

COLOMBIA IS MAGICAL REALISM

UNCOVER DIVERSE COLOMBIA



15 August 2 - August 16

DAYS Feria de las Flores in Medellín
- Salsa in Cali - Birdwatching in
Km 18 - Dolmetsch Arboretum
- San Cipriano - Ladrilleros -
Bahía Málaga



Plaza de Botero in Medellín
Procolombia

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PROCOLOMBIA
EXPORTACIONES TURISMO INVERSIÓN



Juan de Dios Beach
Procolombia

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. It is a country with many distinct, varied regions, each with its own unique customs, dances, traditions, ac-

cents, 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 Feria de Las Flores in Medellin in the Andes mountains, to the Latin rhythms of the salsa capital of the world, to riding motorcycle-powered carts through lush rainforest, to visiting the beaches and mangroves of one of the most bio diverse regions on the planet in search of Humpback Whales. This trip is of epic proportions, complete with beaches, city life, flowers, and incredible hospitality. 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.

Feria de Las Flores in Medellin

Kike Calvo / VWpics





Feria de Las Flores in Medellin

Kike Calvo / VWPics

COST

\$4950 USD per person, double occupancy, not including international airfare.

AIRFARE

Approximately \$500 to and from Miami. Must arrive in Medellin on or before August 2 and depart on or after August 16 from Cali.

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 in cities, a beach side hotel with incredible ocean views, a hotel in Buenaventura with a magnificent terrace with views of the bay and port, and a quaint hotel in the outskirts of Cali. There is a river in San Cipriano, jacuzzi in the hotel in Medellin and a pool at the hotel in Ladrilleros, so pack your swim wear! We expect relative comfort, hot showers (except in Ladrilleros), 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 Hotel Aguamarina in Ladrilleros.

DAY 1

Arrive in Medellin

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

Lodging: Hotel Viaggio

DAY 2

Orchid Show in the Medellin Botanical Garden

Medellin is a bustling metropolis that lies in the Aburra Valley, and has been dubbed the *City of Eternal Spring* due its pleasant climate. *Paisas*, as people from Antioquia state are referred to, are known for their abundance of hospitality. The first morning will be devoted to photographing the grounds of the Medellin Botanical Garden, where the Orchids, Flowers and Crafts exposition takes place. There is something to suit all tastes. From beautiful grounds, to warm and friendly people, to more thousands of species of orchids and flowers. There are plenty of inspiring opportunities and of course those who wish can do some craft shopping.

In the afternoon the group boards gondolas that ferry passengers up to Arvi Park, passing above the barrios with stunning views of the city.

Lodging: Lodging: Hotel Viaggio

DAY 3

Photo Review and Botero Plaza

Botero Plaza, also known as *Plaza de las Esculturas*, is a 2-acre park in front of the Antioquia Museum. Photographic subjects abound, including 23 works by famed figurative artist and sculpture Fernando Botero. His signature style, also known as “Boterismo”, depicts people and figures in large, exaggerated volume, which can represent political criticism or humor, depending on the piece. He is considered the most recognized and quoted living artist from Latin America. The plaza also provides a great opportunity to photograph people and the surrounding architecture.

After lunch the group meets at the hotel for a photo review. Dinner will be in the nearby entertainment district, and those who wish can enjoy a bit of the friendly nightlife.

Lodging: Hotel Viaggio

DAY 4

Photo Workshop, History Talk and Classic Car Parade

A brief talk on the history of Colombia and a workshop on people as photographic subjects will take most of the morning. After lunch there is an optional visit to the classic car parade where more than 260 cars from the past century are exhibited along the streets of Medellin.

Lodging: Hotel Viaggio

DAY 5

Silletero Parade

The *silletero* parade is undoubtedly the most sought after event of the *Feria de las Flores*. Held since 1957, the festival is one of the Medellin’s most important events and the parade is something that cannot be missed. In it, men and woman carry large *silletas* on their backs, which are beautifully adorned flower arrangements. The parade represents the end of slavery, with participants replacing the weight of slavery on their backs with the weight of large flower arrangements. The first *silleteros* parade also took place with some 40 men, and this number has grown to more than 500 in the past few years.

Some of the day will be devoted to free time to download and organize photos.

Lodging: Hotel Viaggio



Botero Plaza

Kike Calvo / VWPics

DAY 6

Medellin to Cali flights and City Tour

The morning will be spent flying to the city of Cali, to experience the rhythms of the city known as being the Salsa Capital of the World. .

Founded in 1536, Cali is known as the *Sucursal del Cielo*, which loosely translates to “the branch office of heaven.” A whole day in this warm and friendly city nestled at the base of the western Andes, will surely provide great photo opportunities. Just a few blocks from the hotel is the Cat of the River and his Girlfriends, a collection of bronze cat sculptures that were designed by various Colombian artists. The rest



SALSA
Procolombia

Cat of the River
Procolombia



of the morning will be spent visiting the Cristo Rey monument for panoramic views of the city. Lunch will be at the *Galeria Alameda*, a bustling market where the harvests from nearby farmlands and the Pacific Ocean are displayed.

Then we visit the historic center of town and many of the churches and colonial buildings along the Cali River. The boulevard along the river is only open to pedestrians and is quite enjoyable, with wide open spaces, large trees and locals enjoying the outdoors. After the sun sets and the breeze from the nearby Andes mountains begins to descend on the city, those who wish can enjoy a tour of the vibrant nightlife of Cali and its friendly people.

Lodging: Hotel Hampton by Hilton



Green and Black Fruiteater
Christopher Calonje

DAY 7

Bird Photography at Hummingbird Paradise with Juan Jose Arango

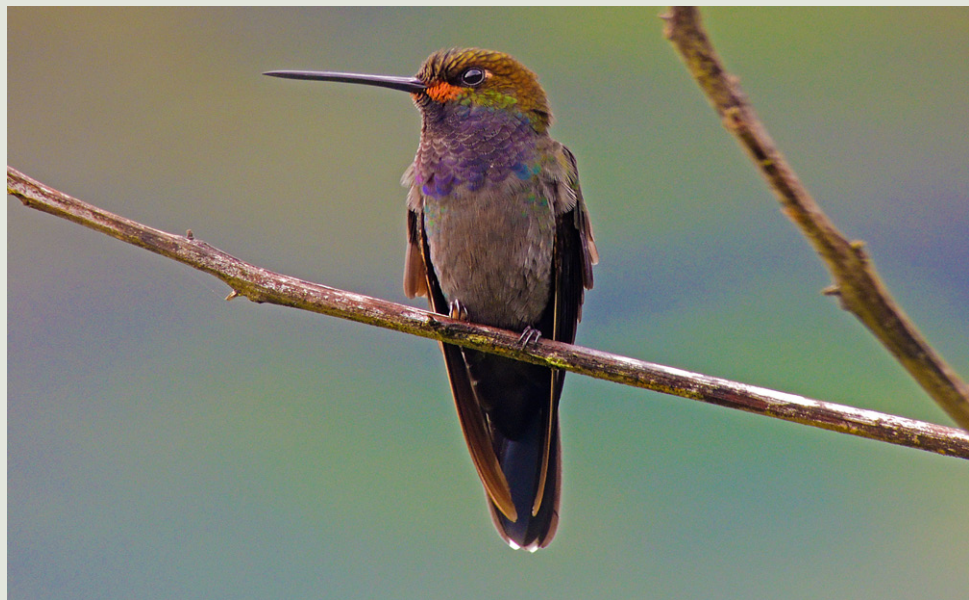
On this day the group will have the pleasure of learning from one of Colombia's best bird photographers, Dr Juan Jose Arango. You can view his complete collection of Colombian birds at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jjarango/>. The morning is spent at the world renown Hummingbird Paradise, a small chalet with an impressive feeder set up that attracts hundreds of hummingbirds and colorful tanagers.

Juan Jose will offer up advice on bird photography during a full day workshop at the site. The problem here is having too many subjects to choose from! The array of colors is awe-inspiring, with tanagers lining up to have a chance at the bananas and hundreds of hummingbirds visiting more than twenty feeders throughout the property.

Lunch will consist of the traditional *sancocho* dish cooked over a wood fire at Eduardo Carvajal's lovely home. Eduardo is a film photographer who has worked on hundreds of Colombian films since his career began in the 1970's..

Lodging: Hotel Hampton by Hilton

Blue-naped Chlorophonia
Christopher Calonje



White-tailed Hillstar
Christopher Calonje





Dolmetsch Arboretum
Francois Dolmetsch

DAY 8

Dolmetsch Arboretum and Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek.

We will have the morning to explore some sights around Cali and then have lunch at the Dolmetsch Arboretum with the director, Alvaro Calonje. The Dolmetsch Arboretum houses more than 2,200 plants from around the world, and is world-renown for its cycad collection, containing more than 60 species. Cycads are an ancient group of seed plants that are much less abundant than they were during the Jurassic period, and their geographic ranges have contracted, resulting in cycads being one of the most threatened plant groups in the world.

The grounds of the arboretum provide ample photographic opportunities, as does the incredible diversity of plants that adorn the impeccably manicured gardens. Lunch and wine is served on the patio followed by a cup of the best coffee in the world and great conversation. An afternoon photo review will take place at the hotel.

Lodging: Hotel Hampton by Hilton

DAY 9

Cali to San Cipriano and then to Buenaventura

After a three hour drive to Zaragosa and a pleasant 20 minute ride on "brujitas" (motorcycle-powered wooden carts on rails), one arrives in the town of San Cipriano. The ride is exhilarating and will surely get the adrenaline pumping as the "brujitas" travel through lush tropical rainforest, one of the most biologically diverse on the planet. The area is a protected reserve and is the source of drinking water for the nearby port city of Buenaventura. Located in the Choco Bioregion, it is known for being one of the wettest places on the planet.

Aside from the amazing diversity of birds and the very interesting local village, the reserve is home to one of the most pristine tropical rivers on the planet. A nice trail borders the river with various side trails that provide access to serene riverscapes. A visit to the Waterfall of Love is also in order, with a chance to take a dip in the refreshing waters.

After an adventurous morning, the group will learn how to prepare a *Sancocho* soup from the lo-



Brujitas in San Cipriano
Christopher Calonje

cal women. This iconic regional dish consists of fish, coconut, plantains and manioc cooked into the soup in a specific order and with a calculated amount of local herbs and spices. After lunch, another *Brujita* ride is followed by a 1 hour drive to the lovely hotel in Buenaventura.

Lodging: Hotel Cosmos

DAY 10

Buenaventura - - Juanchaco - Ladrilleros

From Buenaventura the adventure continues by boat, first crossing the bay in order to wrap around the *El Tigre* peninsula towards the village of Juanchaco. The photographic opportunities begin as soon as you make landfall on the pier of this lazy village. After a short transfer to the hotel, there will be some time to relax and enjoy the stunning ocean views before an afternoon hike along the beach to La Barra, a nearby fishing village.

Apart from the incredible landscapes, La Barra offers a chance to photograph the locals, and experience how they live and work in this remote beach village. Chances for sunset photography will abound on the walk back to the hotel.

Lodging: Hotel Agua Marina





Humpback Whales
Procolombia

Mangroves
Kike Kalvo / VWPics



DAY 11

Visit to Uramba - Bahía Malaga National Park

Uramba Bahía Málaga National is one of the newest Colombian national parks, and was created in 2010 as Colombia's 56th national park. Known as a hot spot for biodiversity, the park is explored by boat, visiting several remote fishing villages and the interminable mangroves and waterfalls that abound in the Malaga Bay.

The group will disembark at several sites within the bay to photograph the villages, waterfalls and natural wonders the bay has to offer. Lunch will be taken as a picnic in order to maximize field time in this amazingly diverse location.

After returning to the hotel there will be time for a photo review before and after dinner.

Lodging: Hotel Agua Marina

DAY 12

Whale Watching

Each year, hundreds of humpback whales make the 8,000 km journey from the frigid Antarctic Ocean off the coast of Chile to the warm waters of Colombia's Pacific coastline, gathering in bays and coves by the dozens or even hundreds to mate and calve their babies before beginning the long trip back. This area has the largest concentration of breeding Humpback whales along the Colombian Pacific coast. This species



Traditional Dance
Kike Kalvo / VWPics

of whales are known for breaching and other distinctive surface behaviors, making them ideal for photographers wanting to capture this majestic being.

The specific logistics of the boat ride in search of the whales will depend on the weather and tides, so the day will be split between time searching for whales and time at the hotel working on photographs.

Lodging: Hotel Agua Marina

DAY 13

Beach Time - Photo Review and Pacific Music

The morning will consist of free beach time! After lunch, a talk on the history of the Pacific coast of Colombia and the people that inhabit it. At night the evening comes alive with a live dance and music concert on the cliffs overlooking the beach. Escaped African slaves from the sugar cane plantations of the nearby Cauca Valley settled in this region of Colombia, and African roots are deeply ingrained in the traditions, cuisine and music and dance of the local people.

The traditional songs and dances and the sounds of the marimba instrument were declared by UNES-

CO as a Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. The marimba is basically a xylophone made of wood with keys that are made from specific palm trees that grow in the region. The cultural expressions we will witness make up an important part of the social fiber, where men and women tell stories and recite poems as they dance rhythmically. The objective is to celebrate life and death, and in some cases the events take a religious, ritualistic or festive tone.

Lodging: Hotel Agua Marina

DAY 14

Ladrilleros-Buenaventura-Cali

A travel day to Cali and time to enjoy a short city tour on arrival, to the bohemian San Antonio neighborhood, where we will enjoy a farewell dinner and reminisce on the good times and the memories and photographs that were made in Colombia.

Lodging: Hotel Hampton by Hilton

DAY 15

Depart Cali

TRIP INCLUDES

Kike Calvo and Christopher Calonje as Tour Leaders

Bottled Water Throughout the Trip

Snacks Throughout the Trip

All Meals From Breakfast on Day 2 to Breakfast on Day 12

Internal Flight: Medellin - Cali

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

Guests who wish to spend a few days exploring Cali or any other Colombian region can inquire with us about setting up a custom or group extension.

Pacific Beaches

Procolombia



Caribbean Sea



Medellin - Cali

Pacific Ocean

Medellin

Urmaba - Bahia Malaga NP

BOGOTÁ

Juanchaco - Ladrilleros

Buenaventura

km 18

Cali

San Antonio Forest

Cock-of-the-rock Lek

