{rokbox title=|Rafting in Santander|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Adondeir/Destinosfindesemana/santander/santander1.jpg{/rokbox}

Rafting in Santander

Whenever you have the chance to visit the department of Santander , in northeastern Colombia, you will realize why one of its sites was nominated as one of the new Seven Natural Wonders of the World: the Chicamocha Canyon , an extraordinary place worth watching from land, air, and water.

The Santander region has been thriving as a major tourist attraction thanks to this superb canyon that fractures the mountains of the Eastern Range of the Andes. In addition to amazing landscapes, it has deep cultural, historic, and architectural meaning to the towns in its area of influence. Motivations to travel the region are varied and interesting. Its beauty is evident in every kilometer, so it is suggested to travel by road and, preferably, from the department of Boyacá.

The people of Santander are characterized by their strong character, for keeping their word, and for an immense pride for their land

Santander is made up of 87 municipalities grouped in 8 provinces and, although each province has specific interests, the province of Guanentá concentrates most of the tourist sites and may be considered as representing the entire department. Because touring the province means learning about the fascinating story of the department as narrated by its own inhabitants and as reflected in buildings from past times that speak about the existence of the valiant and courageous Guane men and women who took the first steps in pro of the country's independence from Spain.

Aside from its beauty and grandeur, Santander's natural environment is wild and challenging. The Chicamocha Canyon, streams, brooks, rivers, mountain ecological paths, royal roads, and tropical forests attest to this fact.

All this diversity of landscapes has catapulted the destination as one of the most important in Colombia - if not the most - for engaging in adventure sports, in the midst of lavish forests,

gushing waters, copious rivers and waterfalls, dark caverns, and ravines along the roads between hills.

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Santander

It is important to know that Santander's villages and natural attractions make it easy for trips that, aside from unforgettable, are dynamic, amusing, thrilling, and enriching from a cultural point of view. With adequate information and the advice of Santander people, it is possible to extend the journey to the maximum and truly enjoy the experiences offered by this lovely land.

San Gil and Its Surroundings: Pure Adrenaline and Beautiful Landscapes

The epicenter of a journey through Santander could well be San Gil, the capital of the province of Guanentá and equidistant from historic municipalities and adventure sites. If you decide to come and get acquainted with this splendorous region, with no remorse for what you could have done and did not do, bear in mind that you should have available at least four or five days. Santander is today Colombia's most important destination for adventure sports

Devote one day to San Gil for strolling its colonial streets, touring the emblematic El Gallineral Park, rafting down the challenging Fonce River, and enjoying coffee in any of the bars that frame the central square. You may want to increase your dose of adventure on your second day by rappelling at the Juan Curí Waterfalls on the road to Charalá and then going deep into the Cueva del Indio, in the municipality of Páramo, to explore the cave for two hours, equivalent to two and a half kilometers.

After such intense thrills, a pause on the third day is suggested in the tranquil, ochre-colored village of Barichara, considered one of the most beautiful villages in the country for its rammed earth houses and the harmonious complex of streets covered with the typical yellow stone that is also used for artisan sculpting. Very close to Barichara is Guane, an equally beautiful Indian village reached by road or by one of several royal paths that still remain amid the exuberant geography of Santander.

The Majestic Chicamocha Canyon

To resume this subject, it must be stated that the Chicamocha Canyon is the indispensable visit and tour during an expedition in Santander. So, the fourth day is for experiencing the fascination that rises when we begin to see its majesty from the road that takes us there. Coming from San Gil and crossing the village of Aratoca, the road takes us from the highest to the lowest part of the canyon. After a descent of a couple of hours one reaches Pescadero Bridge and the bed of the Chicamocha River.

{rokbox title=|Barichara - Santander|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Adondeir/Destinosfindesemana/santander/santander3.jpg{/rokbox}

Barichara - Santander

This is why this part of the trip implies several stops, whether to admire the beauty of the landscape or to take off on a paragliding wing and live the indescribable adventure of flying over the canyon. The stop is also at the mountain's summit, where madness became reality in the form of the National Chicamocha Park (Panachi, by its Spanish acronym), an ingenious challenge to nature for feeling and being captured not only by the canyon, but by the dauntless lands of Santander just as they were immortalized in several songs.

The park's attractions leave no doubt that Santander is synonymous with adventure. In a very short time, the aerial tramway that crosses the canyon, the buggy track, the enormous monument to Santander pride, and various mechanical attractions turned Panachi into an emblem of Santander and one of the best theme parks in Colombia.

Girón, Piedecuesta, and Floridablanca, Other Towns to Visit in Santander

If you have more time available, the fifth day could be devoted to towns in the metropolitan area. Girón, Piedecuesta, and Floridablanca are important for their history, architecture and contribution to the region's economy.

Due to its diversity, the department of Santander is one of those places in the country that

become embedded in people's memories, with their amazing beauty and the thrills it offers.

Learn more about Santander and its tourist attractions:

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Santander Land of Adventure

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El majestuoso Cañón del Chicamocha

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Video de Santander

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Galería de fotos

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El Gallineral Park - 360° panoramic photo