

# Colombia

## Geography

Location: Northern South America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Panama and Venezuela, and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Ecuador and Panama

Map references: South America

Area:

total area: 1,138,910 sq km

land area: 1,038,700 sq km

note: includes Isla de Malpelo, Roncador Cay, Serrana Bank, and Serranilla Bank

Land boundaries: total 7,408 km, Brazil 1,643 km, Ecuador 590 km, Panama 225 km, Peru 2,900 km, Venezuela 2,050 km

Coastline: 3,208 km (Caribbean Sea 1,760 km, North Pacific Ocean 1,448 km)

Maritime claims:

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation  
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm  
territorial sea: 12 nm

International disputes: maritime boundary dispute with Venezuela in the Gulf of Venezuela; territorial dispute with Nicaragua over Archipelago de San Andres y Providencia and Quita Sueno Bank

Climate: tropical along coast and eastern plains; cooler in highlands

Terrain: flat coastal lowlands, central highlands, high Andes Mountains, eastern lowland plains

Natural resources: petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, nickel, gold, copper, emeralds

Land use:

arable land: 4%

permanent crops: 2%

meadows and pastures: 29%

forest and woodland: 49%

other: 16%

Irrigated land: 5,150 sq km (1989 est.)

### Environment:

current issues: deforestation; soil damage from overuse of pesticides; air pollution, especially in Bogota, from vehicle emissions

natural hazards: highlands subject to volcanic eruptions; occasional earthquakes; periodic droughts

Note: only South American country with coastlines on both North Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea

## People

Population: 36,200,251 (July 1995 est.)

### Age structure:

0-14 years: 32% (female 5,784,010; male 5,925,600)

15-64 years: 63% (female 11,642,870; male 11,245,235)

65 years and over: 5% (female 888,358; male 714,178) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.7% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 21.89 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 4.69 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.17 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 26.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:  
total population: 72.48 years  
male: 69.68 years  
female: 75.38 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.4 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:  
noun: Colombian(s)  
adjective: Colombian

Ethnic divisions: mestizo 58%, white 20%, mulatto 14%, black 4%,  
mixed black-Indian 3%, Indian 1%

Religions: Roman Catholic 95%

Languages: Spanish

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1985)

total population: 88%

male: 88%

female: 88%

Labor force: 12 million (1990)

by occupation: services 46%, agriculture 30%, industry 24% (1990)

## Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Colombia

conventional short form: Colombia

local long form: Republica de Colombia

local short form: Colombia

Type: republic; executive branch dominates government structure

Capital: Bogota

Administrative divisions: 32 departments (departamentos, singular - departamento) and 1 capital district\* (distrito capital); Amazonas, Antioquia, Arauca, Atlantico, Bogota\*, Bolivar, Boyaca, Caldas, Caqueta, Casanare, Cauca, Cesar, Choco, Cordoba, Cundinamarca, Guainia, Guaviare, Huila, La Guajira, Magdalena,

Meta, Narino, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Quindio, Risaralda, San Andres y Providencia, Santander, Sucre, Tolima, Valle del Cauca, Vaupes, Vichada

Independence: 20 July 1810 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Day, 20 July (1810)

Legal system: based on Spanish law; a new criminal code modeled after US procedures was enacted in 1992-93; judicial review of executive and legislative acts; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Flag: three horizontal bands of yellow (top, double-width), blue, and red; similar to the flag of Ecuador, which is longer and bears the Ecuadorian coat of arms superimposed in the center

## Economy

Overview: Colombia's economy has grown steadily since 1991, when the government implemented sweeping economic reform measures.

Industries: textiles, food processing, oil, clothing and footwear, beverages, chemicals, metal products, cement; mining - gold, coal, emeralds, iron, nickel, silver, salt

Agriculture: growth rate 3.8% (1994 est.); accounts for about 15% of GDP; crops make up two-thirds and livestock one-third of agricultural output; climate and soils permit a wide variety of crops, such as coffee, rice, tobacco, corn, sugarcane, cocoa beans, oilseeds, vegetables; forest products and shrimp farming are becoming more important

Illicit drugs: illicit producer of coca, opium poppies, and cannabis; about 45,000 hectares of coca under cultivation; the world's largest processor of coca derivatives into cocaine; supplier of cocaine to the US and other international drug markets; active eradication program against narcotics crop  
Transportation

Railroads:  
total: 3,386 km

Highways:  
total: 107,377 km (1991)

Inland waterways: 14,300 km, navigable by river boats

Pipelines: crude oil 3,585 km; petroleum products 1,350 km; natural gas 830 km; natural gas liquids 125 km

Ports: Barranquilla, Buenaventura, Cartagena, Leticia, Puerto Bolivar, San Andres, Santa Marta, Tumaco, Turbo

Airports:

total: 1,307

Defence Forces

Branches: Army (Ejercito Nacional), Navy (Armada Nacional, includes Marines and Coast Guard), Air Force (Fuerza Aerea Colombiana), National Police (Policia Nacional)