



Cali & Southwest Colombia

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Why Go?

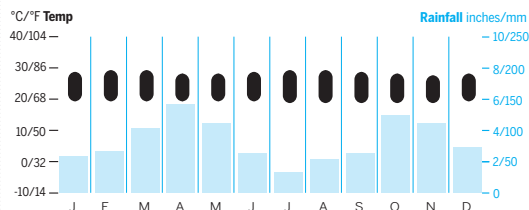
Southwest Colombia, often overlooked by visitors, is one of the most diverse and interesting regions in the country. It is Andean and African, modern and pre-Columbian – a land of contrasts that stimulates the senses at every opportunity.

Here you will find the best archaeological sites in the country and some of its finest colonial architecture. It's a place of immense biodiversity where you can pass through desert, jungle and *páramo* (high-mountain plain) ecosystems in just one day. Nature lovers will find active volcanoes, thermal springs and spectacular mountain ranges all easily accessible from thriving metropolitan centers with fashionable accommodations.

Cali is the biggest city in the region and is famous for its vibrant salsa clubs, but it also has plenty to offer non-dancers including charming old neighborhoods, fine restaurants and hip bars all served up with a big portion of *caleño* attitude.

When to Go

Cali



Best Places to Eat

- » Hotel Camino Real (p233)
- » El Zaguán de San Antonio (p224)
- » Bahareque (p224)
- » Asadero de Cuyes Pinzón (p244)

Best Places to Stay

- » Posada San Antonio (p223)
- » Now Hotel (p223)
- » Hotel Los Balcones (p231)

Sep Head to Cali's Festival Mundial de Salsa and Popayán's Congreso Nacional Gastronómico.

Jul-Sep Local thermal winds pack an extra punch for the best kitesurfing on Lago Calima.

Dec & Jan Clear skies make for pleasant hiking in Parque Nacional Natural (PNN) Puracé.



Cali & Southwest Colombia Highlights

1 Learn to swivel your hips and boogie in the sweaty salsa joints of **Cali** (p225)

2 Soar above the waves amid green mountain scenery while kitesurfing **Lago Calima** (p228)

3 Spend the night stargazing in Colombia's tiniest desert, the **Desierto de la Tatacoa** (p241)

4 Take a boat ride on **Laguna de la Cocha** (p245) and visit cloud forest-clad Isla Carota in the middle

5 Hike the spectacular hills of **Tierradentro** (p239) to visit ancient underground tombs

6 Wander through the elegant streets of **Popayán** (p229) for its excellent

museums and imposing colonial mansions

7 Get up close to the indigenous Guambiano culture at the market in **Silvia** (p232)

8 Gawk at giant pre-Columbian sculptures in phenomenal natural settings at **San Agustín** (p235)