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# GET READY FOR COLOMBIA



The Local  
Experience Curator

**KUODA**

# CONTENTS

<b>Entry and Exit Requirements</b> .....	3
To enter Colombia .....	3
Passports and Visas .....	4
<b>Packing</b> .....	4
Weather and Activities Considerations .....	4
Fashion and Dress Code .....	5
Baggage Size and Weight Restrictions .....	5
Suggested Packing List .....	6
<b>Voltage</b> .....	7
Voltage, Sockets and Plugs .....	7
<b>Money and Budgeting</b> .....	7
Exchanging Money and Using ATMs .....	7
Tipping .....	8
Budgeting .....	8
<b>Health, Safety, and Insurance</b> .....	9
Before You Go: Vaccinations, Questions for Your Doctor and Preparing for Altitude .....	9
Travel Insurance .....	9
Food and Water Precautions .....	9
Medical Care .....	10
Altitude Issues .....	10
Safety Tips .....	10
<b>Staying in Touch</b> .....	10
Internet .....	10
Your Mobile Phone .....	11
Cyber Cafés and Wifi .....	11
Time Zones .....	11
Calling Colombia and Calling Home .....	11
<b>Arrival and Departure</b> .....	12
Upon Arrival .....	12
Airport Taxes .....	12
When it's Time to Say 'Goodbye' .....	12
<b>Cultural Considerations</b> .....	13
Language .....	13
Food .....	13
Accommodations .....	13
Festivals and Celebrations .....	13

# KUODA TIPS

## Preparing for Your Trip & Answers to Other Frequently Asked Question

*We are so delighted that you've decided to travel with us and we can't wait to host you in beautiful Colombia! In order to help you pack and prepare, we've put together this list of helpful tips. If you have any additional questions, don't hesitate to contact your Travel Designer. See you soon!*

- Your Kuoda Team

## Entry and Exit Requirements

### To enter Colombia

- All non-resident travelers of 18 years and over must be vaccinated with a full dose to enter Colombia. Travelers must have had the final dose of the vaccine at least 14 days before entering the country (The definition of the complete scheme shall be in accordance with the technical recommendation of the producer of each vaccine).
- Travelers over the age of 18 who are not vaccinated or not fully vaccinated have the following options to enter Colombia:
  1. Negative PCR Test result taken 72 hours before departure of the first flight of the trip.
  2. Negative Antigen Test result taken 48 hours before departure of the first flight of the trip.
- The Colombian Government recognizes those vaccines authorized by the WHO (AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine, Johnson and Johnson, Moderna, Pfizer/BionTech, Sinopharm, Sinovac, COVAXIN, Covovax, Nuvaxovid), or those officially approved by a country or territory recognized by the United Nations.
- Proof of vaccination requirements: either vaccination cards or digital certificates are accepted as proof of vaccination and they must show as a minimum: Holder's full name, type of ID (e.g., passport) and number (if included in the certificate), vaccination date, vaccine administered, and number of doses administered.

- The vaccination card will no longer be mandatory to enter massive and closed events, restaurants, bars, museums, cinemas, sporting events, among others.
- Foreign nationals with symptoms of COVID-19, that have tested positive or that have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive in the last 14 days will not be allowed to enter the country.
- All must complete the [Check-Mig](#) form within 72 hours and 1 hour prior to arrival, upon arrival to, and before departure from Colombia. You will receive a confirmation email that you will need to present upon arrival in Colombia.
- The use of masks is mandatory during your flight and upon arrival to Colombia, as well as in health establishments, nursing homes, and mass transport services. Handwashing and the use of hand sanitizer is strongly recommended.

## Passports and Visas

U.S., Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and (almost all) Western European citizens DO NOT require a visa to enter Colombia. Others should check with the Colombian Embassy or consulate in their respective area/region for entry requirements. Travelers who do require a visa can obtain one through the Colombian Embassy or consulate. Times to acquire a visa may vary. For more information check this [website](#).

## Packing

### Weather and Activities Considerations

Colombia is located in a tropical zone of our planet. The climates of the different regions of the country vary due to the effect of the trade winds, humidity and different thermal levels. Colombia's climate consists of dry seasons (December to January and July to August) and rainy seasons (April to May and October to November).

- Warm climates: These are areas where the heat exceeds 24 °C, as in the Pacific, areas like San Andrés, the Caribbean coast and Tayrona National Park.
- Temperate climates: In these areas, the temperature ranges between 17 °C and 24 °C, such as in Medellín.

- Cold climates: The temperature ranges between 12 ° C and 17 ° C, such as in the city of Bogotá.
- Páramos: In these areas, temperatures range between 6 ° C and 12 ° C, such as in the Chingaza National Natural Park.
- Glacial zones: These have temperatures below 6 ° C, like the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.
- Tropical forests: These are hot and humid, and temperatures exceed 27 ° C, as in the Amazon.
- Tropical steppe: This is characterized by its high temperatures, rainfall and its little vegetation, as in La Guajira.

## Fashion and Dress Codes in Colombia

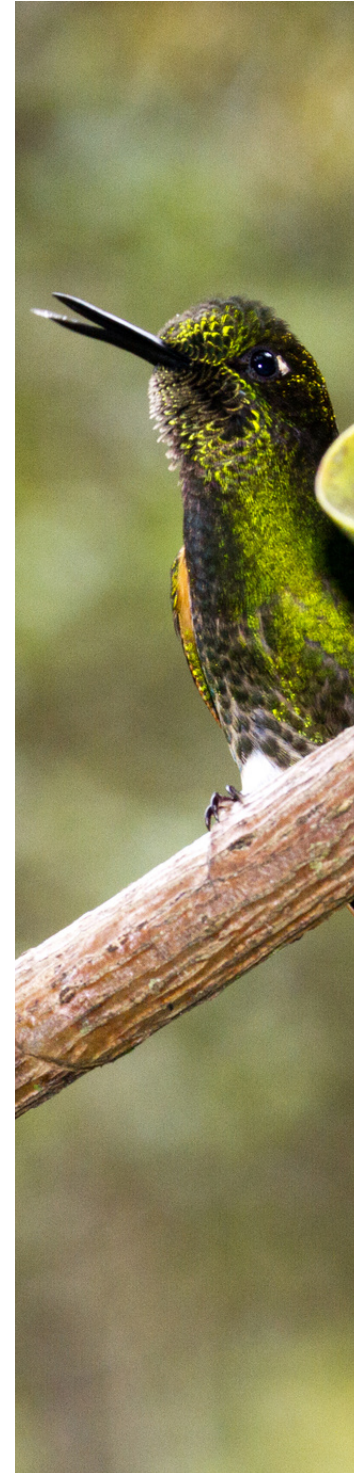
The best advice when planning what to wear in Colombia is to pack different types of clothing to suit the various weather conditions. Check the weather and temperature of the places you are visiting before you travel, and pack accordingly. Don't forget a light waterproof jacket and a pair of comfortable and waterproof shoes to walk through the Amazon.

## Baggage Size and Weight Restrictions

Please triple-check luggage restrictions for your international flights secured on your own. You will likely want to pack for greater restrictions on domestic flights and ground transportation within Colombia, which means packing a bit lighter and bringing something that can serve as an overnight bag if you don't want to be subject to extra baggage fees on your domestic flights.

Permitted baggage on domestic flights (you'll have all your luggage):

- Avianca: Checked bags are 50 lbs. (23 kg) and carry-on is 22 lbs. (10 kg)
- Latam: Checked bags are one piece of 50 lbs. (23 kg) and carry-on is 22 lbs. (10kg)
- Satena: Checked bags are 33 lbs. (15 kg) and carry-on is 11 lbs. (5 kg)



- Easy Fly: Checked bags are 33 lbs. (15 kg) and carry-on is 11 lbs. (5kg)
- Charter: Checked bags are one (1) piece of 22 lbs. (10 kg) and carry-on is 11 lbs. (5kg) with the following dimensions: 30 cm x 20 cm x 20 cm

Allowances depend on the category of ticket bought, so please check carefully before your travels.

## Suggested Packing List

Our team's experience says, the lighter the better. This of course is quite difficult, given the varied climates of Colombia. The great thing is that you can have laundry done in your hotel or in town within 24 hours. Here is our suggested packing list:

### General list:

- Passport and flight tickets; after you've been given the all-clear by Colombian migrations and customs, you'll need to have your passport at most hotels and attractions, including on treks  
\*We recommend also bringing an extra photocopy of your passport, kept in a secure location separate from the original.
- Secure day bag with enough space for camera gear, water bottle/s, poncho and snacks (pack toilet paper or tissue packets in your day bag as many Colombian bathrooms don't have it)
- Lightweight poncho or waterproof jacket - Lightweight trousers
- T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts
- Underwear, of course
- Long underwear
- Fleece jacket
- Hat or cap to protect from the sun
- Comfortable walking/hiking boots with good ankle support
- Sun lotion (high factor), lip salve and sunglasses
- Insect repellent
- Basic first aid kit
- Sanitizing hand gel (good to keep in your day pack with some spare tissues)
- Basic toiletries (though most of your hotels will provide shampoos and soaps)
- Secure money belt or pouch
- Camera, battery charger, spare battery and plenty of memory cards
- Bathing suit/plastic sandals
- Good quality locks for luggage
- Converter, since electricity is 110 volts

When traveling to the jungle, add:

- Hiking daypack for your day-to-day supplies on the trail
- Waterproof hiking boots/shoes
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries
- Hat, gloves and warmer clothing for cold nights
- Ziploc plastic bags to protect clothes and cameras from damp
- Optional: Sleeping bags and walking sticks as they can be rented

## Voltage

### Voltage, Sockets and Plugs

In Colombia, domestic energy is 110 volts at 60 hertz (110V AC, 60Hz). For this reason, you will find electrical connectors with two flat input pins or with a third round pin. It is very easy to find power adapters and voltage regulators in specialized stores or department stores.

## Money and Budgeting

### Exchanging Money and Using ATMs

The Colombian peso is the legal currency in the country. You can identify it with the abbreviation COP and, locally, with the peso sign (\$). For current information on exchange rates, please visit: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) We recommend changing money at banks or Casas de Cambio (money changing booths) whenever possible. Note that dollar bills with rips or tears will often be denied or exchanged at a significantly lower rate. It is best to bring new bills from your bank. It is better to not change money at the airport where the rates are not as favorable.

You can use your ATM card at banks. Please make sure to call your bank before your trip, to let them know you will be in Colombia – this will avoid potential fraud scares, and ensure your card is not blocked while traveling. In the main tourist destinations of the country, such as Bogotá, Santa Marta, Barranquilla, Cali, Medellín, Cartagena, San Andrés, Pereira or Bucaramanga, as well as in other cities, you can pay your expenses in cash and with debit or credit cards.

Credit cards can be used in all large businesses and some smaller ones. The most widely accepted are Visa and MasterCard. Before using your debit or credit cards in Colombia, check if your bank charges a commission for withdrawals abroad.

## Tipping

Tipping is not required, but is a welcome gesture if you feel you received excellent service. For guides and drivers the suggestions are for the total tip from your group, per day. It is best to tip in pesos, but dollars will be accepted too. It is not necessary to tip everywhere, but here are some good rules of thumb:

- Your guide – \$ 20 USD per day (from your whole party, not “per person”).
- Your driver and/or host – \$ 10 USD per day (from your whole party, not “per person”).
- Waiting staff at great restaurants – 10% (sometimes service is included in your bill, please check first)
- Bellboys – \$1 USD per piece of luggage

## Budgeting

While most charges are included in your trip cost, you will need a bit of extra cash for:

- Meals not included in your itinerary: there is a huge variety in price available, but generally, a nice meal in Colombia might be \$12 - \$20 USD.
- Souvenirs – absolutely up to you. You can find great little gifts for 6000 pesos (under \$2 USD) and Colombian hats for about \$15 USD. You can buy a different hat for every region during your trip! Hammocks are always a good buy especially on the coast.
- Taxis or other transport on your free days – this will depend on where you are. Your guides can provide estimates for costs.
- Tipping. We’ve provided more information below. - Airport taxes. More information below.





## Health, Safety, and Insurance

### Before You Go: Vaccinations, Questions for Your Doctor and Preparing for Altitude

Currently, there are no vaccinations required to enter the country. However, the Colombian authorities will require the yellow fever vaccine if you are going to visit certain sites such as the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta National Park, Tayrona Park and the different reserves of the Amazon. Remember that this vaccine must be applied at least 10 days before traveling to these destinations. To know which places it is necessary to have the yellow fever vaccine please check the following link: <https://www.minsalud.gov.co/salud/publica/PET/Paginas/Fiebre-amarilla.aspx> It is also recommended to have your vaccinations up to date, including those for measles - rubella.

Other recommended vaccines, but not mandatory, are those against hepatitis A and typhoid fever. Anti-malaria pills are only useful if you are going to visit jungle areas, where we also advise you to use repellent and mosquito net. If you are preparing to trek at high altitude, you'll feel much better if you are physically fit! Good aerobic health will help a great deal!

### Travel Insurance

Kuoda does not include travel insurance in its trip prices, but we strongly encourage you to purchase a plan before you travel in Colombia. This is relatively inexpensive and protects you financially from sickness abroad and cancellations due to unforeseeable events. If you are trekking, you are required to have insurance coverage. We recommend using [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com) or you can check [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com) for a list of options.

### Food and Water Precautions

While in Colombia, please drink only bottled water which is readily available in all hotels and local stores. Eat fruit that can be peeled and stay away from lettuce and other uncooked vegetables. Make sure the cooked foods you do eat are well-cooked and that meats are hot. Water cleanliness and sanitation is not all it could be here, so sticking to these rules and eating in reputable restaurants will prevent stomach ailments. You may wish to bring antibiotics as a precaution.

In Colombia, the altitude ranges from sea level to more than 5,000 meters high in the Andes, or the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, where the highest peaks in the country are located.

## Medical Care

If you have any medical issue whatsoever, contact your Kuoda Team as soon as possible and they will help you find the best medical care.

## Safety Tips

Don't wear flashy jewelry or display expensive electronics. Keep purses and bags close, cab doors locked and cab windows rolled up. Use caution throughout the rest of Colombia and always be aware of your surroundings. That said, you'll most often be with a guide, who will be on the lookout for you and there's no need to be overly worried! As in any other big cities in the world, take care of your personal belongings. Take heed of your guide's advice on where is safe to visit and when. Keep your documents, money, jewelry, cell phones and any other valuable item in a safe place.

## Staying in Touch

### Internet

All of our hotels will have Wi-Fi available and your guides will be happy to help you find locutorios where you can connect to the Internet, print and even make international phone calls. \*Please note there is little-to-no internet connectivity when visiting the jungle.



## Your Mobile Phone

It is only in Bogotá – the largest city in Colombia – and Bucaramanga, where the entire city has access to cable and ADSL internet at the same time. Other Colombian cities, such as Medellín, Cartagena and Cali, have a single ADSL operator that caters to the whole city, and as such the tariffs are much higher. The cities with populations of under one million are provided with broadband access by ColombiaTelecom, which is partly owned by the government.



## Cyber cafés and WiFi

Colombia has a number of cyber cafes across all the major cities. They can also be found beyond the cities, although there may be just one in each small town. At cyber cafes, internet connections are fast and quite affordable. But you may require a Colombian ID card to use the internet at one of these places. There are also several free WiFi zones to choose from, which can be found in all the major cities.

## Time Zones

Colombia has a time difference with the Greenwich meridian of -5 hours throughout its territory (UTC -5). Due to its location close to the equatorial line, there are no changes to the time throughout the year.

## Calling Colombia and Calling Home

The telephone country code for Colombia is + 57.. When dialing Colombia from overseas, dial the country code (57), followed by the regional code (see below) minus the initial 0, followed by the number. If dialing a Colombian cellphone number from the USA, simply dial: 011 + 57 + the 10-digit mobile number. If you are bringing a smart phone or tablet on your journey, certain apps allow you to make phone calls and send messages via Wi-Fi for free. We recommend the app WhatsApp, as well as FaceTime for Apple users. Skype is also popular and allows video calls. \*Please note there is little-to-no cell reception or internet when visiting the jungle or other remote areas.

# Arrival and Departure

## Upon Arrival

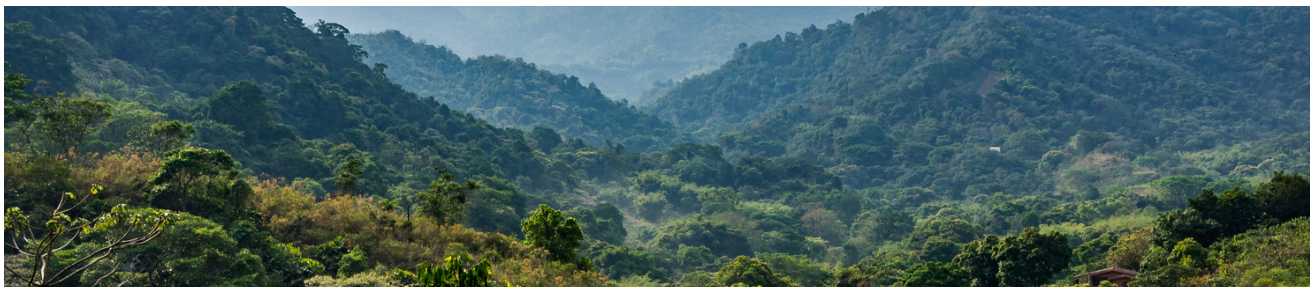
Most flights arrive quite late in the evening or early in the morning. Once you've claimed your baggage and cleared customs, look for our unmistakable welcome board in the arrivals lounge with your names clearly marked. Our Host will warmly welcome you to Colombia, assist you with your luggage, and take you to your hotel. Please do not leave the airport terminal building unless you have made contact with them. Also, ignore the calls from taxi drivers as your private transport has been provided for you.

## Airport Taxes

All airport taxes for domestic and international departures and arrivals are now included in flight ticket costs. You will not need to pay additional taxes in Colombian airports.

## When it's Time to Say 'Goodbye'

Your Kuoda Host will bring you to the airport, help you check in and bid you "adios!" Make sure you have your tourist card readily accessible to hand in as you pass the immigration counters.



# Cultural Considerations

## Language

Colombia's primary language is Spanish, though there are approximately 68 native languages spoken by about 850,000 people.

## Food

In Colombian gastronomy, indigenous and Spanish ingredients are mixed with African, Arabic and Spanish forms of preparation. The main ingredients in are: Pork, potatoes, beans, corn, chicken, rice and soups.

## Accommodations

We have personally stayed in each of the hotels and lodge we recommend to you, and we prefer accommodations that are quiet and centrally located. Please note that some accommodations, particularly jungle lodges and homestay opportunities, are rustic at best. This means no central heat or air conditioning, electricity only at select times of the day, and oftentimes no cell reception, wifi, or TV.

## Festivals and Celebrations

No other country celebrates life like Colombia. The more than 150 festivals with over 18 public holidays are waiting for you all year round to arrive in this country full of colors, liveliness and a touch of madness!

Semana Santa, or Holy Week, is an especially important celebration in Colombia. Other holidays celebrate important dates in Colombia's history and independence. January and June have the most holidays, at three per month.

Barranquilla's carnival is the biggest celebration of folklore in all Colombia and one of the world's largest carnivals, with more than a hundred years of tradition. The festivities run for four days and Colombians and visitors alike party in the streets in a colorful celebration of Colombian culture.

*“Traveling – It Leaves You Speechless,  
Then Turns You Into a Storyteller”*

-Ibn Battuta