

Less Known Yet Remarkable Destinations

Nothing says that you've been on unusual ground like a passport control officer asking "Cartegena? Why would anyone go to Colombia?" as he looks at your stamps. Some Americans might consider Cartagena an odd holiday destination. However, it is one of the most popular places for travelers in South America at the moment.



The Historic Port

The land has been associated with Pablo Escobar and Marxist guerillas for many years. The area has changed significantly over the last 10 years and is now a favorite destination for anyone who wants to enjoy dense tropic, warm beaches, and a variety of cultural attractions. It is an ideal place for thrill seekers and adventurous spirits. As to the activities, there are various options to choose from including water jumping, diving and jungle trekking.

Cartagena's northern coast attracts a large number of visitors with its wide variety of attractions including mountains, national parks, beaches, and historic cities. The port city is the best place to start off your holiday.

The most popular attraction in Cartagena is its historic city center. It is an old walled town with several winding streets made of stone. The city is filled with Spanish architecture and degenerating building facades. Several cathedrals dot the city and street vendors display vibrant wares.

The Inquisition Museum is a must see for visitors who want to delve into the city's history of torture. A visit to the city is incomplete without walking through the church grounds, which are home to St. Peter Claver's remains. He defended Cartagena's slaves during the 1600s.

Visitors can walk through the city's narrow streets for many hours and discover several busy squares. A meal at the Il Balconi is the perfect way to end your evening. This is an Italian restaurant found in Gethsemane with a great view of the city. If you are looking for some Cuban-style entertainment, Café Havana features a live salsa band every night.



The Lost Town

La Ciudad Perdida is a must see for adventurous spirits. The jungle ruins, home to the Tayrona people, are over 1,000 years old. The city was a modern political and commercial hub, called Teyuna. The ruins are in a remote part of the town and visitors can go on a four or five day hike to explore them. There are various guiding companies that help visitors get to the ruins. They offer transport, accommodation, and supplies during the hike.

A visit to the Lost Town is not for everyone. The hike takes you through an elevated region that covers nearly 15 miles. Most of the trails are very rough and hikes last between six and eight hours through dense jungle. It rains daily and the humidity is severe during some seasons. Explorers have to cross nine rivers and you will stay wet throughout the course.

In spite of the challenges, the hike gives you an opportunity to see unexplored parts of the country. It was once filled with pot and coca fields and FARC guerillas. The fields have been cleared and the guerilla's driven out and it is now a tourist attraction. You can still see some armed military patrolling the city, but the cocaine farmers are long gone.

You will get to see the Kogi, Tayrona descendants who remain in the jungle. They live in mud huts and you can learn about their hunting and semi-nomadic society. Some of the villagers can guide you through the dense jungle.



Beach Trip

Colombia's northern coast is home to several beaches. A visit to Taganga, a fishing village gives you an opportunity to enjoy a unique beach experience. It is only 20 minutes away from Santa Marta. It is a quiet village with affordable and comfortable accommodation and several dive shops.

It is an ideal location for snorkeling and taking in the ocean view in one of the many cabana bars. You can learn freediving from Carlos Correa, the country's diving champion.

Tayrona National Park is a favorite stopover for visitors. You can use a bus or speedboat to get to the

park. Explore the various beaches and spend your nights in hammock cabanas or campgrounds. Entrance fees are high for Americans and the food is not great, but the amazing scenery and secluded beaches are worth it.

There is so much to see in Colombia and its tourism sector is just starting to take off. Most people think of civil war and violence when Colombia comes up, but this is changing. Travel and explore the amazing destinations.

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