

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

Putumayo River, THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

PUTUMAYO

• COAST, MOUNTAIN RANGE AND AMAZONIAN FOOTHILLS •

COLOMBIA 

VISIT COLOMBIA.TRAVEL



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**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM**

VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

**RAINFOREST AND
ANDEAN PEAKS, ALL
TOGETHER**

PAGE 3

**TRADITION
AND CULTURE**

PAGE 5

**CONSCIOUSNESS
OF THE PAST TODAY**

PAGE 7

**KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS**

PAGE 9



Mocoa, Putumayo, **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.

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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Fin del Mundo Waterfall (Mocoa), Putumayo, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

— RAINFOREST AND ANDEAN PEAKS, ALL TOGETHER

The stunning department of Putumayo is a fertile, diverse and culturally rich land, with rainforest, mountains, rivers and boundless flavours.

Putumayo differs from the Amazon as it is part rainforest and part Andean, thus it is split into three main areas: Upper, Middle and Lower Putumayo. This has resulted in spectacularly diverse landscapes and cultural manifestations.

“That's what makes us different, because we have three regions. We have the Andean region, for instance. Here you can say that it starts out cold and ends up hot (...). You can get to a pine forest where you will find fog and then arrive in Mocoa and see beautiful waterfalls.”

Upper Putumayo is a mountainous area, even close to Nariño; Middle Putumayo has more forests, and Lower Putumayo is basically rainforest, difficult to access and has an undeveloped tourism industry. Most of the tourism is in Upper Putumayo, which is more Andean, but can be categorised as within the Amazon.

“We also have ecotourism, trekking, that entire field has become more popular now. There are more specialised activities because of the equipment and everything must be certified: certified torches, overalls, hiking shoes, gloves, etc.”

The waterfalls in the Upper Putumayo are crucially important and have an associated mysticism that is of crucial significance for the inhabitants. They say that if you are not feeling okay or you are in a bad mood, the water can become cloudy and you can't see life inside and outside the waterfalls. It is also an area rich in butterflies, a kind of natural butterfly farm, as well as areas for caving.

“The waterfalls are always watched over by someone, some say a goblin and that the goblin is a soul in purgatory, but no, it is like a spirit that remains there watching over the waterfall. So, if you go with bad thoughts or if you are going to pan for gold or if you are going to shout, that waterfall grows, even if it is not raining, it clouds over the place where you are, it has happened to me several times, in Indio Waterfall and in La Honda Waterfall.”

You can also observe unique species of flora and fauna, such as the jaguar and a great variety of butterflies. Hence the growing interest in visiting the department by specialised scientists and tourists interested in such subjects. There are extreme or adventure activities, such as rafting, canoeing and caving, where you can explore and enjoy waterfalls, trails, rivers and caves in the department.

“Adventure tourism, caving and rafting. But that is not all: Putumayo itself is adventure, there are rivers, lakes, waterfalls, there is magic.”



Putumayo River, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

TRADITION AND CULTURE

Indigenous traditions, masks and handicrafts, and even yagé are fundamental to the department's culture. A unique experience.



Casabe, Putumayo, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

Putumayo has a history that demonstrates the blending of cultures and diverse migration processes related to the quinine and rubber boom.

"I would say the rubber, because we have had a lot of booms. First it was quinine, then rubber."

It is a place of transit and transitions, due to migrations. Its festivals and carnivals showcase this blending of cultures, such as the Bëtsknaté Carnival or Festival of Forgiveness, which is held in the Sibundoy valley.

"In the Festival of Forgiveness they march from point to point with all their gods. It's like a retreat, because before, the Inga people and the Camsá people fought a lot, they came into conflict. They held a Festival of Forgiveness. On those days they conduct various cultural activities that are typical of the indigenous people and there are several gods that they have in the park in Sibundoy."

It has festivals such as the Festival de Mocoa, which commemorates the Carnaval de Negros y Blancos (Carnival of Blacks and Whites), originally held in the city of Pasto.

"Before, the culture was all Nariño, even the black and white carnivals are celebrated here in the department. In some towns they hold the traditional festivities of the department of Nariño, such as the Folk Carnival of Mocoa."

It also has a highly varied gastronomy, reflecting the department's geographical characteristics and showcasing the blend of Putumayo's cultures. Hence, there are recipes that include foods from indigenous communities such as casabe (cassava bread) and foods grown at each of the thermal floors.

"Well, in that part of gastronomy, the strong point is that we have thermal floors. You see products originating from the identity of indigenous peoples that we also identify with. This is where products such as casabe, fariña and others have come from. In Middle Putumayo you can see a blend of practically everything. There it has been influenced by all things Andean and the lowlands."

CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PAST TODAY

Putumayo has a long-standing tradition of yagé, which has become a cure for many ailments for which allopathic medicine does not appear to have a remedy.

Yagé or ayahuasca are one of the department's most important symbols, which have generated tourism and commerce, all related to culture and health.

"And that connection is so strong that some people are healed that way. There are people who have been cured of illnesses over there and in traditional medicine they find the cure from the taita, or father, of the community through yagé and the spoken word. They are even renewed, healed and become other people."

There is also an interest in yagé from scientists and journalists that has led to the production of research articles, reports and books narrating the experiences of people who have taken yagé and their journeys through the department.

It has fascinating literature festivals that showcase the department's stories as told by its inhabitants and highlight oral tradition, poetry, music and theatre. This event is held in a different municipality each year. On another note, handicrafts are a crucial cultural and historical representation of the department, highlighting the importance of the indigenous communities that inhabit this land. There, the identifying hallmark of the region is the masks, around which tourist packages have even been established.

"For example, in Sibundoy they take them to the workshop where they make wooden masks. They say, 'let's make this mask'. There is a workshop there where you go for a morning or afternoon and make the masks. Others teach them how to embroider chaquiras or necklaces, rituals and dances, so they already have their route planned out, and they know the families they will visit."

You can visit monuments, craft workshops and murals that commemorate indigenous communities and highlight their culture in the streets of the department's main town centres. Tourists can enjoy native lodges where they can disconnect from everyday life and savour the nature and traditional culture of Putumayo.

"There is the Exploremos el Putumayo lodge, where the leader is an indigenous woman and she conducts all the rituals, harmonisations, healings, gastronomy, in indigenous-style accommodation in cabins and that is where the tourists arrive, she offers them everything."





KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS





Monumento a la Raza, Putumayo, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

ANCESTRY

Reflecting the department's connection with indigenous communities.



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

MASKS

The handicraft of the department, expressing diversity.



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

YAGÉ

Representing the communities' knowledge of therapy.



Canalendres, Putumayo, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

WATER

A hallmark related to the life and adventure that the department offers to tourists. It is represented by waterfalls.



General Santander Park, Putumayo, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

KEY CONCEPTS



EMBLEMATIC PLACES AND ACTIVITIES

- Fin del Mundo Waterfall
- Indio Waterfall
- Mocoa
- La Paya Park
- Amazon Ecotourism Centre
- Caving
- Putumayo River
- Sibundoy valley
- Hiking
- Drinking yagé
- Ecotourism
- Ethnotourism
- Canoeing
- among others.



CRAFTS

- Masks
- Necklaces
- Blankets
- Sashes
- Tunics
- among others.



FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND FESTIVITIES

- Festival of Forgiveness
- Folk Carnival of Mocoa
- Carnival of Blacks and Whites
- Indigenous Carnival
- Kamentsa People's Big Day
- among others.



GEOGRAPHY

- Lower Putumayo
- Middle Putumayo
- Upper Putumayo
- Amazonas
- Mountains
- Putumayo River
- among others.



GASTRONOMY

- Tacacho (fried plantain and meat dish)
- Arazá fruit
- Cocona fruit
- Smoked cachama
- among others.



FIGURES

- Indigenous communities: Awá, Cofán, Coreguaje, Embera, Inga, Camsá, Nasa, Siona and Witoto.
- Taitas or father of the community
- Cam
- among others.



Fin del Mundo Waterfall (Mocoa), Putumayo,
THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

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.

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