

COLOMBIA - MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES - VILLA DE LEYVA

ITINERARY

Day 1

The meeting point is Bogota International airport.

The first and last nights are spent in Bogota and so your flights can arrive and depart at any time.

Overnight Scala 68. Meals are to your own account today.

The first and last nights of the trail are spent in hotel accommodation in Bogota. For the nights in between, you stay at small inns and guesthouses.

On most nights of the ride there are private bathrooms for each room, but on occasion a bathroom is shared between two guest rooms. Cold showers are the norm in Colombia, so you cannot expect to have hot water at the end of a long day in the saddle - the exception being the hotel accommodation in Bogota, which does have hot showers.

For your time in Bogota, we would recommend that if you wish to tour the city, do so with a guide. It is best that you ask your hotel to book taxis for you, rather than to hail one in the street. If you go walking by yourself do so only during daylight hours and stay within around a five-block radius of the hotel, which is located in the business district of the city.

Scala 68 is four star centrally located property is within easy reach of Bogota's restaurants and shopping centres. Depending on availability an alternative hotel of similar quality may be used.



Double room at Scala 68

Day 2

Local conditions and weather can sometimes cause the itinerary to change. Below is a sample itinerary to give you an idea of what to expect. The accommodation used and the route can sometimes change, but always with your best interests in mind.

Early morning drive to meet the horses about an hour north from the city.

Horses and guides await near the beautiful Sisga Dam.

Set off on horseback and ride through the valley of the Sisga River until it flows into the Bogotá River. The waters here are still crystalline and full of aquatic life.

Turn onto a mountain trail which leads us towards Suesca Lake. From here there are good views across the northern side of the Bogotá Savannah, with the notable Tominé Reservoir in the distance.

Cross the Cajones Mountain (c. 3,000m) and descend to the beautiful Suesca Lake. There is an old railway station here, which was used until the middle of the last Century. Continue onwards to Cucunubá located in the Ubaté Valley. Cucunubá is a beautiful colonial town well-known for its handmade woollen fabrics and clothes.

Riding time: Approximately 6-8 hours.



Overnight La Posada de Aquilino. Tonight's accommodation is a simple guesthouse in a rural location, with excellent pasture for the horses.

Day 3

After breakfast, set off on horseback. From Cucunubá, journey in the direction of Guachetá. Along the way, discover the beautiful natural lakes of Cucunubá and Fúquene.

Ride along rural paths that cross artisanal coal mines. Arrive in San Miguel in the afternoon.

Riding time: Approximately 6-8 hours.



Overnight Hacienda Ticha. Dating back to the early 1800's, this historic private family home has a wealth of Colombian charm.



Day 4

After breakfast, the ride sets off in the direction of Ráquira. Along this route there are forests of native oaks, hundreds of years old.

As La Candelaria Desert comes into sight, you will see the many clay ceramic handicraft workshops for which the Ráquira region is famous.

Riding time: Approximately 6-8 hours.



Overnight La Candelaria Monastery. La Candelaria Monastery was the first Augustinian monastery in the Americas.

The monastery was founded by Father Mateo Delgado in 1604, on the banks of the Gacheneca River. Here, he started a community by bringing together the hermits that lived scattered in caves in the surrounding area. Augustinian monks still live at the monastery, and it also provides lodging for travellers.



Day 5

After breakfast, set off on horseback. Leave the monastery and cross La Candelaria Desert. Riding in the direction of the Villa de Leyva Valley, follow rural tracks amongst the hills surrounding the town.

Villa de Leyva was founded in 1572 by order of Don Andres Diaz Venero de Leyva, first President of the New Kingdom of Granada, with the main purpose of becoming the supplier of foodstuffs for the conquistador armies stationed in Moniquirá and Tunja.

Riding time: Approximately 7-9 hours.



Overnight Hacienda Flamingo. Farmhouse-style accommodation, featuring simple cabins and spectacular views.



Typical room at Hacienda Flamingo

Day 6

Today's ride takes you through beautiful landscapes not far from Villa de Leyva. Lunch will be a picnic out on the trail.

Later, after the chance for a shower and change of clothes, head into Villa de Leyva for dinner at a local restaurant.

Riding time: Approximately 5-7 hours.



Overnight Hacienda Flamingo.

Day 7

Today there is a guided visit to the city of Villa de Leyva

Villa de Leyva's main square is the largest in Colombia. The town has many important historical buildings, including the house where Antonio Nariño, one of the key figures of Colombian independence, died in 1823. Now a museum,

the Case de Nariño displays artefacts from colonial times and the fight for freedom from Spanish rule. There is also the chance to see Claustro de San Agustín, the town's first church.



Return to the hotel in Bogota.

Overnight Scala 68.