feast of Ascension takes place 40 days after Easter in both the Christian and Orthodox faiths and celebrates the ascent of Christ into Heaven.

<sup>\*2</sup> Western Catholic feast commemorating the Eucharist, takes place 60 days after Easter, and is typically the time when believers take their first communion.

<sup>\*3</sup> Catholic observance of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, takes place in June.

<sup>\*\*1</sup> Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. In A.D.320, Pope Julius I fixed the date at December 25 based on the Gregorian calendar. The Orthodox church calculates Christmas using the Julian calendar and celebrates 13 days later on January 7.

**Lifecycle****Introduction**

As well as maintaining Colombia's dominant culture—an ethnically European and Roman Catholic majority—Colombia sustains a big indigenous minority in the remote mountain areas. Along the Caribbean coast, Colombia

hosts a large population of African descent. Each of these groups has its own unique traditions and lifestyles; they bring a colorful vibrancy to the country's national identity. The family remains the cornerstone of the highly stratified Colombian society—a society with a strong strain of social conservatism coloring the culture as a whole. This can be seen in society's respect for elders and people of the upper classes, their attitude toward women's role in society, and formality in dress and social interaction. In contrast to the staid Hispanic society based on *machismo*, however, and the power of the dominant ruling families, Colombia faces the chaotic influences of poverty, the drug business, right-wing death squads, and the paramilitary groups that control a significant part of the country.

### **Birth**

In Colombian culture, birth, an auspicious occasion, calls for joy and celebration. Colombians use telephones and telegrams to spread to their kin the happy news of the arrival of a new baby. Family and friends make sure to give pregnant women a lot of care and attention, keep them away from work and negative influences, encourage them to eat healthy food, and shower them with presents.

Expectant mothers in Colombia typically engage in decorating the baby's room, making cribs and playpens, and buying baby carriages, cradles, and clothes. During the eighth month of pregnancy, traditional Colombian families conduct baby showers and pray for the good health of the mother and baby. Doctors check and wash newborns before giving them to the mothers. Most mothers breast-feed their babies for 10 to 20 months.

The Colombian health system uses the latest technology and offers thorough support for most childbirths in the country. Well-trained medical personnel (including doctors, skilled attendants, and pediatricians) become involved in pregnancy testing, antenatal screening, prenatal and postnatal care, birth assistance, and childcare. Surveys indicate that upper-class women normally give birth at hospitals and in clinical settings, under the supervision of experienced doctors. Lower-class women, however, commonly prefer to give birth at home with the help of midwives. The infant mortality rate has dropped from 79 deaths per 1,000 live births in the 1960s to 20 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006.

Being a Christian-dominated country, Colombia considers baptism ceremonies essential for all newborns. Priests conduct baptisms within the first year of birth and in the presence of all elder and close family members. Baptism rituals include christening the baby in a church, appointing *compadres* (godparents), and partying with cake and champagne. In rural as well as urban areas, parents usually choose wealthy or well-known people as godparents for their children. This ensures financial support for the children's entire life and moves the parents to a higher social rung.

Colombians traditionally hold parties on their children's birthdays every year and give them many gifts. They commemorate a girl's 15th birthday in a grand manner and commonly give valuable gifts like gold at this time.

In 2006, abortion, previously illegal and a criminal offense in Colombia, became allowed in cases of rape, fetal complications, and to save the pregnant woman's life. According to the Colombian government's estimates, illegal or unsafe abortions end nearly 30 percent of all pregnancies and remain one of the primary causes for maternal mortality. Less than a quarter of married women of childbearing age use contraceptives; in fact, they do not find modern birth control methods widely available.

### **Childhood**

Colombian children spend most of their childhood under parental care and guidance. In most Colombian families, parents as well as extended family members involve themselves in childcare and upbringing of children.

Grandparents, aunts, and elder female cousins typically play caretaker to infants when parents work away from home. Grandfathers, in particular, play a vital role in the overall development of grandchildren.

Childhood activities in Colombia include playing with siblings or with children of similar age, going to school, learning about ancestral customs, and participating in Christian religious practices. Colombian families highly revere children, although some Colombian parents show favoritism to males.

The Colombian Constitution mandates free education to all children aged 5 to 15. Parents highly value education and consider schooling the best means of teaching children social skills. Children usually enroll in elementary school at the age of four or five. They learn the basic skills of reading, writing, solving math problems, and studying other subjects. Most Colombian children pursue secondary schooling as well as diplomas in subjects of their interest. Statistics reveal a 92 percent youth literacy rate, equal for males and females.

Colombian parents do not expect children to contribute to the household income, but expect them to give paramount importance to their education. With increasing poverty in the country, however, many children have to work, either to support their own education or financially support their families. Most families view child labor as an unavoidable necessity. In Colombia, some 20 percent of children aged 5 to 17 work, half of them without compensation.

Children between 10 and 17 years mainly engage in domestic work, family businesses, flower plantations (processing as well as harvesting) and similar commercial activities. While not many children find employment in

the formal economy, some aged 17 or above find themselves forced to work as paramilitary combatants, coca pickers, laborers at coal mines and construction sites, or prostitutes (in the case of female children). The National Committee for the Eradication of Child Labor is taking steps to eliminate forced child labor in Colombia, but little evidence of progress in enforcement exists.

### **Coming of Age**

Families in Colombia consider children immature and subject them to parental supervision until their adolescence or puberty. Thereafter, they expect children to become self-reliant and take on the vital responsibilities of the household.

Girls undergo their “coming of age” in the *quinceañera* party on their 15th birthday, which signifies their transition to womanhood. Society considers this a milestone in the lives of the girls, and all families celebrate with great fervor. Celebrations include decorating the girl in colorful attire and glittering jewelry and inviting many guests to enjoy music, dancing, and a lavish feast (the size of which reflects the family’s social and economic status).

Coming of age also marks the beginning of discrimination between girls and boys in Colombian culture. Teenage girls, closely supervised by their family elders, remain subject to various restrictions regarding where they can go and with whom. Teenage boys, however, generally remain free to go anywhere, do anything, and exert more independence.

Many Colombian youth face poor socio-economic conditions that force them to give up their education and start working. Many children, from the young ages of six or seven (much earlier than the minimum legal age of 14 for non-hazardous jobs), work for an income outside the home to financially support their families.

### **Dating and Courtship**

Colombian society retains a tolerant attitude toward dating. A growing acceptance of cohabitation over marriage has also emerged in this part of South America. During the 1980s, nearly 84 percent of couples lived together after a Catholic marriage, and only 15 percent cohabited. Nowadays, almost 56 percent of couples prefer live-in relationships over marriage.

Boys and girls start showing interest in each other from the age of 14 or 15. They usually meet at schools, work places, in religious settings, or at social gatherings. Nowadays, online dating has become popular among young Colombians as a way to find compatible partners, as evidenced in a growing presence of dating websites, services, and agencies. No taboos or social stigmas exist to deter couples from dating in Colombia.

Couples no longer require the approval of parents in order to date. The practice of a boy formally asking the permission of the girl’s father has become virtually obsolete in contemporary Colombia. Young people increasingly make their own choices and decisions regarding their intended spouse, marriage, and family life.

Although Colombian people enjoy freedom to choose their life partners and arranged marriages have become uncommon, families still often only allow young people to fraternize or go on a date with a chaperone in tow. Among the upper-middle and upper classes, parents strongly prefer to have their children marry within their own class.

Popular venues for dating among Colombian youth include coffeehouses, restaurants, parties, discos, movies, sports events, and shopping malls. Serious courtships generally last for a minimum of one year and lead to marriage with the parents’ approval.

Manliness, self-reliance, and earning capacity serve as the ideal attributes looked for in a Colombian man. The ideal attributes sought in women include beauty, submissiveness, courtesy, and homemaking abilities.

Religion seems to have no specific impact on dating in Colombia. In fact, premarital sex proves a widely accepted practice. Recent estimates reveal that more than 90 percent of men and 63 percent of women have been involved in premarital sex during their college years.

Catholic prohibitions against birth control have traditionally limited the use of contraceptives in Colombia, but their use has increased in recent years as population control and medical specialists have waged campaigns promoting birth control measures. Women now have easy access to contraceptive devices at pharmacies, hospitals, and clinics.

Colombian culture does not oppose cross-cultural dating, nor does it place many restrictions on inter-religious or inter-ethnic marriages. While it is not uncommon to see white men marrying indigenous or Black Colombians, people from lower and middle classes of *mestizo* or *mulatto* ancestry rarely marry into upper-class families.

### **Marriage**

Colombians consider marriage a spiritual bonding between two souls as well as a legal act. While the legal age of marriage remains 18 years in the country, boys aged 14 years and girls aged 12 years can marry with parental consent.

Colombians conduct the majority of marriages according to Catholic traditions and civil law. Nowadays, however,

due to the great expense of a marriage (usually borne by the bride's family) and the difficulty in getting a divorce after a Catholic marriage, many people prefer civil marriages. They usually celebrate a marriage with music and dancing, lots of food, many guests, and a grand reception. The rituals associated with Catholic Colombian marriages include a church Mass, the hiring of a small band by the groom to sing to the bride, the exchanging of rings, lighting of candles, cutting *el pastel* (the wedding cake), and toasts of *aguardiente*.

Young people have the freedom to choose their life partners, and they generally maintain the same rights after marrying that they held prior to marriage. Colombian laws, however, state that a woman below the age of 18 is legally dependent on her husband and can have no legal property rights.

Colombia, traditionally a patriarchal society, typically bases the roles of men and women in marriage upon gender. Thus, society expects a Colombian husband to display *machismo* in public and in his family life, exert authority, earn an income for the family, and reinforce pride in the family. A Colombian wife has to fulfill her husband's wishes, obey his orders, perform the domestic duties, bear and raise children, and take care of the family.

Parents and in-laws in traditional Colombian families stay very much involved in their offspring's marriage. However, nowadays, couples seldom seek or wait for approval of their family for marriage. Likewise, while newly married couples in earlier days stayed in the husband's parents' home, they more commonly form households separate from their parents these days, as the new spouses both earn an income.

The Colombian legal code permits polygamy and does not penalize any man or woman for having an extramarital sexual affair. Statistics reveal that infidelity has become a growing concern in Colombia, with three men, on average, engaging in love affairs outside marriage for every one woman that does so. Reportedly, cases of infidelity more commonly surface among the upper-middle class elite.

Colombian Civil Law accords equality between spouses and full legal capacity to a married woman. Colombians also now legally accept divorce from both Catholic and civil marriages. Men and women can initiate divorces on several grounds including mutual consent, infidelity, and adultery. Couples of Catholic marriages separate by an annulment of their marriage by the Church. Courts hold legal proceedings for the divorce of couples in civil marriages. After the divorce, spouses liquidate any jointly owned property, and each spouse receives an equal share. The judge determines alimony and child custody, taking into consideration the best interests of the child.

### **Family and Parenting**

A typical family unit in Colombia consists of a father, mother, and their children. The extended family system, where parents, children, grandparents, and other close relatives live together in the same house, also remains prevalent in many areas. Most Colombian families have two to four children, and the number may increase in upper-class families. The average family size in the country is five: two adults and three children.

Children usually function as the center of attraction in Colombian families. Although families consider sons the future breadwinners and true bearers of the family lineage, they do not ignore their daughters.

Ensuring a good upbringing for their children remains one of the primary duties of parents in Colombia. From early childhood, families teach children about social behavior, moral values, respect and obedience to elders, religiosity, and the value of education. They also encourage them to dream big, be brave, and strive hard to succeed in all their endeavors.

Like in most South American countries, the head of the household, the husband or father, earns the family income and makes most of the major decisions regarding family economy and social status. Wives and mothers typically shoulder responsibility for cooking, cleaning, washing laundry, raising the children, supervising their children's educations, and managing other domestic activities. In lower and middle-class families, young women also join the workforce to financially support their families.

In typical Colombian families, husbands go to work while their wives look after the household, children, and the elderly. Families of upper- and middle-class women in particular, prohibit them from working outside the home. In today's Colombian family (especially those in the lower classes and the lower-middle class), both parents share equal roles in family income, childcare duties, and decision-making responsibilities. When parents work outside the home, they leave children at daycare centers, nurseries, or under the care of their extended family.

Preadolescent Colombian children (up to 10 years of age) from poor families sleep in the same bed with their mother, or next to the bed, on the floor. On the other hand, children from well-off families have sleep and play rooms separate from their parents.

A primary duty of male adolescents in Colombian culture requires learning masculine behaviors from their fathers and other elder male family members. Elder women in the household (mothers, aunts, and grandmothers) ensure that female adolescents adhere to feminine habits and activities. Society allows male adolescents to freely socialize in the neighborhood, but restricts females within the household. Traditionally, Colombian adolescents stayed with their parents until marriage, but these days they leave home earlier to pursue higher education or to do business.

The leisure activities of a typical Colombian family include participating in social activities (like secular/religious festivals and beauty pageants), movie-going, and attending bullfights. *Paseos* (outings to the countryside), visiting

friends to chat, cycling, swimming, or simply watching *fútbol* (soccer) also prove popular pastimes with Colombian families.

Colombian families generally enjoy their lunch (the main meal of the day) together. However, due to the hectic pace of life, with most fathers (sometimes both parents) spending most of their waking hours in the office, lunching together becomes impossible, and families reserve this treat for holidays.

Due to the strong influence of the Catholic Church in Colombia, long-lasting marriages prove more common than divorces or separations. A judicial decree of divorce that specifies child support, custody of children, parental authority, and visitation rights dissolves the marriage. Colombians reputedly maintain the strong support of their families throughout their lives. While parents earnestly perform their duties when children are young, adult children take good care of their aged or widowed parents.

Grandparents in any Colombian family help out with childcare, their main role, especially when women engage in economic activities outside of the household. Grandparents in this country typically stay with their children and grandchildren.

### **Work / Professional Life**

The minimum legal age for employment in Colombia remains 14, although individuals aged 12 can be hired in exceptional cases. Workplaces cannot employ those below 18 in hazardous or underground work.

Many Colombian male and female children below this age are, however, forced into labor due to the poor socio-economic conditions of their families. Estimates indicate that nearly 90 percent of them engage in hazardous tasks, while others work as day laborers at flower plantations, construction sites, and small enterprises.

Generally, Colombian people can freely choose a profession based on their qualifications and aptitudes. The average unemployment rate reached 13.6 percent in 2004, although job opportunities are increasing, especially in the informal sector. Colombian women, particularly among low-income sectors, have a higher rate of unemployment than men, and their representation in formal-sector jobs remains low.

An average Colombian employee works eight or nine hours per day, and up to 48 hours per week. While banks and government offices operate from 8a.m. to 5p.m. with a lunch break at noon, private businesses open from 9a.m. to 6:30p.m. Most workplaces open Monday to Saturday.

Colombian women have the same legal rights and access to jobs as their male counterparts. In reality, however, society restricts women to feminine-oriented areas of the economy like horticultural labor (80% of laborers in the flower industry are women), clerical/secretarial jobs, food processing, and textile work. Furthermore, Colombian women suffer disproportionate employment in low-paid and low-status jobs, earning 28 percent less compensation than men who perform equivalent work.

Colombian women from lower and lower-middle class families often hold outside jobs, contribute to the family income, and gain the respect of their male partners. They continue to work even after having children in order to maintain the family income.

The official retirement age for men and women in Colombia is 60 and 55, respectively. A well-planned social security system in both public and private sectors provides health, pension, and death benefits to retired employees.

### **Old Age**

Colombian culture promotes respect for, and obedience to, older people. Colombians deeply revere old age and hold the elderly in high esteem. The average life expectancy in the country registers 68 years for men and 76 years for women.

Surveys indicate that the majority of aged people in Colombia live with their own children; less than 1 percent live in nursing homes or old-age care centers. Society attributes vital importance to the elderly for their roles as grandparents in extended families. While women in the household manage primary responsibility for childcare, grandparents also stay involved in educating and entertaining their grandchildren. Grandfathers in particular, reputed to enjoy the company of children, pass on family traditions and ethics to them.

Colombian children pay tribute to their parents by caring for them during their old age. It remains extremely rare to see old people harassed, abandoned, or sent out of the home in Colombia. However, private (60%) as well as state-sponsored (40%) nursing homes do exist, where a few old men and women with no relatives, no income, or from poor family backgrounds make their homes.

### **Death**

The Colombians primarily derive their view of death from the teachings of the Catholic Church, which emphasize the eternal consequences of “sin” and the power of “redemption.”

Rituals for the dead include a memorial service after a church Mass, the funeral procession (usually to a cemetery), and mourning at the deceased’s home after the burial (regarded as essential for the soul of the deceased).

Amerindians and Colombians of African descent imbue these Catholic traditions with elements of their pre-Christian belief systems as well, particularly the belief that the spirits of the dead continue to live on in some fashion.

Colombians commemorate All Souls' Day to honor the spirits of the dead. On the eve of this religious holiday, people light candles on their windows or participate in candlelight processions. In the morning, they go to the church and pray.

Colombians also firmly believe in the Christian view of the afterlife, with its last judgment and its determination of the soul's place in heaven or hell.

## **Religion**

### **Religions of the Country**

The overwhelming majority of the population of Colombia (95 percent) is Christian, and Roman Catholicism has been the dominant Christian denomination since the arrival of the Spanish. Catholics constitute 81 percent of the population, non-evangelical Christians make up another 10 percent, evangelicals comprise 3 percent, and about 2 percent profess to have no religious affiliation at all.

Among the evangelical groups, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church has 180,000 followers, Jehovah's Witnesses have 110,000 adherents, and the Church of Latter-Day Saints has about 130,000 adherents. Other minority faiths include Judaism (with between five to ten thousand followers), Islam, animism, and various syncretistic belief systems.

### **Basic Tenets**

The Catholic Church believes itself the legitimate successor to the ministry of Jesus Christ through uninterrupted apostolic succession from St. Peter to the present Pope. Like most other Christian faiths, Catholicism is both monotheistic and trinitarian, following one God in three forms, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It holds that Jesus Christ, the Son, died and rose from the dead to redeem humanity from its sins. It considers both scripture as well as church teachings and sacraments to be legitimate sources of revelation and grace. The sacrament of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is usually celebrated at Mass; Catholics go through a period of study before they may receive communion for the first time, as they believe in the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

The Catholic Church believes that all human life (from conception to natural death) is sacrosanct, and that human life should not be debased by material considerations. Therefore, it opposes abortion, artificial birth control, cloning, eugenics, and genetic manipulation.

### **Spiritually Devout or Nominal**

Colombians attend church regularly, and religious service is an important part of family life. Women, in particular, attend the Mass more regularly than men as they consider observance of religious rites an attestation of their virtues.

People in rural areas are supposedly more devout, and their Catholicism often combines Christian practices with indigenous, African, and/or Spanish customs. Colombians worship the patron saints and honor them each year with a *fiesta*. The urban lower class communities, particularly those with many rural migrants, practice rural folk religion.

### **Religious Conflict**

In general, people of varying religious denominations co-exist peacefully. Evangelical churches, clergy, and worshipers have been in the crossfire between the governmental forces and the leftist guerrillas, but this has more to do with territorial matters than with religious issues.

### **Secularism**

The Constitution expressly states that there is no official church or religion and prohibits discrimination based on religion. A 1994 Constitutional Court decision declared religious characterization of the country unconstitutional, nullifying for all practical purposes many articles of a 1973 agreement between the government and the Vatican.

### **Superstitions**

Fear of supernatural punishment is prevalent among people in rural villages, and they try to fulfill their religious obligations with the utmost devotion. Many superstitious beliefs surround the devotion to patron saints, considered more accessible than God and sometimes willing to intercede on behalf of the individual's material wants.

### **Religious Clerics**

The church's traditional position as a moral and social arbiter has ensured its continued influence in public life. The parish church is the center of nearly every community, and the local priest is often the primary authority figure in small communities. Recent migration and displacement of priests to urban areas because of the ongoing civil war

has left avoid of religious leadership in certain communities for an indefinite period. Priests receive training at seminaries such as the Colombian Theological Seminary.

### **State Regulations**

The government partially supports the Catholic Church, and all legally recognized churches, seminaries, monasteries, and convents are exempt from national and local taxes.

### **Religion and Public Life**

In Colombia, the most important role played by the Catholic Church in public life is education. In fact, the official powers vested with the Colombian Catholic Church suggest that it has the strongest influence on education of any Latin American country. The Church has its own Secretariat of Education, which is responsible for a system of more than 3,500 schools and universities, estimated to cover nearly 85 percent of the students in preschool, 20 percent of those in primary school, and 40 to 50 percent of those in secondary schools and universities. Higher education under the church system is reputedly of high quality and incorporates religious courses in the curriculum. The Church also runs a literacy program that reaches thousands of rural Colombians.

Church-operated research institutes, founded in the 1960s, conduct highly reliable socioeconomic studies on topics such as housing and population problems, Church-sponsored development programs, and land reform.

The Church also took up mission activity and social welfare programs in the mid-1980s. Currently there are about 1,100 charitable institutions (orphanages, hospitals, and leprosariums) run by the Church system.

The Church has also been actively involved with labor organizations since the mid-1980s to counteract the growing power of the liberal-backed unions and Communist parties. Toward this end, it formed the Union of Colombian Workers, a labor union based on the Catholic social doctrine.

### **Religious Holidays and Ceremonies**

The major religious holidays include Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday, Corpus Christi, All Saints' Day, Immaculate Conception, and Saint Peter and Saint Paul's Day. Holy days of minority religions are not public holidays.

Baptism, Holy Communion, marriages, and funerals are the main Church ceremonies. In addition, every village and town has a patron saint's day, and certain cities have distinctive local religious festivals. For example, Colombians in Cartagena celebrate Candlemas, the feast of the Virgin of La Candelaria, who reputedly protected the people of the city from the plague and from pirates. Hundreds of pilgrims carry lighted candles and climb the La Popa hill in Cartagena to pay to the Virgin in the Church of Santa Cruz.

### **Government and Religion**

The Constitution grants freedom of faith, and the government generally protects this right. All religions are technically required to accede to a 1997 law in order to obtain recognition of the State. The criteria for granting recognition include parameters such as the total membership of the religion, the extent of its popular acceptance in society, the content of the organization's statutes, and its required behavioral norms. Nearly 13 non-Roman Catholic churches have received accession and non-Christian religious groups are not party to the 1997 agreement.

### **Persecution**

The government does not persecute outside religions so long as they restrict their activity within the legal framework of the Constitution. The government did close down a small Taoist commune in the mountainous region of Santander in 2004, but an investigation and testimony of former commune members revealed that the commune's leadership had links with an illegal armed group and was engaged in murders and other crimes in the area.

The Ministry of Foreign Relations issues visas to foreign missionaries and administrators of religious denominations that have official recognition. Some evangelical missionaries have reported that government officials denied entry to their groups on grounds that they are not recognized.

There is no restriction on the possession of religious literature or materials, and people are free to display their religious symbols in public.

### **Religious Tolerance**

Although the Constitution decreed the separation of church and state in 1991, the Roman Catholic Church remains a privileged institution. Non-Roman Catholic churches are required to accede to the 1997 public law before they can receive recognition.

Protestant denominations have complained they have had to locate their churches in commercial and industrial zones as required by the city planning authorities, which restrict the number of churches in residential areas. They view it as favoritism because most Roman Catholic cathedrals were in central locations throughout the country

before the enactment of zoning laws.

### **Protocols for Foreigners**

Visitors to the country can freely participate in the religious activities in Colombia, but non-Catholics attending Catholic Mass should refrain from taking the communion bread and wine.

## **Cultural Stereotypes**

### **Stereotypes of Colombians as accepted by foreigners**

#### **Rich or Poor**

*Colombia is a country where there is no middle ground. You are either super-rich or ridiculously poor.*

Colombia has several image problems, not the least of which is that people often think of it as a nation of peasant farmers overseen by a filthy rich set of corrupt plantation owners, who spend their time in urban palaces. Colombia actually has a large middle class that developed beginning in the 1920s from medium-sized farm owners and from a growing industrial base. This middle-class forms the group that is spearheading change in Colombia, and they are the most concerned about the national image and progress.

#### **Drug Cartels**

*Colombians live off of the drug trade but are very resentful when foreigners criticize them for it.*

If you ask just about any non-Colombian what first comes to mind when the name of the country is mentioned, the response will be “drugs”. Captured drug-lords living in posh prisons, media stories about the Medellin Cartel, and Hollywood shoot’em-up movies have all made the drug image of Colombia as famous and unshakeable as the “arrogant Frenchman” and the “loudmouthed American.” Many Colombians (those that travel, at least) hate this image, but the lower classes often revel in its tough-guy bravado. The “narco-rhythm” style of pop music that glorifies the drug trade is the gangster rap of Colombia and enjoys a particularly eager following.

#### **Everyday Violence**

*Violence in Colombia is so common that locals are no longer fazed by it. Life is cheap and getting cheaper.*

Shootouts on the street, kidnappings, guerilla army shakedowns at impromptu roadblocks, and murders of judges have done a great deal to damage any kind of tourism that Colombia had. Many countries post travel warnings for their citizens to avoid the country altogether, or at least avoid travel at night when there. Defenders of Colombian security say the violence is exaggerated or that it is rarely direct at tourists; but with the highest murder rate in the world and an estimated 45 reported kidnappings a month, it is hard to convince any but the most adventurous tourists to visit Colombia.

#### **Family Ties**

*Colombian families are very closely-knit and grandparents are kept as close as children within households.*

Colombians have always seen themselves as a “special people” among their South American cousins, so they tend towards insularity. Family support systems are common through all the social strata, although urbanization and immigration are taking their toll. Unmarried adults tend to live with their parents, even into their thirties, and the family patriarch usually has a good deal to say about marital and career choices in Colombian families. Divorce is rare due to the predominance of Catholicism and the effect it would have on the all-important family unity.

#### **Class Distinctions**

*Colombia is a very stratified culture that retains remnants of the colonial class structure even today.*

In Colombia’s early history after Spanish conquest, the *peninsulares* (those with direct bloodlines to Spain) became the ruling elite. Next came the *criollos* of mixed Indian and Spanish blood followed by the native Indian tribes and then the *zambos* (black slaves). Nowadays the mestizos (formerly the *criollos*) make up 58 percent of the population, whites (the *peninsulares*) 20 percent, and mulattos 14 percent. Pure-blood indigenous Indians make up only 1 percent of the population. The white ruling class remains in place and are held there by intermarriage among the top families, while the Indian population remains in decline.

### **Stereotypes of COLOMBIANS as accepted by Colombians**

#### **Not Just Latin American**

*Colombians are special and our culture is significantly different than our neighbors in South America.*

The image Colombians like least after their reputation as drug dealers is being thought of as “Latin Americans.” It is easy for foreigners to lump all of the Spanish-speaking countries in South and Central America into the category of “Latin”, but the Colombians beg to differ. According to Colombians, they have different songs, legends, dances, art, literature, et cetera, et cetera than anyone else on the continent. Foreigners will find it different, but not that different.



## Greatest People in the World

*We Colombians are the warmest, friendliest, and most open people in the world. Come and see for yourself.*

In an attempt to counteract their violent profile, some Colombians go overboard in their attempt to show other people that they are, in fact, very nice. Of course, everyone knows that the vast majority of Colombians are not violent criminals with zero respect for human life, but the Colombians are keen to make sure you know that they know. You might encounter these good will ambassadors in your country or theirs, and the message will be the same: Colombians are very nice!

## Tired of the Image

*It is our own fault that we have been saddled with our terrible image. Our government is powerless to help.*

Colombia-oriented websites are full of bitter remarks about how Colombians are treated at airports and border crossings -- even by their close South American neighbors who should know better. Since the bad image is linked to crime, Colombians have become increasingly impatient with their government to clean up the country's streets and its reputation. The criminal image did not happen overnight, but it is only a few decades old, so many Colombians hope it can be turned around in short order.

## Puppet State

*Our relationship with the United States has always been one of a needy but resentful supplicant.* The United States was one of the first to recognize Colombia as an independent country in 1822, and the economic connections between the two have spanned three centuries. When the U.S. peeled off the Panama region from Colombia through political intrigues in 1903, the relationship soured. U.S. assistance (some might say insistence) in the last two decades with Colombia's war against the narcotics trade and leftist insurgencies have each been categorized as both helpful or devastating at various times. Many Latin American neighbors see Colombia as a puppet state of the North American bully.

# Superstitions & Folklore

## General

The Spaniards were the first to colonize Colombia between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as part of their Latin American conquest. Today, Spain continues to have the greatest influence on the Colombian way of life—from the locals' spoken language to some of its superstitions. A number of prevailing beliefs in this country have traces of Christianity, a contribution from Spain that made Colombia the most dominant supporter of Roman Catholicism in South America. However, most superstitions followed today come in the form of urban legends (still popular among the young and old alike), talismans, dream interpretations, and New Year good luck rituals.

## Specific Superstitions

### Tonina

The *tonina* (pink dolphin), found in the Amazon River, is the world's biggest freshwater dolphin at 2.80 meters in length. Originating from popular Colombian legends, this dainty-colored dolphin became one of the most commonly used subjects of superstitions. For example, Colombian legend maintains that this creature evolves into a man and a womanizer in its next life, and it causes illness to its slaughterers' children.

According to one legend, the *tonina* was once a dashing young man whose features God envied, thus making the man into a water mammal. Another is that dolphins come out of the river every June as men dressed in white to seduce and impregnate women. The dolphin is also believed to molest menstruating women swimming in rivers. These legends seemingly rationalize the incidences of fatherless children in Colombia.

### Bola de Fuego

The *bola de fuego* (fireball) in Colombian superstition pertains to a revolving ball of light, measuring approximately 2 meters wide, which can be seen moving within grasslands and hills during the darkest nights. When it touches the ground, it bursts into flames accompanied by a strange, loud scream. It is also believed that when seen up close, the fireball is actually a flaming human skeleton.

Various stories of the fireball's origins exist. Some say it was actually the soul of a wicked bishop, who was punished and had to wander in misery; others say that it was the soul of a cursed girl, while for others, it is just a plain spirit in disguise.

A folktale explains why it produces a sound after it drops and blazes. According to the tale, a woman was married to a cattle ranch owner, who was at most times manic, jealous, and irritable. When her husband told her to prepare food for himself and his 60 cowboy laborers, who would be staying for the night, she became unreasonably infuriated. Her behavior irritated her husband, who left the house and was not able to chop wood for cooking. When the wife learned that there was no wood to use, she became angry again and picked up an ax to do the chopping herself. While doing this, her son Juan suddenly cried and this annoyed her even more. She went back to their house with the log and ax in hand and started hacking the poor child to his death, as if the devil possessed her. It

drove her insane, and the gods guarding the grassland threw a curse at her.

The sad folktale is believed to be the reason behind the shrieks when a fireball strikes; the woman is now a nomadic spirit looking for her son Juan. Men bearing the name Juan feared her because of the gods' penalty that she will keep on wandering until she finds seven Juans born to the same mother. The fireball is often depicted as a female skeleton holding an ax and a boy's head. Upon seeing the fireball, one must throw curses at it.

### **Sayona**

*Sayona* is the name of the female ghost that makes its presence felt to flirtatious men, unfaithful male lovers, and philandering husbands. It is described as a horrible-looking, thin, night creature, about three to four meters tall with long hair and nails. *Sayona* first adopts the façade of a seductive and svelte woman of captivating beauty, attending parties as a socialite and luring the men she desires to come with her. When she gets a man to kiss her, her fangs begin to show and her look changes drastically. She kills by eating the man alive. Then, she disappears into the savannah and wails. Another version of the *Sayona* legend is that she also appears in cemeteries with her face hidden, only to be discovered by the witnesses as an ugly skull.

Locals say that *Sayona* was a victim of grave deception prior to being a ghost. She was a married woman who gave birth when one of her persistent suitors lied about a rumor that her husband was having an affair with her mother. Enraged, she murdered her mother and burned the house down. Too late she realized that her son was still inside the burning hut, and she failed to save him. She let out desperate cries, went mad, and rushed to the grassland.

To prevent the *Sayona* from torturing its victim, an item made of a material taken from a *cachicamo* (a toothless, warm-blooded animal) must be worn. This natural material can be skin, which is often used in manufacturing bags, or nails, an alternative to beads in fashion jewelry.

### **La Llorona (The Crying Woman)**

The tale of *La Llorona*, the weeping specter, gave rise to the legend that a howling dog during the night signals her presence. Its whines can be heard on Easter in cemeteries and dark places. *La Llorona* was a woman who killed her sick son because she could not bear his whimpering. Devastated by the crime, her husband was provoked to curse her—that she would cry endlessly while wandering aimlessly with the dead child on her back. She, in turn, committed suicide, and her soul carried on with the curse.

In some documentation, she is depicted as promiscuous and had a child out of wedlock. So the people would not condemn her as immoral, she drowned her child during a full moon. Realizing her mistake, she went back to where she committed the act, and she has never stopped looking for her child's body. Natives describe her as a skull-faced, red-eyed phantom with unkempt hair and untidy clothing.

### **El Silbador/Silbon**

*El Silbador/Silbon* (the whistler) is actually a ghost, and speaking in the native dialect of the *Llaneros* (Colombian and Western cowboys) will keep him far from sight. In Colombia, he is called *Silbador*. Since the Colombians share this legend with the people of Venezuela, the latter call The Whistler *Silbon*. He looks scary, often illustrated in stories as a thin man standing six meters tall, who wanders on top of trees, scaring people with his whistle, and rattling a sack full of bones. He is said to appear during the rainy season, especially in May and June.

Two adaptations about this creature are passed on from time to time. He is depicted in both as a grieving soul, but the explanations for this vary. One holds that he killed his father, whose *asadura* (the group of organs composed of the heart, lungs, and liver) he ate afterwards; the other recounts that upon death he experienced unwanted isolation, something to which he was unaccustomed as he partied hard and slept with many women. He targets women who are either heavy with child or travel late at night. In another popular superstition, a woman dies when he whistles softly, and when he does it loudly, death befalls someone of the opposite sex.

### **The Emerald Gem**

Belonging to the same genus as the aquamarine, the emerald is a medium, green-colored gemstone containing amounts of chromium and iron elements. It brings pride to Colombia, the world's biggest producer of the stone. The evolution of the name Emerald came from the Greek word *smaragdōs*, the Middle English word *esmeralde*, and the French word *esmeraude*, which all meant green. It was said to be associated with the Greek goddess Aphrodite and was considered a symbol of faith and immortality. Egyptian Pharaohs first discovered the Emerald gems in a site called "Cleopatra's mines," near the Red Sea during the period from 3000 to 1500 B.C. The Chibcha Indians mined some of these stones in Colombia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which started the manufacturing tradition that continues to the present day. The recovery of emeralds also occurred in the 1800s, and a few were mysteriously found in the Legbach ravine at Hebachthal, Germany and the Ural Mountains in Russia. However, attempts to find a new batch of emeralds following the discoveries did not turn out as well as expected due to the scarcity of the original produce. As a result, American jewelry specialist Carroll F. Chatham created a special process of making artificial emeralds in the 1930s that contributed to the bulk production of modern emeralds.

Emeralds are believed to help in achieving better health, such as relieving eye sores, preventing the occurrence of

epilepsy, healing dysentery, maintaining good heart condition, and providing articulacy and brainpower. Some also believe it preserves chastity and drives away evil forces.. Due to the gem's remarkable properties and its present value, public and private organizations in Colombia have been fighting over the known landmines in the country since the 1970s, which resulted in controversies and cases of corruption, disputes, illegal acquisition, smuggling, and even murder.

### **Other Superstitions**

#### **Actions**

- Sweeping outwards means getting rid of luck from the house.
- Cover mirrors during rainy days because mirrors are perceived to magnetize forces of lightning.
- Underwear worn inside out is an amulet against the effects of witchcraft.
- Leaving a broom in an upside down position keeps visitors away.
- Dropping utensils will determine the gender of the guest to be expected. If it is a fork that was dropped, it will be a male visitor; while for a spoon, it will be a female. If it is a knife, then it is the mother-in-law.
- Trimming of trees on a Good Friday helps in fruit growth.
- Etching cross figures on the front hoofs of the horse when riding at night prevents ghosts from blocking the way.
- Praying to San Marcos saves one from a bull attack; praying to San Carmelo in secret helps a wild horse to behave and avoid its attack; praying to San Pablo will prevent snake bites.
- Drinking cold coffee makes a person susceptible to witchcraft because potions are easily concocted with this drink.
- To treat a dog bite, cut in half a lemon still in its tree. Apply the cut lemon on the wound while leaving the other half to dry up and eventually wither in the tree. The teeth of the dog will fall off when the dried up lemon falls to the ground.
- Babies smiling at no one are believed to be playing with angels.
- Taking a bath between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will turn one into a fish.

#### **Animals**

- When a *bujeo* (river dolphin) is killed and its body parts are removed to be used for *pusanga* (witchcraft) or as a talisman, this animal becomes a human ghost (if a man killed him, it will appear as a woman) and gets back at its slayers by bringing them to the waters and drowning them. The dolphin's tooth, when added to a mixture of oil, is a medication to the deranged.
- A howling owl brings news of a possible death of a close relative or loved-one.
- A ray's sting soothes toothache.
- A pig's agitation is a sign of rainfall.
- For extra strength, roosters are given meat and red pepper.
- When the night is dark, natives hear the unique galloping sound and strange whining of the horse dubbed as the *Lame Horse*; they will then see a black horse with red eyes, three legs, and a suffocating smell.
- Hearing a *ciriri* bird chirp will make one witness a bad luck event.
- When curlew birds fly into a house, the family can expect the birth of a baby girl. Two of them signify a baby boy, while three or any odd number will still mean a baby girl's birth.
- A hummingbird's gouged and roasted heart, an alligator's fat, and a little perfume will make an effective love potion. A person should apply it on the palm so that a handshake will result in reciprocated emotions.
- Snake bites can be avoided between 9a.m. and 4p.m., when the sun's rays are at their strongest.
- A crying dog is a sign of death or a demon's presence.
- Before they became animals, monkeys were believed to be fallen angels.
- The croaking of crickets foretells good fortune.
- A person shall die when a fly touches his face.
- To avoid seeing vultures (black birds of prey) after slaughtering a cow or calf, cut off the tip of the dead animal's tongue, place it underneath its shoulder blade while it is still tied lying down.
- If a hunter's main purpose of killing a calf is to eat it, he/she has to put salt before cooking and serving it. The hunter is prohibited from bathing that same day or else he shall experience paralysis.
- To stop floods, bury a *copore* or *bocachico* fish in a beach.
- Gamblers should follow a ritual to stay lucky. They kill a black cat during Good Friday, extract its bones, and then bury them in a busy place. The gamblers then roast the bones and stuff a pouch made of frog skin with its residue after a year. The end product shall serve as good luck charm, which can also be useful

for favorable business deals.

- The tiger can determine fear by trailing a person's footsteps and stepping on them. If the paw of the tiger suddenly trembles while stepping on a footprint, it will convince the animal even more to hunt the scared person.

### **Bad Luck**

- A leap year
- Walking under ladders and walking under staircases on Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup>
- Black butterflies or bumble bees entering houses
- The number 13
- Weddings on Tuesdays
- The act of shattering mirrors
- Being the third person to light up a cigarette stick from the same matchstick
- Salt spills
- Howling of an owl
- A clear vision of the bride's face when dreaming of a wedding
- Having a woman as a first customer (applies to any type of business)

### **Body Parts**

- A female's tooth and body part can be amulets for love, catching fish, and hunting animals.
- When a person suddenly feels that his earlobes are warming up, he is being talked about behind his back.
- To relieve muscle aches, get a massage from a pregnant woman.
- Itching of the right palm or having someone prick it by accident means money will come.

### **Death and Funerals**

- A burial is said to happen at a place seen glowing with blue lights at night.
- The "cold of the corpse" afflicts newborn babies who come close to someone who just attended a funeral. This can also lead to the infant's death.
- A person who finds the cat behind the bushes whose tail is attached to the rainbow's end will die.
- For a peaceful death, a dying person should be given water in front of a crucifix and be asked for his final wish.
- For the soul of the dead to have a peaceful journey to the other world, his personal things should be kept in a wooden cabinet.

### **Dreams**

- Dreaming of water is good luck, while dreaming of snakes means otherwise.
- Dreaming of bathing in the river and hearing gunshots at the same time means the following day is not advisable for hunting animals because there will be heavy rains and typhoons.
- Dreaming of bathing under the rain or sinking underwater and hitting the bottom hard means death is not far behind. The water here symbolizes the soil to be used for the burial.
- Dreaming of being struck by an arrow on the lower limb is a warning against a possible snakebite.
- Dreaming of purchasing a wristwatch, weapon, beds, canoes, and hammocks means luck in marriage and finding the right woman soon.
- More money can be expected after having a dream of being stabbed in the face and suffering from hemorrhage as a result.
- Dreaming of the Virgin Mary and Jesus means poverty and unemployment.
- Dreaming about the Devil results in good fortune.
- A dream of oneself weeping for a family member who died means having a delicious meal the day after.
- Dreaming of a tree that is hard to knock down is a sign of a future fight with a hard-to-beat enemy.
- Dreaming of sex with a current lover will take away any sex life and break the relationship.

### **Food**

- A lemon tied as a chain to a sick dog's neck will suck its fever out.
- *La Vieja Comilona*, the vampire-looking woman with a bottomless pit of a stomach, will eat the rice or grilled plantain left unattended on the table.

### Legend Characters

- Women treat the *el anima sola* (the lonely spirit) as a patron saint. The spirit once belonged to a woman who did not give water to Jesus Christ when He asked for it during his crucifixion. Therefore, God sentenced her soul to wander until Judgment Day, when all souls will face Him and justify their existence on Earth.
- The *Animero* is an apparition usually seen in November and every Holy Week that is kneeling at every stop and asking people to cry for the dead in purgatory. He looks like the Nazarene holding a cross and a gas lamp. God punished him for a broken promise, and he shall face those living in the present who did the same and showed disrespect for the religion.
- A cowboy ghost on a horse is usually seen on the night of a full moon. Those who hear him arrive will think that there are a number of singing cowboys, but he is just alone riding on his black horse that shimmers like gold. The cowboy looks creepy—his face is black, his eyes are yellow, his teeth are gold-like, and he has a daunting laugh.
- An elf is believed to be the soul of an unbaptized child.
- The *Madremonte* is the mountain and jungle goddess and a patron of women who pray to her for safety against male-initiated crimes.
- A *Duppy* is a spirit of the deceased that appears at night and in dreams. This is an English term that also means “ghost.”
- Witches, according to Colombian legend, are fearless women who entrusted their souls to the Devil and fly with wings growing from their breasts while riding on brooms. A witch can change its shape into a bat, hen, cat, or a snake. As a bat, she seeks out a newborn child's blood. Her gruesome physique is composed of an aging face, popped eyes, pointed nose, disheveled hair, and beggar-like clothes.

### Miscellaneous Omens/Symbols

- A pair of scissors left open when not in use results in visits from undesirable guests.
- A person may expect visitors upon seeing a spark of a bonfire flame.
- A loud crackling sound coming from a lighted wood in a furnace signifies a visitor coming.
- When a rainbow becomes visible, it stops the rain.
- For Colombians, every color represents an illness, its classification, and gravity. The colors yellow, red, and white are for minor illnesses (the “light” group), while blue, black, and green are for the untreatable. To explain further, black and white are symbols of bad direction and light, respectively; red is the color of sexuality; yellow is the color of light, blue is North Colombia's color and people blame the arrival of health outbreaks from that area, therefore, it is also the color of funerals; green, like blue, is synonymous with death; orange is for fertility.

### New Year's Day Good Luck Acts

- Aloe leaves placed behind house doors
- Fine grains of rice under the bed
- Eating 12 grapes without peels and syrup
- Burning incense on every corner of the house
- Leaving a small amount (about a handful) of rice grains or lentils under the bed will result in constant food supply.
- Using wheat spikes and garlic flowers as charms.
- Reciting this prayer to San Silvestre on New Year's Day at midnight: “*Señor San Silvestre del monte mayor, guarda nuestra casa y su alrededor de bruja hechicera y hombre malhechor*” (Sir St. Silvester of the greater mount, guard every corner of our house against witches and criminals).
- An ear of wheat in the living room .
- Asking for water from neighbors and washing the house with it.
- Burning incense and myrrh and reciting this chant out loud: “*que entre el bien y salga el mal*” (Let good in and evil out).

- Kissing someone of the opposite sex while greeting Happy New Year.
- Changing outfits and wearing white at midnight to remove sickness and curses.
- Bathing and relaxing in rue, sagebrush, myrtle, chamomile, walnut wood, laurel, and hemlock when the clock strikes 12 on New Year's Eve. Then, upon waking up the day after, have a cup of coffee with the aroma of a flower of hue or a drink with *aguardiente* (rough brandy), rum, *chichi* (American beer), and cloves.
- Wearing new clothing and eating a well-balanced diet.
- Creating an "old year doll" by stuffing used clothing with sawdust, paper, and fireworks. Writing all the unpleasant things done in the past year on a piece of paper and pinning it on the doll. Put the doll in a public place and light it up with a lighter or match so the bad things go down with the "old year doll."
- Upon hearing the chiming of bells at New Year, slam the door to kick last year's spirits out of the house.
- Stuffing pockets with paper bills.
- Putting jewelry in a glass with champagne then pouring the liquor all over the body.
- Asking for three coins from a companion and wishing for desired objects in the name of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and the Three Kings.
- Using a lettuce leaf to wrap a green paper bill.
- Walking around with travel gear in tow and bidding farewell to anyone on sight, or requesting from a relative a heartfelt greeting of a happy trip. This will mean a great year of fantastic trips.
- Card reading is ideal on the eve of New Year or the day itself, as heavenly bodies are believed to be at their strongest and most cooperative nature.
- A potpourri made of cinnamon, cloves, coffee, myrrh, incense, storax, sugar, and pine or cedar cones should be handy on the first hour of New Year's Eve. This mixture is called *sahumerios*.
- Putting three potatoes under the bed at midnight without the lights on. One should be peeled, the other half-peeled, and the third unpeeled. At 6 a.m., reach out for a potato underneath without looking. Getting the unpeeled potato will mean the New Year will be a good one, half-peeled means it will just be an average year, while for the peeled, a bad year is to be expected.
- Lentils, when eaten in a bowl on January 1, serve as a good omen.
- Finding many bubbles inside an egg, after cracking it in a glass of water at the start of the New Year and putting it under the bed overnight, is a sign of a good new year. Shapes formed from egg whites have corresponding interpretations: a boat means a good travel year; a house means moving in; two people in a long garment and crown means matrimony; a cradle means birth; a tomb means death; while the formation of no shape at all or the egg sinking in the glass is bad luck.
- Jump with a group before midnight of New Year, and the one who falls down will be unlucky.
- Give an apple to someone while holding a suitcase for frequent traveling in the coming year.

### Pregnancy and childbirth

- A pregnant woman eating twin bananas, corncocks, or any food that comes in double will give birth to twin children (a disgrace in Colombia).
- Eating foods with peels will result in a double placenta, while drinking water makes labor more difficult.
- Drinking using a brand new cup will result in the newborn's baldness.
- Crabs, when eaten while pregnant, will make the baby dark-skinned.

### Talismans

- A San Benito medal frightens unwanted neighbors.
- A Virgin Carmen Scapular and a San Isidro medal are defenses against *La Muelona*, the lady with fangs who looks for men to eat.
- A figure of a crucified child
- A needle inserted in a dying person's heel
- A rabbit's foot
- Objects like a broom by the main house entrance, flower and garlic amulets, and a mixture of mustard leaves, rice, and barley spilled on top of the bed will repel witches. Consumption of salt and pepper will kill them, while a cat or toad will be heard making noises inside their stomachs.

## **International Trade**

### **Wood Packaging Material**

Colombia has adopted and implemented the requirements of ISPM 15 (*International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures: Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade*\*) as of 15 September 2005.

\*ISPM 15 is produced by the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Colombia is a contracting party to the IPPC.

ISPM 15 requires certain phytosanitary procedures, in particular heat treatment or methyl bromide fumigation, relating to wood packaging material (including dunnage) made of raw wood in use in international trade; the phytosanitary procedures are meant to minimize the risk of introducing and spreading certain pests that live and breed in raw wood.

For the full text (21 pages) of ISPM 15 in PDF format, [click here](#).

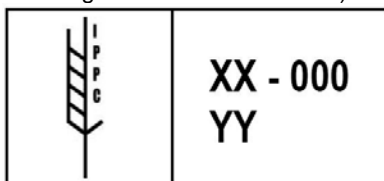
### **Requirements of ISPM 15**

Wood packaging material in the form of:

- Packing cases, boxes, crates, drums, and similar packings
- Pallets, box pallets, skids, and other load boards
- Pallet collars
- actually in use in the transport of objects of all kinds, except:
- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or any combination thereof

**The wood packaging material shall:**

- Be subject to one of the approved measures as specified in Annex I To FAO ISPM 15 (currently, *heat treatment* or *methyl bromide fumigation*)
- **Display a mark with:**
  - The two-letter ISO Country Code (in place of **XX** in the image below)
  - A code identifying the producer (in place of **000** in the image below)
  - The code identifying the approved measure applied to the wood packing material in the mark as specified in Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (in place of **YY** in the image below; examples are **HT** For “Heat Treatment” and **MB** for “Methyl Bromide Fumigation”)
  - Where “debarking” is required, the letters “DB” shall be added to the abbreviation of the approved measure included in the said mark
  - The logo as specified in Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (this logo is the ippc trademarked graphic symbol shown in the image below on the left side)



- **Markings should be:**
  1. Permanent and not transferable
  2. Legible and visible, preferably on at least two opposite sides of the article being certified

DUNNAGE, i.e. wood used to wedge or support non-wood cargo, including that which has not kept its natural round surface except:

- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and presseur, or a combination thereof
- Be marked in accordance with Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (see directly above under "**Display a mark with:**")
- If not, at a minimum it should be made from bark-free wood that is free from pests and signs of live pests