River Rafting in Colombia

With so much water running down the slopes of the mountains of Colombia, it is only natural that there be so many stages for engaging in the thrilling sport of river rafting, a discipline with remote origins in southern Africa, yet relatively new in Colombia.

What is rafting about?

It is about challenging the force of rivers from aboard inflatable boats. A group of people maneuver paddles and struggle to stay afloat to avoid bowing down to the rapids formed in the river. The rapids are classified in six classes - 1 to 6 - according to their level of difficulty.

Class 1 is the gentlest, perfect for beginners, although they can easily advance to Class 3 rapids in a short time. Classes 4 to 6 are very demanding, with challenges only for experts; here the margin of error and the rescue possibilities are minimal.

In Colombia, there is an abundance of white-water rivers, as the special currents for this sport are called.

Where to go rafting in Colombia

Among the possibilities for adventure lovers, the following stand out: the Magdalena River near the municipality of San Agustín (department of Huila); the Río Negro (in the department of Cundinamarca); the Barragán River in the Café Triangle (more specifically, in the department of Quindío); and the Suárez, Chicamocha, and Fonce Rivers (in the department of Santander). The latter three are perhaps the most sought after by lovers of extreme sports from Colombia and abroad.

The Magdalena River in San Agustín

The Río Negro in Tobia

Very close to Bogotá, an hour and a half by road in a northwestern direction, in the municipalities of Nimaima and Útica, runs the Río Negro, the Black River, whose surrounding landscapes are also adequate for other adventure activities like mountain biking and dry and wet rappelling.

The Barragán River in the Café Triangle

The Barragán River runs through an area known as the Café Triangle . It crosses several municipalities in the department of Quindío and allows for easy, safe rafting. The area, surrounded by coffee bushes and fruit trees, also offers locations for engaging in altitude sports like zip lining and high ropes.

The Suárez, Fonce, and Chicamocha Rivers in Santander

In the department of Santander , on the western range of the Colombian Andes, multiple rivers and landscapes make the dreams of extreme adventurers come true. The Suárez and Fonce Rivers, in the proximity of the towns of Socorro and San Gil, respectively, and the Chicamocha River, which runs through the canyon by the same name, are white water rivers continuously navigated by rafting boats in one of the favorite extreme sports of this department. There are also air currents strong enough for paragliding, caves for spelunking, and powerful waterfalls for rappelling.

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Other Colombian Rivers for Rafting

Several other Colombian rivers have adequate stretches for rafting. Among them are the Cauca River; the San Juan River, in the department of Antioquia; and the Sumapaz River near the municipalities of Melgar and Flandes, in the department of Tolima.

Certified companies operate in all these destinations, with expert guides that guarantee an amusing, unforgettable sports experience and, most importantly, under the most rigorous safety conditions.

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Arrival and Lodging at the Various Colombian Rafting Destinations

If you decide to explore the Magdalena River near its source, you must travel to San Agustín, in the department of Huila, 546 km from Bogotá. By road, the trip lasts about nine hours. There you will find a variety of lodging options, including Tourist Inns .

The Barragán River runs through the department of Quindío, in the heart of the coffee country, where distances are very short and it is easy to find lodging options in the municipalities of Armenia, Montenegro, La Tebaida, and Quimbaya.

The Río Negro, in Cundinamarca, is quite close to Bogotá, in the municipality of Nimaima. Camping is possible, yet due to its proximity to Bogotá, it is possible to leave the capital very early in the morning to return the same day.

The town of San Gil is located six hours northeast of Bogotá by road. It is known for its adventure landscapes and sites. The municipality has become the headquarters for sportspeople who wish to challenge the force of the Fonce, Suárez, and Chicamocha Rivers. San Gil has an ample offer of hotels characterized by their country style.

If you like extreme sports in fascinating scenery, you may also be interested in:

- Destination Santander, land of adventure
- Santander Photo Gallery
- Video de Santander
- Santander Video
- Diving in Colombia

- Adventure Sports in Colombia