{rokbox title=|Reflection of Ciénaga. Photo: Miguel Barahona|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/gabo/garciamarquez7.jpg{/rokbox}

Reflection of *Ciénaga*. Photo: Miguel Barahona

This is the tour of our route – not in a battered motorboat, but on a modern bus, along a narrow line of paved road, with *Ciénaga Grande* on one side and the Caribbean Sea on the other.

The road takes us to *Ciénaga*, no longer a “mysterious town”, nor the small and prosperous town of the Banana Zone where the historic episodes immortalized by *García Márquez* in his novels took place, but a thunderous, chaotic city with remnants of its past splendor.

Ciénaga was founded by Friar Tomás de Ortiz and is located 35 kilometers from Santa Marta . Richard McColl, a journalist from London’s BBC, called it “the capital of Colombian magical realism”.

Ciénaga: The Capital of Magical Realism

Ciénaga, a municipality in the department of *Magdalena* is located on the shores of the Caribbean Sea, on the northeastern tip of *Ciénaga Grande* .

{rokbox title=|Main square in Ciénaga. Photo: Nicolás Pernet.|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/gabo/garciamarquez8.jpg{/rokbox}

Main square in Ciénaga. Photo: Nicolás Pernet.

- Setting of the tragic episode in Colombia’s history known as the “banana massacre”, masterfully recreated in *Cien años de soledad* [One Hundred Years of Solitude].
- Way station on the journey undertaken by *Simón Bolívar* from *Barranquilla* to *Cartagena*, in the novel *El general en su laberinto*

[The General in His Labyrinth].

- The town experienced important transformations between 1920 and 1930 due to the “banana boom” driven by the United Fruit Company. The dazzling, short-lived kingdom of wealth was recreated in *Cien años de soledad* [One Hundred Years of Solitude]. The author makes the decline of the Banana Zone coincide with the decline of *Macondo*.

- In *La hojarasca* [Leaf Storm], his first novel, surely written between 1950 and 1953, *García Márquez* introduces his readers to this universe of splendor and fleeting hopes produced by the arrival of the banana company.

Consult the complete texts on *Ciénaga* in *Las rutas de García Márquez* guide, available at the following bookshops: *Librería Nacional* in *Cartagena* and *Barranquilla* and *Librería Ábaco* in *Cartagena*.