



COLOMBIA
PHOTO EXPEDITIONS




COLOMBIA
BIRDWATCH



COLOMBIA
IS MAGICAL REALISM

UNCOVER DIVERSE COLOMBIA

16 **2018**
DAYS **FEBRUARY 4 - FEBRUARY 19**

 Cartagena - Barranquilla Carnival- Isla Salamanca NP - Santa Marta - The Santa Marta Mountains - Minca - El Dorado Lodge - Tayrona NP - Riohacha - Los Flamencos NP





Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
Christopher Calonje

WHY COLOMBIA

Colombia has been undergoing a very positive transformation in the past decade, and with the recent signing of a historic peace treaty the country is now regarded as one of the safest countries for tourists in Latin America. For many years Colombia has remained a mystery for travelers and photographers from around the globe, but Colombians are now welcoming visitors from around the planet with open arms.

Colombia is tropical, yet it also has ample elevation changes due to the Andes Mountains, the longest mountain range in the world. Furthermore it has both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. The Andes reach great heights (some peaks are glaciated) and are home to a great variety of natural habitats due to the fact that they split into three ranges. Colombia also comprises a vast portion of the Amazon and the Orinoquia region and is home to the highest coastal mountain in the world, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. All these factors synergize to make it one of the most biodiverse countries on the planet. Colombia is also the birdiest country on earth, with more than 1,950 species (almost 20% of the world's total). There are more species of birds in this country than on any other.

Colombia is equally diverse in terms of culture. Colombia is a country with many distinct, varied regions, each with its own unique customs, dances, tra-

ditions, accents, social patterns, and cultural adaptations. An added benefit is the food! Along with other cultural expressions of national identity, Colombian cuisine varies among its many different regions, and is as diverse as its climate, landscapes, and people.

A country as diverse and friendly as Colombia undoubtedly offers a plethora of photographic opportunities and subjects, and an invitation to get immersed in the natural landscapes and vibrant culture the country has to offer.

ABOUT THIS TOUR

This tour is designed to highlight Colombia's astounding natural and cultural diversity, and we believe we have struck the perfect balance with this exhilarating itinerary: From exploring the streets rich in history of colonial Cartagena and learning about Gabriel Garcia's Magical Realism, to the folkloric celebrations of the second biggest carnival in the world in Barranquilla, to photographing the landscapes, mammals and birds that live in the planet's most irreplaceable nature reserve. This trip is of epic proportions, complete with white-sand beaches and a visit to the Wayuu communities of the Guajira peninsula.

Join us in a land where everyday life is very real but visitors can easily escape into a magical world as they explore the culture and natural richness the country has to offer.

KIKE CALVO

Kike (pronounced key-keh) is an award-winning National Geographic photographer, bilingual journalist and author with many years of experience as a Photography Expert for National Geographic Expeditions and Lindblad Expeditions, with Latin America as his main focus. Kike has spent years exploring Colombia extensively, acquiring ground experience that has eventually led to the creation of the boutique travel agency Colombia Photo Expeditions. His work has been published in National Geographic, New York Times, Time, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, New York Magazine, Rolling Stone, and Vanity Fair, among others. Kike teaches photography workshops and has been a guest lecturer at leading institutions like the School of Visual Arts and Yale University. He is a regular contributor to National



Geographic blog Voices. Kike has made a strong emphasis in imprinting his conservation efforts within his work in Colombia, and is excited to show you around a country he has learned to love through the years.

CHRISTOPHER CALONJE

Christopher was born and raised in Colombia, and after studies and a career in environmental science in the US, returned to his native country to launch his eco-tourism company Colombia BIRDWATCH.



He has been leading tour groups in all regions of Colombia since 2008, and devotes time to various non-profit conservation groups and local communities that promote bird tourism as a conservation tool in Colombia's post-conflict era. Sustainability is one of the core principles at Colombia Birdwatch and this is evidenced by his work to promote conservation in Colombia.

COLOMBIA PHOTO EXPEDITIONS AND COLOMBIA BIRDWATCH

When we met in person for the first time in 2016, after talking on the phone only a few days earlier, an instant friendship was struck. Thus began the collaboration to bring you the photographic opportunity of a lifetime. The result of this synergy is this unique itinerary, first of its kind, in which our local access and expertise plays a major factor. The first thing we agreed upon was that local community would be key in expedition logistics. Second, that we would design, operate and lead one-of-a-kind photo expeditions based on sustainable travel, and constantly work with Colombian scientists and organizations to join efforts towards peace, conservation and a better global understanding of the country.

Carnaval de Barranquilla
Kobby Dagan / VWPics



Caribbean Sea



COST

\$5,600 USD per person, double occupancy, not including international airfare.

AIRFARE

Approximately \$400 to and from Miami. Must arrive in Cartagena on or before February 4 and depart from Bogota on or after February 21

GROUP SIZE

Maximum 10 Guests

NUMBER OF DAYS

15 days total, including estimated travel time.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging will consist of a mix of 3-4 star hotels (sometimes boutique hotels) in cities, a top-notch birding and nature lodge in El Dorado, and the beach front eco lodge Barlovento, that is touted as one of the best spots to stay in Colombia by the Lonely Planet. There is a river near the lodge at Barlovento, and a pool at the hotel in Barranquilla, so pack your swim wear! We expect relative comfort, hot showers, and excellent local food and provide a nice variety of snacks and purified or bottled drinking water available throughout the trip. Hot water is not available at Maloka Barlovento. AC is not available at Barlovento but there is a nice coastal breeze.

DAY 1

Arrive in Cartagena

Guests will be greeted at the airport upon arrival with private transfer from airport to the hotel.

Lodging: Hotel Boutique La Artilleria

DAY 2

Magical Realism in Cartagena

Few cities on Earth are as beautiful as Cartagena. On the sunny Caribbean coast of Colombia, Cartagena de Indias has rightfully earned a designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And it is easy to see why. Founded in 1533, Cartagena still retains its colonial charm, with colorful balconies overlooking cobblestone streets and quaint plazas that pull you into impressive churches. The city was one of the main ports in the Americas during the Spanish Conquest, resulting in numerous pirate attacks that eventually led to the fortification of the city with 13 KM of stone walls.

The morning will be devoted to photographing within the walled city, where there is something to suit all tastes. From beautiful architecture, to warm and friendly people, to striking monuments. there are plenty of inspiring opportunities.

Before an afternoon photo shoot on the walls surrounding the city, a local expert will present a talk

on Magical Realism, a literary style whose defining author is Colombia's own Gabriel Garcia Marquez. A nice parallel can be drawn between his style and what visitors can experience in Colombia! In the evening an optional carriage ride through the romantic streets of Cartagena.

Lodging: Hotel Boutique La Artilleria

DAY 3

Islas Corales del Rosario

Thirty five Kilometers off the coast of Cartagena lies Corales Islas del Rosario NP, a marine wonderland comprised of crystalline shallow waters and white sand beaches. Founded in 1988, the park protects coral reefs and coastal mangroves in more than 25 islands. The entire afternoon is spent photographing the sea of the seven colors, landscapes and the colorful and friendly afro-colombian people that inhabit the islands. Those who wish can go snorkeling and there will be a talk on conservation of marine resources.

Lodging: Hotel Boutique La Artilleria

DAY 4

Photo Review and Cartagena Free Afternoon

The morning will be devoted to Cartagena Botanical Garden with a photo review mid-morning, and an afternoon photo assignment in the city.

Lodging: Hotel Boutique La Artilleria



Islas del Rosario
Procolombia



Cartagena Walled City
Procolombia



DAY 5

Cartagena to Barranquilla and Crowning of the Carnival Queen

A morning drive to Barranquilla followed by a talk on the history of Barranquilla and the carnival will get the group prepped for the intense festivities to come in the following days. The idea is to live by the carnival slogan: "Those who live it are those who enjoy it." The carnival originates from a combination of pagan ceremonies, catholic beliefs and ethnic diversity and is a mixture of the European, African and Indian traditions, dances and music. It was at first a holiday for slaves, and grew to be a celebration of the region.

The evening comes alive with special access to the crowning of the Carnival Queen, a once in a lifetime event.

Lodging: Hotel Barranquilla Plaza

DAY 6

Rehearsal Day

On this day we will have special access to rehearsals for the upcoming parades and festivities. A unique chance to get close and personal with the artists and dancers that are the life of the event.

Lodging: Hotel Barranquilla Plaza

DAY 7

Saturday of Carnaval de Barranquilla

The carnival is kicked off 40 days before Holy Week, with the Battle of Flowers, one of the main activities during the carnival. The battle is basically a parade through much of town with musical groups, costumes, elaborate floats, and dance troupes in a contagiously festive environment. What better example of peace for Colombia and the world than a battle of flowers?

Lodging: Hotel Barranquilla Plaza

Carnaval de Barranquilla
Kobby Dagan / VWPics





Carnaval de Barranquilla

Kike Calvo

Carnaval de Barranquilla

Procolombia





Black-crested Antshrike

Juan Jose Arango

DAY 8

Isla Salamanca and Quinta de San Pedro de Alejandrino

An early start is necessary to visit Isla Salamanca National Park to avoid the high temperatures and take advantage of good light for wildlife photography. The main target is the aptly named Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, which will often pose for photographers. There will also be time to explore some nearby irrigated pastures for aquatic species and a very unique bird, Northern Screamer.

Lunch will be in Santa Marta, followed by a visit to the Quinta de San Pedro de Alejandrino, where Simon Bolivar spent his last days and succumbed to Tuberculosis. Apart from photographing the incredible grounds of this 17th century hacienda, complete with its own sugarcane mill and distillery, being in a place of such historical importance will allow the group to learn about Simon Bolivar and Colombia's independence.

Lodging: Hotel Boutique Casa de Leda

Russet-Throated Puffbird

Juan Jose Arango



DAY 9

Santa Marta to El Dorado Lodge

This day will allow for bird photography along a vast altitudinal gradient, birding different elevations along the road to El Dorado Lodge. Birding up the mountain will surely yield a large number of species, including the stunning Golden-winged Sparrow, Rosy Thrush-tanager, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, the recently described Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Santa Marta Tapaculo, Black-backed Antshrike, the magnificently colored Blue-naped Chlorophonia, and the attractive Rufous-capped Warbler.

Along the way stops will be made to photograph the various landscapes, arriving at the lodge in time to relax before an afternoon photo review at the main lodge. The lodge overlooks Santa Marta, Ciénaga Grande and Barranquilla at a distance and if the weather cooperates the group will be able to capture some stunning sunsets.

Lodging: El Dorado Lodge



DAY 10

El Dorado Lodge to Cerro Kennedy

We will rise early and head up to higher elevations towards Cerro Kennedy, in search of these endemics: Santa Marta Parakeet, Santa Marta Warbler, Santa Marta Mountain-tanager, Santa Marta Bush-tyrant and Brown-rumped Tapaculo, among many others. We will have a picnic at high elevation with great views of the Sierra Nevada, and we will bird along the road on our way down, hoping to run into awe-inspiring species such as Swallow Tanager, Grove-billed and Santa Marta Toucanets, Black-chested Jay, the endemic White-

Tayrona National Park
Pr Colombia





Black-fronted Wood-quail
Juan Jose Arango

lored Warbler, Golden-breasted Fruiteater and the near endemic White-tipped quetzal, one of the photographic targets of the trip!

The afternoon and evening will be devoted to a workshop on nighttime photography to hone up on skills to be used on the next evenings adventure.

Lodging: El Dorado Lodge

El Dorado Lodge
Christopher Calonje

DAY 11

Vicinity of El Dorado Lodge

The morning will be devoted to a short presentation on hummingbird photography followed by some time developing skills at the feeders at the lodge. Hummingbirds that visit the feeders include the endemic White-tailed Starfrontlet, White-vented Plumeteer, and Long-tailed Hermit. The bananas attract the endemic Santa Marta Brush-finch and also the endemic Colombian brush-finch, and the many flowers in the garden attract White-sided and Black Fowerpiercer. A day of birding near the lodge will have its rewards, a special treat being the near endemic Black-fronted Wood-quail that visit the lodges compost pile in the afternoon.

After dinner we will take a nighttime hike in search

of nocturnal mammals like Kinkjaou and night monkeys, and we will certainly scout for the endemic and recently described Santa Marta Screech-owl. Various species of frogs and insects will also make the night very interesting!

Lodging: El Dorado Lodge

DAY 12

El Dorado Lodge to Tayrona National Park

The morning will be spent birding the road en route to a coffee plantation for a tour of the grounds and an insight into how a coffee farm operates, which will surely provide many photographic opportunities. After lunch the group embarks on a 3 hour drive to a fabulous beach-side hotel to enjoy the beautiful scenery. We will spend one night at Finca Barlovento, an exquisite lodge with ocean views on the beach that is touted as one of the best places to stay in Colombia.

Lodging: Maloka Barlovento



DAY 13

Tayrona National Park

Kike Calvo

Tayrona National Park

We will have a morning visit to the park, and if all things align for us, the Blue-billed Curassow could show up and allow for photographing. One abundant bird that is easiest to see here than anywhere is the stunning Lance-tailed Manakin. Sometimes it can be found with its relative, the White-bearded Manakin. The birds here are varied, from Crane Hawk and Boat-billed Heron to Greater Ani, White-necked Puffbird and Rufous-tailed Jacamars. Blue-headed Parrot is common, and Lineated Woodpeckers are impressive to see as they forage on the large trees.

White-bellied Antbirds belt out their song from the understory, if one is lucky they will even show themselves. It is an active area, full of birds! Crimson-backed Tanagers and the gorgeous Red-legged Honeycreepers give a lot of color to the local flocks. While birding here it is common to see the Cottontop Tamarin, a gorgeous primate that is dwarfed by the less common White-fronted Capuchin.

The afternoon will be spent with some free time to relax and then photographing the beach and forest surrounding the hotel.

Lodging: Maloka Barlovento



Double-striped Thick-knee

Christopher Calonje



Barlovento Beach
Christopher Calonje

DAY 14

Tayrona to Riohacha and Photo Review

The morning will be spent driving to Riohacha, with a stop at a known spot where Double-striped Thick-knee are often seen. Our hotel is right on the beach with easy access to the boardwalk where colorful local crafts adorned the sidewalks. An afternoon photo review will happen at the hotel.

Lodging: Hotel Taroa

DAY 15

Los Flamencos National Park and flight to Bogota

Very close to the city of Riohacha is Los Flamencos and the village of Camarones. This is the west edge of the Guajira desert, where dry forest becomes shorter and sparser and bare dry earth separates the trees from each other. But before you have a mistaken idea of a parched world, Los Flamencos is on the coast and it has shallow waterbodies that fill as the rains come, and evaporate during the dry season. These evapo-

rating ponds concentrate salt, and then brine shrimp bloom which brings in the namesake bird of the park – American Flamingos! Their numbers vary depending on water levels, but they can be here in the hundreds on a good day. If you have not had enough pink, how about the even brighter Scarlet Ibis?

Retreating to the forest though, one is quite surprised that a series of very attractive regional specialties are found here. The sole South American offshoot of what is really a North American group, the Vermilion Cardinal can be seen here. Nothing prepares you, even if you have backyard Northern Cardinals, for the striking red of this species, the overdone crest and the very different look to its close relatives from the north.

Pecking in the branches and trilling away is a tiny and colorful woodpecker, the Chestnut Piculet. Don't ask why there are so many good looking birds in this drab desert habitat, just enjoy these wonderful dry forest birds. After lunch we will spend the afternoon photographing the handcraft market in Riohacha before catching flights from Riohacha to Bogota.

Lodging: Hotel Habitel

DAY 16

Depart Bogota

Guests who wish to spend a few days exploring Bogota or any other Colombian region can inquire about arranging pre or post tour stays.

TRIP INCLUDES

Kike Calvo and Christopher Calonje as Tour Leaders

Internal Airfare (Riohacha - Bogota)

Bottled Water Throughout the Trip

Snacks Throughout the Trip

All Meals From Breakfast on Day 2 to Breakfast on Day 16

All Lodging (Double Occupancy)

Entrances to Parks and Reserves

Regional and Local Guides

Internal Terrestrial Transport From Airport Pickup to Airport Drop-off

DOES NOT INCLUDE

Gratuities

Alcoholic Beverages

Insurance

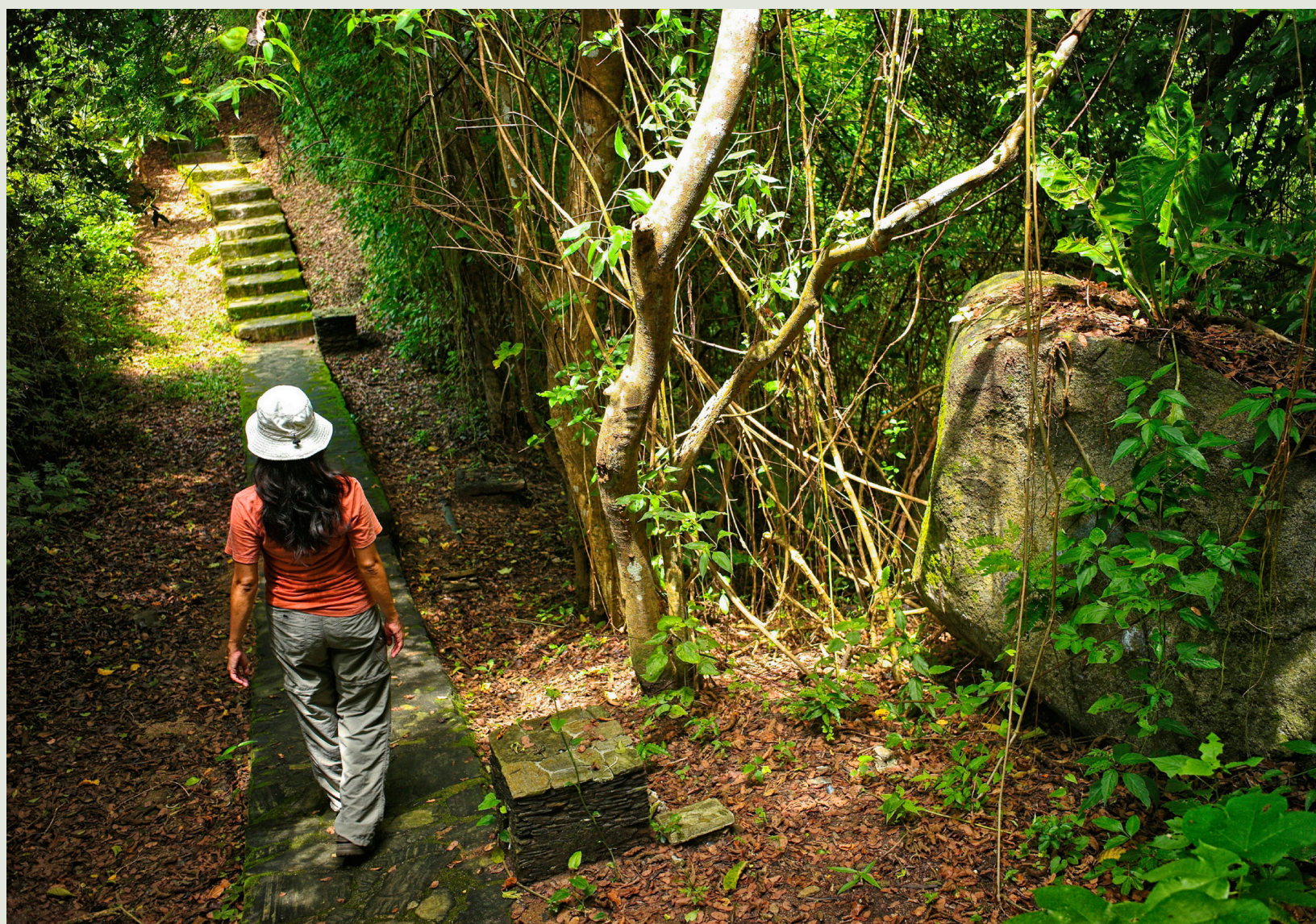
Airfare to Colombia

Laundry Services

SINGLE RATES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Tayrona National Park

Kike Calvo





Green-rumped Parrotlet
Christopher Calonje



Dancer in Cartagena
Kike Calvo



White-fringed Antwren
Christopher Calonje



Streets of Cartagena
Kike Calvo



Black-crowned antshrike
Christopher Calonje