

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

Cabo Tortuga, Santa Marta, GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.

MAGDALENA

● THE DEPARTMENT THAT HAS IT ALL ●

COLOMBIA 

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**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM**

VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

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Quinta de San Pedro, Magdalena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

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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Taganga, Santa Marta, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

MARSHES OF FRESH AND SALT WATER

All lands, all climates. This is where fresh and salt waters meet and become the ideal environment for many species of fish and birds.



The unique geography of the department of Magdalena means that fresh water meets salt water in the Ciénaga Grande (Large Marsh), and the mountain range shelters the indigenous people who care for and protect nature. It boasts sea, beaches, rivers and marshes. Rivers that irrigate and refresh the land, and a group of 16 marshes give rise to the great estuary. This geographical feature means that when a river flows into the sea, salt and fresh water are exchanged as a result of the tides, which has always been characterised as an ideal space to harbour many forms and colours of life.

"It is a non-depleting ecosystem. There are fish of many shapes, strange colours of birds and other animals. It's such a magical place that many people stay and live here."



This space is brimming with diversity, with many species of flora and fauna, and the marsh is a place for bird and fish watching.

The Sierra Nevada (shared with the departments of La Guajira and Cesar) is a land of fertile soils, meaning all kinds of crops can be grown. It is home to many of the department's indigenous people, who are the guardians that ensure the natural balance and protect their sacred sites.

"The Sierra Nevada mountain range is a lady, she is a woman who chose this location as her place to live thousands of years ago because she wanted to venerate her beauty and found no better place to do so. For me, that majestic lady stayed here because she could bring a white veil — the snowy peaks — a corset of many greens and white details, comprising the 35 rivers of the mountain range, and then a tropical dry green skirt that flutters in the light Caribbean breezes, and ends with a white sand-coloured lace, the tail of the dress being the blue Caribbean sea."



SANTA MARTA HAS A TRAIN, BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE A TRAM



Aracataca, Magdalena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

The arrival of different cultures, trade and the railway brought life, trade and people from different places to the department.

The charming department of Magdalena has welcomed everyone entering through its bay. It has been witness to stories of joy and love and others of violence and heart-break, but it has always taken the good from its experience and built on it.

At the time of independence, the port of Santa Marta was a crucial point of entry for the country's imports. It also gave life to the entry of the United Fruit Company, an American company that managed the department's Banana Zone and was of great importance for development (it built docks and brought growth through the railway to transport the fruit). **However, it simultaneously brought difficult situations upon the department.**

"The pluricultural theme in Magdalena is a core feature, it is incredible when you are in that sector of the Sierra Nevada mountains. I see her as a woman with a big, coloured skirt, like a mixture of magical realism, because the skirt changes colour depending on where you are."

The railway, on the other hand, brought good times to the Magdalena area. It moved goods and people to and from the interior of the country. Thus, the ports and the railway brought the department innovation and life, fashion, glassware, oils and, above all, the accordion, which paved the way for musical blends of which the Caribbean can be proud.

The department boasts a major indigenous influence (Ar-

huacos, Arsarios, Koguis, Wiwas) on the Magdalena side of the sierra, in addition to the Chimilas. Similarly, the colonisation process gave way to the slave trade, which formed the first palenques (settlements founded by people of African origin), and hence the strong Afro influence. This came in addition to a European and Eastern influence marked by the arrival of the Dutch, Germans, Italians and Arabs, who are said to have been involved in the commercialisation of the accordion.

The indigenous people with their ancestral wisdom envelop the sierra and care for it, bestowing upon it their mysticism and sacred stories of nature. The Mamo is the greatest caretaker of nature and asks forgiveness for the "younger brothers" who cause harm to the earth.

At the same time, their handicrafts have a meaning of their own. The shoulder bags, for example, bear a special importance, as they are unique and non-transferable and, according to the ethnic group they originate from, it is their symbolism; and the poporo (receptacle for lime) represents the union between a woman and a man. Another defining feature is their dance and music with gaitas (flutes) and maracas, which contributed to forming important sounds for the whole Caribbean region.

"The shoulder bag represents the womb, it is made by the woman and given to the man as a symbol of her loyalty. And then there is the poporo and that entire process. The shoulder bag is also made with some symbols of the Law of the Mother."



MAGDALENA HAS IT ALL

It is a place of stories, books, music and dance; the joy of carnival, festivities, songs and love.



Its multi-cultural mix means that its inhabitants feel that Magdalena “has it all.” This department has embraced and built upon its cultural diversity, creating spectacular unmatched dances, cuisine and music.

It is the department of cumbia, a musical blend that gives rise to more genres and which influences the whole country. It has a special European, indigenous and African mix, with dances and instruments that speak of history. Besides cumbia, Magdalena was the birthplace of vallenato and the emergence of the juglares (legendary performers).

“Cumbia in this country is an icon, like the orchid or the condor. That magical lyrical space reproduces the cumbia, so for me it should be higher up than the vallenato. Cumbia represents Colombia, but cumbia belongs to José Benito Barros, in other words, he is the one who has put us on the map worldwide through cumbia.”

The history of the Hombre Caimán (The Alligator Man) began in Magdalena, while the first carnivals of Ciénaga and Santa Marta emerged, before influencing the renowned Barranquilla carnival. Here you can find the likes of Colombia’s National Cumbia Festival, the Chandé Festival, the Plato Festival, the Gallegos Festival, the Hombre Caimán Festival, the Caimán Cienaguero Festival and the Fiestas del Mar.

“Grandparents and aunts and uncles tell of how they used to make the caps, which came about because they went to the parties but they did so in secret because they belonged to the elite and they couldn't be seen. So they wore hoods, and thus the cap was born. They also talk about the great orchestras that came in those wonderful times, before the carnivals came.”

It is an alluring place where people are inspired to tell their stories. Hence why it is the birthplace of writers and composers (García Márquez, Carlos Vives).

“When you look for magical realism, the benchmark is García Márquez. He exploits our truth, that the Caribbean is exotic, different, relaxed, then he starts exploring and showcases it to the world. Carlos Vives lives and breathes Santa Marta, the Samarian sand. He is incredibly passionate about his songs and staging, his locations, his love. I think it's a wonderful thing, that he is a cultural leader.”

The cuisine of this area is a mixture of local and foreign, ranging from the banana-growing area that boasts important culinary delights such as the Cayeye made from mashed green guineos.

Magdalena is a remarkable diverse place of immense geographies that shelters cultures of mountains, fresh and salt waters, and crosses them to form a mixture of flavours, colours and folklore represented in an incredible magical realism.



Cumbia dancers, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**



KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS





Ciénaga, Magdalena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

CUMBIA

Representative of the department's blend and the country's musical foundation.



Mamancana Nature Reserve, Magdalena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

THE CLIMATE

Time passes slowly so you can enjoy the amazing sunrises, sunsets and meals.



Kogui village in the Sierra Nevada mountains, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

ANCESTRAL TERRITORY

The ancestral territory and its sacred sites represent the department's indigenous people, who make use of their wisdom to care for the waters and lands.



Butterflies, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

MAGICAL REALISM

Yellow butterflies are a symbol of cultural expression and of the territory with its astounding unforeseen landscapes.



Quinta de San Pedro, Magdalena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**



GEOGRAPHY

- Tayrona National Natural Park
- Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
- Buritaca
- Ciénaga Grande
- Taganga
- Playa Blanca
- Salamanca Island Road Park
- El Morro
- Minca
- Naguanje
- Marinca
- Paso Del Mango
- among others.



ART, HANDICRAFTS AND MUSIC

- Cumbia
- Vallenato
- Shoulder bags
- Gaita (flute), maraca
- Poporo (receptacle for lime)
- among others.

KEY CONCEPTS



GASTRONOMY

- Guineo banana
- Cayeye (dish made from mashed green guineos)
- Helado de leche (ice cream)
- Atlantic thread herring
- Corozo smoothie
- Arroz de bonito (Albacore rice dish)
- Bollo de angelito (bun made from corn or cassava)
- Butifarra (sausage)
- Suero y queso costeño (whey and cheese)
- Cucayo (characteristic rice dish)
- Alegría de coco y anís (coconut and aniseed sweet)
- River and sea fish
- Hallacas (meat and vegetables in ground corn wrapped in a banana leaf) among others.



Mamancana Nature Reserve, Magdalena,
GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.



REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES

- Arhuacos
- Arsarios
- Koguis
- Wiwas
- Chimilas
- Syrian-Lebanese
- Europeans
- Carlos Vives
- Gabriel García Márquez
- José Benito Barros
- Carlos "el Pibe" Valderrama
- Guillermo Vives
- Gregorio Castañeda de Oregón
- Antonio María Peñalosa
- Pacho Rada
- Ángel Almdares
- Uber Guardiola
- Manuel Medina Moscote
- Francisco "Chico" Bolaños
- José Gustavo Pava
- Falcao García among others.

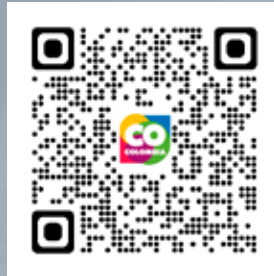


SOME MUNICIPALITIES, TOWNS AND ACTIVITIES

- Ciudad Perdida
- Pueblito
- Fundación
- Aracataca
- Palafitos
- Taganga
- Ciénaga
- Plato
- Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino
- The Home of García Márquez in Aracataca
- Railway in Fundación
- Gaira
- Bonda
- Minca among others.

GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN

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.

Ciénaga Grande de Santa María Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, Magdalena, GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.

• REGIONAL NARRATIVES OF TOURISM •

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