Santander: Travel guide

Vacations to a land full of Adventure

Rafting in Santander is one of the many tourist activities you can experience

From the majestic view of the Chicamocha river canyon to the placid El Gallineral park, the land of Santander offers striking landscapes that have made this department a favorite vacation destination with lovers of extreme sports and ecotourism.

The adventure is for real: paragliding, kayaking, rafting, bungee jumping, rappelling, and cave exploration are part of the menu Santander has to spice your holidays. Beautiful colonial towns, biodiversity, handicrafts, and agriculture invite visitors to learn about history and culture, or simply rest and relax. Good lodging is found in Bucaramanga, the capital, and San Gil, Socorro, and Barichara. Also, great tourism destinations.

With so many natural, cultural and architectural attractions, getting to know Santander will take some time. Aside from forests, colonial towns, rivers, caves, and plains, Santander is home to forceful and resolute people whose provinces have given Colombia many of its heroes. And it has always been a land and travel guide of adventure, history, and amazing tales.

Santander has always been a land of adventure, history and stories

Holidays: Places to visit

Bucaramanga seems to lean on a terrace on the eastern mountain range of the Andes. It is an industrial, commercial, and university town with a temperate climate and an adequate hotel infrastructure.

San Gil y sus alrededores son la base ideal para quienes vienen por el deporte y la aventura. Barichara, el pueblo más lindo de Colombia y monumento nacional, atrae por su arquitectura, sus artesanos de la piedra y la gastronomía local.

San Gil and its surroundings are the ideal destination for visitors coming for sports and adventure. Barichara, considered the prettiest town in Colombia and proclaimed a national monument, charms everyone with its old, well-preserved architecture, its stone masons, and its local cuisine.

South of San Gil, El Gallineral is a park with unusual moss-covered trees and interesting surroundings, among them, Bellavista, La Playa, the Curití falls and La Antigua cave. In the middle of the park, there is a small lake with diving boards and cabanas.

The practice of extreme sports is ideal in places like Pescaderito in Curití, Hoyo del Aire in La Paz, the Ortices lagoon in San Andrés, and the Ahogado waterfalls in Zapatoca. Kayaking is practiced in the Fonce River, and waterfall rappelling in the Salto del Mico, a 45-meter high cascade.

Kayaking in Santander is another tourist activity you can enjoy during your vacations

At only ten kilometers from San Gil, the adventure leads to the Cueva del Indio, a cave that has become one of the main attractions in Santander. Delving into the depths of the cave is quite a challenge: it is necessary to slide down an 80-meter cliff with the help of a rope.

Places like the Caverna del Yeso in Curití, where you have to go through a five-meter

underground tunnel in a rappel descent, also offer challenges and adventures to explorers. There are stalactites and stalagmites, columns, and ancient Indian tombs in this cave. Other places favored by those who practice rappelling and cave exploration are the Caverna de la Vaca in Curití and La Antigua cavern on the road to Barichara, the latter with rooms with mineral formations, mudrooms, and a well at the end of the path.

Pinchote, Juan Curí, and Pescadero have brooks to explore by making descents. Vertigo and heights put self-confidence and ability to the test. The best sites for paragliding are La Tumba del Alemán, right in the center of the Chicamocha canyon, the Mesa de Ruitoque, the Mesa de los Santos, and Curití.

Climate

The climate varies according to the elevation. In the lower Magdalena valley, mean temperature is 29º C (84º F). On the mountainsides, the temperature decreases. To the south, and especially in the canyon of the Chicamocha River, temperatures can reach 32º C (90º F). In the high moors of the páramos, temperatures might go well below 7º C (44º F).

Altitude

Bucaramanga is located at 1000 meters (3280 ft.) above sea level. The high mountains in the department reach altitudes above 3000 meters (9850 ft.).

Airport

The main airport is Palo Negro, in Bucaramanga.

How to get there

By air, from most main cities in the country. By land, from Bogotá, passing through the city of Tunja the distance is 393 kilometers; by the Ubaté – Chiquinquirá road, 380 kilometers.

Contacts

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When in Santander, enjoy:

- Rural tourism
- Birdwatching
- Los Estoraques Natural Park
- Chicamocha river park

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Map of Santander