



ARRANGEMENTS
ABROAD

Colombia's Arts, Traditions & Magical Realism

New Year's Aboard *AmaMelodia*

December 29, 2027 - January 4, 2028



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Mark the turn of the year on Colombia's **Magdalena River**, cruising round-trip from **Cartagena** aboard the recently launched **AmaMelodia**, one of the first two luxury ships built for this historic waterway. As the river carries you between the Caribbean coast and Colombia's interior, trace a corridor that moved gold, goods, and people for centuries and fed the imagination of **Gabriel García Márquez**.

In **San Basilio de Palenque**, the first free African town in the Americas, enter local homes for drumming and dance shaped by ancestral practice. In **Cartagena**, watch young performers train in Afro-Colombian movement at a pioneering arts school. Walk through Cartagena's Getsemaní neighborhood in the footsteps of García Márquez, and join naturalists and biologists for close looks at birdlife and rescued parrots and macaws.

Trip Highlights

Cruise aboard the recently launched 32-cabin **AmaMagdalena** and enjoy a festive New Year's celebration, dinner, and a vibrant performance of **cumbia**, Colombian folk music and dance with African, Indigenous, and Spanish roots.

Walk Cartagena's **Getsemaní** neighborhood on a guided literary tour tracing the life and inspirations of Nobel laureate **Gabriel García Márquez**.

Meet community hosts for a tour of **San Basilio de Palenque**, the first free African town in the Americas.

Join a private artisan workshop in **filigrana momposina**, crafting your own filigree piece alongside master silversmiths in Mompox, the city for which this technique was named.

Experience a guided look at the **Loros Foundation's** 1,300 acres of dry tropical rainforest, meeting biologists who rehabilitate rescued parrots and macaws.

Participate in one of the **optional early-morning naturalist-led birdwatching excursions** by small boat.

Go behind the scenes at a **pioneering Cartagena institution** that has given free arts education to vulnerable youth, watching young dancers trained in Afro-Colombian movement.



Map of the region

Activity Level:
Intermediate

Pace Level:
Moderato



Visit Arrangements Abroad's website for more information about Activity and Pace Levels at www.arrangementsabroad.com/faqs.

An optional prelude in Medellín will be offered, with dates, details, and pricing forthcoming.

Wednesday, December 29:

Cartagena, Colombia / Embark AmaMelodia (L,R,D)

Those arriving early in **Cartagena** will board *AmaMelodia* for a light lunch in the lounge before an optional guided afternoon tour of Cartagena's UNESCO-listed fortified historic center.

At the **Museo del Oro Zenú**, learn about the Zenú civilization that flourished here over 2,000 years ago. Continue to the 17th-century **Santuario de San Pedro Claver**, dedicated to the Jesuit missionary who spent 40 years caring for enslaved Africans brought through the port.

Enjoy an evening welcome reception with cocktails on deck as we sail at sunset through the sheltered harbor. Continue upriver with the city's twinkling lights astern before gathering for our welcome dinner on board.

Thursday, December 30:

San Basilio de Palenque / Calamar (B,L,D)

Meet community hosts for a special look at UNESCO-listed **San Basilio de Palenque**, the first free African town in the Americas. In 1603, Benkos Biohó, a Bantu king from present-day Guinea-Bissau, led escaped enslaved Africans to found this walled settlement; a Royal Decree in 1691 formally recognized its freedom.



Benkos Biohó statue, San Basilio de Palenque

Enter private residences, participate in traditional drumming and dance workshops rooted in centuries of transmitted memory, and learn about *Palenquero*, the only Spanish-based creole language spoken in South America.

After lunch, enjoy an optional Colombian coffee tasting led by an expert barista, featuring distinct regional varieties and an introduction to the bean-to-cup process.

Finally, ride through **Calamar**, a 19th-century riverside fishing town, by *bicitaxi* (cycle rickshaw), passing colonial-era architecture along narrow streets with a local guide. Return to the ship for dinner this evening.

Friday, December 31:

Boca de Tacaloa / Santa Cruz de Mompox (B,L,D)

At dawn, experience some of Colombia's rich biodiversity aboard a small excursion boat. On a naturalist-led birdwatching trip into **Boca de Tacaloa**, where the Magdalena's wetland channels narrow, keep watch for flamingos, toucans, scarlet ibis, and species endemic to this stretch of the river.

Enjoy lunch on board and take advantage of the ship's amenities as you continue cruising south, before arriving in **Santa Cruz de Mompox**, the UNESCO-listed town founded in 1537 as a Spanish gold depot. When the Magdalena shifted course in the mid-19th century, it bypassed Mompox entirely, freezing its 17th-century architecture in place.



Museo del Oro Zenú, Cartagena

This evening, enjoy a **festive New Year's Eve dinner on deck**. Later, drinks will be served as the group enjoys a vibrant onboard performance of **cumbia**, a Colombian folk music and dance tradition blending Indigenous, African, and Spanish elements. At midnight, raise a glass to ring in 2028.

Saturday, January 1:

Santa Cruz de Mompox

(B,L,D)

Enjoy a full day in **Santa Cruz de Mompox**, starting with a guided visit to the 17th- to 18th-century **Iglesia de Santa Bárbara**, whose distinctive octagonal bell tower and balcony make it the most recognized silhouette along the river.

At the **Cementerio Central**, see elaborate, blindingly white tombs that honor the town's luminaries, including pioneering Afro-Colombian poet Candelario Obeso.

Return to the ship for lunch before a **private artisan workshop in filigrana momposina**, the centuries-old silver filigree technique carried here via Hispano-Arabic metalsmithing traditions from the Mediterranean. Watch master silversmiths intertwine threads of silver without a solid backing, then craft your own piece to take home.

Later, stop at the **Casa de la Cultura** to see historical exhibits and archives, followed by a **guided tour of a private historical residence**. This evening, gather for dinner on board.



Colonial house, Santa Cruz de Mompox

Sunday, January 2:

Mahates / Loros Foundation (Villanueva) / Cartagena

(B,L,D)

From Mahates, travel to **Villanueva** for a visit to the **Loros Foundation**, which protects over 1,300 acres of tropical dry forest, the most endangered terrestrial ecosystem in Latin America. Join expert biologists to observe parrots, macaws, and parakeets rescued from illegal wildlife trafficking.

Then, **meet local artisans** from farming families who have partnered with the foundation. Learn how their sustainable craftwork creates economic alternatives to deforestation for rural communities.

After an afternoon cruising the river, arrive in Cartagena in time for sunset drinks on deck as the city comes into view. You may join an expert for an **optional tasting of Colombian chocolates paired with locally crafted rums**, learning the bean-to-bar and distillation processes. While docked in Cartagena this evening, gather for dinner aboard *AmaMelodia*.



Filigrana momposina workshop, Santa Cruz de Mompox



Parrot, Aviario Nacional de Colombia, Cartagena

Monday, January 3:

Cartagena

(B,L,D)

Guests have the choice between two morning excursions:

Morning Option 1: Take a guided walk through the **Aviario Nacional de Colombia**, one of Latin America's largest bird sanctuaries and home to over 190 species, including flamingos, toucans, scarlet ibis, and the harpy eagle.

Morning Option 2: Experience a guided introduction to a **pioneering arts institution**, where contemporary dance is used as a tool for social transformation.

Observe a rehearsal or informal performance rooted in Afro-Colombian music and movement, while learning about the organization's mission to empower young people—particularly young women—through discipline, creativity, and access to artistic education.

After lunch on board the ship, set out for a **guided walking tour of the Getsemaní neighborhood**, the working-class quarter whose street murals and colonial alleyways fed the imagination of Nobel laureate **Gabriel García Márquez**. Hear stories about his life and the specific locations that surface in his novels.

The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to explore the city at your own pace or relax and enjoy the amenities on board. This evening, celebrate the journey at a **festive farewell dinner** aboard *AmaMelodia*.

Tuesday, January 4:

Cartagena

(B)

Disembark this morning in Cartagena and transfer to the airport for your afternoon flight home.

An optional postlude in Bogotá will be offered, with dates, details, and pricing forthcoming.

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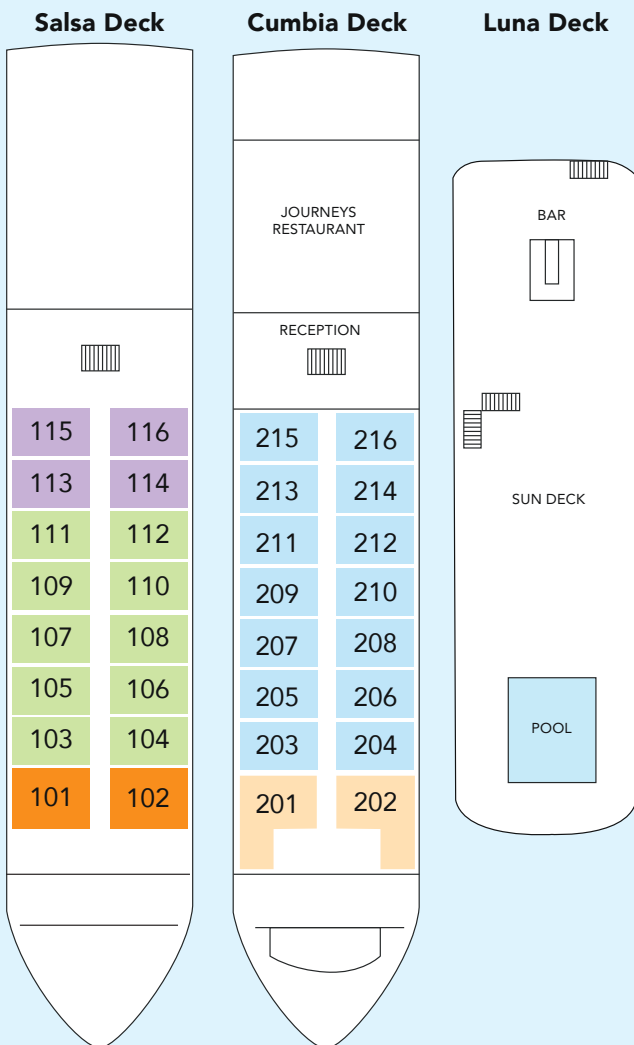
Front cover: Santa Cruz de Mompox



Cartagena

AmaMelodia

This newly designed luxury riverboat carries 32 cabins along Colombia's principal waterway, with twin-balcony staterooms providing panoramic views of riverside life. A sun deck pool and fitness room complement the main dining room, where chefs prepare regional Latin American dishes and various other Western cuisines. Dine outdoors in the evening as river towns and wetland forests drift past your table. Your French balcony and full outdoor balcony offer dual vantage points for observing daily life along South America's greatest river, from fishing villages to colonial ports.



Cruise Rates

Cabins	Decks	Double	Single
113-116	Salsa	\$TBD	\$TBD
Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.			
103-112	Salsa	\$TBD	\$TBD
Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.			
203-216	Cumbia	\$TBD	\$TBD
Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.			
101 & 102	Salsa	\$TBD	\$TBD
Junior Suites, Twin Balcony, 275 sq. ft.			
201 & 202	Cumbia	\$TBD	\$TBD
Luxury Suites, Twin Balcony, 306 sq. ft.			

Rates Include

- Six nights cabin accommodations aboard *AmaMelodia*
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner). Bottled water, soft drinks, juices, and coffee/tea with all meals; wine and beer with all meals aboard *AmaMelodia*
- Airport/pier/airport group transfers on arrival and departure dates
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
- Taxes, service, and portage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers; customary shipboard gratuities

NOT INCLUDED IN RATES: International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than what is noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; optional Medellin prelude; optional Bogotá postlude; airport transfers other than on arrival and departure dates with the group; excess baggage; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.



AmaMelodia