



Cali & Southwest Colombia

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Hotel Camino Real (p239)
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Best Places to Dance

- ➔ Zaperoco (p230)
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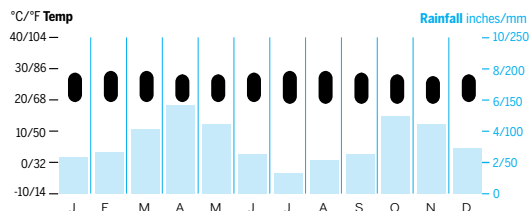
Why Go?

Out of the way and with a reputation for security problems, southwest Colombia is often overlooked by travelers, but this fascinating region warrants an appearance on all itineraries. It's an authentic land of contrasts: Andean and African, modern and pre-Columbian. It stimulates the senses at every opportunity and leaves intrepid visitors with countless tales of classic travel experiences.

Security has improved markedly and destinations that were once off-limits are being put back on the map by adventurous trailblazers. Here you will find the best archaeological sites in the country and some of its finest colonial architecture. It's a region 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 famed for their vibrant culture.

When to Go

Cali



Aug Afro-Colombian rhythms take over Cali during the Festival Petronio Álvarez.

Jul-Sep Thermal winds pack an extra punch for the best kite-surfing on Lago Calima.

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



Cali & Southwest Colombia Highlights

- 1 Gawk at giant pre-Columbian sculptures in phenomenal natural settings at **San Agustín** (p241).
- 2 Learn to swivel your hips and boogie in the sweaty salsa joints of **Cali** (p226).
- 3 Stargaze in Colombia's tiniest desert, the **Desierto de la Tatacoa** (p247).
- 4 Take a boat ride on **Laguna de la Cocha** (p252) and visit cloud-forest-clad Isla Corota.
- 5 Hike the spectacular hills of **Tierradentro** (p245) to visit ancient underground tombs.
- 6 Wander through the elegant streets of **Popayán** (p235) to check out its imposing colonial mansions.
- 7 Pick up thermal winds rolling off the cloud-covered mountains while kitesurfing **Lago Calima** (p233).
- 8 Get up close to the indigenous Guambiano culture at the market in **Silvia** (p238).