

BOKANA TRAVEL

COLOMBIA

TRAVEL GUIDE 2026

COFFEE REGION

A UNESCO-listed coffee landscape, towns of painted balconies, wax palm forests and mountain hot springs, about an hour's flight from Bogotá.

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THE ESSENTIALS

COFFEE MOUNTAINS, WAX PALMS AND MIST

Colombia's Coffee Cultural Landscape has been a World Heritage Site since 2011. It takes in parts of 47 municipalities and 411 veredas (rural districts) across Caldas, Quindío, Risaralda and northern Valle del Cauca, where thousands of families grow coffee on steep hillsides. Here you measure the trip in cups: you walk a farm, watch the beans being picked, pulped, dried and roasted, then taste the result with someone whose family has done this for generations.

There's a lot more around the coffee. Salento is the gateway to the Cocora Valley, home of the wax palm, Colombia's national tree. Filandia keeps its bahareque (wattle-and-daub) streets and painted balconies. Santa Rosa de Cabal has hot springs tucked into the mountains, and from Manizales you can head up into Los Nevados National Natural Park, where the Nevado del Ruiz volcano is under constant monitoring. After the August 10, 2026 earthquake, the region is open to visitors and is asking travelers to support local tourism.

WHERE IT IS

The Central Cordillera of the Andes, across Caldas, Quindío, Risaralda and northern Valle del Cauca.

GETTING THERE

Direct flights from Bogotá take about an hour to Pereira (Matecaña) and Armenia (El Edén), with flights to Manizales (La Nubia) too. From Medellín, direct flights to Pereira and Armenia take under an hour.

WEATHER

Mild mountain climate: Pereira averages 21 °C (70 °F) and Salento about 17 °C (63 °F), while the páramo (high-altitude moorland) of Los Nevados gets bitterly cold. Two rainy seasons a year.

DOCUMENTS

Colombian ID (cédula) or other valid ID for residents; passport for foreign visitors. For Los Nevados: a booking, accident insurance and an authorized guide.

MONEY

Colombian peso (COP). Cards work in cities and hotels; bring cash for rural areas, Willys jeeps and the access fees charged on private land in the Cocora Valley.

LANGUAGE

Spanish.

TIME ZONE

Same time as the rest of Colombia (UTC-5).

PLUGS

Types A and B, 110 V, 60 Hz.

DON'T MISS

HIGHLIGHTS

01
COCORA VALLEY

About 11 km (7 mi) from Salento, reached by Willys jeep from the main square. Choose a short one- to two-hour walk or a long five- to six-hour loop through wax palms, cloud forest and hanging bridges.

02
SALENTO AND ITS LOOKOUT

Quindío's oldest town sits at 1,895 meters (6,217 ft). Wander its streets of bahareque houses, then climb the 242 steps to the Alto de la Cruz lookout for a view over rooftops and mountains.

03
INSIDE A COFFEE FARM

In rural districts like Boquía and Palestina, near Salento, farms walk you through the whole process: picking, processing, drying, roasting and a guided cupping of specialty coffees. It's the best way to understand the landscape UNESCO protects.

04
FILANDIA

Streets of painted balconies, classic coffee-country architecture and mountain views. The Colina Iluminada lookout was damaged in the August 2026 earthquake, and its future depends on a new technical study, so check whether it's open before you go.

05
SANTA ROSA DE CABAL HOT SPRINGS

Hot spring pools set in the mountains, a few minutes from Pereira. After the earthquake, the local government reported the springs are operating normally. The right way to end a day of hiking.

06
LOS NEVADOS FROM MANIZALES

The Brisas-Kumanday sector takes you by vehicle to the Valle de las Tumbas, a near-lunar superpáramo above 4,000 meters (13,100 ft). The Nevado del Ruiz volcano remains on yellow alert: visits are guided and depend on conditions.





PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO

December to February are the driest months and the best for hiking Cocora or heading up to Los Nevados under clear skies. June to August are good too, with less rain. April, May, October and November bring most of the rain: trails get slippery and fog hides the views. If Los Nevados is on your list, try to avoid the last week of September, the last week of November and Holy Week, when the park closes.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

BEST

DEC – FEB

The best time to go.

GOOD

MAR · JUN – SEP

A good time, with a catch on weather or crowds.

RAINY

APR – MAY · OCT – NOV

More rain: keep plans flexible.

WHAT YOU NEED TO TRAVEL

For Colombian travelers: all you need to travel the region is your ID. Los Nevados National Natural Park has its own rules: a mandatory guide, accident insurance, age limits and bookings, plus restrictions tied to activity at the Nevado del Ruiz volcano. Traveling on another passport? Requirements differ, so message us and we'll check yours.

- Colombian ID (cédula) or other valid ID for residents (tarjeta de identidad or birth certificate for minors); passport for foreign visitors.
- Los Nevados: you must be accompanied by an authorized guide or operator; in Brisas-Kumanday, the operator is Unión Temporal Operación Nevados.
- Los Nevados: accident insurance is mandatory; minimum age is 6 in Brisas-Kumanday, and maximum age is 69 throughout the park.
- Los Nevados: booking one day ahead is recommended for Brisas-Kumanday and required in other sectors (3 business days for El Cisne and Laguna del Otún, 5 for Quindío-Dulima).
- 2026 entry fee for Los Nevados: COP 24,500 for Colombians and residents over 25, COP 12,500 for under 25; insurance is extra.
- Environmental vehicle restriction (pico y placa) on the road to Brisas-Valle de las Tumbas on weekends and holiday weekends, 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Resolution 1815 of 2026, Tolima Transit Department).
- The park closes for five business days during Holy Week, the fourth week of September and the fourth week of November.
- The Nevado del Ruiz volcano is on yellow alert according to the Colombian Geological Service (bulletin of August 4, 2026); access from Brisas goes only as far as the Valle de las Tumbas.

Checked in September 2026 with National Natural Parks of Colombia: Los Nevados National Natural Park. Rules change, so confirm with the official source before you travel, or message us and we'll help.

WHAT WE'D TELL A FRIEND

BOKANA TIPS

1 Dress in layers

In a single day you go from 21 °C (70 °F) in Pereira to just a few degrees in the páramo. Pack a rain jacket, a warm coat for Los Nevados and shoes with real grip: the Cocora trails are always muddy.

2 Get to Cocora early

Catch one of the first Willys jeeps from Salento's main square. You'll walk in better weather with fewer people. Bring small bills: the private properties along the trail each charge their own access fee.

3 Check the volcano before you go up

The Colombian Geological Service publishes a weekly bulletin on Nevado del Ruiz. Read it before heading to Brisas, and always follow your guide and National Parks staff.

4 Take the altitude slowly

The Valle de las Tumbas sits above 4,000 meters (13,100 ft). Sleep well the night before, eat light, stay hydrated and tell your guide if you feel dizzy or get a headache. The park restricts entry for people with certain health conditions.

5 Pick the right airport

Armenia is closer to Salento and Filandia; Pereira is closer to Santa Rosa de Cabal. Since the earthquake, Matecaña has been operating from the terminal's ground floor. La Nubia, in Manizales, reports 91.6% operability in 2026.

6 Coming by road

Medellín to Pereira is about 220 km (137 mi), roughly five hours. From Bogotá, the La Línea route was reduced to a single lane with stop-and-go traffic after a landslide in July 2026; check with Invías, the national roads agency, before you set out.

7 Spend locally

Buy coffee straight from the farm or from producer shops, and hire local guides. Since the earthquake, businesses in towns like Salento and Filandia depend heavily on every visitor.

TRAVEL MINDFULLY

The wax palm is Colombia's national tree, and cutting it is banned under Law 61 of 1985: stay on the trail, don't step on or pull up seedlings, and don't buy or use palm fronds, Palm Sunday included. In Los Nevados, walk only on approved routes and respect the environmental vehicle restriction.

WHERE TO EAT

OUR RESTAURANT PICKS

Chosen for their food, their track record and what past diners say. Price: $ budget · $$ mid-range · $$$ splurge.

CAFÉ JESÚS MARTÍN $

Specialty coffee and baked goods · Downtown, Cra. 6A #6-14 (Salento)

★ **4.5** · 1,911 reviews on Google Maps

The essential stop for understanding Quindío coffee in Salento: they brew pour-over methods at your table and sell their own beans in a traditional house.

What diners love: Reviewers love that the barista explains each method while brewing, plus the cakes (chocolate, almojábana cheese bread, pecan) and the inner courtyard. Some find it pricey for what it is.

Order: Tableside Chemex with almojábana cake

Bring cash: recent reviews say they don't take cards.

RESTAURANTE COCINA Y HORNO $

Quindío home cooking and trout · Downtown, Calle 6 #5-40 (Salento)

★ **4.8** · 1,677 reviews on Google Maps

Well-made trout at a fair price in the heart of Salento. It took part in the 2026 Trout Festival, the town's post-earthquake recovery initiative.

What diners love: Generous portions, fast service and good value. Diners mention the trout in its many versions and the trout soup most.

Order: Trout al ajillo (garlic trout) with patacón

A good pick when you come back hungry from the Cocora Valley.

HELENA ADENTRO $$$

Contemporary Colombian, shared plates · Downtown, Cra. 9 #7-05 (Filandia)

★ **4.6** · 5,433 reviews on Google Maps

Filandia's best-known table: Coffee Region cooking reimagined, plates to share and mountain views. It was named best restaurant in the region at the La Barra awards.

What diners love: Reviewers single out the view, the shared-plates format, the ribs, the rabbit and the cocktails. Several warn that it fills up and that some dishes aren't worth the price.

Order: Four ribs with desgranado (sweet corn)

Book ahead to get a table with a view, especially on weekends.

LATINO COCINA POPULAR $$

Regional Colombian cooking · Downtown, Av. Belalcázar #19-28 (Pereira)

★ **4.7** · 1,397 reviews on Google Maps

A tour of the Pacific, Caribbean and Andean kitchens, using Afro-Colombian, Indigenous and mestizo techniques. In 2019 it won a national award for best new Colombian cuisine restaurant.

What diners love: Diners highlight unusual flavors, the coconut rice, the cazuelas (seafood casseroles) and the fried fish chicharrón, and that the owner explains the dishes. Some find it expensive.

Order: Chicharrón ceviche and coconut rice

Call ahead: downtown Pereira is still recovering from the earthquake.

LOS ARRIEROS COCINA CULTURAL CAFETERA $$

Traditional coffee-country and paisa food · Autopista del Café km 5, outskirts (Manizales)

★ **4.7** · 2,447 reviews on Google Maps

Traditional arriero (muleteer) cooking on a farm with coffee-country views just outside Manizales. A good way to taste the region's food in a themed setting.

What diners love: Reviewers praise the sancocho de gallina (hen soup), the beans, the mazamorra (corn drink), the generous portions and the view. Many mention fast, friendly service.

Order: Sancocho de gallina, or beans with mazamorra

It's outside the city: come by car or taxi.

LA FOGATA $$$

Grilled meats and traditional cooking · North, Cra. 14 & Calle 14 Norte (Armenia)

★ **4.5** · 3,375 reviews on Google Maps

Open since 1963, it's Armenia's most traditional restaurant. Right for a celebratory meal of grilled meats and the region's classic dishes.

What diners love: Diners mention the quality of the grilled meats, the fried sabaletas (a local river fish), the elegant setting and the music. A few complain that steaks didn't arrive cooked as ordered.

Order: Fried sabaletas or punta de anca (rump cap steak)

Confirm how you want your meat cooked when you order.

LOCAL FLAVORS

WHAT TO EAT

SINGLE-ORIGIN COFFEE

Try it at the farm, freshly roasted and brewed by pour-over methods that bring out each lot's acidity and sweetness.

BANDEJA PAISA AND BEANS

A legacy of the settlers from Antioquia: beans, rice, meat, chicharrón (crispy pork belly), egg, plantain and arepa. A plate for after the hike.

TROUT

A staple at restaurants in Salento and Cocora, cooked al ajillo (in garlic) or on the griddle, almost always with patacón (fried green plantain).

CORN AREPA

It comes with almost everything. At a farm breakfast it usually arrives with fresh cheese and a hot chocolate or tinto (black coffee).



BOKANA
TRAVEL

PICTURE YOURSELF IN THE COFFEE REGION? LET'S PLAN IT TOGETHER.

Join one of our groups on your own, or bring your people on a private trip.
Scan the code or message us.

Chat with us on WhatsApp

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