

COLOMBIA DISCOVERY, (ZCQ)

Quito to Cartagena 19 Days, departing 2nd July 2023



TRIP OVERVIEW

Trip Style: Overlanding
Route: Quito to Cartagena
Duration: 19 Days
Transport: Overland Expedition Vehicle, Jeep
Accommodation: Comfortable Hotel 4 nights
 Camping 1 night
 Basic Hotel 3 nights
 Multishare Hostel 8 nights
 Hammocks 2 nights
Meals: Breakfasts x 14, Lunches x 3, Dinners x 3

Physical Challenge: ● ● ○ ○ ○

Your itinerary may include easy-paced day walks, bike rides, and other activities that are not too strenuous.

Lifestyle Challenge: ● ● ● ○ ○

This trip has a bit of everything. Some areas that you travel through may be physically challenging; for example you may be at altitude some of the time and you may be camping for several nights. The pace of the trip can be tiring at times and some facilities will be basic. However there will also be plenty of time to relax and some comfortable accommodation.



DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1 - Quito (2nd July 2023)

Border Information: if joining in Quito, you will most likely enter Ecuador at Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport (IATA code: UIO).

There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Quito before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Quito.

A note on altitude: If you are joining in Quito, we strongly recommend arriving at least 24 hours before the trip begins to allow additional time to acclimatise.

Accommodation: Ikala Quito Hotel 'A'

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Visit one of the countless art galleries in Quito such as La Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana

Entrance: Free

Visit the Museo Nacional del Banco Central showcasing the countrys largest collection of Ecuadorian art and housing an impressive gold collection

Entrance: 2 USD

Freely explore the stunning historical Old Town of Quito, and wander its ancient streets marvelling at the outstanding architecture and wonderful atmosphere

Price: Free

Day 2 - Otavalo (3rd July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today our journey begins with a short drive to Mitad del Mundo, the monument that marks the Equator. After this we will continue north to the charming town of Otavalo.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Visit the equator at Mitad del Mundo

Included

Day 3 - Ipiales (4th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will leave Ecuador behind and travel into Colombia. We will have an included visit to the Santuario de las Lajas en route to our hotel in Ipiales.

Border information: Exit Ecuador at Ipiales, enter Colombia at Ipiales.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Visit the jaw dropping Santuario Las Lajas on the outskirts of Ipiales

Included

Day 4 - Popayan (5th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive to the beautiful town and former colonial capital of Popayán.

On the following day we will have a free day to explore Popayán or take part in some excellent treks or other optional activities in the surrounding area.

Day 5 - Popayan (6th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a free day to explore Popayán or take part in some excellent treks or other optional activities in the surrounding area.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Relax in the volcanic thermal springs near the village of Coconuco dramatically set in a steep-sided valley

Thermal springs trip: 60,000 COP

Trek to the 4650m summit of the towering Puracé volcano near Popayán

Hike: 130,000 COP

Day 6 - Salento (7th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today we will continue our journey north to the small town of Salento, the gateway to the spectacular Valle de Cocora.

Day 7 - Salento (8th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a guided trek through the Cocora Valley to see the Quindio wax palm trees, the largest palms in the world and the national tree of Colombia.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Head out on a half-day guided trek through the spectacular Cocora Valley and see the incredible 50m-tall Quindio wax palms the tallest palm trees in the world!

Included

Day 8 - Salento (9th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a tour of the coffee plantation and learn about the cultivation of coffee.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Learn about Colombia Coffee and wander the plantation

Included

Day 9 - Manizales (10th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we have a short drive to our Hacienda in the heart of the coffee region.

Day 10 - Medellin (11th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today we will drive to the vibrant city of Medellin, where we will spend 3 nights.

On our first full day in Medellin we will have a guided walking tour of the city, and our second day will be free time to independently explore the town, its parks, churches, and museums.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Take the pioneering Metroline cable car up to Santo Domingo to see a very different area of the city and the revitalising effect the Metroline has had on the communities there

Cable car ride: 1,750 COP

Visit the colossal Catedral Metropolitana in the city centre built using over a million bricks between 1875 and 1931

Entrance: Free

Head out and discover some of Medellín's vibrant and unusual nightlife at the Dulce Jesus Mio club

Entrance: 10,000 COP

Day 11 - Medellin (12th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a guided tour of the city.

Day 12 - Medellin (13th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today is free time to independently explore the town, its parks, churches, and museums.

Day 13 - Lorica (14th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we have a drive north to the beautiful, colonial town of Santa Cruz de Lorica.

The following day we have a free day to explore the historic centre, learn about the traditional hats that are made in the region or head to the coast for a final beach sunset at San Bernardo del Viento.

Day 14 - Northern Colombia (15th July 2023)

Today we will start the journey north towards Tayrona National Park, staying en route in a local Guesthouse.

Day 15 - Tayrona NP (16th July 2023)

Today we arrive in Tayrona, one of the most popular National Parks in Colombia. Leaving our main luggage stored on the truck, we take a day-pack/night-bag and go on a moderate walk in to the park to where we will stay. Mules to carry your luggage can be hired at an extra cost.

Day 16 - Tayrona NP (17th July 2023)

Today we will go for a guided trek in the National park and in the afternoon there is time to do some snorkelling or just relax on the beautiful beaches.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Explore some of Tayrona National Park's scenic walking trails including a hike to the mysterious ancient ruins of Pueblito hidden in the jungles high above the coastline

Included

Day 17 - Cartagena (18th July 2023)

We will have some more free time in Tayrona National Park in the morning, before we walk back to the park entrance and complete our epic journey with a drive to the beautiful coastal colonial city of Cartagena.

In Cartagena we will stay in a comfortable hotel just outside the historical centre.

Day 18 - Cartagena (19th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have an included walking tour of the city, and then the afternoon will be free to explore the city further, enjoy the many optional activities on offer, or simply relax on the beach.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Explore Cartagena on a guided walking tour

Included

Optional Activities

Discover the brutal history of the Spanish Inquisition at their former headquarters in Cartagena the Palace of the Inquisition

Entrance: 15,000 COP

Guide: 10,000 COP

Learn all about Cartagena's naval tradition and history at the Naval Museum of the Caribbean

Entrance: 15,000 COP

Day 19 - Cartagena - End Date (20th July 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Border information: if you are finishing in Cartagena, you will most likely exit Colombia at Cartagena Rafael Núñez International Airport (IATA code: CTG).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Cartagena. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact your sales agent if you are interested in booking extra nights of accommodation in order to fully explore and take part in some of the optional activities listed below.

If you are continuing on to Panama then your leader will assist you with airport transfers for your included flight. You will stay tonight in a comfortable hotel in either Panama City or Cartagena (depending on the flight times and availability).

Accommodation:

ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

Drive Times

Drive times are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. These are the approximate number of hours that the vehicle will be in motion, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors.

Accommodation and Meals Included

The type of accommodation and included meals are listed for each day of the itinerary. These listings show our intention and on most departures the listings will be accurate. However due to the flexible nature of overland itineraries, climatic, bureaucratic or road conditions may demand changes to our listed intentions or groups may simply decide to amend the plans from time to time.

Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Certain activities may not be available on your particular visit and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. It is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. The prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed. If you partake in any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities. For more information around activity safety and insurance, please see the Essential Information document.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact us on our out of office hours number. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564

A FEW RULES

We expect all group members to act respectfully towards our staff and other group members. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, or carrying weapons may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

ISSUES ON THE TRIP

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk.

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

IMPORTANT NOTES

OVERLANDING LIFESTYLE

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out! For more details of how an overlanding trip works, please see the Essential Information document.

SAFETY STANDARDS

We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards. For more information, please see the Essential Information document

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available, and communications may be sparse. We do not carry satellite phones on our regular trips. Therefore, if you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

VISAS, HEALTH, INSURANCE & MONEY

Before you travel there are vital things to consider such as:

- Any visas needed for your trip
- Any vaccinations needed (please consult your GP or travel clinic)
- Organising your local payment (the kitty)

- Buying travel insurance (insurance is compulsory to be allowed to join our trips)

For more information on these topics, please see the Essential Information Document.

ALTITUDE WARNING

Warning - this trip goes above 2800m.

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

For further information please [download our AMS information sheet](#) or refer to the following website: www.high-altitude-medicine.com. If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival. Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

Some travel insurance companies will stipulate a maximum altitude limit. Please ensure that you are covered and if necessary pay the additional premium of extended cover.

ECUADOR NOTES

COLOMBIA NOTES

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 23rd April 2021**