



LADATCO TOURS

South & Central America, Falkland Islands & Antarctica



TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

Bogota, Colombia

CITY TOUR: Full day tour with lunch

Full day with private guide of one of the most sophisticated, cosmopolitan cities in Latin America, one that gracefully combines modern skyscrapers alongside historical, colonial buildings. Highlights will include the main square, Plaza Bolivar, flanked by the National Cathedral, Capital building. On to Simon Bolivar's house, Casa Narino, now a museum.

Visits will be made to two outstanding museums, the famed Gold Museum with its 30,000+ pre-Columbian pieces and the Fernando Botero Museum, of the world renowned artist, housing not only his works but selections of other contemporary artists such as Picasso, Dali, Matisse and Chagall.

Enjoy a walking tour of the historic district of La Candelaria filled with wonderful colonial architecture and colors. Take the cable car up an additional 1500 ft. above the city to Monserrate, a pilgrimage site since 1640, offering fantastic vistas of the city.

Lunch included on tour, which will be atop Monserrate at one of the city's finest restaurants, Casa San Isidro

NOTE: Gold Museum is closed on Mondays; Botero Museum is closed on Tuesday (itinerary may be adjusted)

ZIPAQUIRA:

North of the Bogota savanna, about 1-hour's drive is the town of Zipaquirá, noted for its magnificent Salt Cathedral. Built right into the mountain of a working salt mine, the original Cathedral was built between 1950-1954, but was closed in 1991 when a new cathedral was built, 200 ft. below the first one. Its engineering feat, with wonderful architecture, high ceilings, great acoustics, alone makes it a worthwhile visit. Walking some 300 meters inside this magical, spiritual place, you will see landscapes of salt rock, enormous caverns and mazes; 14 small chapels representing the stations of the cross on the first level. On the second level is the Copula; the third is the chamber of birth and death. And you can also visit the Salmuera Museum to see how salt is extracted. Lunch will be included just outside of Bogota, a fine restaurant in converted hacienda, El Portico.

FUSAGASUGA:

Today you will drive southwest, along the Pan American Highway, to the western slopes of the Andean range to Fusagasuga (getting its name from a literal translation that varies, from Invisible Woman, to Woman who Hides Behind the Mountain, but referred to by locals as simply "Fusa." The area abounds with orchid and coffee farms, stop to see how both are planted and harvested. Typical lunch will be included.

BOGOTA-VILLA DE LEYVA VIA GUATAVITA & TUNJA:

Today begins your journey into the "colonial heartland" of the country, the area of Boyaca. First stop will be at the Andalusian-styled town of Guatavita with its beautiful lagoon and the legends of El Dorado along with indigenous rituals. Continue on to the Bridge at Boyaca where Bolivar defeated the Spanish in 1819, gaining the country's independence. Drive on to historical Tunja, founded in 1539, with numerous museums, churches and convents. A lunch stop is included before driving on to charming Villa de Leyva.



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VILLA DE LEYVA:

A leisurely day exploring with your guide this quaint colonial town whose character and architecture has changed little since the Spanish era; small winding cobble-stone streets lined with orange roofed white-washed buildings graceful arcs and flower laden balconies; it is quiet, peaceful and is said to have been an inspiration to poets and writers. Even with all its colonial "cache," it is a town with French restaurant and bakeries, Dutch speaking bars, Italian pizzas, Austrian strudel and Lebanese kibbes!

Another highlight of the area is a visit to "El Fossil" Museum, so named because a 7-meter long pre-historic, marine-like reptile believed to be a "kronosaurus, was found at this spot in 1977. Also stop at the House of Narino (Antonio Narino was a political and military leader of the independence movement; visit the Luis Acuna Museum; Acuna is considered one of Colombia's most important artist of the 20th Century, and the museum showcases his and other artists works. Lunch is included en route today.

VILLA DE LEYVA-BOGOTA VIA RAQUIRA, ZIPAQUIRA:

Returning to Bogota, stop at La Candelaria to visit the Sacred Ecce Homo Convent; then on to Raquira charming town "home" to local artisans, producing excellent earthenware pottery. Stop at Zipaquira (City of our Fathers, in Chibcha language).

Here visit the famed Salt Cathedral, carved some 600 ft out of a salt mine. In this magical, spiritual place, you will see landscapes of salt rock, enormous caverns and mazes; 14 small chapels representing the stations of the cross on the first level. On the second level is the Copula; the third is the chamber of birth and death. And you can also visit the Salmuera Museum to see how salt is extracted. Lunch is included en route.