

Colombia

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Colombia is a developing nation classified as upper middle income. Located in northwestern South America along the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea (north of Peru and south of Venezuela), the climate is extremely diverse with classifications that range from humid equatorial (no dry season) to dry (semi arid), with cooler temperatures in some high-altitude areas.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

An official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary. Vaccination is usually recommended if you'll be traveling in areas where there is risk of yellow fever transmission.

Requirement:

A vaccination certificate is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from Angola, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Uganda. This also applies to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours in these countries.

Supplementary requirement: Colombia requires vaccination (given at least 15 days prior) or a valid waiver (age ≥ 60 years is a recognized contraindication) for all persons, including travelers from all countries, entering: the national nature parks of Amacayacu, Cahuinarí, Catatumbo Barí, Corales del Rosario and San Bernardo, Cordillera de Los Picachos, El Tuparro, Farallones de Cali, Gorgona, La Paya, Las Orquídeas, Los Katíos, Macuira, Nukak, Paramillo, Puinawai, Rio Pure, Sanquianga, Serranía de Chiribiquete, Serranía de los Churumbelos, Sierra de la Macarena, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Tatamá, Tayrona, Tinigua, Uramba Bahía Málaga, Utría, and Yaigojé Apaporis; the flora and fauna sanctuaries of Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta, El Corchal "El Mono Hernández", Los Colorados, and Los Flamencos; Sanctuary of Flora Medicinal Plants Orito Ingi-Ande; Vía Parque Isla de Salamanca; and Wildlife Sanctuary Acandí, Playón, and Playona.

Proof of vaccination must be carried at all times. Travelers may be required to show proof of vaccination when visiting national nature parks.

Official Status: listed by WHO as a country where YF transmission risk is present.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2018) Malaria risk is high in the following municipalities of the departments of Antioquia (El Bagre, Vigía del Fuerte, Segovia, Tarazá, Zaragoza, Cáceres, Nechí, Murindó, Anorí, Remedios, Mutatá, Frontino, San Pedro de Urabá, Dabeiba, Valdivia and Cauca), Amazonas (Tarapacá, La Pedrera, Puerto Nariño, Leticia, Miriti13 Paraná and La Chorrera), Bolívar (Montecristo, Norosi, Tiquisio and San Pablo), Cauca (Timbiquí), Chocó (Bagadó, Nóvita, Lloró, Tadó, Río Quito, El Cantón del San Pablo, Río Iro, Atrato, Bojaya, San José del Palmar, Quibdó, Bajo Baudó, Medio San Juan, Carmen de Darien, Nuquí, Medio Baudó, Alto Baudó, Istmina, Bahía Solano, Medio Atrato, Juradó, Sipí, Unión Panamericana, Condoto and Certegui), Córdoba (Puerto Libertador and Tierralta), Guainía (Inirida and La Guadalupe), Nariño (Roberto Payán, Olaya Herrera, El Charco, Mosquera, Barbacoas, Santa Barbarba, Magüi, Francisco Pizarro and San Andrés de Tumaco), Risaralda (Pueblo Rico and La Virginia), Valle del Cauca (Cartago), Vaupés (Taraira and Yavarate) and Vichada (Puerto Carreño and Cumaribo). Malaria risk is moderate in the following municipalities of the departments of Antioquia (Urrao, Chigorodó, Apartadó, Necoclí and Yondo), Amazonas (El Encanto and Puerto Santander), Bolívar (Santa Rosa del Sur and Río Viejo), Cauca (Guapi and López), Chocó (El Litoral de San Juan, Riosucio, Acandí and Unguía), Córdoba (San José de Uré and La Apartada), Guaviare (San José de Guaviare, Miraflores, Calamar and El Retorno), Nariño (La Tola) and Vaupés (Pacoa). A lesser risk exists in some municipalities of Amazonas, Caqueta, Guaviare, Guainia, Meta, Putumayo, Vaupes and Vichada.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications)^a

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: All areas < 1,700 m (5,577 ft). None in Bogotá, Cartagena, and Medellín. (See Map 2-10).

- Drug resistance³: Chloroquine.
 - Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 50%, *P. vivax* 50%.
 - Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, or tafenoquine.⁴
- ³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.
- ⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, with moderate risk in deluxe accommodations. Food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent seafood poisoning may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chagas' disease (American trypanosomiasis), chikungunya, dengue, hepatitis C, leishmaniasis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, altitude illness, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to terrorism, drug trafficking, and other ongoing security concerns, U.S. (DOS) advises avoiding travel to Arauca, Cauca (except the city of Popayán), Chocó (except Nuquí), Nariño, and Norte de Santander (except Cúcuta) departments and advises reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to Antioquia (except Medellín), Caquetá, Casanare, César (except Valledupar), Córdoba (except Montería), Guainía, Guaviare, Meta, Putumayo, Valle del Cauca (except Cali and Palmira), Vaupés, and Vichada departments. U.K.(FCO), Canada (GAC), and Australia (DFAT) have more limited warnings.

Terrorism Risk

High risk of attack by domestic terrorist groups exists throughout the country, including Bogotá. Targets may include domestic and international organizations and businesses; public places and events, including those frequented by tourists; and transportation systems.

Risk of kidnapping by terrorist groups exists in rural areas. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners).

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, sexual assault, and murder) exists in urban areas throughout the country, including Bogotá (especially in La Candelaria and Monserrate and on hiking trails), Cali, Santa Marta, and the coastal region of La Guajira Department; on roads outside of Riohacha; on the road from Medellín to the José María Córdova International Airport.

High risk of petty crime exists throughout the country, especially in areas frequented by tourists and in Bogotá (particularly in Ciudad Bolívar, El Codito, and Monserrate and downtown La Candelaria), Medellín (particularly downtown and on the Metrocable), and Cali.

Kidnappings by criminal groups occur throughout the country, especially near the borders with Venezuela and Ecuador and in Buenaventura and Tumaco. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), including foreigners working for oil and mining companies.

Express kidnappings to force cash withdrawals at ATMs occur throughout the country.

Scams involving counterfeit currency and false identity (such as criminals posing as police officers) have been reported.

Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted. Scopolamine, via aerosol spray or paper handouts, is commonly used to incapacitate victims.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations frequently occur in major cities throughout the country, especially in Bogotá, and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Unsafe Areas

Armed conflict occurs and a dangerous security environment exists throughout the country, especially in rural areas.

Lost City in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Magdalena Department) or Caño Cristales in Parque Nacional Natural de la Macarena (Meta Department): only visit with trained guides.

Water Safety

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including ferries, small crafts, and speedboats. Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI, and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Transportation Safety

High risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road-traffic death rate is 12 to 24 per 100,000 population. The rate is less than 10 in most high-income countries. Speed laws are poorly enforced. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark. Driving at night is not advised.

Traffic flows on the right-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

Avoid public buses due to safety and security concerns, including armed robbery.

Many taxis are unsafe. Use taxis from official ranks or dispatched via smart phone app or radio from a reputable company and ascertain the license or identification number of the dispatched vehicle.

Airline Safety

U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country oversees its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

Natural Disasters

The hurricane season is from June through November in coastal areas along the Caribbean Sea. The rainy seasons are from March through June and from September through November. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Colombia

- | United States: [+57] 1-275-2000; co.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: [+57] 1-657-9800; www.colombia.gc.ca
- | United Kingdom: [+57] 1-326-8300; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-colombia
- | Australia: [+57] 1-657-7800; colombia.embassy.gov.au

Colombia's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: www.colombiaemb.org
- | In Canada: www.embajadacolombia.ca
- | In the U.K.: reinounido.embajada.gov.co
- | In Australia: australia.embajada.gov.co

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

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