

THE COLOMBIAN
MASSIF

MAGAZINE
No. 21

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

CAUCA

• A PLACE OF BIRTH AND SPIRITUALITY •

COLOMBIA 

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Cauca, THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.



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Calle 28 # 13A - 15. Floors 35 and 36
Bogotá, Colombia
+57 601 5600100.
info@procolombia.co

**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM**
VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Created by:
**FEEDBACK PROVOKERS
AND PROCOLOMBIA**

**DESIGN AND
RESEARCH TEAM:**

Claudia Medina
Account manager

Project leaders
María Alejandra Gutiérrez
Natalia Bonilla

Juliana Quecán
Analysis manager

Carol Retavisca
Project coordinator

**FIELD EXECUTION AND
ANALYSIS TEAM:**

Semiotic director
Marcia Pinzón

Anthropologists
Alejandra Ramírez
Eliana Cepeda
Julián Numpaque

Psychologists
Natalia Pastrán
Ana María Rebellón

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The White City, Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**

WELCOME TO A NEW WAY OF NARRATING COLOMBIA

We are delighted to take this step forwards with you during this stage of promoting the tourism of our country and, first of all, we would like to thank you for being part of this strategy geared towards the growth and strengthening of the sector. It is people like you who make it possible for increasingly more Colombians and foreigners to explore Colombia.

The Government's goal was to find innovative content associated with cultural expressions and natural attractions in our country, to enable the stakeholders of the tourism sector to publicise destinations and experiences to promote Colombia in the best possible way.

Following in-depth research into our 32 departments plus Bogotá, needs and perspectives were identified with a

view to promoting the country.

This is what led to the creation of the regional narratives of tourism, which are a tool for anyone who wants to generate attractive content and benefit from this department-based research, which featured the participation of researchers, composers, writers, journalists, entrepreneurs, artisans, artists, cultural advisers, social leaders, singers, traditional cooks, indigenous communities, natural parks' representatives, tourists, chefs and other experts from all regions of the country.

So, together, we are going to take advantage of these opportunities for communication and we are going to show that Colombia is the most welcoming country in the world.

PROCOLOMBIA



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

As a result of a tourism promotion initiative, we have created the regional tourism narratives and their accompanying magazine—a tool to convey them to local tourism operators. Both the toolkit and this publication are designed to complement each other and offer an outstanding opportunity to attract tourism from all corners of the world.

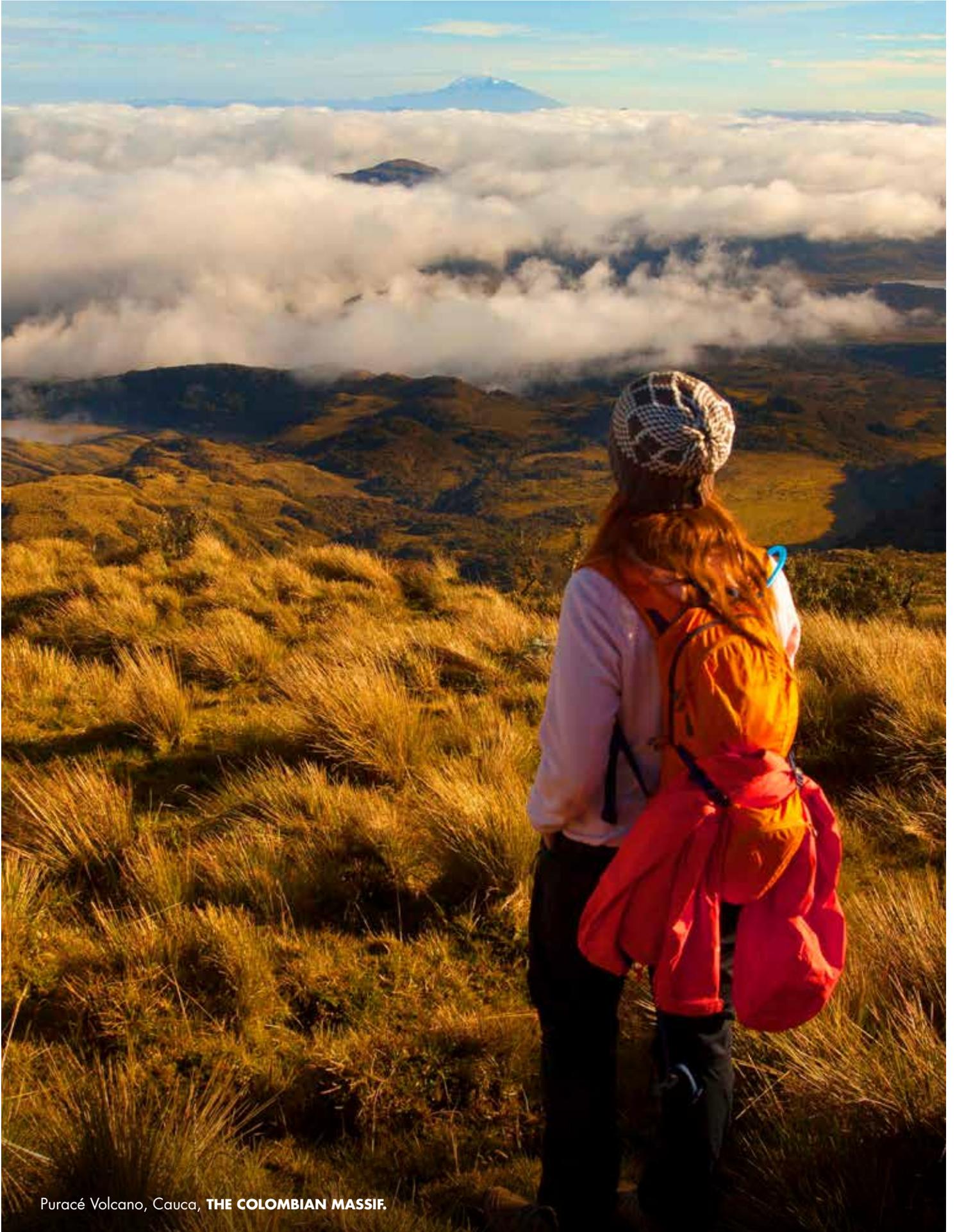
As a reader, you will have at your disposal **33 research modules**, broken down by region and department. Additionally, a content manual is available, a guide teaching you how to best wield this information and create content for different media that efficiently communicates destinations' offers and aligns itself with their needs. The initiative also includes the podcast series "**Sounds from the Heart of Colombia**", 33 stories that reconstruct environments, voices, songs of nature, and the cultural identities of each of our departments, as well as a series of photographs and illustrations of the main destinations.

The following pages contain articles showcasing the highlights of each department in keeping with the aforementioned narratives, as well as information providing a general summary of the research. If you were to require more in-depth information, we recommend reviewing the 33 modules comprising the regional tourism narratives.

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Popayán, Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**



Puracé Volcano, Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**

WATER SOURCE

In the awe-inspiring ecological region of Cauca you can seek out the source of water and connect with the intangible, nourish your spirit and charge up your soul with new energy. Water features as the main element of its geography, encouraging you to roam paths that whisk you away to the past and ramble green mountains full of life that represent the future.

The astonishing department of Cauca is an outright land with a collection of sumptuous natural landscapes, as it has five geographical zones. This is a privileged region of inexhaustible treasures.

"I would mention Cauca's gastronomic richness, its cultural richness as regards music, and its natural richness as a water reserve."

The **Pacific plain** comprises the coastal strip covered with mangrove forests, rivers, canals and estuaries that reach the Pacific Ocean coast, and a sector of hills in Colombia's western mountain range. **The islands of Gorgona and Gorgonilla in the Pacific**, with their three islets, also reveal thick tropical rainforest. **The Patía Valley**, with its warm-climate, through which the Patía River flows from north to south, extends into the department of Nariño. **The Bota Caucana** (or Caucan boot) is the land through which the Caquetá River flows into the Amazon basin. The **western and central mountain ranges** host the Colombian Massif, one of its most biodiverse regions, with further ecosystems and major water sources. Its most exemplary attractions feature the Buey moorlands, Puracé Volcano and the snow-capped Sierra Nevada de los Coconucos.

However, something special that makes it a privileged department is the source of the rivers Patía (Pacific slope), Cauca and Magdalena (Caribbean slope), and Putumayo and Caquetá (Amazon basin), located in the Colombian Massif and supplying water to 70% of Colombians. Because of their geographical location, with so many water sources and rivers that run through a large part of the country's land, they are known as the factory for Colombia's life source.

In Cauca, the natural landscape is in itself the place where everything is born and has become a tourist attraction in the region. The most characteristic places to visit include parks, mountain ranges, lagoons and thermal springs. Some, better known than others, are jewels and a must for tourists. We start with the **Puracé National Natural Park**. It is located between the departments of Cauca and Huila, and has been a Biosphere Reserve since 1979. It spans 83,000 hectares, featuring altitudes ranging between 2500 and 5000 MSL, has a primarily cold climate and is home to endangered plant species such as the Colombian pine, oak and wax palm. There you can find places to enjoy nature such as the source of the Magdalena, Cauca, Patía and Caquetá rivers. The **Serranía de los Coconucos mountain range**, comprising 11 volcanic craters such as the Pan de Azúcar, at 5,000 MSL. and the Puracé volcano, at 4,673 MSL. The Puracé and Sotará are the only two active volcanoes. You can visit lagoons, the San Juan thermal springs and see the Andean condor. **Tierradentro Archaeological Park** comprises a broad area of tombs dug beneath the earth's surface and painted red and black. The primary archaeological attractions in this park include El Duende, Alto de San Andrés and El Aguacate. Lastly, **Gorgona National Natural Park** is located in the Pacific, 46 km from Guapi. It is an island covered by tropical rainforest and is rich in freshwater streams such as the Tunapuri lagoon, which enables a broad diversity of flora and fauna (oak, bay laurel, coconut trees, reptiles, sea turtles and babillas). Dolphins, porpoises, sperm whales and humpback whales can be observed nearby. You can also dive and admire coral species and all the reserve's marine biological abundance.

DIVERSE CULTURE

Cauca is a blend of opposing cultures and communities, which carry the same region in their hearts. It communicates ancient cultural origins and traditions.

Payanenses, indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians give the department its essence and refine it with their unique traditions and styles. These are three contrasting communities, whose stories, emblematic places and memorable figures, leave their legacy.

“Cauca is a territory with diverse cultures, ethnicities, climates and regions. Geographically, it can be said that it comprises valleys and mountains, rivers and sea. It is like having a little Colombia, where there is everything.”

The **Payanese culture**, belonging to the city of Popayán, features a religious culture, which takes pride in its history and cares for its cultural treasures. Its people seek intellectuality and are conservative in their Catholic values. It is Colombia’s White City and strives to preserve the architecture of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, as a testimony of its importance during this period. It hosts the Morro de Tulcán hill, Cerro de las Tres Cruces hill, Puente del Humilladero bridge, Torre del Reloj tower, Parque Caldas square, Panteón de los Próceres funeral monument and other historical architecture.

Several historical figures made a name for the city, thus, there are various museums where you can relive ancient times and discover the principal characters. You can find the mill of El Sabio Caldas (Francisco José de Caldas, known as The Wise), the colonial estates near the city, the Mosquera and G. León Valencia House Museum, the National Museum and the Guillermo Valencia Theatre.

The **indigenous Caucan culture** comprises uncomplicated, reserved, organised and hard-working people, who are bound to their lands with body and soul, and who are concerned with keeping their culture alive.

The Páez people live in the municipalities of Jambaló, Inzá, Páez and Toribío, and although they are more distant from visitors, they also allow interaction under strict rules, especially as regards caring for the environment. Silvia is the centre of the indigenous Guambiano or Mis-



ak community, which welcomes tourists with open arms, respecting their traditions and teaching them about their worldview and way of being.

Both groups maintain their traditional dress made by them, speak their own language thanks to their families and schools, and have their own political organisations, with their authority being La Guardia Indígena or the Indigenous Guard. Lastly, they are indigenous communities that reflect the territorial struggles that have taken place in the municipality due to the presence of armed groups, violence and displacement.

The third culture resides on the coast. Its inhabitants are mostly **Afro-Colombians**, known for their multicoloured dress, their joy, their immaterial heritage music (the currulao, alabaos and arrullos), in addition to their African traditions. Timbiquí, López and Guapi are the Caucan Pacific municipalities that subsist on the trade of gold, agricultural products such as rice, coconut, corn and peach palm fruit, fishing, and ancestral trades such as lutherie (making musical instruments), tetera fibre crafts and tourism.

This is a rich biodiverse area due to being close to mangrove swamps, guandal (lowland and wetland) forests, the Pacific Ocean and its border with Colombia’s western mountain range, perfect for those who love cultural tradition, gastronomy and ecotourism. Popayán (the capital of the department of Cauca) is note-



Tortilla soup, Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**

worthy as a destination for gastronomy and for many years has held the nationally renowned Popayán Gastronomic Congress, and its dishes have been internationally acknowledged for their local flavour.

Its most celebrated dishes include caldo batido (minced beef soup), sopa de tortilla (tortilla soup), sopa de envueltos (tortilla soup), sango (corn soup) and sancocho de gallina (chicken broth often accompanied by cassava, yam, potato and corn on the cob). Tripaso de maní (tripe and peanut soup), veal and boiled potato with peanut stew; empanada (corn dough pastry) and tamal de pipián (boiled meat and vegetables in banana leaf), carantantas (corn chips), aplanchados (pastry), ullucus, envueltos (boiled corn and cheese in a wrapped banana leaf). Ají pique (chili sauce), ají de maní (peanut and chili sauce), tortilla and arracacha cake, white and banana cake, as well as cucas (biscuits), choclo corn envueltos, molletes (buns), pambazos (sweet buns), rosquillas (sweet fried dough) and mantecadas de yuca (sweet fried cassava dough).

Indigenous cuisine is focused on corn, potato and ullucus. These products are prepared in many ways and complemented with rice, cabbage and beans. The Pacific region's traditional gastronomy is based on local products such as crustaceans, molluscs, shellfish, fish, corn, banana, coconut, mamey, pineapple and rooftop herbs. The region offers exquisite dishes such as shrimp sudado (fried prawn dish), seafood rice, piangua cockles, shell

stews, encocado de jaiba crab stew and envueltos. The department's other cultural attractions include festivals and crafts. Fairs and festivals mainly involve the Andean music of flute, drum, charrascas and maracas in Popayán, the rural municipalities and the resguardos (indigenous communities); or currulaos with the marimba percussion instrument in the Pacific.

There is the famous Carnaval de Blancos y Negros (Carnival of Blacks and Whites) with parades, soirées and people with their faces painted in colours. The Fiesta de Reyes, featuring parades, artistic performances and bullfights. Holy Week, a particularly important festival in Popayán that is celebrated throughout Cauca and features processions from Holy Tuesday to Easter Sunday. The Day of the Peasant and the Corn Festival: associated with country folk and indigenous people, they include float competitions, parades, cultural events, masses, popular festivities with traditional Andean music and dance, compadrazgos (co-godparenthood), gastronomy and traditional medicine. The Afro-Colombian Encounter, a gathering of western Colombian culture featuring cultural demonstrations, seminars and shows by bands, and the KÜC' CH WALA: parades from each community with men dressed as male and female devils, accompanied by musicians.

Cauca's handicraft industry has played a major role in reviving the economy among women, especially indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, who also promote their culture and retake manual traditions. Each community has also specialised in a particular craft technique, producing precious, highly symbolic objects.

Payanese artisans and country folk have excelled in the production of Timbío baskets, wood carvings, ñapangas (peasant women) and thuribles made from wood and tamo (dyed wheat strands). The indigenous people are noteworthy for their Nasa weavings, such as sheep's wool shoulder bags with indigenous iconography, Yanacóna yarns and Misak hats. Afro-Colombians are renowned for their filigree work with Pacific gold and marimba instruments made from peach palm. The latter two communities are skilled in wood carving (aguamanil and chachajo wood) of plates, trays, ladles, and baskets and hats made from fibres such as tetera, chocolatillo, matamba and amargo.



BIRTH, ANCESTRY, SPIRITUALITY

Cauca encourages connection, meditation, introspection, recharging your soul, and connecting with your inner self.

The Cauca region is steeped in spirituality and a devotion to the divine and to nature that is reflected in its daily life. The way in which the indigenous community and the Payanese approach and experience this reverence is different, but the result is the same: appreciating the land as a centre of energy, where everything has a sacred nature: the lagoon, the volcano, even religion itself.

The major indigenous population that inhabits the land has a special connection with nature and an interaction that goes beyond what is functional. They see it as a source of life (water), as a reservoir of the future and as the cradle of their ancestors. For this reason, roaming its valleys, mountains, water sources and moorlands is an experience in which you connect with your inner self.

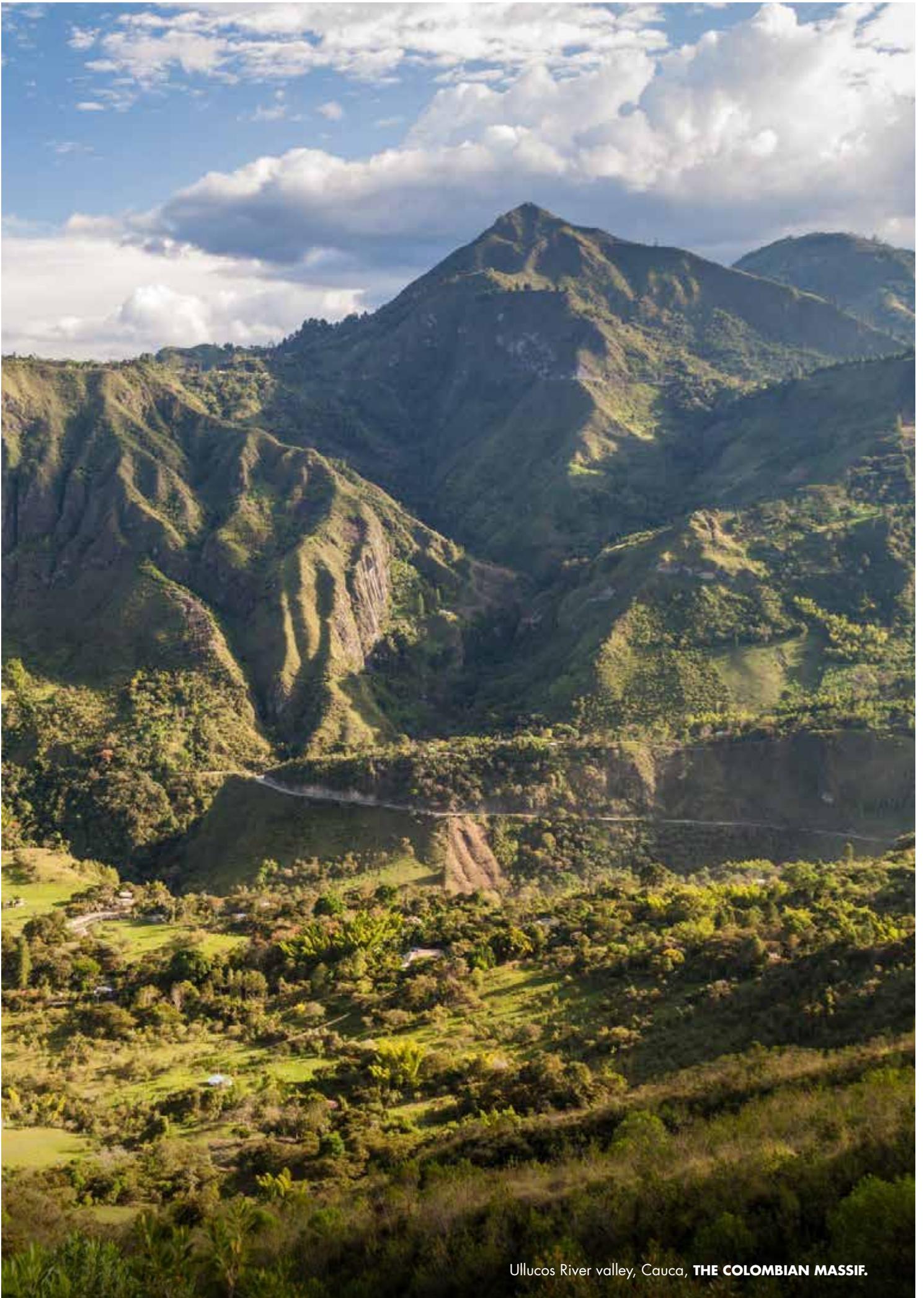
The Condor Tour and the visit to the Laguna del Misterio (Mystery Lagoon) are perfect activities to make this connection. Thus, they are packed with rituals that ask for permission to clear the fog and call the animals. These tours are held in the Puracé National Natural Park, where you can admire the majestic condor, messenger of the sun, in its natural habitat, and behold an extraordinary panoramic view of the Andes. Both outings give the visitor a new frame of reference on nature.

Another highly unique way of connecting with this land of ancestral expression and rituals is to spend time with indigenous Guambianos in Silvia. This community welcomes visitors to become part of their daily life and teach them how to treat plants and animals, how to cook and weave, while sharing their worldview.

Popayán is renowned for its religious tourism and Catholic traditions. Its Holy Week practices are renowned for being UNESCO Intangible Heritage of Humanity and attract visitors from Colombia and the world to share this transcendental experience.

Processions are conducted with great devotion. Ancient religious images are carried on wooden platforms through the streets of the city. Worshippers, known as “cargueros”, carry them on their shoulders, a function that is passed down through the generations.

The Festival of Religious Music is held in this same celebration, featuring choirs and soloists renowned for their sacred music.



Ullucos River valley, Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**



KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS





Andean condor, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**

ANDEAN CONDOR

It is the messenger of the Sun and the country's most representative bird. It is linked with the moorlands where water is born and is a symbol of the spirituality of the indigenous Andean cultures.



Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**

HOLY WEEK

An event held in Popayán that is renowned for its dedication, organisation and beauty. It represents Catholic fervour, values and attachment to traditions.



Woodwork, Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**

COMMANDING STAFF

It is made from peach palm wood and represents strength, territory, authority, resistance and organisation for the indigenous people.



El Bolsón Lake, Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**

WATER SOURCES

They symbolise life and the future (source of several rivers).

KEY CONCEPTS



EMBLEMATIC PLACES AND ACTIVITIES

- Puracé and Nunchique national parks: Condor Tour
- Coconucos moorlands
- Endemic fauna watching
- Coconuco orchid and San Juan orchid trail
- San Sebastian and Santiago Lagoons
- Thermal springs
- Trout Tour, Corn Tour
- Market day in Silvia
- Paragliding encounter
- Tierradentro Archaeological Museum and Park
- Ethnographic Museum
- Alto de Segovia Hypogæum
- Santa Rosa Nasa-Páez community
- Guambiano communities
- Silvia (Misak community)
- Morro de Tulcán hill, Cerro de las Tres Cruces hill, Puente del Humilladero bridge, Torre del Reloj tower, Parque Caldas square, Panteón de los Próceres funeral monument and historical architecture
- Mill of El Sabio Caldas (Francisco José de Caldas, known as The Wise)
- Colonial estates near the city
- Mosquera and G. León Valencia House Museum
- National Museum and Guillermo Valencia Theatre
- Holy Week
- Archdiocesan Museum of Religious Art
- Churches of San Francisco, Santo Domingo, San Agustín, San José, Cathedral Basilica of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción and La Ermita
- Temple of the Incarnation and Bethlehem Chapel
- Negret and Ibero-American House Museum of Modern Art, MIAMP among others.



FIGURES

- Mosquera family
- Guillermo León Valencia
- Guillermo Valencia
- José María Obando
- Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera y Arboleda
- Joaquín Mosquera
- José Hilario López
- Julio Arboleda Pombo
- Anatolio Quira: leader of the Kokonuko people among others.



GEOGRAPHY

- Central and western mountain ranges
- The Colombian Massif
- Patía valley
- The Bota Caucana (or Caucan boot)
- The rivers Magdalena, Cauca, Patía, Putumayo and Caquetá
- Pacific plain
- Guapi on the Pacific coast among others.



CRAFTS

- Timbío baskets
- Wood carving
- Nasa weavings (sheep's wool shoulder bags with indigenous iconography)
- Yanacona yarns
- Napangas (peasant women) or thuribles made from wood and tamo (dyed wheat strands)
- Misak hat
- Filigree work with Pacific gold among others.



Cauca, **THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.**



GASTRONOMY

- Empanadas de pipián (corn dough pasty)
- Carantantas (corn chips)
- Popayán Gastronomic Congress among others.



FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND FESTIVITIES

- Holy Week among others.

THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF

We sincerely hope that all these tools will serve as a point of departure to offer better services, optimise promotion and strengthen our tourism industry, which will be prepared for the golden future that awaits it.



Scan this code and view the 33 modules of the regional narratives of tourism.

Tierradentro Valley, Cauca, THE COLOMBIAN MASSIF.

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