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Blue Horseshoe LOVES Colombia Part I

By Tom Ocean - (10)

Fifteen years ago Escapeartist took the "path-less traveled" and planted the Escapeartist flag in Costa Rica. Dozens of media and expat organizations courageously followed our steps spreading the good news about Costa Rica. As a result of this decision, MILLIONS of people experienced...



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By Tom Ocean - (0)

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By EscapeArtist Staff - (0)

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Working in Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff - (0)

One of these idiosyncrasies for Colombia that at first

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By EscapeArtist Staff - (0)

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Bogota – The Entertainment Capital of Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff - (0)

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By EscapeArtist Staff - (0)

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By EscapeArtist Staff - (0)

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Blue Horseshoe LOVES Colombia Part I

By Tom Ocean / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Colombia es Rico!

Are you looking for the next land of opportunity? Does talk of massive government debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures and unemployment have you singing the blues? Escapeartist is about to provide you with an insider tip to the next 'in' location. We are talking about a location where all the smart money is moving to, a country vast with resources, a beautiful culture and probably the most attractive women on planet earth. (It's true) –

Names like Sam Zell (Billionaire) and Carlos Slim (Billionaire) and many others are investing in Colombia right now. Why are they investing? Why are tourism rates in Colombia skyrocketing? Why

is the Colombian stock market returning double digit returns? Why is Colombia leading the Latin American rim in attracting foreign direct investment?

Escapeartist has the insider scoop on Colombia and we are going global with it! – We were on the front lines of Costa Rica, Belize, Dominican Republic, Argentina and NOW Colombia!

Escapeartist has partnered with Investment Group Colombia to provide our readers with authoritative articles that are written by Escapeartist readers who actually live the Colombia Escapeartist Dream right now. Escapeartist over the next few months will be providing special coverage of Colombia and we will be getting the truth from the 'frontline' early adopters, the market mavens, pioneers of the international Colombia lifestyle!

Our intention is to create a tsunami of awareness for Colombia over the next year and you are getting the very first newsletter that we have published on Colombia – Nothing like being at the right place at the right time... right before 15 million people learn about this beautiful country – Colombia is Passion!

Please enjoy the first of three Special Edition Colombia Ezine – This month we covered Bogota, in March we will cover Medellin and in April we will feature the romantic ciudad of Cartagena.

[Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about Why Escapeartist Loves Colombia](#)

Fifteen years ago, Escapeartist took the "path-less traveled" and planted the Escapeartist flag in Costa Rica. Dozens of media and expat organizations courageously followed our steps in spreading the good news about Costa Rica. As a result of this decision, MILLIONS of people experienced, enjoyed and explored Costa Rica; hundreds of millions of dollars of real estate were bought and sold; millions of plane seats were filled; and hotels, eco-resorts and golf courses were built because of the articles written by Roger Gallo, the readers and staff of Escapeartist and other international living websites.

Those who have witnessed the history of Costa Rica's rise from a banana republic to the 800- pound gorilla of eco-tourism may already be aware of the 'Escapeartist Effect' for creating visibility and influence. The Costa Rican government, their citizens, and people from all over the world have benefited from the wealth gained from the global awareness that our world-renowned publication *Escape From America* Ezine and the Escapeartist website

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have generated.

The Escapeartist Real Estate section has been recognized as the 8th most powerful real estate portal in the world and has provided international realtors, developers and landowners with free access to the global marketplace. Every real estate lot that has been sold has expanded the financial ecosystem of Costa Rica and other emerging growth countries. We will be the first to admit that we are not responsible for all of the business transacted, but we did prime the pump and push Costa Rica towards its 'tipping point' and helped power the eco-tourism beacon that now shines around the world.

Escapeartist and other notable expat organizations have raised the quality of life for millions of people in Costa Rica, Panama, Belize and South American by focusing on the best and highest qualities of their country's culture and not destroying it with politicized agendas. Our mission has been to help people realize their 'Escapeartist Dream,' and this has translated into Escapeartist becoming one of the largest unofficial private investment promotion agencies in the world.

Escapeartist is a global 'weapon of massive awareness' that will be used to lift countries up, not tear them down. Escapeartist has influenced billions of dollars in foreign-direct investment not only for Costa Rica, but also for Mexico, Panama, Belize, Honduras, Argentina, Brazil and many other countries around the world.

Why is this important to you? And, how can you get involved with the Escapeartist Mission?



Escapeartist has now planted another flag on the globe, and we want our readers to know about our new commitment for putting Colombia on the list for "best destinations in the world." The country of Colombia is not only a beautiful country, it is absolutely and unequivocally deserving of the positive public relations that Escapeartist can provide! Colombia has one of the richest and most beautiful cultures of any country in the world but its unique offerings have been hidden in a cloud of geo-economic dis-information that has been mislabeled as the 'war on drugs.'

Over the last decade, the world has watched Colombia fight courageously to right its own ship, only to have other countries sensationalize stories of murder and drugs to further their protectionist approach by slinging media warfare. Mainstream media organizations in the pursuit of ratings and advertising dollars have created irreprehensible damage within the Colombian culture and thwarted economic development that Colombia so deservingly needs.

The good news that this decision creates is that you no longer have to rely on popular cable news because Escapeartist will feature real stories and the truth about Colombia's virtues and offer you 'authoritative value' that our readers have come to expect. Colombia now has a major ally in Escapeartist in the battle against disinformation and a partner in promoting foreign direct investment. Escapeartist is now declaring that...

"Blue Horseshoe LOVES Colombia!"

That phrase is from the famous words of Gordon Gekko and Budd Fox in the well-known movie *Wall Street*, "Blue horseshoe loves Colombia." Escapeartist, along with the biggest investment research firms in the world, are elevating Colombia as the "shining star" of Latin America, and in possibly of all of the Americas.

2011 is the year for Colombia and EscapeArtist is going to prove it to you by providing real stories from real expats about Colombia. We are boldly saying that if this beautiful country is not on your list of places to travel to in 2011, then it should be.

Request our Investor's Guide to Colombia and read what the BIG BOYS have to say about this undiscovered gem of a country! [CLICK HERE](#)

Are you in search of the next Costa Rica or Panama? Drum roll please.....

Over the next few years, Escapeartist will reveal the beauty of Colombia, prime the positive 'PR pump,' and pave the way for millions of travelers to experience the rich culture, the quality of life and the incredible investment opportunities that are available in Colombia. In the past, we have been criticized for our passion that we have for Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Argentina and many other countries. So, to the media and pundits, we say, "Take your best shot and throw out your crime rates, your drug stories and your political instability theories and we will be glad to compare them to the major cities right in your own back yard." No country is without its problems, economic

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and societal challenges.



Do people get murdered in Colombia? Yes, and people are also murdered in Tucson, Arizona, or Sydney, Australia, and London, England. Is there a drug problem in Colombia? Yes, and it could be speculated that the high consumption of drugs in the United States could be the source. Can you live a very peaceful life and experience a high quality of life in Colombia by enjoying nutritious food, excellent air quality and drinking water that has not been recycled with poisonous levels of chlorine? You bet you can! Does it take courage to make your first trip to Colombia...for some, it may! Will it be worth it...absolutely. We love

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Colombia and so will you!

Colombia is rich with culture and the Colombian people are some of the most educated and gracious people you will meet in the world. If you want to learn Spanish, learn it from a Colombian as they have some of the best pronunciation in Latin America. Colombia is certainly home to some of the most beautiful women in the world, and it hosts world class vacation destinations that are pristine and untouched by commercial developers. Colombia is a leader in the mining industry, agriculture, fashion, petroleum and precious stones. Medellin, Cartagena, Bogota, and Cali Colombia are bustling business centers with the technological infrastructure to support the operations of fortune 500 companies.

If you are interested in joining the list of early pioneers who explore, enjoy and experience the incredible opportunities that Colombia has to offer, you can start by requesting the Investors Guide to Colombia and connect with Escapeartist's partners who are on the ground in Colombia. Escapeartist is proud to announce the launch of a new division of Escapeartist called Investment Group International which is a select group of Expats who will assist Escapeartist readers with their decisions relating to living, investing, retiring, and starting businesses in their host countries. Our first partners in Colombia, Don, John, Jim and George, along with their very well connected network of Colombian associates including Carlos Pinel and Jorge Duque, are successful business men who live in Medellin and have firsthand experience with Colombia. They will be happy to provide you with guidance and advice that you need in Colombia and most likely will meet you at the airport when you arrive. Over the next few years we plan to expand the IGI business to over 60 countries creating a partnership of qualified people who can assist Escapeartist readers in realizing their Escapeartist Dream.

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Bloomberg, *USA Today* and many other media organizations are realizing that Colombia has been the 'abused child' of the United States' 'Drug War,' and no one has suffered more than the women and children of Colombia. It is time for this to **stop**. The governments have proven that they are incapable of accomplishing this task and in the author's opinion, they have done more to finance the problem than to destroy it.

"Positive awareness," that actually showcases the greatness of Colombia and its beautiful culture will do more to eliminate the drug problem and tear down the 'smear campaigns of the last 20 years.'" It may be true that Colombia does a mediocre job of eradicating the bad stories about themselves, or maybe the first-world countries do a great job of sensationalizing their bad stories. Two things are for certain, tourism and foreign direct investment hold the keys for transforming Colombia into a 21st century tourism Mecca!



According to the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies, Colombia is leading the world in attracting massive amounts of foreign direct investment, and companies are realizing that due to its geographic location, Colombia could become one of the most important distribution centers in the world. The weather is phenomenal, the beaches are beautiful and the people of Colombia are even more beautiful. It is time that the Escapeartist reader (who in our opinion,

are the most courageous readers and ‘adventuralists’ in the world) make their trek to Colombia and help move it towards the tipping point of being known as a top travel and living destination as Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, Brazil and Argentina have become.

In Part II we will begin exploring the major cities of Colombia. Be sure to visit our new website about Colombia and if you have questions about Colombia drop Don or John an email.

To learn more about Colombia, request our complimentary Investors Guide to Colombia and receive as a bonus NINE Special reports on living, working, investing, retiring and traveling to Colombia.

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10 Comments

michael

February 5, 2011 • 11:25 pm

the Colombia story...

“Colombians can easily travel to Panama unlike the US and other parts of the world and it is close to home where they speak the language. Banks from all over the world set up shop in the form of subsidiaries in Panama City in an effort to get a share of the action. Publishers, such as Escape Artist, cranked up the marketing machine claiming the new “mecca” had been found with great tax benefits, while all the while cutting deals with developers in exchange for turning up the cheerleading to “buy-buy-buy”. But that bloom is off the rose as buyers have begun to realize, like a game of musical chairs, there is no place to sit down when the music stops. There are no buyers left to buy, simply because it is not a great place to live, earn a living, or even vacation beyond a few days in ones life.”

[Reply](#)

Phil Young

February 8, 2011 • 10:52 am

I spent 3 weeks in Costa Rica and walked away with mixed feelings. First, the dollar is not as strong a l

thought it would be. Prices are mediocre to normal compared to the U.S. If you spend any money related to tourism, consider paying the normal rate as you would pay in the U.S. in a similar situation.

Costa Rica is probably still a 3rd World country. Although many will deny it, but spend some time there and you will find that there are problems with transportation, crime, graffiti, pollution, trash removal and personal security.

Costarricense want the tourism dollar by touting "pura vida" but in some areas are ill-equipped to handle the influx and demands tourists place on their economy. I asked several locals where the "pura vida" was and they had no answer for me.

If you want to retire there, I would spend a few weeks there gathering information and ask a lot of questions. I recommend renting a property first so that you can learn "their" rules about ownership before you buy. Prices are lower in real estate but the cost of healthcare, home maintenance, transportation (in the country and flying there), the weather and road conditions during the rainy seasons.

Yes, there are some beautiful areas of Costa Rica worth seeing but I don't think you can expect any real bargains.

Reply

Justin

February 8, 2011 • 12:28 pm

Very interesting; I will be traveling through in April; I'd love to submit some articles. Thanks. Justin

Reply

Pasquale

February 18, 2011 • 11:24 pm

The beaches on the North Atlantic are nice but difficult to enjoy in Cartagena, Santa Marta, or Taganga because of all "nuisance people" who pollute the beaches trying to sell you sunglasses, candy, ice cream, etc. etc. etc. Also don't think about walking on the beaches at night. Poverty abounds and so does petty thievery. The weather is year around for the most part, though the rain and humidity may not appeal to some people but you can learn to deal with it. In my opinion, Colombia is more like Nicaragua than the rest of South America, except for Bolivia and Paraguay. Personally, I prefer SE Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, or Chile than Colombia. Also Peru and Ecuador are more livable than the coast of Colombia, though Cali and Medellin are quite nice these days, but Bogota is not very attractive unless you like poverty and crime. Sorry to give such a negative sounding review of Colombia but I have done a lot of traveling in Central and South America and that is how I see Colombia.

Reply

Maxine

February 19, 2011 • 5:10 pm

I have recently come home from a fantastic trip to Colombia. I am British so it was a long flight there from London via Madrid and Bogota. I took my disabled 3 year old son and one year old daughter. We went to Cartagena De Indias and loved it there. From there we did some day trips including Playa Blanca. We also went to Santa Marta and liked it there. From there we went to Playa Grande. I found the local people friendly and the shops had everything we needed. I found prices higher in Cartagena than in Santa Marta. I so hope to be able to go back to wonderful Colombia and see more. I would like to visit Medellin, Barcarmanga, San Gil and Bogota.

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Blue Horseshoe Loves Colombia...So does Sam Zell Part II

By Tom Ocean / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Sam Zell Loves Colombia Investment

Are you looking for the next land of opportunity? Does talk of massive government debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures and unemployment have you singing the blues? Escapeartist is about to provide you with an insider tip to the next 'in' location. We are talking about a location where all the smart money is moving to, a country vast with resources, a beautiful culture and probably the most attractive women on planet earth. (It's true) –

Names like Sam Zell (Billionaire) and Carlos Slim (Billionaire) and many others are investing in Colombia right now. Why are they investing? Why are tourism rates in Colombia skyrocketing? Why

is the Colombian stock market returning double digit returns? Why is Colombia leading the Latin American rim in attracting foreign direct investment?

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[Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about Why Sam Zell Loves Colombia](#)

In our continual quest to bring you the honest facts about Colombia, we at Investment Group Colombia scour the periodicals, the internet, and the television media, as well as "keeping our ear to the ground" in an effort to bring you relevant, actionable information. It is Investment Group Colombia's sincere, heart-felt desire to assist and see both you, our client and friend, and Colombia prosper and grow. In this issue, we focus on an individual that knows much about growth and prospering and has taken a strong interest in Colombia...an individual that most in the real estate investment field are at least familiar with – Sam Zell.

What is it besides a modicum of good fortune and impeccable timing that allows a good investor to join the ranks of the-richest-of-the-rich? In short, the answer is courage; recognition of an opportunity, and the willingness to assume risk in venturing forward. Any investment involves some risk. And while an investor with a lot of money –

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Mmm...say a billionaire – might be able absorb a loss a little easier than the average guy, that does not make the loss any easier to swallow. So along with “courage”, research, knowledge, and wisdom—someone “who knows their stuff” and knows how to minimize loss—play a major role as well. When you find someone with these qualities and instincts, it can pay tremendous dividends to not only watch their actions and moves, but to emulate them as well.

[Check out Colombia's Real Story Watch this Moving Video:](#)

Enter Sam Zell and Equity International...the latest and maybe the first truly major outside investor to give focus to Colombia.

Ranked number 237 on Forbes list of the world's most wealthy people for 2010, Zell's net worth of 4 billion dollar's definitely puts him in the class of the richest-of-the-rich. Born in September 1941, Zell, 69, is a United States real estate entrepreneur and business magnet residing in Chicago, Illinois. Founder and CEO of Equity Group Investments and many other companies, including being the former owner of the Chicago Cubs, to say that Zell has succeeded beyond most people's wildest dreams would be an understatement. Salty language and sometimes over-bearing, surly manners aside, Zell has as many advocates, supporters and followers as he does detractors. One of Zell's most notable successes was the sales three years ago of his Equity Office Properties Trust to Blackstone Group LP for \$39 billion just as commercial property prices reached their peak, and only 21 days before Lehman Brothers collapsed! Shrewd forecasting or incredibly lucky timing, Zell's business successes really speak for themselves.

Zell is also Chairman of Equity International. Co-founded with Gary Garrabrant, CEO, in 1999, [Equity International](#) is a private equity investment firm that focuses on real estate-related companies outside of the U.S. A private equity company is an investment management firm that makes investments on behalf of its investors through an assortment of different investment methods from growth capital to leveraged buyout to venture capital. Usually private equity companies raise capital, or private equity funds that provide the equity contributions needed for the transactions. In return, private equity companies receive management fees as well as a percentage of the profits earned by each private equity fund managed.

As all good investors know, it is “first in” or at least those that are “early in” that stand to reap the largest profits. “Colombia is now viewed as this rising phoenix,” Garrabrant says. “It's been off the screen for so long. We like to be early, if not first.” In Chicago on September 16 of last year, Zell confirmed his belief that Colombia may be the “next best” Latin American market for serious investors. That Equity International is now investigating and negotiating with several companies in Colombia is a huge vote of confidence by a “major-mover” that should cause all serious investors to sit up and take notice.

While Zell and Garrabrant have not divulged the companies that they have focused on or are negotiating with, their interest is definitely more than casual or superficial. In a recent interview with Betty Liu of Bloomberg Television, Garrabrant was quoted as saying that, “Equity International is seeking to buy stakes in (Colombian) companies that benefit from rising demand for affordable and middle-income housing. You have growth of the middle class and increasing consumerism (in Colombia). The demand is constant, the demand is high.” Garrabrant went on to say that, “Colombia's plan to integrate its securities exchange with those of Peru and Chile also boosts growth prospects because it increases liquidity and attracts international investors.”

When asked by Liu if Colombia was a good bet property wise, Garrabrant responded:

“We are enthused about Colombia, 45 million population. Again, youthful, aspirational, interesting institutional strength in Colombia...strong banks, investment...”

He indicated that major investment by Equity International was eminent within the next 12 months.

Having invested more than \$1.5 billion in markets outside the U.S., Equity International's largest Latin American holdings are currently in Brazil. According to Garrabrant, Equity International owns major shares in several Brazilian companies including Gafisa SA, Brazil's second-biggest home builder by revenue, and BR Malls Participacoes SA, Brazil's largest owner of shopping malls.

Although still plagued by the stigma of its violent history, Colombia has risen above its past reputation to become a glistening, if not shining example of self-determination and tenacity. The Colombia of today is definitely not the Colombia of yesterday, and it is safe to say that the Colombia of tomorrow will be that much better yet. Since the institution of new security policies with the inauguration of former President Alvaro Uribe in 2002, Colombia has reduced the number of murders by half and has reduced kidnappings by 93 percent, encouraging increased confidence and strong economic gains.

The Central Bank has projected the economy to increase by approximately 4.5 percent this year after increasing by

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an estimated 3.7 percent to 4.1 percent in 2010. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has increased more than fourfold in just the past decade, from \$1.5 billion in 1999 to \$7.2 billion in 2009. According to Colombian Finance Minister Juan Carlos Echeverry, who was an adviser to current President Juan Manuel Santos during his presidential campaign, "President Santos will double government housing subsidies to the poor and middle class as part of plans to boost growth in Latin America's fifth-biggest economy."

It has been these statements and elements of profound change that has lead to the interest of investors like Zell and others. Carlos Slim, the world's richest man has very recently indicated that he intends to greatly increase his already major holdings in Colombia, focusing largely on oil and gas reserves...but more about Carlos Slim in another edition. The point being made here is that we at Investment Group Colombia feel that Colombia is poised for major economic growth and expansion, ripe for those investors who are able to recognize the signs and have the courage to step forward. Investment Group Colombia encourages you the investor—our client and friend—to take advantage of one or more of the amazing opportunities that Colombia has to offer....experience the passion... experience the profit!

If you would like to learn more about the exciting and rewarding opportunities of investing in Colombia and to receive our comprehensive Investors Guide to Colombia [CLICK HERE](#).

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The Rich Culture of Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) •  [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Are you looking for the next land of opportunity? Does talk of massive government debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures and unemployment have you singing the blues? Escapeartist is about to provide you with an insider tip to the next 'in' location. We are talking about a location where all the smart money is moving to, a country vast with resources, a beautiful culture and probably the most attractive women on planet earth. (It's true) –

Names like Sam Zell (Billionaire) and Carlos Slim (Billionaire) and many others are investing in Colombia right now. Why are they investing? Why are tourism rates in Colombia skyrocketing?

Why is the Colombian stock market returning double digit returns? Why is Colombia leading the Latin American rim in attracting foreign direct investment?

Escapeartist has the insider scoop on Colombia and we are going global with it! – We were on the front lines of Costa Rica, Belize, Dominican Republic, Argentina and NOW Colombia!

Escapeartist has partnered with Investment Group Colombia to provide our readers with authoritative articles that are written by Escapeartist readers who actually live the Colombia Escapeartist Dream right now. Escapeartist over the next few months will be providing special coverage of Colombia and we will be getting the truth from the 'frontline' early adopters, the market mavens, pioneers of the international Colombia lifestyle!

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Please enjoy the first of three Special Edition Colombia Ezine – This month we covered Bogota, in March we will cover Medellin and in April we will feature the romantic ciudad of Cartagena.

[Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about The Rich Culture of Colombia](#)

Investment Group Columbia (IGC) is committed and dedicated to providing you with the true on-the-ground, in-country picture of Colombia. No hyperbole or exaggerated statistics. Just honest, hard facts on what Investment Group Colombia feels are some of the most exciting, secure, and lucrative investment opportunities available today.

So, do you want to know what Colombia is reeealy like? Then it is time to abandon stigmas and stereotypes and take a closer look at what is arguably one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Long considered to be off the charts and unsafe for tourist travel, Colombia has suffered more than its fair share of one-sided journalistic and governmental bias and judgment.

Originally discovered and settled by the Spanish in 1514, Colombia (or New Granada as it was then called) occupied a full one quarter of the South American continent. Having endured three centuries of conflict and struggle both with indigenous natives and the ruling hierarchy, Colombia (by then called Gran Colombia) won its independence on July 20, 1810. The United States of Columbia, or "Colombia" as it is known today, along with Venezuela and Ecuador are the three countries that emerged from the final collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830.

Occupied by indigenous Indian tribes, settled by the Spanish, fueled by black slavery, and ruled by Euro-

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Caucasians, Colombia has since mingled and melded, creating a rich cultural diversity and heritage. Divided roughly into five geographical regions (Amazon rain forest, Pacific Coastal, Atlantic or Caribbean Coastal, the Llanos or plains, and the Andes), Colombia is the only South American country to be bordered by two oceans. Blanketed in various shades of green from shore to shore, punctuated with innumerable cascades of water, from tiny rivulets to raging torrents, Colombia is truly a land of breath-taking beauty.

The result of such cultural and geographical diversity provides one with a mélange of tastes, sounds, rhythms, and sights to delight and appeal and stimulate all of your senses. From the sounds of Afro-Spanish “Cumbia”, to the romance of “Bachata” and “Vallenata,” to the undeniably sexual rhythms of “Salsa,” “Merengue,” and “Reggaeton,” you find yourself moving to the music even long after the sounds have ceased.

And with traditional epicurean treats such as Sancocho, Bandeja Paisa, Fritanga, and Lechona, and desserts like Buñuelos, Manjar blanco, Postre de natas, there is no worry about going hungry! ...and that is to say nothing of the aguardiente (a popular licorice flavored alcoholic drink, literally translated “firewater!”), or Ron Viejo (a quality Colombian Rum), or some of the fine local beers. AND, nothing more can really be said about the coffee that Juan Valdez has not already made known! Rich in local mountain freshness, the aroma and flavor cannot be beat!

From both international and local exhibits at the museums, to the beautiful native emerald and gold jewelry and crafts of local and indigenous artisans, to the wonderful prose of Gabriel García Márquez, there is no shortage of culture. And with artists such as Fernando Botero and Alejandro Obregon, and muralist Pedro Nel Gómez, you are stimulated not only by the natural beauty surrounding you, but by the resolve and creativity and beauty of the human spirit.

Bordered by oceans, separated by mountains, equatorial Colombia enjoys some of the best weather on earth. Typically spring-like year round in most areas, the coasts can become a bit warm, but are often cooled by ocean breezes. The inland valleys and plains can be arid and warm; the Amazon, humid and hot. But almost every where one goes, you are just a matter of a short drive to a higher elevation to find cooler weather. The mean average year-round temperature for Colombia is 74 degrees Fahrenheit. Bogota, the capital of Colombia, at 8355 feet in elevation is the third-highest capital city in the world, allowing for a comfortably cooler climate.

The governmental seat of Colombia in Bogota is a liberal democracy. Presided over by current President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon, powers and responsibilities are delegated to thirteen ministerial Directors. Employed by the constituents and citizens of Colombia, an Inspector General oversees the daily operations of government and safeguards the public's interests, while insuring compliance with the Colombian Constitution of 1991. Foreign Investment is highly encouraged, with the World Bank recently ranking Colombia as the third most business friendly country in all of Latin America. Colombia is also ranked as the first country in the region and the fifth country worldwide that best protects its investors. Bolstered in recent months by its rebound against the US dollar, the Colombian peso (COP) is the official currency.

Although Catholicism was the official religion until the new constitution was put into place in 1991, the rich and varied cultural heritage of Colombia has led to a plethora of places to worship, spanning all faiths and denominations. Up until the late 1980's however, the country remained at 96% Roman Catholic. Since that time, Catholicism has dropped to approximately 80% of the population, with the largest secondary religious group being Protestant.

With the national flower being the incredibly beautiful and fragrant Cattleya Orchid (*Cattleya trianae*), and with the national bird being the magnificent Andean Condor, and the national horse being the elegant Paso Fino, and especially for being the country known for having the most beautiful women in the world, Colombia is truly a land of superlatives!

So it is on first impression that, even though brightly colored, the Colombian flag seems rather sedate and plain in contrast. Having three horizontal bands—a yellow double-width top band, followed by a blue, and a red band—various interpretations of the colors exist. One of the more popular is that the yellow is for the gold in Colombia's land, blue for the seas on its shores, and red for the blood spilled in achieving freedom. I choose to view it in a slightly different way. Yes, red for the battles fought and won for independence, as all countries have had to fight for their independence. And blue representing the two pristine seas washing that blood away forever. And finally, a double band of yellow radiating a double dose of sunshine and prosperity over a land that has finally come into its own.

As the Colombian tourism ministry promotes, “Colombia IS passion!”come and experience that passion first hand. Through our commitment to excellence, Investment Group Colombia shares this passion and is wholly and enthusiastically dedicated to showing investors and clients the truth about this undiscovered country, its rich cultural heritage and its beautiful people.

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Investing in the rapid growth of Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



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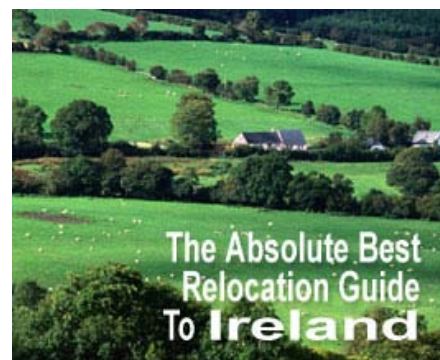
Long considered the pariah of western civilization for its participation in the illegal drug trade and the accompanying violence, [Colombia](#) has had some major hurdles to jump in finding acceptance in the world marketplace. And while the race may not yet be won (...it never truly is!), the hurdles have been cleared and [Colombia](#) has emerged as a major contender in the direct foreign investment (DFI) market. [Investment Group Colombia](#), in its continuing dedication and commitment to bringing our clients and friends the true hard facts about [Colombia](#), feels that [Colombia](#) is right now on the brink of highly profitable and sound investment opportunity, with the best yet to come.

It is with enthusiastic and confident prejudice that [Investment Group Colombia](#) recommends your close scrutiny and consideration in acting upon one or more of the many excellent investment opportunities that [Colombia](#) has to offer.

"Why [Colombia](#)," you may ask? ...past legacy considered, a very good and logical question!

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As one of the emerging **CIVETS** countries, **Colombia** has become known in both America and abroad as THE country with the best infrastructure, and social and business acumen necessary for rapid, stable economic growth and development. CIVETS (**Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa**) are, in **HSBC CEO Michael Geoghegan's** words:

"Countries with major populations, dynamic, diverse economies, political stability and each of them have a brilliant future. Any company with global ambitions will have to take immediate action in these markets."

Colombia leads the **CIVETS** group not only by alphabet, but also by virtue of past performance, present status, and future projections.

In spite of its past legacy, **Colombia** has continually been recognized for its unusual and notable economic stability, with GDP growth remaining constant for over seventy years. **Colombia** has also controlled inflation, never experiencing hyperinflation. **Colombia's** stability has been marked by single digit inflation since 1999.

Colombian exports tripled in the last six years, growing from 13 million dollars in 2003 to 32 million dollars in 2009. During that same time frame, tourism in **Colombia** grew from 668 thousand visitors in 2003 to 1.7 million visitors in 2009. While tourism worldwide fell by 4%, in **Colombia** it increased to 10.2% in 2009... all during a global recession.

Labor wise, multinational companies consider Colombian managers to be the best in the region. According to PriceWaterHouseCooper, Colombia possesses... *"The most productive workforce in South America."*

The **International Institute for Management Development (IMD)**, a world recognized nonprofit business school located in Lausanne, Switzerland, adds that with the lowest Index on rigidity of employment in Latin America, Colombia's labor regulations are the least restrictive to business activities, and that **Colombia** has the second most qualified labor force available in the region. Known particularly for their rapidly emerging technology work force, with 27,000 business graduates and 13,000 engineering graduates per year, **Colombia** graduates more IT and engineering students than any other country in the region. Coupled with low labor costs, each of the above facts creates an atmosphere of profitability for both investors and business developers.

Geographic location provides an advantage as well. Located just a little over three hours from Miami via air, **Colombia** falls within the same time zone as the US eastern seaboard. Additionally, **Colombia** possesses seaports on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, reducing shipping costs by an average 30% over other South American competitors. Having **Free Trade Agreements (FTA)** and **International Investment Agreements (IIA)** with 48 countries, and **Double Taxation Agreements (DTA)** with 22 countries further enhances the ability to participate in the worldwide business market with increased ease and profitability. As of 2010, these agreements have created preferred access to over 1.5 billion additional consumers.

Among the greatest reasons for investing in **Colombia** however, are the incredible business and investment incentives and opportunities that are offered by the Colombian government. *"Investment Incentives"* are differentiated from *"Investment Opportunities"* in that Investment Incentives are essentially tools used to encourage, simplify and facilitate establishing and operating mainstream businesses. These incentives are available to nearly all new and existing businesses across the board. *"Investment Opportunities,"* on the other hand, are specific opportunities identified and supported by the government with the goals being to increase quantity and quality in production and to promote the development of new and emerging sectors of business. For foreign investors, the ramifications here can be enormous!

Central and instrumental to investment activity in Colombia is **Proexport Colombia**. Long leading the way in providing the research, education, legal clarifications, and consultation needed by the foreign investor, **Proexport Colombia** currently has offices in 19 countries. A partial list of services offered includes market opportunity identification, assistance with company internationalization, designing action plans and market penetration strategies, establishing contact between buyers and sellers, and providing specialized services to foreign companies interested in acquiring Colombian goods or services.

The core of their mission is to:

"Increase Colombian non-traditional exports, international tourism and foreign investment to Colombia, through a systematic sales process and a partnership work relationship with companies to enable the generation, follow-up and closing of business opportunities in international markets."

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Truly a world-class organization, [Proexport Colombia](#) is an outstanding resource for the foreign investor, being recognized and awarded 16th place on the list of best investment promotion agencies in the world.

Drafted and put into action in order to encourage investment, simplify business start-up and operation, and to increase employment, the “*Investment Incentives*” program has had a profound effect on the Colombian economy.

Some of the highlights in the incentive program are the most competitive Free Trade Zones in all of Latin America (two types of FTZ's!), low 15% income tax (even less for tourism and environmentally related businesses!) and local market selling, 100% deduction of property taxes, signage, and billboards that are directly related to the taxpayer's economic activity, 125% income tax deduction for investments in science and technology, 200% income tax deduction of salaries and benefits for handicapped employees, “[Plan Vallejo](#),” allowing service exporting companies to import capital goods exempt from custom duties and sales tax (VAT), and Legal Stability Agreements lasting from 3 to 20 years, assuring the investor that the laws and incentives that prompted them to invest will not be modified or changed.

In contrast, while at the same time being supplemental, the “*Investment Opportunities*” program was developed as part of the [Productive Transformation Policy](#) drafted by the [Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism](#). With its focus being on more specific business opportunities that the Colombian government wishes to support and promote, the investor stands to reap an even larger profit. Some of the “*focus fields*” or emerging sectors identified in this program are bio fuels, cosmetics, IT services, tourism, and medical tourism. Each of these emerging sectors has been given their own set of incentives, from tax deductions to leniency in licensure and permits to government subsidization. Based on current needs, sustained and expanding future demand, locally available resources, and having a qualified work-force, each of these emerging sectors hold tremendous potential and opportunity for the investor.

When one considers all of the extraordinary opportunities and incentives offered by the Colombian government, along with the benefits of geographical location, climate, and cultural richness, it is clear to see that [Colombia](#) truly is an outstanding opportunity that the serious investor should not let slip by. Investment Group Colombia confidently encourages you—our client, friend, and investor—to give immediate consideration to investing in [Colombia](#).

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Imagine waking everyday to fresh air, clear sunny, skies, and 70 to 80 degree temperatures...365 days per year!

Add to that, being surrounded by landscapes of varying shades of emerald, lime, jade, and chartreuse greenery and crystal clear, cool, cascading waterfalls, fed by warm tropical rains that fall mostly in the dead of night... and hearing the wonderful and unique songs and calls of colorful exotic birds and animals. And imagine too, feasting on an almost endless variety of fresh exotic fruit or juice for breakfast–lulo, mango, papaya, maracuya, tomate de arbol, mora, nispero, melon, pitaya, curuba, guayaba, zapote, sandia, granadilla, tamarillo, baby banana, cherimoya, et al... and sipping truly fresh-from-the-local-mountains coffee.

These are all things you can commonly experience living in the beautiful land of Colombia.

Or, if you prefer, you may choose to wake each morning high aloft a multi-story apartment or condo building overlooking endless miles of sandy beaches, with crashing waves and expansive vistas of the Atlantic Caribbean Seas... temperatures here, a bit warmer, but moderated by almost constant off-shore breezes... fresh seafood and fish for lunch... maybe snorkeling or scuba diving a pristine coral reef in the afternoon... enjoying fine dining and

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learning salsa dancing in the evening.

The fact of the matter is that with a country as geographically and culturally diverse as Colombia, your life-style choice becomes your first major decision when moving here! As the Ministry of Tourism slogan states (and we at [Investment Group Colombia](#) concur!),

"Your only fear in coming here is that you might not want to leave!"

Often referred to as the land of eternal spring, Colombia is blessed by its location as the northern entry point to the South American continent, bordered by both the Pacific and Atlantic Caribbean oceans, as well as Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador. With the majority of this beautiful land lying just north of the equator, Colombia is also blessed with mostly moderate temperate climates.

But truth be known, one can choose the micro-climate that best suits their comfort level simply by choosing a higher or lower elevation. As the starting point of the three Andean ranges and as the home of the pristine and isolated Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the tallest coastal range in the world, elevations in Colombia range from sea-level to over 17,000 feet. Colombia's Capital, Bogota, at 8,612 feet, ranks as the third-highest capital city in the world, and as such, enjoys much cooler temperatures, typically ranging from the low 40's to the upper 60's. With a bit of research and careful selection, one can select a "personalized" micro-climate where temperatures average between 30 and 60 on up to other locales that average between the 70's and 90's. Humidity is also highly variable, depending on locale.

Geographically considered to be one of the most beautiful countries in the world, Colombia also has all of the many other amenities of life that one might consider important when making a move. Whether your choice of life-styles is that of a thriving, up-scale metropolis, swanky hip-hop beach scene, a peaceful rural coffee farm (or "finca" as farms are referred to here), or a completely out-and-out eco-jungle hide-away, Colombia has something to offer you, fulfilling your needs and desires in ways you may have never thought possible, and probably more economically than what you would expect. But choosing a new place—a new country—to live in involves much, much more than simply finding a place that appeals to your senses.

In fact, finding a new place to live necessitates finding a place that appeals more to ones sensibilities. If you do not want to suffer major disappointments or setbacks, it is absolutely essential that you perform your due diligence, taking the time and doing the research necessary to assure that your choice of country and local is a sensible choice.

Like the story of the Pig arguing with the chicken as to which of them is more important in providing a good breakfast, it was the chicken's ascertainment that she was more important by way of her ability to provide fresh eggs every morning. But in hasty response, the pig stammered that he was certainly more important, as his contribution required TOTAL commitment! ...total commitment without first carefully considering the consequences is not necessarily a good thing!

Sound judgment and choice must be based on knowledge and foresight.

It is to that end that we at [Investment Group Colombia \(IGC\)](#) commit ourselves and our resources to providing you, our clients and friends, with the latest and most pertinent information and news related to Colombia.

In the next several issues, IGC will be presenting you with the detailed specifics on individual subjects that should be addressed in any expatriate move. As with our investment articles, we will present the on-the-ground, in-country specifics for Colombia. Whether you remain solely as an investor, or you decide to become a full or part-time resident in this incredible country, you will be at ease knowing that you have been provided the tools and knowledge with which to make a sound, informed choice.

Subjects that will be covered in future articles include:

- Entry Requirements**- Passports and the various types of Visas and residency permits.
- Importation**- Bringing in personal effects, possessions, and pets.
- Cost of living**- What does it take to survive, to thrive, and to prosper?
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Each of these topics, individually, will focus on Colombia; each constituting one more step in the decision making process. Upon completion of this series it is our hope at [Investment Group Colombia](#) that you will be better equipped physically, mentally, and emotionally to make possibly one of the more important decisions in your life. Colombia is a land of wonderful and expanding opportunity. Colombia is a land that some of us are already blessed to be in. It is our sincere desire at IGC to share first-hand our passion—the passion that IS Colombia—with you, our loyal clients and friends.

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Working in Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Are you looking for the next land of opportunity? Does talk of massive government debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures and unemployment have you singing the blues? Escapeartist is about to provide you with an insider tip to the next 'in' location. We are talking about a location where all the smart money is moving to, a country vast with resources, a beautiful culture and probably the most attractive women on planet earth. (It's true) –

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[Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about Working in Colombia](#)

At Investment Group Colombia (IGC), it is our desire to provide you with pertinent, insightful, and helpful information that will assist you in making sound business and investment choices and that will enable you to conduct and perform business in a more efficient manner. It is IGC's research efforts, local sources, and, in Colombia's case, our in-country presence that gives you the reliable, verified, and qualified information that you as an investor or business person require. Conducting business and investing internationally, each country — each culture — has its own specific customs and idiosyncrasies.

[Colombia is no different.](#)

One of these idiosyncrasies for Colombia that at first is not given much thought to is public holidays. Holidays can and do affect the way that you do business. When it comes to setting business dates, appointments, or meetings, it pays to know the holiday schedule. When it comes to scheduling employees or establishing production schedules, it pays to know the holiday schedule. When it comes to filing documentation or meeting deadlines, it pays to know the holiday schedule, and when it comes to performing business in Colombia, it REALLY pays to know the holiday schedule!

More in 'Living Overseas'

- [Blue Horseshoe LOVES Colombia Part I](#)
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Either a blessing or a curse, depending on your perspective as a business owner or as an employee, Colombia is ranked number one in the world for its number of public holidays. According to a new study by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, which advises businesses in 42 different countries, Colombia has 18 public holidays per year. Colombia leads the number two country, Slovenia (having 16 holidays), by two. Third place on this holiday manifesto falls to a three-way tie between Chile, Slovakia, and Cyprus, each having 15 public holidays per year. By contrast, the United States currently has 10 federal holidays. In addition to the 18 public holidays Colombia also requires two weeks of paid vacation for full-time employees. Once again, by contrast, the United States does not require ANY paid vacation, while both France and Finland pay for 30 vacation days per year.

In researching our current article on [Entertainment and Culture](#) entitled, "[How Happy Are You](#)," some of the sources suggested that Colombians "*happiness*" was a result of these frequent holidays, while other sources inferred that the holidays were the result of the happiness. There may be some merit to those assertions. According to an InVamer Gallup survey published by Caracol Broadcasting, 54% of Colombian employees say that their employers provide opportunities for them to improve, 51% say that their employer invests in the development of their employees, 74% say that their company promotes the labor development laws, and 68% said that it is possible to progress in Colombia by working hard. ...pretty strong figures that certainly seem to have some correlation with satisfaction and happiness!

Whatever the case, Colombia's public holiday schedule can and does affect the way one performs business.

As the result of a law enacted in 1983 created to encourage domestic tourism, the majority of religious holidays in Colombia have been moved to the following Monday, even when traditionally falling on a weekend. This creates several "puentes," the Colombian term for a three-day weekend (Saturday, Sunday, Monday). Depending on the year, June can have as many as three puentes. With nearly two holidays or puentes per month on average, knowledge and awareness of the holiday schedule can be crucial to both the business person and the employee. Add to this official public holiday schedule the occasional what could be called "*political holidays*" and the number of days and production lost per year can be significant.

In a place as beautiful, and exciting, and just plain relaxing as Colombia, the days off can be ooh so rewarding too!

What is referred to as "*political holidays*" above is in reference to election years. Elections always fall on weekends in Colombia. And in the interest of encouraging voter turnout, eliminating any potential unrest, and insuring sound, "sober" voting choices, all alcohol sales are prohibited from midnight on Thursday until the following Monday morning ... not a bad idea! In essence though, this creates several more "*holidays*," or puentes (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) during election years as most bars, clubs, and liquor stores simply shut down for three days... alcohol sales at liquor stores and markets can be quite brisk prior to Thursday midnight however! The majority of holidays in Colombia are in honor of Roman Catholic saints and mandatory for both public and private-sector employees. But don't ask Colombians who or what the holiday is for.

As AP writer [Joshua Goodman](#) states:

"Most (Colombians) are blissfully ignorant of what allows them to pack their car trunks for the beach or mountains for yet another puente." As a matter of fact, I can just about guarantee with certainty that if you familiarize yourself with the attached public holiday schedule, you will know more than 90% of Colombians! ...after a year of asking innumerable people, "What holiday is it today," I have never received even one answer! I even asked a Catholic priest, who was quite embarrassed to admit that he was not sure who or what the current holiday was for!

Following are the official public holidays for Colombia:

Date – Espanol – Inglaís

January 1 - Año Nuevo – New Year's Day

January 1 – La Circuncisión – The Circumcision

January 6 – * Día de los Reyes Magos – Epiphany

March 21 – * Día de San José - Saint Joseph's Day (Fathers Day)

March/April – Jueves Santo Maundy – Thursday (the Thursday before Easter)

March/April – Viernes Santo – Good Friday (the Friday before Easter)

March/April - Easter (not part of the official 18 holidays as it always falls on a Sunday and ALL Sundays are unofficial holidays)

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May 1 – Día de los Trabajadores – Labor Day

May/June – La Ascensión de Jesus Ascension of Jesus (observed the Monday six weeks and a day after Easter Sunday)

May/June – Corpus Christi (observed the Monday nine weeks and a day after Easter Sunday)

May/June – Sagrado Corazón – Sacred Heart (observed the Monday ten weeks and a day after Easter Sunday)

June 29 – * San Pedro y San Pablo – Saint Peter and Saint Paul

July 20 – Día de la Independencia Colombian Independence Day

August 7 – Batalla de Boyacá - Battle of Boyacá

August 15 – * La Asunción de Nuestra Señora – Assumption of Mary

October 12 – * Día de la Raza – Columbus Day

November 1 – * Día de Todos Santos – All Saints' Day

November 11 – * Independencia de Cartagena – Independence of Cartagena

December 8 – La Inmaculada Concepción – Immaculate Conception

December 25 – Navidad Christmas Day

Note: * Movable holiday: when they do not fall on a Monday, these holidays are observed the following Monday.

Holidays are a happy time for a happy people. Holidays are a time to spend time with friends and family. Often seen by foreigners a bit more superficially as simply an excuse to have a party, the Latin culture utilizes the opportunity, seemingly instinctively, more as means of further nurturing and cementing the bonds of friendship and especially family. While the distinction might be insignificant and inconsequential to some, it is quite possibly one of those "little things" that is the key, ultimately contributing immensely to the visible happiness, contentment, and subjective well-being of one of the happiest people and Countries on earth...the people — the passion — Colombia!

If you would like more information about the exciting and rewarding opportunities of visiting, living, or investing in Colombia, please enter your contact information below. An IGC representative will contact you within 5 business days.

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Join in with [Investment Group Colombia's](#) enthusiasm, confidence and passion...share in the passion that IS Colombia!

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Traveling to Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



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[Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about Traveling to Colombia](#)

The New York Times calls Colombia one of the best places for tourism, drawing more arrivals than any other Latin American country. Based on beauty, culture, affordability and safety, Budget Travel ranks Colombia as one of the top ten must see destinations for 2011. Lonely Planet says that Colombia is back, is safe to visit and travelers are discovering what they've been missing. MSNBC's Destination Travel states that Colombia is not only safe, but that it has mass tourist appeal. Frommer's votes Cartagena among the world's 12 best travel destinations. The New York Times tipped the Colombian city of Cali as one of the best travel destinations of 2011, adding that Colombia as a country was the second most recommended travel destination of 2010 by the readers of the Times. Travel Destinations refers to San Andres in Colombia as an "Island Paradise"... It's Time to Go!

Colombia is home to an amazing array of activities and attractions ranging from stunning culturally rich colonial cities and countless quaint pueblos to exotic sun-drenched Caribbean beaches. ...from expansive verdant green plains to the towering, snow-capped Andean and Sierra Nevada mountains, and to the deep, dense jungle of the Amazon. Along with its pristine beaches washed by the waters of both the Pacific and Atlantic Caribbean seas, it could arguably be said that Colombia has more geographical diversity than nearly any other country. So...It's Time to Go!

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Not to be out shown by geographical diversity only however, Colombia also possesses an amazing cultural wealth and diversity. Offering traveler and resident alike fine dining, art and theatre in its larger cities, and countless folkloric festivals and opportunities for exploration throughout the country, there is never a time for boredom in Colombia. Salt and freshwater fishing, trekking, scuba diving, shopping, spectator sports, horseback riding, rafting and kayaking, Para-sailing and hang gliding, mountain climbing, and salsa dancing are just a few of the many activities you can enjoy in Colombia. ...or maybe even something as relaxing and "mundane" as seeing how many of the over 3500 species of orchids that are indigenous to Colombia that you can find. Colombia truly does have activities for EVERYONE. Are you ready? ...It's Time to Go!

At Investment Group Colombia (IGC), we know that our friends and clients have a broad range of interests. Activities among our membership run the full gamut, from business and investment ventures to social gatherings. ... from fitness and sports, to flying and boating and much, much more. We at IGC applaud the diversity and individuality of our friends and clients as much as we do the diversity and individuality of the countries and opportunities that we promote. But it is a rare and special treat for us at IGC when we find one country that can offer so much to so many. Colombia truly is one of those very special countries.

Depending on departure and destination cities, Colombia is on average only a short three-hour flight from the U.S. Having only recently spread the welcome-mat to discount air carriers such as JetBlue and Spirit, and also having recently signed an "Open Skies" agreement with the US, Colombia is not only stimulating an increase in tourism, but is also reaffirming its strategic position for investors, according to Proexport Colombia. Colombian travel statistics show that 24% of tourists to Colombia arrive from the US. From January to August of 2010, the number of tourists from the US grew by 7.5% when compared to the same period in 2009. Proexport director Maria Claudia Lacouture said in a press release that, "When the Open Skies agreement takes full effect in January 2013, this number of visitors will be stimulated to grow even more." "There is a significant change in perception of Colombia and we have tremendous challenges ahead, because we have big goals and major tasks to accomplish," Lacouture said.

The cruise ship industry has also experienced the increased interest and demand for Colombian travel, with cruise sales to Colombia increasing over 16% in the last year alone. Royal Caribbean and Princess Cruises now offer itineraries docking in Cartagena. Celebrity Cruises, See Tours, Holland America, Silver Cruises, Azamara Cruises, MTC Hamburg and Seabourn all offer service as well, with additional ports of call in Santa Marta and San Andres. In excess of 450,000 passengers set foot on Colombian soil during the 2010 cruise season, a figure that is expected to climb significantly in 2011. Last year's tour season also saw the maiden voyage of the luxury cruise ship "Sea Voyager" cruising between Panama and Buenaventura, Colombia, with stops along the way at Malaga, Bahia Solano, and Nuqui Utria. Operated by Aviatur Travel, the Sea Voyager provides a truly unique opportunity to travel the largely unpopulated, unexplored, pristine Pacific Coast, with amazing diving and whale-watching opportunities along the way.

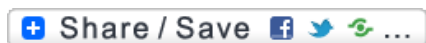
Clearly, access to the beauty and culture and people that IS Colombia has never been more convenient or easier... access to the "passion" has never been made more enticing. The time has never been better for both exploring this wonderful land and at the same time gaining valuable in-country insight and hard-facts knowledge of the investment climate and opportunity as well.

So, are you ready yet? ...it really is time to go!

Let Investment Group Colombia show you the investment, travel, and lifestyle options available to you in this land of passion...this land called Colombia. We want to have a great time and enjoy everything this wonderful land and people have to offer, but we also want to have a positive impact on Colombia. It is to this end that we encourage—even implore—you, our friends and clients, to pack your bags... It really is time to go! It's time to truly experience and check out first-hand the many opportunities that exist for those serious enough to venture forward.

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Bogota – The Entertainment Capital of Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



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Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about Bogota – The Entertainment capital of Colombia

During the past few years, and during the past year in particular, Investment Group Colombia has been witness to the rapidly growing phenomenon of strength, stability, and security taking place in Colombia. We have witnessed a people—a country—who with grit, determination, and a dream of being better, being stronger, being more prosperous, have literally pulled themselves from the quagmire of world disdain and criticism.

The changes taking place in Colombia have been enlightening, inspiring, encouraging, and, for this North American, even a little embarrassing as one realizes what can be accomplished when complaining and blaming is replaced by determined tenacity and focused action. We at IGC applaud not only the efforts, but the success of Colombia... a success that has only started, but that is sure to continue long into the future.

A strong evidence of Colombia's success is that in a period of world financial difficulties, global recession, and collapse of the commercial and residential building industries, Colombia has been experiencing a construction boom. Condos, apartments, high-rises, fine custom homes, and planned communities seem to be rising from the

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proverbial ashes of vanishing crime, violence, and fear. In the hotel industry alone there have been nearly 5,000 rooms added in the past year. For us at IGC, this is just one more fact that further emphasizes and confirms what a wonderful investment opportunity Colombia is. While this flurry of construction activity seems to be well distributed nation-wide, the largest and most aggressive changes are taking place in the capital of Bogota.

Located on a high Andean plateau at an elevation 8661 feet, Bogota is the third highest capital in the world behind Quito, Ecuador, and La Paz, Bolivia. With over 8 million people, Bogota is the largest city in Colombia and one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in South America. Serving as Latin America's Mecca for artists, writers, intellectuals, and architects, Bogota is home to the National University of Colombia as well as several other universities making it the primary educational centre in the country and giving it the moniker of "the Athens of South America." Bogota is also home to the National Museum and the National Cathedral, only two of numerous grand museums and churches located throughout the metropolis.

Already renowned for its "high-energy" atmosphere, Bogota's economy, as for all of Colombia, has been supercharged by rapidly growing international business and investment interests. Attractive business incentives and opportunities in the natural resources fields in particular—from gold and coal and petroleum exploration and production to coffee and exotic tropical fruit production and marketing—has lured new business interest, both domestically and from abroad. Along with a new emerging middle-class, increased direct foreign investment (DFI) dollars has spurred economic growth to previously unseen levels. With current President Juan Manuel Santos' continued efforts and support, Colombia's future is one of ever-increasing prosperity, security, and self-determination. With the increased security and the substantial reduction in crime and violence, international tourism has steadily increased over the past decade, rising by 17% last year alone, surpassing 1.7 million visitors... a sharp contrast to world tourism growth of just 2% for the same time period!

With the steady increase in tourism and international business interests, the need for facilities and services has also grown. A [Proexport Colombia](#) sponsored business incentive of a 20-year income tax exemption for new hotel and room inventory has both encouraged and facilitated the increased development of Bogota's hospitality industry. Of the 5,000 hotel rooms added to Colombia's room inventory in the past year, nearly half of those are located in Bogota. The international chains of Marriott, NH Hotels, Sonesta, Hilton, and Inter-Continental have all joined in the rush to increase room inventory. "Colombia doesn't have the image it once had," said Rodolfo Guillioi, vice president of Grupo Poma, a corporate conglomerate who just this past September opened a new Marriott Hotel in Bogota. "Occupancy and room rates are high in Bogota, which makes it interesting. We expect many competitors to follow us," said Guillioi.

Along with the increase in the hoteliers room inventory has come a host of posh new boutiques, elegant eateries, and stylish nightclubs. Along with the tourist, business, and investment influx of people, throngs of university students and the new emerging middle class locals flock to these night spots. Here, the parties start at sunset and continue right on through until sun rise. Colombians typically begin arriving at the clubs in numbers around 10:00 to 11:00 pm, but have often already begun to party at home or at the many small barrio bars and cigarrerias. Between the early evening bar hopping and the serious clubbing, many people opt to go to dinner at one of the many fine restaurants. Bogota has a tremendous number and variety of restaurants and cafes, with prices often being quite reasonable. Bogota being truly cosmopolitan, you can satiate your appetite with incredible local cuisine, traditional specialties from around the country, endless international delicacies, or something as simple and "down-home" as a hamburger or pizza. Most bars and clubs close at 1:00 am, and ALL bars must close by 3:00 am, so after-parties are very popular in Bogota, with cover fees ranging from 5.000 to 25.000 pesos (\$2.50 – \$12.50).

Bogota's Entertainment Zone

Bogotá's entertainment zone is basically divided into four sectors. The beautiful colonial barrio of La Candelaria, where numerous governmental offices, museums, churches and other buildings of historical and architectural significance are located, is known as the central sector. The northern sector, where many cultural activities are held, is considered to be part of the more modern, commercial area of town. Next is the southern sector, which consists primarily of industrial and middle class barrios. And lastly is the western sector, location of Eldorado Airfield, numerous city parks, and sports centers. Within these sectors lie the more specific entertainment areas; the ever popular Zona Rosa region, the ritzy and trendy Zona T, the Zona G, etcetera, all vibrating with energy, swaying sensually and rhythmically with live music, wafting with the aromas of both local and international cuisine, and filled with laughter and good times.

For first-time visitors, it really pays to connect with a local or someone who is intimately familiar with "the lay of the land" until you yourself become more familiar with the local venues. Typical cover fees at most clubs range between 10.000 and 25.000 pesos (\$5.00 – \$12.50). Longtime favorites such as Quiebra Cantos, Escobar Rosas, and Maria Mulattos are always popular hotspots, full of enthusiastic partiers. Electronica club, The End, has gained a lot of attention and fame as of late for its quality night life and its location on the 30th floor of a high-rise. For food

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and dance, and to see how important both food and dance are to Colombians, Andrés Carne de Res is not to be missed! Salto del Angel is another place to see beautiful people and enjoy wonderful food and dance. Pravda's, Cha Cha's, Andres D.C.'s (De Corazon), Escobar y Rosa's, Gato Gris', and Kukaramakara's are a few other local and international favorites that should not be missed.

A recent addition to the Bogota night life scene is that of Speed Dating. Brian Wilson, owner of Speed Dating in Colombia, sponsored the event and has plans for several more in the very near future. Popular in the United States, speed dating is a structured event having themes "that target individuals based on age, religious affiliation, social interests, business, etc. The participants rotate to each other's tables having 4 to 6 minute dates. This is an efficient, time managed way to meet 15-20 people in an hour and a half," according to Wilson. "The setting for the Speed dating events is a local, upscale bar/restaurant, which has a quiet, romantic ambience in which the participants feel comfortable. They rate each other on a score card provided by the event host. The event host collects score cards at the end of the event and calls each participant to give them the contact information of their matches- absolutely no contact information is exchanged between participants at the event. This ensures that everyone has the right to their privacy and that they are under no pressure to give out their personal information," says Wilson.

While each club has their specialty, most Colombian clubs actually play a variety of Salsa, Meringue, Techno, Cumbia, Vallenato, Bachatta, Hip Hop and Reggaeton. In the U.S one thinks nothing of going to a club alone. Colombians, however, always go in groups and typically stick with their group at clubs. And although times are changing, it is still considered an insult to dance with someone outside your group, especially for women. Etiquette and custom varies from city to city. For women in Bogota, stylish, fitted denims, high heels (always, it seems!), and a classy flowing blouse, perhaps accessorized with a waist-accentuating belt are the norm. Cleavage is rarely present, something that DEFINITELY cannot be said for Cali, Cartagena and Medellin! Hair is straightened, usually long and make up MUST BE PERFECT! For men, it is simply a nice dress shirt and dark-washed denims or khakis with dress shoes—no athletic shoes!

A very endearing quality of Latin American culture and life, contrary to most people's first thoughts, is that the young and the old party together.....and "party hearty" together I might add! In the US young people think, at the very least, that having adults (old folks!) around quenches the party spirit. But in Colombia, this isn't the case at all.

Many of these "old folks" are actually more agile, energetic, and enthusiastic than their often much younger counterparts! And folks, I must say at this point, Latino's, young AND old alike, move their bodies in ways that are just not possible for their North American counterparts! And to quote my old friend, Forrest Gump, "...that's all I have to say about that!" And I don't know, but maybe it is because I am now becoming a part of that "older" club myself, I find it wonderfully touching, encouraging and even exciting (not in THAT way!) to see two seniors obviously enamored, if not in love, gazing at each other starry-eyed, swaying to the music, laughing, and just generally having a good time. ...that is life and love as it should be!

As evidenced here, Bogota is not just about politics and business. Investment Group Colombia's message here is that Bogota provides a vast array of stimulating cultural variety for pleasure and entertainment as well. So come to Bogota and have fun! And keep in mind that Bogota is just one of many wonderful, beautiful, opportunity-filled cities in this exciting land called Colombia. That Bogota leads the country by way of being the governmental seat is clear. That it leads the country by way of its super-charged growth and by example is becoming ever more clear. Our counsel at IGC is to keep an eye on Bogota. What you see happening there is an indicator of what is to come for the rest of the country. And we at IGC whole-heartedly believe that vision is one of promise, prosperity, and the passion that IS Colombia.

If you would like more information about the exciting and rewarding opportunities of visiting, living, or investing in Colombia, please request our Investors Guide to Colombia by [CLICKING HERE](#).

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Festival in Bogota Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Are you looking for the next land of opportunity? Does talk of massive government debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures and unemployment have you singing the blues? Escapeartist is about to provide you with an insider tip to the next 'in' location. We are talking about a location where all the smart money is moving to, a country vast with resources, a beautiful culture and probably the most attractive women on planet earth. (It's true) –

Names like Sam Zell (Billionaire) and Carlos Slim (Billionaire) and many others are investing in Colombia right now. Why are

they investing? Why are tourism rates in Colombia skyrocketing? Why is the Colombian stock market returning double digit returns? Why is Colombia leading the Latin American rim in attracting foreign direct investment?

Escapeartist has the insider scoop on Colombia and we are going global with it! – We were on the front lines of Costa Rica, Belize, Dominican Republic, Argentina and NOW Colombia!

Escapeartist has partnered with Investment Group Colombia to provide our readers with authoritative articles that are written by Escapeartist readers who actually live the Colombia Escapeartist Dream right now. Escapeartist over the next few months will be providing special coverage of Colombia and we will be getting the truth from the 'frontline' early adopters, the market mavens, pioneers of the international Colombia lifestyle!

Our intention is to create a tsunami of awareness for Colombia over the next year and you are getting the very first newsletter that we have published on Colombia – Nothing like being at the right place at the right time... right before 15 million people learn about this beautiful country – Colombia is Passion!

Please enjoy the first of three Special Edition Colombia Ezine – This month we covered Bogota, in March we will cover Medellin and in April we will feature the romantic ciudad of Cartagena.

Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about Festivals in Bogota, Colombia

When one thinks of Bogota Colombia, usually the first thing that comes to mind is politics and government. Most people are well aware of its status as the capital of Colombia. Many also know that with over eight million people, it is ranked as one of the top 30 largest cities in the world and one of the largest most rapidly expanding communities in South America. Some might even know that at 8661 feet in elevation, it ranks as the third highest city in the world elevation wise. But what many do not know is that it is also home to some incredibly fun, exciting, beautiful, world-renowned fairs and festivals; with one in particular being the largest and most respected of its kind in the world.

Colombia as a whole—her heart and soul; the people of Colombia—are a happy, joyful culture typically having a good, healthy perspective on life. A recent InVamer Gallup survey published by Caracol Broadcasting confirmed this, stating that, "Colombians are the happiest citizens of Latin America and are among the happiest people in the world." And that a country and a people, both so rich in culture, can combine this culture with their seemingly innate joy and enthusiasm comes as no real surprise to us here at IGC. And that is precisely what they have done—combining their enthusiasm and joy for life with their wonderful culture to create some of the most enjoyable fairs and festivals one can find anywhere in the world.

To say that Colombia is a land of fairs and festivals is no exaggeration. The nation as a whole hosts several hundred different fairs and festivals each year! Bogota alone has in excess of 80 fairs that it hosts, most of them

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annually. So it goes without saying that no matter your tastes or interests, you are likely to find at least one fair or festival with which to titillate your senses or satisfy your curiosity. For the purposes of this article, we will focus on five of the more popular festivals in Bogota. To provide you with an expanded more comprehensive scope of what is available in Bogota however, IGC suggests viewing the wonderful calendar of events produced by Bogota Brilliance. And for a more exhaustive view of the fairs and festivals held throughout ALL of Colombia, IGC suggests referring to the Civic and Religious Holidays in Colombia, Events, Festivals and Fairs, Calendar 2011 produced by colombia-sa.com.

The Ibero-American Theater Festival (FITB), the largest event of its kind in the world, is hosted in Bogota every two years during late March and into early April. Lasting 17 days and with the participation of over 200 art groups from all around the world, over three million enthusiasts and curiosity seekers attended during 2010. It is a major cultural event not only for Colombia, but for the whole world, bringing together the most important theatre companies from five different continents as well as being attended by several of the most versed and recognized performers, directors, writers & artists from around the world. To take literary liberty with William Shakespeare's monologue, for a period of slightly more than two weeks, "*All of Bogota [sic] is a stage.*"

Founded in 1988 by actress Fanny Mickey and playwright Ramiro Osorio, it was initiated as one of the many events celebrating the 450th anniversary of the founding of Bogotá. Gaining immediate acclaim and popularity however, it has since become THE highlight of the year for Bogotá, making a cultural statement to the world while displaying the amazing talent, diversity, and plurality of various theatric genres, from classic theatre to dance, circus, music, puppetry, pantomime, performance art, and even concerts. An integral and purposeful part of the Festival is the training of young theatre aspirants with a varied curriculum of workshops and classes taught by international masters.

In its twenty-three years of existence, the Ibero-American Theater Festival of Bogotá has welcomed over 600 theatre companies from over 80 countries around the world. The traditional inaugural night parade includes more than 2,000 performers all in full regalia of colorful costumes representing different regions of Colombia. Celebrating this parade, in excess of half-a-million spectators line the route and help usher-in the most famed and loved event in Bogota. During the course of the event, there are typically in excess of 700 performances in theater halls and other venues, with over 250 street performances taking place as well. Many of the events are free. Spectators and performers alike fill public areas, arenas, parks, streets, theatres, shopping centers, sports venues and cultural and community centers throughout Bogota.

Maybe not quite as large or well recognized, Bogota's International Book Fair (FILB) is equally important to bibliophiles and enthusiasts of the printed word. Founded in 1988 and taking place during late April and into early May, this festival lasts two weeks and is the third most important book fair in the world, attracting authors, publishers, buyers and over 500 national and foreign exhibitors, and featuring over 100,000 titles. During the course of the event, over 2400 workshops and seminars for children and youths will be offered promoting and fostering the benefits and joys of reading.

The initial purpose of creating the Feria Internacional del Libro de Bogota (FILB) was to strengthen the Colombian publishing industry. Twenty-three years later however, the FILB is now considered a national treasure and cultural resource, and is one of the reasons why Bogota was christened "*World Capital of the Book*" in 2007. The festivals program includes round table discussions, recitals, book presentations and author signings by over 100 authors. "It makes sense that the country that is home to Gabriel García Márquez, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, has the best Book Fair on the continent," says attendee María Montserrat Pena.

Next on the calendar of events for the top five fairs and festivals in Bogota is Rock al Parque. Created in 1995 and held during the month of July for each year since, Rock in the Park is billed and recognized as the largest and best annual rock festival in Latin America, crowding over 500,000 spectators into and through Simon Bolivar Park in the short span of three days. Founded by former "La Derecha" band member, Mario Duarte and initially financed by Bogota businessman Julio Correal, Rock in the Park is now fully supported and funded by the Secretaría de Cultura Recreación y Deporte in Bogota. Offered as a totally free event, attendees can expect to see and hear some of the best local, national, and international rock bands in existence, usually with several "headliners" performing as well. Some of the most unique and amazing aspects about this festival is that portion known as "*Boys and Girls at the Park*," literally targeting children and their musical interests AND that this rock-and-roll festival is promoted and enforced as being an alcohol and smoking free zone, insuring harmonious coexistence and truly making it an event for the entire family. The festival begins daily at 1 pm and ends promptly at 10 pm both as a matter of tradition and courtesy.

The month of September brings Bogota's Jazz al Parque festival. Created in 1996 and being hosted every year since, for two days in September, seductive, sometimes haunting, sometimes sad, sometimes raucous, always emotion-filled melodies of jazz flow throughout Bogotá inviting bogotanos and tourists alike to listen to world class

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jazz interpreters and performers. Supported and endorsed by Secretaría de Cultura Recreación y Deporte in Bogota and backed by the radio stations of Bogotá universities, from which new musicians rise each year, Jazz in the Park takes place simultaneously at several different parks scattered throughout Bogota. Nearly 30,000 people attended the 2010 performances, viewing and listening to over thirty different performers or ensembles.

Offering cinematic categories for documentaries, shorts, features, animation and children's films, the 27th annual Festival de Cine de Bogota has something to offer for all cinephiles. Founded in 1984, the Bogota Film Festival was created to reward and bring recognition to the Colombian film industry. Since that inaugural event, the Bogota Film Festival has opened its doors to honor other countries, including Turkey, Spain, Australia, Italy, the USA, Egypt, Germany, Ecuador, the Caribbean, South America, France, Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Korea, and India. Held in October of each year, and lasting for a week, the Bogota Film Festival provides hours of film-going fun for the dedicated cinephile. Given by competent international and national juries, Bogota Film Festival has presented 195 awards among Pre-Columbian Gold Circles, Silver, and Bronze and 32 Honorable Mentions. It has distinguished the work of two documentary producers and has given 12 Special Distinctions to personalities that have represented landmarks on the recent history of Colombian cinema.

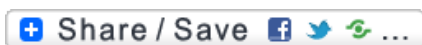
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"It is our goal and desire at IGC to not only experience happiness and fulfillment, but to provide you, our clients and friends, the means and methods of increasing the happiness and fulfillment quotient in your own lives. Both financially and experientially (mentally, emotionally, spiritually)".

Colombia possesses such a diversified wealth of culture, geography, and opportunity as to satisfy almost anyone looking to make a life-style change or enhance their financial portfolio. And with Investment Group Colombia's first-hand, feet-on-the-ground experience in Colombia, we can assure you that Colombia is indeed a 'happy' and wonderfully satisfying place to be. "So take some of that proverbial time and smell the roses." Visit Colombia, attend some fairs and festivals. Experience the peace, the joy, the relaxation—the passion—that IS Colombia. Once you do, like us here at IGC, you will understand why the ministry of tourism says, "The only thing to fear is that you will not want to leave."

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Real Estate in Bogota

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [International Real Estate](#) • [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Are you looking for the next land of opportunity? Does talk of massive government debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures and unemployment have you singing the blues? Escapeartist is about to provide you with an insider tip to the next 'in' location. We are talking about a location where all the smart money is moving to, a country vast with resources, a beautiful culture and probably the most attractive women on planet earth. (It's true) –

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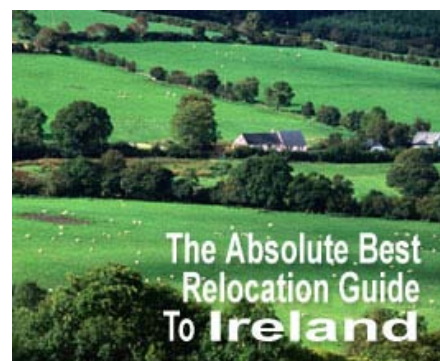
At Investment Group Colombia (IGC) we like to keep an ear to the ground and our eyes on the horizon. And by way of a monumental new project, Bogota's horizon will soon be changing...in a BIG way! The new BD Bacatá, rising from the location of the old Bacatá Hotel located at 19th Street #5-20, is set to take center-stage not only as the tallest building in Colombia, but as the tallest building in all of South America. A statement of stylish modernity and class, with three towers of more than 66 floors and measuring over 240 meters (more than 790 feet), the new BD Bacata will topple a 30 year record held by the Colpatría Tower as the tallest building in Colombia. Colpatría Tower, at 49 floors and 196 meters (643 feet) in height and still a landmark in its own right, will end up looking like the BD Bacatas malnourished, gangly step-sister in comparison.

Stepped style skyscrapers are not a new concept in and of themselves; however few projects have taken the design quite as far as the BD Bacata. The overall structure will consist of three towers measuring 240 meters, 200 meters, and 120 meters respectively, each interconnected with multiple sky bridges. Total interior area will be 114,384 square meters.

The towers will be partitioned into 396 apartments, 138 offices, a 542 room hotel with two restaurants and a club

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lounge, an observation deck, a 1500 person convention center, a shopping mall with 38 stores and 10 kiosks, 403 private parking spaces, and 334 public parking spaces. The tallest tower, the hotel, will have seven vertical sections each with sky gardens in between. The complex will offer its residents, business venues, and visitors only the best quality, security and services in a fully integrated modern environment.

Development leaders for the project, BD Promoters Colombia, has the backing of the Alonso Balaguer architectural firm of Madrid, Davivienda Bank and Trust Action, and is also seeking private investor funding via presales of both commercial and residential investment. Two investment models are offered for the project; for sale by property (parks, housing and offices) and sell real estate trust rights or horizontal plate (shopping and hotel).

Pre sales and investment options for both residential and commercial units began on February 18, 2010, with potential investor or resident guests showing enthusiastic interest and acceptance of the offerings. Initial pre sales pricing of the residential units ranged between \$88,745 and \$455,000 USD. Investors may also opt to invest in the commercial units by way of a Right of Trust investment. BD Bacatá offers two Right of Trust options; the hotel and the shopping center. Investment is made in \$30,000 USD increments with the investment being managed and audited by company controlled Trust Action under the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. Though the goal and objective of any such investment is to obtain a share of the project and in turn achieve a high rate of return, it should be understood that investment returns and profitability for the hotel venue is based solely on hotel occupancy, nightly room rate, and other components such as food and beverage service and rental of meeting rooms and conference rooms, while investment returns and profitability for mall units is based solely on the income of the mall lease/rental units.

We at Investment Group Colombia strive to bring you the most current investment, travel, and living information and opportunities available. It is our firm belief that the increasing prosperity of Colombia and the rise of the new middle class has only just begun. Development and construction of such major projects as the BD Bacata are indicative of what and how the investment world feels about Colombia's future. As declared by the World Bank, Colombia is THE BEST and most secure country in Latin America to do business with. For over 10 years the Colombian economy has grown at rates above the world average and 2 points above the Latin American average, experiencing zero negative growth and minimal cost of living increases.

Between 2002 and 2009 alone, foreign investment grew by 400%, from 2.1 million to nearly 9 million USD. Exports have also grown, from 12 million USD in 2002 to 33 million USD in 2009. Additionally, the number of tourists nearly tripled, increasing from 661 thousand in 2002 to nearly 2.8 million visitors in 2010. To say that Colombia is on the move, heading for bigger and better things, is an understatement. We at IGC see the development and construction of BD Bacata as just one more vote of confidence, faith, and commitment in the direction that Colombia is heading and in the even greater prosperity to come. So maybe it is time for you, our friends and clients, to consider as the folks at BD Bacata state, to "[Become part of this project \(Bacata\) and live with us the experience of being 3,000 meters closer to the stars.](#)"

If you would like more information about the exciting and rewarding opportunities of visiting, living, or investing in Colombia, please request our Investors Guide to Colombia by [CLICKING HERE](#).

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Happiness in Colombia

By EscapeArtist Staff / Feb 11 • Categorized as [Living Overseas](#) •  [Download Print Friendly PDF](#)



Are you looking for the next land of opportunity? Does talk of massive government debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures and unemployment have you singing the blues? Escapeartist is about to provide you with an insider tip to the next 'in' location. We are talking about a location where all the smart money is moving to, a country vast with resources, a beautiful culture and probably the most attractive women on planet earth. (It's true) –

Names like Sam Zell (Billionaire) and Carlos Slim (Billionaire) and many others are investing in Colombia right now. Why are they investing? Why are tourism rates in Colombia skyrocketing?

Why is the Colombian stock market returning double digit returns? Why is Colombia leading the Latin American rim in attracting foreign direct investment?

Escapeartist has the insider scoop on Colombia and we are going global with it! – We were on the front lines of Costa Rica, Belize, Dominican Republic, Argentina and NOW Colombia!

Escapeartist has partnered with Investment Group Colombia to provide our readers with authoritative articles that are written by Escapeartist readers who actually live the Colombia Escapeartist Dream right now. Escapeartist over the next few months will be providing special coverage of Colombia and we will be getting the truth from the 'frontline' early adopters, the market mavens, pioneers of the international Colombia lifestyle!

Our intention is to create a tsunami of awareness for Colombia over the next year and you are getting the very first newsletter that we have published on Colombia – Nothing like being at the right place at the right time... right before 15 million people learn about this beautiful country – Colombia is Passion!

Please enjoy the first of three Special Edition Colombia Ezine – This month we covered Bogota, in March we will cover Medellin and in April we will feature the romantic ciudad of Cartagena.

[Now, go on and get your insider tip and learn more about Happiness in Colombia](#)

That is the primary question along with the corresponding multiple-choice answers that are available in the annual "Worlds Happiest Countries" survey. Compiling their "World Values Surveys" (WVS) for over 20 years, the results of this University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research report are considered THE most authoritative by "happiness researchers" (Yes, that is a job title!) world-wide. And notably, as vague and broad as that question may seem, Colombia has ranked in the top twenty for the World's Happiest Countries during most of that time!

But, even more notably, when you add the results of the second question into the mix, you will find that Colombia has ranked in the top ten for the majority of those years, has been in the top five for several of the years, and has held the first place position as the Worlds Happiest Country more than once!

We at Investment Group Colombia (IGC) are certainly interested in, and even dedicated to "happiness."

It is our goal and desire at IGC to not only experience happiness and fulfillment, but to provide you, our clients and friends, the means and methods of increasing the happiness and fulfillment quotient in your own lives. Both financially and experientially (mentally,

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emotionally, spiritually), Colombia possesses such a diversified wealth of culture, geography, and opportunity as to satisfy almost anyone looking to make a life-style change or enhance their financial portfolio. And with Investment Group Colombia's first-hand, feet-on-the-ground experience in Colombia, we can assure you that Colombia is indeed a "happy" and wonderfully satisfying place to be.

So what is the second and seemingly more determining question in the World Values Survey?

...."All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

When combining the data and the results from these two questions, the WVS is able to determine and measure the overall "subjective well-being" of the survey participants. Often considered synonymous with happiness, subjective well-being is a more accurate indicator of personal happiness, according to WVS director, Dr. Ron Inglehart.

And "*subjective well-being*" IS what life is all about, right? There are many things that can contribute to ones happiness—faith, love, friends, family, health, wealth, etc. But ultimately, it is "*attitude*" that determines how we view our world, how satisfied we are with our surroundings, and how happy we are in life. Plain, but not always so simple, "*attitude*" is always a choice. It goes without saying, no society, no people—no person — is ever perfect. But in regards to having a good, healthy perspective on life; in regards to having an admirable "*attitude*," my personal experience has shown that Colombians, as a whole, excel.

In spite of, and even during the course of, decades of civil unrest, violence, poverty, and fear, Colombian attitudes have remained positive and hopeful. And probably more than anything else, it is this attitude and hopefulness that has propelled the beautiful country of Colombia into a new age of growing prosperity, peace, and security. An [Invamer Gallup](#) survey published by [Caracol Broadcasting](#) reached essentially the same conclusion as the WVS; Colombians are the happiest citizens of Latin America and are among the happiest people in the world.

According to the Invamer Gallup-Caracol survey, 13% of the Colombian population says they have suffered hunger, 21% have endured chronic illness, 25% have dealt with intense sadness, and 17% have experienced recurring depression. Of that same group of respondents, however, 52% said that they feel secure, 95% felt respected by others, 77% said they wanted to have more days like the present, 61% have a plan to improve their life, 68% feel that it is possible to progress by working, and a full 11% said that they were experiencing the best time of their life (the World average response is only 4%)! ...that is resiliency folks! ...that is determination, and drive, and focus, and hopefulness acted upon!

In short, as the Invamer Gallup-Caracol survey concludes, "Colombian life is intensive and dynamic but that in general Colombians are strong both before and during adversity because their focus is upon positive perspectives and subjective happiness."

That most Colombians think that the situation of their country is much better now than what it was five years ago, and that they think that things will continue to improve considerably over the next 15 years is also indicative of their positive, optimistic attitude. 43% of Colombians think that the situation of the country will improve considerably even in the next five years. And this is not only indicative of the peoples attitude, it is also highly indicative of the direction that the country as a whole WILL CONTINUE to take, because it is not the success of the country that drives the peoples attitude... it is the attitude of the people that drives the success of the country.

But for many outsiders, the question still remains: With its history of unrest, kidnappings, and violence, how can Colombia possibly rank as one of the world's happiest countries? Writer Albeiro Rodas of the Colombia Passport states that, looking to the international press and media about Colombia you would think that Colombians have lived under the law of terror and suffering, but that is not the case. Rodas theorizes that the key element of this phenomena, the ability to be happy in spite of circumstances, is the strong will to overcome difficulties common to all Colombians. Rodas goes on to say that it is not, therefore, the "*happiness*" of a self-satisfied grinning idiot sitting and sucking honey from his finger-tips that is being touted, but more one of a complex meaning. Maybe it would be better described as "*optimism*" rather than happiness.

Whatever the case, we at [Investment Group Colombia](#) truly believe that while Colombia has been exceedingly blessed by its richness of geology, geography, and culture, it is the richness of her people that is the driving force behind the ever brightening future of this amazing country. Will Colombia continue to shine and prosper? Absolutely! ...her people virtually guarantee it! As the Colombian Ministry of Tourism claims (and we at IGC whole-heartedly concur!), [Colombia IS passion](#). But it is important to remember that "*passion*" is not an entity unto itself. Passion is an expression, a noun, a word that requires people or a person to give it presence—Colombia's people are her passion.

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