

*Croydon*  
TRAVEL

# COLOMBIA & PANAMA

**14 - 27 February, 2027**

**Cultural Immersion**

# FULLY HOSTED

BY JAMIE DAVISON  
FROM CROYDON TRAVEL.

# WELCOME

Next year marks two very special milestones: 55 years of Croydon Travel, and 30 years for me personally in the travel industry. It's been an incredible journey. To celebrate, I wanted to do something memorable.

What I love most about travel, and I know many of you do too, is discovering new places before the rest of the world catches on. I still remember my first trip to Cuba over 20 years ago. I went as an independent traveller, then returned later to host a Captain's Choice group. It remains one of my favourite travel memories—not just because of the destination, but because I was able to share it with clients who have become dear friends.

When it came time to plan our next Croydon Travel Hosted Tour, I spoke with people I trust, including my mentor Phil Asker. One destination kept coming up: Colombia.

And the timing couldn't be better. AmaWaterways, a trusted name in luxury river cruising, is launching its first-ever South American cruises on the Magdalena River. With brand new ships and strong ties to local communities, they're bringing their signature style and service to this remarkable destination.

This 14-day itinerary includes time in Medellín, a seven-night river cruise, and a post-cruise stay in Panama. It offers history, wildlife, music, food, and above all, genuine connection.

I know some of you may have concerns about Colombia's past. But those days are behind it. Everyone I've spoken to says it's now one of the most welcoming places in South America. The warmth of the Colombian people is something you will never forget.

This will be my first time in Colombia too, and I will be personally hosting the tour. I would love for you to join me as we explore this vibrant, beautiful country.

Let's discover it together.

Warm regards,



**Jamie Davison**  
Owner, Croydon Travel

# RIVER CRUISING ON THE MAGDALENA



## THE MAGDALENA

Described by novelist Gabriel García Márquez as the “River of Life,” there is perhaps no river that embraces diversity more than the Magdalena. Many explorers sailed along its northerly path, paving the way for trade and communication between the Andes and the Caribbean Sea – and in fact the river basin today is home to approximately 80% of Colombia’s population, a melting pot comprised of Indigenous, European and African ancestry. Spend a memorable 7 nights aboard the brand new *AmaMelodia* soaking up the local culture and exploring small villages along the banks of this majestic river.



## MEDELLIN & PANAMA CITY

This tour also includes a 3-night pre-cruise stay in Medellín, Colombia’s second largest city and a 3-night post-cruise visit to Panama City. In Medellín, you can explore the city’s dramatic transformation, tour vibrant neighbourhoods like Comuna 13, and savour world-class coffee. In Panama City, you will experience the cultural charm of the historic Casco Viejo, marvel at the engineering feat of the Panama Canal, and connect with indigenous traditions in Chagres National Park. Both stays include luxury accommodation, guided tours, and seamless transfers, creating a well-rounded, culturally-immersive adventure.



# Our Inclusions

*Barranquilla Carnival, Barranquilla, Colombia*

## KEY FEATURES

- Three nights of luxury accommodation in Medellín, Colombia (pre-cruise)
- Guided Medellín city and coffee regions tour with English-speaking local expert
- Seven-night all-inclusive luxury cruise on Colombia's Magdalena River
- Riverview staterooms with French and outside balconies
- Fine dining across multiple venues on board AmaMelodia with complimentary premium wine, beer, and soft drinks at lunch and dinner
- Daily Sip & Sail cocktail hour with complimentary drinks
- Up to five daily excursions to choose from: walking tours, village visits, dance & music experiences and more
- Wellness Program with classes led by a trained Wellness Host
- Distinctive onboard entertainment and cultural programs
- Experienced Cruise Manager and English-speaking staff throughout
- Three nights of luxury accommodation in Panama City (post-cruise)
- Guided tours of the Panama Canal, historic Old Town, and rainforest
- Enjoy complimentary bottled water replenished daily and free Wi-Fi access throughout the cruise.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover Medellín and Colombia's lush coffee region
- Experience the vibrant Carnival in Barranquilla
- Enjoy live Latin rhythms, from cumbia to vallenato
- Cruise the Magdalena River aboard the new luxury *AmaMelodia*
- Visit charming villages and colonial towns, including Mompox, Santa Barbara de Pinto, and the floating village of Nueva Venecia
- Spot rare wildlife and exotic birdlife unique to the region
- Explore Cartagena's Caribbean coastline and UNESCO-listed San Felipe Castle
- Witness the engineering marvel of the Panama Canal
- Journey through the stunning rainforest near Chagres National Park

## CROYDON TRAVEL BONUS INCLUSIONS

- Fully hosted by Jamie Davison from Croydon Travel
- Home to Airport return transfers
- Visas (if required)
- Local currency pack
- Gratuities and port charges

*With Croydon Travel, all your travel necessities are included for a seamless journey!*

# Tour Summary

## COLOMBIA AND PANAMA

14 Days / 14 - 27 February, 2027

**Day 1:** Medellín Hotel Check-in

**Day 2:** Medellín Medellín City Tour

**Day 3:** Medellín Full-Day Coffee Region Tour & Tasting

**Day 4:** Flight to Barranquilla  
EMBARKATION - Exclusive "Carnaval" Celebration

**Day 5:** Nueva Venecia Stilt-House Village Tour

**Day 6:** Santa Barbara de Pinto Walking Tour & Mompox Exclusive Jazz Street Performance

**Day 7:** Mompox Nature Experience or Historic Walking Tour with tuk tuk ride

**Day 8:** Mompox Scenic Cruising through the La Mojana Region, El Banco Walking Tour & Shoreside Dinner with Exclusive Cumbia Performance

**Day 9:** Magangue Birdwatching Tour OR Ciénaga Visit Scenic Cruising from Magangue to Calamar with Historic Tour by Paola (Rickshaw)

**Day 10:** Cartagena Walled City Tour Getsemaní Tour and San Felipe Castle & Sundown Cruise

**Day 11:** Cartagena DISEMBARKATION  
Panama Flight to Panama  
Old Town Panama

**Day 12:** Panama Full-Day Panama Canal

**Day 13:** Full Day Chagres National Park

**Day 14:** Panama Return flight home





## DAY 1 - ARRIVE IN MEDELLIN

Arrive in Medellín, Colombia's second largest city and one of South America's most dynamic destinations. Once known for its turbulent past, Medellín has redefined itself as a hub of innovation, resilience, and cultural vibrancy. In 2013, the Urban Land Institute named Medellín the most innovative city in the world, a testament to its remarkable transformation.



After a warm welcome, check into your centrally located hotel and enjoy time to unwind or begin soaking in the atmosphere of this vibrant Andean city. With its striking mountain setting, pleasant climate, and blend of colonial charm and modern flair, your first evening in Medellín sets the tone for an unforgettable journey ahead.





## DAY 2 - MEDELLIN CITY TOUR

Begin your day with a guided city tour that highlights Medellín's modern developments alongside its artistic and historic roots. From world-renowned sculptor Fernando Botero to emerging creatives showcased at places like Casa Galería, Medellín's art scene is as bold as it is inspiring.

Visit Comuna 13, once a setting of political corruption's influence on the city, the neighborhood is now a thriving symbol of hope and resilience. Glide up the hillside aboard the outdoor electric escalators, a creative public transport solution that transformed lives and explore the streets filled with vibrant murals, hip-hop music, street art, and community spirit.

This immersive day reveals how Medellín has embraced change, becoming a safer, more inclusive city that captivates travellers from around the globe.





## DAY 3 - COFFEE REGION TOUR & TASTING

The region's ideal climate and soil conditions, combined with the skill and passion of local farmers, make for a unique and delicious coffee experience, which you can learn about and enjoy during a guided excursion.

Before the majority of coffee farms moved south, the state of Antioquia was where coffee growth in Colombia first began, planting the seed of tradition and culture strongly in this region. The coffee beans grown in Medellín are known for their rich and complex flavour profiles, with notes of dark chocolate, caramel, and berries. This delightful coffee is also certified by organizations such as the Rainforest Alliance, which ensures that the coffee is grown sustainably and environmentally friendly. On your way back, ride a cable back into Medellín, taking in picturesque views of the city, that you will explore more closely tomorrow.

Although predominantly known for its coffee, the cuisine from Medellín is just as noteworthy. Hearty dishes such as chorizo, red beans, arepa, avocado, and plantains form the foundation of Colombia's food culture, though Medellín boasts a particularly cosmopolitan food scene.





## DAY 4 - BARRANQUILLA – EMBARKATION

Fly to the vibrant city of Barranquilla and settle into your stateroom in preparation for your unforgettable journey along the Magdalena River.

This evening, experience an exclusive Carnival celebration brought to life just for AmaWaterways guests, capturing the colour, rhythm and spirit of one of Colombia's most treasured traditions. Recognised by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, Barranquilla's Carnival is one of the country's most iconic cultural events.

You'll be immersed in the festivities as you embrace its joyful motto: *Quien lo vive, es quien lo goza* – Those who live it are those who enjoy it.





## DAY 5 - NUEVA VENECIA

Step into the charm of Colombia's Nueva Venecia "New Venice". A floating village nestled in the heart of the Ciénaga Grande. Accessible only by boat, this vibrant community is known for its colourful colonial houses, welcoming locals, and unique way of life on the water.

During your guided visit, you'll learn about the traditional fishing techniques passed down through generations, browse local crafts and artwork, and discover the village's commitment to preserving its natural sanctuary.

Sample regional delicacies and experience the authenticity, warmth, and resilience of a community that truly embodies Colombia's rich cultural tapestry.





## DAY 6 - SANTA BARBARA DE PINTO - MOMPOX

Spend your morning in Santa Barbara de Pinto, located on the banks of the Mompox arm of the Magdalena River.

Enjoy a walking tour through this traditional town, where you may see local landmarks such as the Santa Barbara Church and enjoy intricate handmade crafts created in the town. In the afternoon, arrive at the island town of Mompox, where you will be welcomed with open arms and lively music as local musicians treat you to an exclusive jazz performance.





## DAY 7 - MOMPOX

Today offers a choice of immersive experiences designed to showcase the natural beauty and colonial charm of this UNESCO World Heritage-listed town, nestled along the banks of the Magdalena River.

Start your day your way with either a Sunrise Nature Experience: Embark on a tranquil early-morning boat ride through the serene wetlands surrounding Mompox. As the sun rises, watch the landscape come alive with birdlife and gentle river scenes. An unforgettable start to the day.

Or you may prefer a morning Nature Experience: Enjoy a relaxed nature cruise through the lush Ciénaga de Pijiño region. Discover the region's rich biodiversity and the peaceful rhythms of life along the waterways.

This afternoon, enjoy leisure time to explore Mompox's cobblestone streets, artisan shops, or simply relax at your boutique hotel.



This evening enjoy either a Sunset Nature Experience: Glide through nearby lagoons and mangroves at golden hour, taking in vibrant skies mirrored on the peaceful waters.

Or an Historic Walking Tour with Tuk-Tuk Ride: Explore grand churches, artisan shops, and shaded plazas before a scenic tuk-tuk ride through its historic streets.

Both options reveal a unique side of this riverside gem—whether you're drawn to nature, history, or a bit of both.



## DAY 8 - CRUISING LA MOJANA REGION

This morning, we bid farewell to the colonial charm of Mompox and set off on a scenic cruise through the La Mojana region, one of the most picturesque stretches of the Magdalena River. As our vessel glides gently through this lush and biodiverse waterway, spend time on deck soaking in the tranquil rhythm of Colombia's riverine landscapes.



Along the way, delve into the fascinating cultural roots of cumbia, one of Colombia's most iconic musical and dance traditions. Born from the fusion of African, Indigenous, and European influences, cumbia began as a courtship ritual among enslaved Africans and gradually evolved to incorporate Indigenous flutes, European instruments, and graceful choreography. Today, it resonates as a global genre, especially beloved across the Andean regions of Colombia.



This evening, the spirit of cumbia comes to life during an exclusive onboard performance. Feel the infectious rhythm of the drums, the sway of the dancers, and the pulse of a culture deeply rooted in resistance, celebration, and community.





## DAY 9 - MAGANGUE - CALAMAR

Witness the sights, hear the bird calls, and watch the wildlife around you as we spend the beginning of the day docked near Magangué. Immerse yourself in the presence of Colombian nature on a guided birdwatching tour, offering a unique opportunity to observe rare and endemic species found only in this part of the country. This region is a haven for ornithologists and nature lovers alike, where wetlands and forests host a dazzling array of avian life. Keep your binoculars ready—you may spot the vibrant Northern Screamer or the elusive Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird.

Later in the day, we visit the riverside town of Calamar, located at the entrance of the historic Canal del Dique. Settled in 1840, Calamar's rich past is reflected in its preserved colonial architecture and riverside charm. Discover the town's highlights on a relaxing tour by paola, a traditional bicycle taxi for two, and stop to admire landmarks like the Iglesia de la Inmaculada Concepción. As you explore the quiet streets and welcoming plazas, enjoy an authentic glimpse into daily life along the Magdalena River.





## DAY 10 - CARTAGENA

Take the day to delight in the beautiful coastal city of Cartagena. Many Spaniards flocked to this strategic port when they heard tales of gold hidden in the tombs of Indigenous leaders, transforming it from a quiet outpost into a thriving colonial city. Its rich blend of Caribbean flair and Spanish heritage continues to captivate travellers today.

Start with a guided city tour, where you may encounter iconic landmarks such as the Catedral de Cartagena and the imposing stone ramparts built to protect the city from pirate raids. Wander through the charming Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where cobblestone streets, bougainvillea-draped balconies, and colonial mansions transport you back in time.

In the afternoon, visit the incredible UNESCO-designated Castillo San Felipe de Barajas, the massive fortress that stood firm against repeated French and British assaults and remains one of the most important military structures in South America.

Enjoy a walking tour through the vibrant Getsemaní neighbourhood, now a canvas for creativity and community spirit. Savour mouth watering local delicacies from street vendors and hidden cafés





## DAY 11 - CARTAGENA – PANAMA CITY

Disembark your ship and fly to Panama City, famous for the canal that separates North and South America. Start your Panama journey in Panama Casco Viejo, the site of the original Panama City. Located in the middle of skyscrapers, this charming UNESCO World Heritage Site still conserves its initial mystical flavor. Casco Viejo preserves the first institutions and buildings that laid the foundation for the Panama that we know today.



Explore the city walls that were built to protect the city from pirate attacks. Walk through Plaza de Francia, a beautiful public square that pays homage to France's role in building the iconic Panama Canal, and Plaza Carlos V, named for the most powerful monarch in Europe during the 16th century.



The stunning La Compañía architecture is prominent in this historic area of the city, showcased in breathtaking buildings such as the Catedral Basílica Santa María la Antigua de Panamá. Immerse yourself in the vivid colours of Casco Viejo, as you make your way to your hotel, where you will be staying during your time in this incredible city.





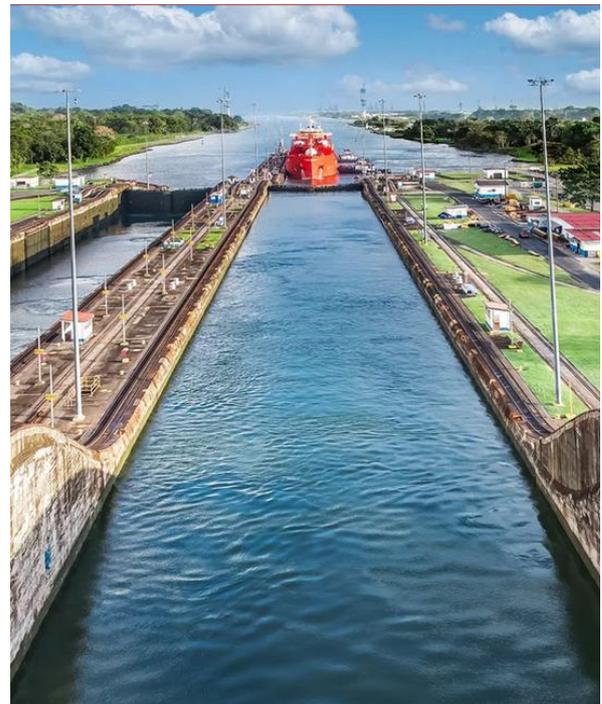
## DAY 12 - PANAMA CANAL

Discover one of the world's greatest engineering feats on this full-day excursion to the legendary Panama Canal. Officially opened in 1914 after more than three decades of arduous construction, the canal revolutionised global trade by dramatically shortening the voyage between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

Begin your journey at the historic Panama Canal Administration Building, where you'll learn about the vision and determination of Chief Engineer George W. Goethals and the canal's enduring impact on international commerce.

Then, embark on an intimate boat expedition across Gatun Lake, once the largest man-made lake in the world. As you glide through its calm waters, be on the lookout for the many species of tropical birds, monkeys, and other wildlife that thrive in this lush ecosystem.

After enjoying a delicious lunch featuring authentic regional cuisine at a scenic local resort, continue to the Miraflores Visitor Centre for a private, guided tour. Here, you'll delve deeper into the history, mechanics, and environmental significance of the canal.





## DAY 13 - CHAGRES NATIONAL PARK

Be dazzled by the breathtaking rainforest near Chagres National Park, taking in the spectacular scenery that surrounds you. Navigate Gatun Lake through this magical jungle before continuing to an Emberá village.

The Emberá people are an indigenous group in Panama, traditionally building their homes along riverbanks. They relocated to this area when Gatun Lake was created, finding a new home beside this vast body of water. Savour a traditional Emberá tasting experience that is sure to delight your palate. Immerse yourself in ritual dances, local music, handicrafts, and more as you connect with this vibrant and unique culture.

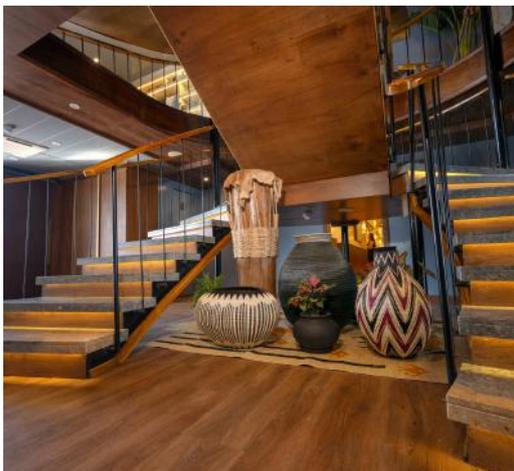


## DAY 14 - PANAMA

Bid a fond farewell to Panama as you reflect on the unforgettable experiences of your journey.

Prepare for your flight home, taking with you cherished memories of this vibrant and diverse country.





*AmaMelodia*  
**OVERVIEW**

Step aboard a world of unparalleled experiences and be warmly welcomed aboard the stunning new *AmaMelodia*, an intimate 60-passenger river cruise ship offering the luxury of space and sweeping views as you cruise Colombia's Magdalena River.

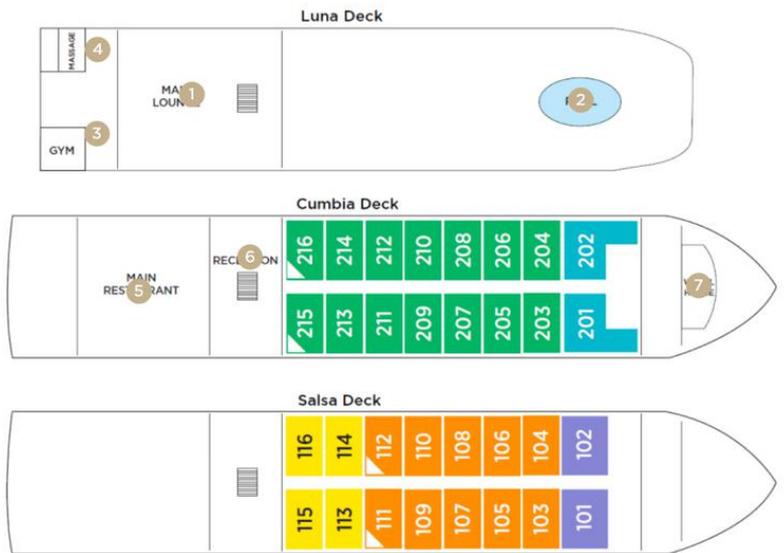
This beautiful ship features a rejuvenating whirlpool on the Sun Deck, a spacious fitness room, a Main Restaurant serving exquisite, regionally inspired Latin American cuisine and Western favourites.

Plus, you will rest your eyes each night in your amenity-filled stateroom, each featuring an outside balcony, from which you will wake up to a new view each day in one of Colombia's fascinating destinations.



# AmaMelodia DECK PLAN

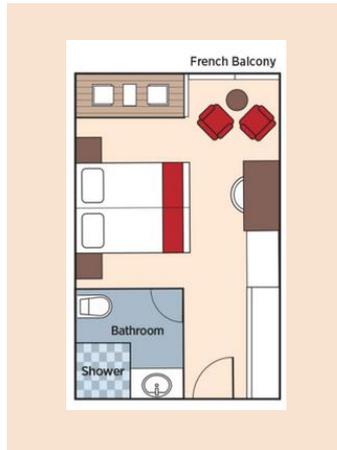
1	Main Lounge
2	Pool
3	Fitness Room
4	Massage Room
5	Main Restaurant
6	Reception
7	Wheel House



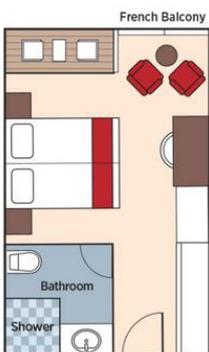
## Your Luxurious STATEROOM

### Category B - 237 sq. ft

Each stateroom includes a safe, mini-fridge, separate sitting area, desk, bathroom with shower, Entertainment-on-Demand and individually controlled air conditioning.



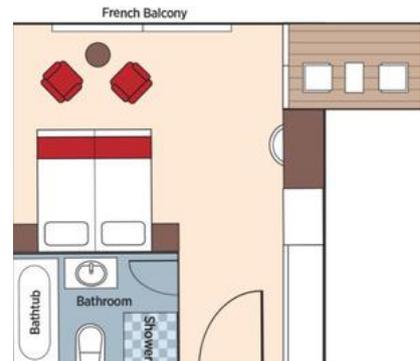
Upgrades to A Stateroom, Junior or Luxury Suites are available on request and subject to availability.



Category A - 237 sq. ft  
Cumbria Deck



Junior Suite - 275 sq. ft  
Salsa Deck



Luxury Suite - 306 sq. ft  
Cumbria Deck



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**Solo Traveller: \$25,499**

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The standard price includes a category B Stateroom with balcony.

Upgrades to category A Stateroom, Junior or Luxury Suites are available on request and subject to availability.

**Our package price covers many inclusions; however, the following items are not included:**

- International flights (indicative fares available; subject to change). Air New Zealand offers the most direct connections, with Qantas and other carriers also available.
- Travel insurance and vaccinations.
- Items of a personal nature, including laundry.
- Beverages during your land stays before and after the cruise.

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Refer a friend and you'll both receive a \$250 discount per person.

*Payment and cancellations terms:*

*First deposit: \$1,000 per person due within 7 days of booking (non-refundable)*

*Second deposit: \$3,000 per person due by 31 July 2026 (non-refundable)*

*Final balance due: 30 September 2026 — 100 % cancellation fees apply from this point*

*We strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance to protect against unforeseen circumstances.*

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PO Box 628, Croydon VIC 3136



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