



HERE TO HELP

## The IVHQ Colombia - Cartagena team

The IVHQ Colombia - Cartagena Program Manager is Grace Stevens. Grace will be your first point of contact before you arrive in Colombia and is available to answer any questions you may have. Once you arrive in Colombia, Monica Sepulveda and the Emerging Voices team will be your first point of support and IVHQ becomes secondary.

### BEFORE YOU ARRIVE



**Grace Stevens**  
PROGRAM MANAGER

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INTERNATIONAL

1-877-342-6588  
USA/CANADA CALL FREE

0-808-234-1621  
UK CALL FREE

1-800-557-380  
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[grace@volunteerhq.org](mailto:grace@volunteerhq.org)

International Volunteer HQ  
PO Box 8273  
New Plymouth  
NEW ZEALAND

### IN COLOMBIA



**Monica Sepulveda**  
VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR

+57 315 867 0876



[cartagenaivhq@gmail.com](mailto:cartagenaivhq@gmail.com)

Address

Calle 67 número 3-13  
Crespo  
Cartagena de Indias  
Colombia



YOUR ARRIVAL

# Location & Dates

## Location

The program is based in the historic city of Cartagena on the Caribbean coast of Colombia.

## Your Program Dates

Programs begin on the 1st and 15th of every month. Volunteers can choose to volunteer for periods ranging from 2 weeks to 12 weeks.

## Arrival & Pick-up

We ask that you arrive in Cartagena for pickup on the day before your chosen start date.

### Arriving by Flight

You will be met at the International Rafael Núñez Airport (CTG) by a staff member from Emerging Voices, who will be standing in the arrivals area with an IVHQ sign.

Once you book your flights to Cartagena, please enter these details into [MyIVHQ](#) so the local team can arrange your pick up. It is important to specify your flight number and airline, so the local team can check what time you will be arriving if your flight is delayed.

### Arriving Overland

If you are traveling in Colombia prior to your program starting and arrive in Cartagena overland, please contact Emerging Voices to arrange your pickup from a pre-arranged destination. Once you have booked your overland arrival, please provide any details you can in advance via [MyIVHQ](#).

## Post Pick-up

Once you have been picked up, you will be transported to the volunteer accommodation in Cartagena and explained the procedure and timeline for the next few days.

## Return Airport Transfer

You are responsible for your own return transport to the airport, however our local staff will be happy to call a taxi for you. You should budget around US\$5 for a taxi to the airport at the end of your program.

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YOUR ROLE IN COLOMBIA

## Childcare

The Childcare project aims to support various childcare centers in Cartagena by easing the workload for local workers through the assistance of volunteers. You will work with children ranging in age from babies to 18 years old, who are in desperate need of affection, attention and education. You will play an invaluable role in providing knowledge, care and attention to these children and can join in with games, song and dance, reading and writing lessons, meal times and basic chores. You will be placed in day care centers, and also a foundation for children with cancer.

YOUR ROLE IN COLOMBIA

## Teaching English

The Teaching English project provides the opportunity for students from low-income communities in Cartagena to learn English with the support of international volunteers. While students generally receive English lessons at school, the Teaching English project supplements those lessons, giving Colombian students the invaluable experience of conversing with fluent English speakers. You may also have the opportunity provide support for students in learning Mathematics, Sciences, Humanities, Music, Sports, Dance and Art. Volunteers encourage young students to believe that although they may come from poor backgrounds, they can become the doctors, teachers, sport stars, mathematicians and artists of the future. You work with students from primary school age through to elderly in local schools, day care centers, foster homes and community centers. Placements on this project are flexible and volunteers can either be involved with tutoring a few students or teaching a full class, as well as teaching English students at a beginner or intermediate level. You will often work with the other volunteers to create their lesson plans and are encouraged to be creative and bring new ideas to their placements. As you will work with the support of IVHQ's local team and placement staff, they do not need to be qualified or experienced teachers to participate. However, we encourage you to come prepared by completing some relevant training. Visit our [Online TEFL course page](#) to learn how to gain an internationally-recognized TEFL certification at a discounted rate.

YOUR ROLE IN COLOMBIA

## Community

The Community project is designed for enthusiastic and flexible volunteers, as work varies and is based on where there is the greatest need at a particular time. Volunteers on this project undertake a variety of tasks while in Cartagena and these could involve carrying out general maintenance tasks, helping in community gardens, teaching English and skills such as computer knowledge, as well as helping the elderly at a local community center. You can also work at a rehabilitation centre for teenagers with substance abuse problems.

YOUR ROLE IN COLOMBIA

## Alternative Break

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YOUR ROLE IN COLOMBIA

## Sports Development

Volunteers on the Sports Development project play a vital role in teaching children and teenagers in Cartagena the importance of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle, as well as building skills in teamwork, trust, respect and sportsmanship. The children are full of energy and thrive on the opportunity to learn new sports and develop their skills. You are encouraged to bring their own ideas to the project in regards to incorporating new games, sports, skills, and holding tournaments with the children. This project is only limited by the availability of volunteers; so if you are interested in teaching a specific sport (whether it be football or swimming, or another sport such as gymnastics or volleyball), please let us know, so we can include this in the schedule. It is preferable that you hold a First Aid Certificate for this project and any coaching qualifications are welcomed, although not essential. It is important to note that the Sports Development project is a component of two other projects and only makes up one to two hours a day from Monday to Thursday. You will need to supplement your time on the program with another project, such as Teaching English.

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#### FREQUENTLY ASKED

## What are the specifics of my placement?

Our local team in Colombia is responsible for determining your specific volunteering placement. As they are locals and understand the needs of the community where you will be volunteering, they are in the best position to determine where your assistance will most effectively be utilized. To arrange a suitable volunteer placement for you, the following factors are considered:

- Project that you have applied for
- Duration of your program
- Your unique skills, interests and qualifications and experience relevant to your chosen project
- Your demographics
- Placements and work currently available for volunteers
- Placements in the most need of volunteers

Given these factors, the specific placement where you will volunteer is not finalized until you arrive in Colombia and have met with the local team.



#### YOUR ROUTINE

## Program Structure

### Orientation

Orientation is hosted by the Colombia team at the volunteer house in Cartagena on the first day of your program and is split into sessions. Orientation covers everything you need to know for your volunteer program in Colombia:

- Introduction to Colombia
- Colombian customs
- Language lessons details
- Rules and expectations
- Safety

- Introduction to your project and placement

## Example Volunteer Week

On your first day of volunteering, you will be escorted to your placement by a local coordinator and introduced to the placement staff you will be working with. Volunteers typically work in morning and afternoon shifts that last around 3 to 5 hours each. A typical daily schedule would be as follows:

TIME	ACTIVITY
7.15 AM	Breakfast at the volunteer accommodation.
8 AM - 12 PM	Travel to placements and volunteer work.
1 PM	Lunch at the volunteer house.
2 - 4 PM	Volunteer work.
7 PM	Dinner at the volunteer house.

Please note, this is an example schedule as work hours are dependent on the project and placement. Volunteers on the Cartagena program can easily take part in a range of the projects if they would like to, this can be arranged with the coordinators. The optional Spanish lesson schedule is flexible and they are usually held in the afternoon or post dinner.



PROGRAM ADD-ONS

## Language Lessons

Spanish is not a prerequisite for the Colombia – Cartagena program, however on certain projects, such as Teaching, the level of volunteer work will be restricted with limited Spanish. We recommend all volunteers, regardless of their Spanish language ability, take advantage of the very affordable Spanish lessons offered exclusively to IVHQ volunteers by our program staff in Colombia.

Spanish language lessons are available for all ability levels. IVHQ strongly recommends taking Spanish lessons as they help you communicate and work more effectively in your volunteer placement.

Tailored to each person's specific needs, the classes are offered exclusively to IVHQ volunteers at US\$15 per hour. The lessons are arranged with Alejandra +57 301 6520031 and you pay her at the end of each lesson directly.

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WHAT TO EXPECT

## Accommodation & Meals

### Accommodation

The accommodation in Cartagena is a dormitory-style volunteer house in Crespo, a safe and conveniently-located neighborhood in Cartagena. The volunteer house has indoor and outdoor communal areas, a dining area, running water and western toilets (toilet flushes human waste only - toilet paper should be thrown in the rubbish bin provided). Showers are cold water only, which are actually welcome in the heat. Wifi is available, but limited due to it being shared by several people in the house.

Bedrooms are comprised of bunk beds and you should expect to share a room with three to seven other volunteers of the same gender. Sheets and pillows are provided, however you will need your own towel and toiletries. We also recommend bringing a sleeping bag for weekends away.

### Curfew

To ensure the safety of our volunteers and respect of the others in the volunteer house, the following curfews are strictly enforced:

- Sunday through Thursday: 11:00 PM
- Friday, Saturday: 2:00 AM

Volunteers are required to return to the volunteer accommodation at 11 PM times on weekdays. If volunteers wish to stay out longer than the curfew hours on Friday and Saturday, they must arrange their own accommodation for that night and provide advanced notice of their plans to the local staff. Staying in alternative accommodation on weeknights is not allowed. Returning to the volunteer accommodation after the rules will be regarded as a breach of the curfew rules, which can result in a warning or dismissal from the program.

### Extra Nights of Accommodation

If you arrive a few days early or stay a few days after your program ends, it is possible to arrange extra nights of accommodation. Extra nights of accommodation are subject to availability and therefore must be arranged in advance by emailing the local team

directly at [ivhqcolombia@gmail.com](mailto:ivhqcolombia@gmail.com). The cost is US\$25 per night, per person, paid to the local team directly once you are in Colombia.

### **Private Room Upgrade**

Couples or individuals who desire more privacy may arrange the private room for an additional US\$20 per night, paid to our local staff in local currency on arrival. Private rooms are subject to availability as there is only one private room. We recommend arranging this as far in advance as possible via email with the local team at [ivhqcolombia@gmail.com](mailto:ivhqcolombia@gmail.com).

### **Meals**

Volunteers are provided with breakfast, lunch and dinner at the volunteer house. On weekdays, food is prepared for you and on weekends, you are welcome to help yourself to leftovers, prepare your own meals, or dine out in one of Cartagena's many restaurants. You should not expect to eat as you normally do at home - as a volunteer and a traveler, there is a need to be flexible! All volunteers help with clean up and dishes on a roster system, so be prepared to chip in.

Breakfast is varied and can include pancakes, fruit, eggs and arepas. Lunch and dinner include a balanced range of traditional dishes and some western dishes. Tea, coffee and toast are available in the volunteer house throughout the day.

Tap water is fine to drink in Cartagena and we recommend bringing a reusable water bottle to fill at the volunteer house and bring to your placement. Alternatively, bottled water can be purchased for around US\$1.

If you have any special dietary requirements, please let us know when you apply for the program so we can make arrangements for you.



GET ORGANISED

## Visas

Ensuring that you qualify for and have sufficient time to obtain your visa for Colombia should be one of the first things you organize when planning your trip. If you haven't already, we recommend you do this immediately.

Colombia visa requirements vary depending on the following factors: your purpose of travel, length of stay, nationality and place of residence.

### **Purpose of travel**

All volunteers are required to have a PIP 6 Permit Stamp in order to participate on the program, which can be arranged upon arrival into Colombia. Once registered, the local team will send you an email asking for a copy of your passport so that they can arrange an invitation letter for you to present to immigration when you arrive at the airport in Colombia. This stamp will register you as visiting the Emerging Voices Foundation with immigration.

If you choose to continue traveling in Colombia after your volunteer time is complete, you must go to the office of immigration and get your passport stamp changed from a PIP 6 to PIP 5. You simply tell them that you are done volunteering and want to continue to stay in Colombia as a tourist. The immigration office in Cartagena is located around 15 minutes away from the volunteer house and the local team will be happy to assist you with it further. This costs around US\$30 and is a very easy process.

### **Length of stay**

A Colombian PIP 6 Permit Stamp typically allows volunteers to stay for 90 days. If you are planning on staying in Colombia for longer than 90 days, you can apply for an extension, prior to your entry stamp expiring. The extension will let you stay for a total of 180 days, including any time already spent in the country. The extension costs about US\$40 and our local staff in Colombia can provide guidance to obtain this when the time comes. For those staying more than 8 weeks, please be advised that the government charges an exit fee when you leave the country of around US\$35.

### **Nationality and place of residence**

Volunteers of most nationalities will be granted a PIP 6 Permit Stamp on arrival in Colombia. You will need to check with the [nearest Colombian embassy](#) to verify your specific requirements.

Canadian citizens are charged a reciprocity fee, approximately \$88 CAD, when they arrive at an airport in Colombia. There is a dedicated counter at immigration for Canadian citizens. The fee can be paid by credit card, debit card or by cash only in Colombian pesos. If you are unable to pay the fee, you will not be allowed to enter the country. This is strictly enforced. On rare occasions there have been issues processing credit and debit cards at the counter and there is no access to cash machines. For this reason, I highly recommend that you come prepared with no less than US\$100 equivalent in pesos.

### How to apply

Our recommendation is to obtain your PIP 6 Permit Stamp upon arrival in Colombia. Once you have registered you will need to send the local team a copy of your passport so that they can arrange an invitation letter for you. Once you receive the invitation letter please print it out and bring it with you so that you can present it at immigration to support your application for a PIP 6 Permit Stamp. This will be stamped into your passport when completing immigration procedures upon arrival. To enter Colombia, your passport must be valid for at least six months from your date of arrival.

### Travel Documents

It is highly recommended that you make two copies of all your important travel documents (passport, flight tickets, and travel insurance) before you leave home. Leave one copy with a friend or family member and take the spare copy with you. Bring your passport as well as an identification card (such as driver's license or student card) for traveling as you may be asked to present this when making tour bookings or checking in for flight/bus trips. To enter Colombia, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of departure from Colombia.



GET ORGANISED

## Vaccinations

Vaccinations are a personal decision and there are usually no legally required vaccinations required to enter Colombia. We recommend talking to a doctor about your trip so he or she can help you make informed decisions on vaccinations based on your specific travel plans and health needs.

The following are some vaccinations which are worth considering for your trip to Colombia:

- Diphtheria/Tetanus
- Hepatitis A & B
- Typhoid
- Polio
- Yellow Fever (many countries require this to enter or return home after you have been in Colombia)

### **Malaria**

Malaria, which is spread from the bite of malaria-infected mosquitos, can be found sporadically throughout Colombia. However, Bogota and other urban areas in the Andes, are too high in elevation for the mosquitos that carry the virus. If you plan to travel to areas outside of Bogota, particularly east of the Andes or along the Pacific coast, we recommend discussing anti-malarial medication with a travel doctor.



GET ORGANISED

## Travel Insurance

It is mandatory to purchase travel insurance for the time you will participate on an IVHQ volunteer program. Although IVHQ does everything we can to ensure your trip abroad goes smoothly, it is essential that you have adequate travel insurance should you fall sick, your bags go missing or something is stolen.

IVHQ has partnered with World Nomads, a travel insurance provider, to ensure volunteers have access to the best insurance designed specifically with volunteer travel in mind. This insurance covers medical emergencies, emergency evacuation, trip cancellation, personal belongings and personal liability. World Nomads quotes are competitive and they are one of the only insurance companies that allow travelers to claim while traveling, or extend their policy if they decide to stay longer. Find out more information and obtain a free no-obligation quote via our [Volunteer Travel Insurance](#) page. Once you have arranged travel insurance, please enter these details via MyIVHQ.

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GET ORGANISED

## Flights

To make your trip planning even easier, we work with a team of expert humanitarian flight agents to provide IVHQ volunteers with exclusive access to affordable humanitarian flights.

Why book your flights with IVHQ?

- Affordable humanitarian fares - Get access to airfares specifically for volunteer travelers that allow for low cost flight changes, extra baggage and cancellations. These are not available when booking online.
- One itinerary for your travel - If you book through our flight partners, your travel details will automatically be uploaded to your MyIVHQ account, so we can arrange your airport pick-up directly with the local team.
- Travel with other volunteers - If you are volunteering with a friend or family member, or traveling as a group, our team can ensure you're all on the same flight. If you are traveling solo, our team will do their best to place you on flights with other IVHQ volunteers traveling to the same program.
- Personalized itineraries, designed to work with YOUR travel plans - If you want to travel before or after your volunteer program, we can design an itinerary that works best for you.
- Experts in our field - Our team know the IVHQ volunteer programs inside out and can ensure you arrive and depart from the closest airport to your program.
- Round the world airfares - If you are looking to travel to more than one IVHQ volunteer program, we can find you the best route and deal for your itinerary.
- More reliable and flexible - We use safe and reliable scheduled airlines and we look for changeable tickets whenever possible.



WHAT TO PACK

## Clothing

Casual, modern clothing is normal in Colombia – generally, Colombians tend to dress nicely and take pride in their outward appearance. Cartagena is generally a very hot city with annual rainy seasons. Please bring lightweight clothing and a rain jacket and appropriate footwear. The dress code for volunteer work is conservative; please ensure your chest, shoulders and legs (at least to the knee) are covered by light,

loose-fitting clothing. Please ensure that tattoos and facial piercings are covered while at your volunteering placement.

In Cartagena, your clothes will get sweaty and dirty; please pack in accordance with how often you plan to do laundry. In your free time, shorts and tank tops are fine. Volunteers love to go out dancing and socializing in Cartagena, so please also bring some nice clothing you like to wear out. If you plan to travel to higher-elevation areas of Colombia, like Bogota, Medellin or Cali, it's important to note that you should pack clothing for a much colder climate.

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#### WHAT TO PACK

## Personal Belongings

- Important travel documents:
  - Passport
  - Travel insurance information
  - Immigration documents
  - Copy of birth certificate and passport
  - Plane tickets
  - Passport photos
- Medical kit:
  - Personal medication
  - Pain relievers
  - Antihistamines
  - Diarrhea stoppers
  - Scissors and tweezers
  - Band aids
  - Antiseptic cream
  - Lip balm
- Toiletries:
  - Toothbrush
  - Toothpaste
  - Shampoo

- Conditioner
    - Soap/body wash
    - Deodorant - personal hygiene is important in the warm climate
  - Electrolyte powder or replacement supplements
  - Towels
  - Insect repellent
  - Mobile phone, SIM-compatible and unlocked
  - Laptop, tablet and/or smartphone
  - Camera
  - Clothing:
    - Conservative but lightweight clothing that you don't mind getting dirty for volunteer work
    - Nice clothing for going out
    - Any clothing you are comfortable in for your free time
  - Footwear:
    - Comfortable, appropriate footwear for your volunteer work and your free time plans
    - Nice shoes for going out
  - Sun hat, sunblock and sunglasses
  - Swimsuit
  - A small padlock for securing bags and valuables
  - Raincoat
  - Books, music, cards and other entertainment for long travel and down time
  - Travel guides
  - A small gift for your hosts/cooks (optional)
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FUNDRAISING SUPPORT

Fundraising

Despite IVHQ doing our utmost to make our volunteer trip affordable, we realize that the total cost can still be expensive by the time your flights, travel insurance and

vaccinations are paid for. Every volunteer traveler is different and while some volunteers have access to funds to cover the cost of their trip, there are many who fundraise to cover these expenses.

Here is how IVHQ can help you:

- IVHQ has a partnership with [Fund & Seek](#) which provides IVHQ volunteers with access to online crowdfunding services, which have helped IVHQ volunteers raise thousands of dollars for their trips. See the [Volunteer Fundraising](#) page on our website for further information.
- Your IVHQ Program Manager can also provide you with a verification letter that you can use to help legitimize your fundraising efforts, which helps when approaching individuals or companies for the first time.



KEEPING YOURSELF PREPARED

## Background Checks

All volunteers are required to provide a criminal background check, which you can upload via [MyIVHQ](#).

A basic disclosure check from your local police is sufficient and can be obtained by visiting or contacting your local police department or an online provider. Please ensure you allow sufficient time to acquire this document before you depart, as processing times vary. The check must be issued within 12 months of your program start date and is required to be presented in English.

If your background check cannot be issued in English, a translated and verified copy will be accepted if presented along with the original. Please contact IVHQ if you need any further details about the background check. Anyone with a criminal record or caution for offenses should also contact us before proceeding further.



FREQUENTLY ASKED

## What other costs will I have?

- Visa
- Flights
- Travel Insurance (mandatory)
- Vaccinations
- Criminal background check
- Transfer at end of program
- Transport to and from placement
- In-country trips and tours
- Spending money (See budgeting section)

# Country Information



YOUR DESTINATION

## Location

Colombia is located in the northwestern corner of South America, alongside the Caribbean Sea between Panama and Venezuela, and bordering the Pacific Ocean between Panama and Ecuador. Colombia has an area of 1,138,903 square kilometers (439,733 squaremiles) and a total coastline of 3,207 kilometers (1,993 miles) distributed between the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. It shares borders with Venezuela to the east, Brazil to the southeast, Peru and Ecuador to the south-southwest and Panama to the northwest. With the fifth-largest area in Latin America in terms of size, Colombia is one-ninth the size of the United States, and is approximately the same size as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany combined. The capital city, Bogota, is located in the center of the country in a mountainous setting.



YOUR DESTINATION

## Demographics

In Latin America, Colombia ranks fourth in overall population and tenth in population density, estimated at 46.2 million. The birth rate stands at 16.73 per 1,000 and the death rate at 5.36 per 1,000. Between 2000 and 2015, the annual population growth rate was 1.6 percent.

Population distribution is highly uneven. Roughly 94.5 percent of the population is concentrated in 42 percent of the territory, mostly in the plateaus and basins scattered among the Andes cordilleras and the valleys of the Magdalena and Cauca rivers. Some 58 percent of the territory, mostly the 9 eastern departments (administrative units, much like provinces), accounts for only 5.5 percent of the population.

Three-fourths of the population live in the Central Highlands, in the temperate and cool zones and the remainder in the Caribbean lowlands. Colombia is one of the most Spanish of all South American nations, although persons of pure Spanish descent constitute only 20 percent of the population. The mestizos (people who are a mixture of white and indigenous Amerindians) comprise 58 percent. The mulattos (a mixture of

African and white ethnicities) make up 14 percent, and those of African descent are only 4 percent of the population. The zambos (those of mixed African and Amerindian origins) comprise 3 percent of Colombia's people. Colombia is a country composed primarily of young people, with 68 percent aged between 15 and 64 years, 25 percent below the age of 14, and 7 percent of the population older than 65.

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YOUR DESTINATION

## Climate / Weather

Colombia is located very close to the equator but has a striking variety of geographic features, therefore a wide range of climates, particularly in areas of varying elevation. Temperatures range from very hot (at sea level) to relatively cold (in the Andes), but temperatures remain relatively consistent throughout the year. Colombians typically describe their country's climate in terms of the climactic zones: Tierra Caliente or "hot zone" (elevation under 900 meters), Tierra Templada or "temperate zone" (elevations between 900 and 1,980 meters) and Tierra Fría or "cold zone" (elevations from 1,980 meters to about 3,500 meters).

Cartagena is in the Tierra Caliente, at sea level on the Caribbean coast. The climate is very hot, windy and humid, averaging at 90 percent humidity throughout the year. Day time highs remain consistent throughout the year around 32°C/90°F and night time lows around 24°C/75°F. The rainy season is from May to November, with the most common form of precipitation being thunderstorms. We recommend that volunteers bring plenty of lightweight clothing and electrolyte replacement supplements to help avoid the negative effects of the heat.

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YOUR DESTINATION

## Transport

Public transport is required to get to volunteer placements; volunteers will need to budget approximately \$5 - \$7 per day for this. Additionally, transport in your free time will be at your own cost and you should budget extra for this.

The majority of volunteers travel by bus to their placement, which costs approximately COL\$2000 each way, with travel between two placements in one day sometimes

being necessary. You can stop a bus at any corner and its direction will be indicated on a sign at the front of the bus.

Volunteers sometimes also opt to travel together to their placement by taxi, as it is sometimes faster and just as cost effective, costing about COL\$8000 each way. Each time you get in a taxi, you must negotiate the fare and be aware that the minimum fare is COL\$6000.



The currency of Colombia is the Colombian Peso; visit [xe.com](https://www.xe.com) to view the current exchange rate. The conversion rate changes daily so we recommend checking this again shortly before your program begins.

Credit and debit cards can be used at ATMs, which are widely available throughout the major cities in Colombia, however there are often daily withdrawal limits. We recommend contacting your financial institutions to let them know you're planning to travel to Colombia, so they do not freeze your account due to suspected fraud.

Your Program Fee covers your accommodation, meals for the duration of your volunteer program, however you will need extra money for daily transport to your volunteer placement, weekend travel, shopping and personal expenses. Volunteers in Colombia generally find a budget of US\$80 per week to be sufficient for basic weekly expenses.



Most parts of Colombia have good communications infrastructure. WiFi access is available at the volunteer house and in many cafes and restaurants throughout the country. You can bring your own unlocked mobile phone. If it is SIM card compatible, you can get a local SIM card and a Colombian mobile number for approximately US\$5, which is great for keeping in touch with other volunteers and also home. Both International and local/long distance calls can be made and the country code of Colombia is +57.

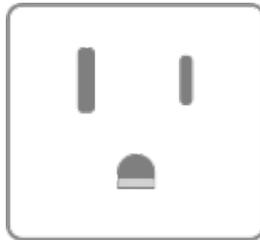


YOUR DESTINATION

## Plugs & Adaptors



Type A



Type B

The two most commonly found socket types in Colombia are the Japanese flat two-prong plug (Type A) and the flat two-prong and round grounding pin plug (Type B) used in North America. Power points that fit both plugs can be found in the volunteer house however, the Type A plug will fit in either. The voltage in Colombia is 110 V and the frequency is 60Hz.



YOUR DESTINATION

## Laundry

It is not common for households in Colombia to have washing machines and dryers. There is a laundry mat two minutes walk away from the volunteers' house.

The laundry mat charges 7,000 COP per /kilogram and returns the clothes the following day at 5 pm. Please note, laundry costs are not covered in your Program Fee.



YOUR DESTINATION

## Public Holidays

If one of the following public holidays falls during your volunteer program, you will have a free day, depending on whether your project is closed for that day. It is also important to note that only some shops and shopping malls will be open on these holidays:

DATE	2019 HOLIDAY
Jan 01	New Years Day
Jan 07	Epiphany
Mar 25	St. Joseph's Day
Apr 14	Palm Sunday
Apr 18	Maundy Thursday
Apr 19	Good Friday
May 01	Labor Day
June 03	Ascension Day
June 24	Corpus Christi
July 01	Sacred Heart
July 01	Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul
July 20	Colombia's Independence Day
Aug 07	Battle of Boyacá
Aug 19	Assumption of Mary
Oct 14	Columbus Day

Nov 04 DATE	All Saints' Day 2019 HOLIDAY
Nov 11	Independence of Cartagena
Dec 08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Dec 24	Christmas Eve
Dec 25	Christmas Day
Dec 31	New Year's Eve

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YOUR DESTINATION

## Culture & Customs

- Colombians base their lives heavily on the traditional family values of politeness, modesty and respect.
  - Pleasantries are very important and several minutes of greetings and handshaking will often take place when greeting and departing friends and associates.
  - An offered gift or invitation to join a meal should always be accepted as to refuse may shame the person offering.
  - **Do not** take photos without permission.
  - Schedules are relatively relaxed - Colombians do not generally allow time to control their lives, socializing and personal relationships are much more important.
- 



YOUR DESTINATION

## Weekends / Free Time

During the weekend, volunteers have spare time to relax or take the opportunity to explore Cartagena or other parts of Colombia. In and around Cartagena, day trips can

be made to the walled city for a historical walk, Playa Blanca for a day at the beach and El Totumo volcano for a geothermal mud bath among the mountains. Further afield, the cities of Medellin, Bogotá and Cali offer a change of pace and scenery in the Andes Mountains. Incredible treks and beaches are available in Parque Nacional Natural Tayrona near, Santa Marta and Parque Isla de Salamanca, near Baranquilla.

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YOUR DESTINATION

## Shopping

There are great grocery stores, markets and shopping centers throughout Colombia in towns and major cities. Cartagena is certainly no exception to this. You will be able to get everything you need in Cartagena, from snacks and drinks to toiletries and volunteering supplies. There is also an excellent range of restaurants to suit all budgets in Cartagena for those who wish to occasionally dine out.

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WHAT TO LEARN

## Language Basics

Spanish is the official language in Colombia, however the Spanish spoken in Colombia can differ from the Spanish spoken in Spain. An important difference between the Colombians' way of speaking Spanish is the use of 'vos' instead of 'tu' (you) and the pronunciation of Y and LL as 'sh'.

In order to participate on an IVHQ volunteer program you must be fluent in English, however it is also expected that volunteers in Colombia have at least a basic level of (or be willing to learn) Spanish. During your program orientation, you will be provided with more information on the Spanish language lessons available exclusively to IVHQ volunteers in Colombia. To help you practice before you depart, we have provided some basic Spanish vocabulary for you below.

A great website to visit to learn Spanish is duolingo. You can also download the free Duolingo smartphone app for iPhone or Android.

### Pronunciation

In Spanish, all vowels are pronounced the same, no matter where they fall in the word. This means that, in theory, once you have learned how to pronounce the vowels, you should be able to pronounce nearly every word in Spanish with a fair degree of intelligibility. The following phonetic guide should work for most native English speakers.

- In Spanish, A is like the 'ah' in 'haha', or 'awe'
- In Spanish, E is like the long 'a', like the 'a' in 'hay'
- In Spanish, I is like the long 'e', like the 'ee' in 'keep'
- In Spanish, O is a short 'o', like the 'o' in 'or'
- On Spanish, U is like the 'oo' in 'zoo'
- Please note, there are some exceptions and some of the consonants are pronounced differently, as outlined below.
- In Spanish, H is silent, hotel is 'o-tell'
- In Spanish, J is the 'h' sound, jalapeño, is 'haw-la-pain-yo'
- In Spanish, ñ is a sound like 'nyuh', like in the above example
- In Spanish, R is a rolling 'r' sound - this usually takes practice (try purring like a cat)
- In Spanish, B is pronounced like the letter 'v'
- In Spanish, V is pronounced like the letter 'b'
- In Spanish, G is pronounced with a 'guh' sound unless in front of a 'u' like in guacamole, then it is 'gw', or in front of an 'e' or an 'i', which makes it an 'h' sound
- In Spanish, LL is a 'y' sound, the verb 'llegar' (to arrive) is pronounced 'yaygar', however in Colombia, LL is pronounced as a 'sh' sound

#### BASIC WORDS AND PHRASES

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Hello!	Hola!
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Good morning!	Buenos días!
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Good evening!	Buenas noches!
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Goodbye.	Adiós.
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How are you?	Cómo está?
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Very well.	Muy bien.
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What is your name?	Cómo se llama?
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I am Mr.  
BASIC WORDS  
Gonzales.  
AND PHRASES

Yo soy el Señor González.

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I am Mrs.  
Gonzales.

Yo soy la Señora González.

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It's nice to  
meet you.

Mucho gusto.

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I had a  
wonderful  
time.

Lo pasé de maravilla.

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Thank you  
very much.

Muchas gracias.

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Please.

Por favor.

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Pardon me.

Perdone.



Every program we offer has been personally inspected, selected and approved by a director from IVHQ. We have lived in the accommodation, experienced the orientations, worked on the projects and have built strong relationships with the local teams. All programs adhere to a comprehensive set of standards and meet our expectations of quality, risk management and health & safety.

Volunteers can feel confident knowing they'll be supported to stay safe while abroad with IVHQ and here are some of our top health & safety tips. Complete your "Keeping Safe" training module for more detailed advice and guidance.



YOUR SAFETY

## Top safety tips

In the unlikely event that an incident occurs, volunteers have multiple layers of support that they can access. In an emergency, this support is available 24/7:

- Colombia Volunteer Coordinator
- Placement Staff
- Accommodation Managers
- IVHQ Program Manager (although we are located in New Zealand, we are here to help you)

Our programs are monitored on an ongoing basis to understand volunteers' experiences and we are continually improving our programs based on this feedback.

The safety and security of our programs is constantly being reviewed and the local team will provide detailed health and safety guidance to you during the program orientation. Listed below are some general safety tips for volunteers in Colombia:

- Avoid wearing jewelry on the streets, especially gold neck chains or items that would be appealing to thieves.
- Handbags are always a temptation. If you must carry one, keep it in front of you. A backpack is better but should still be kept out of reach when possible.
- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you. Stick to well-lit public

areas and be aware of how to safely return to your accommodation at all times.

- Always tell someone where you are going before heading out and ensure you are confident with the directions to and from your destination. Use taxi drivers you know (keep a telephone number) or who are connected to the place where you are traveling to. Our local team will recommend some specific drivers during your program orientation. If you are unsure, always ask local staff who to use.
  - Be especially careful at night, stay in a group and never walk down dark streets. If possible, use transport door-to-door after dark. Keep in mind that recognized tourist areas can be considered high-risk zones for pickpockets and thieves.
  - Always leave valuables locked in your accommodation if you are heading out, regardless of whether it's night or day.
  - Be aware of local traffic. It can be chaotic and it's important to take it slowly when crossing the road. Always look to the left and right to avoid hazards.
  - Always keep an eye on your drinks when out socializing.
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YOUR SAFETY

## Transport Safety

Transport provided by the local team is vetted to ensure it meets our standards and all applicable local regulations, but you also need to make smart decisions about the transport you use during free time. Some forms of transport simply aren't safe, so get advice from the local team on suitable options and always do a quick assessment yourself before using a mode of transport. Look for safety measures that you could reasonably expect (eg. safety belts in a taxi), and always make sure you are comfortable with the suitability of the person operating the vehicle.

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YOUR SAFETY

## Safe socializing

We understand that it is common for volunteers to want to socialize and go out together during your free time. All we ask is that if you are going to consume alcohol,

please drink responsibly and look out for each other. Limit your alcohol intake, be careful of ice, never leave your drink unattended and avoid accepting drinks from strangers. Remember that you are in a new environment, outside of the comfort of your home country and you may react differently to alcohol as a result. Enjoy your night, but be smart and drink responsibly.

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YOUR SAFETY

## Drug Use

The consumption of illegal and prescription drugs (if you do not have a prescription for the drugs) is forbidden on all IVHQ programs. These rules will be discussed by our local team during your program orientation, and if a volunteer is caught using illegal drugs they will be removed from the program with no refund provided.

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YOUR SAFETY

## Security Warnings

The following governments publish useful travel advisories, highlighting entry requirements, medical facilities, areas with health and safety risks, civil unrest or other dangers, and are generally very up to date:

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United  
States

<https://travel.state.gov>

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Canada

<https://www.voyage.gc.ca>

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United  
Kingdom

<https://www.fco.gov.uk/travel>

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Australia

<https://www.smarttraveller.gov.au>

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New Zealand

<https://www.mft.govt.nz>