

# POLITICALTOURS

Travel beyond the headlines

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## Colombia

Dates: *9 nights*  
**Saturday to Monday**

In September 2016 the Colombian government and the leftist guerilla group the FARC signed a historic peace deal ending the longest running conflict in South America. After a shaky start the agreement is being implemented and the conflict has subsided. We look at the huge issues that remain one year on from the accords; from land reform to the disarming of the former rebels and the long hoped for peace-dividend for the economy.

The 10 day tour through this beautiful and varied country includes the capital Bogota, former drugs capital and now coffee mecca, Medellin and the colonial city of Cartagena on the Caribbean coast.

Colombia has a huge amount to offer with rich natural resources and one of the most diverse ecologies on the planet. Remnants of organised crime, several million refugees as well landmines left over from the conflict are reminders of the challenges ahead.

The tour is led by **Tom Feiling**, the renowned travel writer and Colombian expert. Contributions by **Laura Dixon** and **Joe Parkin Daniels**, British journalists based in Bogota, who have seen the changes first-hand.

**Price:** on request  
**Single Supplement:** TBC

As on all our expert-led tours the groups are deliberately small and will not exceed 14 people. Limited spaces are available. Flights are not included in the price and need to be arranged by customers themselves or with an agent.

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*Like all our tours the itinerary is focused on current affairs. Events on the ground may change and the final schedule may be adjusted accordingly.*

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## Itinerary

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### Day One – Medellin

We start in the once infamous city of Medellin, an ideal place to assess the challenges that lie ahead for Colombia as it assesses security, clamps down on organised crime and looks forward to a peace-dividend for the economy. Over dinner we look at the week ahead with our expert **Tom Feiling**. *Overnight Medellin*

### Day Two – Medellin

We head to the countryside and rural Granada, an Antioquian town hard-hit by the conflict, where we meet with one of the leaders as well as other survivors of a community that has a difficult past. Lunch at a roadside almuerzo. We visit a project that is helping former soldiers convert from violence to growing coffee –meeting a former ELN guerilla who now runs his own vegetable business. The national reintegration agency have helped tens of thousands of demobilised paras and guerrillas in the last decade. In the next few years they will play a key role in helping the FARC guerrillas retrain and find work, vital if the peace deal is going to be a long-term success. Drinks with recently retired police officers, for their take on the changes and the wide-ranging effort to eradicate the ingrained drugs industry. *Overnight Medellin*

### Day Three – Medellin

We tour the city and examine the rise and fall of it's most infamous resident, Pablo Escobar. Medellin has changed from being one of the most dangerous cities in the world to one that wins awards. We talk to experts about the peace deal, organised crime, Escobar and urban renewal. Visit the infamous Comuna 13 barrio in Medellin, a major area of conflict in the inner city in the 80's. What prospects are there for the neighbourhoods youth? Briefing on organized crime, Medellin's dark days and renaissance at the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Dinner at a top restaurant run by a chef who is training up former FARC soldiers, paras, landmine victims, and making award-winning food while he is doing it. *Overnight Medellin*

### Day Four – Morning flight to Bogota

Local analysts introduce us to the peace-deal two years after it was signed. With considerable local opposition to the deal (a majority of people voted against the deal in a referendum) what are the perceptions today? Walk down to the Plaza Bolivar, the grand old city centre, home to Congress and the Supreme Court building seized by Marxist guerillas in 1985. Tour of the *Casa Nariño* (the Colombian White House). Discussion on the current political system, what the peace deal means in terms of the FARC in politics, as they compete in general elections. *(Please book your own flight. Details of the flight which best fits the itinerary from Medellin to Bogota will be advised closer to the tour)*. *Overnight Bogota*

### Day Five – Bogota

Visit The Historical Memory Museum and meet with an organisation which campaigns for “the disappeared” as well as people searching for their missing relatives. Tens of thousands of people are still unaccounted for. After lunch, a senior government official gives us an overview of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, reintegration, demobilization camps, infrastructure, development, and rural reforms. At dinner we meet with a politician who was kidnapped by the FARC. *Overnight Bogota*

### Day Six – Bogota

The peace-process is expected to boost outside investment as well as tourism. We meet with local business leaders and families in their home, and learn about day-to-day concerns of ordinary Colombians. Stop off on the Circunvular to take in the views over Bogota, on our way to visit a children's home rehabilitating former combatants. Time off to explore the city and a free evening., Museo Banco de la Republica (traditional and modern art), and the Colon Theatre where the peace deal was signed, are all highly recommended. *Overnight Bogota*

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## Itinerary continued

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### **Day Seven** – *Flight to Cartagena*

Economic overview with a journalist from Colombia's leading financial newspaper. Lunch-time flight to Cartagena. *(Please book your own flight. Details of the flight which best fits the itinerary from Bogota to Cartagena will be advised closer to the tour).*  
*Overnight Cartagena*

### **Day Eight** – *Cartagena*

There are currently seven million internally displaced people in Colombia. We look at refugees and visit some of the indigenous communities in Cartagena. What does land reform mean for those whose territory was taken over during the conflict. Dinner at *Interno- a Prison restaurant* in the old city being staffed by rehabilitated female prisoners. The government faces a huge challenge in terms of rehabilitation and reintegration of former guerrillas, paramilitaries and others imprisoned during the conflict. *Overnight Cartagena*

### **Day Nine** – *Cartagena*

In the morning we tour Cartagena's beautiful old city, a place that Colombia's most famous writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez called home. Meeting with *Fundacion Garcia Marquez* and learn about their work, their history, and more about what the potential is for culture and tourism in post-conflict Colombia. Time off to explore the city. At dinner we look back over the tour and assess the hopes for this diverse and amazing country. *Overnight Cartagena*

### **Day Ten** – *Cartagena*

Tour ends with breakfast. Check-out and departures for the airport.