

## CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Colombia's fifth-largest city exudes colonial Spanish vibes. The wall that encloses the Old Town is one of the few intact city walls in the Americas. Perhaps the nicest part of life in Cartagena is how these historically significant monuments tie in so organically to everyday life, creating a relaxed atmosphere. Just watch your belongings.

### KEY INFO

**Currency:** Colombian Peso (1 USD = 3,900 COP)

**Population:** 914,552

**Emergency #:** 123

**Drinking water:** Bottled water recommended

**Time Zone:** GMT-5

**ID Requirements:** Government-issued photo ID

**Languages:** Spanish

**Drive on the:** Right

**Pharmacy:** Farmatodo Ciudad Amurallada 🌐

**Protection:** SPF 30+

**Wi-Fi:** Port Terminal (1-hour for \$3)

**Post Office:** Adpostal, 34, La Matutina 🌐

### PORT LOCATION

Cruise ships dock at dedicated berths at the Port of Cartagena. Tour buses come right up to the pier. Some visitors choose to stay within the port area, which feels like an Eco-Park attraction with a few shops. Others head to the enchanting Old Town (15-minute drive, 40-minute walk)

**Getting Around:** Avoid public transport in Cartagena as tourists are often the victim of crime on public buses. Instead, private taxis and walking are the best ways to get around. The area immediately outside the port isn't particularly pleasant, but once in the Old Town, everything is within a 30-minute walk and full of character.

**Taxis:** Taxis available both inside and outside port area, expect to pay roughly double inside port area (\$20 in/\$10 out). Taxi drivers in light-blue shirts are port authorized. Red shirts are independent. White shirts are worn by licensed guides.

**Tourist Bus:** There is a hop-on hop-off bus operated by [City Sightseeing](#), with 14 stops starting at Muelle de la Bodeguita

**Smartphone App:** Unknown

**Port Facilities:** Duty Free, Shops, Small Eco-Park 🏡, \$ Wi-Fi, Postal Services, Tourist Information

**Port Address:** Port of Cartagena, Manga, Cartagena de Indias, Provincia de Cartagena, Bolívar, Colombia 🌐

**Tourist Map:** [Link to tourist map](#)

### SOMETHING TO EAT

**Pan de Bono:** a savory pastry made with yucca flour and cheese that has a fluffy but filling consistency. Pan de Bono can be found at any panaderia (bakery) in Cartagena and is often served in the mornings, alongside piping hot coffee.

**Tres Leche Cake:** Made with three different milks - evaporated, heavy cream and sweetened condensed - this cake is rich and creamy

For more: <https://colombia.travel/en>, [www.puertocartagena.com/en/cruise-terminal](http://www.puertocartagena.com/en/cruise-terminal)


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🌐 link to map

## HIGHLIGHTS OF CARTAGENA



If you're looking to soak up local vibes in this **UNESCO World Heritage-listed Old Town**, head to **Calle 36 and Calle 38**, the central shopping district where the small side streets are bustling with all sorts of small independent shops. Pedestrian-friendly, but keep an eye on your pockets.

**City Walls:** dating to the 1600s, these colonial Spanish city walls are some of the most intact examples of historic city walls in all of the Americas. Cartagena has a relaxed approach to its historical monuments, and it's not uncommon to see children playing on the walls as if they were an adventure playground. 24 Hours | Free | 



**Plaza de la Aduana:** large public square lined with colonial-era buildings, with a statue of Christopher Columbus. 24 Hours | Free | 

**Catedral Santa Catalina de Alejandria:** towering over the city, the Cathedral's domed tower was constructed between 1577 and 1617. It's free to go inside, but it's the exterior that's truly unmissable. 7a-8p | Free | 

**Museum of Cartagena de Indias:** social history museum set in a fabulous, historical complex. 9a-6p (Mon-Sat), 10a-4p (Sun) | COP 24,000 |  | 

**Santuario de San Pedro Claver:** grand 16th-century church with a museum dedicated to its namesake, a canonized early abolitionist. 10a-4:30p (Tue-Sun) | Free |  | 

**Playas del Capilla del Mar:** resort beach on the Atlantic coast with plenty of umbrellas and sun loungers. 24 Hours | \$ Unknown | 

**Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas:** walk out of Old Town, across the Puente Heredia Nuevo Bridge to the dominating hilltop fort, built by the Spanish from 1536-1767 with an exciting network of underground tunnels. The walk from Old Town takes about 20-minutes. 7a-6p | COP 33,000 |  | 


## SHOPPING FOR EMERALDS


Beautiful loose emeralds and emerald jewelry is plentiful in the Old Town. Look for shops with the following in their names: **Taller y Fabrica de Joyas** (workshop and manufacturer of jewelry), **Museo de Artesanias y Esmeraldas** (museum of crafts and emeralds) or simply **Joyeria** (jewelry). Prices are negotiable. Ask for a certificate of authenticity.


Other typical things to buy from Colombia include fabulous **coffee** and top-quality **textiles**. Clothing and lingerie are well-made and reasonably priced.

Street peddlers will be pushy to push you towards a shop that will pay them a commission for attracting business.

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