



{rokbox title=|The buildings of Villa de Leyva are full of magic. / Photo: Flickr user tristadesign.}|images/stories/turistainternacional/Adondeir/pueblos-magicos/villa-de-leyva/villadeleyva-tristadesign.jpg{/rokbox}

The buildings of Villa de Leyva are full of magic. / Photo: Flickr user [tristadesign](#) .

Every corner and every house in Villa de Leyva is a thing of beauty and a fragment of history. The main square is one of the first places to go, with the very simple but picturesque church, where the local people and visitors alike congregate. Religious services are held there by day; and by night, films are projected off the walls. Another side of the square is adorned with arches and columns, over restaurants and inns.

The Ricaurte museum is a collection of military memorabilia centered on the life of the revolutionary hero who sacrificed his life to blow up a Spanish arsenal. The square in front of the museum also carries his name. Other museums worth visiting are El Carmen, the Museum of Religious Art, and Paleontological Museum, on the road to Arcabuco; Casa de Vargas Tejada, where Vargas wrote “Las Convulsiones” and the Convent of La Candelaria, also exhibiting religious works.

Around Villa de Leyva

Near Villa de Leyva adventure sports are a leading feature of the natural surroundings of an unforgettable visit.

There is plenty of quiet countryside near Villa de Leyva for rest and relaxation of a different kind, particularly open-air activities. There is Las Periqueras, a series of waterfalls, the Iguaque Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, perfect for ecological walks and, incidentally, a place of Muisca legend; Hayal’s grotto, another spectacular waterfall; La Cueva de la Fábrica, a haven for cavers; along with Hoyo de la Romera; Paso del Ángel and El Pozo de la Vieja.

“The Fossil” is the name given to the place where one of the largest local prehistoric animal remains have been preserved. There is also El Infiernito, a muisca astronomical observatory in the middle of a desert, as a witness to the worship of fertility of the indigenous peoples. Another local attraction is an (almost-interactive) ostrich farm. Ostrich meat is now a delicacy, and skins are used locally in the production of fine leathersgoods.

Other places of interest



{rokbox title=|Every house in Villa de Leyva is a picturesque monument to the Spanish colonial era. / Photo: Flickr user pattoncito.}|images/stories/turistainternacional/Adondeir/pueblos-magicos/villa-de-leyva/villadeleyva-pattoncito.jpg{/rokbox}

Every house in Villa de Leyva is a picturesque monument to the Spanish colonial era. / Photo: Flickr user [pattoncito](#) .

- The monastery of San Francisco, next to the hospital.
- Fábrica Real de Licores, one of Colombia's first distilleries. In a sort of pop-baroque style, it is a few yards off the main square.
- Convent of Ecce Homo, an amazing piece of architecture in Santa Sofía.
- La Villa racetrack. Not in use for horse-racing today, but the building is interesting.
- Los Olivos, A 17th-century olive farm.
- Desert of Villa de Leyva. Perfect for stargazing, cycling and climbing.
- Ráquira. A vilage of acraftworkers.
- Pozos Azules, a source of hot springs.
- Parque Gondava, close to El Infiernito with life-size replicas of dinosaurs and extinct mammals.
- Rock paintings on the banks of the river Sáchica.

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