

BERGDORF GOODMAN



SPRING
Collections
2015

BG on Location



1 Plaza Santa Teresa's brightly colored buildings and cobblestone streets. 2 The colonial boutique hotel Casa San Agustín. 3 Local produce vendors line the streets. 4 The Sofitel Santa Clara, originally a seventeenth-century convent.



CARTAGENA, Here We Come

ESCAPE TO THIS COLOMBIAN PARADISE WITH *Nausheen Shah's* GUIDE TO ITS MOST VIBRANT ATTRACTIONS.

It's the color that captures your attention first. Cartagena's washed-out yet striking facades coated in cerulean blues, Creamsicle oranges and citrus yellows and dashed with fiery fuchsia bougainvillea focus your gaze down the Old City's mazelike cobblestone streets. Next your eyes take in the captivating seventeenth-century colonial architecture of the fortified UNESCO World Heritage site, carving through the crystalline blue Colombian skies. Nearly every building's door is studded with a slithering aquatic knocker. It's almost as if you stepped into Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Then you turn a corner, stumble upon vibrant, ruffle-adorned Cartagenans, either peddling delectable pineapples or salsa-ing to the ringing notes of Latin-Caribbean beats. Then comes the inevitable question: "Why have I never been here before?"

Cartagena, named after its Iberian forebear, provides an enticing mix of culture, cuisine and climate. And as it is only a four-and-a-half-

hour direct flight from New York City, it's no wonder the port town has become a magnet for jet-setters—with its fresh-off-the-boat ceviche, luxuriously diverse accommodations and contagious salsa clubs. Jimmy Buffet said it best when he sang "I Want to Go Back to Cartagena," because once you arrive, it is a full-on Latin love affair.

Stay

The town's hotel scene has had a recent facelift, and by 2016, Sheraton, Four Seasons and Viceroy hotels will join an already fabulous list of places to stay. Originally a seventeenth-century convent, **SOFITEL SANTA CLARA** is arguably the pinnacle of the brand's hotels in the world. Its courtyard and seemingly infinite arches demand your attention, as does its SoSpa and Restaurante 1621 featuring a Fernando Botero sculpture.

Otherwise, opt for a boutique hotel such as **CASA SAN AGUSTIN**, a lush colonial spot with an equally seductive restaurant, Alma, or the



TCHERASSI HOTEL + SPA, whose white-clad, modern layout features fashion designer Silvia Tcherassi's clothing boutique. If sybaritic privacy is what you seek, reserve one of many opulent villas, such as **CASA DEL HOBO**. (Sofitel Santa Clara: Calle del Torno 39-29, 800 763 4835, sofitel.com; Casa San Agustín: Calle de la Universidad No. 36-44, 800 745 8883, botelcasasanagustin.com; Tcherassi Hotel + Spa: Calle Plaza Fernández de Madrid, Calle 38 # 6-21, 57 5 664 4445, tcherassihotels.com; Casa del Hobo: Calle Cuchera de Hobo No. 38-73, 57 310 631 2923)

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Eat

In addition to the Old City, Cartagena's Boca-grande, Getsemani and San Diego neighborhoods offer multicultural flavors fit for even the most discerning foodie, but to many, **LA VITROLA** reigns supreme. The Old Havana-inspired restaurant serves up freshly caught seafood, spotlighted by our favorite, filete de mero Vitrola, a sea bass drizzled in a sweet chili sauce mixed with cherry tomatoes, mushrooms and basil.

We also recommend indulging in chef Juan Felipe Camacho's grilled octopus dishes at either of his **DONJUÁN** or **MARIA** restaurants or the cashew shrimp with crispy rice at award-winning chef **HARRY SASSON**'s recently opened namesake restaurant. Otherwise, lunch on daily catches with the locals at **CLUB DE PESCA** while overlooking the waterfront.

(*La Vitrola: Calle Balco No. 33-201, 57 5 660 0711; Donjuán/Maria: Calle del Colegio # 34-60 Local 1, 57 5 664 3857, donjuancartagena.com; Harry Sasson: Centro Plaza de Santa Teresa, 57 5 664 9494, harysason.com; Club de Pesca: Manga, Fuerte de San Sebastián del Pastelillo, 57 5 660 4594, clubdepesca.com*)

Drink

Whether you're sipping rum in a local bodega or moving to the sultry sounds of Colombian beats, Cartagena's nightlife is intoxicating. For starters, check out the bustling restaurant bars of **DEMENTE** and **FRANK & FRANK** or the town's oldest salsa spot, **QUIEBRA-CANTO**. For those looking for a stylish scene, head to **LA MOVIDA**, with its international DJs and chic local crowd. But the spot that truly embodies the spirit of the city is salsa haven **CAFÉ HAVANA**, where a live band plays into the wee hours.



BG DISPATCHES

THE BERGDORF GOODMAN CREATIVE TEAM TRAVELED TO CARTAGENA TO SHOOT TWO STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE (BEGINNING ON PAGE 108 AND PAGE 122)

WATCH A VIDEO OF CARTAGENA'S MANY PLEASURES ON **5th+8th**

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1 The Rosario Islands are a short lancha ride away. 2 Outside **La Vitrola**, a restaurant inspired by Old Havana. 3 **Casa Chiqui** sells home furnishings from local artisans.

(*Demente: Carrera 10 # 29-29, 57 317 441 1037; Frank & Frank: Calle del Colegio #34-25, 57 5 668 6124; Quiebra-Canto: Calle 24, Media Lana 8B #25-100, 57 5 664 1372; La Movida: Calle Balco No. 2-14, 57 5 660 6126, lamovidaando@gmail.com; Café Havana: Esquina*

Day Trip

It's just a forty-five-minute lancha ride to the archipelago of the Rosario Islands, with its pristine crystal-clear water and intact ecosystem. While a day trip and lunch at **HOTEL SAN PEDRO DE MAJAGUA** would suffice, the ultimate escape would include an evening at the neighboring beaches of **AGUA BARÚ**. This resort of luxury bungalows is one of the best-kept secrets in town and requires a reservation well in advance for its three villas. (*Hotel San Pedro de Majagua: Isle Grande, Corales del Rosario and San Bernardo Natural Park, 57 5 650 4460, hotelmajagua.com; Agua Barú: Isla Barú, Bahía de Cebalón, 855 272 1122, aguabarú.com*)

Do

The Cartagena art scene is burgeoning, thanks to artists such as Fernando Botero, whose voluptuous sculptures are sprinkled around town, and many museums are filled with exhibits bridging the Spanish Inquisition to contemporary art. At the top of our list is **NH GALERIA**. Nohra Haime opened her New York venue in 1981 and in 2011 opened a South American outpost to give art collectors an authentic way of obtaining Latin American artworks. Top offerings include Ruby Rumié's multi-silhouetted squares and Olga de Amaral's gilded tapestries. (*NH Galeria: Carrera 2 No. 33-36, 57 5 664 0561, nhgaleria.com*)



Shop

Don't let the entreaties of emerald dealers distract you, as other gems lie nearby, such as **CASA CHIQUI**, named after its vivacious owner, who sells a variety of sophisticated home furnishings as well as basket-woven, pompom-adorned beach totes and accessories impeccably crafted by local artisans. Just off Santo Domingo Plaza, **ST DOM** boutique curates the best of up-and-coming Colombian designers—perfect for those looking for something more original, such as Andrea Landa's crocheted leather cover-ups. (*Casa Chiqui: Calle de la Universidad # 36-127, 57 5 668 5429, casachiqui.com; St Dom: Calle Santo Domingo 33-70, 57 5 664 0197*)