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. Prior to your holiday, the ride operator (Julio Pardo) will contact everyone joining the ride to create a WhatsApp group. This will make it easier for you to keep in touch and find each other at Bogota airport if you are arriving on similar flights. It is also a way for you to keep in contact and share photos of your trip afterwards.

Julio may share some more information about the trip you are about to do. He does also sometimes ask for riding or flight details but please be assured that we will already have sent him this information. In The Saddle will continue to be your main point of contact in the lead up to your holiday and please do ask me if you have any questions.

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 usual in Colombia, so you may not always have hot water for a shower at the end of a long day in the saddle.

For your time in Bogota, we would recommend that if you wish to tour the city, do so with a guide. You could use the app called 'Get Your Guide' for city tours. Alternatively, you could try Gran Colombia Tours and their website is: https://grancolombiatours.com/

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

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stay within around a five-block radius of the hotel, which is located in the business district of the city.

Scala 68 is a centrally located property 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.

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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 Casa la Bisbal. A colonial hotel in the centre of Cucunuba, not far from the main square.

The hotel has 10 guest rooms, each with a fireplace.

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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.

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Outside Hacienda Ticha

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 Teneria Guesthouse. This simple guesthouse is located near La Candelaria desert. The building is typical of the area, made of adobe cañabrava (bitter cane), stone and wood.

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Typical room at La Teneria

A typical guest room at La Teneria

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.

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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.

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Villa de Leyva

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.

Villa de Leyva

Return to the hotel in Bogota.

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Overnight Scala 68.

Day 8

You will likely need to check-out after breakfast. If your flight is later in the day, you can go for a coffee or explore a little of Bogota until it is time to leave for the airport.

You will be transferred to Bogota Airport.

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