SubUrban

Antioquía, Medellín, Colombia is a vibrant city, known for the warmth and friendliness of its “paisas” (a term used for people from the Andes region of Colombia), the year-round spring like weather and its’ gorgeous flowers and mountains.

"It is not only a breath of fresh air; it is a scene full of natural beauty and tranquility. I was thrilled to find out that I was going to explore this gorgeous city for five days. As a Colombiana, I must admit going back to the homeland was kind of emotional for me. It had been nearly 17 years since my last visit and my desire to go back had grown over the years. I was grateful for the opportunity to be culturally inspired and to reconnect with my roots.

I went on this press trip to witness the annual Medellin Flower Fair (La Feria de Las Flores), which takes place from July 29th - August 8.The highly anticipated fair offers visitors and residents over 140 cultural, traditional and modern Colombian events. It was an awe-inspiring experience. The 54 year old festival attracts people from all over the world to Medellin. There are a series of parades, concerts and parties that take place but my favorite part was the Desfile de Silleteros (Parade of the Silletes). During this parade, “campesinos” (men and women from the town) walk through the town with large flower arrangements (Silletes) on their backs, each decorated elaborately with flowers of every color and fragrance imaginable.

Originally, La Feria de Las Flores began as a relatively low-key affair to help inspire local flower growers in the region. Now it is one of the most popular events in Latin America and I was eager to take part in some of the festivities!

Medellin, is the second largest city in Colombia. The enormous educational, cultural, social, and urban transformations made over the years have allowed Medellin to become a city of opportunity and progress . With a great gastronomic, commercial and tourist offer, it provides countless opportunities for leisure and business.

Here is ULM's guide to the city of Eternal Spring, Medellin

Department: Antioquia
Population: 2.5 Million
Altitude: 1,500m

Climate: Spring weather

Where to stay?
Medellin Hotel, Holiday Inn Express (Carretera 43A N 1 Sur150 CC la Strada)
The hotel is located in the El Poblado district of Medellin, Colombia. I give this hotel 5 stars! It is clean, convenient, affordable and the staff is extremely welcoming and friendly. It is a perfect place for visitors on vacation, since it is near many popular attractions such as El Pueblito Paisa, which offers a taste of Colombian culture and El Parque de Los Pies Descalzos (Barefoot Park). La Strada Mall(adjacent to the hotel), offers world-class dining, entertainment and shopping, as well as the Portofino Casino. They also provide complimentary high-speed, wireless internet access. My favorite part was waking up to the free Express Start Breakfast Bar, which features a variety of hot and cold items served fresh daily. While staying there, take advantage of the on-site Fitness Center and stay productive using the Business Center with faxing, printing and copying
capabilities.

What to experience?

Metro Cable

The Metro Cable to Santo Domingo Savio was one of the smoothest and enjoyable rides I've ever been on. It is actually the only massive urban cable transfer in the world and it provides breathtaking views of the city. At the end of the line the city shows its cultural transformation in the park library called Parque Biblioteca España. It was inaugurated in 2007 by the king of Spain whose country made considerable contributions to its construction. At one point Santo Domingo Savio was one the most dangerous areas in Colombia. A place where someone would be found killed almost everyday is now a new space with schools, museums and a library! The cable passes over some of the city's poorer and more colorful neighborhoods and gives an impression of how the many of the people live in the city.

Botero Square, Antioqua Musuem
I explored Botero Plaza, home to Medellin's own Fernando Botero’s 23 monumental sculptures! I also toured the Antioquia Museum which showcased his best work. There are 108 paintings in different medias by the native artist and it is considered one of the greatest art exhibitions in the world. Fernando Botero is Colombia's most famous artist; his specialty is painting/sculpting subjects (primarily people, fruit and horses) in a bloated, chubby style. Botero's works are ubiquitous around Medellin and can befound on the walls of restaurants, the sides of buildings, houses and in plazas.

Parque Lleras
Want to hit the town after a long day of touring? Well go to Parque Lleras! This #1 nightlife district is located in one of the most famous zones of the city, Zona Rosa. It is the "downtown area" of Medellin. Here you will find Restaurants, hotels, Clubs, bars and Fashion stores. This is where you will get introduced to Aguardiente, a signature liquor in Colombia. An evening in Parque Lleras will showcase Medellin's finest young crowd living it up. If you are lucky enough to hit it on a fashion show night,vget ready for to bump into the most beautiful paisas in the world! For more information log on to www.parquelleras.com/restaurantes/index/

Pueblito Paisa– Cerro Nutibara
Experience what life was like in a typical "Antioquian" town at the recreated Pueblito Paisa, with fantastic views overlooking Medellin. The cobblestone square, its' fountain, the church, rectory, the mayor's office, the barber shop, and the one-room school house standout at the Pueblito Paisa. It is the replica of an original Antioquia town. This is one of Medellin's most famous landmarks. The view from the top of the Nutibara hill on which it's located is worth a trip. There is a viewing platform where you see the city's skyline and can snap amazing photos.

Where to eat?

El Herbario (El Poblado 10-30,Medellin, Antioquia, Colombia)
El Herbario is the best place for business lunches or to go on a nice date! It reminded me slightly of New York as it is very contemporary and modern. The menu offers a great variety of fresh food which I would describe as mediterranean. There is also a good selection of vegetarian dishes and wine. The cuisine draws axis herbs and spices in each dish of the menu - very healthy! Website: www.elherbario.com

Casa De Olivia (Calle 43 D# 10-72)
Now if you want that "Colombian Grandmother" type food try the Casa de Olivia. The restaurant is in a charming restored house and it is very authentic and traditional, they even have an indoor garden. I tried a little bit of everything here and I recommend it all. Its delicious! Casa de Oliva specializes in regional cuisine (cuisine criolla) and not just that of Antioquia.

Botanical Garden -In Situ (Calle 73# 51 D-14)
Wander through the breath taking Medellin Botanical Garden, where you will see some of the rarest orchids and exotic birds in the world. It is truly a show full of color. Just so you know Colombia is the world's leading home to orchids, boasting more than 3,000 species! While you are there have lunch at In Situ located in the Botanical Garden. Reservations are recommended. The menu offers a combination of local food, some organic choices and all plates are picturesque. Website: www.restauranteinsitu.com

If you want to travel to Colombia so you can get to know more fantastic destinations within the

country, please log on to www.proexport.comand to book your trip!