

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM



SAN ANDRÉS, PROVIDENCIA AND SANTA CATALINA

■ A PARADISE OF BEACHES, CULTURES, FLAVOURS AND SOUNDS ■

COLOMBIA 

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**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM**

VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

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San Andrés , **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.

PROCOLOMBIA

FROM THE CARIBBEAN TO THE WORLD

The archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina is a paradise where people are at one with the sea and coexist with it. Where you can fish, sail, dive and learn about the maritime culture and fauna.

San Andrés is a breathtaking Caribbean archipelago, surrounded by sea and marine fauna. There is a pristine coral reef barrier that generates a rich biodiversity, ideal for interacting and learning about it. It is also Colombia's sole island department.

"The archipelago is a place where people are at one with and coexist with the sea and the maritime space. It's where you can fish, sail, dive and learn about the sea fauna and culture."

It boasts a wide variety of beaches and a sea of different colours. Its unique setting invites you to enjoy the tranquility of the archipelago, especially in Providencia, which has established itself as a dream destination.

"Providencia is very beautiful, well worth a visit. Yes, it is a place to rest, sometimes you can't even get internet coverage here, so those who really want to disconnect have found their ideal place."

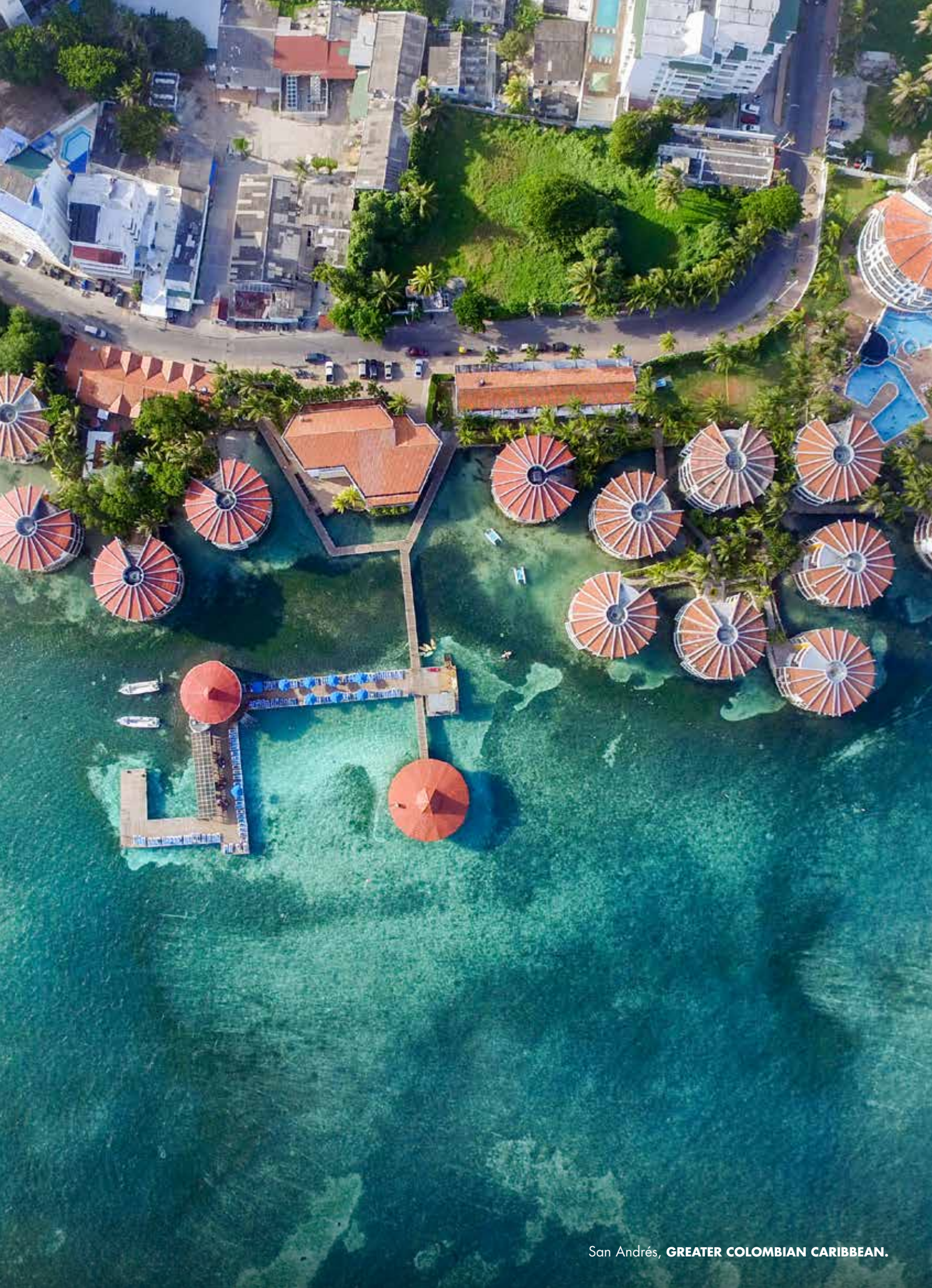
This dreamlike location has established itself as a domestic fishing-based economy, shown by the development of activities such as construction, the use of artisanal boats and the practice of traditional fishing methods.

"Enrique is a fisherman who —I think— is in his seventies, but you see him grabbing his canoe and paddling here from San Luis all over this area to fish alone, and he is a very old man. The sea runs in his veins."

You can do water sports and activities such as diving, snorkelling, kayaking, parasailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing and flyboarding. *"Many foreign tourists come to Providencia to enjoy not only the beaches, but also the marine fauna,"* says a beach vendor.

Its exquisite gastronomy is highly varied, featuring the likes of crabs, prawns, oysters, and snapper. You can also enjoy the dazzling natural aquariums, where you can interact with the great variety of marine fauna found in the archipelago.

"The food here is based on coconut and fish. I would like a museum to showcase the gastronomy and display how the crab back, fish ball, crab patty and rondón is cooked. We also have an area where all the flora and fauna species of the park are found. In the aquarium you can interact with different species, crabs, snails, and we even have an iguana farm."



THE FRUITS OF MIGRATORY CURRENTS

The archipelago is steeped in a strong history of trade, mainly due to its strategic location and the measures that were taken, such as being declared a free port.



The archipelago is located in a strategic area for trade due to its proximity to various countries: Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the United States.

"The trade was set up so that we could coexist with our neighbours, as we are all different countries: Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, with whom we had trade relations but not the free export and import trade we have today."

Its diverse past tells a story of trade in different stages: periods of European colonies, pirate exploits and adventures, as well as the consolidation of a coconut industry (fruit that is crucial to its gastronomy today) and the declaration of the island as a free port.

"So we were even able to trade with goods from the United States, because the boats that brought the coconuts came back full of products that we needed here, and that was normal, it was the economy for the island, not for anything else."

The latter has facilitated the purchase and sale of cut-price products, which has generated the flow of people from different national and international destinations, especially on the island of San Andrés.

"The free port is currency, it's permanent speculation... it is: What have I got? What should I buy? What should I show? With the free port law of '59 this became no holds barred."

All this means that some of its most representative tourist attractions are connected to stories about trade and its development, such as Morgan's Cave and the Coconut Museum.



Seafood stew, San Andrés, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

THEY DANCE, WHATEVER THE BEAT

A proud, joyful culture, enriched by the passing of other legacies and other stories. A spectacular gastronomic blend and mesmerising sounds, which is why some say it's paradise.

The culture of the archipelago is based on the Raizal group, underpinned by language, beliefs, cuisine and music. They created and preserve the Creole language as a Raizal language, showcasing their culture and the crossing of languages (English and African languages). This enriches and constitutes, at present, its main cultural feature and identity.

"The language we speak is Creole, a Caribbean English, but we have been able to maintain it. Creole was the private dialect."

The department holds noteworthy religious traditions of the Baptist church, taking pride in its ceremonies and in having the first Baptist church in Latin America, and the architecture of its church brought from North America.

"The tradition includes people who grew up under the idea of God and who go to church. On a Sunday you won't hear the hubbub, they don't play music, that day is sacred for the Raizal. On Saturdays, the Raizal devote themselves to housework, the farm, the courtyard. And Sunday is a holy day for going to church."

These days its traditional cuisine is seafood- and coconut-based, reflecting the island's history, environment and culture, and featuring rondón (rundown, or coconut and seafood soup), its most representative dish.

"Dishes that are now tourist dishes arise from the mere development of the community. Rondón is a dish that originated with the coconut harvesters, who

went to work on horseback and cooked the fish using the milk they got from the coconuts."

Its dances reflect the department's cultural syncretism through styles inherited from Europe and blended with indigenous traditions, generating dances such as the jumping polka, the quadrille and the shatiss.

"The British were so lazy that they didn't dance to their own music, at least those who came to this side of the world. So they dressed the slaves and servants and demanded that they play and dance to their music. That's why we have these dances."

There is a broad variety of musical rhythms, most notably calypso and mento, the lyrics of which narrate the daily lives of the islands' inhabitants. Reggae is seen as a stereotype that does not represent their Raizal culture.

"Calypso is fundamental here. For us our music revolves around rhythms such as mento and calypso. Calypso is a narrative, a chronicle in which stories are told."

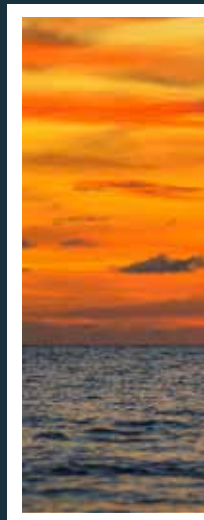
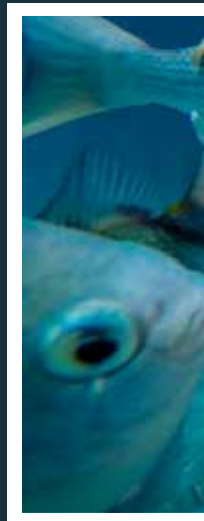
Theatre, film, dance and music festivals let the island's stories and traditions live on and create links with neighbouring countries.

"Green Moon Festival is an event that originated in the Cultural Centre and now has its own identity because it highlights our own creation. But its main feature is to join forces, to bring what we have elsewhere, and come together to celebrate with other countries."

Thus, this is a complex land with paradise-like islands that encourage you to immerse yourself not only in their crystalline waters but also in a culture that, in its own language, tells a story of survival and syncretism to the sound of calypso.



KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS





San Andrés, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

INTERACTION

The region's geography encourages you to interact with the sea, the beaches, the marine fauna and its biodiversity.



San Andrés, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

TRADE

Trade is a recurring theme in the archipelago's history, linked to European colonies, pirates, the coconut industry and even its proclamation as a free port.



Providencia, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

SYNCRETISM

Its culture is based on a blend of different European and African cultural traditions. This region encourages you to get to know the Raizal culture through its different manifestations such as language, gastronomy, religion and music.

KEY CONCEPTS



GEOGRAPHY

- Johnny Cay
- Providencia
- San Andrés
- Santa Catalina
- Coral reef among others.



FIGURES

- Fishermen
- Calypso and mento singers, performers and dancers
- Phillips Beakman Livingston
- Fidel Antonio Corpus
- Albert Strobele among others.



GASTRONOMY

- *Fish ball*
- Rondón (rundown, or coconut seafood soup)
- *Domplin (dumplings)*
- Coconut
- Fruto de pan (breadfruit)
- Snail: meatballs, stewed snail, soup.
- *Stew boil*
- Crab among others.



FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND FESTIVITIES

- Ethnic Roots (theatre)
- Events at the Cultural Centre (Caribbean evening)
- Fiestas del Mar (Sea Festival)
- Seaflower (cinema)
- Patron saint festivities
- Green Moon Festival
- Regional Choir Meeting
- National Day (7 August)
- Caribbean Gastronomy Show (Fih Wih Ties) among others.



Providencia, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**



EMBLEMATIC PLACES

- Emmanuel Baptist Church (first Hispanic Baptist church)
- Baptist Church Museum
- Island House Museum
- Aquarium
- La piscinita natural pool
- Morgan's Cave
- La Loma
- Johnny Cay
- Hoyo Soplador (blower hole)
- Big Pond Lagoon
- Rocky Cay
- Beaches of San Luis
- North End Cultural Centre
- El Pico (The Peak)
- San Andrés Mosque
- Puente De Los Enamorados
- Coral reef
- 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.

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