

- **Place:** Medellín, Antioquia
- **Region:** Andes
- **Date:** August 1 - 10, every year
- **Duration:** 10 days



The Medellín Flower Fair

In August, when Medellín – known as the “city of eternal spring” – blooms in all its splendor and balconies, terraces, gardens, and billboards get flooded with flowers, it is the beginning of the famous fair.

This feast of flowers takes place in early August and lasts ten days. It offers visitors and residents over 140 cultural, traditional, and modern events, the following among them: a horse fair, an orchestra festival, the national *trova* festival (singers in duels of improvised verses), an old and classic cars parade, a dog walk, musical and cultural platforms, the festival of remembrance and folk songs, a contest of talented women, *the chiva* carnival (*a chiva* is the typical open-sided bus built on a truck chassis), and the national championship of noise on wheels.

The flower fair is one of the cultural episodes in Colombia with a high degree of reaffirmation of identity and an event that brings together *antioqueños* and thousands of visitors in search of flowers, enjoyment, music, and fun.

Origins of the Flower Fair

Medellín, a place with no seasons that turns August into spring.

The first flower fair was held on May 1, 1957, and lasted five days. Activities included dancing in stalls located throughout the city for the people to have fun.

In search of novelty and a way to lure *paisas* into participation, Arturo Uribe, an illustrious Antioquenean, proposed *the silleteros* parade. On that occasion, he invited *silleteros* from the nearby district of Santa Elena who had devoted themselves to flower production for generations.

The invitation was accepted by forty *silleteros*, and the spectators, attracted by the beauty and color of the flowers, fell in love with the parade.

The Flower fair is one of the most awaited moments by all citizens. The joy, the feast, the culture, the flowers, and the tourists take over the streets and parks of Medellín. The transformation of the city [...] is our main tourist attraction. / [Comfenalco](#) , Antioquia/

The Silleteros: A Not-to-be-forgotten Tradition



The Medellín Flower Fair

Undoubtedly, the most representative event of the fair is the Desfile de Silleteros (*silleteros* parade). Silleteros is the term used for the farmers who make beautiful flower arrangements on a *silleta* (a chair-like contraption for carrying flowers on a person's back). This parade is recognized as a cultural heritage of Colombia.

The silletas are made from wood and have a back plate and two handles for hanging the silleta on a person's back. They were used in colonial times to carry people on the mountains of Antioquia.

The use of *the silleta* became generalized, and the meaning of the word *silletero* came to mean people who sell flowers in the streets of Medellín at the beginning of the 20th century.

The most emblematic figure of this tradition is the legendary María La Larga, a *silletera* who carried children on her back. María and her novel way of transportation convinced many of the region's farmers that *silletas* were the easiest, fastest way for carrying flowers from the farm to the city.

The use of the word *silleta* became generalized and since the beginning of the twentieth century, the term *silletero* began to be applied to the people who sold flowers on Medellín's cobble-stoned streets.

Every year, men women, and children proudly carry on their backs a depiction in flowers of their life histories, land, and culture. This parade is eagerly awaited by foreign and national tourists who join this lovely tradition by chanting "Cuando pasan los *silleteros*, es Antioquia la que pasa" (When the *silleteros* go by, it's Antioquia going by.)

The Silletas under the Magnifying Glass

- A *silleta* can weigh up to seventy kilos and measure up to five meters in height and diameter.
- Over 25 kinds of flowers are used to manufacture a *silleta*, although some contain as much as seventy.
- The main flowers used are: pinocchios, lilies, carnations, agapanthuses, sunflowers, bridal veil, gladioli, chrysanthemums, roses, and orchids.
- Because they require special care, pansies, snap-dragons, and wild flowers are found only occasionally.

Every August the city of Medellín blooms as the flower fair gathers thousands of people who celebrate race, customs, and life itself.

For additional information, we invite you to visit [the festival's official website](#) .

Did you enjoy the Medellín Flower Fair? Visit more of Medellín:

- [Medellín](#) destination
- [Colombiamoda](#) .