

- **Place:** Mompox, Bolívar
- **Region:** Caribbean
- **Date:** April 13 - 19, every year (varies according to Christian calendar)
- **Duration:** 8 days



### Holy Week in Mompox

Mompox, a world historical and architectural heritage site located on the banks of the Magdalena River in the department of Bolívar, celebrated Holy Week for the first time in 1564.

What appeals most to the national and international tourists who come every year is the incredible fusion of Catholic religious customs with the magical and pagan elements of the region. The religious celebrations in Mompox date back to the time when wealthy people donated jewels, altars, and images as a way to atone for their sins and achieve eternal salvation. These profuse religious furnishings of Mompox are proof of the great religious vocation of the city.

Every Holy Week, the inhabitants of Mompox dust their jewels to decorate the figures of saints that will parade in the street processions to reminisce the death of Christ.

### **Serenade to the Dead**

The biggest attraction of Holy Week in Mompox is the incredible fusion of Catholic religious customs with mythical and pagan practices of the region.

On the afternoon of Good Wednesday, the inhabitants of Mompox dress in their best clothing and go to the municipal cemetery for the famous *Serenata a los difuntos* (serenade to the dead).

At about six in the evening, the people have gathered at the cemetery, which has been lit for the occasion, and sit in chairs beside the graves of their relatives to keep them company until the small hours of the morning to the rhythm of the funeral music played in honor of the dead. Candles are lit and the graves are decorated with flowers.

The procession starts well into the evening and lasts about ten hours, during which the nazarenes rock the sacred images back and forth and side to side on their shoulders.

## Mompox Processions

In honor of the dead, candles are lit and tombs are decorated with flowers.

The main features that make the Holy Week in Mompox unique in Colombia are the participation of the seven colonial churches of the city and the fact that the Good Thursday and Good Friday processions are marches that take two steps forward and one back, imparting to the occasion a solemn and imposing rhythmic beauty, which is nationally and internationally recognized. The Good Friday procession goes by the names of *Desprendimiento* (detachment) and *Paso Robado* (stolen effigy)

The *Desprendimiento* procession begins at midnight on Good Friday when the parishioners arrive at the church of San Francisco and start knocking on its three doors until they are opened.

The people enter the church and “steal” the effigy. Then the “thieves” take it to a predetermined place. It is left there until two in the morning, when it is “recovered” by the nazarenes who take it to the church of Santo Domingo to the beat of a military-type march composed for the occasion. Mass is then celebrated in the church.

**If you enjoyed the Holy Week processions in Mompox, you should also spend time::**

- Holy Week celebration in: [Pamplona](#) and [Popayán](#),
- Handicrafts:

[Mompox filigree](#) .