

Colombia,  
the only risk  
is wanting  
to stay.

National  
Natural  
Parks  
of Colombia



Ecohabs, Tayrona Park, Santa Marta



Colombia  
*is passion!*

The passion of Colombians makes that  
the only risk a visitor faces when coming to Colombia  
for the first time, will be wanting to stay.



Colombia  
*is passion!*

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## SHAUN CLOHESY (Australia)

"Eight years ago, I took off in search of adventure to Asia, Europe and South America... and when I reached Colombia, I discovered something quite different... Tranquility full of small mysteries... always a landscape, a waterfall, and a pretty village... and always a new and fantastic adventure... In other places, I was only one more tourist, but here, every Colombian wants to talk to you, they want to show you the country they love with passion... and this 3-year adventure called Santander... the adventure of my life".

Colombia, the only risk is wanting to stay.



# National Natural Parks of Colombia

Welcome to Colombia,  
a country full of incredible places that are waiting for you, places  
that will leave a mark, like the 18 natural parks we present here,  
where you will enjoy marvelous, diverse climates, exotic flora  
and fauna, and amazing ecotourism possibilities for you to  
remember that in Colombia the big risk is to want to stay.

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Río Piedra, Santa Marta

# 18 National Natural Parks of Colombia

## Caribbean Region

1. Tayrona National Natural Park
2. Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta National Natural Park
3. Macuira National Natural Park
4. Isla de Salamanca Parkway
5. Corales del Rosario y San Bernardo National Natural Park
6. Old Providence McBean Lagoon National Natural Park
7. Los Flamencos Fauna and Flora Sanctuary

## Andean Region

8. Puracé National Natural Park
9. Chingaza National Natural Park
10. Los Nevados National Natural Park
11. El Cocuy National Natural Park
12. Isla de La Corota Fauna and Flora Sanctuary
13. Iguaque Fauna and Flora Sanctuary
14. Otún Quimbaya Fauna and Flora Sanctuary

## Pacific Region

15. Gorgona National Natural Park
16. Utría National Natural Park
17. Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary

## Amazonia and Orinoquia Region

18. Amacayacu National Natural Park



## Overview:

A diversity of terrestrial and marine environments, archaeological remains, a simultaneously modern and autochthonous 5-star lodging infrastructure, and an enormous variety of recreational, educational, and cultural activities make this park the icon of Colombian ecotourism. Many consider its coves and beaches the most beautiful in the world.

## How to get there:

The city of Santa Marta is reached by air, land, or sea. From there, a 45-minute trip north on the Troncal del Caribe takes visitors to El Zaino, the park's main entrance. After an additional 15 minutes on a paved road, visitors arrive at the Cañaveral sector, where the parking area, interpretive paths, the Chairama Museum, the campground, and the ecohabs are located.

## Communities:

The Kogui, Arhuaco, and Kankuamo Indians have settlements in the park. Several of their sacred territories are located in the park, but are seldom visited by them. Settlers from various parts of the country, especially the Atlantic coast, inhabit the park's buffer zone.

## Fauna:

The fauna is the most diverse and abundant of the Colombian Caribbean. So far, 100 species of mammals have been recorded, among them 70 bat species. Bird species number 300; reptiles, 31 (4 are sea turtles); amphibians, 15; and sea sponges, 202.

## Flora:

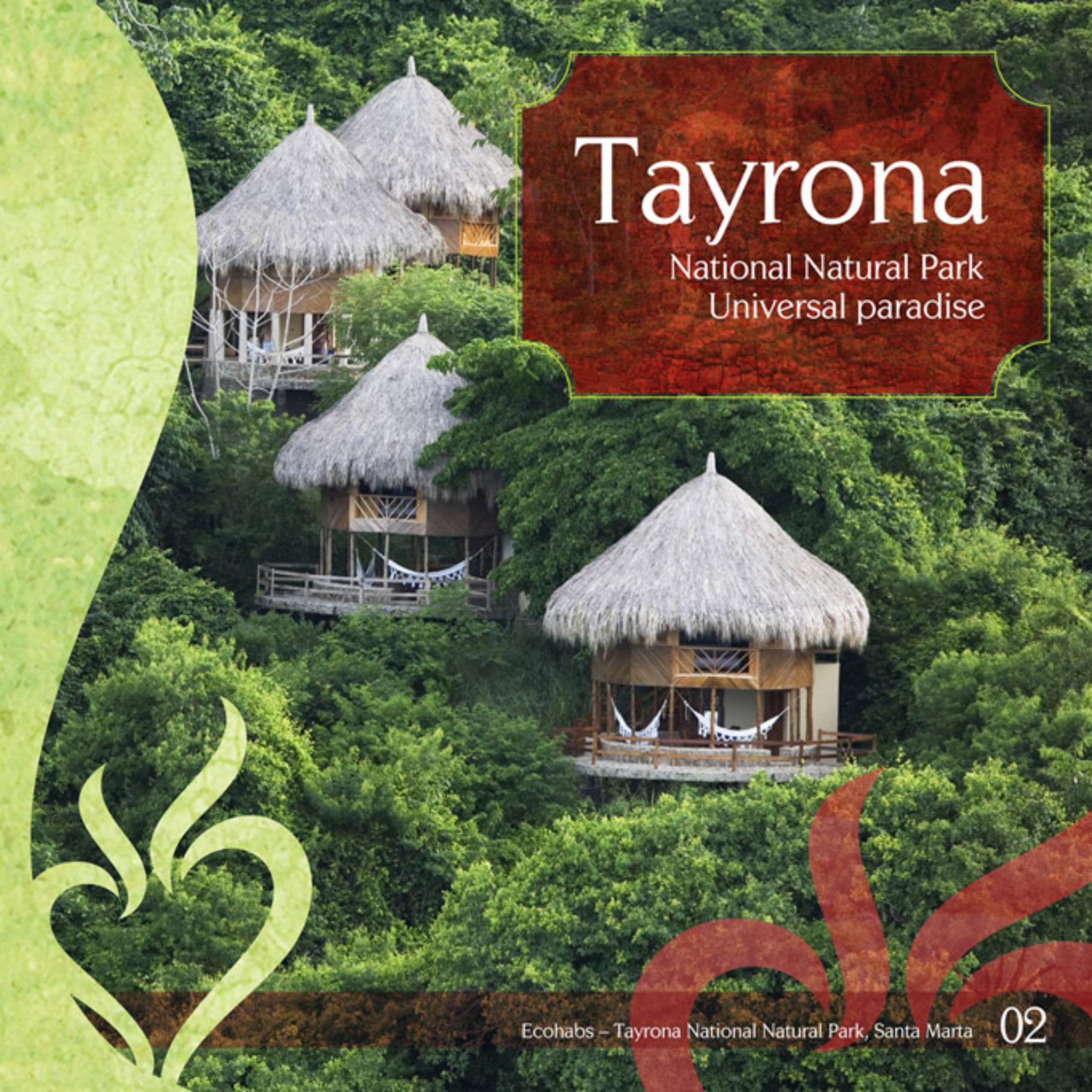
The 12,000 land hectares of the Tayrona Park are home to several types of forest: shrub, dry forest, rain, and cloud. Mangrove communities are present in the coastal areas. The best-preserved relict of dry forest in Latin America is found here.

## Interesting sites:

The beauty of the scenery is one of the greatest attractions of Tayrona, with ideal sites for enjoying the sun, the beach, and diving. The bays of Concha, Bonito Gordo, Gayraca, Neguanje, Playa del Muerto, Arrecifes, Isla Grande, and Granate are favorites. As to cultural attractions, Pueblito (also known as "Ciudad Chairama"), the Chairama Archaeological Museum, and the Chairama, Nuevas Piedras and Los Naranjos trails stand out.

## Ecotourism Activities:

- Hiking • Diving • Nautical activities • Camping • Photography •
- Horseback riding • Fauna and flora observation • Visit to the Museum •

An aerial photograph of several traditional thatched-roof huts built on stilts in a dense, lush green forest. The huts have conical roofs made of dried palm fronds and wooden walls. Some huts have hammocks strung across them. The forest is thick with various shades of green. In the top right corner, there is a dark red, textured rectangular box with a decorative border containing the title and subtitle. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark red banner with the page number. On the left side, there is a large, light green decorative graphic that looks like a stylized leaf or flame. At the bottom, there is a dark brown horizontal bar with white text.

# Tayrona

National Natural Park  
Universal paradise

# Overview:

Its 381,000 hectares are located in northern Colombia, in the departments of Magdalena, Cesar, and La Guajira. For nationals and foreigners, the park is one of the better known and more widely accepted natural areas of the country for ecotourism. The Simón Bolívar and Cristóbal Colón twin peaks, both at 5,770 meters above sea level, constitute its central core. The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is thought to be the tallest seaside mountain range in the world.

# How to get there:

The city of Santa Marta may be reached by air, land, or sea. From Santa Marta, it is necessary to travel 42 kilometers on an unpaved road, first to the township of Minca, then to Cerro Kennedy, and finally, to the San Lorenzo Experimental Station, a one and a half hour ride.

# Communities:

The Kogui, Wiwa, Kankuamo and Arhuaco (also known as Ijka) Indians inhabit the Sierra, conserving their myths and traditions. Two traditions from the past deserve to be highlighted: the job of the *mamos* and the coca ritual. The *mamos*, or *mamas*, are the priests and wise men of the community who inherited the wisdom of their ancestors and exert religious power.

# Fauna:

The fauna includes jaguars, tapirs, páramo deer, condors, curassows , and the Sierra parrot, among a multitude of other species.

# Flora:

The biota of the massif (warm, cold, sub- páramo and páramo thermal floors) has a notable affinity with that of the Andes, especially the Eastern Mountain Range of Colombia. The flora of the park is quite varied: *mastres*, *caracoltes* (*Anacardium*), *ceibas de leche* (*Hura*), and wax palms stand out as gigantic trees.

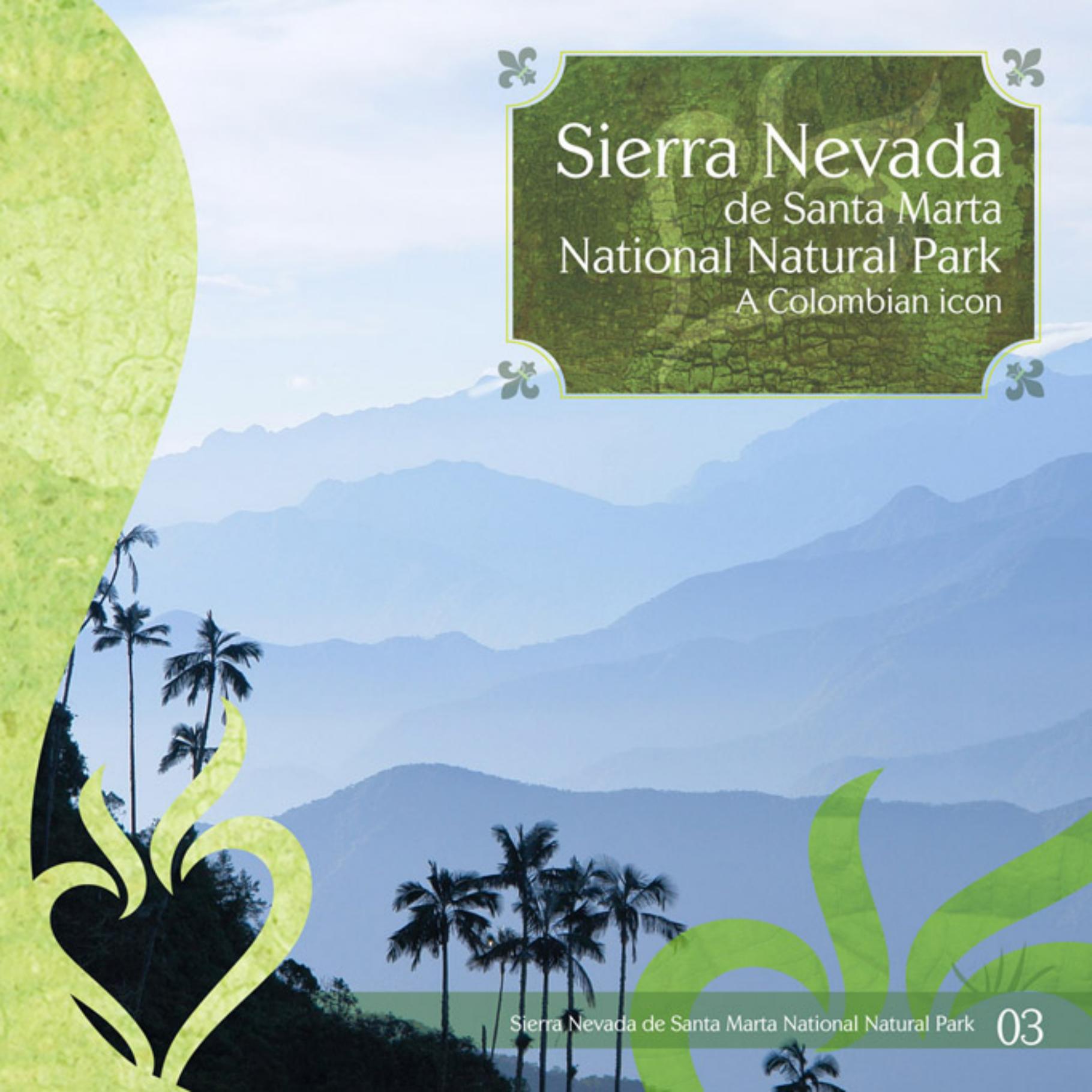
# Interesting sites:

Several interesting sites are visited year round. Among them are: Teyuna (also known as Ciudad Perdida or the Lost City), which is the most important historical and archaeological finding in Colombia; the San Lorenzo Experimental Station; interpretive paths; dozens of waterfalls; the Bolívar and Colón peaks; and the Indian settlements.

Nearby cities: Santa Marta, Ciénaga (Caiman Feasts in January), Valledupar (Festival of the Vallenata Legend in April).

# Ecotourism Activities:

- Cultural contact
- Mountain climbing
- Fauna and flora observation
- Archaeology
- Hiking
- Research and environmental education activities
- Bird watching



Sierra Nevada  
de Santa Marta  
National Natural Park  
A Colombian icon

## Overview:

The Serranía de La Macuira is the highest mountain range in the Upper Guajira. Three mountains covered by five types of forest make its 25,000 hectares a bio-geographic island in the midst of the arid and semi-arid desert strip of La Guajira.

## How to get there:

Flying from Bogotá to Riohacha is easy. From there, visitors take the road to the township of Nazareth, in the municipality of Uribia. The road to Nazareth borders the coast and takes eight hours along the coast in the dry season. The trip is also possible through Venezuela and Puerto López, but it takes 18 hours.

## Communities:

The Macuira National Natural Park is the ancestral birthplace of the Wayúu culture. According to legend, the three mountains that comprise La Macuira were the children of a Sierra Nevada Indian chief who forbade them to leave home. They disobeyed him one night and fled towards the sea. As punishment, they were turned into mountains. There are a few *rancherías* (Indian villages) and other human settlements in the park.

## Fauna:

A hundred and forty bird species have been reported, of which 17 are endemic. Examples are the *guacharaca*, the Guajiro cardinal, bluebirds, and over ten migratory birds. Species typical of the dry tropical forests represent the mammals: rabbits, anteaters, *mapuritos* (Petiveria), and peccaries. Also notable are the reptile and amphibian populations.

## Flora:

This natural region is home to five types of forests, all of which must be protected for their great value, among other things, as a source of water for the region's inhabitants. Additionally, the flora protects the dwarf cloud forest and its exuberant epiphyte vegetation of bromeliads, orchids, and mosses.

## Interesting sites:

Mountain biking trails, pure water springs, Wayúu villages, the township of Nazareth, (with its Festival of the Wayúu Culture), and spots for the sale of handsome handicrafts.

## Ecotourism activities:

• Hiking • Horseback riding • Bird watching • Ethnic tourism • Mountain biking

A man with glasses, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and shorts, is sitting in a red hammock. He is focused on weaving palm fronds into a basket. The background shows a sandy area with some trees and a large log on the ground. The image is framed by a green border with decorative elements.

# Macuira

National Natural Park  
A Wayúu mirage

# Overview:

The biodiversity of the Parkway's ecosystems led UNESCO to declare Isla de Salamanca a Biosphere Reserve, thus protecting one of the most productive natural, scientific, and cultural riches in the Caribbean. Its landscapes are ideal sites for academic fieldwork.

# How to get there:

Reaching Isla Salamanca is easy from Barranquilla. Visitors arriving by air can take a taxi from the airport to the Kilometer 11 signpost on the Troncal del Caribe road, which is where Los Cocos administrative center is located (municipality of Sitio Nuevo, department of Magdalena).

# Communities:

Fishermen and artisans inhabit the park's area of influence.

# Fauna:

The existence of 33 mammal species is an indication of great diversity. Two hundred species of bird species have been registered so far. This is one of the most important habitats for migratory birds in the entire Caribbean area.

# Flora:

Mostly, it has the flora of the tropical dry forest, although a narrow strip has the flora of the very dry tropical forest.

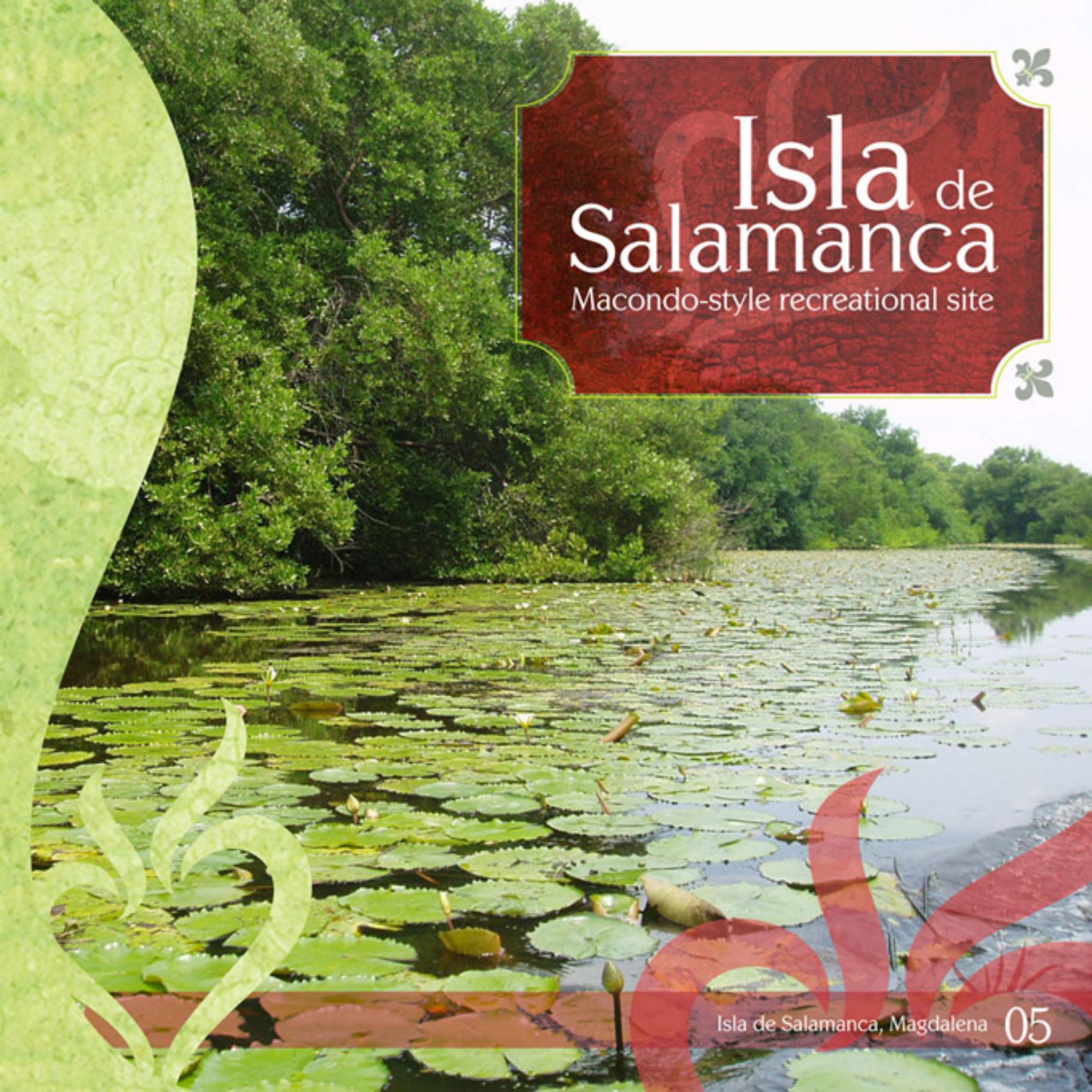
# Interesting sites:

Interpretive paths through the intricate network of mangrove swamps, small rivers, and beaches for observing the activity of marine turtles.

Nearby cities: Barranquilla (Carnival in February), Ciénaga (Caiman Feasts in January), Santa Marta.

# Ecotourism activities:

- Hiking · Photography · Bird watching · Cultural contact ·
- Scientific and educational activities ·



# Isla de Salamanca

Macondo-style recreational site

## Overview:

This valuable complex of marine and terrestrial biodiversity is located in the Colombian Caribbean Sea, 45 km southwest of the city of Cartagena de Indias. The Corales del Rosario y San Bernardo National Natural Park has innumerable attractions that make it one of Colombia's principal ecotourism zones. Lovely beaches and coral reefs stand out. The climate is warm, with an average temperature of 24°C.

## How to get there:

The city of Cartagena is reached by air, land, or sea. From La Bodeguita wharf, a one to two hour boat trip takes travelers to the Rosario islands.

## Communities:

Most of the natives of the Rosario, Barú, and San Bernardo islands descend from Afro-Colombians who settled as fishermen many years ago in Barú and later dispersed to the other islands. Their main activity is artisan fishing, although occasionally they engage in tourism-related jobs.

## Fauna:

The fauna associated to the mangrove system consists mainly of fish (some of which are commercially important) and several organisms that live attached to the submerged roots of the mangroves and corals, such as oysters, sponges, anemones, and feather worms.

## Flora:

Since it is essentially an underwater park, the protected vegetation is mostly marine. Sub-marine species are mainly sea grasses. Mangroves are the most abundant amphibian species.

## Interesting sites:

The environmental interpretation trail on Isla Grande, the Ceiner Oceanarium, the educational, recreational, and research center on San Martín de Pajarales Island, Playa Blanca, coral reefs, Isla Grande, and Isla Barú (patron feasts in May).

Nearby city: Cartagena de Indias (World Historical and Cultural Site).

## Ecotourism activities:

- Snorkeling • Nautical activities • Sun and beach • Observation of fauna and flora •
- Diving • Canoeing • Sea and land hiking •



Corales del Rosario y  
San Bernardo  
National Natural Park  
A Caribbean treasure

## Overview:

The terrestrial area offers two types of landforms: an 80-meter high isolated hill by the name of Iron Wood Hill and a flat area with mangroves. The reef complex stands out in the marine area and is famous for the blue and green hues of the water.

## How to get there:

Flights depart daily from Bogotá to the island of San Andrés. Getting to the island of Providencia involves an additional 25 minute flight. Providencia can also be reached by regular marine transport services after a five to eight hour trip.

## Communities:

Afro-Colombians with a strong influence of the English settlers from old times inhabit the area. Cultural traditions are rich and strong, and include fine cuisine and a great variety of music.

## Fauna:

Reptiles like the iguana and the blue lizard and crustaceans like the black crab make up most of the terrestrial fauna. The McBean mangrove area is the nesting site of residual and migratory birds. Marine fauna includes a large diversity of colored fish, lobsters, snails, and turtles.

## Flora:

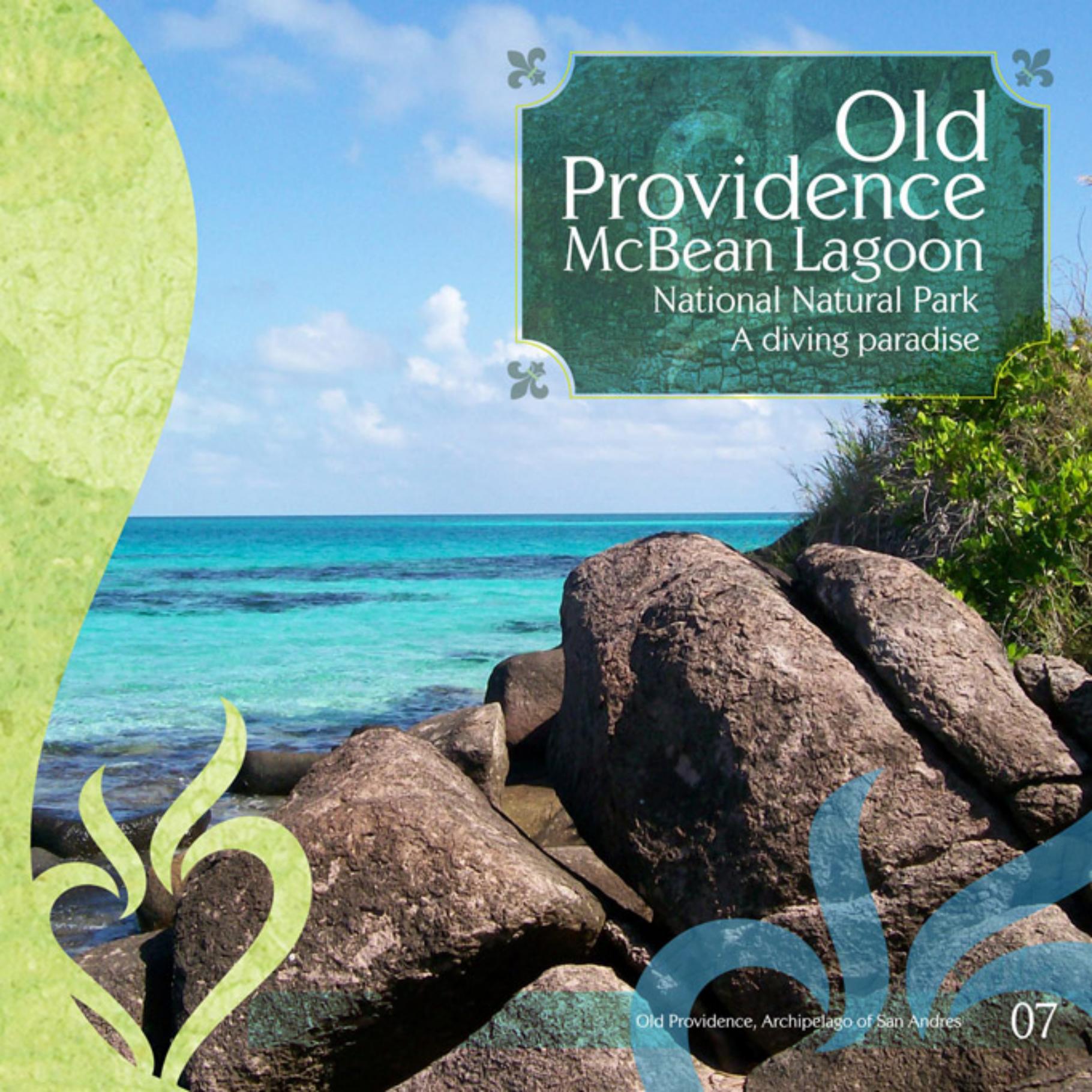
The vegetation is dominated by the cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*), whose fruit is used by the local population to prepare delicious desserts. Coconut palms and fruit trees are also present.

## Interesting sites:

The path of seven colors, Maracaibo Hill, Iron Wood Hill, the McBean mangrove swamp, Cangrejo cay, the McBean lookout point. Nearby city: San Andrés (trade seaport).

## Ecotourism activities:

- Snorkeling • Nautical activities • Sun and beach • Walks •
- Flora and fauna observation • Diving •



# Old Providence McBean Lagoon

National Natural Park  
A diving paradise

## Overview:

The 7,000-hectare sanctuary was created in 1997 for preserving the dry and very dry tropical forest, mangrove and coastal lagoon ecosystems, and the fauna and flora associated with them. Foremost is the pink flamingo, the symbol of the park.

## How to get there:

From Riohacha, the capital of the department, it is just 20 km to the village of Camarones, on the Troncal del Caribe road that goes to Santa Marta. From Santa Marta, the trip to Camarones is 165 km or two hours by the same road. Then it is only five minutes on an unpaved road from Camarones to the Administrative of the Sanctuary.

## Communities:

Wayúu Indians from the Upper Guajira Peninsula who migrated southwest and Afro-Colombians inhabit the area. Both groups value and preserve their ancestral cultures.

## Fauna:

Pink flamingoes are the most representative species. Foxes and deer represent the mammals; sea turtles that spawn on the beaches of La Guajira represent the reptiles.

## Flora:

This is one of the few areas in Colombia where relicts of tropical dry forest can be seen.

## Interesting sites:

Los Mangles visitor center, which is run by members of the local community; Navío Quebrado Lagoon; Laguna Grande; the Chentico salterns; beaches; Boca de Camarones, the Tococo sector, Cari Cari, Wayúu *rancherías* (villages); and sites with archaeological remains.

## Ecotourism activities:

- Hiking • Photography • Tours of the lagoons •
- Watching of resident and migratory birds • Ethnic tourism • Typical gastronomy •
- Visit to the sea turtle education and research center •



# Los Flamencos

Flora and Fauna Sanctuary

A shrine of life and color

## Overview:

As can be easily seen by observing its numerous sulphur springs, Puracé is a volcanic area. Its 30 lakes are ideal for resting and relaxing. The region is the hydrographic star of Colombia: the large Magdalena, Cauca, and Caquetá rivers originate here. Puracé is also part of the Andean Belt declared by UNESCO a Biosphere Reserve in 1979.

## How to get there:

A 45-minute flight from Bogotá takes travelers to Popayán. From there the distance by land to Puracé is 44 km. From a place called El Crucero, it is only 1 km to the recreational area of Pilimbalá.

## Communities:

Its area of influence (the Pilimbalá sector) is a Coconuco Indian reservation. Members of the community offer comfortable lodging and typical food. There is a settlement of Guambiano Indians nearby.

## Fauna:

The park protects mammals in danger of extinction due to the reduction of their habitats. The main species are deer, rabbits, and spectacled bears. The area has over 150 species of birds, among them, the condor of the Andes.

## Flora:

The flora is the typical one of its four biomes: rainforest, páramo, sub.páramo, and snow. The *manzano*, *candelo* (Hieronyma), and *biguerón* (Ficus) trees stand out, as well as numerous vines. Calculations point to 200 species of orchids.

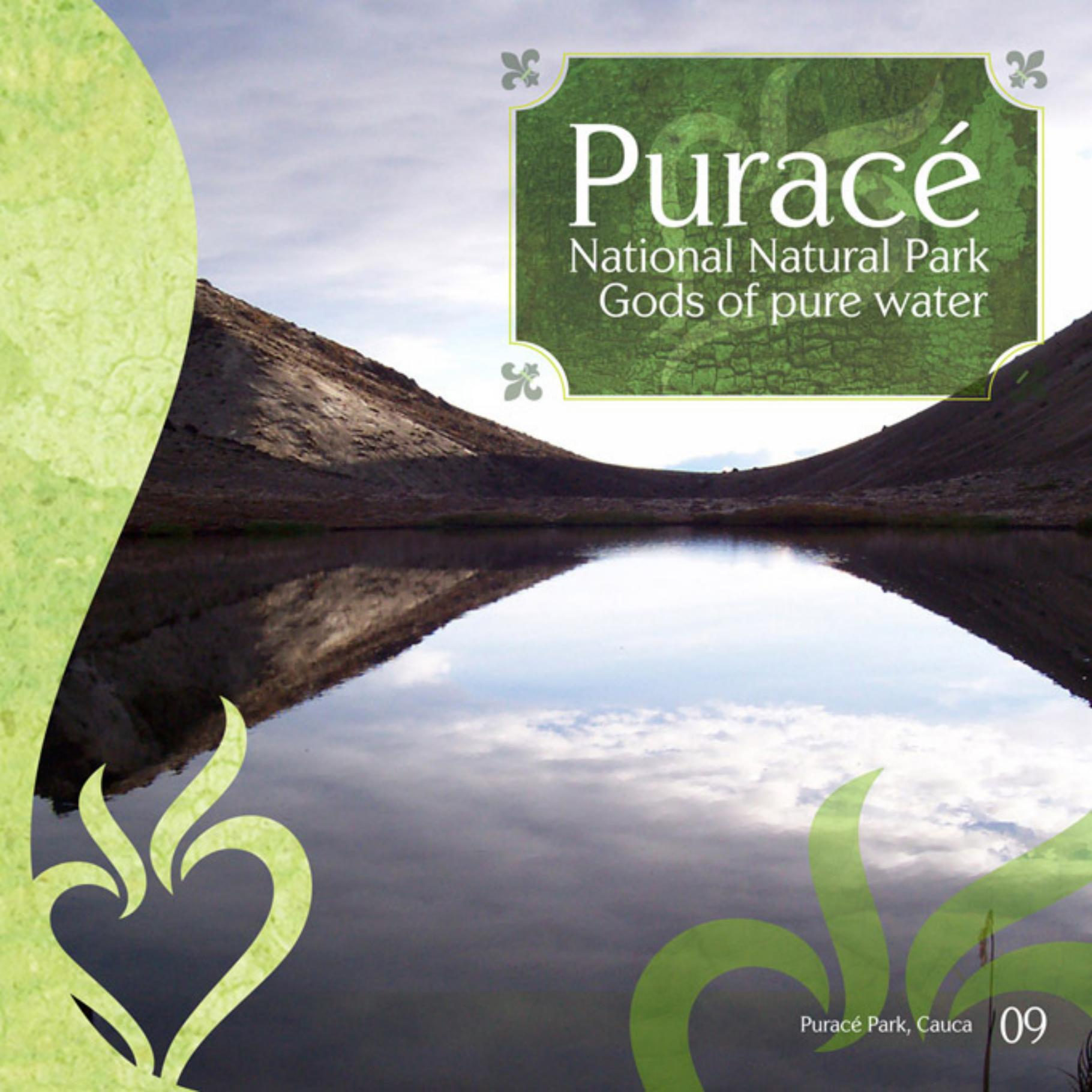
## Interesting sites:

The Puracé Volcano (4 hours from the Visitor Center), San Rafael Lake, the Bedón and San Nicolás Waterfalls, San Juan Hot Springs, Los Guácharos Cave, and the community of Pilimbalá.

Nearby city: Popayán (religious and cultural heritage).

## Ecotourism activities:

- Hiking • Hot springs • Photography • Cultural contact •
- Fauna and flora observation • Trail hiking •

The background of the page is a photograph of a volcanic crater lake. The water is calm and reflects the sky and the surrounding dark, rocky slopes. In the upper right, there is a green rectangular text box with decorative corners. The text inside the box is white. On the left side of the page, there is a large, light green circular graphic with a textured, paper-like appearance. At the bottom, there are stylized green leaf-like graphics on both the left and right sides.

# Puracé

National Natural Park  
Gods of pure water

## Overview:

Chingaza supplies 80% of Bogota's potable water and is thus indispensable to the lives of its inhabitants. The park includes mythological lakes, beautiful mountain vegetation, and the famous *frailejones* (Espeletia). The solitary, melancholy atmosphere of the páramos is the main attraction of this park, which covers parts of the departments of Meta and Cundinamarca.

## How to get there:

A 1-hour ride takes visitors to the park, either by the Bogotá – Fómeque road or the Bogotá – La Calera – Piedras Gordas road, both paved and in good condition.

## Communities:

Ten thousand years ago, this natural area was a sacred and ceremonial site for the Muisca Indians. Nowadays, its population is composed of peasants with distinctive, authentic cultural patterns.

## Fauna:

Chingaza is home to spectacled bears, deer, ocelots, opossums. Over 180 species of birds have been reported, among them, Andean condors, toucans, and guans. Sixteen species of amphibians and six species of reptiles have been reported so far.

## Flora:

The park has a good number of vegetable species. No less than 383 have been registered, although it is estimated that the total may surpass 2,000. Eight species represent moss, an ecological marvel that absorbs up to 40 times its weight in water.

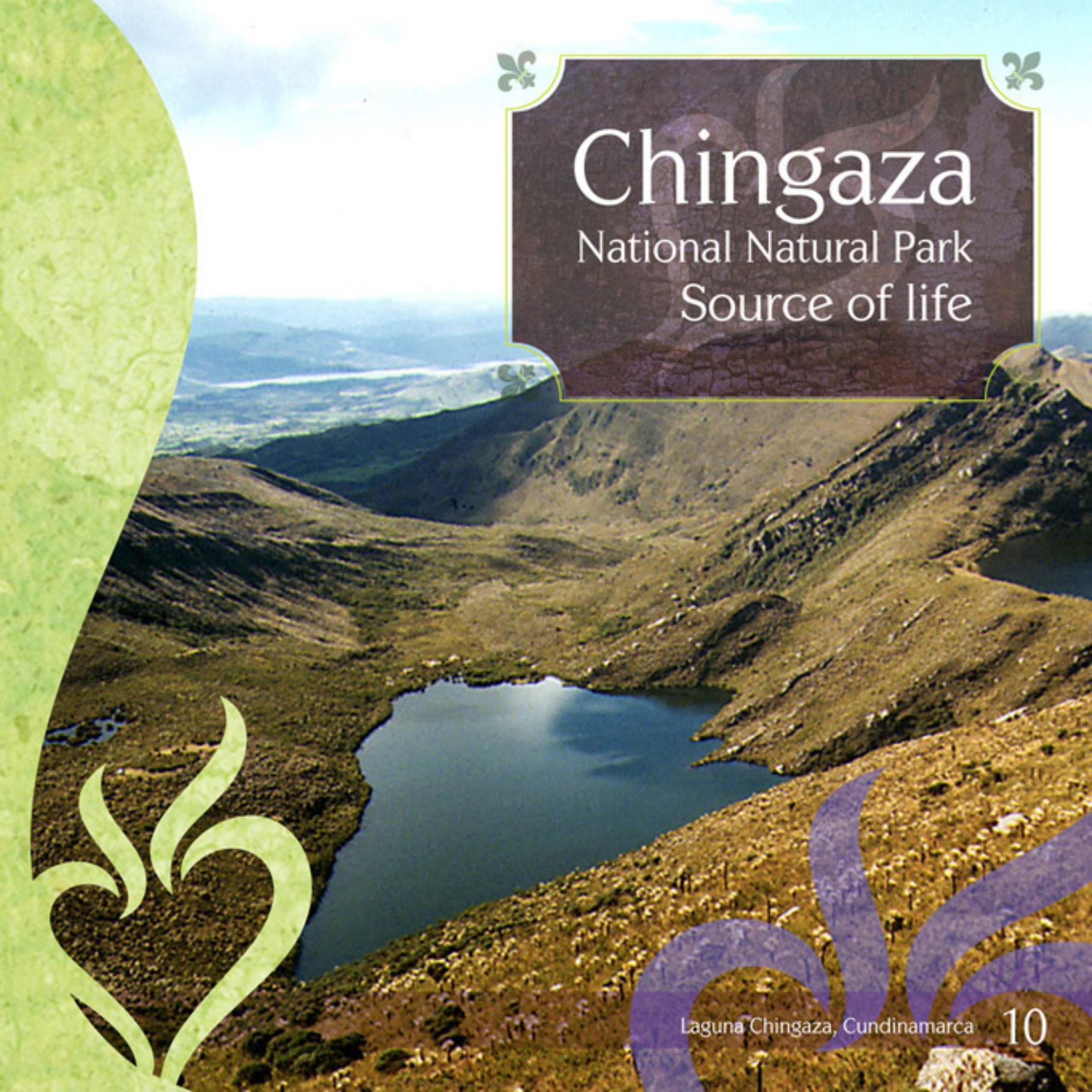
## Interesting sites:

The campgrounds, the most modern in South America; Siecha Lake with archaeological remains of the Muisca culture; the Monterredondo, Suasie, Laguna Seca, and La Arboleda trails; and Los Cóndores lookout point.

Nearby city: Bogotá.

## Ecotourism activities:

• Trail hiking • Walks • Camping • Photography • Observation of flora and fauna •



# Chingaza

National Natural Park  
Source of life

# Overview:

Los Nevados Park is situated atop the central mountain range of the Colombian Andes, with altitudes above sea level between 2,600 and 5,321 meters and temperatures ranging from medium to low. The beauty of the scenery and the ruggedness of the territory make it an ideal site for extreme and high-concentration ecotourism activities.

# How to get there:

The trip from Bogotá to Manizales can be done by land or air. From Manizales, cars and buses travel directly to the park area. Also from Manizales, other options are the Manizales – Villa María – La Telaraña – Hacienda Potosí route, which starts at an altitude of 2,150 meters above sea level, and the Manizales – Santa Bárbara – El Cisne route, which is 48 km in length.

# Communities:

The inhabitants of the surrounding area are peasants, who will be happy to offer typical food and handicrafts and act as guides. They are very active in contributing to the strengthening of conservation and maintenance activities in the park.

# Fauna:

The páramo hummingbird, endemic to the region and unique in the world, stands out among many bird species. Blackbirds, three species of guan, and mountain partridges are easy to spot. Spectacled bears, páramo tapirs, dwarf squirrels, and weasels are the most abundant mammals.

# Flora:

Andean forests, with the wax palm as a notable species, grow in the valleys and on the slopes of the lower parts of the park. Trees up to 30 meters tall and a bush stratum characterize the upper Andean forest. Here, oaks and *encenillos* (*Weinmannia tormentosa*) stand out among the rest. The páramo and superpáramo are covered with their typical vegetation, primarily *frailejones* (*Espeletia*).

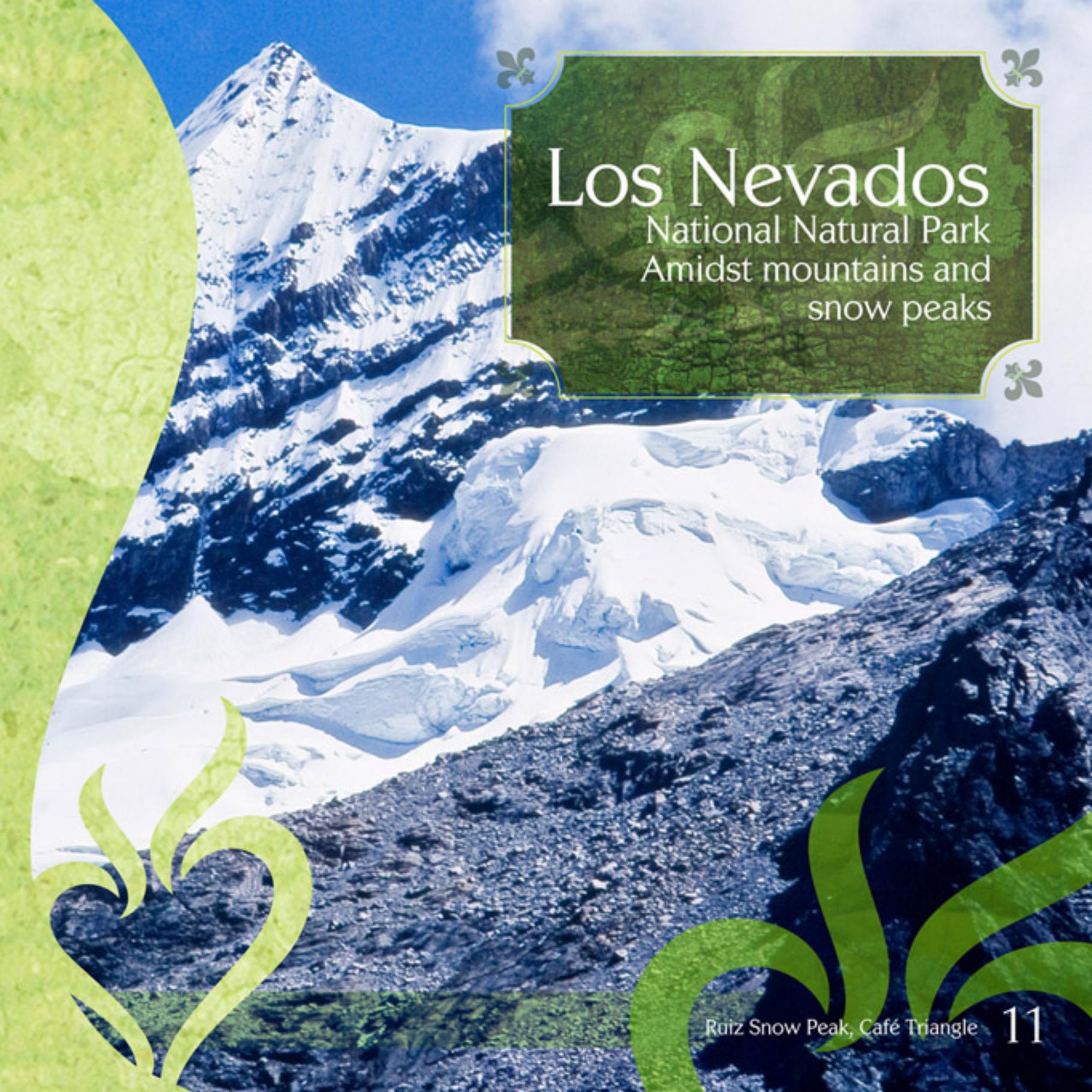
# Interesting sites:

Los Nevados Park offers many attractions, the main ones being the Ruiz and Tolima snow-capped volcanoes (heights of 5,321, and 5,200 m.a.s.l., respectively), the Santa Isabel Volcano, the Olleta, and Piraña craters, the El Cisne, Morronegro, Santa Rosa, Quindío *paramillos* (small páramos), the Mosquito, Verde Encantada, Encanto, Otún lakes, the Tucurrubi lookout point, La Gazapera, and the Lagunilla and Combeima River canyons.

Nearby city: Manizales (International fair in January).

# Ecotourism activities:

- Camping • Ice and Rock climbing • Photography • Hiking • Cave exploration •
- Mountain climbing • Bird watching • Mountain biking • Observation of stars •



# Los Nevados

National Natural Park  
Amidst mountains and  
snow peaks

# Overview:

The Sierra Nevada del Cocuy range consists of over 25 separate snow peaks and constitutes the largest glacial mass in Colombia. These are the only snow peaks on the eastern range of the Colombian Andes and their height ranges between 4,800 and 5,330 meters above sea level. The park is located on the border zone of the departments of Boyacá, Casanare, Arauca, and Santander, and offers many sites for extreme and high concentration sports.

# How to get there:

From Bogotá, the first part of the trip is getting to the town of Soatá, in the department of Boyacá. There are two alternatives for continuing the trip to El Cocuy. The first one involves taking the Soatá – Tipacoque – Capitanejo – El Espino – Panqueba - El Cocuy route. The second one takes the Soatá – Boavita – La Uvita – San Mateo Guacamas – Panqueba El Cocuy route. Both trips last approximately ten hours.

# Communities:

The inhabitants of the surrounding area are of peasant stock, mostly descended from Indian ancestors. They are happy to sell typical food and their handicrafts. There is a 135,000-hectare overlap between El Cocuy Park and U'wa Indian reservations that are the last bio-cultural enclave inhabited by direct descendants of the Muisca Indians.

# Fauna:

Tapirs, morrocoy turtles, corn, choyó, and araguato monkeys, páramo deer, peccaries, agoutis, and all the felids registered in Colombia, including ocelots, represent the fauna in this protected area.

# Flora:

The park has 260 of the 300 genera of high mountain vascular plants in Colombia (83%). This means about 700 species and the richest high mountain flora in the world.

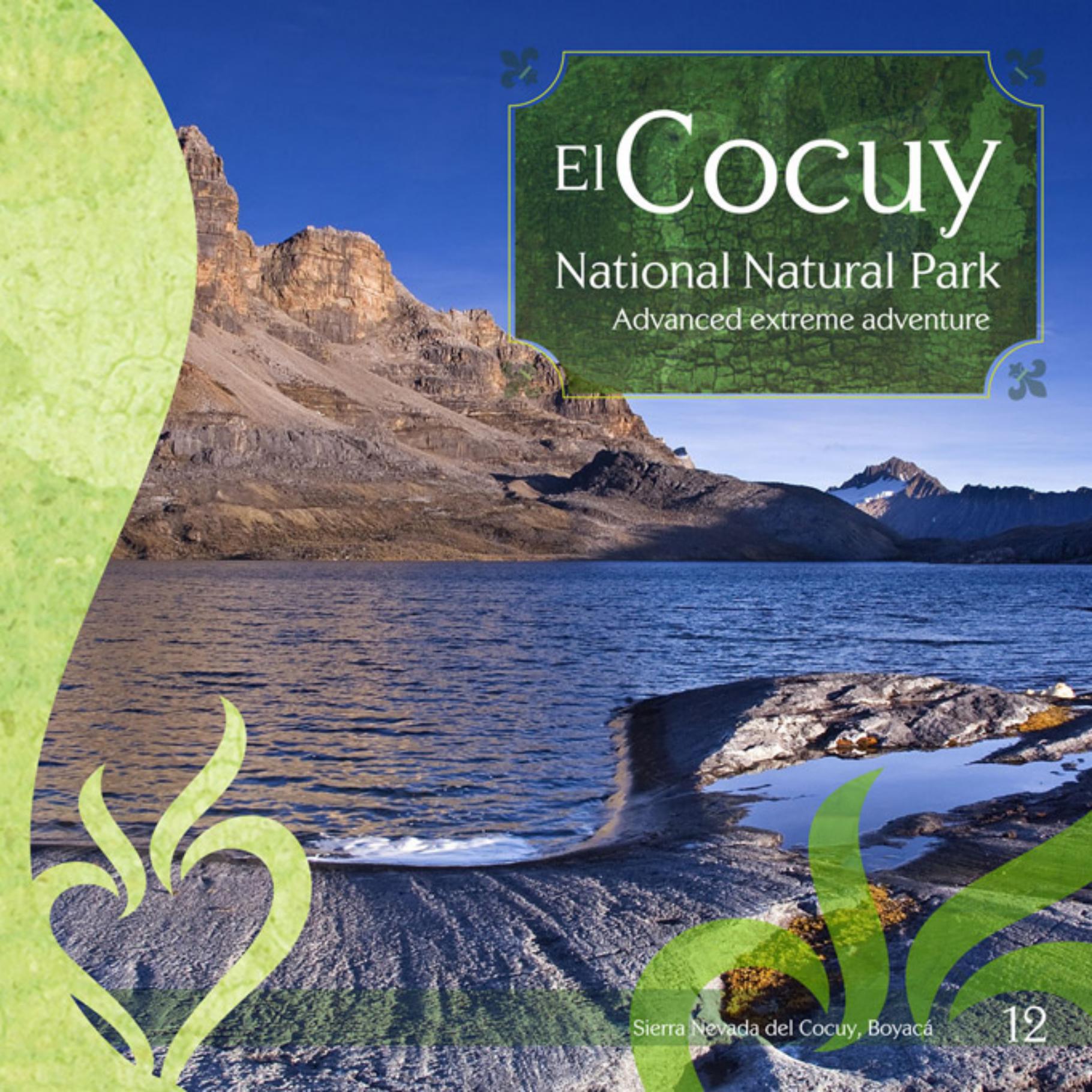
# Interesting sites:

Snow peaks above 4,700 meters above sea level, Valle de Lagunillas, Laguna Grande de la Sierra, Ruta de Lagunillas, Esperanza, Kamwara cabins, and the Pan de Azúcar, Pulpito del Diablo, Toti, Portales, and Concavo glaciers. Mountaineers with more experience may enjoy other tours such as El Paso de la Silla (crossing the Sierra Nevada de El Cocuy from the San Pablín peak to the Concavito peak) or Campanillas (crossing El Cocuy from the Campanilla to the Pan de Azúcar peak).

Nearby city: Tunja.

# Ecotourism activities:

- Trail hiking
- Photography
- Mountain, rock, and ice climbing
- Mountain biking
- Fauna and flora observation
- Paragliding
- Cave exploration

The image features a scenic landscape of a lake and mountains. In the foreground, a large, light green leaf-like shape is partially visible on the left side. The middle ground shows a calm lake reflecting the sky, with a rocky shoreline in the lower right. The background consists of rugged, brown mountains under a clear blue sky. A decorative green box with a yellow border and floral motifs at the corners is positioned in the upper right, containing the title and subtitle. The overall aesthetic is natural and adventurous.

# El Cocuy

National Natural Park

Advanced extreme adventure

## Overview:

This park is an island in La Cocha Lake. From afar, the island resembles a tree partially submerged in the water. It encompasses only eight hectares of land and is, thus, the smallest sanctuary in the National Natural Parks system. La Corota is located in the municipality of Pasto, in the department of Nariño.

## How to get there:

There are flights from Bogotá to Pasto lasting less than two hours. From Pasto, visitors take a 40-minute trip to the port of El Encanto. From there, it is just a 10-minute boat ride to the sanctuary.

## Communities:

Peasants with the cultural patterns of southern Colombia inhabit the park's area of influence. Quillasinga Indians inhabited the area in Pre-Columbian times. Several museums in the department of Nariño exhibit samples of their fine metalwork.

## Fauna:

Water hens and ruddy ducks are among the bird species. The famous rainbow trout abounds and nearby restaurants offer it in exquisite preparations.

## Flora:

With species like the *liso*, *cucharo* (*Rapanea*), and *cerote* (*Ficus*) trees - the latter very popular with hummingbirds - the vegetation of La Corota is that of a very humid primary forest. The canopy is between 20 and 25 meters tall, and is rife with fragrant flowers that attract numerous pollinators.

## Interesting sites:

The path that crosses the island ends in a lookout point: the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, which welcomes pilgrims on Sundays; the biology station, and hotels and restaurants at the water's edge.

## Ecotourism activities:

- Photography • Bird watching • Religious ritual • Typical cuisine •
- Regulated fishing • Trail hiking •



# Isla de La Corota

Fauna and Flora Sanctuary  
The submerged tree

## Overview:

Just 15 kilometers from the romantic and historic city of Villa de Leyva, is one of the most valued and best-preserved flora and fauna sanctuaries in the departments of Cundinamarca and Boyacá. Its area covers 6,960 hectares and its mountain peaks range between 2,400 and 3,800 meters above sea level. According to the mythology of the Muisca Indians, the Iguaque lake is the cradle of all humanity. Bachué, mother of the Muiscas, emerged from this lake.

## How to get there:

There are two main options for traveling to the Sanctuary from Bogotá. The most popular is the Bogotá – Tunja – Villa de Leyva route (160 km), with the possibility of taking a detour at Puente de Boyacá to arrive in Villa de Leyva through Samacá. The other alternative is to take the Bogotá – Ubaté – Chiquinquirá – Villa de Leyva route (170 km).

## Communities:

The high plains of the departments of Cundinamarca and Boyacá – the *altiplano cundiboyacense* - are a region where various groups of Muisca cultural ancestry converge. The park is located on this *altiplano*.

## Fauna:

Wild fauna is that of the Andean and páramo zoogeographical zone. Opossums, bats, rabbits, squirrels, deer, and agoutis are the largest mammals. Guans, partridges, woodpeckers, chickadees, bluebirds, and torrent ducks are the most notable bird species.

## Flora:

The main species are oaks, *frailejones* (*Espeletia*), *sietecueros* (*Machaerium biovulatum* Micheli), *bayuelo* pine trees, *encenillos* (*Weinmania tormentosa*), and *cucharo* (*Rapanea*) trees, aside from mosses, lichens, *quichés* (*Guzmania*), orchids, and ferns.

## Interesting sites:

The San Pedro de Iguaque and Mamá Ramos sectors; the rock paintings in the archaeological area; Iguaque Lake; Los Robledales Center, for its oaks; nine smaller lakes, among them, El Monte, La Empedrada, La Colorada, Carrizal, Cazadero and Ojo de Agua; and the Astronomical Observatory at Villa de Leyva.

Nearby cities: Bogotá, Tunja and Villa de Leyva (Wind and Kite Festival in August).

## Ecotourism activities:

- Trail hiking • Photography • Flora and fauna observation •
- Cave paintings • Camping •



Flora and Fauna Sanctuary

# Iguaque

Cradle of the gods

## Overview:

This 489-hectare sanctuary was created in 1996 as a water and forest reserve for guaranteeing the supply of water to the population in the surrounding area, including the inhabitants of the capital cities of the Café Triangle. Its scenic attractions make it ideal for ecological tourism.

## How to get there:

A 40-minute flight takes visitors from Bogotá to the city of Pereira. From there, it is necessary to go to the village of La Suiza, a 45-minute trip by car or *chiva* (typical tourist bus), which is where the administrative center of the sanctuary is located. There are several comfortable haciendas in the surroundings.

## Communities:

The ancestral inhabitants of the area were the Quimbaya Indians, noted among other things for their exquisite metalwork. Their descendants contribute to the conservation and maintenance of the park.

## Fauna:

At dawn and sunset, the echoing screams of the three groups of howler monkeys are quite an attraction. The sanctuary is a habitat for spectacled bears, páramo tapirs, eagles, deer, and astounding numbers of bright-colored birds.

## Flora:

The flora is that of the Andean humid forest. Black cedars, *ceibas* (*Bombacopsis*), and Colombian pines are among the most representative species. Many trees are heavy and tall, with branches extending higher than ten meters.

## Interesting sites:

Two interpretive trails, the Otún and Barbo rivers, the science station, the waterfall, the Ucumarí Regional Park (La Pastora).  
Nearby city: Pereira (business and trade).

## Ecotourism activities:

- Trail hiking • Páramos • Flora and fauna observation • River bathing •
- Cultural and historical contact • Butterfly watching •



Fauna and Flora Sanctuary

# Otún Quimbaya

Dispenser of charm

## Overview:

This natural reserve was used as a haven for pirates, an area for Indian settlements, and much more recently, as a maximum-security prison. Today it is a preferred destination for Colombian eco-tourists thanks to its enormous environmental and cultural offer. The environmental services provided to visitors and scientists make it an exceptionally valuable site.

## How to get there:

The park is located in the municipality of Guapi, department of Valle del Cauca, in the jurisdictions of Guapi and Gorgonilla. The trip involves taking the Bogotá – Cali – Guapi route, either by air or by land. From there boats depart to the island - a one and a half hour trip.

## Communities:

Only a small community composed of park rangers from the Concesión Gorgona and scientific researchers inhabit the island. The buffer zone is inhabited primarily by Afro-Colombians, who are devoted to fishing and have a rich musical tradition.

## Fauna:

Gorgona is a mating site for whales and a nursery for their young. It encompasses habitats for endangered species like iguanas, babilla alligators, and golfina marine turtles. Endemic species include blue lizards and freshwater crabs. White-faced monkeys stand out among the mammals and pelicans, boobies, and fragata birds, among the birds.

## Flora:

Tree strata are differentiated enough for the flora to be considered jungle. The most outstanding species are: machare (*Symphonia*), pácora, jaboncillo (*Isertia*), roble (*Cybistax*), and peinemono (*Apeiba*). The Colombian pine tree is also present here.

## Interesting sites:

Casa Payán, the environmental interpretation center, the archaeological salon, the jail, the eco-store, the diving station, the Playa Palmeras, Chonta, and Árbol del Pan trails, the old wharf, the Azufrada hot springs, and the Playa Blanca, Piedra Redonda, and Palmeras beaches.

Nearby cities: Buenaventura (sea port), Cali (fair in december).

## Ecotourism activities:

- Diving • Snorkeling • Whale watching • Trail hiking • Sun and beach •
- Flora and fauna observation • Visit to the interpretation center •

A tropical beach scene with several tall palm trees in the foreground and a clear blue sky. The water is a vibrant turquoise color. A dark purple, textured rectangular box with rounded corners is positioned in the upper right, containing white text. On the left side of the image, there is a large, light green circular graphic with a textured pattern. In the bottom right corner, there is a purple graphic element resembling a stylized leaf or flower.

# Gorgona

National Natural Park  
An enchanted island

# Overview:

This park is located in the department of Chocó and covers parts of the Nuquí and Bahía Solano municipalities. Its ecotourism vocation is evident in its natural attractions, impressive scenery, the excellent state of its ecosystems, and a cultural wealth that is unique to the northern Pacific region of Colombia.

# How to get there:

There are two ways of getting to Utría. Boats depart from the port of Buenaventura for a 20 to 24-hour trip to Nuquí or Bahía Solano. It is possible to fly to Bahía Solano from Medellín and Cali.

# Communities:

Embera Indian and Afro-Colombian communities have several settlements in the park and its area of influence. The Emberas developed their principles and norms from their relation to rivers, animals, and mountains. The exploitation of rubber attracted the first Afro-Colombian inhabitants.

# Fauna:

The following are the most notable mammals: ocelots, pacaranas, agoutis, deer, wild pigs, foxes, and sloths. Reptiles abound and include unique, endemic species, such as several poisonous frogs of the *Dendrobates* genus.

# Flora:

The *cobiba* is the official tree of the department of Chocó. Other timber trees are the following: *nisperos* (*Manilkara*), *cominos* (*Aniba*), *abarcos* (*Cariniana*), *ceibas* (*Bombacopsis*), and *carboneros* (*Abarema*). The *caracolí* (*Anacardium*) tree is used for boat making; Indian and Black communities use the *oquendo* for their handicrafts.

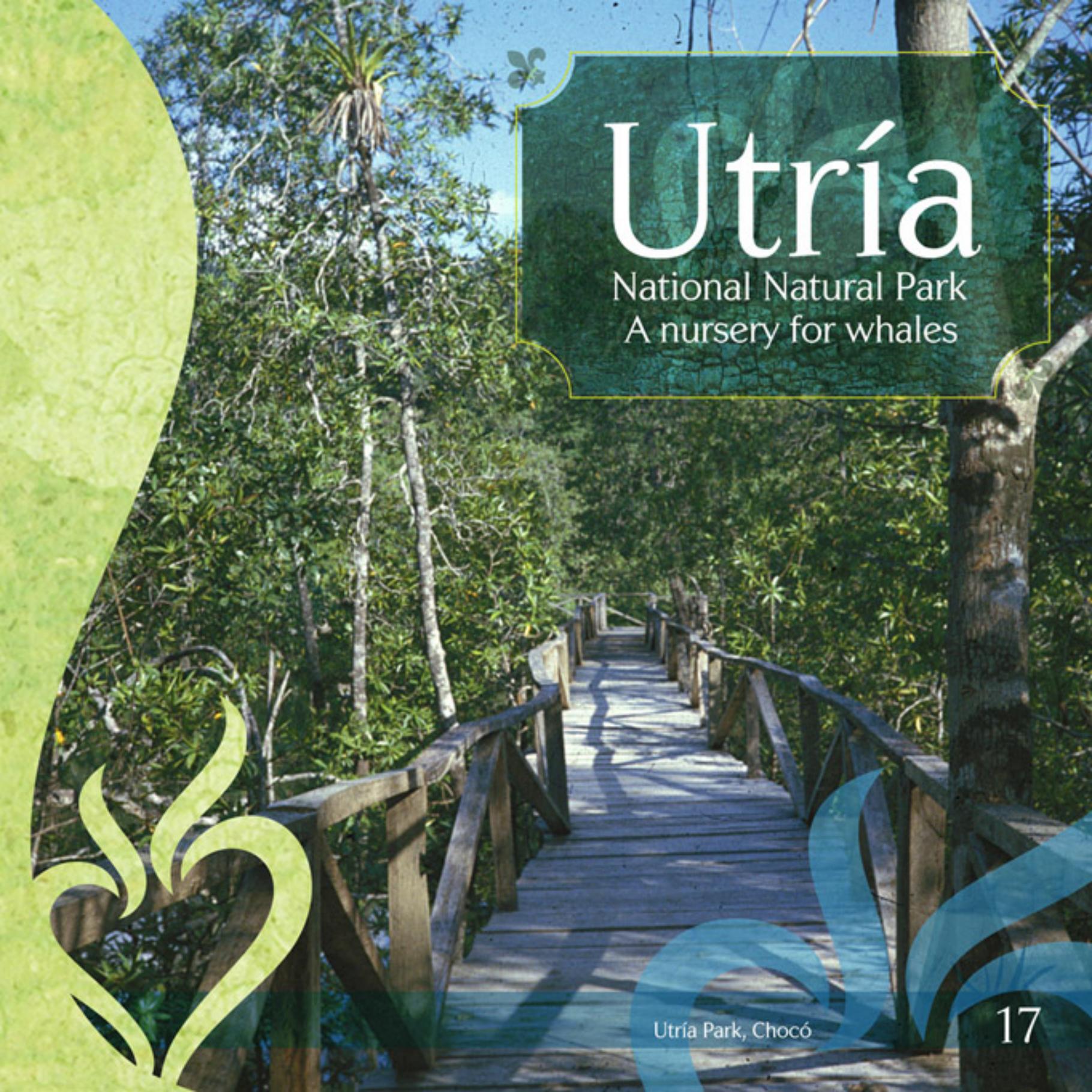
# Interesting sites:

Playa Blanca Island, Utría Cove, Almejal Beach, and the Chadó and El Tigre waterfalls in the jurisdiction El Valle. Migratory species like dolphins, whales, and cachalots are frequently present in the area. There are four land trails and five underwater trails: Playa Blanca Island, Punta Diego, Fondeadero de Cocalito, Fondeadero Grande (land and sea), Terrón Colorado (canoeing).

Nearby cities: Quibdó (San Pacho feasts in January), Bahía Solano (Festival of the Pacific in August).

# Ecotourism activities:

• Trail hiking • Photography • Diving • Whale watching • Canoeing •



# Utría

National Natural Park  
A nursery for whales

# Overview:

The Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary is located in the Colombian Pacific Ocean, 506 km west of the port of Buenaventura. It consists of one rocky islet and eleven crags. In 2006, UNESCO declared the area a World Natural Heritage Site for its marine biodiversity. Many people consider it one of the five most beautiful diving spots in the world.

# How to get there:

All boats, whether foreign or national, must request an entry permit from the Bogotá office of the National Natural Parks system. The trip from Buenaventura lasts between 30 and 40 hours.

# Communities:

There are no native communities or settlers in Malpelo. The occasional presence of humans is limited to marines at the surveillance posts of the Colombian Army and sporadic scientific researchers.

# Fauna:

Malpelo presents endemic species like land crabs and gekos because of its isolation from the continent. Malpelo harbors the largest colony of the masked booby, or Malpelo Alcatraz. Fish species are specially rich and diverse, tollo and yellow sharks, spectacular 15-meter long whale sharks, and the giant devil rays, among them.

# Flora:

Among the particularities of the land area, patches of vegetation dominated by algae, lichens, and mosses are especially worth preserving.

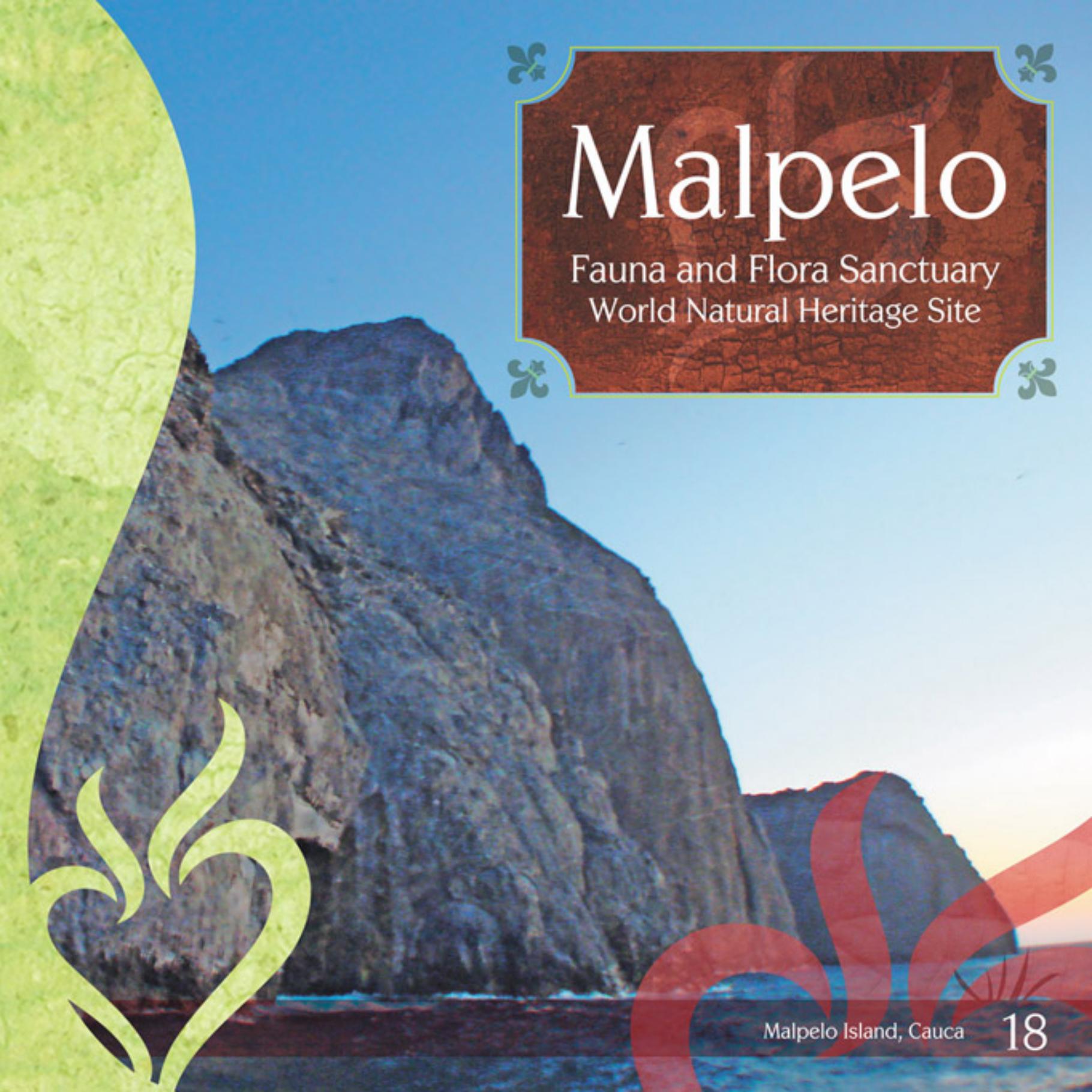
# Interesting sites:

Malpelo is very important as a conservation area. It possesses the only mosaic in the Colombian Pacific of coastal, coral reef, and mixed bottom layer ecosystems and provides habitats for migratory endemic and endangered species.

Nature in Malpelo is highly valued for its educational use, and is at the core of oceanic research in the Colombian Pacific.

# Ecotourism activities:

• Underwater photography • Bird watching • Advanced diving • Scientific activities •



# Malpelo

Fauna and Flora Sanctuary  
World Natural Heritage Site

## Overview:

This 293,500-hectare park is located in the Amazonian Trapeze, in the municipality of Leticia. In Amacayacu, meandering trails are perfect for venturing in the tangled greenery of the jungle, and specially designed walkways are exactly what is needed for exploring the canopy.

## How to get there:

The best way is to travel from Bogotá to Leticia, the capital of the department of Amazonas. Flights depart on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. From Leticia, travelers must go to the main wharf (in the dry season) to take a 2-hour boat trip to the protected area.

## Communities:

Ten percent of the park's area overlaps with Indian reservations: Buenos Aires, (northern sector); San Martín de Amacayacu, Palmeras, and Mocagua (southern sector). The Macedonia, El Vergel, and Zaragoza reservations are part of the park's area of influence. They belong primarily to the Ticuna ethnic group and, to a lesser degree, to the Yagua and Cocama groups.

## Fauna:

There are close to 150 species of mammals in the park, notable among them pink dolphins and several endangered species like tapirs, jaguars, manatees, and otters. The lion marmoset, the smallest primate in the world, also stands out. There are close to 500 species of birds. Fish constitute a quite diversified group; among them are *pirarucúes*, *arawanas*, and piranhas.

## Flora:

The *capirón* and *munguaba* trees are characteristic of the margins of flooded areas. On dry land, trees can reach heights of up to 40 meters. Species like red cedars, white cedars, mahogany, *ceiba* (*Bombacopsis*), and *uvo* (*Pourouma*) trees are the tallest and most imposing.

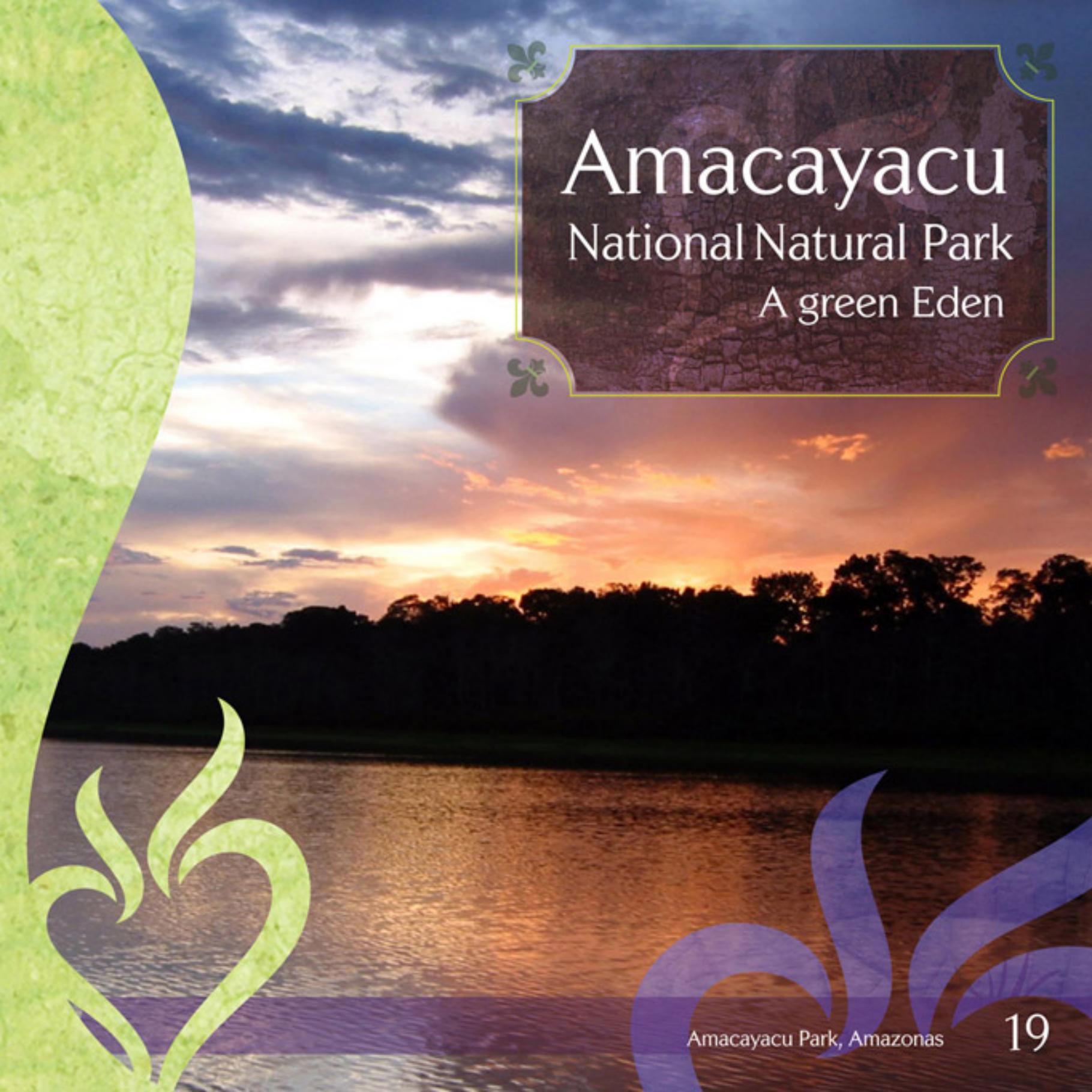
## Interesting sites:

Impressive sites like the green thicket of the tropical rainforest, the enchantment of the Ticuna culture, the eco-store, the Yecraé visitor center, the Nainekman environmental interpretive path, Mocagua Island, a walk to Martín de Amacayacu, Palmeras, Loma del Tigre, observation of pink dolphins in the Tarape Lakes and Vista Alegre, canoe outing on the Matamatá stream.

Nearby city: Leticia (Golden Pirarucú Festival in November - December).

## Ecotourism activities:

- Trail hiking • Cultural contact • Canoeing • Walks • Jungle canopy •
- Flora and fauna observation • Photography •



Amacayacu  
National Natural Park  
A green Eden

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