

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

Inírida River, Guainía, THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

GUAINÍA

• BACK TO LIFE'S BASICS •

COLOMBIA 

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**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM**

VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

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Mavicure, Guainía, **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

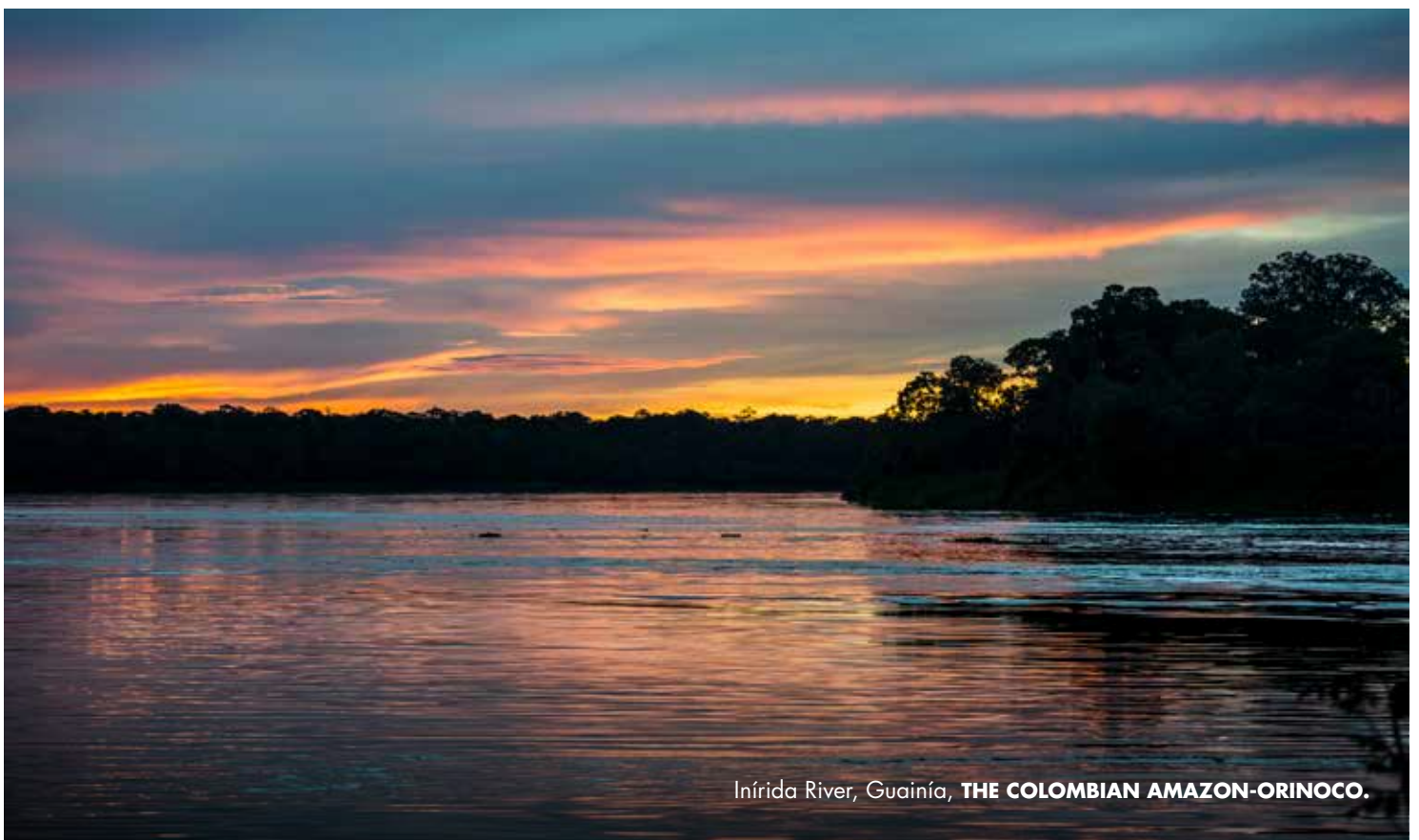
ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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.

PROCOLOMBIA



Inírida River, Guainía, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

AMONG WATER

Guainía makes you think of a little known department that holds an immense cultural and natural wealth, with countless water sources and many rivers that look like snakes when viewed from above.

“When you arrive by plane, from the sky, you will notice a giant snake in the middle of the jungle, trees all around and in the middle you will see an extremely extensive brown spot awash with curves and it is incredibly long, and on your approach you witness more snakes coming from different directions and they are all rivers.”

Guainía is a land that is still in the process of being discovered, particularly because its main tourist attractions are largely crossed by rivers, making it a novel and highly seductive destination. Its major protagonist, the river, is also important because that is where the fish comes from and is one of its core sources of food and economic development, but it is unquestionably its presence in the most characteristic places of the region that draws so much attention to this department, entirely surrounded by many water sources, and also part of the Guiana Shield and its primitive lands.

You just have to visit some of its most characteristic places to fall in love with this destination bathed by various water sources and with the most breathtaking landscapes and contrasts.

Its main one is the Cerros de Mavecure. A collection of three huge rocks, located on the Inírida River in the city of the same name, where the Puinave indigenous community lives. Each hill has a name: Pajarito, Mono and Mavecure, and all three form part of one of the most stunning tourist attractions and are even represented in the department's coat of arms.

Las Brujas Lagoon is a place where you can appreciate nature in all its grandeur. This lagoon is one of this department's representative bodies of water. For this reason, the primary means of communication in Guainía are the rivers, since land roads are scarce and are only used during the months of low rainfall.

Puinawai National Nature Reserve is the second largest



national natural reserve in Colombia's National Natural Park System, primarily covered by jungle and irrigated by several rivers. Forty-four communities have been discovered there that directly use of the protected area.

“The Puinawai Natural Reserve is a region that has been literally isolated from the Amazon and Guainía. It is something that very few of us have had the privilege of seeing, and that is why you can find all the diversity there, with vast savannas, forests and there are unique formations.”

Lastly, it is worth mentioning an emblem of the department that, although it is not a destination as such, is a unique species that can be identified throughout the length and breadth of the territory. The Inírida flower, an icon of the department, a species that occurs only in this region of the country and grows in the flooded savannah and around the Atabapo River. It has winter and summer species and they are embodied on the flag of Inírida, in the coat of arms of Guainía and monuments have been erected to them in the town.



MYTHS THAT TELL STORIES

Guainía is a land that is populated by various indigenous communities that narrate myths about the places and species that exist in the area.

As a territory, Guainía is fortunate to host numerous indigenous communities that provide knowledge and learning about the know-how and practices that are performed in the territory. This means that everything that envelops them can be preserved and valued from a different worldview.

“Welcome to the living museum of Guainía, which through song reveals the entire indigenous worldview: the history of origin, art, indigenous musical instruments, traditional medicine and the distinct languages.”

From its vision, each ethnic group contributes ancestral knowledge as a tool for life, as well as myths and legends that tell stories in an inspiring manner. The most well-known myth is that of the Creation of the Inírida flower and the myth of the Cerros de Mavecure. Other myths and legends include the myth of the Curripaco people, the legend of the Desinkora, the myth of the fishing bat, and the legend of the morrocoy.

PIAPOCO PEOPLE

This ethnic group currently has a major presence in the city of Inírida and in the settlement of Barrancominas. Their economy is based on agriculture, fishing and hunting. They grow bitter cassava, corn, beans, yams, ocumo, sweet potato, peach palm fruit, pineapple, chilli, cashew, plantain, rice and sugar cane.

The women are potters. They make the púali or budare, a large frying pan for roasting cassava starch. They also make clay pots and cups for sale. Men and women make hammocks from cumare palm fibres.

PUINAVE PEOPLE

Most of the Puinave ethnic group lives in the Inírida river basin. But part of their community is also in Guaviare and on the borders with Venezuela and Brazil.

Their language belongs to the Maku-Puinave linguistic



Caño Bonito Lake, Guainía,
THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

family. A major proportion of the Puinave people speak their native language. Medicine is an crucial part of their culture. Traditional practitioners have learned this practice through oral tradition. Specific characteristics are required to be a healer: concentration, observation and interest.

CURRIPACO PEOPLE

In Guainía they live in the basins of the rivers Isana, Atabapo and Guainía, in addition to the lower Inírida and the upper Orinoco.

The chagra farming system is essential, in which they grow cassava, corn, peach palm fruit, sweet potato, chonque, yams, chilli, banana, pineapple, lulo, papaya, sugar cane and achiote. Fishing is a major source of food; they hunt tapirs, peccaries, capybaras, agoutis, speckled caiman and some birds.

Crafts are an activity that generates income in their community. They make bijao baskets, and budares and graters for sale. They also gather chiquichiqui fibre in the forest to make brushes and sell them on to intermediary traders.

GUHIBA PEOPLE

They live between the Guaviare, Meta and Arauca rivers, in the departments of Vichada, Meta, Arauca, Guaviare and Guainía. The women's main activity is to sow, care for, harvest and process the bitter cassava, and make fibre tools, such as the juicer and baskets. The cured dough is used to make a tortilla or casabe, and a grain of roasted flour or fariña, which is always available. They hunt using a bow and arrow to obtain their food. Some families rear chickens and pigs, and some communities have cattle, introduced by Jesuit missionaries.

As is the case in other communities, the men are weavers



Inírida flower, Guainía,
THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

and make hammocks from cumare palm and moriche palm fibres, baskets, mats, flutes and sebucanes, used to squeeze poisonous liquid out of the bitter cassava mixture.

MYTH OF THE CREATION OF THE INÍRIDA FLOWER

Legend has it that Inírida means “little mirror of the sun” and was the name of a girl who lived on the Pajarito hill. One day, a man fell madly in love with Inírida. He discovered a recipe to win her over. He learned how to prepare a concoction with puzana. But he didn’t know the formula very well and it was too strong.

The story goes that the man managed to get Inírida to drink it. But the concoction was so strong that the effect was disastrous. Instead of falling in love with him, the princess went mad, lost her sense of reality, didn’t know where she was, and ran all over like a headless chicken. The young man tried to follow her, but this hill is impossible to climb, only she could do it.

When she awoke, the young woman found herself alone and chose to live far away from humans, and turned the hill into her castle. It is said that once in a while the princess misses human company. For this reason, whenever people visit the hill, they should greet her with beautiful songs to brighten her day. Inírida, in appreciation, lets threads of water trickle down the walls of the hill with an appearance of silver embroidery on the rocks, looking like a beautiful flower: the Inírida flower.

The flower lives all year round and its colours change in line with the princess’s emotions: it is brighter when she is happy. It fades when the princess is sad. It dies when the princess is angry.

MYTH OF THE HILLS OF MAVECURE

Legend has it there were three orphaned brothers who lived on the banks of the Inírida river. The eldest loved birds and lived on the Pajarito hill, the second was passionate about primates and lived on the Mono hill, the third felt no connection to anything and with a blow-pipe killed everything his brothers loved. The other two brothers, angry, decided to take him away, exiling him to the other side of the river.

PRESERVE TO DISCOVER

Caring in order to discover is the principle under which its inhabitants live. They preserve a little-known land for other people to be able to discover it.

The inhabitants of Guainía have had an interest in researching the practices and knowledge existing in the territory, with a view to continue reproducing them and to be able to showcase them to tourists visiting the department, e.g. the process that is undertaken with the bitter cassava, which is used to make crafts and for human consumption.

They conduct productive and ecological projects that benefit the community and their territory, opening up spaces for tourism in this department. Thus, this territory manages to preserve its land in order that other people can discover it. Some noteworthy examples are as follows.

THE HONEY ROUTE OF THE STINGLESS BEE

An indigenous community in Guainía uses these insects to form the basis for a long-term productive project and an alternative means of caring for the environment. In the process, the community's inhabitants learned how to raise and manage stingless bees and generate income for the families involved, without having to take down the hives to extract the honey.

EDUCATIONAL PROJECT FOR CHILDREN

This project seeks to help the children of Guainía learn to recognise their area, so that they can take ownership of it and later convey this knowledge to future generations and through tourism.

It is a project that generates awareness among the youngest, as well as interest in seeking to conserve the natural and cultural wealth of the territory.

ECO-EFFICIENT STOVES

The construction of ecological stoves endeavours to reduce the domestic consumption of firewood. The stoves include certain technological processes that the inhabitants have learned for their construction. They have also considered the possibility of cultivating a wood-burning garden to reduce deforestation.







KEY WORDS
AND CONCEPTS





Bow and arrow, Guainía, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

THE BOW AND ARROW

The symbol of the ways in which they acquire their food and the expression of the ongoing nature of a practice that harks back to their ancestors.



Inírida River, Guainía, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

RIVERS

The rivers are a major tourist attraction for the department, as this area is surrounded by them and they represent the means of transport and food for many people in the territory.



Inírida flower, Guainía, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

INÍRIDA FLOWER

Characteristic of the territory, as it is a species that only occurs in this area.



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

NATURAL FIBRES

The natural fibres obtained from palms such as cumare, moriche and bijao are used to make instruments for their daily lives, but it is also a way of making handicrafts to earn a living.

KEY CONCEPTS



GEOGRAPHY

- Flat expanses
- Tepui table-top mountains
- Orinoco River
- Amazon River
- Cuiarí River
- Isana River
- Guainía River
- Inírida River
- Source of several rivers of the South
- Canyons
- Lagoons
- Dry docks
- Trails
- among others.



EMBLEMATIC PLACES AND ACTIVITIES

- Puinawai National Nature Reserve
- Puerto Inírida
- Torrent of Mapiripana
- Las Brujas Lagoon
- Torrent of Sapuara
- Inírida River
- Laguna Negra Canyon
- Caño Vitina Spa Resort
- Monument to Princess Inírida
- Nuestra Señora del Carmen Cathedral
- Petroglyphs of Coco Viejo
- Yuruparí Cultural Maloca
- among others.



GASTRONOMY

- Ajicero (fish stew)
- Mandioca fruit
- Fariña (cassava flour)
- Casabe (cassava bread)
- Ají (spicy sauce)
- Growing of bitter cassava, corn, yams, ocumo, sweet potato, peach palm fruit, pineapple, chilli, cashew, plantain, rice and sugar cane
- among others.



FAIRS AND FESTIVITIES

- Tres Culturas Festival
- San Antonio patron saint festivities
- among others.



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

- Curripaco
- Tucanos
- Puinave
- Piapoco
- Guhiba
- Sikuani
- Desanos
- Banivas
- Guarequenas
- Yerales
- Cubeos
- among others.



Plantain, Guainía, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**



Inírida River, Guainía, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**



MUNICIPALITIES AND NON-MUNICIPALISED AREAS

- Barrancominas
- Cacahual
- Inírida
- La Guadalupe
- Morichal Nuevo
- Pana Pana
- Puerto Colombia
- San Felipe
- among others.



ARTS, CRAFTS AND MUSIC

- Hammocks
- Canastos (woven baskets)
- Flutes
- Sebucanes (a tool used to squeeze poisonous liquid out of the bitter cassava mixture)
- Brushes
- Clay cups
- Pans
- 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, as key factors 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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