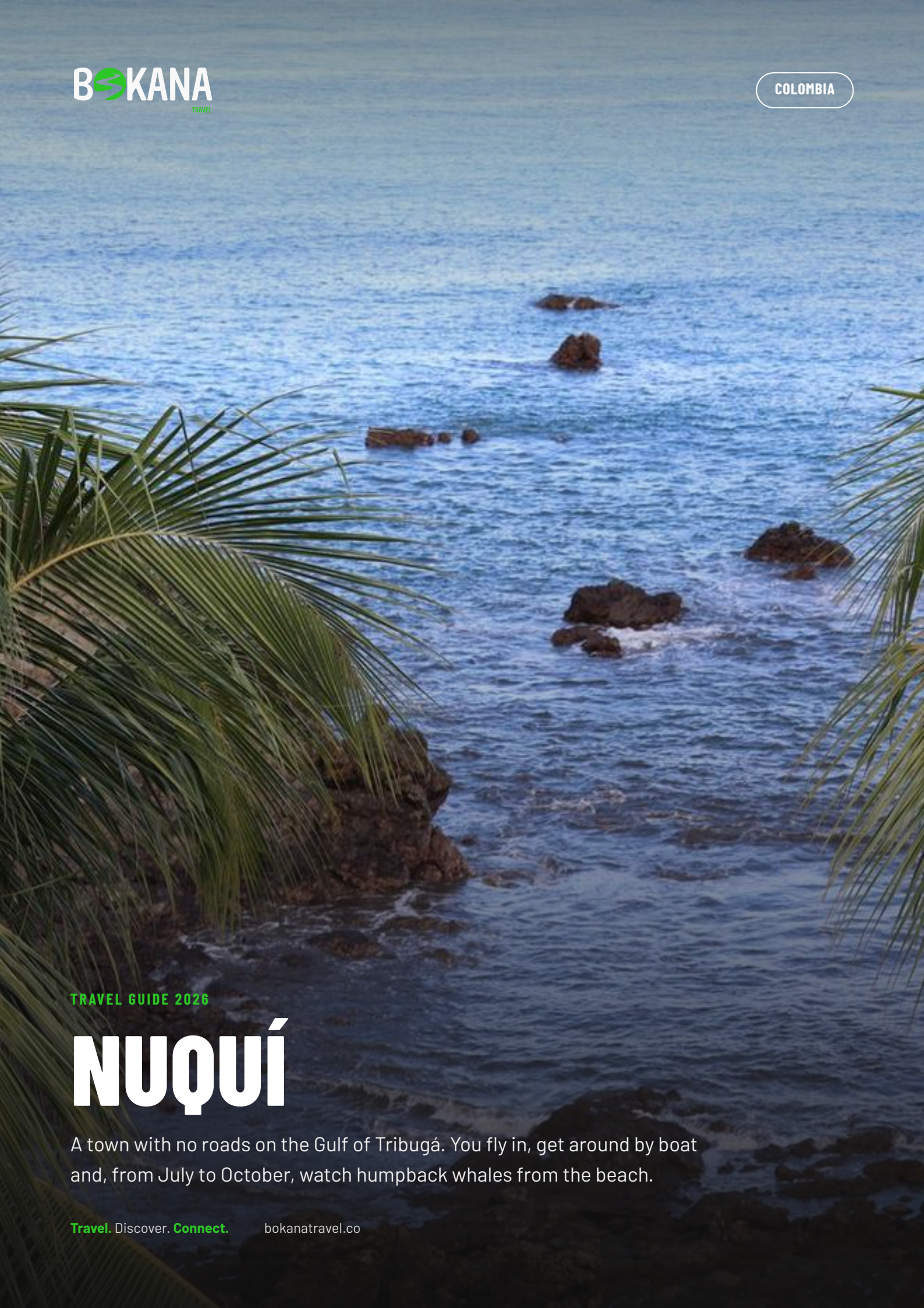


BOKANA TRAVEL

COLOMBIA

TRAVEL GUIDE 2026

NUQUÍ

A town with no roads on the Gulf of Tribugá. You fly in, get around by boat and, from July to October, watch humpback whales from the beach.

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THE ESSENTIALS

WHALES, RAINFOREST AND HOT SPRINGS ON THE PACIFIC

Nuquí sits on the northern coast of Chocó, on the Gulf of Tribugá. No roads reach it: you fly in from Medellín, then take a boat from town to villages like Guachalito, Termales, Joví, Coquí, Jurubirá or Arusí. Rainforest runs right down to long, dark-sand beaches, with mangroves, rivers and waterfalls a few minutes from the sea.

Between July and October, humpback whales arrive from the south to mate and give birth, and the gulf becomes one of the best places in Colombia to see them. The rest of the year is just as good for slowing down: natural hot springs, Pacific cooking from Afro-Colombian communities, rainforest hikes and Utría National Natural Park less than an hour away by boat. Expect rain almost every day, little signal and an easy pace. That's part of the trip.

WHERE IT IS

Pacific coast, northern Chocó department, on the Gulf of Tribugá. Reyes Murillo airport is in town; hotels are reached by boat (Guachalito takes about 30 to 40 minutes).

GETTING THERE

Direct from Medellín (Olaya Herrera airport): 45 minutes to 1 hour, on Satena, Clic or Moon Flights. From Bogotá and Cali there are flights in some seasons, or you connect in Medellín.

WEATHER

Warm and very humid year-round, 25 to 28 °C (77 to 82 °F). It rains almost daily: this is one of the wettest places on Earth. January to March is less rainy; August is the wettest month.

DOCUMENTS

Colombian ID (cédula) for residents; passport for foreign visitors. Bring cash for the municipal tourism tax and a yellow fever vaccination card, with the shot given at least 10 days before.

MONEY

Colombian peso (COP). Bring enough cash from Medellín: there are hardly any ATMs and few places in the villages take cards. Small bills work best.

LANGUAGE

Spanish. Most people are Afro-Colombian, and there are also Emberá Indigenous communities with their own language.

TIME ZONE

Colombia time (UTC-5), no difference.

PLUGS

Types A and B, 110 V, 60 Hz, same as the rest of Colombia. Some lodges only have power for part of the day.

DON'T MISS

HIGHLIGHTS

01
HUMPBACK WHALES

From July to October, whales come to the Gulf of Tribugá to mate and raise their calves. August and September are usually the best months. You'll often see them breach from the beach; for a boat trip, go with local operators who keep their distance.

02
UTRÍA NATIONAL NATURAL PARK

More than 64,000 hectares (158,000 acres) of rainforest, mangrove and reef. From Nuquí it's about 45 minutes by boat to walk the boardwalk over the mangroves, cross to Cocalito hill and beach, and swim in the cove. Entry is with an authorized guide.

03
TERMALES AND JURUBIRÁ HOT SPRINGS

Pools of hot water that bubble up from the forest, close to the sea. Termales charges entry (COP 15,000 by day, COP 20,000 at night); Jurubirá's springs are about 30 to 45 minutes by boat north of Nuquí.

04
GUACHALITO AND CASCADA DEL AMOR

A long, open beach backed by rainforest, home to several of the area's lodges. From Guachalito or Termales, a short forest hike leads to Cascada del Amor, a waterfall with pools for a swim.

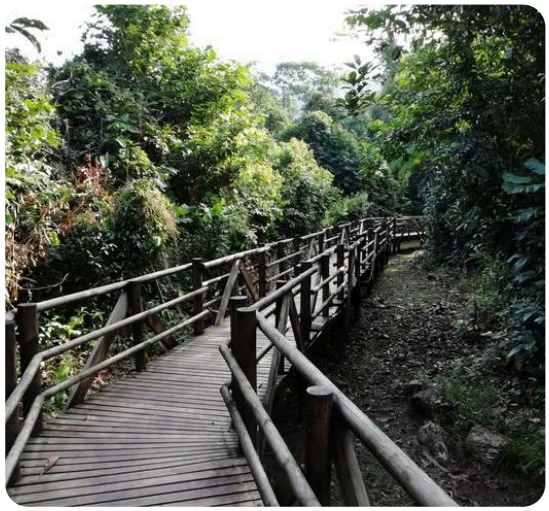
05
COQUÍ MANGROVES

One of the largest mangrove forests in the region, explored by canoe with village guides in about 45 minutes. Coquí is also home to Zotea, the community restaurant run by the village's cooks.

06
JOVÍ AND ITS RIVER

A small village between Coquí and Guachalito, linked to Coquí by 2.5 km (1.5 mi) of beach. Walk over at low tide, swim in the river and stay for a Chocó-style lunch.





PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO

If whales are the priority, go from July to October; August and September are the peak. It rains a lot in those months, so pack rain gear and be patient with flights. January to March brings less rain (February is the driest month) and fewer visitors, great for beaches, hot springs and hikes. Between September and February, baby turtles are released on several beaches, depending on the protected nests.

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

BEST

JUL – SEP

The best time to go.

GOOD

OCT · DEC – MAR

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

RAINY

APR – JUN · NOV

More rain: keep plans flexible.

WHAT YOU NEED TO TRAVEL

For Colombian travelers: Nuquí doesn't require a reservation or special permit, but you do need ID, cash for the municipal tourism tax and a yellow fever vaccine, which Utría National Park also requires. Pack light: the planes are small. Traveling on another passport? Requirements differ, so message us and we'll check yours.

- ID: Colombian ID (cédula) for residents; passport for foreign visitors. For Colombian minors, tarjeta de identidad or registro civil (birth certificate).
- Municipal tourism tax: paid in cash on arrival, at the airport or the dock. Since July 1, 2025, operators report COP 42,000 per person; the amount is set by the town hall and can change, so confirm it before you go.
- Yellow fever vaccine given at least 10 days before: Colombia's Ministry of Health lists Nuquí among the municipalities where vaccination is recommended. If more than 10 years have passed since your shot, Ministry of Health Circular 001 of 2026 calls for a booster for travelers to risk areas. You can check your record at mivacuna.sispro.gov.co.
- Utría National Park: Colombia's National Parks require a yellow fever vaccination card in their protected areas (Ministry of Health Resolution 691 of 2025), and entry is with an authorized guide. Entry and exit hours: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 2026 Utría entrance fees: COP 28,000 for Colombians and residents over 25; COP 19,000 for ages 6 to 25; COP 80,000 for non-resident foreigners.
- Luggage: airlines flying to Nuquí use small planes with tight allowances (on some routes, 10 kg (22 lb) checked and 5 kg (11 lb) carry-on). Check your ticket's allowance before you pack.
- Inside Utría, single-use plastics, taking wildlife and using unauthorized trails are not allowed.

Checked in October 2026 with Colombian National Natural Parks: Utría 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 Pack light

Baggage allowances are small and excess weight costs extra. Bring a backpack or soft bag, quick-dry clothes, and leave behind anything you won't use.

2 Cash from Medellín

There are hardly any ATMs, and in the villages you pay for boats, hot springs and meals in cash. Withdraw enough before you fly, in small bills.

3 Dress for rain

A light rain jacket, water sandals or rubber boots for the forest, a dry bag for your phone and bug spray. It rains almost every day, even in the drier months.

4 Mind the tide

Beach walks between villages and some boat landings depend on the tide. Ask your hotel when low tide is before you set out.

5 Actually unplug

Signal is weak outside town and several lodges only have power a few hours a day. Let people at home know you'll be mostly offline, and bring a power bank.

6 Watch whales responsibly

Go with local operators who cut or slow the engine near whales and never chase them. It protects mothers with calves and the community that depends on them.

7 Check the security situation

In March 2026 the ELN guerrilla declared an armed strike on rivers in Bajo Baudó, south of the municipality. Before you go, check the news and your hotel, and travel with licensed operators.

TRAVEL MINDFULLY

Hire guides, boatmen and cooks from the local communities, and follow the distance rules around whales. Take your trash back out of the villages, which have no way to process it, and bring no single-use plastics into Utría. Ask before photographing people.

WHERE TO EAT

OUR RESTAURANT PICKS

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

ZOTEA EXPERIENCIA CULINARIA $$

Traditional Pacific cooking · Coquí (Nuquí)

★ **4.9** · 58 reviews on Google Maps

A community food project backed by chef Leonor Espinosa's foundation, where Coquí's cooks prepare inherited recipes with produce from their own garden and the mangroves.

What diners love: Reviewers highlight the careful plating, the ancestral flavors and how the project involves the village's women. They also mention the view and the calm.

Order: Albacore in spicy sauce

Arrive by boat and call ahead to make sure you get a table.

APAPACHE $$

Chocó fusion · Village center, Termales (Nuquí)

★ **4.7** · 145 reviews on Google Maps

The most-reviewed restaurant in the area: local cooking with a chef's touch, fresh ingredients and a host who chats with every table. It's close to the hot springs.

What diners love: Diners praise the carefully made dishes with local produce, the personal service, the music and the atmosphere. Several call it the best place to eat in Termales.

Order: Grilled fish with mash and sauce

Closes at 8 p.m.; pair it with your visit to the hot springs.

POLEO $$$

Chef-driven Pacific cuisine · Arusí beach, on the way to Termales (Nuquí)

★ **5.0** · 66 reviews on Google Maps

A chef from Medellín who stayed in Chocó serves a multi-course menu with a cocktail, built on regional ingredients. The pick for a special meal in Arusí.

What diners love: Reviewers single out the creativity, the surprising flavors and warm service in a small, quiet space facing the forest.

Order: Sautéed albacore loin with vegetables

No posted hours: message or call ahead to book.

RESTAURANTE CHOIBÁ $

Traditional Chocó food · Joví (Nuquí)

★ **4.9** · 39 reviews on Google Maps

Home-style Chocó cooking at a good price, with dessert and coffee included. They also sell jams, cocadas (coconut sweets) and hot sauce made by a group of women from Joví.

What diners love: People mention generous portions, the fish, the soups and the coconut sweet at the end. They describe it as clean, friendly and made with care.

Order: Breaded fish or the soup of the day

No posted hours: give them notice if you're coming for lunch or dinner.

RAÍCES, SABORES ANCESTRALES DEL PACÍFICO $

Traditional Nuquí cooking · Barrio La Unión, Nuquí town

★ **5.0** · 35 reviews on Google Maps

A family kitchen devoted to keeping the town's recipes alive, like fish tapao, fish sancocho (a hearty soup) and shrimp fritters. A good stop if you spend the night in town.

What diners love: Reviewers talk about well-seasoned dishes, the fish tapao and the shrimp fritters, and friendly service from the owner.

Order: Fish tapao or shrimp fritters

Stop by earlier to agree on your dish: many are made to order.

PLAYA AFRICANA $$

Fish, meat and patacones · Barrio La Unión, on the beach (Nuquí)

★ **4.7** · 34 reviews on Google Maps

A family-run spot on the town beach, good for eating fish while you watch the sunset, with vegetarian options.

What diners love: People like the food, the sea view and the owners' warmth. Some mention long waits.

Order: Fried red snapper with cheese-topped patacón (twice-fried green plantain)

Arrive before sunset and don't be in a hurry.

Ratings and review counts checked in October 2026; they change over time. Review summaries are our own. Hours and prices vary, so check before

LOCAL FLAVORS

WHAT TO EAT

TAPAO DE PESCADO

Fresh, smoked or salted fish cooked covered together with green plantain. One of the most common home-cooked dishes in Chocó.

VICHE

A craft sugarcane spirit made by Afro-Colombian communities of the Pacific, recognized under Law 2158 of 2021. In Nuquí you'll find it neat or infused with herbs.

PIANGUA AND PAPACHINA

Piangua, a mangrove clam, and papachina, a local root vegetable, turn up in rice dishes, stews and chef-driven cooking like Zotea's.

BOROJÓ JUICE

A thick, tart fruit from the Chocó rainforest, served as juice or a shake alongside many local meals.



BOKANA TRAVEL

PICTURE YOURSELF IN NUQUÍ? 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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bokanatravel.co/en/destinations/nuqui/

SOURCES

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