

# REGIONAL NARRATIVES

OF TOURISM

Telares de Cristal Waterfall, Meta, THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

## META

• THE TRUE GATEWAY TO THE PLAIN •

**COLOMBIA** 

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Meta River, **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.

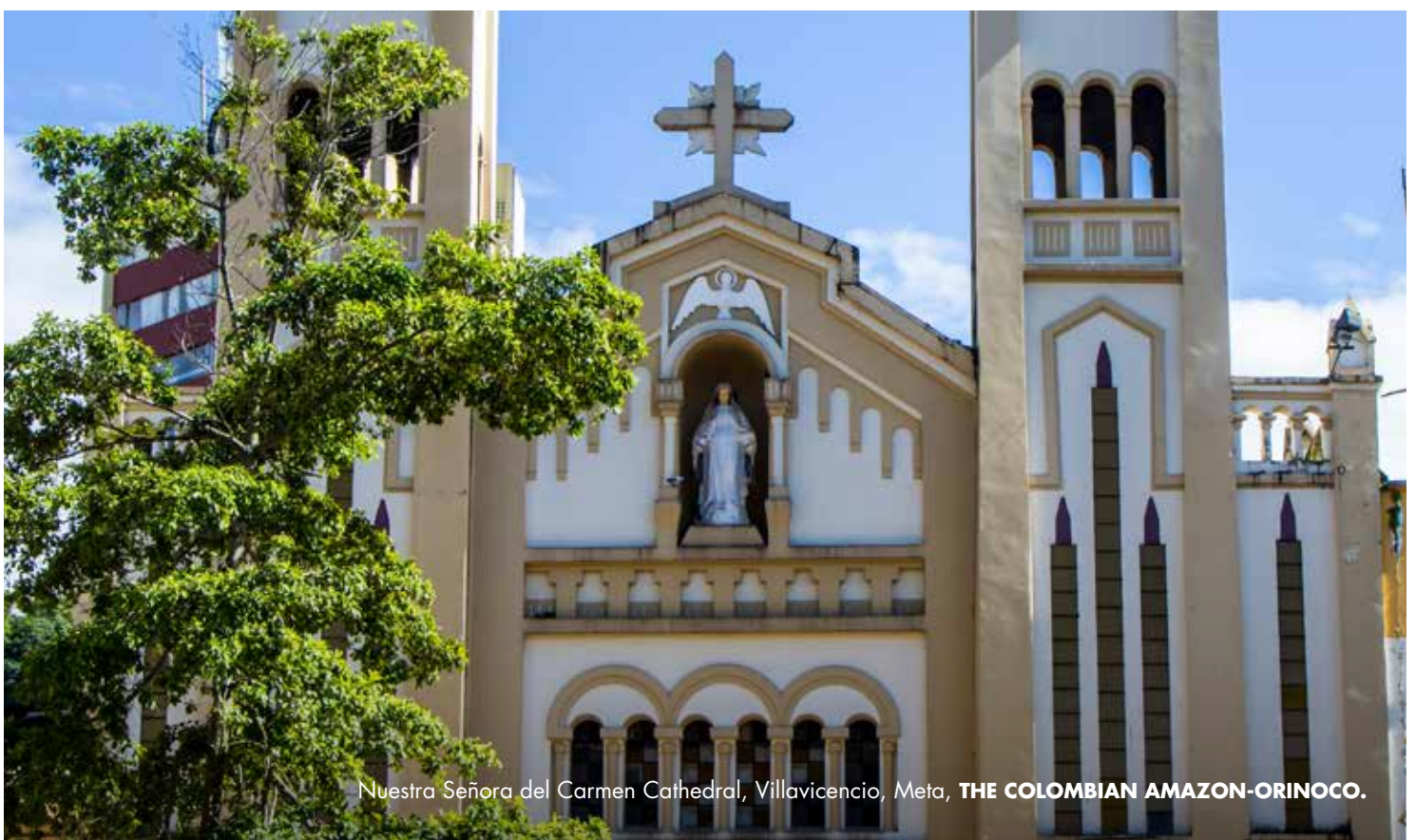
As a reader, you will have at your disposal **33 research modules**, broken down by region and department. Additionally, a content manual is available, a guide teaching you how to best wield this information and create content for different media that efficiently communicates destinations' offers and 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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Nuestra Señora del Carmen Cathedral, Villavicencio, Meta, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**



Laguna del Silencio, Meta, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

# → THE EVERYDAY MIRACLE

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*The sun rises and sets in a very special way in the unique department of Meta. These breathtaking events leave the viewer speechless.*

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The department of Meta is a spectacular biodiversity of savannahs, mountains and rivers that is constantly seeking to be explored. It features extensive savannah plains that have given rise to livestock and agricultural production, which has become an attraction that has led to the migration of people to the department from different regions. Here the department's commercial characteristics and its proximity to the centre of the country are worthy of note as a stand-out attraction.

*"Hordes of people came to settle in Meta and obviously there was land where they could rear livestock and farm, so of course here you find people from Antioquia, Paisas, from Ibagué, Vallunos, Santander, Bogotá."*

It has the astonishing Sierra de la Macarena mountain range and rock formations that represent a biodiversity unexplored by the country's socio-political context. These are inviting and spectacular places to visit, to be dazzled by the flora and fauna of the south of the department.

*"We have other attractions in Mesetas, in San Juan de Arama, comprising natural waterfalls. There is one called the Güejar River Canyon, rising 100 metres high. There is nowhere to stop. In places you delve into the middle of the canyon and the water, and you feel the placid peace, you hear the extrinsic sound of the birds and the monkeys, and you see the parrots go by in the canyon."*  
There is also the acclaimed Caño Cristales, which has

become a benchmark for Colombia's biodiversity and is a destination not to be missed for anyone who wants to discover the department, either traditionally or, for example, on horseback or hiking countless trails.

*"There is a magical place that all Colombians should know, and that is Caño Cristales, the world's most beautiful river, which is in Meta."*

Its blushing sunsets and sunrises are waiting to be admired. The image of the sunrise has been established as a stand-out icon in the department. Thus, you will always be recommended this plan when visiting Meta. To the Llaneros this represents a reflection of the immensity of their territory.

*"Its the simple things, and one of those simple things is for instance listening to birdsong, having a coffee and being soothed by the extraordinary sound of nature, or watching a majestic sunrise or a sunset."*



Villavicencio, Meta,  
**THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## — LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

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*Trade, livestock breeding, farming and the conquest of the plains brought major changes to the department and led to the region's development.*

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Meta's growth and development came about through changes and exploits deriving from processes of trade and migration that now mean that the department is deemed the gateway to the Llanos (plains). Historically, the department has relied upon Villavicencio as a major trading point for the region. The city marked the end of gruelling journeys starting in Arauca and Casanare. Today, it continues to be a commercial benchmark for the Orinoco region as a result of its proximity to the country's capital, which has earned it its nickname.

*“José Bonnet incorporated the first company importing goods and exporting coffee, furs and rubber. At that point, Villavicencio turned its gaze towards the plains, as trade was largely conducted via the Meta–Orinoco–Venezuela river route and from there to North America or Europe. But when things became difficult, the city turned its attention to Bogotá, which could be reached in five days (at best) by an arduous road. The construction of a 4-metre wide national bridle path began in 1868” (Juana Salamanca Uribe, 2009, Villavicencio: la ciudad de las dos caras).*

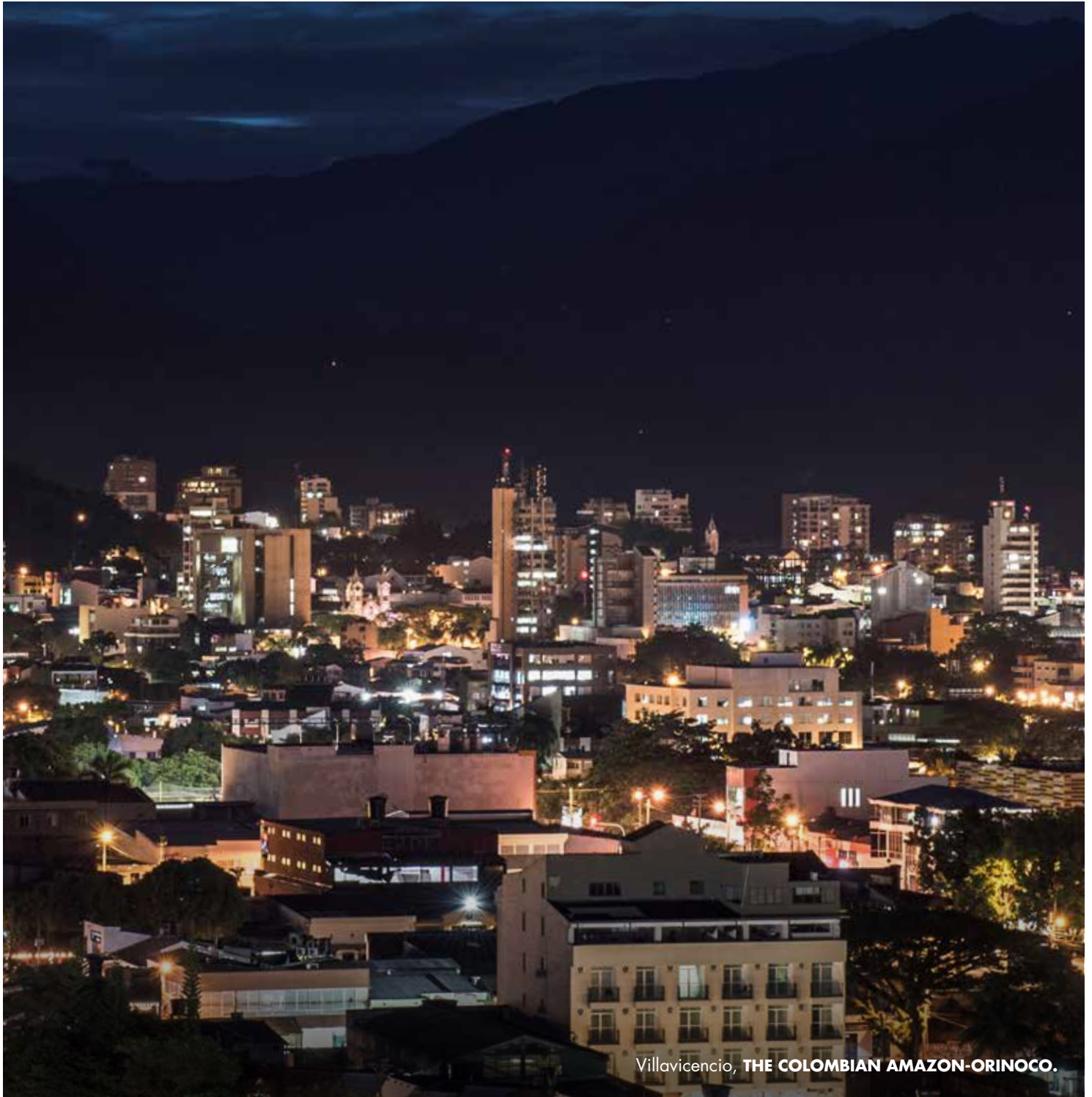
The department boasts a variety of restaurants offering everything from traditional Llanera cuisine to new recipes, which ultimately gives the impression of being a place that preserves its culture but, nevertheless, is no stranger to change and innovation. Thus, you can try everything from the traditional mamona llanera (roast veal) to gourmet dishes that transform traditional flavours into exotic recipes.



*ducing town. It has the resources, there are squares, there are houses, there the people have a very good standard of living.”*

Its oil-based industrialisation process has accelerated urban transformation in certain municipalities. This is why it is a department that has experienced migration that has given rise to a dialogue between the Llanera culture and other cultures.

*“Many people come to live in Meta because for a long time there was an opportunity to work in livestock, farming and the oil industry.”*



# THE CULTURE OF THE PLAINS

*It is a place of stories, books, music and dance, the joy of carnival, festivities and songs.*



The department of Meta has cultural demonstrations that showcase the history of the folklore of the plains and its traditions, while simultaneously taking on board new trends. The oldest and most representative Llano festival, Las Cuadrillas de San Martín, has been declared Cultural Heritage of the Nation and is acknowledged throughout the Orinoco region as a spectacle that conserves the Llanera culture.

*“Not to mention San Martín, the oldest municipality. There we have the only ballet, which is known as Las Cuadrillas de San Martín. This ballet boasts 286 years of tradition, and the municipality dates back over four hundred years. To be a cuadrillero (horseman), you must be the son, grandson, or great-grandson of another cuadrillero. It runs in the family.”*

It also holds international festivals, attracting a large number of visitors from other regions due to the proximity of the department and the infrastructure of the hotel industry. Stand-out events here include joropo (dance), the equestrian sport of coleo and Llanera culture, such as the renowned International Joropo Tournament.

*“We also have our International Joropo Tournament, which outlines the whole Llanera culture and essence, which is expressed in these festivals. You can stand under a tree and watch two or three thousand couples pass by.”*

It also has innovative spaces that recreate the legends of the area, such as Las Malocas Park Path of Myths and Legends, where visitors can experience the amazing legends of the Bola de Fuego, the Silbón, the Madremonte, the Patasola, the Mohán, the Anima Sola, the Muelona, Juan Machete, Florentino and the Devil and the Llanera Witch.

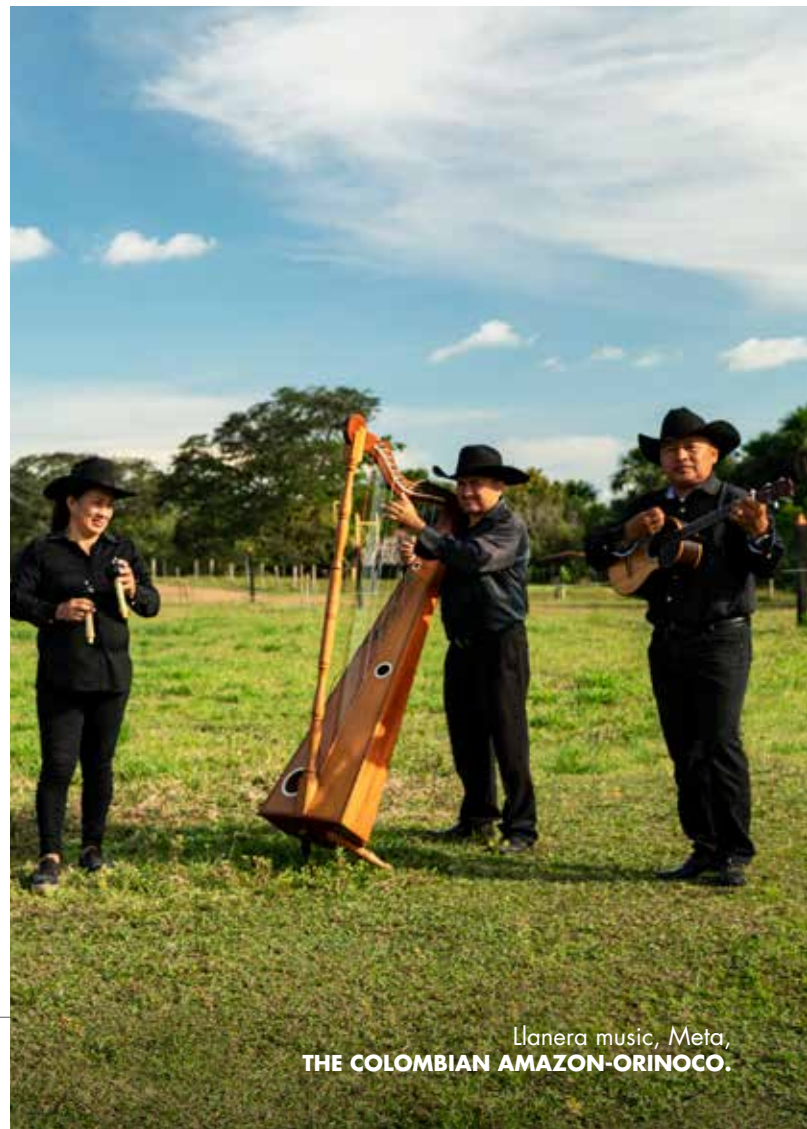
*“This is where the magic of myths and legends lies. You talk to a Llanero or a Creole and they say 'look, this happened to me', 'I met the Silbón', 'I saw the Madremonte', 'I had an encounter with the devil'. The Llaneros tell spooky stories. Once we went to San Luis de Palenque and stayed in a nearby estate with a group from here. In the evening we lit a camp-fire and started telling stories. A horse broke loose and started galloping in circles, and it sounded like chains. The next day the horse woke up*

*braided.”*

In this unique department you can also explore fusions and new musical rhythms. Regionally, the department is viewed as a place which —despite maintaining the essence of the Llanero traditions in its music— also offers expressions that ultimately show an interest in seeking differences by including new lyrics, instruments and combinations.

*“Because he saw our achievement. I said: ‘What you have just seen, we created. It is a style of Llanera music. And it is ours, it is our hallmark. Afterwards we were able to showcase it in other places.’”*

It is an unparalleled land that invites you to discover its nature and learn about its festivals and legends, all while unearthing its gastronomic and musical innovations that conserve the essence of the flavours and sounds of the Llano.





## KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS



Güejar Canyon, Meta, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

### NATURE

Through its nature you are encouraged experience the ecosystems of the department with its flora and fauna.



Villavicencio, Meta, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## GATEWAY TO THE PLAIN

The department deems itself to be the gateway to the Orinoco region and thus plays a major role in the commercial development of the region.



Caño Cristales, Meta, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## CAÑO CRISTALES

It is the benchmark for the biodiversity of the department and the country, both nationally and worldwide.



Plains horses, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## HORSES

The horse is the driving force of the Llaneros, their companion on journeys, exploits and adventures.



Villavicencio, Meta, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**

## DREAMLIKE SUNRISES AND SUNSETS

They are a symbol of Meta and of the land of the plains.



Llanero culture, Meta, **THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.**



## GEOGRAPHY

- Llanero foothills
- Dry and flooded savannahs
- Meta River
- Serranía de La Macarena
- Ariari River
- Manacacías River among others.



## EMBLEMATIC PLACES

- Caño Cristales
- Serranía de La Macarena National Natural Park
- San Juan de Arama
- Las Malocas Park
- Tiuma Park among others.



## FIGURES

- Luis Ariel Rey
- René Devía among others.

# KEY CONCEPTS



## GASTRONOMY

- Carne a la llanera (roast veal)
- Mamona (roast veal)
- Carne a la perra (slow-cooked beef/pork dish)
- Roast cachama
- Pisillo de carne (boiled and fried meat dish) among others.



## CRAFTS

- Chinchorros (hammocks)
- Basketry
- Wooden articles among others.



## FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND FESTIVITIES

- International Joropo Tournament (dance)
- Puerto López Summer Festival
- Festival of San Marín de los Llanos
- Las Cuadrillas de San Martín
- Coleo World Meet (equestrian sport)
- International Cachama Festival
- La Herradura Folk Festival 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.

Raudal de Angosturas, Meta, THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON-ORINOCO.

REGIONAL NARRATIVES OF TOURISM

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