

Barranquilla

As the great Colombian singer, Joe Arroyo said: "Con mar y río, una gran sociedad" (with the sea and the river, a great society), Barranquilla is one of the most important cities of Colombia and a must-see in the Caribbean. Birthplace of the second biggest carnival of the globe, home of many illustrious artists and a melting pot of marvelous gastronomy, this place deserves at least a two-night stay to catch a glimpse of all its underrated wonders. Our favorite experiences and spots are: Museo del Caribe, Masks workshop at Galapa, Costeñitas (tiny local beers served extra chilled) by the Magdalena river, panoramic tour of the houses of El Prado neighborhood, dance with the locals at La Troja, eat the best local fried snacks at La Tiendecita, and of course, have one of the best experiences of your life in the carnival celebrated in February.

Barranquilla's Carnival is Colombia's most important folklore celebration, one of the biggest carnivals in the world. The carnival has traditions that date back to the 19th century. Forty days before Holy Week, Barranquilla opens its doors to receive local and foreign tourists, and join together with the city's residents to enjoy four days of intense festivities. During the carnival Barranquilla's normal activities are paralyzed because the city gets busy with street dances, musical and masquerade parades.

Many styles of Colombian music and dancing are also performed, most prominently cumbia, and instruments include drums and wind ensembles. The Carnival of Barranquilla was proclaimed Cultural Masterpiece of the Nation by Colombia's National Congress on 2002. Also the UNESCO, in Paris on November 7, 2003, declared it as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.