



*Colombia*

# Executive Travel Brief

## February 27, 2012

### INTRODUCTION

Advanced Mission Systems (AMS) was founded in 2006 as a business to meet urgent intelligence needs of the military and law enforcement agencies. While filling the technical gaps that were present in the surveillance and exploitation field it became apparent that many things these professionals do as common practice that keep them safe are being overlooked by business professionals. The mission of the Executive Travel Division of AMS is to prepare the businessman for travel to less than perfect and sometimes dangerous locations. This is accomplished by providing crucial information to help get the traveler to their destination and back without excessive risk. Varied levels of service offer the customer a general Overseas Travel Brief, a customized Travel Brief with tailored information and recommendations for your trip, training on how to not be targeted while traveling, personal security gear, security updates and warnings for your areas of interest. This travel brief is for Bogota, Colombia, to include some examples of tailored information.

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF COLOMBIA

Colombia was one of the three countries that emerged from the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830 (Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela). A 50 year conflict escalated during the 1990s between government forces and anti-government insurgent groups, principally the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) whom were heavily funded by the drug trade. The insurgents lack the military or popular support necessary to overthrow the government, and violence has been decreasing since about 2002. However, insurgents continue attacks against civilians and large areas of the countryside are under guerrilla influence or are contested by security forces. The Colombian President's reforms have eliminated many of the core ideological reasons for most insurgent groups to operate, revealing the more sinister and criminal actions and further decreasing support. More than 31,000 former paramilitaries had demobilized by the end of 2006 and the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) as a formal organization had ceased to function. In the wake of the paramilitary demobilization, emerging criminal groups arose, whose members include some former paramilitaries. The Colombian Government has stepped up efforts to reassert government control throughout the country, and now has a presence in every one of its administrative departments. However, neighboring countries worry about the violence spilling over their borders. In January 2011, Colombia assumed a nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2011-12 term.

### COLOMBIAN FLAG AND SIGNIFICATION

-  **Yellow:** represents all the gold found in the Colombian land.
-  **Blue:** represents the seas on Colombia's shores.
-  **Red:** represents the blood spilled on the battlegrounds by the heroes who gained Colombia's freedom.

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### TRAVEL DOCS AND TAXES

All U.S. citizens who are not also Colombian citizens must present a valid U.S. passport to enter and depart Colombia, and to return to the United States. U.S. citizens traveling to Colombia do not need a Colombian visa for a tourist stay of 60 days or less. No arrival tax is collected upon entry into Colombia, but travelers leaving by plane must pay an exit tax at the airport, in cash, of US\$35.00 and \$37.00 (both of these fees are updated once a year). There can be an additional exit tax known as the Colombian Administrative fee, in the amount of US\$15.00. Normally the Colombian Administrative fee is not included in the tickets purchased in the U.S. Some airlines include all or a portion of this tax in the cost of your airline ticket; check with your airline to find out how much you will have to pay at the airport.

### 1. GEOGRAPHY

1. Colombia is located on the northwestern corner of the South American continent. It is bound by Panama and the Caribbean Sea to the northwest, Venezuela to the northeast, Brazil to the southeast, Ecuador and Peru to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The country is divided into four topographical regions.
  - a. The central highlands which consist of the Cordillera Occidental, the Cordillera Central and the Cordillera Oriental Ranges as well as a massive plateau called the Sabana de Bogota.
  - b. The Atlantic lowlands which consist of the plains north of the highlands, although they are connected to them through the Cauca and Magdalena River Valleys, and the isolated mountain systems called the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta as well as the semiarid Guajira Peninsula.
  - c. The Pacific lowlands which consist of a lowland area called the Serrania de Baudo as well as jungles and swamps.
  - d. Eastern Colombia which is east of the Andes and comprises the vast Llanos or plains in the northern area as well as the Selvas or jungle forests in the south. The country drains in three directions by rivers that flow into the Pacific Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.



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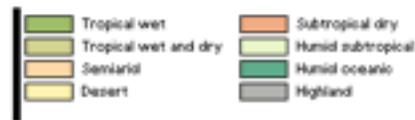
**2. CLIMATE**

2. Average temperature ranges in Bogota are from 10 to 18 degrees Celsius (50 to 64 degrees Fahrenheit) in July, to 9 to 20 degrees Celsius (48 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit) in February. Colombia has a tropical climate on the coast and a temperate climate on the plateau. Colombia can be divided into three climatic zones depending on altitude.

a. 1. Below 915 meters (300 feet) which is a hot zone and comprises 90% of the land area. Average temperature ranges are from 23.8 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit) to 26.6 degrees Celsius (80 degrees Fahrenheit)

b. 2. Between 915 meters (3,000 feet) and 1,980 meters (6,500 feet) which is the temperate zone and comprises only 8% of the land area. Average temperature ranges are from 18.3 degrees Celsius (65 degrees Fahrenheit) to 23.9 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit).

c. 3. Over 1,980 meters (6,500 feet) is the cool zone comprising the plateau and terraces of the Colombian Andes. Average temperate ranges are from 12.7 degrees Celsius (55 degrees Fahrenheit) to -17 degrees Celsius (1.4 degrees Fahrenheit).



**d. SEASONS**

- i. The wet season from March to May and September to November with
- ii. The dry season from December to February and June to August, except in the northern plains where there is only one long wet season from May to October.

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#### 4. DEMOGRAPHICS

a. **POPULATION (2011):** 44,725,543

b. **COUNTRY COMPARISON TO THE WORLD:** 30

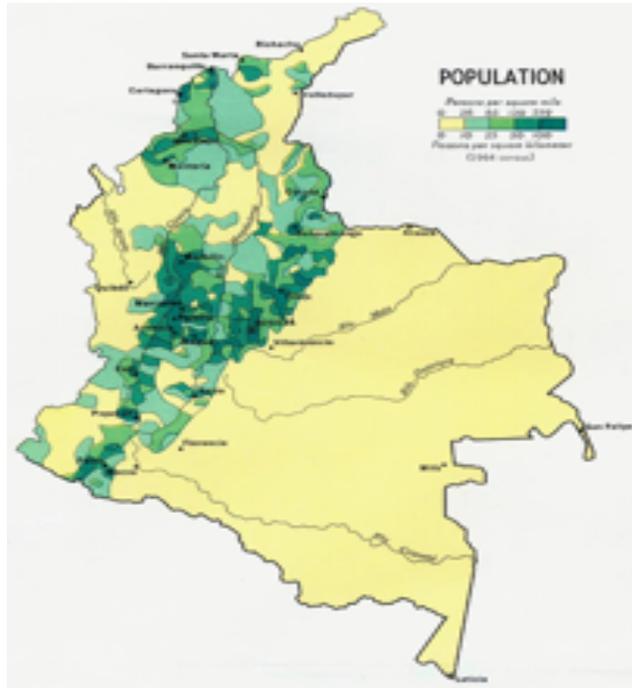
i. Age structure: (2011 est)

- 0-14 years: 26.7% (male 6,109,495/female 5,834,273)
- 15-64 years: 67.2% (male 14,826,008/female 15,208,799)
- 65 years and over: 6.1% (male 1,159,691/female 1,587,277)

ii. Median age: (2011 est.)

- total: 28 years
- male: 27 years
- female: 28.9 years

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- c. MAJOR CITIES.** (2011 est)
  - i.**Bogota (pop. 8.26 million)
  - ii.**Medellin (pop. 3.3 million).
  - iii.**Santiago de Cali (Cali)(pop 2.5 million).
  - iv.**Barranquilla (pop 1.1 million).
  - v.**Cartagena (pop .9 million).
- d. ETHNIC GROUPS.**
  - i.**Mestizo(mix of European and Indigenous ethnicity) 58%
  - ii.**white 20%
  - iii.**mulatto(mixed black and white ancestry) 14%
  - iv.**black 4%
  - v.**mixed black-Amerindian 3%
  - vi.**Amerindian 1%
- e. RELIGION**
  - i.**80% Catholic
  - ii.**13.5% non-Catholic Christian
  - iii.**4.5% other religious groups (including Seventh Day Adventist, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Islam, and Judaism)
  - iv.**2% no religion.
- f. LANGUAGES.**
  - i.**Spanish
- g. CULTURAL DO's & DON'Ts.**
  - i.**Do's

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1. Handshakes are the most common form of greeting, though people who know each other well may greet each other with an embrace, known as the abrazo. Offering your hand upon arrival as well as departure is an essential part of Colombian culture.
2. Meetings should be prolonged affairs where the parties involved ask about family, business, health and your sports team. Rushing the process is seen as disrespectful
3. If entering into negotiations initially concentrate on building rapport and establishing trust
4. Business meetings should be booked at least a week in advance, one should also confirm them prior to meeting
5. Make appointments via telephone or fax
6. Colombia people stand quite close together and like to engage in some physical contact. Be prepared for a hand on your shoulder and don't back away from people if they get too close
7. Until invited to do so, don't address Colombians with their first name. A simple Mr., Mrs. or Miss followed by their surname is fine.

ii. Don'ts:

1. DON'T rush business dealings with your Colombian colleagues and avoid pressing for final decisions.
2. Once a level of trust has been established never change your personnel as this will mean returning back to square one and rebuilding the relationship again
3. Yawning in public is considered impolite.
4. If you see someone tapping their fingers on their elbows this means they are calling someone stingy.
5. The "OK" gesture, i.e. thumb and forefinger brought together to make a circle, should be avoided.

**5. CRIME**

- a. **OVERVIEW:** While both violent and petty crime remains significant concerns in Colombia, over-all crime rates are not increasing. Rising guerrilla-related violence represents an increased risk, primarily that of oil worker kidnappings. A plan, discovered after the killing of FARC leader Alfonso Cano in Nov 2011, to kidnap oil workers specifically, while maintaining bombing campaigns against the industry's infrastructure, is a significant change that will have implications well into 2012. Robbery and other violent crimes, as well as scams against unsuspecting tourists, are common in urban areas. Generally speaking, if you are the victim of a robbery, you should not resist. Firearms are prevalent in Colombia and altercations can often turn violent. Small towns and rural areas of Colombia can still be extremely dangerous due to the presence of narco-terrorists.
- b. **VICTIMS OF CRIME:** If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the U.S. embassy in Bogota or the Consular Agency in Barranquilla. They can:
  - i. Replace a stolen passport.

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- ii. Help you find appropriate medical care, for violent crimes such as assault or rape.
- iii. Put you in contact with the appropriate police authorities, and contact family members or friends.
- iv. Although the local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting the crime, consular officers can help you understand the local criminal justice process and can direct you to local attorneys.

The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in Colombia is 123 for police, ambulance, and fire. There will not be an English speaker answering the telephone. The Government of Colombia does not provide monetary compensation to foreign victims of crime. However, a U.S. citizen residing in Colombia who is a victim of violence by illegal armed groups may apply for compensation.

c. **THEFT:** remains a significant problem in many urban and rural areas. There has been an increase in petty crime, including a significant increase in pick pocketing of passports in the El Dorado Airport in Bogota, Colombia, and at luxury hotels, especially around the predominant Colombian holidays, Christmas, Easter Week, and summer holidays (July and August). Due to criminal activities the U.S. Embassy defines two areas in Bogota that are always off limits for all U.S. government officials and family members. These areas are:

- i. “Galerias” District (between Calles 53 and 54 with Carrera 24 through 27)
- ii. “Plaza de las Americas” District (Avenida Primera de Mayo between Carrera 68 and Avenida Boyacá)

**d. COMMON CRIME METHODS**

- i. **Robberies of ATM Customers:** Tourists and others have been robbed after using automatic teller machines (ATMs) on the street. In some cases, robbers have used motorcycles to approach their victims and later flee the scene. Americans are urged to use ATMs only inside shopping malls or other protected locations. Driving to and from the location – rather than walking – provides added protection. When using an ATM, you should be on the lookout for anyone watching or following you.
- ii. **Robberies of Taxi Passengers:** Robbery of taxi passengers is a serious problem in Bogota, as well as in Cali and Medellin. Typically, the driver – who is one of the conspirators – will pick up the passenger and then stop to pick up two or more armed cohorts, who enter the cab, overpower the passenger, and take his/her belongings. If the passenger has an ATM card, the perpetrators may force the passenger to withdraw money from various ATM locations. Such ordeals can last for hours.

*In almost every case of taxi-related crime, the victims have been riding alone and have hailed taxis off the street.* Rather than hailing a taxi, you should use the telephone dispatch service that most taxi companies offer. Many hotels, restaurants, and stores will call a taxi for you, and the taxi usually arrives within minutes. When a taxi is dispatched by telephone, the dispatcher creates a record of the call and the responding taxi. When taking a

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taxi, it's important that the passenger take note of the license plate, company and other ID of the taxi.

**iii. Robberies of Tourists Departing Airports:** U.S. citizens arriving at major Colombian airports have occasionally been victimized by armed robbers and rogue taxi drivers while en route from the airport to their hotel or home. There are taxi booths both in El Dorado (international) and Puente Aereo (domestic) airports. Travelers may go to the booth, request a taxi, and provide the address of the service. The taxi booth in the international terminal is located to the right, once you exit the baggage/customs area. The taxi booth in the domestic terminal is located to the left, once you exit the baggage area. The person in the booth will give you a ticket indicating the amount of money you will pay for the service. Dispatchers are right outside the exit to organize the waiting line. Authorized taxis are located in the designated area, close to the booth. The passenger should give one part of the ticket to the driver and retain one for their records. Non authorized taxis usually are located in front of the exit areas but not in the authorized areas. Criminals also sometimes scout out victims at the airport and then follow their vehicles before robbing the occupants at a stoplight. Travelers should remain vigilant at airports and report to local airport police if they suspect they may be under surveillance.

**iv. Robberies on Hiking Trails:** Several U.S. citizens were robbed in 2010 while hiking on nature trails in and around Bogota. Because hiking trips generally take place in isolated settings, participants are especially vulnerable. Hikers in Colombia are more protected if they travel in large groups.

**v. Attacks On Hostels:** In the past twelve months (since April 2010), there have been reports of eight attacks on tourists in local hostels in the Candelaria area of Bogota, including one that involved the sexual assault of a U.S. citizen. Be careful when selecting a hotel, looking not just at price but at the general safety of the area.

**vi. Use of Disabling Drugs:** The Embassy continues to receive reports of criminals in Colombia using disabling drugs to temporarily incapacitate tourists and others. At bars, restaurants, and other public areas, perpetrators may offer tainted drinks, cigarettes, or gum. Typically, victims become disoriented or unconscious, and are thus vulnerable to robbery, sexual assault, and other crimes. Avoid leaving food or drinks unattended at a bar or restaurant, and be suspicious if a stranger offers you something to eat or drink. Certain areas of Bogota are off-limits to U.S. Embassy personnel due to the prevalence of the use of disabling drugs. See map below for specific areas that U.S. citizens are encouraged to avoid.

**vii. Counterfeit Money Scams:** U.S. citizens in Colombia routinely fall victim to a scam in which purported undercover police officers approach them on the street and request to examine their money, supposedly to determine if it is counterfeit. The "officers," who are in fact criminals, then flee with the money. In a variation of this scam, the thieves may ask to see jewelry. Legitimate Colombian police officers do not make such requests. Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, purchase of them may also break local law.

**e. LOCAL**

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**i. Kidnapping of oil workers**

1. Cano's Plan 2010 explicitly targeted the oil industry with kidnappings and infrastructure bombings
2. In 2011, at least 38 oil workers were kidnapped, FARC kidnapping activities are expected to rise in 2012
3. In 2011, the oil industry sustained 19 attacks against infrastructure, 26 vehicles burned, and one helicopter destroyed.
4. In June 2011, four Chinese nationals were kidnapped in Caqueta and remain hostages
5. In July 2011, FARC kidnapped five workers from a Western oil company in Arauca Department
6. In November 2011, the FARC executed four of the longest-held hostages — between 12-13 years—, one soldier and three police men

**f. TERRORIST ACTIVITY.**

**i. Current:** The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the dangers of travel to Colombia. Security in Colombia has improved significantly in recent years, including in tourist and business travel destinations like Cartagena and Bogota, but violence by narco-terrorist groups continues to affect some rural areas and large cities. A Travel Warning remains in effect for Colombia and was updated on July 22, 2011.

**ii. Historic.** Terrorist activity remains a threat throughout the country. On August 12, 2010, a car bomb exploded outside the Caracol radio station in Bogota, injuring seven people. On October 21, 2010, Colombian authorities foiled another car bomb attack directed at the National Administrative Center in Bogota. On June 16, 2011, a satchel bomb exploded at a local monument in uptown Bogota, resulting in some damage to adjoining buildings, but no fatalities or injuries. Small towns and rural areas of Colombia can still be extremely dangerous due to the presence of narco-terrorists. While the Embassy possesses no information concerning specific and credible threats against U.S. citizens in Colombia, we strongly encourage you to exercise caution and remain vigilant. Emerging criminal gangs (BACRIM- bandits and criminals) began to develop after the demobilization of the paramilitary fighters from the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC). BACRIM competes and sometimes cooperates with the FARC in the drug trade. The violence associated to BACRIMs occurs throughout Colombia and is a major law enforcement challenge which has led to an increase in the murder rate within some urban areas.

**g. HIGH RISK AREAS.**

**i. Over All:** U.S. government officials and their families in Colombia are permitted to travel to major cities in the country, but normally only by air. They may not use inter- or intra-city bus transportation, or travel by road outside urban areas at night. U.S. government officials and their families in Colombia must file a request to travel to any area in Colombia that is outside of two general vicinities. The first vicinity is outlined by the cities of Bogota, Anolaima, Cogua, and Sesquile. The second vicinity is on the Highway 90 corridor that connects Cartagena, Barranquilla, and Santa Marta. All U.S.

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citizens in Colombia are urged to follow these precautions and exercise extra caution outside of the aforementioned areas.

**6. ECONOMY**

a. **Over View:** The SANTOS administration has highlighted five "locomotives" to stimulate economic growth: extractive industries; agriculture; infrastructure; housing; and innovation. Colombia is third largest exporter of oil to the United States. President SANTOS, inaugurated in August 2010, introduced unprecedented legislation to better distribute extractive industry royalties and compensate Colombians who lost their land due to decades of violence. He also seeks to build on improvements in domestic security and on President Uribe's pro-market economic policies. Foreign direct investment reached a record \$10 billion in 2008, but dropped to \$7.2 billion in 2009, before beginning to recover in 2010, notably in the oil sector. Pro-business reforms in the oil and gas sectors and export-led growth, fueled mainly by the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act, have enhanced Colombia's investment climate. Inequality, underemployment, and narco-trafficking remain significant challenges, and Colombia's infrastructure requires major improvements to sustain economic expansion. Because of the global financial crisis and weakening demand for Colombia's exports, Colombia's economy grew only 2.7% in 2008, and 0.8% in 2009 but rebounded to around 4.4% in 2010. Barclay's says, "In the past 10 years, Colombia has gone from being nearly a failed state to becoming a very attractive destination for foreign investment." The economy is growing by 4-5 percent annually and is predicted to continue this growth through the next decade; domestic oil production is at an all-time high. The Colombian government reaped \$13.2 billion in oil revenue in the first half of 2011 alone. In late 2010, Colombia experienced its most severe flooding in decades, with damages estimated to exceed \$6 billion. The government has encouraged exporters to diversify their customer base beyond the United States and Venezuela, traditionally Colombia's largest trading partners; the SANTOS administration continues to pursue free trade agreements with Asian and South American partners and a trade accord with Canada is expected to go into effect in 2011, while a negotiated trade agreement with the EU has yet to be approved by the EU parliament. Improved relations with Venezuela have eased worries about restrictions on bilateral trade, but the business sector remains concerned about the pending US Congressional approval of the US-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

b. **CURRENCY:** Colombian Peso (COP) divided into 100 Centavos.

c. **APPROXIMATE EXCHANGE RATE:** 1778 COP per 1 USD 2/21/2011

[Current exchange rate](#)

d. **GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT:** USD \$435.4 billion PPP (2010 EST.).

e. **EXTERNAL DEBT USD:**

i. \$68.94 billion (30 June 2011 EST.)

ii. \$62.11 billion (31 December 2010 EST.)

1. country comparison to the world: 50

f. **PER CAPITA (PPP):** \$9,800 (2010 EST.)

i. \$9,600 (2009 EST.)

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ii.\$9,500 (2008 EST.)data are in 2010 US dollars

1. country comparison to the world: 110

g. **MAIN IMPORT PARTNERS:** US 25.5%, China 13.4%, Mexico 9.4%, Brazil 5.9%, Germany 4.1% (2010 est.)

i.**Imports:** industrial equipment, transportation equipment, consumer goods, chemicals, paper products, fuels, electricity

1. USD \$38.64 billion (2010 EST.)

2. \$31.48 billion (2009 EST.)

a. country comparison to the world: 54

h. **MAIN EXPORT PARTNERS:** US 42%, EU 12.6%, China 5.2%, Ecuador 4.5% (2010 EST.)

i.**Exports:** petroleum, coffee, coal, nickel, emeralds, apparel, bananas, cut flowers

1. \$40.78 billion (2010 EST.)

2. \$34.03 billion (2009 EST.)

a. country comparison to the world: 59

i. **LABOR FORCE:** 21.78 million (2010 EST.)

i.country comparison to the world: 30

ii.**Labor Force** - by occupation:

1. agriculture: 18%

2. industry: 13%

3. Services: 68% (2010 EST.)

iii.**Unemployment Rate:**

1. 11.8% (2010 EST.)

2. 12% (2009 EST.)

a. country comparison to the world: 125

## **7. HEALTH ISSUES**

a. Yellow Fever, Malaria and Dengue Fever are common to Colombia.

b. Colombia is listed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as endemic for yellow fever. Airlines require passengers to present a valid Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate before being allowed to board flights out of the country.

c. **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS**

i.**Yellow Fever**

1. Recommended for - all travelers  $\geq 9$  months of age traveling to the following departments (<2,300 m in elevation): Amazonas, Antioquia, Arauca, Atlántico, Bolivar, Boyacá, Caldas, Caquetá, Casanare, Cauca, Cesar, Choco (only the municipalities of Acandí, Juradó, Riosucio, and Unguía), Córdoba, Cundinamarca, Guainía, Guaviare, Huila, La Guajira (only the municipalities of Albania, Barrancas, Dibulla, Distracción, El Molino, Fonseca, Hatonuevo, La Jagua del Pilar, Maicao, Manaure, Riohacha, San Juan del Cesar, Urumita, and Villanueva), Magdalena, Meta, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Quindio, Risaralda, San Andrés and Providencia, Santander, Sucre, Tolima, Vaupés, and Vichada.

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2. Generally not recommended for - travelers whose itinerary is limited to the following areas west of the Andes <2,300 m in elevation: the departments of Cauca, Nariño, Valle de Cauca, and central and southern Choco, and the cities of Barranquilla, Cali, Cartagena, and Medellín
3. Not recommended for - travelers whose itineraries are limited to all areas >2,300 m in elevation, including the city of Bogotá, and also the municipality of Uribia in the La Guajira department
4. Vaccination should be given 10 days before travel and at 10-year intervals if there is on-going risk

**ii. Hepatitis A Vaccine**

1. recommended for - all travelers

**iii. Typhoid Vaccine**

1. recommended for - all travelers

**iv. Hepatitis B Vaccine**

1. recommended for – long-term travelers in close contact with the local population

**v. Tetanus-Diphtheria Vaccine**

1. recommended for – all travelers who haven't had booster within 10 years

**vi. Measles Vaccine**

1. recommended for – travelers born after 1956 who've had only one measles vaccination

**vii. Chickenpox Vaccine**

1. recommended for – travelers who've never had chickenpox

**viii. Rabies Vaccine**

1. recommended for - certain travelers, including:
  2. travelers with significant occupational risks, such as veterinarians
3. long-term travelers and expatriates living in areas that pose a high risk for exposure
4. travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats, stray dogs and cats, wildlife, and other mammals. Such travelers include wildlife professionals, researchers, veterinarians, or adventure travelers visiting areas where bats, wildlife, and other mammals are commonly found

**d. HEALTH CARE.**

ALL TRAVELERS SHOULD VISIT EITHER THEIR PERSONAL PHYSICIAN OR A TRAVEL HEALTH CLINIC 4-8 WEEKS BEFORE DEPARTURE.

**i. MEDICAL INSURANCE:** You can't assume your insurance will go with you when you travel, Medicare for instance does not cover expenses incurred outside of the USA or its territories. It's very important to find out BEFORE you leave whether or not your medical insurance will cover you overseas. You need to ask your insurance company two questions:

1. Does my policy apply when I'm out of the United States?
2. Will it cover emergencies like a trip to a foreign hospital or a medical evacuation?  
In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctors' and

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hospital visits in other countries. If your policy doesn't go with you when you travel, it's a very good idea to take out another one for your trip. The Social Security Medicare Program does not provide coverage for hospital or medical costs outside the United States.

ii. **MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION:** Medical care is adequate in major cities but varies greatly in quality elsewhere. Emergency rooms in Colombia, even at top-quality facilities, are frequently overcrowded and ambulance service can be slow. Many private health care providers in Colombia require that patients pay for care before treatment, even in an emergency. Some providers in major cities may accept credit cards, but those who do not may request advance payment in cash. Uninsured travelers without financial resources may be unable to obtain care, or relegated to seeking treatment in public hospitals where care is far below U.S. standards.

Officials regularly receive reports of U.S. citizens in Colombia who have died or suffered complications from elective surgeries intended to treat obesity. Before undergoing such a procedure in Colombia, the Department of State recommends that you consult with your personal physician, research the credentials of the provider in Colombia, and carefully consider your ability to access emergency medical care if complications arise. It is important to confirm that your medical insurance provides coverage in Colombia, including treatment of complications from elective procedures or medical evacuation if necessary. Should you suffer complications as a result of medical malpractice, collecting damages from your surgeon may be difficult. Colombia has seen a recent increase in the use of unregulated drugs that purport to enhance sexual performance. Several American tourists recently died after using these substances, which come in liquid, powder, or tablet form. You are urged to seek guidance from a physician before ingesting any such substances in Colombia.

Travelers to the capital city of Bogota may need time to adjust to the altitude of 8,600 feet, which can affect blood pressure, digestion, and energy level, and cause mild dyspnea with exercise, headaches, sleeplessness, and other discomfort. Travelers should drink liberal fluids to maintain hydration, and should avoid strenuous exercise until they have acclimated to the altitude.

Travelers with circulatory or respiratory problems should consult a physician before traveling to Bogota or other high-altitude locations.

1. **Clinica Colsanitas**

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2. **Clinica Del Country**

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4. **Fundacion Sta Fe De Bogota**  
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Bogota, Colombia  
**Fax:** + 57 1 214 6668

**e. COMMON ILLNESS'**

**i.Travelers' Diarrhea**

1. To prevent diarrhea, avoid tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (iodine tablets); only eat fresh fruits or vegetables if cooked or peeled; be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurized milk; and be highly selective when eating food from street vendors.

2. If you develop diarrhea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution containing lots of salt and sugar. A few loose stools don't require treatment but, if you start having more than four or five stools a day, you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinolone drug) and an antidiarrheal agent (such as loperamide). If diarrhea is bloody or persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking chills or severe abdominal pain you should seek medical attention.

**ii.Hepatitis A**

1. The second most common travel-related infection (after traveler's diarrhea). It's a viral infection of the liver that is usually acquired by ingestion of contaminated water, food or ice, though it may also be acquired by direct contact with infected persons. The illness occurs throughout the world, but the incidence is higher in developing nations. Symptoms may include fever, malaise, jaundice, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Most cases resolve without complications, though hepatitis A occasionally causes severe liver damage.
2. There is no treatment for Hepatitis A. However the vaccine for hepatitis A is extremely safe and highly effective. And if you get a booster six to twelve months later, it lasts for at least 10 years. Because the safety of hepatitis A vaccine has not been established for pregnant women or children under age 2; they should instead be given a gamma globulin injection.

**iii.Dengue Fever**

1. Dengue fever is a viral infection and the number of cases reported from Colombia has risen sharply in recent years, especially in Santander, Tolima, Valle del Cauca, Norte de Santander, Meta and Huila. Dengue is transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes, which bite

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preferentially during the daytime and are usually found close to human habitations, often indoors. Dengue is especially common in densely populated, urban environments.

2. Dengue usually causes flulike symptoms, including fever, muscle aches, joint pains, headaches, nausea and vomiting, which are often followed by a rash. The body aches may be quite uncomfortable, but most cases resolve uneventfully in a few days.

3. There is no treatment for dengue fever. The only thing to do is take analgesics such as acetaminophen/paracetamol (Tylenol) and drink plenty of fluids. Severe cases may require hospitalization for intravenous fluids and supportive care. There is no vaccine. The cornerstone of prevention is insect protection measures.

**iv.**

**Yellow Fever**

1.

Yellow fever is caused by a small virus that is spread by the bite of mosquitoes. This disease is common in South America and in sub-Saharan Africa. Anyone can get yellow fever, but the elderly have a higher risk of severe infection. If a person is bitten by an infected mosquito, symptoms usually develop 3 - 6 days later.

2.

Yellow fever has three stages:

a.

Early stage: Headache, muscle and joint aches, fever, flushing, loss of appetite, vomiting, and jaundice are common. After approximately 3 - 4 days, often symptoms go away briefly (remission).

b. Period of remission: After 3 - 4 days, fever and other symptoms go away. Most people will recover at this stage, but others may move onto the third, most dangerous stage (intoxication stage) within 24 hours.

c. Period of intoxication: Multi-organ dysfunction occurs. This may include heart, liver, and kidney failure, bleeding disorders, hemorrhage, and brain dysfunction including delirium, seizures, coma, shock, and death.

**v.**

**Malaria**

1.

There is a high incidence of malaria in lowland tropical areas, particularly in Chocó and north western Antioquia.

2.

Malaria is transmitted by mosquito bites. The main symptom is high spiking fevers, which may be accompanied by chills, sweats, headache, body aches, weakness, vomiting or diarrhea. Severe cases of malaria may involve the central

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nervous system and lead to seizures, confusion, coma and death.

3. Taking malaria pills is strongly recommended for all rural areas below 800m. Risk is highest in the departments of Amazonas, Chóco, Córdoba, Guainía, Guaviare, Putumayo and Vichada. There is no malaria risk in or around Bogotá.



- a. Mefloquine (Lariam) is taken once weekly, starting one to two weeks before arrival and continuing through the trip and for four weeks after return. The problem is that a certain percentage of people develop neuropsychiatric side effects, which may range from mild to severe.
- b. Atovaquone/proguanil (Malarone) is a newly approved combination pill taken once daily with food starting two days before arrival and continuing through the trip and for seven days after departure. Side effects are typically mild. Malarone should not be used for treatment if you're already taking it for prevention.
- c. Doxycycline is a third alternative, but may cause an exaggerated sunburn reaction.
4. Protecting yourself against mosquito bites is just as important as taking malaria pills, since none of the pills are 100% effective.

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5. If you develop a fever after returning home, see a physician, as malaria symptoms may not occur for months.

**vi.Hepatitis B**

1. Like hepatitis A, hepatitis B is a liver infection that occurs worldwide but is more common in developing nations. Unlike hepatitis A, the disease is usually acquired by sexual contact or by exposure to infected blood, generally through blood transfusions or contaminated needles. The vaccine is recommended only for long-term travelers (on the road more than six months) who expect to live in rural areas or have close physical contact with the local population.
2. Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and highly effective. However, a total of three injections are necessary to establish full immunity. Several countries added hepatitis B vaccine to the list of routine childhood immunizations in the 1980s; so many young adults are already protected.

**vii.Intestinal Worms**

1. These parasites are common in humid, tropical areas. They can be present on unwashed vegetables or in undercooked meat or you can pick them up through your skin by walking barefoot. Infestations may not show up for some time and, although they are generally not serious, can cause further health problems if left untreated. A stool test on your return home is not a bad idea if you think you may have contracted them. Medication is usually available over the counter and treatment is easy and short.

**viii.Cholera**

1. Cholera is an intestinal infection acquired through ingestion of contaminated food or water. The main symptom is profuse, watery diarrhea, which may be so severe that it causes life-threatening dehydration. The key treatment is drinking oral rehydration solution. Antibiotics are also given, usually tetracycline or doxycycline, though quinolone antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin and levofloxacin are also effective. In recent years, only a small number of cholera cases have been identified and a cholera vaccine is no longer required

**ix.Typhoid Fever**

1. Typhoid fever is caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated by a species of *Salmonella* known as *Salmonella typhi*. Fever occurs in virtually all cases. Other symptoms may include headache, malaise, muscle aches, dizziness, and the loss of appetite, nausea and abdominal pain. Either diarrhea or constipation may occur. Possible complications include intestinal perforation, intestinal bleeding, confusion, delirium or (rarely) coma. Unless you expect to take all your meals in major hotels and restaurants, typhoid vaccine is a good idea.
2. The drug of choice is usually a quinolone antibiotic such as ciprofloxacin (Cipro) or levofloxacin (Levaquin), which many travelers carry for treatment of traveler's diarrhea. However, if you self-treat for typhoid fever, you may also need to self-treat for malaria, since the symptoms of the two diseases may be indistinguishable.

**x.Tetanus**

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1. This potentially fatal disease is difficult to treat, but is easily prevented by immunization. Tetanus occurs when a wound becomes infected by a germ that lives in soil in the feces of horses and other animals. It enters the body via breaks in the skin, so the best prevention is to clean all wounds promptly and thoroughly and use an antiseptic. Use antibiotics if the wound becomes hot or throbs or pus is seen. The first symptom may be discomfort in swallowing or stiffening of the jaw and neck; this can be followed by painful convulsions of the jaw and whole body.

2. This is spread by ticks, mites and lice. It begins as a severe cold followed by a fever, chills, headaches, muscle pains and a body rash. There is often a large and painful sore at the site of the bite, and nearby lymph nodes become swollen and painful.

**xi.Typhus**

1. This is spread by ticks, mites and lice. It begins as a severe cold followed by a fever, chills, headaches, muscle pains and a body rash. There is often a large and painful sore at the site of the bite, and nearby lymph nodes become swollen and painful.

**xii.Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

1. Sexual contact with an infected partner can result in you contracting a number of diseases. While abstinence is the only 100% effective prevention, the use of condoms lessens the risk of infection considerably. The most common sexually transmitted diseases are gonorrhea and syphilis, which in men first appear as sores, blisters or rashes around the genitals and a discharge or pain when urinating. Symptoms may be less marked or not present at all in women. Syphilis symptoms eventually disappear, but the disease continues and may cause severe problems in later years. Gonorrhea and syphilis are treatable with antibiotics.

**xiii.AIDS & HIV**

1. Infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) may lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), which is a fatal disease. Any exposure to blood, blood products or body fluids may put the individual at risk. The disease is often transmitted through sexual contact, and in Colombia it's primarily through contact between heterosexuals.

2. HIV and AIDS can also be contracted through infected blood transfusions, and you should be aware that not all the hospitals screen blood supplies. The virus may also be picked up through injection with an unsterilized needle. Acupuncture, tattooing and body piercing are other potential dangers.

3. In the 2010 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic the UNAIDS/WHO Working Group estimated that around 150,000 adults aged 15 or over in Colombia were living with HIV; the prevalence percentage was estimated at around 0.5% of the adult population compared to the prevalence percentage in adults in the UK of around 0.2%. You should exercise normal precautions to avoid exposure to HIV/AIDS.

**xiv.Rabies**

1. Rabies is a viral infection of the brain and spinal cord that is almost always fatal. The rabies virus is carried in the saliva of infected animals and is typically transmitted through an animal bite, though contamination of any break in the skin with infected

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saliva may result in rabies. In Colombia, a rabies outbreak caused by large numbers of bat bites was reported in May-June 2004 in the Choco region.

2. Rabies vaccine is safe, but a full series requires three injections and is quite expensive. Those at high risk for rabies, such as animal handlers and spelunkers (cave explorers), should certainly get the vaccine.
3. All animal bites and scratches must be promptly and thoroughly cleansed with large amounts of soap and water and local health authorities contacted to determine whether or not further treatment is necessary.

**8. VETTED SERVICES.**

**a. HOTELS.** These hotels are Vetted and approved by the US Embassy and were selected for their security and location to the restaurants and shopping malls. They are in order of precedence

1. Andino Royal:  
Calle 85 No. 12-28  
Bogota, D.C.-Colombia  
Andrea Cristancho Buitrago (Front Desk & Reservation Manager)  
T: (571) 6513131 Ext: 4100  
Director of Reservation (571)6513092  
Fax: (571) 6513126  
C: 320-348-0397  
Juan Carlos Sanabria Rojas (General Manager)  
T: (571) 651-3131 Ext. 5200  
F: (571) 651-3126  
[http://www.hotelesroyal.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=36&Itemid=318&lang=es](http://www.hotelesroyal.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=36&Itemid=318&lang=es)
2. Holiday inn express:  
Calle 94 No. 11A-12  
Bogota, D.C.-Colombia  
POC Jeny Pinzon ext. 5552  
E: [jpinzon@oxohotel.com](mailto:jpinzon@oxohotel.com)  
T: 57(1) 651-0000  
E: [reservas@oxohotel.com](mailto:reservas@oxohotel.com)  
<http://www.hiexpress.com/hotels/us/es/bogota/bogex/hoteldetail>
3. Hotel Dann Carlton Bogota:  
Avenida 15 # 103-60  
Bogota, D.C.-Colombia  
POC: Leidy Perez  
T: (571) 6353200 Ext. 1025  
F: 638-3201  
Reservations: (651) 635-2824  
Email: [l.perez@danncarlton.com.co](mailto:l.perez@danncarlton.com.co)

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POC: Alix Edith Moreno R.

T: (571) 635-0010 Ext 1023

C: (57) 311-809-5408

<http://www.danncarlton.com.co/en/index.php>

**b. Transportation**

Armored Vehicle Service

President

Mario A. Aponte

305-607-7906

POC:Nubia Sánchez

[nsanchez@setsa.co](mailto:nsanchez@setsa.co)

SET Cra. 14 #117-27

619.7280

313 397 9988

Juan Parada

[jparada@setsa.co](mailto:jparada@setsa.co)

**c. Lines of communications:**

Cell phone companies:

1. Comcel
2. Movistar
3. Tigo

**d. Eating Establishments:**

Usaquen/Pepe Sierra

1. La Mar Cebicheria  
Sun- Sun 12-12  
Calle 119 No 6-01  
Tel: 6292200
2. London Calling  
Mon-Sat 4 pm to 3 am.  
Calle 120A No 6A-28  
Tel: 6207655
3. La Fragata Giratorio  
Mon- Sat 12 to 10 pm, Sun 12 to 6 pm  
Calle 100 No 8A-55  
Tel: 2184456
4. La Bonga del Sinu  
Mon-Sat 11:30 to 11:00 pm, Sun 11 To 9 pm  
Calle 116 No 16-89  
Tel: 5219418  
Parque de la 93
5. Salto del Angel  
Mon-Wed 12-1 am, Thu-Sat 12-3 am, Sun 12-6pm

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- Cra 13 No 93A- 45  
Tel: 6545454
6. El Sitio  
Wed- Sat 4pm to 3am, Sun 12-6pm  
Cra 11 No 93b-12  
Tel: 6167372
7. Oma  
Mon- Sun 10-10pm  
Parquet de la 93  
Tel: 6400215
8. Pesquera Jaramillo  
www.pesquerajaramillo.com  
parque de la 93  
Tel: 2565494
- Zona Rosa T
1. Hard Rock Café  
www.hardrockcafe.com  
calle 81 No 13-85  
Tel: 5307328
  2. Juan Valdez café  
Mon-Fri 6:30am-9:00pm, Sat 8am-9pm
  3. La Plaza de Andres  
Calle 82 No 11-75 C.C el Retiro 3piso
  4. Hooters  
Mon-Wed 12-12 Thu-Sat 12-1am Sun 12-10pm  
Calle 85 No 11-44  
Tel: 2184717
- e. Shopping Centers**
1. Andino  
www.centrocomercialandino.com.co  
Cra 11 No 82-71  
Tel: 6213111
  2. Salitre Plaza  
www.salitreplaza.com.co  
Cra 68B No 24-39  
Tel: 4231010
  3. Santafe  
www.centrocomercialsantafe.com  
calle 185 No 43-03  
Tel: 6050707
  4. nicentro  
www.unicentrobogota.com

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Cra 15 No 123-30  
Tel. 2138800

**9. EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSONNEL**

**a. STATE DEPARTMENT**

**i.** U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520  
(Main Switchboard: 202-647-4000)  
(Internet: <http://www.state.gov>)

**b. LOCATIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

**i. The United States Embassy Bogota**

Calle 24 Bis No. 48-50 Bogotá, D.C. Colombia.  
Mailing address: Carrera 45 No. 24B-27 Bogotá, D.C. Colombia.  
Telephone :( 571) 315-1566.  
Emergency/after-hours telephone :( 571) 315-0811;  
Facsimile :( 571) 315-2197.

<http://bogota.usembassy.gov/>

**1. U.S. Embassy POC's by Position.**

- a.** Ambassador--**P. Michael McKinley**
- b.** Deputy Chief of Mission--Perry Holloway
- c.** Political Counselor--Mark A. Wells
- d.** Economic Counselor--Timothy Stater
- e.** Consul General--Raymond Baca
- f.** Commercial Counselor--Margaret Hanson-Muse
- g.** Management Counselor--Theresa M. Leech
- h.** Military Group Commander--COL Michael Brown
- i.** Narcotics Affairs Section Director--James Story
- j.** Defense Attaché--COL Paul Murray
- k.** Public Affairs Officer--Mark Wentworth
- l.** Regional Security Officer--Robert Myers
- m.** USAID Director--Nadereh Lee (Acting)

**ii. The United States Consular Agency Barranquilla**

Calle 77B, No. 57-141, Piso 5, Centro Empresarial Las Americas, Barranquilla, Atlántico  
Telephone: (575) 353-2001  
Facsimile: (575) 353-5216

**c. FOREIGN LEGAL CONSULTANTS (Lists of U.S. Law firms and local law firms that can represent U.S. citizens.)**

**i. [Macleod Dixon LLP](#)**

Bogota, Colombia  
Energy, Mining, Finance and Technology Law Firm  
+57 1 7464666

**ii. [Frank A. Rubino, Esq. PA.](#)**

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Bogota, Colombia  
Federal & International Criminal & White Collar Crime Defense Lawyer  
+57 1 2106614

iii. [Diaz Reus, LLP](#)

Bogota, Colombia  
International Law & White Collar Criminal Defense Lawyers  
+57 1 4761313

iv. [Ballard & Ballard](#)

Bogota, Colombia  
Full-Service Law Firm in Colombia  
+57 1 601 8000

v. [B&R Latina](#)

Bogota, Colombia  
Trademarks & Patents Management in Latin America  
+57 1 3230233

**d. OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION**

**i.** U.S. Department of Commerce, Trade Information Center, International Trade Administration

Mailing Address:

1401 Constitution Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20230

(tell: 800-USA-TRADE)

(Internet: <http://www.trade.gov>)

**ii.** Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce

Calle 98, # 22-64, Oficina 1209

Apartado Aereo 8008

Bogota, Colombia

(tell: (571) 587-7278; fax: (571) 587-7278-2)

Chapters in Barranquilla, Cali, Cartagena, Medellin

**10. ROUTES**

- a. Electronic map(s) with embedded landmark pictures**
- b. Routes that are embedded on mobile apps for iPads, smartphones, ect.**
- c. Preset electronic warning if straying from routes**
- d. Geo-zone data of high threat areas**