



# The Kogi Land

August 8<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> / 2025

SHIKWAKALA

The Crackling of Mother Earth

**Shikwá:** the invisible threads that enshroud the earth and connected among them, help to hold the Universe and Mother Earth. When there is unbalanced energy in the Earth, the Shikwa flow is interrupted and it is when the Crackling of Mother Earth happens.

The Kogi Pagamentos (payments) ceremonies in the sacred places have the main intention to help reestablish the flow of Shikwá.

## ITINERARY

**August. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Arrival in Cartagena, Colombia**

You will be met at the airport and transferred to Hotel Bantú in the old city. If you arrive by late afternoon, you will be able to join the group for dinner.

**Cartagena or Cartagena de Indias** is one of the most beautiful cities of the Americas. With its authentic architecture of the Colonial and Republican times...from the 1600s to the 1800s, the huge fortress of San Felipe, and walled inner city (where we will stay), it has served as the inspiration for numerous books and films about pirates and Spanish America. The city was founded on June 1, 1533. However, settlement in the region around Cartagena Bay by various indigenous groups dates back to 4000 B.C.



During the colonial period, Cartagena served a key role in the administration and expansion of the Spanish empire. It was a center of political and economic activity due to the presence of royalty and wealthy viceroys. In 1984 Cartagena's colonial walled city (11 kilometers long) and fortress were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (For more on the history, please see Footnote 1 below)

The movie "Burn!" (1969) starring Marlon Brando, about a British Economic Hit Man/secret agent in the mid-1800s, was filmed in and around Cartagena. Brando described it as the best film he ever made. Available at Amazon and other on-line services it offers magnificent scenes of the old city. Much of the movie "Romancing the Stone" with Michael Douglas was also filmed here as well as "The Mission" with Robert De Niro.

### **Aug. 9th, 2025: Full day to explore Cartagena**

AM: At the beginning of the day we will gather to introduce ourselves. Then we will start our visit at the San Felipe Fortress which is considered the greatest of all the Spanish fortresses, and do a walking tour through the walled city, its old streets, temples, and well-preserved colonial and republican houses. We will also visit some of the historic monuments such as the Inquisition Palace.

PM: Time to explore this magic city on your own or to relax. In the late afternoon we will reconvene for discussions and sharing, to deepen our communal relationship and our knowledge of the world we are about to enter. Dinner will be in a local restaurant of Caribbean cuisine.

**Aug.10th, 2025: Cartagena – Santa Marta – Ecohabs**

From Cartagena we will take our bus north past the Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta (Spanish for Large Marsh of Saint Martha). It is the largest of the swampy marshes located in Colombia between the Magdalena River and the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. It has an area of 4280 km<sup>2</sup> and belongs to the outer delta system of the Magdalena River. It is separated from the Caribbean Sea by a narrow, sandy spit built in the 1950s, on which is situated coastal route 90 from Barranquilla to Santa Marta. The marsh's large lagoon is connected to the Caribbean Sea via a narrow strait (the La Barra Channel). Aracataca village is in La Ciénega, and it is the setting for Nobel-prize winning Author Gabriel Garcia Marquez's book "One Hundred Years of Solitude."

We will get to Tayrona National Park, where our hotel Ecohabs is located. Is the only hotel inside the National Park and where we will stay for the next 2 nights.

**Aug.11th, 2025: Ecohabs - Arrecifes Tayrona National Park – Ecohabs**

We will hike through a beautiful trail with dry tropical forest, beaches, and great views. If lucky, we will see the endemic Cotton-Top Tamarin monkey from Sierra Nevada, as well as the more common Howler monkeys we are likely to encounter throughout the trip. We will find a hidden beach to swim and relax. Lunch at Arrecifes Restaurant.

After lunch we will visit Arrecifes Kogi community, meeting there a Kogi Mamo and sharing with him and his family their stories and his message for us, the Younger Siblings.

Then we will go by horseback (or foot

for those who prefer) to the parking area where our van will be waiting to take us back to Ecohabs. At night we will share a drumming ceremony and a sharing circle.

**The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Natural Park**

The Park is Colombia's second oldest national park, established in 1964. It is located in the Cordillera Oriental Range, between the departments of La Guajira, Magdalena, and Cesar, in the mountain range of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. A sanctuary, it offers different climates, terrain, flora and fauna environments, ranging from beaches to snowy mountain peaks.

Forty-four of Colombia's endemic species are found in the park (for example seven species of hummingbirds) as well as 44 endangered species. The area is home to 440 species of birds. Mammals found in the park include tapir, cougar, jaguar, otter, and brocket deer. All the waters that originate in the National Park drain into the Caribbean Sea. Roughly 1.2 million people are dependent upon the freshwater supplied by the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Rivers. In 1979 the park was designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. A 2013 report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature identified the park as one of the most irreplaceable environments in the world, a haven for threatened species.

The Indigenous people of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta were never truly conquered by the Spaniards. Descendants of an ancient Tairona civilization, the Kogi, Arhuaco, and Wiwa - who number about 45,000 today - fled death and pestilence centuries ago, seeking refuge in a mountain paradise, whose peaks soar to the glaciers more than 18,000 feet above the Caribbean coast. In the wake of the conquest they

developed an utterly new dream of the Earth, a revelation that balanced the brilliant potential of the human mind and spirit with all the forces of nature.

To this day the Kogi, Arhuaco, and Wiwa remain true to their ancient laws and traditions—the moral, ecological, and spiritual dictates of a force they identify as the “Mother”—and are still led and inspired by sacred rituals that they will share with us.

The Kogis we will meet are descendants of the Tairona, who were masterful in gold work and architecture. They adapted to the invasion of their lands in their own way. The Kogi shunned outside invasion by fleeing higher up into the Sierra. Although they have remained averse to visits from traditional tourists, they welcome people like us who come to learn and partner with them in shapeshifting consciousness.

#### **Aug.12th, 2025: Ecohabs - Kogi community – Oasis camp site**

We will take 4 x 4 vehicles to a Kogi community to visit them, see their life style, and learn about the “payments” offering ceremonies, as well as their beliefs, and the need to pass the message to the Younger Siblings. You will have the unique opportunity to learn about the Kogi people, their traditions and their daily way of life. We will all come together to show that there are “Younger Siblings” supporting and working with the “Elder Siblings” to improve the human presence on the planet, something that will also contribute to the well-being of the Kogi. During our stay we will participate in an Aseguranza ceremony in the Older Siblings tradition.

This Aseguranza ceremony will grant each of us a blessing and protection against bad energies or negative events related to our physical and emotional conditions

and open us to shapeshifting into positive energies, actions, and events.

To the indigenous people, the Sierra Nevada Mountains are the heart of the world. The area is surrounded by an invisible “black-line” that encompasses the sacred sites of their ancestors and demarcates their territory. The Elder Siblings believe it is their responsibility to maintain the balance of the universe. When there are hurricanes, droughts, or famines around the world it is said that they are caused by the failure of humans to keep the world in harmony. Balance is achieved by making offerings to the sacred sites, to give back to the earth – to regenerate – that which is taken out of it.

Kogi spiritual leaders are called Mamos. The Mamo is charged with maintaining the natural order of the world through songs, meditations and ritual offerings. Mamo training begins at a young age and continues for up to 18 years. The young apprentice is taken high into the mountains and taught to meditate on the natural and spirit world. In Western culture, the Mamo could be seen as a priest, shaman, teacher and doctor, all rolled into one. Due to the isolation of this place we will spend the night in Cabanas Oasis, a very basic and rustic facility.

#### **Aug.13th, 2025: Oasis - Bunkuany Terraces - Madre Sierra lodge**

We will ride for about 1 hour in 4x4 vehicles to get to the Bunkuany Terraces. In the Kogi language, Bunkuany means “the place where the stones speak”.

This archaeological site is part of the construction network of ancient civilizations dating from the same period as the remains of the Lost City, around 600 AC. The Bunkany site consists of a series of large terraces that served as foundations for the houses of Tayrona

people that were the original inhabitants of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Here we will do an offering ceremony or "pagamento" in the Kogi tradition. After the ceremony we will have lunch in a local restaurant, then continue walking downhill for about one hour to Madre Sierra Lodge, a cozy place on the shore of a crystalline river in the middle of the forest. Rest, dinner, overnight.

#### **Aug. 14th, 2025: Madre Sierra – Los Naranjos Beach Lodge**

Early in the morning before breakfast with our Kogi friends we will do a "pagamento" again, as a preparation for the pilgrimage which we will start the next day.

We will have free time to enjoy the river, the waterfall and to have a time for meditation.

After lunch we will travel in our 4x4's to the coast, and stay at Senda Maloka Barlovento Beach Lodge. We will share a drumming ceremony.

#### **Aug. 15th, 2025: Pilgrimage**

Today we will start our pilgrimage with the Kogis. The intention of the pilgrimage is to visit several sacred places (altars) which are located on the black line. These are places with a specific attribute or energy, and have specific purposes.

For all the Kogi people it is very important, at least once in their life, to visit the sacred places on the black line, and make offerings, connecting their thoughts, needs and wishes. While they are doing this they are moving tiny balls of cotton between their fingers. Small pieces of cotton are rolled into tiny balls only by children who are 4 and 5 years old.

Later we will drive north following the coast to La Guajira Department, where we will begin visiting the altars (Rio

Rancheria, Camarones, Dibulla) to make our offerings.

At the end of the afternoon we will go back to Santa Marta and stay in a hotel out of town to have a good rest.

#### **Aug. 16th, 2025: Day 2 of the Pilgrimage**

Today we will continue in the morning through the lower lands to Rio Guaira and to the Hot Spring, where we will take our 4 x 4 and begin climbing up the Sierra Nevada Mountains approaching Kennedy Peak. We will be in the high part of the Sierra Nevada, where there are several sacred places that we will visit. The views above the clouds, the sunset and sunrises are spectacular. We will spend the night (along with 10 Kogis and our guide) in a very rudimentary and simple camp site with very limited facilities. Warm clothes are a MUST and be prepared for a camping experience.

#### **Aug. 17th, 2025: Day 3 of the Pilgrimage**

We will spend the morning hiking along a cliff, being with Mother Nature and our Kogi friends making offerings. Then we will return to Santa Marta, where the Kogi will leave us to go back to their homes. We will go to a comfortable hotel in Santa Marta to rest and have dinner in a local restaurant.

#### **Aug. 18th, 2025: Santa Marta**

Today is our last day in Colombia, time to consolidate the experience and to prepare ourselves to return for our departure. In the morning we have a very nice time on isolated beach in Tayrona National Park. There will be a final sharing circle, and as an option a tobacco ceremony. Later there will be free time, lunch on the beach, and the return to our hotel to rest and pack.

Our farewell dinner will be in a local restaurant.

**Aug. 19th, 2025:** Transfer to the airport for international connections.

**Cost per person: \$4,260 (double occupancy). Based on a group of 10 or more.**

**Initial deposit of \$2,000 will confirm your space. Second payment of \$1,260 is due May 10th, 2025. Balance of \$1,000 is due June 10th, 2025.**

**Single Supplement (one night will not be available): \$1,400 per person.**

**\*\*IMPORTANT INFORMATION: For this journey we recommend arriving to Colombia in Cartagena and flying back home from Santa Marta or Barranquilla (a bigger city, closer to Santa Marta and many more options for flights to USA and Europe).**

Note: Wifi will not be available regularly during the pilgrimage or in the Kogi community. The other hotels have it, but it may be slow and intermittent; thus, it is advisable to let people know that you may be offline for extended periods of time. Hot water also will not be available in one location.

**Reservations:** All reservations are subject to availability. For information about how to reserve your space and make your deposit for the journey, please contact Linda Leyerle at lleyerle@aol.com. In Colombia, it is not possible to reserve rooms or park entrance fees without a copy of the traveler's passport. Linda will give you details about how to send a copy to us. Time is of the essence so please respond as soon as possible if you are interested in this journey.

**Cost includes:** Private tour bus, van or

4x4 vehicles for travel during the journey, all meals, hotels, tips for restaurants and hotels, water during meals, transportation from Cartagena and Santa Marta airports, park entrance fees, local guide and/or spiritual leaders to share history and cultural information. Also included are lodging, meals and reciprocity gift for the 10 Kogi friends, who will be with us on the Pilgrimage. The cost also includes a donation of \$600 (total from the group) to build a communal house for the Kogi community. Daniel Koupermann is the tour leader.

**Cost does NOT include:** Airfare to Cartagena, Colombia and from Santa Marta or Baranquilla, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, tips for the local guides, personal items, or souvenirs.

This journey is for individuals ready to have an educational/experiential experience. Persons with physical or psychiatric challenges may find this journey too difficult or uncomfortable. **We recommend a visit with your doctor at least 6 weeks in advance of departure. No immunizations are required unless you will be entering Colombia from a country with Yellow Fever – in which case you will need a Yellow Fever immunization and be prepared to show proof. You will be at low elevation throughout the journey.**

No visas are required for most people entering Colombia (US, Canadian, EU, Australia and New Zealand citizens). If you have questions about this, please let Linda know. **Your passport must be valid at least 6 months after the date of your return (February 19th, 2026).**

Once you have reserved your space, we will send you more information – packing lists, info about the country, etc. You will be fully prepared for the journey. Also,

Linda is always available by email for any questions or concerns – whatever they may be.

**Cancellations & Refunds:** Due to availability of space on our journey and the time required to process trip reservations, **funds will not be refundable after May 10th, 2025. We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance in order to protect yourself in case extenuating circumstances force you to cancel your trip. Travelex or IMG are two respected possibilities.**

**Responsibilities:** ANDEAN PATHS reserves the right to accept or reject any person as a participant at any time, and to make changes in the itinerary whenever deemed necessary for the comfort, convenience, and safety of our participants, and to cancel a journey at any time. In the event a journey is cancelled, ANDEAN PATHS shall have no responsibility beyond the refund of monies paid to it by program participants as listed. By registering, the participant agrees that neither ANDEAN PATHS nor their affiliates shall be liable for any damages, loss or expense occasioned by any act or omission by any supplier providing services to any program participant. Reasons that Andean Paths might cancel a program include, but are not limited to, issues around safety due to impassable roads, protests in Colombia, pandemics or similar unforeseen events.

## **1.) Cartagena: A Brief History**

At the time of the founding of the city of Cartagena, the area was populated by the Calamarí people. This population was part of a native culture called the Mocanáes; they were believed to be fierce and warlike and it is claimed that the women joined the men in battle.

Within a few years of the Spanish arrival, a walled military fortress was erected to

protect the city against the plundering of English, Dutch and French pirates.

Situated on the northern coast of Colombia on a sheltered bay facing the Caribbean Sea, Cartagena boasts the most extensive and one of the most complete systems of military fortifications in South America. Due to the city's strategic location, it is an eminent example of the military architecture of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries and was also one of the most important ports in the Caribbean.

The port of Cartagena - together with Havana, Cuba, Portobello, Panama, and San Juan, Puerto Rico - was an essential link in the route to the West Indies and thus an important chapter in the history of world exploration and the great commercial maritime routes. On the narrow streets of the colonial walled city can be found civil, religious and residential monuments of beauty and consequence. Despite the precautions, the city was attacked many times. One of the earliest came in 1551, by the French pirate Roberto Baal; eight years later another French pirate, Martín Cote arrived in Cartagena demanding a ransom to prevent a total destruction of the city.

The English privateer, Francis Drake, attacked the city in 1572. The ransom for the city was an estimated 107,000 ducats, an unknown amount of gems and jewels, 80 artillery pieces and other assorted goods. Before Drake, in 1568, the English pirate, John Hawkins had attempted for seven days to take the city but left empty handed.

Probably the most serious threat to Cartagena after Drake was Captain Henry Morgan's attack in 1668. Fearing an expected invasion from Jamaica in October 1668 the English Governor Modyford gave Morgan permission to make pre-emptive attacks on Spanish

ships and ports. Modyford and Morgan agreed that Cartagena, Spain's biggest and wealthiest harbor, would make an excellent prize and its capture would send a resounding message to Spain.

Unfortunately for the British, while Morgan was anchored at nearby Cow Island, his ship, the Oxford, exploded under mysterious circumstances. The explosion killed between 300 and 900 of Morgan's men. With the loss of the ship and so many men Morgan abandoned the attack. The incident left a stain on his career as a buccaneer.

The Baron of Pointis was finally able to break into the city in 1697. Cartagena's Slaves revolted and helped Pointis breach the city walls.

The last real threat came in 1741. Led by the English Admiral Edward Vernon, it included a vicious attack of more than 350 bombs fired from ships' cannons. After a bloody fight and numerous losses, including ones from diseases, Vernon suspended the attack and left for Jamaica.

Cartagena is famous (or infamous) as being one of only two Spanish colonial cities that possessed a slave market; the other being Vera Cruz, Mexico. The first African slaves, brought by Pedro de Heredia, were forced to open roads so the Spaniards could raid the tombs of Colombia's Sinu culture in search of silver and gold. They also were used for cutting sugar cane and building fortresses.

## 1) The Tairona

Tairona was the name for a group of chiefdoms in the region of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. This culture goes back at least to the 1st century A.D. and had significant demographic growth around the 11th century.

The Tairona people formed one of the two principal linguistic groups of the Chibcha family, the other being the Muisca. Genetic and archaeological evidence shows a relatively dense occupation of the region by at least 200 B.C.

The people cultivated yuca and maize as early as 1200 B.C. However, occupation of the Colombian Caribbean coast by sedentary or semi-sedentary populations has been documented to have occurred as early as 4000 B.C. Before the arrival of the Spanish ships the Tairona flourished along the shores of the Caribbean Sea. They created irrigated fields and fishing villages, and traded with other villages further inland. Ethno historical data shows that initial contact with the Spanish was tolerated by the Tairona but by 1600 part of the Tairona population had moved to the higher stretches of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. This movement allowed them to evade the worst of the Spanish colonial system during the 17th and 18th centuries. The indigenous Kogi, Wiwa, Arhuacos and also the Kancuamo people who live in the area today are believed to be direct descendants of the Tairona.

**NOTE:** Historical and anthropological information about Colombia, its inhabitants and culture came from the following: Taironas, Conquistadores y Piratas by Francisco Ospina Navia, La Conquista del Los Incas by John Hemmings, local guides and teachers, and various internet sources, including Wikipedia.

## By Andean Paths ©