

Trek to the Lost City



Duration: 10 days

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountains, declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1979, run through Colombia and end close to the Caribbean Sea on the north coast. They are cloaked in dense tropical rainforest, which hides the ruins of Teyuna, dating back some 1500 years, and more famously known as the Lost City.

As the world gets smaller it becomes harder to visit places before they become a tourism hotspot, but our Lost City trek gives us the opportunity to do just that. To reach the 1200 ancient stone steps that lead up to the city, we trek on steep, sometimes overgrown and muddy trails, through lush jungle and river valleys, crossing clear streams. En route we pass indigenous Kogui communities, descendants of those early builders; we sleep near these settlements in hammocks.

After time to explore the uncrowded ruins and marvel at what would have been here in years gone by, we return and head to colonial Cartagena, with a stunning Caribbean backdrop, this is a tough trek full of natural beauty and cultural discovery, and is guaranteed to be a trip of a lifetime!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London for Bogota

Day 2: Bogota – Santa Marta

On arrival in Bogota we connect onto Santa Marta, on the northern coast, where we start our trip with a city tour and some lunch before transferring to our hotel. After freshening up, there should be time to relax and explore the streets or wander by the bay. Santa Marta was founded by conquistadores, and is Colombia's oldest surviving city; there is plenty to see. Later we meet for dinner and a trip briefing. Night hotel.

Day 3: Santa Marta – Casa Adan Camp

Our journey starts with an early morning jeep ride from Santa Marta on roads and then dirt tracks to the small village of El Mamey; here we have lunch while our local support team sorts the kit, and we set off! The route eases us in fairly gently, with an early chance to cool off at a swimming hole; it's hot with little shade before we enter the jungle proper. Then there's a steep climb up through rainforest, which in the heat and humidity feels much further than it actually is, before descending into a lush valley. Night camp.

Drive approx 2 hours; Trek approx 4-5 hours

DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

Day 4: Casa Adan Camp – Paraiso Teyuna Camp

After an early breakfast, we trek steadily uphill through the heart of the jungle – it’s beautiful, but tough terrain and we take it slow. Spotting wildlife in dense jungle can be tricky, but the air around us is thick with birdsong and the hum of insects; the diversity in these forests is impressive. You may see toucans, parakeets and hummingbirds, and some of the many species of tiny frogs. Larger mammals include tapirs, otters and jaguars, though they are very elusive and you would be very lucky to spot them! After regular stops for fresh fruit, we reach the top of our ascent and are rewarded with a long downhill walk through some beautiful landscapes and Kogui villages of round, thatched huts and farmed pockets of land. This is a really tough day but once we reach camp we can enjoy a swim in the crystalline river. Night camp.

Trek approx 9-11 hours

Day 5: Paraiso Teyuna Camp – Lost City – Wiwa Camp (or Mumake)

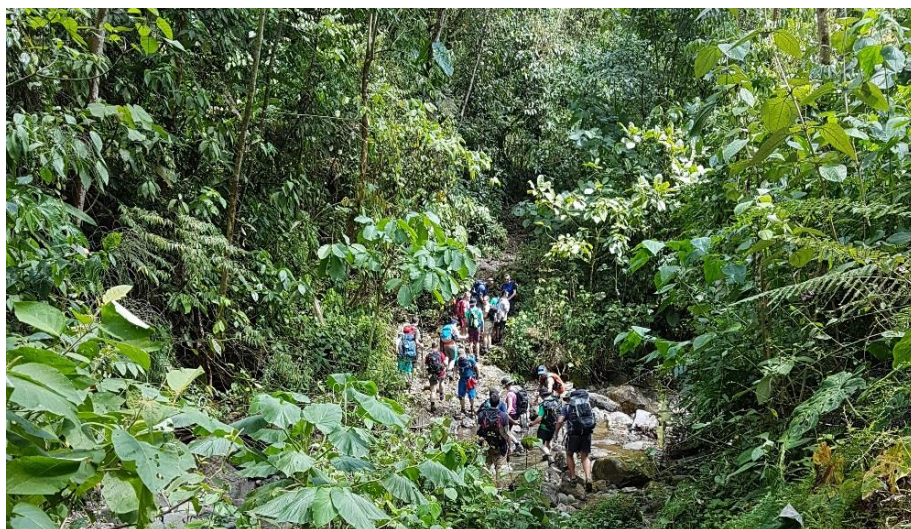
An exciting day ahead, and we rise early to ensure we have plenty of time to explore the Lost City. The jungle path leads us alongside the river for a stretch, and we cross over to reach the ancient flight of stone steps rising through the dense vegetation to the ruins – count them to see if there truly are 1200! This is a sacred city, held in high respect by the local people, and we enjoy a tour to appreciate its history and significance. There is also sometimes an opportunity to hear some of the sacred stories from el Mamo, the local spiritual leader. After soaking up the views and unique atmosphere that surrounds these incredible ruins, it’s time to return back along the trail via last night’s camp, and further on to Wiwa. This is a long, tough day, but a real highlight. Night camp.

Trek approx 10-12 hours (incl. 3 hours at Lost City)

Day 6: Wiwa Camp – El Mamey – Santa Marta

Our final day in the jungle sees us returning back to the trailhead at El Mamey, stopping en-route at a waterfall where we can cool off. We meet the 4 x 4 vehicles and drive back to the road, and on to Santa Marta, where a well-earned bed and shower await! There should be some time free to enjoy wandering the sights of Santa Marta. Night hotel. *(Dinner not included)*

Trek approx 5.5-7 hours; Drive approx 2 hours



CHALLENGE GRADING

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trek lies within the **Orange** range.

The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account.

The Challenge Factor icon shows the most challenging aspect – the terrain, which is hilly, with jungle paths often muddy or overgrown.

The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.

DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

Day 7: Santa Marta – Tayrona National Park – Santa Marta

A hike with a difference today, as we explore beautiful Tayrona National Park, where the rainforest meets the Caribbean. It's stunning, with huge granite boulders and small coves protected by the coral reefs. We explore the old trails at a relaxed pace, before enjoying a swim in the natural swimming-holes. This coastal beauty contrasts hugely with the more arduous rainforest habitat we have been immersed in. We return to Santa Marta. Night hotel.

(Dinner not included)

Trek approx 4 hours

Day 8: Santa Marta – Cartagena

After breakfast we transfer to the colonial city of Cartagena (lunch stop en-route); it was an important town and port for the Spanish colonies, and the walled city and San Felipe fortress have UNESCO World Heritage Site status. After a city tour of the main historical sites, including the fortress which dominates the city, we have plenty of time to relax, wander and shop the markets to our hearts' contents. Farewell dinner in local restaurant. Night hotel.

Drive approx 5 hours (inc stop for lunch)

Day 9: Cartagena; Flight departs

Free time to enjoy discovering more of the charm of Cartagena, before transferring to the airport for our flight home

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

Day 10: Arrive UK

Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

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