

THE COLOMBIAN
AMAZON-ORINOCO

MAGAZINE
No. 29

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

Guaviare, THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO

GUAVIARE

● BACK TO LIFE'S BASICS ●

COLOMBIA 

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BETWEEN STONES
AND TEPUI TABLE-TOP MOUNTAINS

PAGE 3

ITS GREAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL
LEGACY

PAGE 5

A NEW
REBIRTH

PAGE 7

KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS

PAGE 9



Guaviare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

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.

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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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Ariari River, San José del Guaviare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

AMONG ROCKS AND TEPUI TABLE-TOP MOUNTAINS

Thanks to its extraordinary biodiversity that includes rocks, wells, lagoons, tunnels, spas and parks, the stunning region of Guaviare has an extensive offer of nature tourism, sustainable and in open spaces that are seldom frequented, making it a destination of greenery and peace.

The department of Guaviare hosts fragments of the oldest land on the planet. It is part of the Guiana Shield, better known as the planet's right lung and one of the oldest rocky structures (1300 million years old) that was formed by the might of the sea, whose particular 800-metre high rocks comprise a kind of mountain range immersed in the Amazonian and Orinoco contexts.

"Guaviare is part of the Guiana Shield, a part of the Earth that is said to be the most ancient. The landscape is really beautiful and there are species that have never been discovered, roads that have never been travelled."



The department has protected its natural and geographical riches, which is why you can find places with landscapes and natural features never seen before, such as the famous tepui table-top mountains, rock trails with a diversity of shapes, waterfalls with coloured algae, natural tunnels and natural wells.

Let's start with the Serranía de Chiribiquete National Natural Park. This reserve, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, shares land with the department of Caquetá, and is known for being a territory that fosters the preservation of biodiversity and natural ecosystems. The tepuis, one of the region's most unique mountain treasures, are predominant in this area. They are composed of flat surfaces and large vertical walls that give shape to the famous cliffs and are regarded as the oldest formations on the planet. According to beliefs, they are a place of "union with the gods."

Another of the most emblematic places in the region is the Ciudad de Piedra (or Stone City), which is considered to be one of the department's hidden treasures. It is a cluster of limestone rocks located almost symmetrically, giving the appearance of being a human construction, which are part of the natural heritage of San José del Guaviare. This area is also the site of some of the department's other iconic sites: Ciudad Perdida (Lost City), Tunnels, Puerta de Orión (Orion's Gate) and Puentes Naturales (Natural Bridges).

Arriving at the riverside area of the El Retiro stream, you will find the Tranquilandia natural spa, a place that astounds visitors at first sight because, thanks to the growth of fresh water algae, you can make out the green, pink, lilac and red tones that cover both the surface of the spa and its crystalline waters. There you can experience its waterfalls, pools, bushes, mosses and lichens in absolute tranquillity.

Guaviare has several water sources that are accompanied by a variety of rock formations. These prove to be extremely attractive to tourists, because they are natural wells that are very typical of the area. There you can observe the varying shades of colour that contrast with the natural surroundings.





Serranía de La Lindosa mountain range, Guaviare,
THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

— ITS GREAT AR- CHAEOLOGICAL LEGACY

Guaviare has the largest number of indigenous communities in Colombia, with an impressive archaeological legacy, countless myths, an abundance of cave paintings and an endless number of languages and customs.

The department was conceived in the midst of a wealth of stories that highlight important characters in its territory (animals, plants, indigenous people), which reveal the different knowledge and practices that emerge from the cave paintings and from the indigenous communities that today reside in the territory.

Its numerous indigenous communities have safeguarded an archaeological, cultural and biological legacy. They tell myths and stories that have been interwoven around them and have been preserved in cave paintings with many years of history. The villagers themselves claim that “these paintings are a legacy left to us by our ancestors. From their everyday life, from myths, when you look at the paintings, you see the stories.”

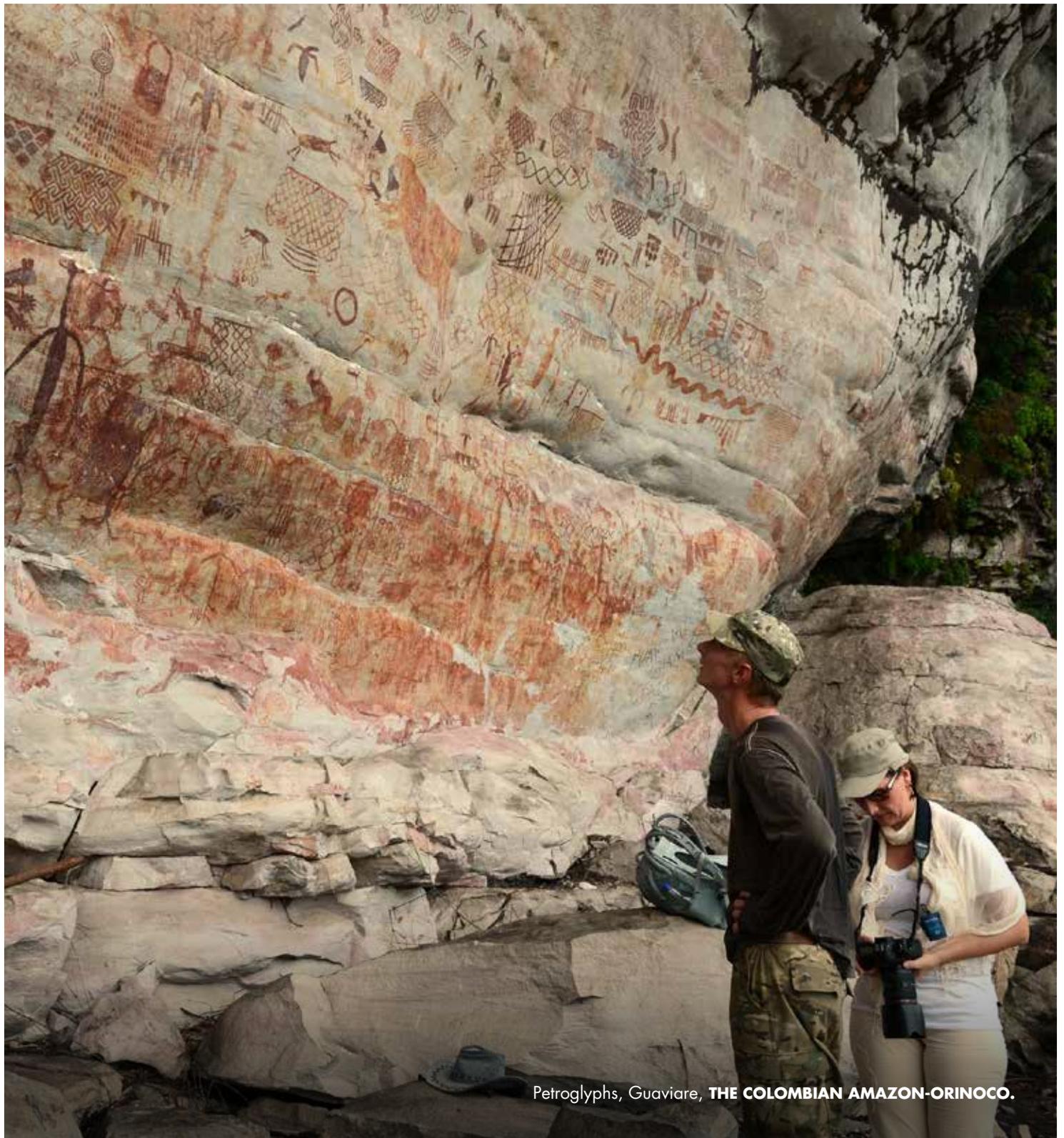
Guaviare is dotted with small hidden treasures that bear witness to this archaeological legacy and, for the benefit of tourists, you can visit and admire them. Sites such as Cerro Azul (Blue Hill), where cave paintings of the region’s first settlers have been found, with a variety of images representing scenes of humans with nature, animals, rituals, etc. Engravings and pictograms laden with meaning that mark an historical and cultural legacy in the department, as famous as the one of the indigenous people with their arms up or the man climbing the stairs, take us on a journey into the past to learn about the history of an entire community, captured in images, drawings and tracings.

A plethora of indigenous communities living together in the same small territory make this department a very unique place, rich in history, customs and trades, offering travellers the chance to delve into the traditions and experience a different, more sustainable and authentic form of tourism. The Nukak Makú community, one of the most extensive in the region, is sadly at risk, since, due to a number of different situations related to the conflict and the colony, some of its members have been gradually dying. However, there are currently approximately 13 Nukak groups in Guaviare.

"The Nukak are the only nomadic group left in the world. They began to move out of the territories and now work is being undertaken to recover them and return to the forest."

Other indigenous communities present in the department of Guaviare include the Desano, Guayabero, Karijona, Kubeo, Kurripako, Piaroa, Piratapuyo, Puinave, Sikuni, Tucano and Wanano. Each community has preserved its native language and its ancestral practices, one of which is to create handicrafts with woven palm and vegetable fibres, with which they make bracelets, bags, hats, baskets and hammocks.

"They use the elements of the jungle to make crafts, for instance, they use the cumare palm to weave hammocks," explains one of the inhabitants.



Petroglyphs, Guaviare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

A NEW REBIRTH

The otherworldly department of Guaviare is a territory that was struck by various conflicts and, in spite of this, today is being converted to conserve nature and its communities.

It was affected by historical moments such as the colonial period and the armed conflict. This resulted in the displacement of indigenous communities from the forest and has destroyed some of the biodiversity. Nonetheless, there is currently a commitment to reforestation and to return communities to their territories, which is why this destination is increasingly emerging as one of the leading places to be discovered by local and foreign travellers. The flagship sites of Guaviare are related to being part

of a virgin land that safeguards ecosystems, species, communities and millenary records, which, although they have been threatened by a number of historical contexts, are currently being built and transformed in order to protect their legacy of natural and cultural heritage.

With practices such as reforestation, the planting of alternative crops to coca and the designation of the widely known territorial spaces as ETCR (Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation), Guaviare is being reborn.

"Today Guaviare is like a destination that lots of people are choosing to visit because everything has changed... it is no longer like it was before, we were just guerrillas, today it is a land of peace."

Through reforestation, visitors are invited to replant the trees and plants that grow in the territory, banning livestock farming as a source of sustenance so as to avoid continuing to cut down the forest. As a result, biodiversity and ecosystems that may have been destroyed in the past after following various historical events are being restored. The people of Guaviare express this transformation with joy.

"My father came at the height of the coca boom and throughout our lives we had the mentality of planting coca and quitting livestock farming, but that ends and deteriorates everything. Now our lives have been overhauled and we try to contribute to renewing the ecosystems."

Coca crops have been replaced by other crops such as cassava, traditional maize, plantain, rubber, cocoa, pineapple, upland rice, sugar cane, peach palm fruit and mechanised rice farming. These are crops that are grown in the territory and that feed the communities and their visitors. For this reason, many dishes in the department are characterised by including these ingredients: quiñapira (fresh fish stew), casabe (cassava-based arepa), postre

garza (rice sweet), green plantain broth, chicha (alcoholic drink made from corn), sancocho de gallina Tapacura o Gumarra (chicken broth often accompanied by cassava, yam, potato and corn on the cob), and pescado moqueado (roasted fish in banana leaf).

In the midst of this transformation of peace lie the new Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR), areas that symbolise reconciliation, a new rebirth brimming with hope and opportunities for the department and for all those who visit it in search of an unforgettable tourist experience.

The above actions are a way of transforming the different conflicts that have affected the territory and have harmed the communities and biodiversity, thereby making it possible to rebuild and transform the department, to recover its practices, its territories and to foster the return of life.



"We stopped growing coca and instead we dedicated ourselves to conservation... we stopped cutting down the rainforest to devote ourselves to reforestation so that we can also expand tourism."



KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS





Serranía de La Lindosa mountain range, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

TEPUI TABLE-TOP MOUNTAINS

They belong to one of the oldest geographical areas on Earth and have been under-explored, which makes them home to an endless number of species of flora and fauna.



Petroglyphs, San José del Guaviare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

CAVE PAINTINGS

Rock art, representations and drawings are the expression of a culture that upholds and preserves the knowledge and rituals of the communities that inhabited its territory in the past.



Pineapple farming, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

PINEAPPLE FARMING

It embodies a practice that seeks to transform those stories that are recalled painfully, to construct other ways of meaning and reconstructing Guaviare.



Ciudad de Piedra (Stone City), San José del Guaviare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**



GEOGRAPHY

- Orinoco River
- Guaviare River
- Guayabero River
- Amazon River
- Apaporis River
- Tunía River
- Itilla River
- Unilla River
- Tepui table-top mountains
- Flooded savannahs
- Mountainous areas among others.



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

- Nukak Makú
- Desano
- Guayabero (or Jiw)
- Karijona
- Kubeo
- Kurripako
- Piaroa
- Piratapuyo
- Puinave
- Sikuani
- Tucano
- Wanano among others.



GASTRONOMY

- Quiñapira (fresh fish stew)
- Casabe (cassava bread)
- Postre garza (rice sweet)
- Green plantain broth
- Chicha (alcoholic drink made from corn)
- Sancocho de gallina Tapacura o Gumarra (chicken broth often accompanied by cassava, yam, potato and corn on the cob)
- Pescado moqueado (roasted fish in banana leaf)
- Pineapple among others.



FAUNA AND FLORA

- Tigrillos, monkeys, foxes, chigüiros (capybara), armadillos and reptiles, toucans, parrots and Andean cock-of-the-rock
- Tropical rainforest among others.

KEY CONCEPTS



EMBLEMATIC PLACES AND ACTIVITIES

- Serranía de La Lindosa mountain range
- Tranquilandia natural spa
- Serranía de Chibiriquete National Natural Park
- Natural Tunnels Reserve
- Ciudad de Piedra (Stone City)
- Natural wells
- Puerta de Orión
- Laguna Negra
- Las Delicias Falls
- El Ángel Falls among others.



CRAFTS

- Hammocks
- Bracelets
- Handbags
- Hats
- Basketry among others.



SOME MUNICIPALITIES

- Calamar
- Miraflores
- El Retorno
- San José del Guaviare among others.



THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO

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.

Guayabero River, San José del Guaviare, THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

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