



{rokbox title=|People say that the legend of El Dorado started in n Guatavita. /Photo: Flickr user Wladimir Valdes|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Adondeir/pueblos-magicos/guatavita/guatavita1.jpg{/rokbox}

People say that the legend of El Dorado started in n Guatavita. /Photo: Flickr user [Wladimir Valdes](#) .

The story of Guatavita goes back to the indigenous era, when the Chibcha communities lived in this region. They worshipped the goddess of the water Chie, to whom they paid tribute in the sacred lake. In 1593 Miguel de Ibarra officially founded the village, and awarded the land to the indigenous inhabitants.

Guatavita is located in one of the lowest and flattest parts of Cundinamarca, but was chosen as the site of the Tomine dam. In 1964, the local population began to be transferred to the current location, each family receiving a house in the new village, and on September 13, 1967 the final Mass was said for our Lady of Sorrows to be transferred, along with the schools, the police station and the mayor's office, to the new site.

### **The legend of El Dorado under the water, as told by the children.**

The children of Guatavita will tell you that during the time of the Chibchas, the Zipa, or chief of the tribe, would pay tribute to the gods, and pray for prosperity and good fortune, sailing with his priests on a raft adorned with jewels and brilliant stones. The Zipa, covered in gold dust, would immerse himself in the waters of the lake, while his retinue tossed vessels of precious metal and clay into the water. This is the story of El Dorado.



{rokbox title=|This lake was a sacred place for the Chibchas. / Photo: Flickr user li Constantine.|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Adondeir/pueblos-magicos/guatavita/guatavita4.jpg{/rokbox}

This lake was a sacred place for the Chibchas. / Photo: Flickr user [li Constantine](#) .

This story came to the ears of Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada (the founder of Bogotá), who encouraged other conquistadores from Europe to explore the lands of the New World, and find

the gold of the indigenous tribes. And this is how the legend of El Dorado began: it was believed that there was a city made of pure gold, in the lands of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

The lake of Guatavita and the village of that name still holds that magic, the mystery and the secret of the Chibchas, and on shore you can still see an excavation made many years ago by some treasure-hunters, who tried to drain the lake and recover the gold. The local people maintain the legacy of working precious metals and crafts in the streets and squares of Guatavita.

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