- **Place:** Uribia, La Guajira
- **Region:** Caribbean
- **Date:** August 16 - 18, every year
- **Duration:** 3 days

Wayúu Culture Festival

The most important cultural event in the department of La Guajira, in the northern part of Colombia, is celebrated every year sometime between the months of May and June. It is known as the Wayúu Culture Festival and lasts a weekend. The site of this important festival is the municipality of Uribia, the largest Wayúu settlement in Colombia.

The Wayúu show the world their enormous cultural wealth through a mix of traditional music, rituals, customs, handicrafts, forums, expeditions, and games, all of which have fostered the preservation of ancestral customs, traditions, and folklore.

Origin of the Festival

The history of the festival began in 1984 with the election of the first Wayúu woman (a *Majayut*). She decided to make public the essence of their culture through dances, food, games, and traditional medicine and music.

The first festival was held in 1985 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of Uribia. In 2006 the festival was proclaimed cultural heritage of our nation.

Festival Activities

The Wayúu Culture Festival offers a wide range of activities to suit any preference:

Handicraft Exhibits The Uribia central park becomes more then a simple display of typical handicrafts; visitors are able to watch exactly how hammocks and *mochila* bags are woven.

Gastronomic sampling Wayúu women prepare and offer the typical dishes of their cuisine: *friche* (a dish prepared with chopped sheep entrails that are cooked with salt in a small amount of water and are then fried in sheep grease), *mazamorra* (a corn-based beverage), and roast sheep.

Theater Plays

Wayúu children and young people act out the traditions of the culture:

- wakes,
- weddings,
- the dance of the little goat, or Kaulayaa a carnival in gratitude for good harvests and rain.

- *the Yonna*, a special celebration related to material and spiritual matters of the Wayúu, such as offerings, revelations, illness, healing, cheers for horse races, etc.

Contests

Contests play an important role in the festival. Typical instruments like the *kasha*, *tariraü*, *wonto loyaa* , and *turompa* ; unpublished stories narrated in chants or verses in décima; traditional dances; and horse races are the main ones.

If you enjoyed the Wayúu Culture Festival, you will also enjoy:

- Handicrafts in the Caribbean Coast:
  Wayúu knitting , hammocks from San Jacinto
- Sun and beach in Santa Marta
- Diving on the Caribbean Coast .