



SCAN THIS CODE AND DISCOVER THE SOUND OF COLOMBIA



COLOMBIA IS SABROSURA

Ashish Sanghrajka, President of Big Five Tours and Expeditions' memoir of his most recent adventure in Colombia, the land of Sabrosura

I first visited Colombia more than a decade ago, and wondered then what would make me want to stay longer. The answer came as I sat in a 600-year-old water well inside Cartagena's walled city, which I discovered purely by accident. When I returned from that first trip, I told everyone that this was a sleeping giant in Latin America, and we should eagerly await her awakening. You can imagine how well that went over in those days.

Well today Colombia is awake and she is sabrosura.

I continue to get answers every time I visit, like the one that came during a graffiti tour in Bogota when I saw that my favorite mural was still there, and letting the old woman in the mural speak to me.

Every time I return to my favorite hotel in Cartagena, I feel welcome, like in the Cheers TV show song where everyone really does know your name. It says a lot about how passionate the people of a country are about service when a restaurant server stops to ask you how your children are... every year for five years after my children were there last.

Having just returned from my latest adventure, which took me through the Huila department in the Andean region to the Tatacoa Desert outside Neiva and to all the remote towns leading up to the ancient necropolis of San Agustín, I have yet again, a newfound appreciation for Colombia in the new places I discovered.



I was asked during this trip why Colombia was so dear to me. Amazingly, I have never been asked that before.

After pondering that question for a few days, the answer hit me like a brick. Tourism here came about in my lifetime, allowing me a front row seat to the organic growth that has occurred over the last decade. It's almost like watching your child grow and flourish. Colombia is my baby. Today I use Colombia as a model for other countries that haven't emerged yet. In fact, Colombia is the best example of how a country can come together and stabilize, under the umbrella of sustainable tourism. Sure, like any country, there are still growing pains, however, the future has never been brighter, especially in the places beyond Bogota and Cartagena like San Agustín and the Tatacoa Desert. Yes, I am a native of Kenya and my bloodlines reach back to India, however, my heart beats a little faster in Colombia.

When I am asked why I go to Colombia every year, I simply say, "I'm going home."

