

Colombia has 55 protected natural areas that have been classified as national natural parks, fauna and flora sanctuaries, natural reserves, parkways, and unique natural areas.



{rokbox title=|Parque Chicaque Park, in the surroundings of Bogotá|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/informe ESPECIAL/parque-chicaque.jpg{/rokbox}

Parque Chicaque Park, in the surroundings of Bogotá /Flickr User [quimbaya](#) /

Visiting these places is to come face to face with the justification of why Colombia is one of the most diverse countries on the planet.

In Colombia, natural parks are spread all across the country.

Various kinds of reserves are situated across the entire territory. Most of them have been adapted to receive visitors, as long as they obtain authorization from the General Direction of National Natural Parks of Colombia, the state agency in charge of administrating protected areas through private concessions.

Colombia's Natural Parks are spread across the entire national territory.

Thanks to the variety of landscapes and thermal floors, the parks offer multiple possibilities for engaging in [nature tourism](#) , which may be defined as a recreational way of enjoying Colombian geography while taking care of the environment.

Activities in Natural Land and Seascapes

With the increase in the number of protected areas, there has also been an increased interest on the part of travelers to enjoy these tranquil sites, away from the din of the cities and in an environment that, depending on the individual park, favors activities in which respect for fauna and flora take precedence. They range from entertaining ecological hikes in any of the sites to diving in parks like Tayrona, [Isla Gorgona](#) , and [McBean Lagoon in Providencia](#) .

Colombia's natural parks offer climates, scenery, flora, and fauna that vary according to their location.



{rokbox title=|El Cocuy National Natural Park|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/informe ESPECIAL/parque-el-cocuy2.jpg{/rokbox}

El Cocuy National Natural Park /Flickr User [Juan M. Anzola](#) /

Although possessing marked differences in their structure, it is a common occurrence to find springs, leafy forests, jungles, rivers, steep paths, the sea, and even exuberant snow peaks, among them, [Los Nevados](#) , El Cocuy, and the Nevado del Huila.

Several paths are graced by the aromas of plants and flowers and the permanent trill of birds. At the Tayrona, for example, over 200 kinds of birds have been detected. Likewise, a diversity of mammals, reptiles, insects, and frogs is part of the fauna inventory and its endemic species.

Ecological and Cultural Experiences

Besides encounters with nature, visits entail interactions with the communities that inhabit them and who are the main allies in conservation efforts. Thanks to their profound knowledge, native inhabitants also serve as guides in the areas where they make their homes.

The cultural rapprochement implied by visits to many protected areas, also includes becoming acquainted with [archaeological remains](#) , rock paintings, and the museums found in some of them. Mutual respect between Man and natural resources is perhaps the best teaching provided by visits to natural parks.

{gallery}turistainternacional/Quehacer/informe ESPECIAL/parques_naturales{/gallery} **Recreation amid Landscape Treasures**

Aside from high mountaineering and trekking, the parks offer options for recreation and sports that take advantage of water and land forms. Some of them are:



{rokbox title=|Tayrona National Natural Park|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/informe ESPECIAL/parque-tayrona1.jpg{/rokbox}

Tayrona National Natural Park /Flickr User [noam fein](#) /

- [diving](#) ,
- canoeing,
- snorkeling,
- sailing

and adventure sports such as:

- caving,
- waterfall rappelling,
- [rafting](#) ,
- zip lining,
- cliff climbing.



{rokbox title=|Laguna Negra, Los Nevados National Natural Park|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/informe ESPECIAL/laguna-negra.jpg{/rokbox}

Laguna Negra, Los Nevados National Natural Park /Flickr User [chilangoco](#) /

Thanks to Colombia's invaluable natural wealth, almost all its departments have protected areas with access to visitors - another hearty, healthful way for them to get to know the country and its treasures.

In view of climatic variations, it is recommended to obtain information from the General Direction of Natural Parks as to the best time of year for visiting. However, due to the benefits of having different thermal floors, it is always possible to visit a natural park any time of year.

Recommendations for Visiting Protected Areas

Preparation for the experience Obtain information about the selected reserve: learn about the

species that are protected, the communities that inhabit them, and make sure there is a visitors' center, lodging infrastructure, and camping grounds. Respect for nature This is the most important rule. Do not disturb the tranquil atmosphere and, if you are lucky enough to encounter fauna, do not upset it. Just watch in silence. Little technology Motor vehicles serve to come close to the parks, but not to access them. With the exception of cameras, forget technology when visiting a protected area. Visitor awareness Protect nature. Do not damage plants or disturb animals; do not litter and please collaborate by picking up the litter you encounter. The survival of Colombia's natural parks depends on careful and respectful treatment from each of us. **If your thing is nature, we invite you to keep on browsing:**

- [Natural Parks of Colombia](#)
- [Bird Watching in Colombia](#)
- [Rural Tourism in Colombia](#)
- [Whales in the Colombian Pacific](#)
- Or maybe [The Colombian Amazon Jungle](#)
- y [The Colombian Pacific](#)