

Colombia

Willamette International Travel ◊ Trip Report ◊ May 18 – 26, 2012

By Linda Fisher

Although my visit to Columbia was short, I left with a very positive opinion of the country and its people. I think it is a wonderful new destination for Americans. The country is thriving and has all but eradicated the negative effects of their civil war and drug cartels. I found the people to be warm, funny, efficient and friendly.



Bogota, the capital, is a sprawling, low-rise city of about 7 million people. It lies at an altitude of 8600 feet and is surrounded by the Andes. We enjoyed visiting the Gold museum which has a huge collection of pre-Columbian gold, displayed beautifully. It is supposed to be the most important collection of its kind in the World. We visited the Botero art museum with an amazing collection of his work. We took a cable car above the city for an amazing view and we visited Zipaquirá, where we walked in the salt mine tunnels and viewed the Stations of the Cross which have been carved into the walls by the miners. Food is diverse and we enjoyed several wonderful restaurants. Lastly, we walked around their impressive government buildings area on a Sunday when everyone is out walking, riding bikes and enjoying the area without cars.



Our next destination was Armenia, located in the coffee region in the Andean hills. The hacienda we stayed in was chock full of antiques and memorabilia and we were treated to wonderful home cooking prepared by several local women who are running the inn. From the hacienda, we drove to a coffee plantation and spent about 3 hours walking the steep property and learning about the



growing of coffee and the coffee industry. It was a highlight for me. On our return to the hacienda, we stopped in the charming town of Salema, high in the hills with its colorful colonial architecture – the shopping was fun and plentiful from local handicrafts to coffee. The people were very welcoming.



The final destination for this whirlwind trip was Cartagena. We stayed in two different hotels inside the UNESCO World Heritage walled city. Cartagena is colorful, charming and a wonderful place to wander. We found terrific restaurants, great shopping, music and history. Outside the old walls is an area called Bocagrande where you will see high rise hotels and night clubs reminiscent of Miami. But the old city, the monastery on the hill and the old fort are wonderful to visit.



I would love to return to the country to see other areas and have the opportunity to explore. The country is noted for its biodiversity, containing about 10% of the world species of flora and fauna—noted especially for its flowers, from roses to tropical plants. I would love to visit their many botanical gardens, bamboo and butterfly farms and take some time to see the amazing bird life. There is truly much to see in this new destination.



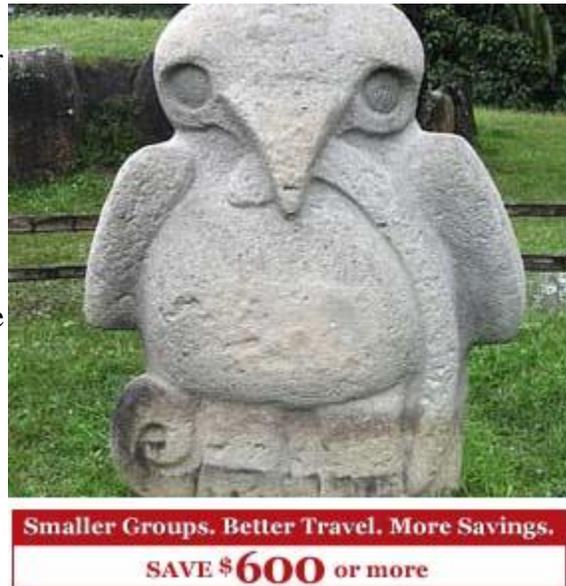
Treasures of Colombia

9 days from \$2,699

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With our handpicked Trip Leaders at your side every step of the way, this intimate guided tour to Colombia promises immersive and authentic experiences that are sure to be a highlight of your escorted travel to South America! You'll enjoy attentive service and comfortable carefree travel as you explore Colombia's wealth of natural, cultural and Colonial-era riches!

Bogotá, Zipaquirá, Cocora Valley and Salento, Colombia



Small Group Discoveries for our World Travelers

- On a high-mountain plateau, beautiful Bogotá sits amidst towering Andean peaks... In the company of our attentive Trip Leader, discover the best of the city – from La Candelaria to the Gold Museum!
- Marvel at the Zipaquirá Salt Cathedral, carved into an underground salt mine; beautifully illuminated, it's large enough to welcome 8,400 worshippers!
- The sustainable traditions of the Coffee Triangle were just recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site... Spend time on an authentic working coffee plantation and then explore the unique flora and fauna of the pristine Cocora Valley.
- Step out with your knowledgeable Trip Leader in Cartagena, where well-preserved fortifications and palaces bear witness to its Colonial-era grandeur... Then cross the bay to unwind amidst the tranquil beauty of the Rosario Islands!
- Discover 2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites 🌐

Our Small Group Adventure Value

- Extensive, fully-escorted sightseeing with never more than 16 guests including all entrance fees
- 8 nights accommodation in our carefully selected hotels

- 12 meals: 8 breakfasts and 4 lunches
- All on-tour transportation, including all 4 internal flights
- Luggage handling, hotel taxes and service charges, and all airline fees and fuel charges for your 2 included flights
- General Assist, our toll-free 24/7 emergency on-tour assistance

Begin	Finish	Per Person	Dbl	Single
6/8/12	6/16/12	\$2,699		\$3,059
8/10/12	8/18/12	\$2,699		\$3,059
9/14/12	9/22/12	\$2,699		\$3,059
10/12/12	10/20/12	\$2,699		\$3,059
11/9/12	11/17/12	\$2,699		\$3,059
1/11/13	1/19/13	\$2,799		\$3,579
2/8/13	2/16/13	\$2,799		\$3,579
3/8/13	3/16/13	\$2,799		\$3,579

Interested in a Colombia Tour? Call Linda for further details.