



# Bogotá

## Includes »

Around Bogotá .....	73
North of Bogotá .....	73
West of Bogotá .....	75
South of Bogotá .....	76

## Best Places to Eat

- » Andrés Carne de Res (p62)
- » Rafael (p60)
- » Central Cevicheria (p60)
- » Abasto (p61)
- » Agave Azul (p59)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Casa Deco (p53)
- » Casa Platypus (p54)
- » Usaquén Art Suites (p58)
- » La Pinta (p55)
- » Cranky Croc (p54)

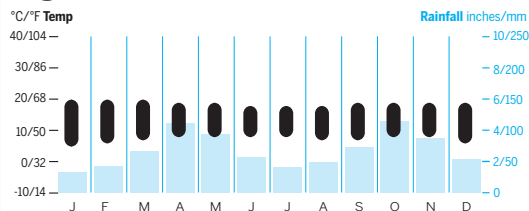
## Why Go?

Bogotá is Colombia's beating heart, an engaging and vibrant capital cradled by chilly Andean peaks and steeped in sophisticated urban cool. The city's cultural epicenter is La Candelaria, the cobbled historic downtown where most travelers gravitate. Here, a potpourri of preciously preserved colonial buildings house museums, restaurants, hotels and bars peppered amid 300-year-old homes, churches and convents. Nearly all of Bogotá's traditional attractions are here – radiating out from Plaza de Bolívar – and gorgeous Cerro de Monserrate is just east.

The city's grittier sides sit south and southwest, where working-class barrios continue to battle well-earned reputations of drugs and crime. In the ritzier north, you'll find boutique hotels and well-heeled locals piling into chic entertainment districts such as the Zona Rosa and Zona G. Here, rust-tinted sunsets dramatically bounce off the bricks of upper-class Bogotá's Andes-hugging residential buildings – a cinematic ceremony that begins the city's uproarious evenings.

## When to Go

### Bogotá



**Jun & Jul** Temperatures aren't as high as May, but rainfall drops dramatically in the capital.

**Aug** Fiesta free-for-all: Salsa al Parque and the Festival de Verano get the city's hips shaking.

**Dec** *Bogotanos* fall hard for Christmas, when the city sparkles in a festival of lights.

## A Bite of Bogotá

Compared to other South American metroplexes like Lima or São Paulo, Bogotá has traditionally lagged behind in gastronomic terms, but don't think for a minute there isn't plenty to sooth your inner foodie. Bogotá is generally chilly, so it's no surprise that two of the most *Bogotano* contributions to Colombia's culinary landscape are warm and soothing. In the city and the Andean region, *ajiaco* is a homey soup made of chicken, corn, many different types of potatoes, avocado and a local herb known as *guasca*. For *onces* (midafternoon tea), there is nothing more inviting than *chocolate completo* (hot chocolate with cheese, buttered bread and a biscuit) – you'll find dozens of quaint cafes offering their take on this cold-weather warm-up. On the street, Bogotá is sweet: *obleas con arequipe* are thin wafers doused in milk caramel; and *coajada con melao* is fresh cheese with melted jaggers. Traditions aside, Bogotá is an international city, with no shortage of excellent eats and fine dining, from coastal Caribbean cevicherias to life-changing Peruvian, Bogotá has it all.

### DON'T MISS

There is plenty to see and do in Bogotá proper, but a visit to Colombia's capital cannot exclude the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá (p73), 50km north of Bogotá, one of only three such structures in the world (the other two are in Poland). Around 250,000 tons of salt was cleared away to carve out the moody, ethereal underground sanctuary, heralded as one of Colombia's greatest architectural achievements. As you descend to 180m below ground through 14 small chapels representing the Stations of the Cross – Jesus' last journey – each a maudlin-lit triumph of both symbolism and mining, nothing prepares you for the trail's culmination in the main nave, where a mammoth cross (the world's largest in an underground church) is illuminated from the base up like heaven itself.

## Bogotá's Top Museums

- » Museo del Oro (p48)
- » Museo Botero (p43)
- » Museo Nacional (p50)
- » Casa de Moneda (p47)
- » Iglesia Museo de Santa Clara (p43)

## ARRIVING IN BOGOTÁ

International and domestic flights arrive at Bogotá's Aeropuerto Internacional El Dorado, while buses call at La Terminal, the city's extraordinarily efficient bus terminal.

## Fast Facts

- » Population: 7.4 million
- » Area: 1587 sq km
- » Telephone area code: 571
- » Elevation: 2625m

## Top Tip

- » After calling a taxi, you'll need to give the driver a password (*clave*), which is normally the last two digits of the phone you called from. Without it, he cannot bring his meter.

## Resources

- » Bogota Turismo (www.bogotaturismo.gov.co/en) Official tourism site.
- » Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com/colombia/bogota) Destination information, hotel bookings, traveler forum and more.