

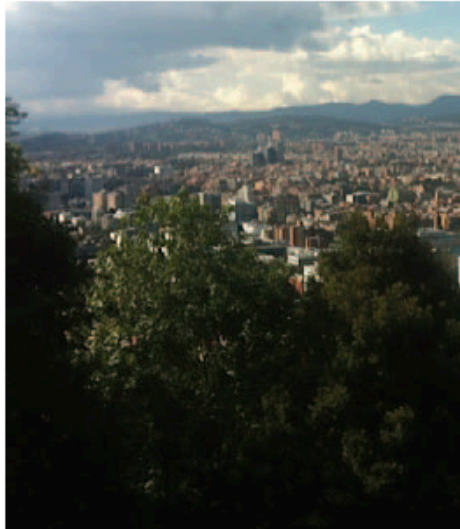
CLEMENTINES CORNER



COLOMBIA: NOT SO FAR, NOT SO FRIGHTENING

By Audra Clemons

In the past, Colombia hasn't been a front-of-mind travel destination for most of the American population, nor has it been a country on the travel radar for most people from across the globe. Unfortunately, much like Mexico, Colombia has been combating a reputation synonymous with guerillas, drug cartels and violence. However, over the past ten years, the Colombian government has made great strides with peace, and in turn safety has become a nationwide priority. Having been a tourist in this country for the past two months I can certainly attest to this.



Desoto County
**Watermelon
Festival**
Sat., May 11th
10 AM - 4 PM
DeSoto Park



Food and Entertainment • Pageants
Arts and Crafts • Watermelon Contests
Kids Korner • Wacky River Race • \$1.99 Pageant

Vendor Space Available
arcadiamainstreet@yahoo.com
863-494-2020 • 941-204-5540

A Sequence of Amicable Events:

With Colombia's economy being the third largest in Central and South America, it is no surprise that the U.S. - Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, also known as the "Free Trade Agreement," was voted into action on May 15, 2012. This Agreement allowed 80 percent of U.S. consumer and industrial goods exports to Colombia to be free of tariffs. Tariffs on the remaining 20 percent of the products will be phased out by 2022, and all remaining tariffs will be completely eliminated by 2027. The Agreement also affects many agricultural commodities - more than half of the current U.S. farm exports to Colombia are now duty-free. (For more specific information on beef, search the National Cattlemen's Beef Association website for "Free Trade Agreement").

Also in 2012, a popular U.S. - based airline at the forefront of successful travel ventures, Jet Blue, launched direct flight service from many cities in the U.S. to the Colombian cities of Bogota, Cartagena and Medellin. Thus making the destination accessible and affordable to the American public.

When and Where to Go:

Being that Colombia does not experience traditional seasons, the weather is nearly perfect year-round, so the determining factor on traveling to this country is based



Colombia, and dating back to an Indigenous settlement of 4000 BC, Cartagena has a myriad of history. At the heart of the city is the impressive Walled City, a fortress built by the Spaniards in 1533. Behind the 60-foot-thick wall lies a romantic, Spanish-colonial city showcasing brightly colored houses with verandas overflowing with a variety of flowers. Attractions not to be missed while visiting Cartagena: Palacio de la Inquisición; Iglesia de San Pedro Claver; the Castillo de San Felipe; and a day trip to Isla de Rosario or Isla Barú. Where to stay: Hotel Agua, the former residence-turned-boutique is stunning. Closest airport: Cartagena, Rafael Núñez International.

around budget. Like any other travel destination, holidays are the most expensive time to book both flights and hotels, and the least expensive time to travel is the week succeeding a holiday.

Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia

If you like St. Augustine, you'll love Cartagena. Situated in the northeastern Caribbean coastal region of

Mesa del los Santos, Santander, Colombia

If you like agriculture, you'll love Mesa de los Santos. This eastern region of the country, nestled between spectacular peaks of the Andes mountain range, is stated to be the origin of the peasant workers revolution against the Spaniards, led by Manuela Beltrán. With plains, mountains, canyons and rivers, Santander offers a variety of outdoor activities.

HARDEE RANCH SUPPLY, INC.

Unparalleled Service
Competitive Prices and Over Value

Proudly serving the community for over 25 years.

863-773-4322
1309 Hwy 17 S. Wauchula, FL
Hardeeranchsupply.com

Ninth Annual
Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference

July 12-14, 2013
Hyatt Regency Coconut Point, Bonita Springs

Register now at
www.FloridaCitrusMutual.com

Hotel reservations can also be made by calling 239-444-1234 and asking for the Citrus Rate.

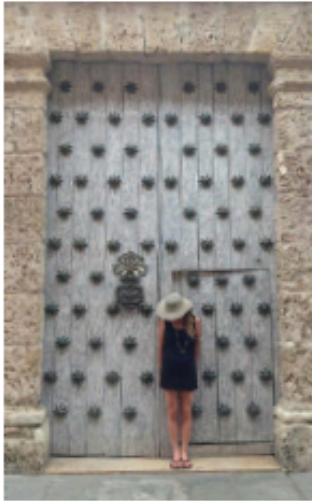
Rate increases from \$138 (plus tax) to \$159 after May 1, 2013.
Group rate cut-off for \$159 is May 16, 2013 or whenever the group block is sold-out, whichever comes first.
Hotel reservations must be cancelled by registrant.

Hyatt Regency Bonita Springs
5001 Coconut Road
Bonita Springs, FL 34134
239-444-1234

Solar Water Works

Josh Eveleth
863.381.2147 cell
Free Estimates

SOLAR PUMP SALES & INSTALL • PUMP SERVICE • GRAVITY TANKS



longest of its kind in South America. For the coffee lover, Mesa de los Santos boasts the largest organic coffee farm in Colombia, and offers guests the opportunity to stay at the farm's 200-year old house – Hacienda el Roble. The stay includes an intimate tour of the coffee farm, revealing the process of coffee making from growing and harvesting to manufacturing and drinking (the best part of the tour is the coffee tasting!). Attractions not to be missed while visiting the Santander region: Parque Nacional del Chicamocha. Where to stay: Hacienda el Roble, a family-owned hacienda boutique b&nb set amidst a lush, organic coffee plantation. Closest airport: Bucaramanga, Palonegro International.

Bogota, Cundinamarca, Colombia

If you like cities, you'll love Bogota. This South American city has the urban sprawl of Los Angeles, and a work ethic with production similar to New York City. As Colombia's capital, Bogota hosts a population of eight million people,

The famous Canon de Chicamocha, equivalent in size to the Grand Canyon, can be viewed from a cable car ride, which is both exhilarating and the

showcasing diverse faces from regions across the country. On the street, one can observe a colonial Spanish style coupled with European modernity, and people that enjoy contemporary art, music, gastronomy and entertainment. However, while in the city it is also hard to avoid seeing shantytown barrios and a multitude of heartbreaking street beggars. Bogota is a complex city; it is industrial with a backbone for business, yet it maintains a natural beauty with the surrounding Andes mountain range, upon which it rests. Over the past five years, Bogota has attracted some impressive U.S. businesses like Google and GE. Attractions not to be missed while visiting Bogota: Museo del Oro, Museo de Botero, Monserrate, and the Zipiquira Salt Cathedral. Where to stay: BOG Hotel, a contemporary luxury design with textures and colors inspired by Colombian riches of gold and emerald. Closest airport: Bogota, El Dorado International.

With an increase in safety and direct flights, Colombia is a country that is now more accessible and agreeable to the general public. The destination offers a wide range of landscapes from the Caribbean and Pacific Oceans, to mountains, savannahs and rivers. It is a land rich in natural resources and beauty; and fairly inexpensive compared to other well-known travel destinations. With so much to offer, it's fair to quote the country's motto: "Colombia, the only risk is wanting to stay." 🇨🇴