

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

CUNDINAMARCA

AND RURAL AREAS OF BOGOTÁ

• WATER, HERITAGE AND PRESERVATION •

COLOMBIA 

VISIT COLOMBIA.TRAVEL



©ProColombia - 2021

Calle 28 # 13A - 15. Floors 35 and 36
Bogotá, Colombia
+57 601 5600100.
info@procolombia.co

**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM**

VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Created by:
**FEEDBACK PROVOKERS
AND PROCOLOMBIA**

**DESIGN AND
RESEARCH TEAM:**

Claudia Medina
Account manager

Project leaders
María Alejandra Gutiérrez
Natalia Bonilla

Juliana Quecán
Analysis manager

Carol Retavisca
Project coordinator

**FIELD EXECUTION AND
ANALYSIS TEAM:**

Semiotic director
Marcia Pinzón

Anthropologists
Alejandra Ramírez
Eliana Cepeda
Julián Numpaqué

Psychologists
Natalia Pastrán
Ana María Rebellón

All rights reserved. Partial or complete reproduction of this material without explicit permission of ProColombia is strictly prohibited.

The published material, including, but not limited to, illustrations, articles, photographs and, in general, information comprised in LAS NARRATIVAS REGIONALES is protected by the intellectual property laws of the Republic of Colombia. The document and its contents, as well as the statements and/or opinions expressed in the publication and in the art that accompanies it, are the result of research carried out by the author and reflect the opinions and interpretations of the work's author, which are personal in nature, and do not correspond to or reflect the position of the National Government and/or ProColombia, or the rest of the entities that have been involved in the project, who shall not assume any responsibility for the position, truthfulness, authenticity, or originality of the information contained therein, nor for any direct, indirect, incidental, or consequential, punitive, special, derivative, and/or any other type of damage arising from what is expressed therein. Its purpose is limited to the promotion of Colombia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WATER
PASSED THIS WAY

PAGE 3

THE MUISCA
LEGACY

PAGE 5

A LEGACY
IS RENEWED

PAGE 7

KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS

PAGE 9



Tominé reservoir, Cundinamarca, **EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.**

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

WATER PASSED THIS WAY

Among impressive mountains and bodies of water we find Cundinamarca, a land that worships the water that springs from its soils and moorlands.



Cundinamarca is a department with a vast wealth of water resources. It boasts a number of incomparable moorlands that function as a water factory. Each of them is host to a great many species, both fauna and flora. *"Cundinamarca has a lot of water, with the moorlands and the reservoirs, which not only supply Bogotá but also provide energy for other regions,"* says an inhabitant.

For starters, there are the incomparable moorlands. Not only does the region have many of them, but there are also the Sumapaz moorlands, considered among the largest in the world. It is one of the most important water factories in the country and the region.

"Sumapaz, as a moorland and ecosystem, represents water: it is one of the world's largest moors, boasting some of the most extensive water resources, thus, we are not even talking nationally but also worldwide."

COLIBRÍ CHIVITO DEL RUIZ

EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES



Neusa reservoir, Cundinamarca,
EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.

Water flows through the exquisite landscapes of Cundinamarca. There are breathtaking waterfalls, lakes, lagoons, rivers, wetlands and reservoirs that make enjoying this water an amazing experience. No matter where visitors go, water will always be the distinctive hallmark. The power of the water is harnessed in its reservoirs to generate electricity, which supplies other regions of the country. *“For instance, there is the Festival of Light in Mesitas, because we generate electricity. We generally do not generate electricity for Cundinamarca, but for other regions. We supply energy to a large part of Colombia,”* stated a proud inhabitant of the department.

It is no coincidence that many of the places to visit are associated with water. The enchanting Neusa Reservoir Environmental Park, for example, is an iconic site in the department. Situated between the municipalities of Coga and Tausa, you can go on ecological hikes, camping, sport fishing and behold the majestic flora and fauna of the Andean forest. This very wealth of water has given rise to the cultivation of captivating flowers, which are marketed nationally and internationally and has been the basis for generating a major source of employment in the municipalities of Cota, Madrid, El Rosal, Suesca, Facativá, Tocancipá, Funza, Chía, Nemocón, Suesca, Sopó and Cachipay. Thus, this resource has been crucial for consolidating an agricultural culture in the department.

The lush landscapes and natural scenery where water is the foremost factor have made it an amazing place for activities such as hiking and boat tours, camping, water sports and tours through the landscape to visit the likes of the breathtaking Sueva and La Quina waterfalls, the mesmerising Suesca and Pedro Palo lagoons, the refreshing reservoirs Guavio, Neusa, Tominé and Gachalá, and the headwaters of the Tunjuelito and Bogotá rivers.

“In the Guavio dam, water gushes everywhere, you can see the water cascading down the mountains. The spectacular waterfall of La Quina is so inviting you’ll want to jump in when you see it so crystal clear.”

In terms of tourism, the rural area of Bogotá has neighbourhoods with rural areas showcasing the other side of Bogotá, where the bucolic landscape of the countryside and water hold sway. Surrounding it, traditional gastronomy, agrotourism with rural families and their traditions, hiking and sports are on the rise. In Usme, for instance, we can find the La Regadera reservoir, the Los Soches agro-park and the Ruta Campesina de Ciudad Bolívar trail.

“In Usme is it not common knowledge that it has a larger rural area than the urban area. It fundamentally offers gastronomy, but things are starting to spring up around it, there is a trail, a zip line, you can fish for trout, and go paragliding.”

Ecological and adventure tourism is also on offer, with a variety of activities that take place in the mountains and water. These range from children's educational outings and school camps to adults' workshops and corporate events, where you can find activities such as canopy, suspension bridges, abseiling, kayaking, rafting, white water rafting and ecological hikes. There is something for everyone at the spectacular Los Trapiches Ecopark, Makute Adventure Park, Chicaque Natural Park, La Chorrera, Aventura Park, La Reserva Biopark and a great deal more.

“The experiences you can have in each of the parks are both adrenaline- and hiking-based.”



Gold Museum, Bogotá,
EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.

→ THE MUISCA LEGACY

The soils of Cundinamarca boast hundreds of years of Muisca civilisation and legend. We even preserve indigenous words in the names of several of our municipalities, which seem to act like roots that prevent us from forgetting that past.

Cundinamarca is steeped in Muisca history, giving rise to influential traditions of the department. *"History has it that the tribes that settled in Cundinamarca were the Chibchas, who had several kingdoms and were always conscious of caring for the region's nature.* Still today you can find names of municipalities and mouth-watering typical dishes that contain — or entirely comprise— indigenous words with different meanings. Chía is the Moon, Zipaquirá is the foot of the Zipa hill, Suesca is the rock of the birds, Cajicá is a stone fortress, a *guache* is a warrior man and a *guaricha* is a wise woman.

"It is called the Siecha lagoon, which in the Chibcha language means water between hills. It has a great deal to do with the vast amount of water sources in the municipality.

Today legends live on that reveal the value the lagoons had for the Muiscas, as they were deemed sacred and were the abode of the gods, of a whole cosmogony and mythology that was passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years.

"In Cundinamarca we have the country's main lagoons that are related to the legend of El Dorado, and nobody can take that away... For me this signifies that the mountains and the water will always have a great deal of meaning."

The incredible colour of the Guatavita lagoon compels you to think of something else: emeralds, which for the Muiscas were a sacred object. Their universe was split into three parts: the overworld, the world and the underworld. In the latter, you could find emeralds of course, the colour of which represents water, fertility and life force. In fact, even today, the municipalities of Gachetá and Gachalá have mines exporting emeralds that are world-renowned for their purity.



Gold Museum, Bogotá, **EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.**

Thus, several of Cundinamarca's breathtaking tourist attractions are dedicated to this indigenous legacy, whose legends survive in places that were sacred to the Muisca, such as the Tequendama Falls, which were created by Bochica, and the spectacular Guatavita Lagoon, where it was believed that El Dorado, the mythical city of gold much sought after by the Spaniards, once stood.

"There are many legends, like the legend of the Tequendama Falls: the savannah was flooded, so the inhabitants asked Bochica for help. Bochica struck the stone with his wand and created the Tequendama Falls."

It is even possible to experience magical Muisca traditions in places where there are several vestiges of the indigenous population. Petroglyphs and pictographs can be found in Cubsio Park; La Poma Ecological Park boasts ancient rock art and indigenous ceremonies take place there to this day. Some tourism operators also carry out unique activities to recreate the life of the Muisca.

"Cubsio Park... There are many indigenous aspects here, you can go and observe the pictographs, and indigenous groups from other places have come there to see the stone engravings. Indigenous people gather in La Poma Ecological Park because they say there are places where they used to conduct ceremonies to ask for rain, for the harvest."

A LEGACY THAT IS RENEWED

A tourist offer for all tastes, but one that is based on awareness, respects nature and water, and also acknowledges and embraces its indigenous heritage.

This great legacy of protection of nature and respect for water lives on to this day in the heritage of the Muisca people, who considered this important resource to be fundamental, the origin and the abundance.

"In the Muisca tribes, the act of caring for water was fundamental. This ancient practice has been upheld to this day and people not only protect the water, but live from it and talk about it."



"Among the indigenous people, caring for nature was always paramount, it was the mother earth for them, and they always asked for permission to touch it or to work with it. In Cundinamarca today, agriculture is clean because it is organic, they don't use chemicals."

Today Cundinamarca invites you to make a picturesque pilgrimage along these ancestral indigenous paths that lead to places considered sacred, respectfully, calmly and quietly contemplating its natural wealth. *"In the mountains you are going travel along a road that is over a hundred years old. On your way up you can feel the tranquillity and the joy of entering such a magical place. You will encounter wondrous nature as you enter the spectacular forest of clouds. You start to feel the excitement of hearing the soothing sounds of bustling animals and refreshing waterfalls,"* states an excited traveller.

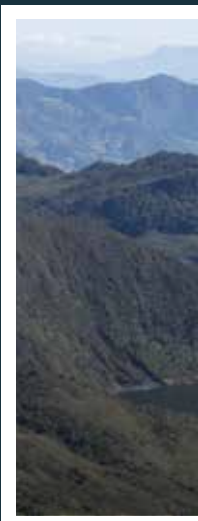
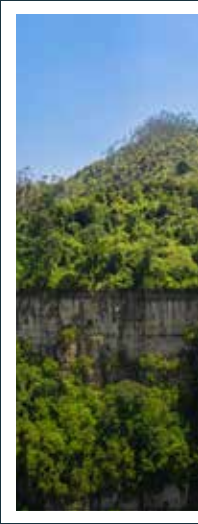
This heritage and legacy of protecting water also applies to the land and caring for how food is grown. This also means that today organic farming takes centre stage, leaving aside industrial production.

A stone's throw from Bogotá, Cundinamarca boasts the Salt Park in the municipality of Zipaquirá, paying a staggering tribute to the department's relationship with salt, mining and religiosity, and inviting visitors to learn about its history through attractions such as the Brine Museum, the reservoir, the Salt Dome, the Sale Mine and the central square. The impressive Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá is noteworthy for the complexity of its monumental infrastructure and its outstanding beauty. This mighty monument invites visitors to marvel at the astonishing collection of religious sculptures in marble and salt and its three main sections: the Stations of the Cross, the dome, and the cathedral's naves. In this vein, the department's salt mines have played a major role both commercially and historically. Archaeologists and historians highlight its legacy, which dates back to the 5th century when the salt trade was one of the Muisca's core activities. For this reason, the stunning Salt Park has generated a huge amount of interest from domestic and foreign tourists interested in geology, history and religious tourism.

Thus, part of the region's tourist offer relates to visits to places that evoke all that is sacred. This includes the likes of the Chingaza National Natural Park, the Los Tunos Natural Park, the Peñas Blancas reserve, the Encenillo biological reserve, the Bogotá wetlands, the Nemocón salt mine, the Zipaquirá salt mine, the Thomas van der Hammen forest reserve and the Sumapaz Natural Park, in outdoor spaces, full of air, for you to feel freedom and tranquillity. Other tourist attractions promote caring for water and the land, such as visits to farmers who grow crops chemical-free and who prepare typical foods using traditional methods. And this entire tourism does exactly that: it upholds and showcases the legacy of water, the land and the indigenous heritage.



KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS





Tequendama Falls, Cundinamarca, **EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.**

WEALTH OF WATER

It is a spectacular region of water-based landscapes with moorlands, lagoons, waterfalls, rivers and reservoirs.



Guatavita, Cundinamarca, **EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.**

SACRED SITES

Cundinamarca cares for and protects the natural resource venerated and protected by the Muisca. You can go on a magical pilgrimage along the trails leading to these sacred sites.



Chingaza, Cundinamarca, **EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.**

MUISCA HERITAGE

The indigenous cultural legacy of care and respect for water and natural wealth remains to this day, with legends and names of the foremost sites for the Muisca surviving today in our region.



Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá, Cundinamarca, **EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.**



GEOGRAPHY

- Cundinamarca
- Nilo
- Guavio
- Chorrera
- Peñas Blancas
- Guatavita
- Neusa dam
- Chicaque
- Waterfalls (Sueva, La Quina)
- Lagoons (Suesca, Pedro Palo)
- Reservoirs (Neusa, Tominé)
- Cerro de las Tres Viejas
- Chingaza National Natural Park
- Los Tunos Natural Park
- Peñas Blancas reserve
- Encenillo biological reserve
- El Dorado among others.



REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES

- Muiscas
- Bochica
- Panches among others.



FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

- Villeta Festival
- National Band Festival (La Vega)
- National Anapoima Festival
- Ancestral festivals (The legend of El Dorado)
- Fruit Festival (Anolaima)
- Corpus Christi Festival among others.

KEY CONCEPTS



GASTRONOMY

- Fritanga (fried meat and veg)
- Piquete campesino (stewed meat and veg in a banana leaf)
- Guatila (mirliton fruit)
- Balú (beans)
- Panela (cane sugar)
- Chicha (alcoholic drink made from corn)
- Amasijos (sundry bakery preparations)
- Gallina (stewing hen)
- Picada (fried meat and veg)
- Cuajada con melado (curd and cane sugar)
- Brevas con arequipe (breba figs with caramelised milk)
- Maíz (corn)
- Ají (spicy sauce) among others.



MUSIC

- Bambuco
- Pasillos
- Joropo among others.



WORDS AND LEGENDS

- Chia, Moon
- Zipaquirá, foot of the Zipa
- Suesca, rock of the birds
- Cajicá, a stone fortress
- Guache, warrior man
- Guaricha, wise woman
- Legend of El Dorado
- Legend of Bochica among others.



Panela (cane sugar), **EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.**



PLACES OF INTEREST

- Nemocón Salt Mine
- Zipaquirá Salt Mine
- Nimaima (Río Negro, Tobia)
- Los Trapiches Ecopark
- Makute Adventure Park
- Chicaque Natural Park
- La Chorrera, Adventure Park
- La Reserva Biopark
- Cubsio Park
- La Poma Ecological Park
- Panela route: the artisanal production process
- Tours of the places of legend for the Muisca
- Ecological walks along the royal trails
- Girardot
- Puerto Salgar
- Anolaima
- Guaduas
- Villeta among others.

COLOMBIAN EASTERN ANDES

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.

Guatavita Lagoon, Cundinamarca, EASTERN COLOMBIAN ANDES.

• REGIONAL NARRATIVES OF TOURISM •

COLOMBIA

 **PROCOLOMBIA**
EXPORTS TOURISM INVESTMENT COUNTRY BRAND

VISIT **COLOMBIA.TRAVEL**