



## Travel Warning: Colombia

Travel Health and Safety; Crime; Terrorism; Political Violence

Western Hemisphere > Colombia; Western Hemisphere > Colombia > Bogota; Western Hemisphere > Colombia > Cali; Western Hemisphere > Colombia > Cartagena; Western Hemisphere > Colombia > Medellin

4/5/2016

### **Tens of thousands of U.S.**

**citizens safely visit Colombia each year for tourism, business, university studies, and volunteer work.** Security in Colombia has improved significantly in recent years, including in tourist and business travel destinations such as Bogota, Cartagena, Barranquilla, Medellin, and Cali. However, violence linked to narco-trafficking continues to affect some rural and urban areas. Despite significant decreases in overall crime in Colombia, continued vigilance is warranted due to an increase in recent months of violent crime, including crime resulting in the deaths of American citizens. This Travel Warning replaces the previous travel warning released on June 5, 2015.

There have been no reports of U.S. citizens targeted specifically for their nationality. While the U.S. Embassy has no information regarding specific and credible threats against U.S. citizens in Colombia, both the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN) terrorist groups continue to condemn any U.S. influence in Colombia. The Department of State strongly encourages U.S. citizens to exercise caution and remain vigilant as terrorist and criminal activities remain a threat throughout the country. Explosions occur throughout Colombia on a regular basis, including

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in Bogota. Small towns and rural areas of Colombia can be extremely dangerous due to the presence of terrorists and criminal elements, including armed gangs (referred to as "BACRIM" in Spanish), that are active throughout much of the country. Violence associated with the BACRIM has spilled over into many of Colombia's major cities. These groups are heavily involved in the drug trade, extortion, kidnapping, and robbery.

Violence associated with crime is a threat throughout Colombia. During the period November 2014 to January 2016, there were several homicides of U.S. citizens in connection with robberies, including armed robbery on streets and in taxi cabs, public transport, home invasions, and muggings. The victims represented a mix of tourists, long-term residents and persons with dual U.S.-Colombian citizenship.

The incidence of kidnapping in Colombia has diminished significantly from its peak in 2000. However, kidnapping remains a threat. Terrorist groups and other criminal organizations continue to kidnap and hold civilians, including foreigners, for ransom. No one is immune from kidnapping on the basis of occupation, nationality, or other factors.

U.S. government officials in Colombia regularly travel to the major cities of Colombia such as Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla, and Cartagena without incident. U.S. government officials and their families in Colombia normally are permitted to travel to major cities only by air. They may not use inter- or intra-city bus transportation, or travel by road outside urban areas at night. U.S. government officials in Colombia and their families are restricted to traveling within certain areas. This includes using the main highways to travel

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between Bogota and Bucaramanga, and between Bogota and Ibague. Personnel are allowed to drive between Manizales, Pereira, and Armenia and within the "coffee country" departments of Caldas, Risaralda, and Quind?o. On the Caribbean coast, personnel are restricted to driving along Highway 90 from Cartagena, through Barranquilla to Santa Marta. Travel to all other areas of Colombia is off limits unless specific authorization is granted. All U.S. citizens in Colombia are urged to follow these precautions and exercise extra caution outside of the aforementioned areas.

For more detailed information on staying safe in Colombia, please see the State Department's Country Specific Information for Colombia. For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Bureau of Consular Affairs' internet web site, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well.

Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). U.S. citizens living or traveling in Colombia are encouraged to enroll with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program to obtain updated information on travel and security within Colombia. For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Colombia, please contact the U.S. Embassy or the closest U.S. Consulate as listed below.

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For further information:

See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information for Colombia.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

Contact the U.S. Embassy in Colombia, located at Calle 24 Bis No. 48-50 Bogota, D.C., Colombia, at (+57-1) 275-2000, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is (+57-1) 275-2701.

Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

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