

CULTURE BOXES

COLOMBIA



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To learn more about the sponsor organizations, see their respective websites:

- [Latin American & Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico](#)
- [Instituto Cervantes of Albuquerque](#)
- [National Hispanic Cultural Center](#)
- [Spanish Resource Center of Albuquerque](#)

SOUTH AMERICA



COLOMBIA



INTRODUCCION

INTRODUCTION

Any attempt to box in a country's culture is necessarily problematic. Colombia is no exception, and for many years, the country has been subjected to just that. In contemporary times, discussions of Colombia have been largely dominated by la Violencia, promulgating images of drug trafficking and violent paramilitary and guerrilla groups. The history of the conflict in Colombia does provide a necessary context to many of the current issues in the country. The clash between right-wing and leftist groups provides background into current Colombian politics, and the mass displacement that occurred as a result helps guide one's understanding of many of the social issues that exist within the country today. Yet, it in no way fully encompasses the incredibly diverse nation that is Colombia, a country that contains an expansive coast, desert, and mountains, more than 80 languages, and even more dialects, festivals that celebrate everything from flowers to salsa dancing, and a diverse population comprised of a multitude of ethnicities and races.

Consideration of Colombia thus requires moving beyond the nation's political and historical status, and towards an understanding of the many facets of Colombian life, from the food to the music. The goal of this culture box is to provide resources for approaching Colombia in a multifaceted, multidisciplinary way. Within this box, students and educators will find the tools to explore the nation's geography, its major political conflict, the racial and ethnic dimensions, the expansive indigenous history, the impressive literary and linguistic development, the often untold history of the Afro-Colombians and their painful history of slavery, the development of vallenato and cumbia music, as well as many other themes of Colombian life. Essentially, the literal box presented here functions as a tool to promote a discussion of Colombia that dismantles the box the country's national identity was placed in for so many years.

OBJETOS ITEMS

Reference Items

Artifacts

Music & Instruments

Films

Books

COLOMBIAN FLAG



DESCRIPTION

This item is a Colombian flag.

The Colombian flag is based on the older flag of Gran Colombia, which included the territories of what is now Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama and parts of Peru and Brazil. When the South American republic broke up in 1830, Colombia's flag retained Gran Colombia's color scheme. The flag is designed with three horizontal bands of yellow (double-width), blue, and red. When flying the flag, the yellow band should be at the top. Yellow represents the gold in Colombia's land; the blue its seas; and the red band represents the blood spilled in attaining freedom.

The colors have also been described as symbolizing more abstract concepts, with yellow a symbol of sovereignty and justice; blue, loyalty and vigilance; and red, valor and generosity.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Flag of Colombia](#)
- [National Geographic and Colombia Facts](#)

BROCHURES/MAPS



DESCRIPTION

This is a four piece collection of tourist maps and brochures.

There are four brochures in this set, all written in Spanish. First, a small pamphlet on the Museo del Oro in Bogotá unfolds to display intricate artifacts of the pre-Hispanic societies of Colombia. Some of the museum’s artifacts, like funeral regalia, date back 1500 years to the early farmers of the Nariño High Plains.

Second, a brochure on Bogotá shows the city’s cathedrals, popular recreation spots, concert halls, and its Centro Histórico.

Third and Fourth are a map and brochure of the city of Popayán—the capital of the Colombian department of Cuaca. Popayán is known as “la ciudad blanca” after the color of its colonial buildings. The brochure highlights Popayán’s sights and attractions including its colonial museums, ecotourism zones and religious festivals.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Visit the [Museo del Oro online](#)

WALL MAP



DESCRIPTION

This is a large (3'x4') laminated wall map of the political boundaries of Colombia.

Colombia is a northern South American country. The Caribbean Sea and North Pacific Ocean border the country to the north; Ecuador and Peru to the west; Brazil to the south; and Venezuela to the east.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [CIA World Factbook](#)
- [Travel in Colombia \(in Spanish\)](#)

PHOTOGRAPHY ALBUM



DESCRIPTION

This item is a binder collection of photos taken in Colombia. Each photograph is unlabeled, but can be identified by a number that corresponds to more information on a citation page. The photos are selected so as to encourage divergent, reflective conversations among students about the many ways to interpret a given country's natural, physical, and social resources.

ADVERTISEMENT PANAMERICANA



DESCRIPTION

This item is a colorful advertisement for Colombia's Panamericana stationary/bookstore.

On the back page of the advertisement, the silhouette of William Shakespeare proclaims: “Leer o no leer, he ahí la pregunta” (To read or not to read, that is the question). Colombia's literacy rate is just over 90% and the bookstore certainly caters to readers of all ages. Some of the items advertised include children's books, dream dictionaries, books on architecture and design, cookbooks, classics (in Spanish) like Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Heidi (and even an augmented reality book based on the American movie, “Ice Age”). Also advertised are books by Colombian authors, like El Libro Mágico de Pombo, one of the most popular fiction books in the country.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Information on the government's [National Literacy Program \(Spanish\)](#)
- [A brief history of Colombian literature](#)

ALPARGATAS



DESCRIPTION

This item is a pair of small sandal-shoes, called alpargatas.

Alpargatas are rustic shoes, typically made of “fique” (a form of straw, like thick burlap). Alpargatas are worn throughout rural Colombia and are often more decorated than those in the culture box. Sometimes they are trimmed in black thread, with fancy heel straps.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- For a history of alpargatas throughout Latin America, see [Taringa!: La Alpargata \(Spanish\)](#) or [Don Quijote: Espadrilles ‘Alpargatas’ \(English\)](#)

BROCHURE: CATEDRAL DE SAL



DESCRIPTION

This is a brochure for the Catedral de Sal in Zipaquirá, Colombia.

The Catedral de Sal in Zipaquirá is a 2500 year old halite mine that has been converted into an underground church 180 meters below the earth's surface. Many Colombians come to the cathedral on Sundays and during la Semana Santa (holy week) to worship before the massive cathedral found below, and participate in the various Stations of the Cross. Tourist attractions at the Cathedral also include a history of the salt mine, the opportunity to mine salt, a light show, and several museums.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Colombian government's [website](http://www.catedraldesal.gov.co) for the Catedral de Sal (Spanish)

BROCHURE: FUNDACIÓN GILBERTO ALZATE AVENDAÑO



DESCRIPTION

This is a brochure for the Gilberto Alzate Avendaño foundation of the arts in Bogotá, Colombia.

Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño (FUGA) is a well-known promoter of the arts in Colombia. This brochure unfolds into a daily calendar that features a sampling of the creation, experimentation and display of art, science, and theatre that is housed in FUGA's exhibition halls in Bogotá. On Friday June 1, 2012, for instance, Bogotá "Automatic Lovers," an electronic music band (<http://www.reverbnation.com/automaticlovers>) performed some of their smash hits. On Sunday June 17, 2012, Afrocolombia Yambamó presented "El duende africano," which combines games, songs and dance in a popular children's play. Numerous other events are noted in the brochure, and it's a neat activity to see what types of plays, concerts, and exhibitions are being performed at FUGA.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Website for the Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño](#)

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SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Website for the Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño](#)
- Websites for [Patricia Moncayo](#), [Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto](#)

BROCHURE: GUÍA HOTELERA



DESCRIPTION

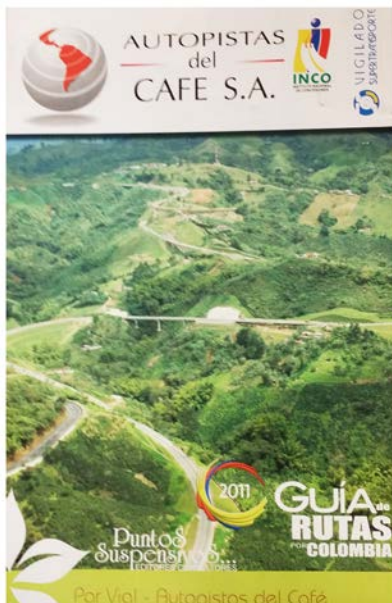
This is a touristic brochure of places in Colombia, advertised by Aero Republica, a local airline.

The pages are loose in this brochure and it should be handled with care. This guide was likely taken from the local airline and is meant to assist tourists in finding places to stay. The brochure is keyed to denote accommodations for guests, including food, entertainment, bars, wi-fi, swimming pools, security, ping pong tables, etc... The entire brochure is in Spanish.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Colombian government's [Official Travel Guide](#)
- [Website](#) for Aero República (now Copa Airlines)

BROCHURE: LA ZONA CAFETERA



DESCRIPTION

This is a brochure on the Colombian region of la Zona Cafetera.

Zona Cafetera constitutes 1% of Colombia's total area, yet nearly half of the country's coffee crop is harvested in the region. Zona Cafetera is a popular tourist attraction not only due to its exceptional coffee, but also its beautiful combination of lush green valleys and snow-capped peaks.

The Colombian coffee regions are some of the world's most biodiverse areas; however, due to the high coffee production, deforestation and soil/water contamination, resulting from pesticide use on coffee plantations are major threats to the ecosystem of this region of Colombia.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Check out [Equal Exchange: History of Coffee in Colombia](#)

CARRIEL ANTIOQUEÑO



DESCRIPTION

This is a “briefcase” traditionally used by peasants in Antioquia and the eje cafetero.

The Carriel Antioqueño (known locally as a “guarniel”) is an adaptation of a traditional Spanish saddle bag, used to carry anything that the wearer—generally a man—wishes. The carriel has become the widely-renowned, cultural symbol of the Antioquia region, particularly in the city of Jericó. The actual size is similar to a medium-sized purse and the carriel typically contains various compartments. While the originals were made from Ocelot hide, a modern carriel is likely made of horsehair and leather. Nowadays, carriels are extremely expensive and sold primarily to tourists.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Check out [How It's Made \(Spanish\)](#)

COFFEE BEANS



DESCRIPTION

This is a plastic bag of Colombian coffee beans.

Colombian coffee is produced in what is called “el eje cafetero” of “la zona cafetera,” which comprises three states (or “departamentos”) in the northwest part of the country. Such states are Quindío, Risaralda and Caldas.

The coffee farms in these regions produce some of the highest amounts of coffee in the world, exceeded only by Brazil and Vietnam. The fictional, charismatic Juan Valdez has popularized Colombia’s arabica beans around the world. But the history of Colombian coffee is much like the history of coffee in other Latin American countries. Export coffee agriculture has historically relied upon a large-scale latifundo system that results in striking disparities between the rich and the poor, as well as miserable conditions for coffee workers. While many artisanal coffee farms continue to utilize traditional production practices, large-scale production sites have become the norm, and deforestation and soil/water contamination are serious problems in Colombia today.

See also, La Zona Cafetera, in the culture box.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [The Coffee Crisis in Colombia](#)
- History of [Coffee in Colombia](#)

CONSUMABLES PACKAGING



DESCRIPTION

This is a set of packaging materials for food products commonly purchased and consumed in Colombia.

Cereal is a common breakfast food in Colombia, just like in the US. You may recognize the brand names on these cereal boxes: Kellogg's and Nestle. The smaller Knorr boxes contain bouillon cubes, a form of broth that is commonly used in rice and various soups. The milk comes from a Colombian company called Leche Alpina, founded by Swiss entrepreneurs in 1945. The milk is now exported to the United States, as well. These items are examples of the globalization of food and culture.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Alpina Colombia's website \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Alpina United States' website](#)
- [Knorr Colombia \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Nestle Global](#)
- [Kellogg's website](#)

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE FOR BOGOTÁ



DESCRIPTION

This is an entertainment guide for Bogotá.

This guide is written in Spanish and includes sections on art, literature, music, movies, shops and other places to visit in Bogotá. The guide may be used for Spanish language practice.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Online version of the Guia del Ocio](#)
- Article: ["Bogotá's Growing Arts Scene"](#)

HANDCRAFTED DOLL (FEMALE)



DESCRIPTION

This is a handcrafted doll, demonstrating a typical female outfit in Colombia.

Women in Colombia traditionally wear a wide skirt, blouse with a ruffle, and alpargatas—or rustic shoes made of thick straw fique (a natural fiber that grows in the Andean regions). Note, of course, that Colombian clothing will differ regionally and culturally. For example, Afro-Colombian women have increasingly turned to tight, braided hairstyles both to look pretty and to pay tribute to their ancestors. One Colombian woman has pointed out:

It's a movement not to forget what our ancestors brought with them when they came over. It's a movement to honor them. People are braiding their hair and wearing headpieces and more traditional dress to honor their ancestors. People dress in African tunics and headpieces. We are keeping that tradition alive. [Source: Washington Post: ["Afro-Colombian Women Braid Messages of Freedom in Hairstyles"](#)].

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- For a step-by-step guide to backstrap weaving, visit the [University of Tennessee's webpage on Backstrap Weaving in Jacaltenango](#)
- [You Tube Demonstration of backstrap weaving method](#)

HANDCRAFTED DOLL (MALE)



DESCRIPTION

This is a handcrafted doll, demonstrating a typical male outfit in Colombia.

Men in Colombia traditionally wear long pants (generally white), a shirt, a hat and alpargatas—or rustic shoes made of thick straw fique. This outfit is especially common in folk dances, such as “bambuco” and “pasillo,” which are typical of Colombia’s central region. Note, of course, that Colombian clothing will differ regionally and culturally. For example, an Afro-Colombian fisherman would likely wear white pants rolled to the knee, a collared shirt, woven hat, sandals, and a large, woven sisal bag.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples](#)

MOCHILA (MINIATURE)



DESCRIPTION

This item is a small woven bag with a drawstring.

The Arhuaca mochila (or tutu iku) is a type of purse made by the Arhuaca people of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Mountains, near the Caribbean coast. These bags have great cultural importance—said to represent an extension of the mother’s womb—and have become popular tourist items (with designer models featured in *Seventeen Magazine*). The bag in the culture box is a small type, used for carrying personal belongings (a chige kwanu).

Much controversy has surrounded the commercial production of the mochila. Recently, the bag has been mass produced and sold at incredibly low prices. As a result, a craft that is incredibly valued and significant for the Arhuaca people is exploited for commercial gain, while leaving those who spend, often times weeks weaving the bags, to compete with the low prices of the large-scale company.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Los archuacos y los 500 años \(YouTube video in Spanish\)](#)

PAINTINGS (MINIATURE)



DESCRIPTION

These are small, postcard-sized paintings.

These are replica prints of paintings by the renowned Antioquian figurative artist, Fernando Botero. Botero's world-famous style, "Boterismo," is known for depicting exaggerated and robust characters and objects. In Botero's own words: "I create my subjects somehow visualizing them in my style. I start as a poet, put the colors and composition down on canvas as a painter, but finish my work as a sculptor taking delight in caressing the forms."

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Fernando Botero's work on The Art Reference Blog](#)

POSTCARDS



DESCRIPTION

These are a series of eleven postcards brought from Colombia.

These postcards are all from different areas of Colombia:

1. Chiva bus (Silvia, Cauca): Chivas are colorfully painted buses. Some, like the bus on the postcard, are for transport. Others have become party buses that roll through Medellin, blasting music.
2. Panorama de la ciudad (Cartagena): This is the skyline of Colombia's fifth-largest city.
3. Café de Colombia: This is a photo of coffee plantations, likely in the Northwest region of the country.
4. Colombia Maravillosa: There are six scenes on this postcard: (1) Silleteros de Medellin, (2) Monumento a los lanceros, (3) Parque del café en el Quindío, (4) Yaguas en el Amazonas, (5) Atardecer en Bogotá, and (6) Cabo de la Vela en la Guajira.
5. Panorama (San Andrés): The town of San Andrés is located on the northern end of a beautiful Colombian island with the same name. The island has become a scuba diving haven for tourists.
6. Monumento al conquistador Rodrigo de Bastidas (Santa Marta): This a monument of a conquistador who "discovered" the coasts of Colombia and the bay of Santa Marta.
7. Colombia: This postcard features six scenes: (1) Papagayo bird, (2) San Agustín, (3) chiva [bus], (4) orquidea, (5) frutas, and (6) the museo del oro.
8. Antioquia (Medellín): This is a postcard featuring Medellín, Colombia's city of flowers.
9. Bogotá: This is a photo of Colombia's capital city. The postcard features Monserrate hill, a pilgrim designation for Catholics.
10. El Museo del Oro (Bogotá): The museum is world-famous and features golden artifacts of

the pre-Hispanic societies of Colombia.

11. Santuario de San Pedro Claver (Cartagena, Colombia): This postcard features an Afro-Colombian woman standing in front of a Spanish colonial church in Cartagena. The dome of the church has beautiful stained glass windows.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [“Chiva: A Fiesta on Wheels”](#)
- [“Cartagena: a Colombian destination of history and culture”](#)
- [“Medellín: Travel Guide”](#)
- [“Bogotá: Travel Guide”](#)
- [“San Andrés: the sea of seven colors”](#)

PRE-COLOMBIAN ARTIFACTS (MINIATURE)



DESCRIPTION

This is a set of pre-Colombian artifacts.

From top to bottom:

Top - Poporo Quimbaya: The Quimbaya people were skilled goldsmiths of pre-Colombian times. The Poporo Quimbaya in the culture box is modeled after a large golden vessel that was likely used to store coca leaves during religious ceremonies. This symbol has also been depicted on the Colombian 20 peso coin.

Center - Unknown: (Please contact the Latin American Iberian Institute at UNM if you have information about the significance of this item).

Bottom - Frog: This is a pre-Colombian fertility frog. Many of indigenous peoples of South America, including the Quimbaya, believed the frog to be a powerful symbol of fertility, associated with the rainy season.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Cultura Quimbaya: El Poporo \(Spanish\)](#)
- Information on the Quimbaya from the [Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art](#)

RELIGIOUS CARDS



DESCRIPTION

These are a series of three cards which are illustrated on the front and captioned on the back in Spanish.

From left to right:

La Virgen del Carmen: La Virgen del Carmen is Colombia's patron saint of drivers, famous for protecting the roads and performing miracles. Colombian drivers have witnessed numerous accidents, where miraculously, none were injured despite serious damage to the vehicles involved. After these accidents, bystanders have often spoken of a divine hand that protected all involved. Many municipalities in Colombia have parades where the image of La Virgen is escorted through town atop intricate floats. A motorist's prayer is included on the back of this card in Spanish.

El Señor de los Milagros de Buga: The city of Buga is world-famous for its Basilica del Señor de los Milagros. Thousands of devout Catholics visit the basilica every year. The image itself is based on a sixteenth-century legend where a likeness of El Señor de los Milagros was taken out of the Guadalajara river and thrown into flames for several days. The image miraculously survived the flames and healed the people of their sickness and hardship. A prayer is included on the back of the card in Spanish.

Divino Niño de Bogotá: This is an image of Jesus as a child. This is probably Colombia's most popular image among devout Catholics. Its statues—modeled after an early twentieth-cen-

ture wood carving purchased by a Salesian priest—dot the parks and streets of Bogotá. It is claimed to have miraculous powers of healing and fertility. The front of the card bears El Divino Niño’s well-known slogan, “Yo reinare” (I will reign). A prayer to El Divino Niño is printed on the back of the card in Spanish.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [History of Divino Niño](#)
- [Library of Congress Country Studies: Religion in Colombia](#)
- [Article about La Virgen del Carmen \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Website of the Basílica del Señor de los Milagros de Buga](#)

RUANA



DESCRIPTION

This is a Colombian garment, worn in cold weather.

The ruana is a kind of “poncho” made of alpaca, sheep, or llama wool. Ruanas are very warm and have long been worn by peasants and indigenous peoples for protection against the cold. In some towns, like Boyacá, pre-Colombian men historically wore knee-length ponchos. The Spaniards arrived wearing capes (called “capotes”) that were eventually blended with the pre-Colombian poncho to create ruanas like the one in the culture box. Over time, the ruana has become popular among all social classes in the Andes. Pope John Paul II wore a ruana when he visited Colombia.

In many contemporary social movements of Colombia the ruana is often worn as a way to exhibit Colombian identity, or show solidarity to a rural cause.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [“Ruana: the Boyacá coat”](#)
- [“La Ruana: Símbolo de la ‘tierrita’” \(Spanish\)](#)

ANDEAN INSTRUMENTS (MINIATURE)



DESCRIPTION

This item is a wall ornament featuring typical Colombian instruments.

There are several instruments featured on this wall ornament. Their brief descriptions follow:
Antara: Antara is the Quechua name for an Andean panpipe instrument made from bamboo shoots. To play an Antara, press the shoots against the lower lip, forcefully blowing air over the tops of the shoots.

Mallta: The Mallta is a smaller version of the Antara.

Quena: The Quena is an ancient Andean notched flute that predates the Inca by over a thousand years. To play the Quena, tilt the flute and press it against your lower lip, blowing air across the notch at the top.

Flauta: A common use for the flauta (or flute) in Colombia is to carry the melody in Cumbia music. A traditional flauta is likely made of native millo cane.

Erke: The erke is a large horn, much larger than the tiny model in the culture box. It is made of multiple lengths of cane and typically wrapped and sealed with gut. The model erke in the culture box appears to have a piece of hide wrapped around the distal end to amplify sound. To play this instrument, you would need to hold it aloft with both hands, pointing the amplifier upwards. An erke player must be in excellent physical condition to deliver powerful sound out of such a large instrument in the high altitude of the Andes.

Wankara: A wankara is a large, goat-skinned drum that is commonly played in Andean urban music.

COLOMBIAN MUSIC FOR EXPORT



DESCRIPTION

This is a 2-disc compilation of Colombian music.

This 2-disc set features a variety of traditional Colombian music, compiling rhythms such as pasillo and bambuco (from the central region); sanjuanero (from the southwest); joropo (from the eastern plains, or “llanos orientales”); vellenato, mapale, porro and cumbia (from the Caribbean region) among others.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- **This website** features information about the diverse styles of Colombian music
- **Watch the dance** that goes along with El Sanjuanero (Track 2 on CD#1)
- Video: Tribute to Salsa Colombiana by Alberto Barros, **Part 1** and **Part 2**
- **Cumbia: The Rhythm of Colombia**

JORGE VELOSA: LERO, LERO, CANDELEIRO – VELOSO Y LOS CARRANGEUROS



DESCRIPTION

This is an audio CD of the popular Colombian singer/songwriter, Jorge Veloso.

Jorge Luis Velosa Ruiz is a Colombian folk musician who is well-known for creating the genre known as carranga. Carranga arose in Velosa’s home region of Boyca and is said to represent the crossroads of merengue and rumba. Guitars and clarinets accompany guacharacas and song in playful melodies. The guacharaca is a Caribbean coastal percussion instrument—a wide stick with slots that is played with a thin stick, producing a playful, raspy sound in carranga. The lyrics of carranga follow the same style. For instance, the first track on the disc in the culture box, “La Gallina Mellicera,” opens with Veloso making rhythmic clucking noises, like a chicken. Velosa describes carranga as follows:

The carranga is the very company of we who have found in it something with which to tuck ourselves up and gain a zone of identity and joy coming from tradition. For me, it is a testimony of my walk through life, and for the country, a musical genre that helps to knit together our identity.

Carranga musicians like Velosa often wear the traditional clothes of rural Colombia, including short brimmed hats and wool ruanas. The songs speak of the countryside and the intrigues of

rural life—a life that carranga musicians have known personally. When Velosa and his band came to the United States to perform at Madison Square Gardens it is rumored that the limousine embarrassingly failed to pick the musicians up due to confusion surrounding the band's rural dress.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- **Video: La Cucharita** (Track #8 on CD)
- **Website dedicated to Carranga music** (Spanish)

SHAKIRA: PIES DESCALZOS



DESCRIPTION

This is an audio CD of the popular Colombian singer, songwriter, and dancer, Shakira

Shakira's full name is Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll. She was born in Barranquilla, Colombia, in 1977. She began as an artist early, supposedly recording poems and dancing before the age of ten. She released her first album not long thereafter, when she was only 14 years old. With 12 different albums to her name, she has a concrete reputation as a tour de force among audiences worldwide. She has since become the number one best-selling Latin artist in history.

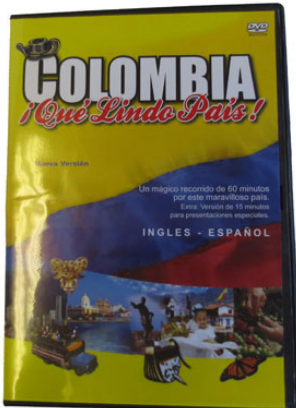
In addition to her artistry, Shakira is known for her philanthropy. Her third CD, *Pies Descalzos*, is included here in the culture box. She released the CD in 1995, the same year in which she founded an organization of the same name "Pies Descalzos (Barefoot) Foundation," which provides "education and nutrition to over six thousand impoverished children in Colombia and is expanding its work to other countries, including newly launched projects in Haiti and South Africa" (source: "Official Bio")

The singer's website also states that "Shakira has also become a leading advocate for Education and Early Childhood Development, proving herself to be as adept at making compelling speeches to world leaders or to the students at Oxford University as she is performing to tens of thousands of fans at her shows. She is a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador and, in October 2011, President Obama appointed her to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics."

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Pies Descalzos Foundation](#)
- [Video: “Estoy Aquí” \(Track #1\)](#)
- [Video: “Pies Descalzos” \(Track #8\)](#)

COLOMBIA: QUÉ Lindo PAÍS



DESCRIPTION

This is a DVD about Colombia (English and Spanish).

This is a 60 minute DVD about Colombia in English and Spanish. The DVD also features a 15-minute short version of the full video. From the DVD:

Colombia, the gateway to South America, is a country of spectacular contrast, with coasts on two oceans, free ranges on the Andes Mountains, and a large chunk of the dense Amazon jungle. Colombia is Caribbean, Andean, Pacific, and Amazonian. Thanks to this geographic diversity, Colombia has abundant natural resources. Without a doubt, Colombia's most abundant resource is its people. We invite you on a tour of this incredible country.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- General information about Colombia from [ProExport Colombia's website](#)

CULTURA Y ACENTOS



DESCRIPTION

This item is a DVD.

This DVD provides video tracks that teach students about Colombian language and culture.

Track 1: Acentos Colombianos (video of accents in Spanish from different areas of Colombia).

Track 2: Acentos Colombianos II (more video of accents in Spanish from different areas of Colombia).

Track 3: Aprenda a bailar salsa (instructional video demonstrating Colombian dance).

Track 4: Arepa e huevo (video on a traditional Colombian food of the Caribbean region).

Track 5: Cumbia la pollera colora (video demonstrating a well-known Colombian dance).

Track 6: Danzas tradicionales de Colombia (video demonstrating various traditional dances).

Track 7: El caporal y el espanto (video of Juan H. Caycedo performing).

Track 8: El professor Super-O (video of a popular Colombian cartoon).

Track 9: Indigenas Colombianos (short documentary on the indigenous peoples of Colombia).

Track 10: Joropo recio con furruco (video demonstrating Colombian dance and music).

Track 11: La Palenquera (video of Julio Flores performing "La Palenquera").

Track 12: Lengua palenquera (video of a news report demonstrating the Creole-based Spanish of the Colombian Caribbean).

Track 13: Los niños junqueros (video of children in the Laguna de Fúquene, Cudinarmarca).

Track 14: Niña interprete musica llanera (video of a Colombian girl playing various instruments).

Track 15: Prende La Vela (Lucho Bermúdez music video)

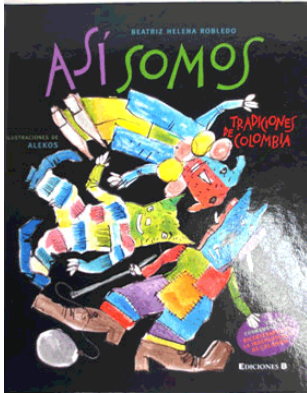
Track 16: San Agustin (documentary on the enigma of Colombian sculptures in el Macizo Colombiano).

Track 17: Teleantioquia (interviews with high school students in Medellín about a student newspaper).

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Article and video about the “Paisa” accent in northwestern Colombia (Spanish)
- Article and videos about traditional Colombian dances (Spanish)
- Article: “Music and Dance in Colombia”

ASÍ SOMOS

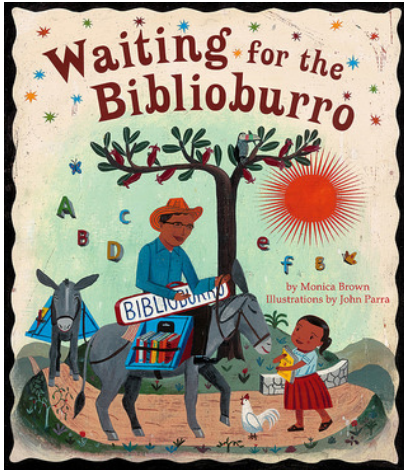


DESCRIPTION

This is a colorfully illustrated children's book by the Colombian author, Beatriz Helena Robledo.

This book describes and illustrates Colombian traditional festivals, myths, legends, toys, instruments, foods, celebrities and other aspects of Colombian culture.

BIBLI BURRO: A TRUE STORY FROM COLOMBIA



DESCRIPTION

This is the book *Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia* written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter.

This is a colorful book with vivid, folkloric illustrations, appropriate for grades 1-4. The publisher's description reads "Luis loves to read, but soon his house in Colombia is so full of books there's barely room for the family. What to do? Then he comes up with the perfect solution--a traveling library! He buys two donkeys--Alfa and Beto--and travels with them throughout the land, bringing books and reading to the children in faraway villages. Beautiful!"

In *School Library Journal*, Joan Kindig reviews the book with the following observation: "One person can make a difference, and in this book Luis Soriano makes all the difference in the world. A Colombian schoolteacher with a passion for reading, he had so many books in his house that he decided to take them to children high up in the mountains where no libraries existed. With the help of two burros, Soriano made the mountainous trek each weekend to spread literacy where it was desperately needed. Winter has a gift for creating nonfiction that is accessible to and appeals to very young readers. The story is well told, and the colorful illustrations reflect the flora and fauna of Colombia. Back matter offers a bit more information

about this generous and dedicated teacher who got books into the hands of so many people. Pair this title with Margaret Ruurs's *My Librarian Is a Camel: How Books Are Brought to Children Around the World* (Boyd's Mills, 2005) for some great conversations. Winter ends the book by saying, 'A small corner of the world is enriched.' What a terrific way to help children think about their role in doing the same."

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Biography of Jeanette Winter](#)

CUENTOS COLOMBIANOS: ANTOLOGÍA



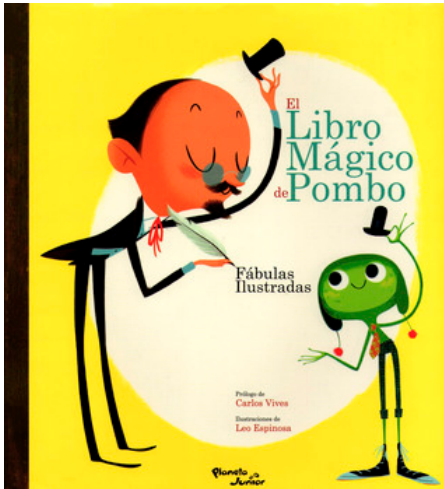
DESCRIPTION

This is a book of Colombian stories (Spanish).

The book includes “six extraordinary stories from authors José Felix Fuenmayor, Hernando Tellez, Alvaro Cepeda Samudio, Eduardo Caballero Calderon, Manuel Mejia Vallejo, and Roberto Burgos Cantor.”

Description in Spanish: “Llevar a cabo una seleccion que sea representativa, al menos de una epoca, no es una tarea facil. Sin embargo, en este caso particular, existe el firme convencimiento de haber escogido seis estupendos relatos, entretenidos, bien estructurados, rebosantes de dramatismo y, por supuesto, bien escritos.”

EL LIBRO MÁGICO POMBO



DESCRIPTION

This is a book of poems and recipes with a CD attached to the inside of the back cover (Spanish).

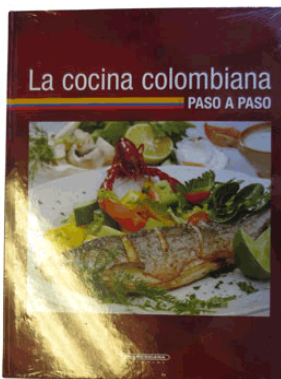
El Libro Mágico Pombo is an enormously popular book of poems written a century ago by Rafael Pombo and illustrated by the award-winning Leo Espinosa and Lucho Correa. The book is known for its wonderful character development, and the incorporation of those characters into 14 easy to make recipes, which are presented in an illustrated appendix. Rafael Pombo was named Colombia's perennial poet in 1905.

The poems/recipes and CD were the result of a Pombo project that was launched at the Bogota Book Festival in 2012. The collaborators are renowned Colombians and giants in their industries. Award-winning illustrators Leo Espinoza and Lucho Correa have created beautiful images of Pombo's characters on every page. A CD (attached to the back cover) features 14 musical tracks produced by Carlos Vives. Each track incorporates the poetic inspiration of Pombo into song. The album is world-famous and won a Latin Grammy in 2009.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Rafael Pombo's website](#)
- [Lucho Correa Design](#)

LA COCINA COLOMBIANA



DESCRIPTION

This is a hardcover Colombian cookbook.

Much can be learned about a nation's history from the food that its people eat. The indigenous peoples of Colombia long ago invented recipes based on maize, cassava, roots, chili, wild game and fish. With African slavery came the culinary contributions of coconut, palm oil, papaya, avocado, pineapple and mango. These fruits were initially grown in the palenques—runaway slave communities—eventually forming the basis of modern Colombian cuisine. The Spaniards contributed the culinary traditions of Iberia, complete with Muslim influence, and Colombia's Latin American neighbors, like Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Mexico, have also impacted the Colombian diet.

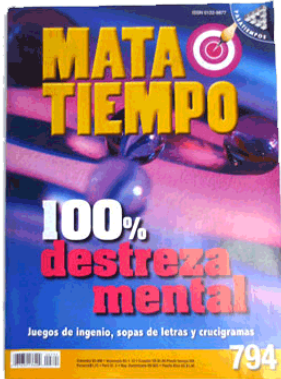
La Cocina Colombiana features many traditional Colombian recipes. For example, sancocho de gallina is a tasty chicken dish, served with avocado, white rice, and aji. Colombians speak fondly of this dish. From mycolombianrecipes.com:

I have a lot of good memories associated with this meal. One memory is of my grandmother cooking a big pot of sancocho and having all of her nine children with their families for lunch on Sundays. I would wait all week for that day to come to see all of my cousins and let me tell you, that was a party. In Colombia when we get together it is always a reason to dance and drink, no matter what time of the day. Another great memory I have associated with this dish is going with my friends from high school on a weekend to a farm or country house and cooking this soup outside on the fire.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [“My Colombian Recipes”](#)
- [The Latin Kitchen: Colombian Recipes](#)
- [Typical Colombian Food](#)

MATA TIEMPO



DESCRIPTION

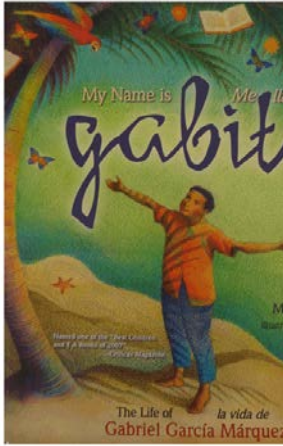
This is a book of Spanish language puzzles and word problems.

This magazine contains word games, crossword puzzles and word searches. Answers are included at the back, and teachers are welcome to photocopy pages.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Play more Spanish word games at [Qué Onda Spanish](#)

MY NAME IS GABITO



DESCRIPTION

This is a multilingual children’s book.

The description reads “Can you imagine a shipwrecked sailor living on air and seaweed for eight days? Can you imagine a trail of yellow butterflies fluttering their wings to songs of love? Once, there was a little boy named Gabito who could. Gabriel Garcia Marquez is perhaps one of the most brilliant writers of our time. He is a tremendous figure, enormously talented, and unabashedly admired. This is his story, lovingly told, for children to enjoy. Using the imagery from his novels, Monica Brown traces the novelist’s life in this creative nonfiction picture book from his childhood in Colombia to today. This is an inspiring story about an inspiring life, full of imagination and beauty.”

Midwest Book Review writes “Award-winning author Monica Brown presents *My Name is Gabito: The Life of Gabriel Garcia Marquez*, a bilingual English/Spanish picturebook about the brilliant and imaginative writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Following “Gabito” from childhood to adulthood, and his evolution from a dreaming boy to a great storyteller read by millions, *My Name is Gabito* offers vibrant color illustrations by Raul Colon, featuring a visual texture to the color distantly reminiscent of the swirls of a fingerprint. A wonderful multicultural picture-book, *My Name is Gabito* features modestly involved text and is ideal for young readers who are just about ready to enjoy chapter books. The flawless Spanish text alongside the English will also appeal to Spanish-language students of all ages seeking to hone their skills and fluency.”

PALABRA GRAMAS



DESCRIPTION

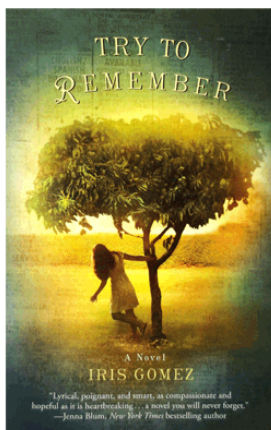
This is a book of word searches.

Palabra Gramas is a book of word searches (or “sopas de letras”).

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Play more Spanish word games at [Qué Onda Spanish](#)

TRY TO REMEMBER



DESCRIPTION

This is a young adult book entitled *Try to Remember* written by Iris Gómez and published in 2010 by Grand Central Publishing.

In the publisher's words: "Poet and immigration lawyer Gómez (*When Comets Rained*) mines her own experiences in her enthralling fiction debut, the story of a family of Colombian immigrants adjusting to life in '70s-era Florida. Gabriela De la Paz has earned the nickname Auxiliadora (the Helper) for all her efforts translating and interpreting American culture for her parents. The frustrated daughter of Roberto and Evangelina, Gabi must act far older than her teen years when her Papi, schizophrenic and untreated, can't keep a job and gets into trouble with the police because of his violent behavior. Evangelina must hide her sewing and cleaning jobs to avoid Roberto's wrath (he disapproves of women working) while Gabi's brothers, Manolo and Pablo, fear his physical abuse. Gomez charts Gabi's challenges as she gains confidence, educates herself, and finds inspiration from Lara, a modern woman for whom she babysits, in this intense and sensitive tale with crossover YA appeal."

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Website of Iris Gómez](#)

YENY AND THE CHILDREN FOR PEACE



DESCRIPTION

This is a children's book.

The description reads “Yeny and her family have escaped from the violence in their mountain village in Colombia to live in the city. But danger remains all around her — from groups of armed men who have kidnapped her uncle to a scary bully at school. Yeny feels powerless until her new friends decide to organize a peace carnival. Before long, the peace movement has attracted young people from across the country, and they decide to hold a national vote for peace. Inspired by the Colombian Children’s Movement for Peace – on October 25, 1996, millions of kids throughout Colombia held a vote that resulted in one full day with no bombs, shootings, or kidnappings. The group has been nominated every year since for the Nobel Peace Prize.”

School Library Journal reviews this book by saying “Grade 4–5—Driven from their village in 1996 by ongoing violence, Yeny and her family move in with cousins in Bogotá where Yeny looks for new friends and her parents worry that her joining the Children’s Movement for Peace will endanger her further. Inspired by actual events, this story focuses on those leading up to the day in October when the violence stopped and millions of Colombian children voted for what they considered their most important rights. While Yeny deals with children’s issues—friendship and bullying—the conflict between those cowed by violence and those driven to speak out is expressed on an adult level by disagreement between her parents and

her aunt. Written for a younger audience than readers of Sara Cameron's *Out of War* (Scholastic, 2001), this book lacks the immediacy of those personal experiences. The third-person narrative never quite comes alive; although told from Yeny's point of view, it doesn't give much sense of her as a person. In order to explain the culture to North American readers, the author had to contrive many occasions for Yeny to describe details of her life that would normally go unremarked. Black-and-white photographs of the day's event and subsequent peace activities add verisimilitude. This powerful story is still waiting for the right teller."

MAS INFORMACION

MORE INFORMATION

ARTESANÍA

CELEBRATIONS

CLOTHING

CURRENCY

FLAG

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GEOGRAPHY

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

LANGUAGE

MUSIC

NARRATIVES

RELIGION

SLAVERY

SPORTS

TOURISM

ARTESANÍA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Colombia's diverse geography and cultures lend themselves to varied forms of handicrafts. Raquirá, located in the Department of Boyacá, and La Chamba, located in the Department of Tolima, are well-known for their ceramics. In Raquirá, about 500 families are dedicated to the production of pottery. The types of pottery they make include sand crockery for larger pots and bowls; roast corn crockery, which are usually small toys; and finger crockery, including child-size food dishes, figurines, piggy banks, and other miscellaneous items. La Chamba ceramics are usually dark red or black and are influenced by indigenous pottery.

Another common form of artesanía in Colombia is basketry. Guacamayas, in the Department of Boyacá, is known for its spiral basketwork. These baskets are commonly made from straw from the leaves of palm trees or fique, a plant that grows in Colombia. Baskets from Werregue are also made from fibers of the palm tree. These handicrafts are often made by women of the Waunana indigenous group near the Pacific Coast.

Textiles in Colombia include Wayúu knitting, hammocks, bags, Cartago embroidery, metalwork, hats such as the sombrero vueltiao, and “mola” designs by the Kuna Indians.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Alpargatas

DVD: Cultura y Acentos

Pre-Colombian Artifacts

Mochila

Ruana

Carriel antioqueño

Cards

Paintings

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Artesanías de Colombia](#) (Spanish)
- Proexport Colombia: [Handicrafts Tourism](#); [Colombian Hand-crafted Ceramics](#); [Colombian Basketry](#); [Autochthonous Materials](#); [Colombian Textile Work](#); [Metalwork](#)

CELEBRATIONS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Colombia has a variety of celebrations to honor its cultural and religious traditions. The Carnival of Blacks and Whites takes place in the southwestern Andean city of Pasto every January 4-6. This carnival started as an agrarian festival of Pasto and Quillacinga indigenous peoples, but soon incorporated Spanish and African elements. In 2009, UNESCO declared this festival as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

The Manizales Fair takes place on January 4-11 and was first celebrated in 1951. It shares many similarities with celebrations in Seville, Spain, including bullfighting. It also includes handicrafts exhibits, parades, music, dancing, and fireworks. In addition, this fair includes the International Coffee Pageant, a beauty pageant for women from different coffee-producing countries.

Four days before Ash Wednesday, the Christian holiday that marks the beginning of the season of Lent, Barranquilla celebrates its four-day carnival. This colorful celebration includes a large parade on Sunday, dancing, music, and other entertainment.

Colombia also has a large theater festival called the Ibero-American Theater Festival. This festival takes place every other year in Bogotá and features hundreds of plays from around the world.

The Festival of the Vallenato Legend has taken place since 1968 in late April – early May. This folk festival celebrates vallenato music, a style of music performed using the accordion and other instruments. The festival includes a parade and music contests.

In August, Medellín celebrates the Flower Fair. The major event of this fair is the silleteros parade. Silleteros are individuals who make elaborate flower arrangements, and carry them on their back using a silleta.

The Cali Fair is known for its salsa music and dancing and takes place each December.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

DVD: Cultura y Acentos

Book: Asi Somos

Andean instruments

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Colombia's Carnivals and Feasts](#)
- [Official website of the Festival of the Vallenato](#) (Spanish)

CLOTHING

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most Colombians wear clothes similar to the clothes worn in the United States. Two traditional clothing items still popular in everyday wear are the sombrero vueltiao and ruanas. A sombrero vueltiao is usually handcrafted out of palm fibers, and often incorporates intricate designs. It is literally translated as “turned hat”. This hat was originally made by the Zenú indigenous people.

Ruanas can be found in the culture box. They are traditionally worn for protection against the cold in rural areas, but are also popular in urban areas. They originated as a mixture between Spanish capes and indigenous ponchos.

Traditional footwear includes alpargatas, which can also be found in the Culture Box. Other traditional clothing items are wide, colorful skirts for women, and long black pants for men. Many folkloric dances feature these types of clothing.

The 102 indigenous groups also wear clothing specific to their traditions.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Handcrafted Doll (Female Costume)
Handcrafted Doll (Male Costume)
Alpargatas
Ruana

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Traditional Colombian Clothing](#)
- [Traje Típico de Colombia](#) (Spanish)
- Video: [Bailes Típicos de Colombia sus 5 Regiones](#)

CURRENCY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The official currency of Colombia is the Colombian Peso. The first peso was issued in 1837. Pesos circulate in both bill and coin form.

After first being issued in 1997, the \$1000 coin caused many counterfeit issues throughout the country. Eventually, the amount of counterfeited copies in circulation exceeded the real ones. For this reason, the Colombian government temporarily discontinued the \$1000 coin in 2002 and changed its design to one that is more difficult to replicate.

In 2011, the Central Bank began to circulate peso bills with Braille numbers on them. This has made identification of pesos more accessible to blind individuals.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Discover Colombia!: Money](#)
- [What is the Colombian peso \(COP\)?](#)
- [Colombia Reports: “Colombia releases blind-friendly peso bills”](#)

FLAG

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Colombian flag is based on the older flag of Gran Colombia, which included the territories of what is now Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama and parts of Peru and Brazil. When the South American republic broke up in 1830, Colombia's flag retained Gran Colombia's color scheme. The flag is designed with three horizontal bands of yellow (double-width), blue, and red. Yellow represents the gold in Colombia's land; the blue its seas; and the red band represents the blood spilled in attaining freedom. When flying the flag, the yellow band should be at the top.

The colors have also been described as symbolizing more abstract concepts, with yellow acting as a symbol of sovereignty and justice; blue, loyalty and vigilance; and red, valor and generosity.

National symbols can be alternatively viewed as patriotic, inspirational marks of a nation's unity or artificial and stifling symbols of homogeneity. It is perfectly normal, and even patriotic, to react negatively to symbols of nationalism when those symbols are used as tools of repression. This is particularly important to remember in a divided nation like Colombia, where leftist guerillas wage war against right wing paramilitaries and the Colombian state. According to Amnesty International, the government of Colombia itself—symbolized by its flag—continues to commit egregious human rights violations. Afro-descendant and indigenous communities, who have faced death threats, killings and enforced displacement, have responded by declaring themselves neutral “peace communities” amidst the conflict.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Flag

FOOD

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Colombia has a variety of typical dishes. Below is a list of some common Colombian foods:

- Arepas are made of corn flour and are formed into the shape of a small pancake. Sometimes they include cheese and are served with butter.
- Empanadas are a popular pastry filled with beef, chicken, or vegetables. After they are stuffed, they are usually fried.
- Mondongo is a soup containing tripe, potatoes, peas, carrots, cilantro, and corn.
- The Bandeja Paisa is a large plate containing grilled steak, fried pork rinds, and chorizo sausages. It is accompanied by rice topped with a fried egg, an avocado, and fried plantains.
- Ajiaco is a chicken soup with potatoes, corn, sour cream, capers, avocado, and an herb called guasca.
- Arroz con Coco is a dish that is typical in the Caribbean region. It contains rice cooked with coconut milk, salt, and sugar.
- Patacones are fried green plantains.

Common drinks include:

- Colombian Coffee is a common drink in Colombia and internationally. The climate of the Andean region is ideal for the cultivation of coffee. Colombia has traditionally grown Arabica beans.
- Fresh Fruit Juices are made with the delicious fruits grown locally in Colombia. They can either be made with water or milk.

Colombia's agricultural products include coffee, cut flowers, bananas, rice, tobacco, corn, sugarcane, cocoa beans, oilseed, and vegetables.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Consumables

Coffee Beans

Brochure: La Zona Cafetera

DVD: Cultura y Acentos

Book: La Cocina Colombiana

Book: El Libro Mágico Pombo

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Colombian Food: Typical Dishes and Modern Styles](#)
- [Typical Colombian Food](#)
- [Agrarian Sector](#)
- **10 Traditional Colombian Breakfast Dishes**

GEOGRAPHY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Colombia is the fourth largest country in South America, and it is the only country in South America that borders both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. It shares its border with five countries: Panamá, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador.

The country can be divided into five major regions:

1. **The Caribbean:** This region includes 994 miles (1,600 km) of coastline along the Caribbean Sea. Located within this region is the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the highest coastal mountain in the world. The region also includes the peninsula of La Guajira, swamps, plains, and beaches. Some of the major cities in this region are Cartagena, Santa Marta, and Barranquilla.
2. **The Andes:** The Andes mountains split into three mountain ranges or 'cordilleras' in Colombia: the Cordillera Occidental, the Cordillera Central, and the Cordillera Oriental. In these mountains, one can find a variety of climates and terrains. There are high peaks up to 5,750 meters above sea level, as well as canyons, highland plains, and valleys. The region's fertile soil allows for diverse agricultural crops. Most of Colombia's population lives in this region. Major cities in this region include Bogotá (the capital), Medellín, Cali, Popayán, and Bucaramanga.
3. **The Pacific Coast:** This region includes 808 miles (1,300 km) of coastline, and is the wettest region of Colombia with over 10,000 mm³ of rainfall per year. This region is not heavily populated, but includes important seaports. The major port city in this region is Buenaventura.
4. **The Orinoquia or Llanos Orientales:** This region extends from the foothills of the Cordillera Oriental to the Orinoco River and the border with Venezuela. This region consists largely of plains at low altitudes. A major city in this region is Villavicencio.
5. **The Amazon Region:** This area encompasses 163,000 square miles. Its climate is hot and humid with high rainfall. A major city in this region is Leticia, which is a port on the Amazon River. Leticia is located near the area called Tres Fronteras, where Colombia, Brazil, and Peru meet.

Colombia's diverse geography lends itself to a variety of climates. In most areas of the country, there are two rainy seasons—one from April to June, and the other from August to November. The rest of the year makes up the dry season.

Colombia's geographical diversity allows for rich agricultural development. Its major agricultural products include coffee, flowers, potatoes, beans, grains, tropical fruits, palm oil, timber, shrimp, palm hearts, and asparagus. Additionally, Colombia is the world's fifth coal producer,

and has large oil reserves.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

La zona cafetera

Entertainment Guide for Bogotá

Mapas

DVD: Colombia: Qué Lindo País

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- ProExport Colombia: [Colombian Geography](#)
- [Geografía de Colombia](#) (Spanish)
- [Discover Colombia!: Geographic Regions of Colombia](#)

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For Pre-Columbian history, see the Indigenous Peoples section.

Independence

In the early 17th century, Colombia was part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, which included modern-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama. On July 20, 1810, a group of creole elites who were unhappy with recent changes in Spanish governance declared itself a governing body. While this day is celebrated as Colombia's official Independence Day, this local declaration did not bring complete independence. The next decade was marked by struggles for power between the Spanish and the criollo independence leaders in New Granada. One of these criollo leaders, Simón Bolívar, led military campaigns in present-day Colombia and Venezuela to fight for independence. After winning the decisive 1819 Battle of Boyacá, Bolívar's forces were allowed to enter Bogotá freely and independence was largely solidified. At the end of the struggle for independence, leaders founded Gran Colombia, which was made up of present-day Venezuela, Colombia, and Panamá. Ecuador joined Gran Colombia after gaining independence in 1822. However, political factions soon threatened this unity, and Ecuador and Venezuela broke off, leaving the Republic of New Granada (modern-day Colombia and Panamá).

In 1850, two political parties were formed: the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. These parties have dominated Colombia's governmental system and politics since then. Two major issues debated among these parties were whether to have a federalist or centralist state and the role of the Roman Catholic Church. While Conservatives favored central rule and close ties between the Church and the state, Liberals favored more decentralized state power and separation of Church and state. Escalating tensions between the two parties led to the Thousand Day's War from 1899-1902, in which an estimated 100,000 people were killed.

20th Century

The conflict between the Liberals and Conservatives became violent again in the mid-20th century. In 1948, Liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán was assassinated during his presidential campaign. His assassination triggered looting, rioting, and violence in Bogotá. This day came to be known as "El Bogotazo", and it marked the beginning of an 18-year period of violence. The most violent period was between 1948 and 1958, when an estimated 300,000 people were killed. In 1958, the Conservative and Liberal parties agreed to form a National Front, which, according to James Brittain, "ushered in a period of 'liberal-bourgeois order'" by allowing both elite parties to share political office (Source: Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia: The

Origin and Direction of the FARC-EP, p. 6).

Meanwhile, the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) was left out of the National Front. The PCC had been active in calling for urban and rural workers' rights in Colombia since the early 20th century. It gained popularity among peasants, and began to organize strikes, seizures of land, and self-defense groups. Within this context, the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army) emerged in 1964 with the initial goal of defending peasants' interests. However, the FARC soon became a guerilla group, and carried out violent acts such as kidnappings, drug trafficking, and murders of civilians. Some countries, including the United States and Colombia, have characterized the FARC as a terrorist group.

As conflict continued between the FARC and the Colombian Armed Forces, other guerrilla groups formed including the ELN (National Liberation Army) and the M-19. Eventually M-19 demobilized and was incorporated into the political system, but the FARC continued to assert power through violent means. At the same time, the Colombian Armed Forces' counterinsurgency campaigns left many civilians dead, leading to outcry by international human rights organizations.

The 1980s and 1990s marked the rise of a new category of armed actors: the paramilitaries. These right-wing self-defense groups were organized by landowners, elites, and members of the armed forces. Their formation coincided with the rise of cocaine production in Colombia, and the paramilitaries were largely financed by the drug trade. In an effort to monopolize drug trafficking, gain more land, and protect business, paramilitaries displaced, tortured, and killed thousands of people in rural areas. A prominent paramilitary group was the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), which has also been declared a terrorist group by the U.S and Colombia.

Contemporary

Human rights abuses and violence continue today. After peace negotiations under President Pastrana failed in 2002, Colombian citizens elected President Álvaro Uribe, who ran on a platform of "democratic security". He claimed that peace had failed and took a hardline stance against guerrillas, while demobilizing many paramilitary groups. In doing so, he pushed much of the conflict into rural areas. Despite popularity among many conservative Colombian elites, Uribe has been criticized by human rights defenders in Colombia and internationally. During his first term in office, the 'false positive' scandal came to light, in which it was revealed that state security forces staged killings of civilians to look like killings of guerrillas or criminals. In fact, between 2002 and 2007, "the number of extrajudicial execution cases allegedly committed by state security forces increased by 66%" (Gómez Santamaría: "Constructions of the Violent State"). Furthermore, Uribe's policies often criminalized human rights groups in Colombia. Uribe once stated, "Every time a security policy aimed at defeating terrorism appears in Colombia, every time the terrorists start to feel weak, they send their mouthpieces to talk about human rights" (quoted in *Blood and Capital* by Jasmine Hristov).

In 2010, Juan Manuel Santos was elected president to replace Uribe. President Santos restarted peace talks in 2012. As of April 2014, the peace talks are still ongoing. For information on the peace talks, see ColombiaPeace.org, a blog hosted by the Washington Office on Latin America.

Today, major human rights concerns in Colombia and internationally include:

- Internal displacement: 3.7 million displaced persons between 1997 and May 2011. Colombia has the largest number of displaced people in the world.
- Attacks on trade union leaders: as of 2012, Colombia was the most dangerous country for trade unionists, according to the International Trade Union Confederation
- Abuses by guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and the military
- Sexual violence and impunity surrounding these crimes
- Threats against human rights defenders
- U.S. funding for the Colombian military and the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement
- Widespread poverty and inequality

Despite outcry against human rights violations, the United States has consistently supported the Colombian government through funding, economic partnerships, and military assistance. In fact, Colombia is one of the largest recipients of U.S. military aid. Some human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have called for the United States to withdraw all funding. The U.S. government argues that funding is necessary for fighting the War on Drugs and for helping the Colombian government combat against armed groups that it considers to be terrorist groups.

Colombia's government has three branches: executive, judicial, and legislative. The president serves a four-year term and can be re-elected once. The legislative branch consists of a 102-member Senate and a 165-member House of Representatives. The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court, Prosecutor General Office, Superior Council of the Judiciary, Constitutional Court and Council for Administrative Law Jurisdiction. The Supreme Court of Justice is the highest court of criminal law, and judges are selected for eight-year terms.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Colombian Flag

Political Wall Map of Colombia

Book: *Yeny and the Children for Peace*

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Colombia Aprende: El grito de La Independencia](#)
- [Library of Congress: Country Study of Colombia](#)
- [BBC News: Colombia Timeline](#)
- [Center for Justice and Accountability: Forty Years of Conflict](#)

- **The Guardian: Colombia Conflict Explained**
- **BBC News Profile: Álvaro Uribe**
- **Human Rights Watch: Colombia, Country Summary**
- **“The U.S.-Colombia FTA: Still a Bad Deal for Human Rights”**
- **U.S. Department of State: “U.S.-Colombia Relations”**

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical

It is estimated that human inhabitants first arrived in Colombia 10,000-12,000 years ago, with some sources suggesting they may have arrived earlier. The major indigenous group in Colombia was the Chibchas, who later split up into three groups: the Arawaks, Caribs, and Muiscas. The Muiscas settled in central Colombia, and their major economic activities were agriculture (especially cultivation of corn and potatoes), weaving, and metalworking. The Caribs' economic activity was focused on hunting, gathering, and fishing. Arawak groups lived in the modern-day departments of La Guajira in the north and Caquetá in the south. They dedicated themselves to raising livestock, hunting, fishing, and agriculture. These indigenous groups and others were present when the Spanish invaded.

Contemporary

According to the 2005 census, 3.4% of Colombia's population identifies as indigenous. Colombia has 102 indigenous groups who have been struggling for their rights for over 500 years. One major political issue among indigenous groups is communal land rights. The indigenous communal land tenure system dates back to the colonial period, and the 1991 constitution gave formal recognition to communal land rights. As of 2013, there were 710 resguardos, or formally recognized indigenous communal lands, each of which is self-governed. However, there are many threats to indigenous land rights, beginning with the fact that 1.15% of Colombians own 52% of the country's lands.

Colombia's armed conflict has also threatened the integrity of indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples have been caught in the crossfire of paramilitaries, guerrillas, and state forces. Often multinational companies from oil, logging, mining, and biofuel industries hire paramilitaries to carry out large-scale displacements, intimidation, and killings of community members. While indigenous communities have the right to prior consultation before projects are carried out on their land, this law is often ignored by powerful corporate interests.

In response to internal displacement, assassinations, disappearances, and other human rights abuses, indigenous peoples have engaged in various forms of nonviolent resistance. For example, the Nasa people have declared themselves "actively neutral" and employ an indigenous guard to nonviolently defend their ancestral territories. They have been successful in removing armed actors from their territories on multiple occasions.

About 80% of indigenous peoples in Colombia live in the departments of Cauca, Nariño, and

La Guajira. There are also significant indigenous populations in the Amazon and Orinoquia regions.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Alpargatas
Andean instruments
Carriel
DVD: Cultura y Acentos
Female costume
Male costume
Mochila
Pre-Colombian Artifacts
DVD: Colombia: Qué Lindo País
Ruana

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- **Colombia Aprende: Época Colombina** (Spanish)
- **Los Pueblos Indígenas del Territorio Colombiano** (Spanish)
- Website of the **Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC)** (Spanish)
- **We Women Warriors: A Comprehensive Study & Discussion Guide** (this is a guide accompanying the documentary called ‘We Women Warriors’ that contains information about human rights and indigenous peoples in Colombia)
- **Map of Indigenous Territories in Colombia** (Spanish)
- **UNHCR World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Colombia**

LANGUAGE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to Ethnologue, there are 82 languages that are spoken in Colombia today. Some of these languages have few speakers while others flourish in institutional and community settings. Colombia's large and diverse indigenous population adds to the great linguistic diversity within the country.

Colombia's official language is Spanish. Major indigenous languages include Wayuu (122,000 speakers), Northern Emberá (49,700 speakers), Páez (40,000 speakers), Guahibo (23,000 speakers), and Guambiano (21,000 speakers) (Source: Ethnologue). Other major languages in Colombia include Colombian Sign Language, Creole English, and Vlax Romani (spoken by Roma populations in Colombia).

As of 2011, there were an estimated 989,000 people of Colombian descent living in the United States. According to the Pew Research Center, about 60% of Colombians in the US over the age of 5 speak English proficiently.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Book: Asi Somos

DVD: Cultura y Acentos

Book: El Libro Mágico Pombo

Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendano

Guia Hotelera

CD: Colombian Music for Export

CD: Jorge Velosa

Book: La Cocina Colombiana

Book: Mata Tiempo

Book: Palabra Gramas

Panamericana Advertisement

DVD: Colombia: Qué Lindo País

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Pew Research Center: [Hispanics of Colombian Origin in the US, 2011](#)
- [Ethnologue: Colombia](#)
- [Lenguas de Colombia](#) (Spanish)
- [Diccionario Básico de la Lengua de Señas Colombiana](#) (Spanish)
- [The Roma Gypsies of Colombia](#)

MUSIC

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Colombia's music is diverse across different regions within the country. Cumbia is perhaps the most well-known musical style of the Caribbean region. Common instruments used in cumbia music include the guacharaca, a percussion instrument consisting of a wooden tube with ridges and played with a wire fork; maracas; claves; gaitas, which are wooden flutes; and drums. Cumbia represents the influences of indigenous peoples, Africans, and Europeans in the Magdalena delta region.

Bambuco is representative of the Andean region. Instruments used in this style of music include the guitar, the tiple, the mandolin, and at times a flute. It is usually performed by duos or trios of instrumentalists, and is accompanied by dancing. Rhythms such as the torbellino, the sanjuanero, the guabina, and the bunde stem from this type of music.

In the Pacific coast, a common folkloric musical style is the currulao. Instruments in this style include the marimba, a variety of drums (conunos, bass drum, side drum), and the guasá (similar to a rainstick). This music is strongly influenced by the Afro-descendant populations in Colombia's Pacific regions.

The music of the Eastern Plains is often performed with harp, a cuatro (four-stringed guitar), and maracas. The joropo is a fast rhythm that is common to the music of the Eastern Plains.

Both salsa and vallenato are common in many different parts of Colombia. Cali is considered to be the capital of salsa in Colombia. Salsa music is popular around the world, and uses a variety of percussion instruments including congas, timbales, bongos, and claves. Vallenato originated in the valley between the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Serranía de Perijá. The accordion is characteristic of this musical style.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Andean instruments

CD: Jorge Velosa

CD: Colombian Music for Export

DVD: Cultura y Acentos

Book: El Libro Mágico Pombo

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [A Small Trip Through Colombian Music](#)
- [Cumbia: The Rhythm of Colombia](#)
- [Colombian Music](#)

NARRATIVES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A diverse selection of books and photographs are included in the Culture Box to show the wide variety of cultural production by Colombian authors and about the country. The various materials in the box demonstrate that the notion of culture is not something that can be “boxed up”. Instead, culture is ever-changing and multidimensional.

The books in the Culture Box include *Así Somos*, a book about Colombia’s traditional festivals, myths, legends, toys, instruments, foods, celebrities, and other cultural icons; *Biblioburro*, a colorful children’s book about a travelling library; a collection of Colombian short stories, *Cuentos Colombianos*; *El Libro Mágico Pombo*, a book of poems and recipes; a collection of short stories by the world-renowned author Gabriel García Márquez; *My Name is Gabito: the Life of Gabriel García Márquez*, a book about García Márquez’s childhood; *Try to Remember*, a story of Colombian immigrants living in Florida; *Yeny and the Children for Peace*, a book inspired by the Children’s Peace Movement in Colombia.

The photographs included in the Culture Box are meant to spark classroom discussion. Together, the books, postcards, artwork, and artifacts will encourage students to think critically about perspective and voice, leading to a nuanced exploration of Colombia that minimizes the pitfalls of stereotyping.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Paintings by Botero

Postcards

Pre-Columbian Artifacts

Religious cards

DVD: Colombia: Qué Lindo País

DVD: Cultura y Acentos

Book: *Así Somos*

Book: *Biblioburro*

Book: *Cuentos Colombianos*

Book: *El Libro Mágico Pombo*

Book: *Gabriel García Márquez*

Book: My Name is Gabito/Me Llamo Gabito

Book: Try to Remember

Book: Yeny and the Children for Peace

RELIGION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In a 2010 report, the Pew Research Center estimated that 82.3% of Colombians identify as Roman Catholic. While Catholicism is the most prevalent religion, Protestantism has been growing rapidly, especially since the 1990s. A PROLADES (Programa Latinoamericano de Estudios Sociorreligiosos) report estimates that 5 million Colombians identified as Protestant in 2007. Other religions represented among Colombians include Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Judaism, Islam, Baha'i, Buddhism, Hinduism, and indigenous religious traditions.

Roman Catholicism was introduced to Colombia by forced conversion practices during the conquest. Since independence, the relationship between the Church and State has been contested, and was a major issue in the power struggles between Liberals and Conservatives. While the Liberals desired clear separation between Church and State, Conservatives favored closer ties between these two entities. The 1991 Constitution in Colombia officially separated Church and State, and it outlawed discrimination against individuals based on their religious beliefs.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Brochure: Catedral de Sal
Religious Cards

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [PROLADES: Religión en Colombia](#) (Spanish)
- [Pew Research: The Global Catholic Population](#)
- [Georgetown University's Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs: Colombia](#)

SLAVERY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Colombia served a major role in the slave trade in the Americas. Many Africans arrived in New Granada throughout the port of Cartagena, which also served as an important center for the intra-Latin American slave trade.

As the indigenous population declined due to disease and violence, European colonizers brought African slaves to Colombia to perform a variety of labor tasks. The first slaves arrived in Colombia in the 1520s, mainly to work in agriculture and domestic realms. After the 1560s, most slaves were forced to work in mines.

The 16th century thus resulted in many slave results. The first revolt occurred in 1530 when several slaves burned down the city of Santa Marta. After the town was rebuilt, another slave revolt in 1550 burned it down once more. Four thousand slaves revolted later in Popayán in 1598 and destroyed the Zaragoza gold mine. Some of these revolts were met by harsh repression.

Many escaped African slaves formed palenques, which were places of refuge for escaped slaves. Palenques were usually located in remote locations in order to protect their inhabitants, and some Afro-Colombians shared territory with indigenous communities.

Afro-Colombians played important roles in Colombia's history. Many participated in the movement for independence. In fact, it is estimated that 3 of every 5 members of Simón Bolívar's army were Afro-Colombian.

Slavery was not abolished in Colombia until 1851. However, Afro-Colombians have faced oppression and discrimination since then. Today, Afro-Colombian communities suffer from lack of access to basic state services and widespread displacement due to the internal armed conflict. Afro-Colombian social movements have been active in calling out these injustices. Chocó, the Colombian department that lies along the Pacific coast, and contains the highest Afro-Colombian population (90%), is also one of the most impoverished departments. The department's placement and social standing has further perpetuated both the social and geographic isolation of this ethnic group.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [El Chocó: The African Heart of Colombia](#)
- [Afropedia: Afro-Colombian](#)
- [African Origins of AfroColombians](#)

SPORTS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The most popular sport in Colombia is soccer. Soccer was introduced to Colombia by British workers on the Barranquilla railroad in the early 1900s. It was not until 1948 that the first Colombian soccer league was formed. The most successful soccer teams in Colombia have been the Millonarios from Bogotá and América de Cali from Cali. Colombia's national team has participated in the World Cup.

Colombia's national sport is tejo. In this unique game, players throw a disk (the tejo) at a metal piece on a clay-covered board. On the board are small bags of gunpowder that explode upon impact and win the player extra points.

Cycling and boxing are also popular sports within Colombia. Many tourists enjoy adventure sports, including surfing, skydiving, paragliding, canoeing, and climbing.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Video: Learning Tejo in Colombia](#)
- [Soccer Politics: Colombia](#)

TOURISM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While the internal conflict and history of drug trafficking have given Colombia a negative reputation, today, the tourism industry is growing. Tourism represents one of the top ten markets in Colombia's economy, expanding 176% between 1990 and 2013 compared to the 125% expansion of the economy at large. In 2012, 1.69 million tourists visited Colombia. The country's great biodiversity also makes it a popular destination for ecotourism. The Culture Box includes a variety of guides that display common tourist destinations.

CORRESPONDING INVENTORY

Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendano

Guía Hotelera

Go Magazine

DVD: Colombia: Qué Lindo País

Panamericana Advertisement

Catedral de Sal

Carriel antioqueño

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [ProExport Colombia](#)
- [World Travel and Tourism Council: Benchmarking Travel and Tourism in Colombia](#)

CONTENTS CHECKLIST: COLOMBIA

Please carefully repackage the culture box and check off each item before returning the box.

REFERENCE ITEMS

- Flag
- Brochures/Maps
- Wall Map
- Photography Album

ARTIFACTS

- Advertisement Panamaerica
- Alpargatas
- Catedral de Sal (brochure)
- Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendano (brochure)
- Guía Hotelera (brochure)
- La Zona Cafetera (brochure)
- Carriel Antioqueño
- Coffee Beans
- Consumables Packaging
- Entertainment Guide for Bogotá
- Handcrafted Doll (female)
- Handcrafted Doll (male)
- Miniature Mochila
- Miniature Paintings
- Postcards
- Miniature Pre-Colombian Artifacts
- Religious Cards

- Ruana

MUSIC & INSTRUMENTS

- Miniature Andean Instruments
- Colombian Music for Export (CD)
- Jorge Velosa: Lero, Lero, Candelero, Veloso y Los Carrengueiros (CD)
- Shakira: Pies Descalzos (CD)
- Colombia: Qué Lindo País (DVD)
- Cultura y Acentos (DVD)

BOOKS

- Así Somos (book)
- Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia
- Cuentos colombianos: Antología
- El libro mágico Pombo (book with CD)
- La cocina colombiana
- Mata tiempo
- My Name is Gabito
- Palabras gramas
- Try to Remember
- Yeny and the Children for Peace

EVALUATION: COLOMBIA

Name: _____

Institution: _____

City: _____

Email: _____

Grade Level: _____

Subject Area: _____

Date Borrowed: _____

How did you hear about the program?

Please describe your institution and the students with whom you work.

Please tell us about how you incorporated these materials into your classroom and the topics on which you focused.

What other materials would you suggest we add to the program?

None

More information about the region

Teaching strategies

Opportunities for classroom speakers

Grade-specific lesson plans

Subject-specific lesson plans

Library/Media resources

Funding for field trips

Please circle the statement that most closely represents your opinion of the following statements:

1. The program presented me with new information about Latin America and the Caribbean.

Strongly Disagree *Somewhat disagree* *Slightly agree* *Strongly Agree*

2. The program content helped me serve my students' needs.

Strongly Disagree *Somewhat disagree* *Slightly agree* *Strongly Agree*

3. I plan to integrate content from this program into my curriculum/career.

Strongly Disagree *Somewhat disagree* *Slightly agree* *Strongly Agree*

5. The reservation and check-out process was straightforward and easy to complete.

Strongly Disagree *Somewhat disagree* *Slightly agree* *Strongly Agree*

Would you be willing to share a testimonial that we might publish anonymously?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Thank you for your time! We appreciate your feedback and will use it to improve the program.