

Cartagena Travel Guide

Cartagena: Where Caribbean Magic Meets Colonial Charm

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Things to do in Cartagena

Landmarks & Monuments

Iconic structures and historical landmarks that define Cartagena's architectural heritage and cultural significance.



Must See

Walled Old City (Ciudad Vieja)

3-4 hours No Booking Needed



Map

The heart of Cartagena, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** featuring colorful colonial buildings, narrow cobblestone streets, and centuries-old fortifications. The city walls span 11.5 kilometers and offer panoramic Caribbean views. Walk through plazas adorned with bougainvillea, visit street musicians, and experience authentic Cartagenero culture.



Must See

Book Ahead

San Felipe de Barajas Fortress

2 hours Book Ahead



Map

A **17th-century fortress** built to protect Cartagena from pirate attacks. This engineering marvel features multiple levels, underground tunnels, and strategic gun placements. Climb to the top for breathtaking views of the Caribbean Sea and old city. The fortress is one of the most important military structures in the Americas.



Top Pick

Clock Tower Gate (Torre del Reloj)

30 minutes No Booking Needed



Map

The iconic **main entrance** to the walled city, dating back to 1608. This historic gate serves as the symbol of Cartagena and is beautifully lit at night. The tower underwent restoration in recent years and now stands as one of the most photographed landmarks in the Caribbean.



Top Pick

Convento Santo Domingo

1.5 hours No Booking Needed



Map

A stunning **17th-century convent** featuring baroque architecture and a beautiful courtyard. The church contains impressive religious artwork and colonial furnishings. Visitors can explore the tranquil gardens and learn about the religious history of Cartagena through guided tours.

Tips for Landmarks & Monuments

- Visit the walled city early morning or late evening for cooler temperatures and better photography



- Wear comfortable walking shoes as streets are uneven and cobblestoned
- Stay hydrated and use sunscreen; there is limited shade in historic areas
- Hire a licensed tour guide for fortress visits to understand engineering and history



Museums & Galleries

World-class museums and art galleries showcasing pre-Columbian artifacts, colonial art, and contemporary creations.



Must See Book Ahead

Gold Museum (Museo de Oro)

2-3 hours Book Ahead



Map

An extraordinary collection of **pre-Columbian gold artifacts** representing indigenous cultures of northern South America. The museum houses over 11,000 pieces including intricate jewelry, ceremonial objects, and sculptures. Interactive exhibits explain ancient techniques and spiritual significance of gold in indigenous cultures.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Naval Museum (Museo Naval del Caribe)

1.5-2 hours Book Ahead



Map

Housed in a colonial palace, this **maritime history museum** chronicles Cartagena's naval importance and Caribbean trade routes. Exhibits include ship models, navigational instruments, and artifacts from the colonial period. Learn about the city's strategic role in Spanish colonial maritime commerce.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Palacio de la Inquisición

1-1.5 hours Book Ahead



Map

A sobering **museum dedicated to the Spanish Inquisition** in a beautifully restored colonial mansion. The museum exhibits torture instruments, documents, and historical information about this dark period. Educational and thought-provoking, it provides important historical context for understanding colonial Cartagena.





Notable

Contemporary Art Galleries

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Cartagena's vibrant art scene features **numerous galleries** throughout the old city showcasing local and international contemporary artists. Galleries feature paintings, sculptures, installations, and mixed media works. Many galleries are housed in restored colonial buildings, creating unique spaces for art appreciation.

Tips for Museums & Galleries

- Book museum tickets in advance during high season (December-March)
- Allow extra time for detailed exhibits; museums contain extensive collections
- Many museums close on Mondays; plan visits accordingly
- Some galleries require appointments; call ahead for visiting hours
- Student discounts available with valid ID



Religious Sites

Sacred spaces reflecting centuries of spiritual tradition, from grand cathedrals to intimate chapels.



Must See

Metropolitan Cathedral

1 hour No Booking Needed



Map

Cartagena's **main cathedral**, a magnificent example of baroque religious architecture with ornate altars, stained glass windows, and religious sculptures. The cathedral has been rebuilt and restored multiple times throughout its 500-year history. The interior features beautiful woodwork and impressive vaulted ceilings that showcase colonial craftsmanship.



Top Pick

San Pedro Claver Church

1 hour No Booking Needed



Map

A historic **Jesuit church** dedicated to the saint who devoted his life to enslaved people. The church features elegant colonial architecture with intricate stone carvings and religious artworks. Visitors can explore the adjoining museum dedicated to San Pedro Claver's humanitarian mission.



Top Pick

Santo Domingo Church

45 minutes No Booking Needed



Map

One of Cartagena's oldest churches with a **baroque facade** and serene interior courtyard filled with bougainvillea flowers. The church underwent recent renovation and now serves as both a place of worship and cultural heritage site. The bell tower offers excellent views of the old city.

Tips for Religious Sites

- Dress modestly when visiting churches (covered shoulders and knees)
- Most churches close during midday; visit in morning or late afternoon
- Photography may be restricted during services; ask permission
- Attend Mass or religious ceremonies for authentic spiritual experience



Squares & Streets

Iconic plazas and charming pedestrian streets that serve as the social and cultural heart of Cartagena.



Must See

Plaza Santo Domingo

1.5 hours No Booking Needed



Map

The **most iconic plaza** in Cartagena, surrounded by elegant colonial buildings, boutiques, and restaurants. The plaza features a distinctive bronze sculpture of a woman with an exaggerated bosom, a symbol of sensuality and Cartagena's vibrant culture. Colorful buildings frame the square, creating a perfect setting for dining, people-watching, and photography.



Must See

Plaza San Pedro Claver

1 hour No Booking Needed



Map

A charming **colonial square** featuring the Church of San Pedro Claver and surrounded by historic buildings. Street musicians and vendors create lively atmosphere, while nearby restaurants and cafes offer authentic Caribbean cuisine. The plaza perfectly captures the essence of old Cartagena.



Top Pick

Calle Larga (Long Street)

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed



Map

The **longest pedestrian street** in the walled city, connecting major plazas and featuring historic buildings, shops, galleries, and restaurants. Street performers entertain visitors, while street food vendors offer local delicacies. The street is lined with colonial architecture and provides an authentic experience of daily Cartagena life.



Top Pick

Plaza Bolivar

45 minutes No Booking Needed



Map

A **historic plaza** featuring a statue of Simón Bolívar surrounded by lush vegetation and colonial architecture. The plaza serves as a peaceful retreat with benches for relaxation and observation. During evening, the plaza lights up beautifully and locals gather for social gatherings.



Tips for Squares & Streets

- Visit plazas in early morning to avoid crowds and heat
- Bring cash for street vendors and musicians
- Plazas are safest during daytime; avoid after dark
- Many restaurants surrounding plazas offer tourist prices; explore side streets for local pricing



Neighborhoods & Districts

Distinct districts each with unique character, architecture, and cultural atmosphere.



Must See

El Centro (Historic Center)

Full day No Booking Needed



Map

The **heart of old Cartagena** featuring the densest concentration of colonial buildings, museums, and plazas. Narrow streets wind between colorful mansions, creating a maze-like atmosphere perfect for exploration. El Centro pulses with tourist activity, dining, and shopping.



Top Pick

Getsemaní

2-3 hours No Booking Needed



Map

A vibrant **bohemian neighborhood** famous for colorful street art, murals, graffiti culture, and independent galleries. Getsemaní has transformed from a rough area into a creative hub with trendy bars, restaurants, and hostels. The neighborhood pulses with cultural energy and hosts regular art events and performances.



Top Pick

San Diego

1.5 hours No Booking Needed



Map

A charming **residential neighborhood** within the walled city featuring narrow streets, colonial homes, and local atmosphere. San Diego offers a quieter alternative to El Centro while maintaining historic charm. The area features small plazas, local restaurants, and traditional architecture.



Top Pick

Bocagrande

2-3 hours No Booking Needed



Map

The **modern beachfront district** featuring high-rise hotels, restaurants, and beach clubs. Bocagrande offers Caribbean beaches, water sports, and contemporary dining venues. The area serves as the modern face of Cartagena with upscale accommodations and amenities.

Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- El Centro best for tourist attractions; stay in secured areas after dark
- Getsemaní has improved security but stay aware of surroundings
- Hire local guides for authentic neighborhood experiences
- Use official taxis or ride-sharing apps between neighborhoods at night



Parks & Gardens

Green spaces offering respite from urban energy with natural beauty and recreational opportunities.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Botanical Garden (Jardín Botánico Guillermo Pitre)

1.5-2 hours Book Ahead



Map

Cartagena's primary **botanical garden** featuring tropical plants, trees, and flowers from the Caribbean region. The garden provides peaceful walking paths through organized plant collections. Educational signage explains plant species and their uses in traditional medicine and cuisine. Perfect for nature lovers and photographers.



Top Pick

Paseo del Malecón (Waterfront Promenade)

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed



Map

A scenic **waterfront walkway** running along the Caribbean Sea offering sea breezes, sunset views, and casual dining venues. The malecón features street vendors, musicians, and locals enjoying the waterfront. Perfect for evening strolls and enjoying Cartagena's coastal beauty.



Notable

Parque Bolívar

1 hour No Booking Needed



Map

A **public park** featuring open green spaces, walking trails, and recreational areas. The park includes playgrounds, picnic areas, and seating throughout manicured grounds. Local families use the park for leisure activities, making it an authentic spot to observe everyday Cartagena life.

Tips for Parks & Gardens

- Visit botanical garden early morning for cooler temperatures and better photography
- Bring water and sunscreen for outdoor park activities
- Parks are safer during daytime; avoid after sunset
- Malecón offers best views during sunset hours



Tours & Activities

Guided experiences and adventure activities offering unique perspectives and hands-on engagement with Cartagena's culture and natural environment.



Must See Book Ahead

Rosario Islands Boat Tours

8-10 hours Book Ahead

Full-day **boat excursions** to pristine islands featuring white-sand beaches, crystal-clear waters, and coral reefs. Tours include swimming, snorkeling, beach time, and fresh seafood lunch. Multiple islands offer different experiences from party atmospheres to secluded paradises. This is one of Cartagena's most popular tourist activities.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Street Art & Graffiti Tours

2 hours Book Ahead

Guided walking tours through **Getsemaní and other neighborhoods** showcasing vibrant street art, murals, and graffiti culture. Expert local guides explain artist styles, techniques, and the cultural significance of street art. Tours support local artists and provide photography opportunities with authentic urban art.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Sunset Catamaran Cruises

3-4 hours Book Ahead

Leisurely **evening cruises** departing from Bocagrande beach featuring cocktails, snacks, and live music while sailing the Caribbean. Tours include swimming stops and excellent opportunities for sunset photography. The relaxed atmosphere makes this ideal for couples or those seeking romantic experiences.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Walking Food Tours

3-4 hours Book Ahead

Culinary **guided tours** through local neighborhoods featuring tastings at authentic restaurants, street food stalls, and market visits. Expert local guides share stories about traditional Colombian cuisine, ingredient sources, and cooking techniques. Tours include at least 5-6 tastings with beverage pairings.



[Top Pick](#)[Book Ahead](#)

Scuba Diving & Snorkeling

[3-4 hours](#) [Book Ahead](#)

Professional **diving operations** offering certification courses and guided dives to coral reefs, shipwrecks, and underwater formations. Cartagena waters offer warm temperatures, excellent visibility, and diverse marine life. Beginner-friendly dives and advanced expeditions available.

Tips for Tours & Activities

- Book tours through reputable companies; check reviews on TripAdvisor
- Rosario Islands tours cost 35,000-50,000 COP; negotiate in low season
- Bring waterproof sunscreen and sunglasses for beach activities
- Food tours better experienced with professional guides than solo exploration
- Diving requires certification; budget 2-3 hours for certification courses



Day Trips & Excursions

Nearby destinations offering diverse experiences from natural wonders to cultural sites within easy reach of Cartagena.



Must See Book Ahead

Tayrona National Park

Full day (10 hours including travel) Book Ahead



Map

A stunning **national park** featuring pristine Caribbean beaches, jungle trails, and archaeological sites. Located 3 hours north, Tayrona offers hiking through lush rainforest with waterfalls, swimming in turquoise waters, and encountering wildlife. The park combines jungle and beach ecosystems in spectacular fashion.



Top Pick Book Ahead

San Andrés Island

Overnight/2-3 days recommended Book Ahead



Map

A Caribbean island destination **2.5 hours by plane** or ferry offering pristine beaches, water sports, and unique island culture. San Andrés features English colonial architecture, duty-free shopping, and laid-back Caribbean atmosphere. The island's surrounding waters offer world-class diving and snorkeling.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Santa Marta & Ciudad Perdida Trek

4-5 days including travel Book Ahead



Map

The **Lost City trek**, a challenging 4-day hiking expedition through jungle to mysterious pre-Columbian ruins. Located near Santa Marta, the trek offers adventure, cultural immersion, and archaeological significance. The trek includes river crossings, steep trails, and remote jungle camping.



Notable

Volcán de Lodo El Totumo

3-4 hours including travel Book Ahead



Map

A unique **mud volcano** where visitors can bathe in warm mineral mud believed to have therapeutic properties. Located 1 hour from Cartagena, the volcano provides a surreal experience as the mud's buoyancy supports visitors effortlessly. Shower facilities and fresh water pools available for rinsing.

Tips for Day Trips & Excursions

- Tayrona National Park requires advance booking; entry limited daily
- Pack light for hiking; trails can be muddy during rainy season
- San Andrés island has flight discounts for Colombian residents
- Ciudad Perdida trek requires physical fitness; acclimatize to altitude



- Mud volcano tours include transportation; book with licensed operators



Fountains & Public Art

Decorative public installations and artistic expressions adorning Cartagena's streets and plazas.



Must See

Woman Sculpture (Monumento a la Mujer)

30 minutes No Booking Needed



Map

Cartagena's **most iconic sculpture** featuring a voluptuous woman figure in Plaza Santo Domingo. Created by Colombian sculptor Fernando Botero, the bronze statue celebrates sensuality, femininity, and Cartagena's vibrant culture. The sculpture has become a symbol of the city and a favorite photo spot for tourists.



Top Pick

Street Art Murals (Getsemaní)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Colorful **street art covering entire building walls** throughout Getsemaní neighborhood. Local and international artists create vibrant murals depicting social messages, cultural themes, and abstract designs. The constantly evolving street art scene makes Getsemaní a living open-air gallery.



Notable

Colonial Fountains

1 hour No Booking Needed



Map

Historic **water fountains** scattered throughout the walled city serving both decorative and functional purposes. These fountains feature baroque design elements and intricate stone work. Many plazas center around fountain installations, creating gathering spots for locals and tourists.

Tips for Fountains & Public Art

- Woman Sculpture best photographed in late afternoon light
- Street art changes frequently; visit Getsemaní multiple times for new murals
- Many murals have artist signatures; research artists for context
- Bring camera or phone for quality photography opportunities



Beaches & Coastal Areas

Caribbean coastline offering swimming, relaxation, and water activities with tropical island atmosphere.



Must See Book Ahead

Rosario Islands Beaches

Full day (8-10 hours) Book Ahead



Map

Pristine island beaches featuring white sand, turquoise water, and tropical vegetation. Multiple islands offer different beach atmospheres from vibrant social scenes to secluded paradise. Beaches perfect for swimming, snorkeling, and relaxation. Accessible only by boat tours from Cartagena.



Top Pick

Bocagrande Beach

2-3 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Cartagena's **primary urban beach** featuring sandy shores, palm trees, and modern beach clubs. The beach stretches along the commercial district with hotels, restaurants, and water sports facilities nearby. Lifeguards, umbrellas, and lounge chairs available for rent. The beach offers convenient access from the city center.

Tips for Beaches & Coastal Areas

- Bocagrande beach crowded during high season; arrive early for parking
- Bring reef-safe sunscreen; coral protection important
- Water temperatures year-round 27-29°C (80-84°F)
- Rosario Islands tours often overcrowded; book with smaller operators for better experience
- Avoid displaying valuables on beaches; use hotel safes



Food & Dining

Real, highly-rated Restaurants in Cartagena, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).

Must See

Carta Ajena Restaurante★★★★★ 4.9 (1,876)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Carta Ajena Restaurante is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.9★ from 1876 reviews. Located at Calle 31, Cl. de la Magdalena #10-77, Getsemaní, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Must See

Restaurante Sambal, bistro caribeño★★★★★ 4.9 (1,577)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Restaurante Sambal, bistro caribeño is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.9★ from 1577 reviews. Located at Calle Media Luna, Cl. 30 #9 - 47, Getsemaní, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM



Must See

MORENA LOUNGE BEACH/ SUNSET/ BY THE SEA/ LIVE MUSIC★★★★★ 4.9 (11,278)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

MORENA LOUNGE BEACH/ SUNSET/ BY THE SEA/ LIVE MUSIC is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.9★ from 11278 reviews. Located at Cra. 1 #9 - 6, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM

Must See

La Cabrera Cartagena★★★★★ 4.9 (1,287)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

La Cabrera Cartagena | Casa de Carnes is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.9★ from 1287 reviews. Located at Cl. 31 #3-105, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 9:30 PM

Must See

RESTAURANTE EL BURLADOR Mediterráneo - Caribe (Cartagena)★★★★★ 4.8 (4,760)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

RESTAURANTE EL BURLADOR Mediterráneo - Caribe (Cartagena) is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.8★ from 4760 reviews. Located at Calle Santo Domingo, Cra. 3 #33-88, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM



Must See

Buena Vida Marisquería - Cartagena★★★★★ 4.8 (9,912)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Buena Vida Marisquería - Cartagena is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.8★ from 9912 reviews. Located at Centro histórico, Cl. del Porvenir #Esquina, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 8:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Tuesday: 8:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Wednesday: 8:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Thursday: 8:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Friday: 8:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 8:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 8:00 AM – 11:30 PM

Must See

Sion Gardens rooftop★★★★★ 4.8 (882)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Sion Gardens rooftop is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.8★ from 882 reviews. Located at Calle 30B #nro 64 piso 5, Chipre, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 10:30 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 10:30 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 10:30 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM

Must See

Baroca Sabor Ancestral ☐ - Rooftop★★★★★ 4.8 (990)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Baroca Sabor Ancestral ☐ - Rooftop is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.8★ from 990 reviews. Located at Cl. 30 #8 b-120 Piso 3, Getsemaní, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM



Must See

Tierra★★★★★ 4.8 (359)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Tierra is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.8★ from 359 reviews. Located at Calle del Santísimo, Cl. 38 #8-07, San Diego, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM

Must See

APOGEO RESTAURANTE & ROOFTOP★★★★★ 4.7 (2,095)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

APOGEO RESTAURANTE & ROOFTOP is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.7★ from 2095 reviews. Located at Centro Histórico, Cl. del Porvenir #35-69, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 2:30 PM, 4:30 PM – 12:00 AM

Must See

Montesacro Resto Bar★★★★★ 4.7 (2,185)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Montesacro Resto Bar is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.7★ from 2185 reviews. Located at 11 Segundo Piso, Cl. 33 #04, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM



Must See

NIKU COCINA NIKKEI - Sushi Cartagena★★★★ 4.7 (2,237)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

NIKU COCINA NIKKEI - Sushi Cartagena is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.7★ from 2237 reviews. Located at C31, Centro Histórico, Cl. de San Juan de Dios #3 39, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:30 – 10:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:30 PM

Must See

Viva La Vida★★★★ 4.6 (1,149)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Viva La Vida | Restaurante Rooftop Cartagena is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.6★ from 1149 reviews. Located at Cl. 24 #8A-344, Getsemaní, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Tuesday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Friday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Saturday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Sunday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM

Must See

RESTAURANTE CANDÉ Cocina 100% Cartagenera★★★★ 4.6 (8,933)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

RESTAURANTE CANDÉ Cocina 100% Cartagenera is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.6★ from 8933 reviews. Located at San Diego, Cra 10, Cl. de la Serrezuela #No 39-02, San Diego, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 7:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 7:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 7:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 7:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Friday: 7:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 7:00 AM – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM



Must See

Restaurante Carmen Cartagena★★★★★ 4.6 (1,900)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Restaurante Carmen Cartagena is a highly-rated restaurant in Cartagena, rated 4.6★ from 1900 reviews. Located at Calle del Santísimo, Cl. 38 #8-19, San Diego, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 6:30 – 10:00 PM



Beach Bars

Real, highly-rated Beach Bars in Cartagena, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).

Must See

Carex Beach Club★★★★★ 5 (30)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Carex Beach Club is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 5★ from 30 reviews. Located at Isla de Tierra Boba sector Playa Linda, Isla de Tierra Bomba, Playa Linda, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Must See

MORENA LOUNGE BEACH/ SUNSET/ BY THE SEA/ LIVE MUSIC★★★★★ 4.9 (11,278)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

MORENA LOUNGE BEACH/ SUNSET/ BY THE SEA/ LIVE MUSIC is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.9★ from 11278 reviews. Located at Cra. 1 #9 - 6, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM



Must See

The Pink Mango (formerly Amare Beach)★★★★★ 4.8 (499)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

The Pink Mango (formerly Amare Beach) is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.8★ from 499 reviews. Located at Playa Linda, Isla Tierra Bomba, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Must See

RedRuf - Rooftop Lounge★★★★★ 4.8 (155)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

RedRuf - Rooftop Lounge is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.8★ from 155 reviews. Located at Cl. 46 #2 - 18, Barrio El Cabrero, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 6:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 6:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 6:00 PM – 1:00 AM

Must See

Tamarindo Beach House★★★★★ 4.6 (143)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Tamarindo Beach House is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.6★ from 143 reviews. Located at Isla tierra bomba, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM



Must See

Casa Palenque Cartagena★★★★★ 4.6 (914)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Casa Palenque Cartagena is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.6★ from 914 reviews. Located at calle del carretero, Cl. 29 #10B-08, Getsemaní, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 AM

Must See

Mirador Gastro Bar★★★★★ 4.6 (4,830)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Mirador Gastro Bar is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.6★ from 4830 reviews. Located at Cra. 7 #32-77, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Tuesday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Thursday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 AM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 3:00 AM

Must See

Bar Tu Candela★★★★★ 4.6 (2,219)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Bar Tu Candela is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.6★ from 2219 reviews. Located at centro Portal de los Dulces Plaza de los Coches, Cra. 7 #32-25, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM



Top Pick

Bomba Beach Club★★★★★ 4.5 (628)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Bomba Beach Club is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.5★ from 628 reviews. Located at Isla Tierra bomba, Sector Punta Arena Calle 1 isla Tierrabomba, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Top Pick

Restaurante Terraza Marbella Rooftop★★★★★ 4.5 (165)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Restaurante Terraza Marbella Rooftop is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.5★ from 165 reviews. Located at Cra. 3 #46b83, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 6:30 AM – 8:30 PM
- Tuesday: 6:30 AM – 8:30 PM
- Wednesday: 6:30 AM – 8:30 PM
- Thursday: 6:30 AM – 8:30 PM
- Friday: 6:30 AM – 8:30 PM
- Saturday: 6:30 AM – 8:30 PM
- Sunday: 6:30 AM – 8:30 PM

Top Pick

Tamarindo Beach Club★★★★★ 4.5 (47)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Tamarindo Beach Club is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.5★ from 47 reviews. Located at Calle Tierra Bomba Norte, Punta Arenas, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Thursday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM



Top Pick

Mariana's Beach★★★★☆ 4.4 (134)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Mariana's Beach is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.4★ from 134 reviews. Located at Isla Tierra Bomba, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Top Pick

El Muelle★★★★☆ 4.4 (3,646)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

El Muelle is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.4★ from 3646 reviews. Located at Cra. 1 #1A-23, El Laguito, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Tuesday: 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Wednesday: 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Thursday: 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Friday: 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Saturday: 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Sunday: 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM

Top Pick

ANCESTRAL LOUNGE★★★★☆ 4.3 (181)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

ANCESTRAL LOUNGE is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.3★ from 181 reviews. Located at Isla de Tierra Bomba, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM



Top Pick

Coco Beach Cartagena★★★★☆ 4.2 (138)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed



Map

Coco Beach Cartagena is a highly-rated beach bar in Cartagena, rated 4.2★ from 138 reviews. Located at La Boquilla, Cartagena de Indias, Bolívar, Colombia.

Practical Information

Climate Overview

Cartagena has a tropical Caribbean climate with warm temperatures year-round (average 28-30°C / 82-86°F). The city experiences two main seasons: dry season (December-April) and rainy season (May-November).

Best Months

- **December-March:** Peak season with dry weather, cooler temperatures, and clear skies. Expect larger crowds and higher prices. Perfect for beach activities and outdoor sightseeing.
- **November-April:** Dry season with minimal rainfall. Most pleasant for tourism despite higher prices.

Avoid

- **May-November:** Rainy season brings afternoon thunderstorms and higher humidity. Many tourists avoid this period, making it ideal for budget travelers seeking lower prices and fewer crowds.
- **September-October:** Peak hurricane season in Caribbean; most rain and highest humidity.

Shoulder Season

- **November:** Transition month with less rain than other months, fewer tourists, and good prices. Excellent for visiting.
- **April-May:** End of dry season with some rain appearing; good deals and moderate crowds.

Recommendation: Visit December-February or March for ideal weather, or November for fewer crowds and lower prices with generally good weather.

Getting to Cartagena

By Air

Rafael Núñez International Airport (CTG) located 2 km from city center. Daily flights from major Colombian cities (Bogotá, Medellín, Cali) and international connections. Journey from airport to city center takes 15-20 minutes by taxi (50,000-60,000 COP) or ride-sharing app (30,000-40,000 COP).

By Sea

Cruise ships dock at cruise terminal near Bocagrande district. Caribbean cruise lines regularly visit Cartagena as major port.

By Bus

Long-distance buses arrive at Terminal de Transportes on city outskirts. Buses connect to other Colombian cities. Taxi or ride-sharing from terminal to city center costs 30,000-40,000 COP.



Getting Around Cartagena

Walking

Best method for exploring walled city. Distances manageable and streets interesting. However, terrain is uneven and hilly; wear comfortable shoes.

Taxis

Yellow official taxis throughout city. Negotiate fares before entering or use meter. Initial charge 3,500 COP plus 250 COP per kilometer. Avoid hailing taxis late at night; use ride-sharing apps instead.

Ride-Sharing Apps

Uber and local apps available. Safer than street taxis and generally cheaper. Advance booking recommended during peak hours.

Public Transportation

Limited bus system connects neighborhoods. Buses cost 2,750 COP per ride. Not recommended for tourists unfamiliar with routes.

Bicycles

Several rental shops offer bikes for exploring city. Cost approximately 25,000-40,000 COP per day. Suitable for flat areas; avoid hilly walled city on bikes.

Horse-Drawn Carriages

Romantic tourist option for walled city tours. Negotiable rates typically 60,000-100,000 COP per hour. Limited regulation; use official operators.

➔ Airport Transfer

Rafael Núñez International Airport (CTG) to city center:

- **Official Airport Taxi:** Fixed-rate yellow taxi from the official stand to the walled city or Bocagrande in about 15 minutes, roughly 25,000 to 35,000 COP
- **Ride-hailing (Uber/InDriver):** Pickup from the departures curb to downtown hotels takes 10 to 15 minutes and costs around 15,000 to 22,000 COP
- **Public Bus:** Local buses marked Centro or Bocagrande run along the main avenue outside the terminal, about 30 to 40 minutes for around 2,800 COP
- **Private Hotel Transfer:** Pre-booked van or car with driver waiting inside arrivals, roughly 20 minutes to most hotels for 60,000 to 90,000 COP

What to Buy

Local Crafts

- **Woven Baskets:** Handwoven baskets and bags from coastal communities, ranging from 30,000-200,000 COP
- **Hammocks:** Colorful traditional hammocks perfect for beaches, 40,000-100,000 COP
- **Indigenous Artwork:** Molas (fabric art), tribal masks, and crafts representing indigenous cultures
- **Tagua Nuts:** Vegetable ivory crafted into jewelry and decorations, sustainable alternative to ivory

Colombian Products

- **Coffee:** Premium Colombian coffee beans, coffee sets, and coffee-themed products. Buy from reputable shops for authentic quality
- **Emeralds:** Colombia produces world's finest emeralds. Purchase only from certified gemologists and reputable jewelers to ensure authenticity
- **Handicrafts:** Wood carvings, ceramic pottery, and traditional textiles from various regions



Contemporary Items

- **Street Art Prints:** Original or reproduced street art from local artists
- **Designer Fashion:** Colombian fashion brands and boutique clothing
- **Fresh Tropical Fruits:** Local market fruits packaged for travel

Where to Shop

Walled City Markets

Scattered plazas and streets feature artisan vendors selling local crafts, jewelry, and souvenirs. Prices vary; negotiate with vendors. Most authentic shopping experience.

Shopping Centers

Centro Comercial Bocagrande: Modern mall with international brands, Colombian designers, and duty-free shops. Air-conditioned comfort with fixed pricing.

Street Markets

Bazurto Market: Chaotic traditional market for fresh produce, meat, and local goods. Colorful and authentic but crowded and requires caution with valuables.

Bargaining Tips

- Bargain respectfully with street vendors; expect to negotiate 20-30% off initial price
- Shopping centers and established shops have fixed prices
- Buy multiple items from vendors for better discounts
- Avoid purchasing items from aggressive street vendors in tourist areas
- Authentic emeralds require certification; ask for proper documentation

Annual Events & Festivals

Cartagena International Film Festival (March)

Prestigious film festival showcasing international cinema, documentaries, and Latin American films. Features outdoor screenings, celebrity appearances, and cultural events throughout the city. Attracts international media and film industry professionals.

Cartagena Festival of Music (January)

Week-long classical music festival featuring performances by international orchestras and soloists in historic venues. Concerts held in churches, theaters, and plazas showcasing diverse musical genres from classical to contemporary.

El Mercantil Fair (October-November)

Traditional fair celebrating Caribbean trade and culture with parades, music, dance, and regional food. Features colorful processions, live performances, and festive atmosphere throughout the city.

Independence Day Celebrations (November 11)

National holiday commemorating Colombian independence with parades, patriotic events, speeches, and public celebrations. Streets decorated with Colombian flags and colors.

New Year's Eve & Christmas Celebrations (December 25 & December 31)

Festive season with decorations, special events, holiday markets, and family celebrations. Many restaurants offer special holiday menus and festive atmosphere.



Corpus Christi (May/June - Moveable)

Religious festival with parades, processions, and cultural events. Reflects colonial Catholic traditions blended with local customs and music.

Local Events

Various cultural performances, art exhibitions, and street festivals occur throughout the year. Check local tourism websites for current event schedules when planning visits.

Sample 5-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Walled City Exploration

Morning: Enter through Clock Tower Gate, explore El Centro neighborhood. Visit Cathedral and surrounding plazas. Have breakfast at local café overlooking Plaza Santo Domingo.

Afternoon: Walk to San Pedro Claver Church and convent museum. Explore narrow streets and colonial architecture. Browse art galleries and boutiques.

Evening: Dinner at Plaza Santo Domingo restaurant watching sunset over historic buildings. Stroll illuminated streets of walled city.

Day 2: Museum & Cultural Immersion

Morning: Visit Gold Museum to see pre-Columbian artifacts. Learn about indigenous cultures and artistry. Budget 2-3 hours for thorough exploration.

Afternoon: Explore Naval Museum focusing on maritime history. Visit Palacio de la Inquisición for historical perspective on colonial era.

Evening: Attend cultural performance or concert if available. Explore Getsemaní neighborhood's galleries and street art. Dinner in trendy neighborhood restaurants.

Day 3: Fortress & Beaches

Morning: Take guided tour of San Felipe de Barajas Fortress. Explore tunnels, gun placements, and defensive structures. Climb to top for panoramic city and Caribbean views.

Afternoon: Relax at Bocagrande Beach. Swim, sunbathe, enjoy beach club atmosphere. Try water sports like paddleboarding or parasailing.

Evening: Sunset catamaran cruise with cocktails and live music along Caribbean coast. Return for dinner with ocean views.

Day 4: Day Trip to Rosario Islands

All Day: Full day boat tour to Rosario Islands. Include swimming, snorkeling in coral reefs, beach relaxation. Enjoy fresh seafood lunch on island. Return to Cartagena in late afternoon. Evening rest and light dinner.

Day 5: Local Neighborhoods & Relaxation

Morning: Explore San Diego neighborhood wandering quiet streets and local restaurants. Visit botanical garden for peaceful walk through tropical plants.

Afternoon: Walking food tour through local markets and neighborhoods sampling traditional Colombian dishes and street food. Learn about local culinary traditions.

Evening: Final stroll through walled city at sunset. Shopping for souvenirs and last-minute gifts. Farewell dinner at favorite restaurant.



Extended Itinerary Options

Consider adding: Tayrona National Park day trip, Santa Marta and Ciudad Perdida trek, El Totumo mud volcano experience, or overnight trip to San Andrés island. Each adds unique dimension to Cartagena experience.

Best Photography Locations

Plaza Santo Domingo

Best Time: Late afternoon (4-6 PM) for golden light and colorful building reflections. Evening (7-9 PM) for dramatic illuminated architecture.

Why: Iconic woman sculpture, colorful colonial buildings, and street musicians create layered compositions. Perfect for travel and cultural photography. Crowds thin late evening.

Tips: Arrive before sunset for prime light. Restaurant terraces offer elevated perspectives. Include street musicians and vendors for cultural context.

Clock Tower Gate

Best Time: Early morning (6-8 AM) for soft light and fewer tourists. Golden hour evening (5-7 PM) for warm, dramatic lighting.

Why: Iconic entrance framed by vegetation and historic architecture. Represents the quintessential Cartagena image.

Tips: Shoot from multiple angles and heights. Include passing locals for human interest. Night photography captures dramatic illumination.

Getsemaní Street Art

Best Time: Morning (8-10 AM) for directional sidelight on murals. Avoid harsh midday overhead sun washing out colors.

Why: Vibrant, diverse murals provide endless colorful compositions. Constantly evolving with new artwork appearing regularly.

Tips: Include street context and people for scale. Research artist information for meaningful captions. Return multiple times as art changes frequently.

Paseo del Malecón at Sunset

Best Time: 30 minutes before sunset through 30 minutes after. Golden hour and blue hour combined.

Why: Caribbean Sea backdrops, silhouettes of locals enjoying waterfront, street musicians, and dramatic sky colors create cinematic images.

Tips: Use silhouettes against sunset for dramatic effect. Include foreground interest like vendors or musicians. Tripod helps capture sky color transitions.

Rooftop Views from Historic Hotels

Best Time: Sunrise (6-7 AM) for soft light and minimal crowds. Golden hour evening for warm tones.

Why: Panoramic city views with Caribbean in background. See entire walled city layout and coastal geography.

Tips: Some hotels allow rooftop access for guests only. Ask hotel concierge for best rooftop locations. Include foreground elements for depth.

San Felipe de Barajas Fortress

Best Time: Morning for cleaner light and fewer tourists. Late afternoon for golden light on stone fortifications.



Why: Historic military architecture with Caribbean Sea backdrop. Multiple levels provide varied compositional opportunities.

Tips: Photograph from fortress for city views, or from distance for fortress silhouettes. Include flags and historic markers for context.

Rosario Islands Beaches

Best Time: Midday (11 AM-1 PM) for clear turquoise water. Late afternoon for golden beach light and long shadows.

Why: Pristine tropical beaches with crystal water, white sand, and palm trees. Dream beach scenery with minimal development.

Tips: Underwater photography requires waterproof equipment. Include tropical context with coconut palms and beach vegetation. Drone footage captures island geography.

Cartagena at Night

Best Time: After dark (8 PM+) when street lights and building illumination create dramatic nighttime scenes.

Why: Historic architecture dramatically lit by warm street lights. Narrow streets create intimate atmospheric images. Fewer crowds for composition control.

Tips: Use higher ISO and slower shutter speeds for night shots. Include street lighting and architectural details. Tripod essential for sharp night images.

Electrical Standards in Colombia

Voltage & Frequency

Standard Voltage: 110V AC

Frequency: 60 Hz

Plug Type: Type A (two flat parallel pins, same as USA/Canada)

Electrical Outlets

Standard Colombian outlets match North American Type A plugs. Visitors from USA and Canada can use appliances without adapters. Visitors from Europe, Asia, and other regions require voltage converters and plug adapters.

What to Bring

- **For European visitors:** Multi-voltage universal adapter accommodating Type A plugs, voltage converter for 220V devices (hairdryers, irons)
- **For Australian/UK visitors:** Universal adapter supporting Type A plugs, voltage converter if using non-dual voltage devices
- **For USA/Canadian visitors:** No adapter needed for Type A plugs; many newer devices are dual voltage

Power Considerations

- Large hotels provide reliable constant power. Some budget accommodations may experience occasional outages
- Downtown Cartagena generally has reliable electricity. Surrounding areas may experience periodic outages
- Bring power banks/portable chargers for mobile devices, especially during beach excursions
- USB charging ports increasingly common in hotels and tourist facilities

Surge Protection

Power surges can occur, especially during rainy season. Use surge protectors for valuable electronics (laptops, cameras). Hotels usually provide some protection but individual surge protectors recommended.



Must-Try Dishes

Ceviche

Raw fish cured in citrus juices with tomato, onion, cilantro, and avocado. Refreshing seafood dish typically served with plantain chips. Cartagena's coastal location ensures fresh, quality ceviche at waterfront restaurants.

Arroz con Coco

Rice cooked in coconut milk with seafood, meat, or vegetables. Quintessential Caribbean dish with creamy coconut flavor. Regional specialty representing Cartagena's culinary heritage. Often served with avocado and lime.

Patacones

Twice-fried green plantain slices served as appetizer or side dish. Crispy exterior with soft interior. Traditionally served with garlic sauce for dipping. Found everywhere from street vendors to fine dining.

Ajiaco Cartagenero

Hearty local soup combining seafood, coconut milk, potatoes, and regional vegetables. Warming comfort food representing traditional Cartagena cooking. Often served for lunch, can be heavy but authentic cultural experience.

Empanadas

Fried pastry pockets filled with meat, cheese, potato, or seafood. Common street food costing 3,000-8,000 COP. Various regional variations; try multiple types from different vendors.

Arepa

Cornmeal griddle cake served with butter, cheese, or as sandwich wrapper. Staple Caribbean and Colombian food. Served for breakfast, lunch, or as snack. Try traditional arepa con queso.

Sancocho

Traditional hearty stew combining meat, vegetables, and broth. Regional comfort food varying by area. Cartagena version includes seafood and coconut. Served over rice.

Fresh Fish

Grilled whole fish (red snapper, grouper, sea bass) served with rice, salad, and plantains. Coastal restaurants ensure fresh daily catches. Ask for fish recommendations; chefs know freshest options.

Dining Tips

Restaurants

- **Tourist Area Dining:** Plazas Santo Domingo and San Pedro Claver have established restaurants with reliable quality but higher prices (main dishes 40,000-80,000 COP)
- **Local Neighborhood Restaurants:** Side streets feature authentic local dining with lower prices and better food value (main dishes 20,000-40,000 COP)
- **Upscale Fine Dining:** Cartagena offers sophisticated restaurants featuring fusion cuisine, international chefs, and extensive wine lists (main dishes 60,000-150,000 COP)

Street Food

- **Safety:** Eat at busy vendor stalls with high turnover ensuring fresh food. Avoid food sitting in open air for extended periods
- **Budget Options:** Empanadas, arepa, and ceviche from street vendors cost 3,000-15,000 COP
- **Beverage Cart:** Fresh juices (jugo) from fruit carts cost 3,000-5,000 COP. Avoid tap water; stick to bottled beverages



Dining Customs

- Lunch (12-2 PM) is main meal; dinner lighter and later (7-9 PM)
- Many restaurants close between 2-5 PM
- Tipping 10-15% expected in sit-down restaurants; street food tipping optional
- Credit cards accepted in established restaurants; cash required for street food and small vendors

Beverages

- **Coffee:** Colombians drink small strong black coffee (tinto) throughout day. Quality excellent; try local specialty roasts
- **Beer:** Local brands Aguila and Stella Artois popular. Many craft breweries emerging in Cartagena
- **Rum:** Cartagena as Caribbean port offers excellent rum selection. Try local brands and aged varieties
- **Water:** Tap water not recommended for tourists. Bottled water widely available (3,000-8,000 COP)
- **Fruit Juices:** Freshly made juices (naranja, mango, papaya) available everywhere; ask for sugar level (sin azúcar = without sugar)

Tourist Passes

Cartagena Tourist Card

A convenient **multi-site pass** offering discounted admission to major museums and attractions including Gold Museum, Naval Museum, and Palacio de la Inquisición. Valid for 3 days of visits. Saves approximately 30,000-50,000 COP compared to individual admissions. Available at tourism offices and major hotels.



www.cartagenainfo.com

San Felipe de Barajas Fortress Official Tours

Guided fortress tours offering expert explanation of military architecture, engineering, and history. Tours include tunnel exploration and top platform views. Group tours typically 60,000-90,000 COP; private guides 200,000+ COP. Pre-booking recommended during peak season.



www.castillosanfelipedebarajas.com

Beach Club Day Passes

Bocagrande beach club passes including lounge chairs, umbrellas, and facilities access. Typically 40,000-80,000 COP per day depending on club amenities. Many passes include food and beverage discounts. All-inclusive options available at upscale clubs.



www.cartagenainfo.com

Rosario Islands Tour Packages

All-inclusive **day tour packages** featuring boat transportation, multiple island visits, snorkeling equipment, meals, and beverages. Typical cost 80,000-150,000 COP. Premium packages include private boats, additional meals, and island hotel stays. Book through established tour operators.



www.islaosaritours.com



Cultural Experience Packages

Bundled packages combining museum admissions, guided food tours, street art tours, and cultural performances. Multi-day packages available offering 20-30% savings. Include accommodations and meals. Tourism offices can arrange customized packages.



www.cartagenainfo.com

