

## 4. SANTA MARTA



**Santa Marta** was founded in 1525 by the Spanish conquistador Rodrigo de Bastidas and became the first Spanish city on the South American continent. Here you can find the memorial and the original home where Simón Bolívar died in 1830. South of town you can see the Sierra Nevada, that has the highest mountain peaks of Colombia. Close to town there is also the start of the lost city track, and Tayrona National Park. On the one side its warm Caribbean waters with coral reefs and on the other side the snowy peaks of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta makes this place unbelievably beautiful.

### Santa Marta - Excursions

#### City Tour Cultural (approx. 4 h)

Visit the colonial centre with the Cathedral of Santa Marta, the ethnographic museum which represents the Tayrona culture. Afterwards, visit the “Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino”, where the liberator of Colombia, Simón Bolívar, died in 1830.

#### Minca, coffee farm & Pozo Azul cascade (approx. 8 h)

From Santa Marta you first visit La Victoria, an organic coffee farm. This farm has one of the most efficient processing systems in Colombia. Micky Weber, German owner, fixed machines that date back from 1892, turning this place in an authentic living museum. His creative gears helped the farm to be self-sufficient in things like electricity and compost for the crops to name a few. In a two-hour approx. tour we get to know the ingenious processing of the coffee, from harvest to your cup. Later, after a brief Jeep car journey we walk for 30 minutes through a natural trail until we get to Pozo Azul Cascade where we have the chance to take a refreshing bath in the Minca River. Returning to town we make a stopover to visit Don Camaritas, a guy famous for preparing the best chorizos and smoked fish in the region. Drive back to Santa Marta.

#### Arrecifes - Tayrona National Park (approx. 8 h)

Leave Santa Marta and take the interesting Coastal Road and reach the eastern entrance of the Park after approx. one hour. From Cañaveral area we start a hike going through the tropical dry forest with beaches alongside until we reach Arrecifes (1h). Here we take a short break to enjoy a refreshing natural juice. We continue our hike for 1 more hour passing by beaches like Arenillas Beach, La Piscina and Cabo San Juan Beach, where we will have time to bath and to relax. Around 4:00 pm we begin our return journey to Santa Marta.

#### Chengue Salt Flat & Tayrona National Park (approx. 10 h)

During this tour you will meet Chengue Bay, considered as one of the most beautiful bays in Colombia. First, you take the western entrance until you get to Gairaca Beach. From here you start a two-hour long walk, going through tropical dry forest ecosystem and some Mangrove forest. Arrive to the lonely Chengue Salt Flat on the Eastern side, and walk to the Western side to get the best pics and to relax at a White Sandy beach. Here you have plenty of time to take a dip in its crystal-clear waters and to enjoy light food (lunch-packet). In the afternoon we return by hiking back to Santa Marta.

#### Taironaka - Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta incl. lunch (approx. 8 h)

Today you drive to Taironaka located in the Sierra Nevada. From Santa Marta it is about an hour drive to the river access of San Diego. Here you take a short walk for about half an hour. On the way, you can observe diverse flora and numerous bird species. Upon arrival in Taironaka you will

be surprised by the restored terraces from Tayrona times. Also, you will find a small museum with some original pieces of the Tayrona culture. At noon a typical regional meal will be served. Taironaka is situated on the banks of the river Don Diego where you can take a refreshing bath. Sometimes you have the opportunity to come in contact with the local Kogui Indians who live nearby and offer a variety of handicrafts at a small square. Very popular are the "Mochilas", small bags in beautiful colours and patterns. In the afternoon return to Santa Marta.

### **Indigenous village (Etnia Kogui) (approx. 10h)**

The Kogis, related to the ancient Tayrona civilization, inhabit the Palomino, Don Diego, San Miguel and Ancho river valleys. Their population is estimated around 10.000 members and all of them live in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta foothills. These older brothers take care of the natural treasure of the Sierra mountain which in their culture represents the center of the world and main fountain of life. They still continue their role as keepers of cosmical stability and are considered one of the most valuable ancient cultures on earth.

From Santa Marta drive along the coastal road until you reach Palomino (2 hours), Guajira. Here a Kogui guide will receive you and after a small talk you will start a hike through the tropical rainforest, going along the Palomino River. Then reach the Seywiaka village where you can have a close look at their way of living. After that, you are purified in a ritual session and once you are prepared to receive the "Aseguranza", the ritual session begins. This ritual, common between the Koguis, consists of making the body energy stable with stones and water, so you can receive a special blessing from one of the spiritual leaders of the community and a bracelet made by them. The ceremony will last around 45 minutes. Then we will take a trail back to Palomino and drive back to Santa Marta.

### **Camarones Fauna and Flora Sanctuary "Los Flamencos" (approx. 8h)**

Los Flamencos Sanctuary is a place that wildlife lovers do not dare to miss. Located in the town of Camarones, this nature reserve has a lot to offer. Its lakes and mangroves and the most varied types of coast birds in the Colombian Caribbean are good examples. It is a varied landscape that can be appreciated between the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta peaks and the dry forest of the Guajira savannas. It also provides the perfect scenery for fishermen stories and shepherding of a tribe that with their food and customs testify the powerful mixture between the afrodescendants with the Wayuu people.

From Santa Marta go to Camarones town where you enter to "Los Flamencos Fauna and Flora Sanctuary". On a 1 ½ hour tour, on a wooden boat, have the opportunity to appreciate the never-ending number of wild birds in the reserve. Among them you can see the Flamingos, kings of this ecosystem and also a great variety of mangrove species. Once finished the tour, have a chat with a ranger about the ecological importance of such place. Return to Santa Marta.

### **Cienega Grande de Santa Marta (approx. 10h)**

Located between the cities Santa Marta and Barranquilla, the Cienega Grande Fauna and Flora Sanctuary is the biggest lake complex in Colombia. It is considered as one of the most strategic water mirrors in the country and of vital importance for the planet. It was declared a Ramsar Site (Wetland of world importance) in 1998, and as a Man and the Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2000. Those who visit this wildlife sanctuary will have a breathtaking journey. Lakes and swamps connected by beautiful natural canals and mangrove mazes with an unmatched exotic beauty makes this an interesting ride.

During the tour you will visit the small town of Tasajera (1h). Afterwards get on a motorboat and visit the typical fishermen region, the amazing Palafitos from Buenavista and Nueva Venecia, each one of them with almost 300 houses in the middle of the marsh. This scenery catches everyone's attention because of the colorful wooden houses. The houses show the inhabitants' intelligence in how to adapt themselves to Mother Nature. The majestic Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the Caribbean Sea and the Magdalena River form a spectacular landscape, making this place one of the Colombian wonders, remaining almost hidden to the world. In this tour it is also possible to see a vast number of exotic birds.

<b>Opening Time for Attractions in Santa Marta</b>				
<b>Site</b>	<b>Weekdays</b>		<b>Weekends</b>	
Quinta San Pedro de Alejandrino	Mon - Fri	09.00h - 16.30h	Sat - Sun	09.00h - 16.30h
Tayrona National Park	Mon - Fri	08.00h - 17.00h	Sat - Sun	08.00h - 17.00h