





HAWAII'S BACKYARD
The Duke Kahanamoku Beach
Challenge brings together
community and culture >> G3

SIGNS OF HAWAIIAN LIFE $\sim G8$ LAS VEGAS ADVISOR $\sim G8$





An aerial view of Bogota, Colombia, shows the grand sweep of the city. Inset, brightly dressed Afro-Columbian fruit sellers add color to a street scene.

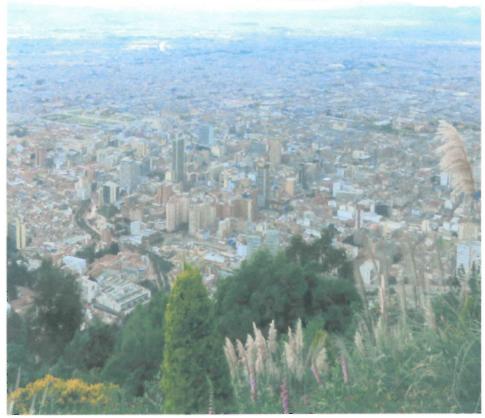
The country's cultural attractions, art and cuisine will take your breath away

Story and photographs by Julie L. Kessler

CMING OF A.E. in the mid-20s, raphly news emanating from Colombia made it an unlikely travel destination, given the peritors narcotics trade and from gwarders from the peritors narcotics trade and from gwarders' turn protection in the years since 1928, when "King of Cocame Pablo Escobar was killed, things have certainly changed it's true that the Revolutionary Armed Forces remain an enormous clome-step roblem. In the provinces, indigenous people are forcibly removed from their land without compensation, causing a displacement to cities ill-equipped to handle mass relocation. Nevertheless, Colombia, with its rich cultural history, excellent cuisine, hip art scere, incredible museums, natural beauty and overwhelmingly kind and hospitable people, make it a memorable and affordable destination with sometiming for everyone.

My travel partner George and Handed in Bogota at mom, and following a 15-minute cab inche wa rivel et al. Cardelaria, Bogota's historic center — where the vast majority of sights are — and checked into blotel Augusta. It's a modern yet charming thistory

Please see COLOMBIA G6





K-CLASS PASS FOR KAMAAINA



TRAVEL

COLOMBIA: Architecture and art scene are inspiring

IF YOU GO

COLOMBIA

COLOMBIA

house the massive collection of Botero's rotund subjects on canvas, and bronze sculptures. The museum also houses several paint-

scuptures. The Imiseum also houses several paint-ings by Dali, Chagall, Klimt Picasso and numerous oth masters. Attached to The Botero is the Museo Nus-

Botero is the Museo Nus-matica (Money Museum) if one is interested in money-making mechanics, and the Coleccion de Arte, which houses the collections of

several important South

American artists, including

an entire room devoted to

artist Aleiandro Obrevon's work inspired by political vi-

STAR-ADVERTISER

Continued from GI

hotel with quirky, colorful art in the lobby. After getting settled, we walked north to the base of Cerro (Hill) de Monserrate, where we took the cable car to the top for an unforgettable view of Bo gota, including, in the dis-lance, an enormous statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe

fance, an enormous statue of the Vingto of Ganzidappe. The sanctuary sits at 10.341 level above sea level Acy you start to account the few stairs to it and the surrounding park religious statues and sourvent knots just behand it, you definitely feed the allitude Despite being a five-day-per-week cardiogram at, rubber legs, some naises and breattlessness that didn't fit the exertion level prevailed. Since it was Sunday Mass was ongoing and we were treated to lovely chamber music. For a different vanisacy we took the innicular down. However, if you don't like heights, don't look down on the descent; it's Disney-kand Eticket steep. A twe-munite walk from Monserarte's base its la Quinta de Bolivar, Simon Beliar's residence from 1818 to 1828, and a good example of colonial activite cure of a colonial activite cure of an order of the colonial activite cure and funishings with surround-ine cardens.

furnishings with surrounding gardens

DINNER OPTIONS were DINNER OPTIONS were limited on a Stunday, but buckly a great place near our hetel was open. At El Sabor de Lupe, we had a delicious meal of "ajiaco" — tasty chucken and potato soup, fol-lowed by shredded chicken with mole sauce, seasoned tice, salad and fee-cold Colombian Poker heer Colombian Poker beer

Although we saw several beautiful churches, many in beautiful churches, many in teresting unisseums and his-toric plazas and architecturally significant buildings during our five daws in Bogota and sur-roundings. Ivo highlights were The Botero Museum and The Graffitt Tour, both of which are free. Fernando Botero, who turns S1 in April, donated

turns 84 in April, donated his private collection to the Banco del Republica, which built a gorgeous building to

The best way: Honolulu to Bogota, Bogota to Carta-The best way; Honolulu to Bogola, Bogola to Carla-gena, then Cartagena to Honolulu starts at \$1.174 round trip, with combined service on United LAN and Avanca. Round-trip Honolulu-to-Bogota service on Delta, American or US Airways starts at \$1.050. Telephones: The country code for Colombia is 57. City code for Bogota is 1; Cartagena is 5. Cellphone area codes are either 300, 310 or 315, depending on cattler.

area codes are either 300, 310 or 315, depending on carrier of Getting around: Taxis are plentiful and cheap in Bogota and Cartagena. Note that the dash meter is not the trip price, but a time distance calculation. At the destination, this number is reflected on a displayed government rate sheet. Tipping isn't enstoamy. Organized ours: Tours of Colombia has several excursions in Bogota as well as various day trips to the north to national parks and coffee plantations. For options and pricing see www toursefoolimbia com. The Graffin Tour meets claify at 10 a m. beside the poolmin at Parique de los Petrolistas Ci Carriera 3 and Calle 16, in La Candelaria). www.begotagrafitti.com

olence in Colombia. The Graffiti Tour is led by The Graffit Four is led by Colombian-born, Wisconsin-ralsed artist Ray Garcia and will forever after your view-point of graffit Togging this is not if 8 art. If 8 beautiful, descriptive, pointed and of-ten functional resentitiving decaying buildings with col-orbit, artistic fervor and of-ten social commentary. We spent two additional days walking through the historic district of La Cande-latia, and seep several top-

laria, and seeing several top-notch museums. Museo del Oro (gold), Museo de Esmer-alda (emeralds), Museo Santa Clara (flower nuns) Santa Clara (flower nuns) and impressive churches (San Francisco, La Calen-daria, La Tercera). Colombia (Sail Faickso, Let, Jain-daria, La Teivera). Colombia is also the world's largest ex-porter of top-quality emer-alds. Should Jewchy be in-your budget, the best qual-ity and prices were at the Emerald Trade Center on the third floor and work your was down! Negotiat-ing is expected and cash is king though credit cards are accepted.

Wanting to see other parts of Bogota, we took a

parts of Bogota, we took a 20-minute ride to Usaquen, once its own distinct pueblo. The charming church plaza was sur-

rounded by several trendy reasonarias, and nearby is a mall created from an old hacreada. Heading back to ward la Candelaria we stopped to stroll at Callede los Antiquarios cântique. Street) — because one never knows what one will find Our wallets infact, our taxindropped us in Macarena, a bobendian area with several awartegarde galeries, hip restaurants and bars. At the Velerzudek Reiner Gallery, we viewed a street film on Albanian artist Aunt Sala, higher dily Bogottis grafifit art. Sala leads the effort in Albania's capital. Trana, to paint building exteriors in bright colors, following years of political resolution.

ATTRACTED BY the northern provinces, we went on a full-day excursion with our terrific guide Juli-ana and driver Javier. After leaving Bogota, we drove through sogota, we move through verdant areas and vistas until we arrived at La-guna (Lake) de Guatavita. From there it's a 20-minute, fairly steep climb to the crater's top. At nearly 10,600-foot elevation w

were breathless, but the view is breathtaking. We stopped at Sol y Luna (Sun and Moon) in tiny esun and Moon) in tuny resiquie and find lunch of firsh-squieezed blackberry pince, spicy vegatable soup and gardie-glazed whiterish that was both delicrons and so fresh, it was certainly swimming just hours before Dirwing on, we stopped for coffee in sleepy Nemecon, a pocket-size colonial-era pueblo. Thirty minutes later we arrived a "Zapaquina". Catedral de Sal (Salt Cathe-dral), where, carved from Haltie deposits in a salt mine 600 feet underground, less an engineering feat; a mas-sive cathedral, including 12 stations of the cross lit with changing colors, covering 25 acres on three levels. Sesquile and had lunch of 25 acres on three levels.

Leaving Bogota, we took a one-hour flight to Cartagena. a coastal city founded in 1533 by Pedro de Heredia Ten minutes after we landed, we were at Casa

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9-Day Japan 101 8-Day Taiwan Round Island To

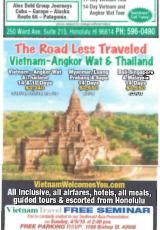
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The cable car to Cerro de Monserrate in Bogota offers spectacular views and a workout even for the most physically fit.

Bustamante, an old hacienda with large rooms and a small refreshing pool, just outsaic the wall of the Cen-tro historico (Old City). The Old City, enclosed by a mas-sive stone wall, is the origi-nal Spanish settlement. The city was pillered several times throughout history, in-cluding in 1508, by priva-teer Sir Francis Drake In 1981, UNESCO named Carta-genia World Heritage Site Cartageria also gamed noto-Cartageria also gamed notoenda with large rooms and a Cartagena also gained noto-riety from the movie "Romancing the Stone." (The movie was actually filmed in

Part of the fun of the Old Part of the fun of the Old City is meandeding about, getting bost, seeing churches, admining colorful, colonial architecture and their stopping for a fresh-spincezed pince or ice-cold best. Street names are rarely used, instead you gain per-spective by going from one many plaza (Bolivar, Santa Domings, San Diego) to an-other.

other. We spent three days walking around pleasurably (or rather getting lost in) the took the hoat to Playa and meanly Getses man, seeing several churches, the San Felipe Fort and Casa Museo Rabad Nunez, home of four-time cloomains President Raphael Nunez (who was born and died in Cartageria). Nunez also wrote several verses of Colombias is not another and its constitution. The intiseum is enclective of traditional epidementy Cartagena architecture and contains.

Amazou. Inspired by Cartageria. Gabriel Garcia Marquez so aptly wrote in "One Hundred Years of Solitude," "There is always something left to ture and contains memorabilia of a life politi-cally lived

We sampled inspired yet We sampled usprued yet inexpensive Caribbean seatood cuisine and, at La Licciola, the best mojitos this side of Havana We also enjoyed fresh fruit from street vendors, and far too many pastries and "arejas" (gilled cheese paircakes) from the dozens of bakeries and carts that abound with intoxicating aromas.

intoxicating aromas. Willing to try something different, we went to the thermal mud baths at Vol-can de Lodo el Totumo. Just 45 minutes north of Cartagena, Totumo spews tepid, bubbling liquid clay. It was like swimming in unsinkable warm glue, only therapeutic

AFTER EIGHT DANS of Colombian travel, it was time to rest. We took a, its number boat rule to Hotel del Eincarto on Earn Iskand, where we passed the day, reading and relaxing in a hammock and symming the warm Caribbean. A rest seedood hinch made it per-fect. However, it was not eneugh, our final day, we took the boat to Flaya Blanca, also on Barti, where the turquoise waters and AFTER FIGHT DAYS of

always something left to love." Indeed

IF YOU GO ...

COLOMBIA

WHERE TO STAY:

WHERE TO STAY:
In Bogota, Hotel Augusta,
Avenuda Junenez No. 4-77.
Cardelama-Centro Histo-rico, H00010, Bogota, Tele-phone of H-57-1-283-300.
Junior sutte including toxes and buffet breakfast, free Wi-Fi: 880 per might for two For more information visit www.hotelaugusta.com.co. in Cartageraa, Casa Busta-

In Cartagena, Casa Busta-mante, Carrera 2, 42-67, El Cabrero, Cartagena, Bolivar, 130002, Telephone 011-57-5-643-7485. Large room with balcony including taxes, breakfast, free Wi-Fi, \$134 per night for two. For more information visit www.casa bustamante.com.co.

WHERE TO EAT:

WHERE TO EAT:
Bogota:
El Sabor de Lupe. Avenida
Junenez No. 4-29. Candelaria
(next to Hotel Augusta) Dinuer tor two including Poker
beer. \$21.
Restaurant Dorde Martha. Calle del Provocto \$53.
Candelaria (mear Pasaje Rivas). Complete lunch for
two including soup and

two including soup and fresh juice, \$8

Restaurant Sanaleio Avenida Jimenez No. 3-73, Candelaria. Telephone: 011-57-1-334-6171. Dinner for two, including wine, \$50.

Sol y Luna, middle of the

Soly Luna, middle of the town's only read, Full lunch (fresh fish, chicken or beef) including salad, marvelous homemade soup and fresh squeezed juice, \$7 for two. Cartagena. La Cevicheria, Calle, 39, No. 7-H (at Calle Stuart), Plaza San Diego, Centro Hi-storico Dumer of two large plates of fresh ceviche served with guacamole, court tortillas and assorted corn tortillas and assorted garnishes, and mojitos, \$46. La Licciola Restaurant and Bar, Corner of Calle 30 and Carerra 9, Getsemani

(kitty corner to Cafe Havana). Excellent mojitos, just \$3 between 5:30 and

just \$3 between 5.20 and 8 p.m., \$4 after, and deli-cious Italian-style, home-made pitzas and pastas. Dinner for two, \$20. La Mulata, Calle del Quero 58, Calle 3, Centro Historico, Authentic Afro-Caribbean food in rooms filled with local art. \$20 for box.

LEAVE AT HOME:

itigh heels, strappy san-dals, rubber slippers and flashy jewelry. The historic areas of both Bogota and Cartagena have gigantic potholes every few feet, of-ten the size of boot boxes. ten the size of boot boxes. This requires you to con-stantly keep one eye down and one on the horizon. The cobblestones streets and pathways are uneven, so countertable, rubber-soled walking shoes are best. There is also an enormous problem of manhole own thet flor the copper's resale valued, and six months ago a Colombian toddler tell into an uncovered manhole and was swept away and was swept away and and was swept away and died. The government has started replacing copper manhole covers with plastic

DON'T FORGET:

DON'T FORGET:
Bogota is mear the equator and is at high elevation.
The weather can have a 2025-degree differential between day and evening,
thus layering is key. There
are often afternoon showers, so take a travel umbrella.

TO LEARN MORE:

Consulate General of Colombia, \$383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 420, Beverly Hills, CA 90211, Tel. 323-653-

It's easy to get lost wandering around Cartagena s Old Town and nearby Getsc-mani, where street names are rarely us A dominant sight is San Felipe Fort, left, built by the Spanish colony powers in 1536 to defend the city from enemies approaching by land or sea.





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