



Cali

culture

TRAVEL GUIDE

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(AKA: Mr. International Man of Mystery)





Dedication

This travel guide is dedicated to ALL the people that travel to different countries with the sole objective to learn, admire, embellish, and respect another culture. May the travel force be with you.

This travel guide is also dedicated to the wonderful people of Cali, Colombia. Thank you for welcoming me to your city with open arms and for allowing me to showcase your amazing culture to the western world. **Cali is truly the place to be. Cali es Cali!**



<http://traveltocali.com>

Description

The Cali Culture Travel Guide is a comprehensive travel guide for sports, nature, and dance tourists visiting Cali, Colombia. This travel guide was written and organized in such a way that the traveler can quickly find and utilize key recommendations & suggestions regarding the best nightlife, bars, restaurants, coffee shops, attractions, parks, things-to-do, etc. in Cali, Colombia.

The Cali Culture Travel Guide is ideal for first-time travelers to Cali, but also, can be used as a reference guide for tourists that have traveled to Cali multiple times.

This travel guide was prepared based on input from locals and from expats. Hundreds of hours were spent interviewing locals and compil-

ing their feedback along with input from expats like myself to produce an easy and effective travel guide for the city of Cali, Colombia.

This travel guide is unique and differs from other travel guides in that in addition to providing an extensive list of must-see attractions and popular city scenes, it provides important safety tips and guidance to follow as you explore the city. Our most important objective here at the Cali Culture Travel Team is for tourists to have an amazing time in the city of Cali while staying safe and

avoiding common mistakes made by first-time visitors/newbies. This travel guide provides you with safety guidance as you learn and explore Cali Colombian Culture.

Background

I first traveled to Cali, Colombia from the United States in January 1, 2022. At that time I knew nothing about the city or its own unique culture. Although, I took a walking tour of the historic area of the city, I still had no idea what to do, where to eat, where to workout, where to watch sports, etc. By the second day, I remember thinking, "Wow, I wish there was a travel guide that I could buy to help me understand what to do and where to go in Cali!" Luckily, I met an expat from America that provided me with some good tips and guidance regarding the city of Cali.

Fast forward to 2025, I absolutely love Cali, Colombia. I purchased an apartment and I'm still exploring areas and learning new aspects of the Cali Culture with every visit. Cali is truly Colombia's best kept secret. I'm of the opinion that everyone should experience Cali at least

once in their life, as it is a city with rich history and an amazing culture.

The good news for you is that you now have this travel guide at your disposal to guide you on your visit. I have done all the heavy lifting for you by curating all the info and publishing it all together here in the Cali Culture Travel Guide. This travel guide you have in your hands is a must-have to ensure that you will have an enjoyable, relaxing, and safe experience in Cali.

Don't spend countless hours on Google or TravelAdvisor.com looking up things to do in Cali or restaurant and bar ratings. Also, don't waste money hiring an expensive travel guide. Simply follow the Cali Culture Travel Guide. The work has already been done for you. This Cali Culture Travel Guide will be your daily guidance to ensure a legendary trip to Cali, Colombia.

Purpose & Intent

This travel guide was written with the intent to provide all tourists & travelers with a short, easy-to-read travel guidance specifically for Cali, Colombia. This travel guide provides a wealth of information regarding Cali, Colombia and its wonderful culture. It is

an A-Z travel guide providing information including, but not limited to the following: safest neighborhoods, top attractions, best restaurants, best bars, best salsa clubs, best gyms, etc.

**CALI IT IS A CITY
WITH RICH
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Goals & Objectives

This travel guide was written to be inclusive to ALL tourists including solo male, solo female, couples, families, straight, gay, swinger, and disability or impaired travelers.

As mentioned in the Description, the guidance information included in this travel guide is based on a combination of input and feedback from 1) locals that were born, raised, and live in Cali (Caleños) and 2) input from expats





from the U.S., Canada, and Europe that have lived in Cali for 3 years or more.

It is imperative that you keep this travel guide close during your trip to Cali to ensure that you have a safe, fun, and memorable experience during your stay in Cali, Colombia, “The Salsa Capital of the World”.

CALI CULTURE TRAVEL GUIDE WILL BE YOUR DAILY GUIDANCE TO ENSURE A LEGENDARY TRIP TO CALI.

In purchasing this travel guide, you also have access to help on-the-ground in Cali and can contact one of our representatives for further travel guidance via a private consultation for more help while you are in Cali. Simply send an email to caliculture2024@gmail.com with your request for a consultation. Or just drop a line to let us know how much you enjoyed this travel guide.

Enjoy your trip to Cali, Colombia, be safe, and remember that “Cali es Cali”.

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1

OVERVIEW of Cali Culture

There is so much to learn and understand regarding the culture in Cali, Colombia. From world class Salsa dancing to traditional Colombian food, parks & waterfalls to shopping centers & sports facilities, Cali, Colombia has it all! Surprisingly, most people in the U.S. and Europe have never heard of Cali, Colombia let alone travelled there. The small amount of people

that have heard of Cali have usually been misinformed with lots of sensationalized, exaggerated, inaccurate, and mostly negative feedback and commentary regarding Cali and Colombia in general. Do not be misinformed – Cali is a great city and if you know where to go and how to conduct yourself, it is a charming city – and safe as well.

2

TIPS FOR Staying Safe in Cali

Cali has a reputation for drug trafficking and gang violence; it has been hard to for the city to shake this bad reputation especially with social media influencers exploiting this reality for views spreading some misinformation about the city. When people consider travel-

ling to Cali, the first question that comes to mind then is, “Is it safe to visit Cali, Colombia.”

The quick answer to the question is Yes, Cali is safe for tourists to visit and explore the culture; **HOWEVER**; travelers need to understand where to



» go, where not to go, and know how to conduct themselves to minimize risk of being victim to criminal activity. Several safety tips and measures are highly recommended below. But before we get into the do's and don'ts, first consider that according to Colombia's own administration of labor and commerce, about 30% of Colombians live below the national poverty level. As many as 60% of Colombians make less than the equivalent of \$600 USD per month and unemployment fluctuates between 9-15%. As a foreign visitor to Colombia, especially from the United States or Europe, you likely earn many times the income of the average Colombian. **Keeping this in mind will give you some context as to why we have created our list of things to do/don't do.**

- *Do not wear designer clothes, expensive watches, or jewelry.*
- *Do not pull-out large wads of money.*
- *Do not walk on desolate alleys or streets especially at night.*
- *Do not meet a man or woman on the street and take them back to your hotel or Airbnb.*
- *Drink in moderation in bars so that you can have situational awareness.*
- *While in nightclubs and bars, never walk away from your drink or leave with other people around.*
- *If you are a solo female traveler, avoid nightclubs and never walk alone at night.*
- *Avoid arranging "hooks up" from dating sites.*
- *Avoid carrying backpacks, knapsacks, or bookbags while walking through center city,*



» ●Place your valuables and critical items (ID, passport, credit cards) in a secure safe in your hotel room or Airbnb apartment. Make a copy of your passport info page and the stamp page with the latest entry into the country and carry this with you instead of the original document.

●Always be courteous, patient, and respectful to locals in Cali. Have a nice, positive energy wherever you go and hangout.

●Stay in an Airbnb that has cameras on the exterior and a security doorman.

●Avoid being in the Bulevar Del Rio or historical center city area past 12:00 am. (Midnight).

The above safety tips and recommendations could save your life. If you are the victim of a robbery, report the incident as soon as possible to the local police station. The locations and contact information for the primary police station in Cali are listed as follows:

Cali Metropolitan Police Station

Physical Address: Cl. 21 #1N-65

Telephone No.: +57 28826106

A few other major police stations in Cali are listed as follows:

Estación de Policía El Vallado Police department

Physical Address: Carrera 41B,
Cra. 41c #48-75

Telephone No.: +57 315 3459829

and, The Maria Police Station

Physical Address: Av. La Maria
#24-00.

Telephone No.: +57 25552915

If your passport and identification is stolen, then you will need to contact the U.S. Embassy office. Unfortunately, there is one main U.S. Embassy in Colombia and it is located in Bogota. The contact information for the U.S. Embassy office in Bogota is as follows:

Call: +57 (1) 275-2000

Email: ACSBogota@state.gov

3 **AIRPORT** & Transportation

The main international airport that services the city of Cali is the Alfonso Bonilla Aragón International Airport located between Palmira and Cali. It is Colombia's fourth-busiest airport in passenger volume. Depending on traffic, the drive time from the airport to Cali (and vice versa) can be up to 45-60 minutes.

There are three (3) main options for transportation to and from the airport. See these options

1. Uber – Yes, Uber does provide ride service to and from the airport. Simply open the Uber App and type in your destination.

2. Taxi – There will be numerous taxis ready and waiting for you outside the airport. Be sure to discuss

and agree upon the price of the taxi ride upfront so that there will be no surprises at the end. As of December 2024, the average one-way taxi fare to/from the airport is \$80,000 to \$120,000 pesos (in USD this would be between \$18-30). Fare varies based on vehicle size and features as well as whether the taxi is picking you up at a pre-arranged time or you are hailing one on the street.

3. Private transportation services. There are several, private transportation services that you can reserve before your trip. Note: These transportation rides are considered luxury so you may pay a lot more than Uber or a regular Taxi. Typically, these transportation services wait for you at the exit of the airport international door with a sign with your name.



» •Transportes Escobar VIP

•Logirenturs S.A.S.

Most people go with the Uber option because it is quick, easy, and slightly cheaper than the other two options. Uber ride from the airport to Cali typically costs around \$80,000 Colombian pesos or

less; this equates to \$20 USD or less.

Regarding travel around Cali, I recommend that you use Uber. Uber is extremely cheap and easy to utilize for traveling from one barrio to the next; this transportation typically costs in the range of \$2.00 to \$5.00 USD.

4 **BEST** & Most Affordable Places for Car Rental Agencies

1. Localiza Car Rental (Cl. 10 #5250, Panamericano, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia)
2. JV RENTACAR (Cra. 83c #20-35 Local 104, Comuna 17, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia)
3. Calima Rent A Car (56, Av. 6a Nte. #26N 56, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia)
4. Luigi Rent a Car (Cl 47 #120-100, Villa Fatima, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia)
5. Travel Rent-a-car Cali (Cl. 20 Nte. #6AN-19 local 1, Santa Monica, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia)

5 **SAFEST** Neighborhoods in Cali

Although we highlight the safest neighborhoods or “barrios” in Cali, it’s important to note the urban and social planning of Colombia.

Firstly, each barrio is given a stratus number ranking where the lowest income neighborhoods are 1-2, middle-class neighborhoods are given 3-4 and wealthy neighborhoods are given 5-6. So, you can easily get a sense of the type of neighborhood you’re in by asking what stratus number it is. Knowing this is crucial to getting around safely in Cali and we recommend never going into 1-2 stratus neighborhoods.

Unique to Cali is an urban planning that places stratus 5-6 barrios adjacent to 1-2 stratus barrios very regularly. So although there are touristy destinations/areas that are generally more safe, you

should not assume that you are 100% safe just because you’re in a nice barrio. Since petty theft is one of the most common crimes in Cali, you should always maintain a sense of awareness no matter where you go.

The safest neighborhoods in Cali for travelers and tourists are listed as follows (in no particular order):

- 1.** Normandia/El Peñon/
Santa Teresita
- 2.** Granada/Santa Monica
Residencial
- 3.** San Antonio
- 4.** San Fernando Viejo
- 5.** Ciudad Jardín/El Ingenio

6 **TOP** Attractions & Monuments in Cali

- 1.** El Gato del Rio & Parque de los Gatos
- 2.** Historic Centre City Monuments & Plaza de Caicedo
- 3.** Trumpet of Grupo Niche Monument in Plazoleta Jairo Varela
- 4.** Iglesia de San Antonio
- 5.** Zoologico De Cali
- 6.** La Galeria Alameda
- 7.** Cristo Rey
- 8.** Coliseo del Pueblo
- 9.** Las Canchas Pan-americanas
- 10.** La Ermita Church
- 11.** La 66 Corridor
- 12.** Cerro de las Tres Cruces
- 13.** Torre de Cali
- 14.** Parque del Perro
- 15.** Parque El Ingenio
- 16.** Rio Pance

7 **TOP 10** Things-To-Do in Cali

- 1.** Visit the Fresh Food & Fruit Open Market Galeria Alameda
- 2.** Hike Tres Cruces (1 – 2-hour hike)
- 3.** Visit the Museo De La Salsa in Barrio Obrero
- 4.** Take a Salsa Dance Class at a local Salsa School
- 5.** Visit the Museo La Tertulia and the Cinemateca
- 6.** Eat and drink in Parque del Perro



» **7.** Hike and spend the day taking a dip in Rio Pance

8. Visit the Cali Zoo

9. Public party on the Bule-

var del Rio Saturday night

10. Try a cholado (mixed shaved ice dessert) at the Panamerican Courts



8

BEST Supermarkets in Cali

15

1. Carulla – the Whole Foods of Colombia

2. D1 – a low-cost supermarket that locals utilize

3. Exito – similar to Target and has everything from

4. Jumbo Cencosud – Chipichape Mall

5. Cañaveral in Centenario Mall

6. Jumbo Valle Del Lili in Jardin Plaza Shopping Mall

9 **BEST PLACES** to Exchange Money

1. Money exchange store located in lobby of Hotel Intercontinental (near El Peñon)
2. Punto Dollar Money Exchange Centro Comercial located in Chipichape Mall
3. Tu Cambio Money Exchange located in the Barbilla Plaza (Ciudad Jardin)

10 **BEST COFFEE** & Pastry Shops in Cali



1. Krost Bakery (Barrio El Peñon)
2. Baraka (Barrio's El Peñon & Santa Teresita)
3. Malc (Barrio Granada)
4. BC Coffee (Barrio Miraflores)
5. Café con Pam (Barrio Normandia)
6. Italiano (Barrio El Peñon)
7. Juan Valdez (Various locations around Cali)

11 **TOP 10** Restaurants in Cali

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Casa Iberica
(Spanish cuisine) | 6. El Gringo
(American Cuisine) |
| 2. Citadino –
(Colombian Fusion) | 7. Pampa Malbec
(Steakhouse) |
| 3. Fusion Wok –
(Asian Fusion/Sushi) | 8. Faro
(Italian Fusion) |
| 4. Cantina La 15 –
(Mexican Cuisine) | 9. Storia De Amori
(Italian Cuisine) |
| 5. El Rancho de Jonas
(Mexican Cuisine) | 10. TDT –
(Good Burger Joint) |

12 **TOP 5** Sports Bars in Cali



- 1.** Mister Wings (Several locations in Cali)
- 2.** Rico Rich\$ (in Barrio Granada)
- 3.** El Gringo (El Peñon & Parque Del Perro)
- 4.** JR Liquors (Several locations in Cali)
- 5.** El Viejo Barril (in Barrio Granada)

13 **TOP 5 Beer Bars & Breweries in Cali**

1. Bogota Beer Company (BBC) [Several locations in Cali]
2. Cervezas Kalima (in Barrio El Peñon)
3. Distrito (in Barrio El Peñon)
4. Martyns (near Barrio Granada)
5. Camden Beer Garden (in Barrio El Ingenio & El Peñon)
6. Antaño Cervecería & Bar (in Barrio Granada)

14 **BEST BARS for Rock-N-Roll Music in Cali**

1. Route 66 Bar (Live Music - Parque Del Perro - Barrio Granada)
2. Bourbon Street (Live Music - Barrio Granada)
3. Cervezas Kalima (Live Music on select dates- Barrio El Peñon)
4. Warhol (Live Music- near
5. Foxland (DJ and Karaoke - near Parque Del Perro)
6. Sonica (DJ - near Mira Flores)
7. El Faro Rock Bar (Live Music - near Parque Santa Anita)

15

BEST LGBTQ Friendly Bars

1. La Purga (Santa Monica Residencial)

16

BEST SALSA Schools in Cali

1. Salsa School Rumba y Salsa (near Parque Artensanal Loma de La Cruz)
2. La Topa Tolondra (near Barrio San Antonio)
3. Baila La Vaina (near Barrio San Antonio)
4. Salsa Pura – Dance Without Borders (in Barrio San Antonio)
5. Swing Latino (near El Mulato Cabaret)
6. Sabor Manicero (Tequendama)

17 **BEST** Salsa Bars & Discotecas (Nightclubs)

1. La Topa Tolondra (near Barrio San Antonio) que Del Perro)
2. Zaporoco Bar (near Barrio Granada)
3. Cimarrón Bar (near Barrio Granada)
4. Café Mi Tierra (near Par-
5. Menga's Discoteca (near El Rincon)
6. La Pergola Clandestine (near Barrio Centenario)
7. Mala Mañana (near Historic Centre)

18 **BEST** GYMS & Health Clubs in Cali

1. Smart Fit Gym (Barrio Centenario)
2. 24/7 Fitness (Various Locations in Cali)
3. Gym San Antonio (Barrio San Antonio)
4. Top Gym (near San Jose Cordoba)
5. Fight House Granada Mixed Martial Arts (Barrio Granada)
6. BodyTech (various locations in Cali)
7. Striking Fitness Boxing (Barrio El Cedro)
8. BeFitness (Ciudad Jardin)

19 **BEST PARKS** in Cali

1. Parque De Los Gatos
2. El Peñon Parque
3. San Antonio Parque
4. La Flora Parque
5. Parque El Ingenio
6. Parque de Las Banderas



20 **BEST KENNELS** or Pet Sitters for Dogs & Cats

1. Fashion Pets Peluquería y Guardería Canina
2. Happy Cats Cali
3. Furry PetCamp - Guardería Canina
4. Hotel Canino Cali
5. Perropolis
6. Ulahlila Dog and Cat Spa & Kennel



END

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