

# REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

Flooded savannah in Casanare, THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

## CASANARE

EXPERIENCING AND NARRATING EXPLOITS OF THE PLAINS

COLOMBIA 

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Cow herding, **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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**PROCOLOMBIA**

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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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*PROCOLOMBIA*

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# A REGION OF FLOODED SAVANNAHS

*The stunning department of Casanare is a land that encourages you to explore its flooded savannahs and wildlife on horseback and hiking, delving into the vastness of its countryside.*

Rising from the foothills of the plains and flooded savannahs, Casanare is a privileged department due to its wonderful biodiversity and diversity of fauna, inviting tourists to behold its natural beauty. Rising from the foothills of the plains and flooded savannahs, Casanare is a privileged department due to its wonderful biodiversity and diversity of fauna, inviting tourists to behold its natural beauty, pumas, otters, giant anteaters and jaguars.

*"The giant anteater attracts a great deal of attention for the reason that it is an endangered species. You can also find giant river otters and even jaguars. Many people say I want to take a photo of this animal, so they come with their cameras and that's when we say we definitely have to send them to Altagracia because there is a greater chance of seeing it there."*



Bird watching, Casanare,  
**THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

You can also go bird watching or "pajareo" as it is colloquially called, observing birds in their habitat, mostly in *garceros* (nesting place of herons) or estuaries.

*"For instance, in winter you know where to go. The garceros are here, all the birds flock to one place. Now in summer, as the difference between summer and winter is so evident here, the birds start to arrive in these small ponds or lagoons, much alike African landscapes, more or less, in a single small lagoon or what they call here an estero."*

On the immense ranches you can even have the experience of working on the plains. This occupation veils a huge part of the culture of the plains, such as its close relationship with the cattle and the landscape that inspire its music and the design of the classic houses.

*"Here you can still live and sleep on a traditional ranch, and have cultural experiences with the plains. The very fact of waking up on a Llanero ranch, the way they serve you the food so you get that feeling, those smells. You feel like you are somewhere else."*

The best way of touring the foothills of the plains and



Carne a la Llanera (roast veal), Casanare,  
**THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

savannahs of the department is on horseback or on foot with ecological hikes, enjoying the wildlife that is representative of the department's biodiversity.

*"This can be done by hiking, horseback riding, cycling or canoeing. Here you have different options, even by tractor when there are large groups, but the safaris are what attract the most attention. There you can see as much wildlife as possible in its habitat, but most of all you can appreciate the Llanera culture.*

Furthermore, the Llanera gastronomy includes a variety of dishes such as the famous carne a la llanera (roast veal), chigüiro (capybara) and pork, accompanied by cooking banana and cassava. Recently, bastimento (fried pork, beef and plantain and arrepuelas) has been promoted as a food that is representative of the Llanero culture.

*"Casanare is carne a la llanera. There is something that is so authentic and it is that we don't roast the meat with so much marinade or beer or with loads of seasoning. Here it is as if you add the salt and that's it, the natural flavour takes hold, if you are going to eat a heifer you eat the one that is there (...), we try to stay local, to eat cassava, plantain, everything, but with natural flavour. I*

*believe that this natural flavour is our own, it is authentic to us."*

An interest in coffee culture has been aroused in the region, and thanks to this, it now produces organic coffee and there are places like Las Tres Topias or Café Tamara, which recreate the traditional preparation experience, so visitors can discover and learn while listening to joropo songs.





Cavalcades in Casanare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## UNEARTHLY STORIES

*The extensive savannahs have borne witness to the daily exploits of the Llaneros, as they ride and travel through their department.*

The Llaneros have had to face many adventures in their work on the plains and, as a result, stories and rituals have arisen based on their work, with rites of protection and legends emerging, such as the Bola de Fuego (fireball) and the legendary figure of El Silbón (the whistler).

*"I was able to see the myths, which are amazing, although they have also been lost a little, but I think it was precisely that traditional part. There is the story of El Silbón and I also once saw the prayer of the snake: when a snake bites him, they pray to save him.*

The hat is an essential garment in the Llanero's clothing, synonymous with identity, status and always present at festivities. This accessory has become so widespread that it is now sold in specialised stores such as Sombreros Florentino in the capital of Casanare.

*"In that sense, I don't think that you have to have many things hanging around your shoulder, they don't have*





San Pablo ranch, Casanare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

*many things hanging. Llaneros only wear their hat, shoes, a plain pair of trousers and a plain shirt. From this alone you can identify a Llanero, they don't need to have a lasso hanging or anything, the hat is the Llanero's identity.*

In this department, the Liberation Route is also noteworthy as a tourist and historical attraction. This is one of the sites of the road to the Battle of Boyacá, which is why it was declared a national historic heritage site.

*"It seems to me that this process is extremely central, particularly underlining what the Liberation Route was, what that influence was like when Bolívar passed through here, and now they have been fixing it up. For the bicentenary they recreated the route and the people really liked it."*

Renowned writers from Casanare have narrated the exploits of the Llaneros, written legends of the savannahs, and through poetry they have conjured the landscapes

of the department and its biodiversity. Noteworthy figureheads include Gonzalo Jiménez Gómez and José Eustasio Rivera, author of *La Vorágine*, which is the most significant work written about the plains and on which a museum has been built in the municipality of Orocué.

*"Now we are working on the route of La Vorágine, through which we intend to promote cultural tourism in the region. It has already been completed once from Yopal to Orocué, where the museum is located."*

# JOYFUL AND MUSICAL CULTURE

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*When you talk about the Llanero culture what instantly comes to mind is joropo and other music, vaquería songs and coleo (equestrian sport), in its manifold cultural manifestations that showcase the Llanero folklore.*

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In Casanare, you learn joropo from childhood and playing the bandola is a crucial part of this learning process, and a symbol of the department.







“For us, I believe that our sound is bandola, as you won’t find it anywhere else in Colombia, only here. So, Casanare has the bandola, with a more popular sound you will find the harp and others, but the bandola is its own particular flavour.”

The bandola and joropo are the main attractions in the department’s festivals. The most noteworthy among these include the International Rodeo Festival in Tauramena, the Bandola Festival in Maní, the Cimarrón de Oro Festival, in addition to the patron saint festivals held in each municipality.

*“In Casanare, I think the most crucial and oldest event is the Tauramena International Rodeo Festival. On this side we also have Maní Festival with its bandola, and Candelaria Festival as well, but they are the most typical events, Villanueva Festival, which is the Savannah Festival, but I think that the Rodeo Festival, the Bandola Festival and the Cimarrón are the three most important ones.”*

Casanare is the proud home of important figures related to Llanera music, who are noteworthy for their versatility in playing joropo, singing about the plains, and playing the bandola. Orlando “el Cholo” Valderrama, Walter Silva, and Dumar Aljure, who through their lyrics have brought acknowledgement of joropo in other places.

*“Dumar Aljure Rivas, who is another figure from Casanare, who brought attention to the bandolón, which is an*

*instrument that is simplified from our brothers from Boyacá, who have the requinto and the tiple guitar, which they transformed into a bandolón (...) he also made an enormous contribution in Colombia, with his Catira Casanareña, with a number of songs (...). Dumar Aljure is always barefoot, you find him at an event of 100 or 200 people and he will be the only one who is barefoot, not because he has no shoes, not because he has nothing to wear, but because it is his culture, his character to go barefoot. To talk about Casanare is also to talk about Cholo Valderrama. To talk about Casanare, you also have to talk about Walter Silva, as he also embodies what Casanare is.”*

Artisans play a core role in reproducing and conserving the Llanera culture. The campechana is undoubtedly what represents Casanare, as it is a hammock made of leather that reflects the relationship of the Llanera culture with cattle. It is a tool that accompanies Llaneros on their journeys and highlights their versatility for making leather goods. However, it is also worth mentioning the artisans dedicated to making crafts, which include objects made with leather, horn, bone, wood and natural fibres.

*“For me, the campechana is what represents Casanare. It’s like a kind of hammock. Here they use absolutely every part of the cow. So they take out the leather, they fully open it and then they cut some rhombi in order to mould it. Then it becomes hard, it’s very tough. Now they make them softer, in leather that is treated differently. But the ones you see, the classic ones, they are made of leather and in a traditional campechana style”.*





## KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS



San Pablo ranch, Casanare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

### RANCHES

They represent the Llanero culture in their day-to-day lives. It is there where the Llaneros carry out work on the plains.



Campechana, Casanare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## CAMPECHANA

The icon of the department's crafts, embodying the Llanero culture's relationship with cattle.



Sunset in Casanare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## THE SAVANNAH

It represents the grandeur of the plains in Casanare and the fact that it can become flooded hides the richness of its biodiversity.



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

## BANDOLA

The musical symbol of Casanare that identifies it and sets it apart from the other departments of the Orinoco.



Llaneros, Casanare, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## HAT

A core accessory for Llaneros, which identifies and represents them at all times.







# KEY CONCEPTS



## GASTRONOMY

- Carne a la llanera (roast veal)
- Traditional Llanero coffee
- Chigüiro (capybara)
- Pork
- Cooking banana among others.



## CRAFTS

- Campechana (leather hammock)
- Leather goods
- Bone crafts
- Crafts in horn
- Wooden crafts among others.



## GEOGRAPHY

- Dry and flooded savannahs
- Llanero foothills
- Casanare River
- Cravo Sur River
- Cusiana River
- Pauto River among others.



## REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES

- Llaneros
- Avelino Moreno
- Orlando "el Cholo" Valderrama
- Walter Silva
- Dumar Aljure
- Gonzalo Jiménez Gómez among others.



## EMBLEMATIC PLACES AND ACTIVITIES

- La Aurora ranch
- Berlín ranch
- Maní
- Garceros (nesting place of herons)
- Pore
- Tamara
- Barley ranch
- San Luis
- Trinidad
- Cavalcades
- Wild lifestyle
- Flora and fauna watching
- La Vorágine House Museum among others.

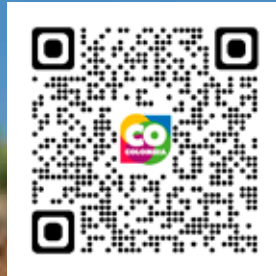


## FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

- Rodeo Folklore Festival
- International Bandola Festival
- Cimarrón de Oro Festival
- Savannah Festival
- Garceros del Llano Festival
- Festival de la Soga 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.

REGIONAL NARRATIVES OF TOURISM

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