

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

Galerazamba salt flats, Cartagena, GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.

BOLÍVAR

• **ALTHOUGH WE ARE DIFFERENT WE FEEL THE SAME** •

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

**A MOSAIC
OF LANDSCAPES**

PAGE 3

**BRIDGES OF
CULTURAL EXCHANGE**

PAGE 5

**AMONG RHYTHMS
AND FLAVOURS**

PAGE 7

**KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS**

PAGE 9



Hotel Las Américas, Cartagena, **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.

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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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Streets of Cartagena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**



Barú Beach, Cartagena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**



— A MOSAIC OF LANDSCAPES

Bolívar is blessed with exceptional geography. Through a series of small connections, it links seas, rivers, canyons, marshes, mountains, highlands, desert and plains which produces a mosaic of landscapes.

Bolívar is another of the departments that is part of the Momposina Depression, a hydrographic basin bordered by plains and highlands and sheltered by the Magdalena River (into which the Cauca, Cesar and San Jorge rivers flow), as well as by marshes that have remained and others that are disappearing.

This stunning department is bordered by the Montes de María or Serranía de San Jacinto mountain range, which is renowned for its three types of forests (dry, tropical and gallery), and its fresh and salt water connections: sea, marshes, streams and rivers.

In the northern part it faces the Caribbean Sea, which joins the department with the rest of the country. Similarly, the marshes are linked to the canals, and the Magdalena River is connected to the Andes Mountains and the Caribbean Sea.

It is also an area that is awash with islands such as San Bernardo, Corales del Rosario, Fuerte, Tierra Bomba, Margarita and Venezuela with underwater ecosystems.

“We have a mosaic of breathtaking landscapes and ecosystems. We even have that part of the mangrove channels, and they are what give us such a rich food supply.”

Bolívar offers special, exotic and mystical landscapes of contrasts, that are attractive to preserve and admire. Islands, marshes, salt flats and unmissable beaches such as the Islands of Rosario, San Bernardo, Isla Grande and Tierra Bomba; the Ciénaga de la Virgen marsh, the Galerazamba salt flats and Puntillas Beach.



Mompox, Cartagena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

BRIDGES OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Bolívar is an open department, which communicates with its waters and builds with the influx of varied cultures to its lands. It has bridged the past and the present, and is at the basis of Colombia's history given that it is located in a strategic area for entering and leaving the country.

The geography of the Caribbean links places and cultures through rivers that connect to the sea, hence ports become important points of connection in the region. Moving along the rivers from port to port involved substantial interactions and exchanges between many cultures, thoughts and personalities: Europeans, Arabs, Indians and Afro-descendants all came together, all with their own histories, heritages and cultural expressions.

Bolívar had river and sea ports, and was also one of the departments that had been positively impacted by the railway, which also fostered cultural exchange.

The port of Cartagena, which came into being during colonial times, was one of the main slave ports in the country. This is where the enslaved Africans came in and hence the major black influence in the region.

"At the time of world slavery, Cartagena was a leading figure. There were ports separated by product, i.e. there were for example ports for black people and ports for mining."

kinds passed through it to the centre of the country. Mompox, as an almost compulsory stop, assumed considerable importance.

With a varied and contrasting geography, the construction of railways was necessary in order to foster development and connect the department. The railway connected the region's ports and even made a decisive contribution to the development of the neighbouring department of Atlántico.

It was thanks to these ports and the railway that a fascinating cultural exchange took place. What we have now comes from a mixture of indigenous, African, Syrian-Lebanese and European. Our gastronomy, music, crafts and architecture are proof of this.

In pre-Columbian times, for instance, the indigenous Zenú and Mokanas, who also inhabited the territories of the modern-day departments of Sucre and Córdoba, were skilled seafarers. They even produced several important engineering works in their time, which established them as having a maritime culture.



Cumbia, a traditional dance. Bolívar, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

Its craftsmanship heritage is unquestionably known for the art of filigree, the sombrero vueltiao (turned hat), totumas (totumo wood creations) and atarrayas (casting nets).

The Syrian-Lebanese who arrived in the department opened part of their businesses in Getsemaní and neighbourhoods of Cartagena, which explains the architecture of the walled city.

Likewise, the Europeans contributed to Bolívar's republican architecture, with Mompox and Cartagena declared World Heritage Sites.

"Because of the coastline and the ease with which ports were built at the time, Bolívar enabled the arrival of ships from Europe and other countries that visited us and brought us culture. Bolívar thrives on all this. After the Europeans, Turkish families settled here and considered it to be the best place to conduct trade.

African culture is possibly the most influential culture in the department of Bolívar. This can easily be appreciated in the gastronomy, the music and the joyful personality of the inhabitants of San Basilio de Palenque, the first free town and declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. The Afro culture has contributed its gastronomy and its most well-known rhythms such as bullerengue and champeta.



AMONG RHYTHMS AND FLAVOURS

Because of its strategic location, Bolívar has a blend of past and present cultures that coexist and feed off each other. It is a department that is open to the world and adapts to everything. For example, its cuisine, fairs and festivals take tradition to new heights.

“Bolívar, and in particular Cartagena, boasts a very comprehensive gastronomic offer with restaurants for all tastes and at all prices. There is the story of the end of Obregón’s life, the relationship with García Márquez and the film, music and literature festivals.

Bolívar is proud to host a wide variety of festivals, especially centred on the department’s music and gastronomy. Having an intercultural mix that dates back to colonial times and continues today, and already profiled as an international capital, you can find, experience and feel the Caribbean of yesteryear with a touch of modernism and internationalisation.

As regards its gastronomy, fried dishes, sausages, tubers and fish are part of its typical cuisine, which it shares with other regions of the Caribbean. Its sweets and desserts are noteworthy because of the department’s strong relationship with sugar cane and because today the way they are made is a family event that brings people together. They are also made with local fruits, in particular coconut



Palenqueras, Cartagena, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

and tamarind.

“Obviously, it has the smell of the sea, the smell of the river, the smell of the savannahs, the smell of the mountains, but it also has a worldly smell to me, it smells of the world because if we move on to gastronomy, all the varied recipes reveal a melting pot of cultures, it speaks to me of multiculturalism. That is what I’m talking about.”

There are many music festivals in honour of certain religious or popular figures of the region, and even of certain foods, such as the Yam, Mango or Frito Festival.

“People like the commotion, the mayhem, and festivals are ways to rally people to places, to bring about integration. The festivals generate a certain amount of renown and awareness among the people and represent the livelihood of the people in Bolívar.”

Because of its geographical location, its heritage towns and its cultural diversity, Bolívar has been and is still a department of international interest. It is an open space,

where people from all over the world intermingle, adapt and build new ways of doing things.

It is for this reason that different international festivals have been emerging that bring together people from many countries; in the music scene with the International Music Festival, in literature with the renowned Hay Festival, and in the seventh art with the Cartagena International Film Festival, all of which make the city a cultural focal point that brings together art, cinema, music, literature and gastronomy, all wrapped up in its own identity.



KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS



Filigree work, Mompox, Bolívar, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

FILIGREE, TOTUMO AND CASTING NETS

Filigree, totumo and casting nets, typical of the Zenú, as well as the braids represent the resistance of Palenques.



Railway lines, Bolívar, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

RAIL, TRAIN AND PORTS

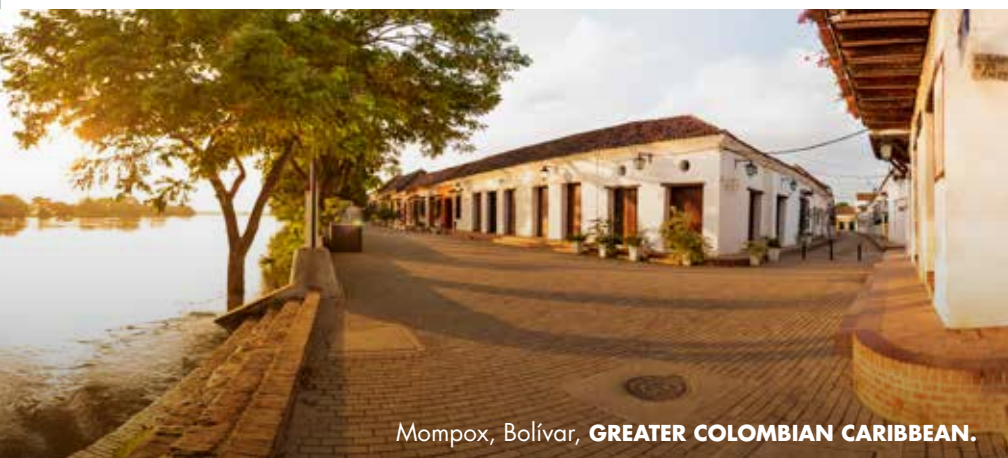
The channels that facilitated the movement of people, the influx of other cultures and the novel products that enriched traditions and customs.



Musicians in Cartagena de Indias, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

FOLKLORE

It is well represented by the black culture with its bullerengue, son de negro, champeta, among other traditional music.



Mompox, Bolívar, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

HERITAGE TOWNS

Each municipality with its republican-style architecture replete with courtyards that are a symbol of connection with the interior of the houses.



Sweets from Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

SUGAR CANE, SWEETS, CASSAVA AND YAM

These are some of the department's core products. They are the centrepiece of its most iconic dishes in their various preparations.



GEOGRAPHY

- Totumo Volcano
- Rosario and San Bernardo Corals National Natural Park
- Los Colorados Flora and Fauna Sanctuary
- El Corchal Flora and Fauna Sanctuary
- Barú Island
- La Boquilla
- Tierra Bomba Island
- Pozo Azul
- Punta Arenas
- Brazo de Loba
- Galerazamba salt flats
- San Bernardo Archipelago
- Montes de María
- The islands of Corales del Rosario, Fuerte, Tierra Bomba, Margarita and Venezuela among others.



REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES

- Syrian-Lebanese
- African, black, Palenque
- Europeans among others.



ARTS AND CRAFTS

- Filigree
- Sombrero veltiao (turned hat)
- Totuma (totumo wood creations)
- Atarrayas (casting nets)
- Cumbia
- Bullerengue
- Son de negro
- Cantaoras y tamboras (singers and percussion)
- Sextets
- Champeta among others.





Coconuts, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN.**

KEY CONCEPTS



GASTRONOMY

- Butifarra (sausage)
- Posta de pescado frito (fried fish dish)
- Posta cartagenera (roast beef)
- Galletas de Chepacorina (biscuit)
- Arepa de huevo (corn and egg patty)
- Carimañola (meat and cassava fritter)
- Buñuelito de fríjol (bean fritter)
- Butifarra (sausage)
- Rice and coconut
- Sancocho de pescado (fish broth often accompanied by cassava, yam, potato and corn on the cob)
- Fritanga (fried meat and veg)
- Ceviche
- Yam and its wide array dishes (fino, diamante, espino)
- Mote de queso (yam and Costeño cheese dish)
- Arroz blanco de ají (rice and chilli dish)
- Alegría de coco y anís (coconut and aniseed sweet)
- Lemon, coconut, mango, papaya, plantain sweets
- Coconut, pineapple, guava, passion fruit, panela and milk cocadas (biscuit)
- Bolas de tamarindo (baked tamarind sweet)
- Melcocha de panela (cane sugar-based sweet)
- Cubanito (coconut-based cigar-shaped sweet)
- Diabolín de queso (cassava and cheese-

based sweet)

- Panderos (cassava based sweet)
- Casadillas de coco (coconut biscuit)
- Chepacorina (biscuit)
- Casabe (cassava bread)
- Enyucado (cassava and coconut cake) among others.



SOME MUNICIPALITIES, TOWNS AND ACTIVITIES

- Castillo de San Felipe fortress
- San Cayetano
- San Jacinto
- Turbaco
- Magangué
- El Carmen de Bolívar
- Bazarro Market
- San Juan Nepomuceno
- Mompox
- Cartagena
- San Basilio de Palenque
- Walls of Cartagena de Indias
- Cathedral of Cartagena de Indias
- San Pedro Claver Church and Convent
- Zenú Gold Museum
- Caribbean Naval Museum
- Cartagena Museum of Modern Art
- Cerro de La Popa
- El Carmen de Bolívar
- Plaza de Los Coches
- National and international fairs 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.

Montes de María, Cerro de Maco, Bolívar, **GREATER COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN**.

REGIONAL NARRATIVES OF TOURISM

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