- **Place:** Villa de Leyva, Boyacá
- **Region:** Andes
- **Date:** December 7 - 9, every year
- **Duration:** 3 days.

Festival of the Lights in Villa de Leyva /Pic. diegotorquemada

In Colombia, the evening and night of December 7 to 9 is a unique moment in the year.

City streets become a blaze of light, with sidewalks, balconies, and terraces covered with lighted candles. This is the traditional *Noche de las velitas*; that is, night of the little candles.

What a way to start the December festivities!

For millenniums, fire has awakened in humans very special feelings associated with the meaning of life and truth.

One of the loveliest celebrations of *the Noche de las velitas* in Colombia takes place in Villa de Leyva, a picturesque village in the department of Boyacá, which becomes filled with tourists from all over the country who come to enjoy the show and the color of the fireworks contest that fills the colonial streets with a special kind of magic.

The festival is geared, above all, to families with children and is an excellent opportunity to feel the Colombian Christmas spirit through the variety of events in the program: a contest of lanterns, which are exhibited during the procession of the Immaculate Conception, concerts by Christmas choirs, and naturally, the fireworks shows presented by expert fireworks technicians.

The best technicians light various figures and participate in the contest obtaining scores for the following:

- luminosity,
- altitude,
- spread of the display,
- creativity,
- sound effects,
- and duration.

History of the Festival

The most beautiful Night of the Candles celebrations in Colombia take place in Villa de Leyva, a picture-perfect town in Boyacá.

The Festival was created in 1986 for the purpose of attracting tourism and rescuing the traditions of the Day of the Immaculate Conception; celebrated by the Catholic Church with bonfires, candles and lanterns.

La noche de las velitas

The widespread use of candles in Catholic Church began during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at the time when America was being colonized by Spain, and the Spaniards began to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the New World, where fire used in feasts had a folkloric, ludical, and festive meaning, rather than a religious and symbolic one.

The night of the little candles joined the traditional religious festivity imported to the American continent with the candles, fire, and festive meaning of the American people, thus giving Colombian warmth and light to the European December 8 celebration.

What did you think of the Festival of the Lights in Villa de Leyva? Why not spend more time in the Bogotá region:

- Bogotá destination
- Handicrafts:
  Ruana , Ráquira ceramics
- Natural park of the Andean region

Iguaque .