COLOMBIA

Trek To The Lost City

ACTIVITY	ACCOMMODATION	CHALLENGE FACTORS	DURATION:	GRADE
Trek	Communal	Terrain	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.

After time to explore the uncrowded ruins and marvel at what would have been here in years gone by, we return and head to historic 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!

This trip generates around **93 kg of CO_2 per person.** Because of our commitment to responsible travel, **we offset 100% of these emissions**, including flights booked with us.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London

Day 2: Arrive Santa Marta

We arrive in Santa Marta, on the northern coast, depending on flight times 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 old 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

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 though 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

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 – Tayrona National Park

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 our wonderful hotel near Tayrona National Park, where a well-earned bed and shower await! There should be some time free to enjoy relaxing in the hotel pool or perhaps a short walk to the beach. Night hotel.

Trek approx 5.5-7 hours; drive approx 1-1.5 hours

(Dinner not included)

Day 7: 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 then drive back to Santa Marta. Night hotel.

Trek approx 4 hours; Drive approx 1.5 hours

(Dinner not included)

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 (incl 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 (flight departure time dependant)

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

Day 10: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Santa Marta / Cartagena
- All known airline taxes
- Internal flight departure taxes
- All transport and transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation on shared basis

- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Local guides and cooks
- Local support team and back-up equipment
- Entrance to Lost City ruins and other sites visited as part of the itinerary
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Sleeping bag
- Any meals specified 'not included' in itinerary
- Personal spending money, souvenirs, drinks and tips for the local guides/support crew
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip 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. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

Trip grading explained

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-

country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

On trek, we sleep overnight in camps with good facilites given the remote locations - sheltered dining areas, sit-on flush toilets and showers, and even power from generators for a couple of hours each evening! While these overnight sites are called camps, we don't actually camp in tents, but sleep in barn-like shelters set up dorm-style with rows of bunk-beds. Each has a thick mattress and a mosquito net, which makes it feel less of a communal living experience than it really is! The local crew look after us very well and the food is excellent. We stay in good hotels (of a 3-4* standard or equivalent) at the start and end of the trip; standards may vary between different hotels, but they are generally clean and comfortable with good facilities.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis. Some nights are usually twin-share. On some nights we are likely to sleep in more communal rooms such as dormitories, huts, local homestays, etc., depending on the trip, and you may be sharing with a larger number of participants or the whole group; this type of accommodation cannot always be single-sex.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that each person completes the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so

you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

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Trip grading explained

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is

appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

Terrain ranges from good wide limestone tracks, to narrow, overgrown jungle paths on rock or clay, to sandy coastal trails on the last day. There are many steep sections, uphill and down, and a long flight of uneven stone steps. There is very little flat. Conditions may be muddy and slippery, especially after rain, which adds to the challenge. The heat and humidity can make the uphill sections in particular feel very arduous. This is a remote region without vehicle access, so you must have confidence in your fitness and stamina.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the FCO's advice on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you will all necessary information 6 weeks prior to depature to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important

you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click here.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - Passenger Portal Log in.

CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS

COFFEE REGION EXTENSION

Colombia is known globally for its coffee, and this trip explores some of the main sights of the Coffee Region. The whole area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and offers a wonderful mix of well-preserved towns with cobbled streets and colourful buildings, beautiful mountain foothills, lush forest and of course coffee plantations!

With one of the country's most famous day-hikes through the tallest palms in the world, time to explore traditional historic towns, and a morning at a natural waterfall-fed thermal spa, this extension offers plenty of variety and yet more insights to Colombia's culture and landscapes after your main trek.

You'll be based at a coffee farm (a *finca*), where the lodge buildings have been carefully restored to reflect their heritage. Relax in hammocks overlooking the spacious lawns and coffee-fields, or take a dip in the pool; you'll have plenty of time to enjoy your surroundings!

Independent Reviews 96%

ABTA No.Y6195

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

Please note: This document was downloaded on 13 Nov 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.