



Cartagena de Indias Colombia

By: Adriana Toledo

I LOVE CARTAGENA DE INDIAS BECAUSE...

It is a city where the summer never ends, with walls and streets that tell a story of their own and feature just about every color ever imagined. The perfect place to visit as a family, enjoy a romantic evening or try-out your photographic skills.

WHY VISIT CARTAGENA DE INDIAS?

Whether you want to escape for a short trip of many days, Cartagena de Indias is the perfect spot to hide at, especially if you decide to submerge in its 13 kilometers of century-old colonial stonewalls. Discover the history of the Caribbean and important role this city played during the colonization era.

Cartagena is always a great starting point, as you explore nearby attractions such as the city of Barranquilla and many others in the region.

WHEN TO GO

Colombia goes thru its dry season from December thru March, making these the best months to visit. Daily temperatures range from the mid 70°F to the high 80°F, while the humid days produce nights with a charming breeze. Christmas, New Year's, and Easter are especially busy, and hotels book up months in advance.

WHAT TO DO

The local attractions in Cartagena are mostly divided between El Centro, which is the old town and Bocagrande, the city's very own hotel front. Another neighborhood to visit is Getsemani, just outside the walled city which continues to reinvent itself as a trendy place to explore during the nighttime.

El Centro, the oldest corner in Cartagena, invites you to stroll around its streets and get lost in history as you go through its plazas and churches. Some say this is one of the best walking cities.



Your list of "Top Things to Do" should include a panoramic view of the city, which you can enjoy at Convento de la Popa. A cab will usually take you there and even wait for you to finish and take you back to the city centre. Additional points of interest include Plaza Santo Domingo, Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas and the Palace of the Inquisition in Plaza Bolivar, all available during any walking tour of the Old Town.

Insiders' Tip: Havana in Getsemani and practice your steps. Just go early as many other locals and tourists will also want to visit the hotspot, famous for live performances and mojitos.

WHAT ABOUT THE AREPAS AND OTHER FOOD DELICACIES?

Food never seems to fail around the Caribbean and Latin America, being the common denominator in many travel tales. Cartagena has been featured in many articles due to its variety of local and international gastronomy.

Choose between tasty street food or high-end restaurants. Each morning the streets of the old town host a number of food stalls that serve the country's signature corncakes and empanadas, such as the "arepa de huevo" (corn cake with fried eggs). As the sun sets Cartagena doesn't go to sleep, instead, the night gives new light to hundreds of restaurants available throughout the Old Town and Bocagrande. Enjoy fresh local seafood, the main protagonist in many kitchens.

Insider's Tip: Ceviche is no stranger to Cartagena, but you will find it with a twist. Cartagena features a new take on the dish, cooking the shrimps instead of serving them raw and trading the standard citrus-juice base, for a tomato-mayo dressing.

ANY ADDITIONAL TOURS?

You can book your day trips to one of the many beaches nearby, most of which are conveniently located in islands scattered in the bay. Tours will most likely include the boat to the island and meals.

Rosario Islands – 27 tiny islands that offer crystal clear waters and all sorts of delights you may associate with the Caribbean.

Coralina Island – a more upscale experience as quality rules over quantity as only handful tourists can spend the day here.

Tierra Bomba – which is fast becoming a trendy spot with fantastic views of Bocagrande.

Visit Playa Blanca or maybe Playa Manglares in Baru Island for the perfect day at the beach or go even further and explore the surrounding attractions, perfect for a day trip from Cartagena: Volcan del Totumo, La Boquilla and Mangrove Swamps or San Basilio de Palenque, the first freed-slave city of the Americas, which retains many of its old traditions, along with its own unique language.

ONLINE INFORMATION

Visit the official tourism website for Cartagena de Indias: <http://www.cartagenadeindias.travel>. There you will find general information about this world heritage city, interesting travel data and facts about recent happenings. Read their tour recommendations and start planning your next visit to Cartagena de Indias.



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