



National Trust *for* Historic Preservation

National Trust Tours



Colombia's River of Dreams
Cartagena to Barranquilla Aboard
AmaMagdalena

March 13 - 21, 2026

Colombia's River of Dreams

Cartagena to Barranquilla Aboard *AmaMagdalena*

The Magdalena River flows 930 miles north from Colombia's Andean Cordilleras to the Caribbean Sea, serving as the nation's principal waterway. It famously also inspired Gabriel García Márquez's literary masterworks. Sail the historic route between Cartagena and Barranquilla, experiencing how the river has shaped Colombian culture and daily life.

Be among the first to cruise Colombia's greatest river aboard *AmaMagdalena*, observing life along these storied banks from your private balcony. Begin in Cartagena, where 16th-century Spanish fortifications stand guard over streets lined with merchants' mansions. Join naturalists to encounter rare wildlife in complex wetland ecosystems and spot native birds along the Ciénega Grande. Throughout your voyage, experts will illuminate how Indigenous peoples, Spanish colonists, and African communities influenced the remarkable culture that flourishes along the Magdalena.



Catedral de Santa Catalina de Alejandría, Cartagena (top); Map of the region (above)

CRUISE HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel with expert guides and naturalists aboard the brand-new *AmaMagdalena*, the first major riverboat to cruise Colombia's legendary Magdalena River
- Explore Cartagena's colorful colonial houses, marvel at spectacular Baroque churches, and attend a private performance of traditional dance
- Visit Nueva Venecia ("New Venice"), a floating village only accessible by boat, with a local guide and naturalist, and explore its stilted houses above the UNESCO-listed Ciénega Grande de Santa Marta wetlands, home to diverse wildlife
- With a local expert, delve deep into the village of Mompo, which was concealed from visitors for centuries, and meet local artisans who craft the town's exquisite traditional filigree jewelry
- Accompany your naturalist guides on private birdwatching tours, observing wildlife not found anywhere else on Earth, and see West Indian manatees and other river wildlife from the balconies of your cabin aboard *AmaMagdalena*
- Attend an exclusive Carnival-inspired farewell dinner in Barranquilla featuring local specialties like *sancocho de guandú* and *bollos de yuca*, celebrating the UNESCO-recognized festival traditions of Colombia's "Golden Gate"



Cartagena

DAY 1: DEPARTURE / CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Arrive in the historic seaside city of **Cartagena**. Transfer to your hotel located within the walls of the Old City, with its colorful architecture and cobblestone streets. This evening, gather for a festive welcome reception in a colonial house featuring a dance performance. R

DAY 2: CARTAGENA / EMBARK AMAMAGDALENA

On a morning stroll with an expert, follow centuries-old cobblestones beneath wooden balconies draped with pink bougainvillea. As you admire colonial churches and colorful houses, pass the gold-hued Cathedral and see massive stone ramparts topped with cannons that helped earn Cartagena its name *La Heroica* during Colombia's fight for independence in 1811.

Experience the spiritual power of the **Iglesia de San Pedro Claver**, completed in 1654. This church owes its name to the Spanish Jesuit priest who baptized 300,000 enslaved Africans between 1610 and 1650. View its interior with its Italian marble high altar and ornate stained-glass windows. Behold African masks and pre-Columbian ceramics juxtaposed with paintings chronicling Claver's profound ministry in colonial New Granada.

Savor aromatic Caribbean dishes during lunch before boarding the gleaming **AmaMagdalena**, where plush staterooms await with panoramic views of one of South America's greatest rivers. Listen as a regional scholar illuminates the Magdalena River's role as Colombia's cultural lifeline, weaving together five centuries of trade, music, literature, and daily life along its banks. B,L,D

DAY 3: SAN BASILIO DE PALENQUE / CALAMAR

Meet a local entrepreneur for a guided morning walk through **San Basilio de Palenque**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 1691, a Spanish Royal Decree established the Americas' first legally free African settlement here, founded by King Benkos Biohó and 30 escaped slaves who carved out their independence in 1619.

Many residents still converse in *Palenquero*, the world's only Spanish-Bantú creole language. Meet locals who preserve their ancestors' West African customs through the haunting funeral chants of *lumbalú* and soul-stirring drumbeats.

Later, travel by *paolo* (a bicycle rickshaw built for two) through **Calamar**, an 1840s river settlement where the **Canal del Dique** branches from the Magdalena River. Coast past the white-walled **Iglesia de la Inmaculada Concepción** as your driver pedals down sun-baked streets. B,L,D

DAY 4: SANTA BÁRBARA DE PINTO / SANTA CRUZ DE MOMPOX

At the confluence of the Cauca and Magdalena rivers, arrive for a guided walk through **Santa Bárbara de Pinto**, born in 1741 as *Los Pintaos* after clashes between Spanish traders and face-painted Chimila warriors.

Marvel at the two distinct towns that emerged from river floods: **Pinto Viejo**, with its 1750 **Iglesia de Santa Bárbara** where the patron saint's feast draws worshippers each December, and **Pinto Nuevo**, established 800 feet inland after the great flood of 1916 transformed this once-mighty logging port into a split riverside community.

In the afternoon, arrive at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of **Santa Cruz de Mompox**, primarily known as Mompox. See the city's preserved 17th-century merchant houses, with their shared-roof hallways and *albarradas* (flood walls) documenting a rare surviving example of Spanish colonial river architecture. Enjoy a warm welcome and lively music as local musicians treat you to **an exclusive jazz performance**. B,L,D

DAY 5: SANTA CRUZ DE MOMPOX

In the mid-16th century, Spanish metalsmiths transformed Mompox into a fortress of precious metalwork, bringing ancient Arab filigree techniques perfected on the Iberian Peninsula. In Mompox, gold from Colombia's mines rested safely beyond pirates' reach,



Mompox



Nueva Venecia

Today, the rhythmic tapping of jewelers' hammers still fills the air as artisans stretch, twist, and flatten silver threads into intricate patterns passed down through five centuries. Meet local artisans and admire their filigree creations on an **exclusive visit to a workshop**.

Then explore the **Ciénaga de Pijiño** wetlands with a naturalist, scanning for howler monkeys swinging through the canopy and neotropical cormorants diving for fish. Your expert highlights the interplay between local wildlife and this massive lake system.

Afterwards, visit two 17th-century churches, the yellow-walled **Iglesia de Santa Bárbara** (built in 1613) and the **Iglesia de San Agustín** (1606), with its ornate altar. Then sample local specialties like *capa* cheese and *butifarra soledaña*, a regional adaptation of Spanish sausage crafted in distinctive spherical form. B,L,D

DAY 6: SANTA CRUZ DE MOMPOX / EL BANCO

Pass through the La Mojana wetlands along the Magdalena to reach **El Banco**. In 1749, José Domingo Ortiz and his fellow settlers established this strategic riverside town at the meeting point of the Magdalena and César rivers.

El Banco marks the birthplace of *cumbia*, which began as a courtship dance among African communities before incorporating Indigenous flutes, European accordions, and other instruments into its distinctive double-beat rhythm. During dinner, **watch local dancers perform traditional cumbia steps**. B,L,D

DAY 7: MAGANGUÉ / CIÉNAGA

Witness the sights, hear the bird calls, and watch the wildlife around you as you spend the day in **Magangué**. Immerse yourself in the presence of Colombian nature with locals surrounding this city on a birdwatching tour, giving you a unique opportunity to see birds only found in this specific part of the country.

With an expert, watch as hummingbirds, parrots, macaws, Andean condors, and other forest and water birds flutter above. Walk among the stilted houses of **Ciénaga**, the waterside town that influenced Gabriel García Márquez's magical realist works. B,L,D

DAY 8: NUEVA VENECIA / BARRANQUILLA

Arrive in the floating village of **Nueva Venecia** (Spanish for "New Venice") for a private exploration led by a local guide. This charming destination sits entirely on stilts above Colombia's largest lagoon complex, where 3,000 residents navigate between 400 houses by canoe through their waterborne community.

Remarkably, the town's central square connects a church, school, library, and even an indoor soccer field to surrounding homes via wooden bridges, all floating above the UNESCO-protected Ciénaga Grande wetlands that stretch from the Magdalena River to the Caribbean Sea.

Later this afternoon, dock in **Barranquilla**, founded in 1813 as Colombia's "Golden Gate" where the Magdalena River meets the Caribbean Sea.

This evening, savor a **Carnival-inspired feast** celebrating the city's UNESCO-recognized festival traditions, where the rhythms of *cumbia*, *vallenato*, and *champeta* reflect the port's role as a crucible of Colombian music and Caribbean cuisine like *sancocho de guandú* (soup with meat and peas) and *bollos de yuca* (dumplings made of cassava flour). B,L,D

DAY 9: BARRANQUILLA / DISEMBARK / RETURN

Disembark early this morning for the flight home. B



Carnival, Barranquilla

PLEASE NOTE: This proposed itinerary is the property of Arrangements Abroad and may not be duplicated or distributed without written permission. All prices are estimated based on preliminary quotes provided by hotel and service providers, prevailing fuel prices, airfares, and currency exchange rates in effect as of the date of this proposal and are subject to change. Reservations are subject to the Terms & Conditions of Arrangements Abroad.

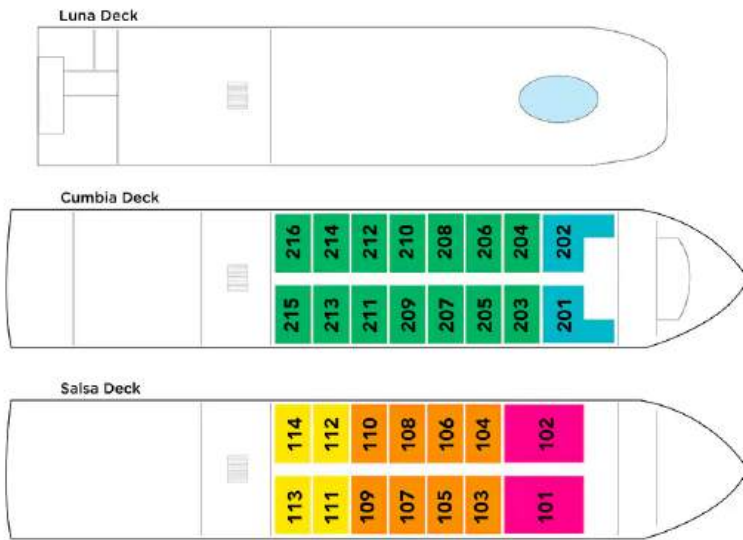
PPI_AMA Magdalena_AA

CST 2059789-40

Proprietary & Confidential, For Discussion Only, Do Not Copy
© 2024 Arrangements Abroad Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Cover photo: Santa Cruz de Mompox

CRUISE RATES

Cabins	Decks	Double	Single
111-114	Salsa	\$7,999	\$11,599
Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.			
103-110	Salsa	\$8,999	\$14,999
Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.			
203-216	Cumbia	\$9,999	\$16,999
Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.			
201 & 202	Cumbia	\$13,999	Inquire
Luxury Suites, Twin Balcony, 306 sq. ft.			
101 & 102	Salsa	\$15,999	Inquire
Grand Suites, Twin Balcony, 516 sq. ft.			



AmaMagdalena

This newly designed luxury riverboat carries 60 passengers along Colombia's principal waterway, with twin-balcony staterooms providing panoramic views of riverside life. A sun deck pool and fitness room complement the main dining room, where chefs prepare regional Latin American dishes and various other Western cuisines. Dine outdoors in the evening as river towns and wetland forests drift past your table. Your French balcony and full outdoor balcony offer dual vantage points for observing daily life along South America's greatest river, from fishing villages to colonial ports.



AmaMagdalena

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sofitel Legend Santa Clara Cartagena (or similar)

A former 17th-century convent, this fully renovated property exudes luxury and elegance while retaining its historic elegance and early architectural details. Rest in comfortable, air-conditioned rooms with extra-large beds. The Jardín restaurant offers sustainable cuisine with fresh ingredients and El Caastro is a sophisticated outdoor space. It also has a spa for treatments, a pool with a bar, a business center, a fitness center, and more.



Sofitel Legend Santa Clara Cartagena

RATES INCLUDE

- One night hotel accommodations in Cartagena
- Seven nights cabin accommodations aboard *AmaMagdalena*
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner). Bottled water, soft drinks, juices, and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine at welcome and farewell dinners; wine and beer with all meals aboard *AmaMagdalena*
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
- Airport/hotel/pier/airport group transfers for all participants on suggested flights
- Taxes, service, and portage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers; customary shipboard gratuities

NOT INCLUDED IN RATES International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than what is noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; airport transfers other than for those on suggested flights; excess baggage; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.