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Snowcapped mountains, deep blue seas, mystical jungle depths: Colombia will surprise you with its variety.

Colombia Today

Years of violence and instability caused by paramilitaries, armed rebels and drug cartels are (largely) a thing of the past in Colombia today, with the country focused on bringing a final peace to the decades of conflict with the FARC rebels, which still sadly defines the country to many people. The reality of modern Colombia is very different, in fact: economically dynamic and fast changing, it's a nation where tourism is simply booming despite the not-inconsiderable problems and challenges still to solve.

Best on Film

Todos Tus Muertos (2011) Devastating critique of corruption and apathy in Colombia.

Apaporis (2010) Incisive documentary into indigenous Amazonian life.

Perro Come Perro (2008)

Tarantino-esque gangster flick.

Maria Llena Eres de Gracia (2008)

Moving tale of teen pregnancy and drug-trafficking.

Sóñar No Cuesta Nada (2006)

Colombian soldiers find millions of FARC dollars – and keep it.

Rosario Tijeras (2004) Vengeful

hit-woman's thrilling tale.

Best in Print

One Hundred Years of Solitude

(Gabriel García Márquez) Magic realist masterpiece.

Calamari (Emilio Ruiz Barrachina)

Cartagena-set historical romance.

Beyond Bogotá – Diary of a Drug War Journalist in Colombia (Garry Leech)

Essential reading for news that's not in the papers.

Delirium (Laura Restrepo) Explores personal and political madness in mid-'80s Bogotá.

Six Months on Minimum Wage

(Andrés Felipe Solano) Life in a Medellín factory.

A Country on the Rise

Having largely overcome the instability and violence that has blighted it since the mid-20th century, Colombia is currently one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing economies in Latin America, overtaking its far more historically stable and developed neighbor Peru in 2014. Having avoided the recessions that have hit many Latin American economies in recent years, and also due in part to the high price of its main natural resources, oil and coal, Colombia looks set to continue growth at an impressive pace in the near future.

While it's undeniable that for many rural poor life has yet to improve, Colombia today is racing ahead to become one of the hottest, most exciting destinations on the continent, and tourism is playing an increasingly large role in that. Fresh from a great performance in the 2014 World Cup, Colombian confidence hasn't been so high in living memory, and most visitors will find this infectious.

This journey has been an arduous one, of course, and Colombia remains a nation beset by the demons of its past: memories of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) insurgency, paramilitary groups and violent drug cartels are never far from the minds of locals. But having largely driven the FARC deep into the jungle and simultaneously toward the negotiation table, the Colombian government is focused on bringing long-term peace to the country.

A Polarizing Peace Process

Harvard-educated Juan Manuel Santos became president of Colombia in 2010, following a landslide victory over a former mayor of Bogotá. Having been handpicked by his predecessor, Álvaro Uribe, and initially defining himself as a fierce and uncompromising opponent of