JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

MAGDALENA RIVER CRUISE: COLOMBIA'S HIDDEN GEMS

13 days from **£4,800pp**

COLOMBIA / CARTAGENA / CARIBBEAN COAST AND ISLANDS / BOGOTA / MEDELLIN



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

Enjoy a cruise along Colombia's mythical Magdalena River through historic colonial towns pulsating with Latin rhythms. Begin by exploring historic Cartagena before your enchanting eight-day river cruise, then discover the wildlife-rich jungle of Tayrona National Park and relax on Caribbean beaches.
Arrive in the colonial walled city of Cartagena and discover its fascinating history on a series of walking tours. Then embark on your river boat for an unforgettable eight-day cruise through northern Colombia's heartlands.

DAY 1	**Arrive in historic Cartagena**
DAY 2	**At leisure in Cartagena**
DAY 3	**Cruise on the Magdalena River**
DAY 4	**Historic towns of Palenque and Calamar**
DAY 5	**Magangue birdwatching**
DAY 6	**Mompox walking tour and Ciénaga Pijiño wildlife**
DAY 7	**Cumbia music performance**
DAY 8	**Santa Barbara de Pinto walking tour and live music**
DAY 9	**Nueva Venecia and Barranquilla**
DAY 10	**Transfer to Tayrona National Park**
DAYS 11-12	**At leisure in Tayrona National Park**
DAY 13	**Transfer to Santa Marta airport for international flight home.**

ITINERARY

Rising in the Colombian Massif and flowing for more than 1,500km to the Caribbean coast, the Magdalena River has long been Colombia's most important waterway. For centuries, it served as the country's main commercial artery, carrying gold, tobacco, coffee and countless other goods from the interior to ports on the Caribbean coast. Passenger steamers once travelled its waters too, and journeys along the river left a lasting impression on a young Gabriel García Márquez, later inspiring many of his novels.

This itinerary combines many of Colombia's highlights with a seven-night cruise along this storied waterway. You'll begin in Bogotá, Colombia's capital, with its colonial architecture, vibrant street art and renowned Gold Museum before travelling to the Coffee Region, a landscape of rolling emerald-green hills, traditional fincas and coffee plantations. Here you'll explore the spectacular Cocora Valley, home to thousands of wax palms, before spending time in the picturesque villages of Salento and Filandia. From here, you'll travel north to Medellín and uncover its transformation from one of the world's most troubled cities to a centre of creativity and entrepreneurship.

A short flight then brings you to Barranquilla for the start of your seven-night cruise on the Magdalena River. Travelling through a region still largely overlooked by international visitors, you'll visit proud riverside communities, wildlife-rich wetlands and the beautifully preserved colonial town of Mompox, one of the river's most important trading ports. Along the way, discover traditions that have endured for generations and experience the music that defines life along the Magdalena, from jazz performances and Carnaval celebrations to the infectious rhythms of cumbia.

The trip concludes in Cartagena, one of Latin America's most captivating colonial cities, where the cobbled streets and colourful façades of the walled historic centre provide a memorable finale to your journey through Colombia.

DAY 1

Arrive in historic Cartagena



Arrive in Cartagena and take a private transfer to your hotel.

Caribbean's most exotic and romantic colonial city, Cartagena was founded in 1533, quickly blossoming to become the main Spanish port in the Caribbean, and a gateway to the north of the continent. Treasure plundered from native inhabitants was stored here until the galleons could ship it back to Spain, and it became a tempting target for pirates. To protect their booty, the Spanish constructed an elaborate system of ramparts, which still encircle the town.

Today, while Cartagena has expanded dramatically, the walled centre has changed very little, allowing a glimpse of 16th and 17th-century Spanish architecture. Enjoy the shade provided by the buildings in these labyrinthine, cobbled streets, and explore the monasteries, palaces, churches, plazas, and imposing mansions with flower-filled balconies.

Beyond this, the city opens up: an eclectic and seductive mix of Caribbean and African influences produces a vibrant street life, with fruit stalls lining the roads and pulsating rhythms emerging from cars and houses.

DAY 2

At leisure in Cartagena



Enjoy another day in beautiful Cartagena. Explore the city independently at leisure or consider an optional guided tour of the historic walled city, the forts and battlements to help you soak up the atmosphere of this seductive city.

Alternatively, go further afield and take a speedboat to spend the day on the coral, palm-kissed beaches of the nearby Rosario Islands.

DAY 3

Cruise on the Magdalena River

Take your private transfer from the hotel to the pier to embark on your river cruise boat.

Then enjoy a walking tour through the Getsemani neighbourhood, taking in the vibrant colours of the homes and street art as well as sampling local delicacies.

Upon returning to your boat, enjoy a sundown cruise as your river adventure begins.



DAY 4

Historic towns of Palenque and Calamar

Step into the story of Palenque, the first "free town" in the Americas, where music, language, and traditions tell a tale of resilience and pride. Experience the rhythm of Afro-Colombian culture through vibrant performances and heartfelt encounters. Later, journey to Calamar to admire its historic charm, from graceful churches to colorful streets best explored by paola, a local bicycle taxi built for two.



DAY 5

Magangue birdwatching

Board a small boat and drift through the emerald wetlands of Boca de Tacaloa, where vibrant birdlife and untamed nature create a living sanctuary. As evening falls, arrive in Mompox and feel the streets come alive with an exclusive open-air jazz performance.



DAY 6

Mompox walking tour and Ciénaga Pijiño wildlife

Step into the timeless rhythm of Mompox, where riverside streets and artisan workshops seem untouched by time. Glide through quiet corners and watch delicate filigree craftsmanship come to life, feeling the enduring spirit and vibrant culture of this storied town.



DAY 7

Cumbia music performance

Journey through the tranquil La Mojana Region, a landscape alive with the pulse of Colombian culture. Here, the story of cumbia unfolds – a dance that bridges continents and generations, carrying the spirit of joy and connection. End the day immersed in its rhythm during an exclusive performance by local musicians and dancers.



DAY 8

Santa Barbara de Pinto walking tour and live music

Spend your morning in Santa Barbara de Pinto, located on the banks of the Mompox arm of the Magdalena River.

Enjoy a walking tour through this traditional town to see local landmarks such as the Santa Barbara Church, then browse intricate handmade crafts created in the town.

In the afternoon, arrive at the town of Mompox, where you will be welcomed with lively music during an exclusive jazz performance by local musicians.



DAY 9

Nueva Venecia and Barranquilla

In the morning, visit the Floating Village of Nueva Venecia. A charming town filled with inviting locals, Nueva Venecia, or "New Venice," can only be navigated by boat.

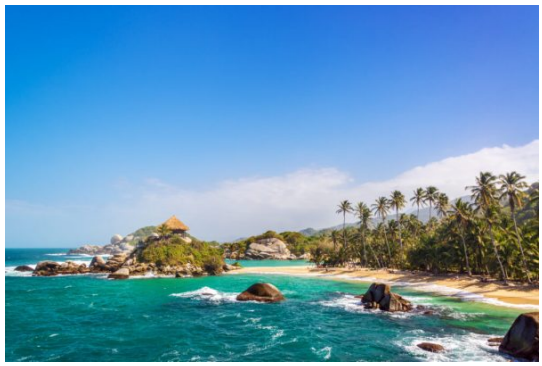
Tour the village to see its beautiful colonial houses, vivid architecture and local sanctuary protecting the native flora and fauna. Enjoy traditional crafts, learn about the techniques the fishermen of Nueva Venecia use, and taste the local delicacies.

Later in the day, continue to the Caribbean city of Barranquilla, a vibrant destination home to notable musicians, writers and artists. Visit famous landmarks such as Bocas de Cenizas, the point at which the magical Magdalena River meets the Caribbean Sea, and the Carnaval Museum, which showcases the unique history of this incredible festival. In the evening, enjoy an exclusive Carnival celebration.



DAY 10

Transfer to Tayrona National Park



As your river cruise comes to an end in Barranquilla, take your private transfer to Tayrona National Park.

Enjoy this enchanting region of thick, humid jungle and unspoilt Caribbean beaches fringed by coconut palms, once home to the indigenous Tayrona people. Jungle paths follow tree-covered trails surrounded by tropical dry forest, with monkeys swinging in the trees.

You'll be staying in a comfortable cabaña with spectacular ocean views.

DAYS 11-12

At leisure in Tayrona National Park



Take a variety of trails through the humid rainforest and tropical dry forests, stopping off at mysterious archaeological sites along the way.

One of the most popular treks is following an ancient stairway to the fascinating archaeological site of Pueblito, reminiscent of the better-known Ciudad Perdida.

Over 100 species of mammals inhabit the region, so keep an eye out for monkeys, sloths and iguanas, as well as a vast array of colourful birds.

You'll have a day at leisure to further explore and enjoy some downtime. Wander barefoot along white sand beaches, unwind in a hammock and sip cocktails as the sun sets over the Caribbean Sea.

DAY 13

Transfer to Santa Marta airport for international flight home.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Bogota: walking tour & Gold Museum
- Coffee Region: Cocora Valley, Salento & Filandia
- Coffee Region: Coffee tour at a traditional finca
- Medellin: City tour
- River Magdalena: all excursions are included.
- Cartagena: San Felipe fortress & street art of Getsemani

ESSENTIALS

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

16 days / 15 nights: Bogota 2; Coffee Region 3; Medellin 2; Magdalena River 7; Cartagena 1.

This trip features a mix of colonial-style and contemporary hotels. The seven-night cruise on the Magdalena River takes place aboard a comfortable, well-equipped vessel accommodating up to 60 passengers.

Upgrades and alternate options are possible. Please contact us for details.

In addition to airport-hotel transfers, this trip includes:

- 2 domestic flights (1 hour each)
- 1 long-distance road journey (approx. 5 hours)
- 7-night cruise on the Magdalena River

Breakfast: daily

Lunch: day 5

Full board on Magdalena River cruise

Our local, trusted and carefully selected partners understand the expectations of our customers very well, and their staff and guides are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

On this holiday, you will be joined by different guides for each activity and or region, ensuring you benefit from specialised expertise and knowledge, often from someone local to the area.

As well as any included activities, most Private Journeys include some free time for optional excursions. As optional excursions are often subject to availability, we recommend you discuss and arrange them with your Travel Expert as early as possible before you depart.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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