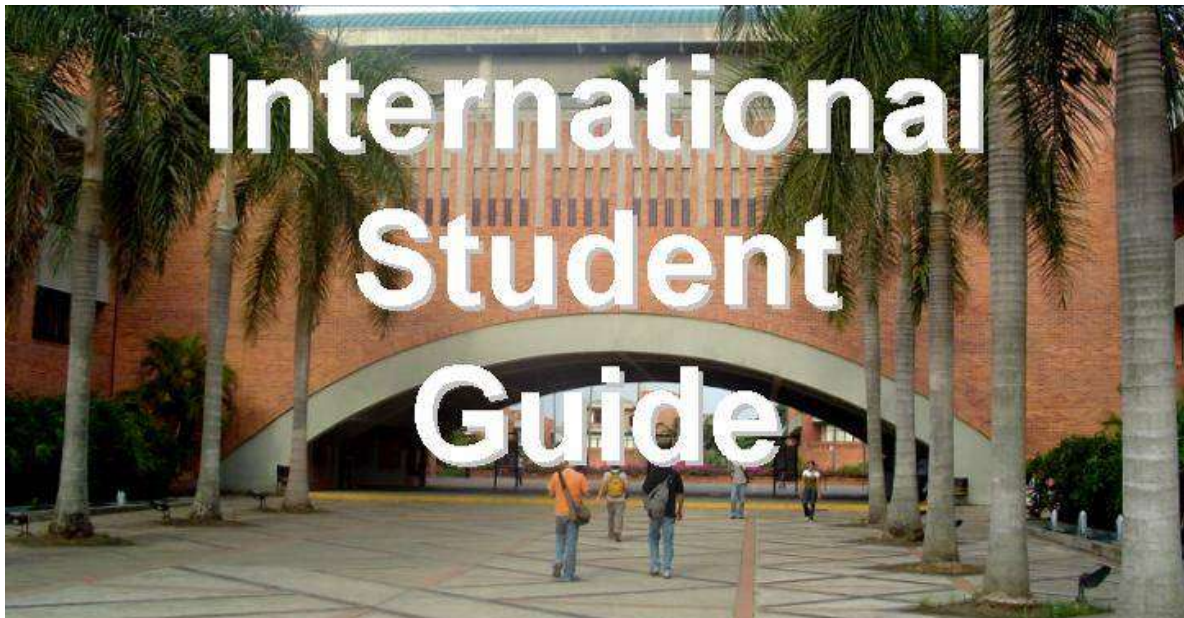




Universidad  
**AUTÓNOMA**  
de Occidente



Edited by the International Office, UAO

Welcome



Dear Student,

Welcome to UAO! We are glad that you have chosen UAO to spend a semester or two for your Exchange Program. Thank you!

In the recent past, UAO has had the chance to welcome an increasing number of international students. We consider this development a great success. In accordance with our mission to support an open debate among the academic world, we endeavor to establish a wide network of international contacts.

As part of our efforts to assist international students to settle into UAO and Colombia, the International Relations Office has put in place several programs, starting with the Orientation Briefings, Campus Tours, and Host family program. We also encourage you to participate in a variety of on-campus activities and events throughout the semester as we think it helps contribute to every student's

cultural enrichment. However, if you need any further assistance you are always welcome to contact the staff of the International Relations Office.

We hope that your stay in our country will be both enjoyable and thrilling. Cali is the perfect city for a South American adventure. Known as "The City of Rumba", Cali definitely has a community feeling to it. The sound of Salsa music, which has its roots in Africa and to a great part had been influenced by the Spanish culture, evokes a warm refreshing feeling and eventually the urge to dance. Get your mind set for an extraordinary experience!

Yours sincerely,

The International Relations Office

Table of Contents			
Welcome			4. Useful Information 28
1. Colombia – A Country of Contrasts	4		4.1. Visas and Necessary Documents 28
Facts and Figures	4		4.2. Immunizations 28
A Brief History	5		4.3. Lodging 28
Geography	6		4.4. Living Costs 29
Capital	7		4.5. Important Phone Numbers 30
Language	7		4.6. Interesting Web Portals 30
Government System	8		4.7. Consulates 31
Population	9		4.8. Banks 31
Holidays in Colombia	9		4.9. Electricity 32
Currency	9		4.10. Time Difference 32
Map of Colombia	10		4.11. International Associations in Cali 32
2. The City of Cali	13		5. Arrival 34
Quick Facts	14		5.1. Immigration 34
Climate	14		5.2. Transportation from the Airport 34
Means of Travel	15		5.3. How to get to the UAO during Orientation 34
How to find your Way in Cali	16		6. Being safe in Colombia 35
Transportation – How to find get around in Cali	17		6.1. Dos and Don'ts 37
Cali – Cultural	18		6.2. Safety Map 37
Restaurants	20		7. Traveling in Colombia 38
Shopping	20		7.1. Travel Guides 38
Entertainment	21		7.2. Places in Cali 38
3. The University	23		7.3. Places in the Surrounding Areas of Cali 39
3.1. Academic Calendar	24		
3.2. Secure Campus	25		
3.3. The International Relations Office	25		
3.4. Medical Insurance	26		
3.5. Students Welfare BIENESTAR	26		
3.6. Map of the University	27		

## 7.4. Places in Colombia 40

## 1. Colombia - A Country of Contrasts

At some point in your research process about Colombia you might have run across someone who strongly advised you not to come here. As a matter of fact, the country has been going through drug trafficking related problems, which however have not affected the urban areas ever since the major drug cartels of Cali and Medellín collapsed. Today these cities are modern urban areas that indeed have to face the same problems every big city in the world has to face, but also feature the most essential western-standard amenities. Visitors to the country are often struck by how normal and orderly everyday life is. In this chapter we would like to give you a complete picture of what this country has to offer, and why it is worth a visit.

## 1.1 Facts and Figures

- Colombia is the world's leading exporter of emeralds and cut flowers.
- Colombia has more varieties of palms, orchids (3500 species), amphibians (583 species), and frogs than any other country in the world.
- Colombia is the only South American country that has coasts at both the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean.
- Colombia is the worldwide leading country in the field of Laser Surgery, curing short-sightedness, astigmatism, and far-sightedness.
- There are more than 1920 species of birds in Colombia, more than in the whole of Europe and North America combined.
- Colombia's herbariums have classified over 130,000 species of plants, including the Victoria Amazonica, which has leaves large and strong enough to support a child.
- The highest qualified doctors in the US are Colombians.
- The chairman of NASA/NeuroLab Science Working Groups is Colombian, namely Rodolfo Llinas.
- Colombia has the only snow-covered mountain located near the ocean.

- Colombia takes second place as a producer of high-quality coffee.
- Colombia is worldwide second in cosmetic surgery.

- Only two countries produce more lingerie than Colombia.

If you wish to see the Caribbean, go to Cuba or the Dominican Republic.

If you wish to see the Pacific, go to Chile.

If you wish to see the Andes, go to Ecuador.

If you wish to see the Amazons jungle, go to Brazil.

If you wish to see the pre-Columbian cultures, go to Mexico or Peru.

But if you wish to see all of this in one country, visit Colombia!

## 1.2 A Brief History

The oldest settlements of modern Colombia can be traced back to the third century B.C., whereas the first civilizations date back to the sixth century B.C., established by cultures that arose in regions of the Andes Mountains. Among the most outstanding were the Tayrona, Sinú, Muisca, Quimbaya, Tierradentro and San Agustín. A civilization allegedly known as the Chibchan people settled in the area roughly around the year 600. A highly sophisticated civilization, it became well established and prospered through trading, mostly salt and emeralds.

After arriving in Central America in the early 1500's, Spanish sailors founded Santa Marta in 1527 and Cartagena de Indias in 1533 at the Colombian stretch of the Caribbean Coast. In 1537 however, more Spanish discoverers surged into the country, and soon subjugated the Chibchans. They replaced their trading centers with new settlements, such as Santa Fe de Bogotá (1539) and Tunja (1539). In 1544 Colombia was incorporated into the Viceroyalty of Peru. Centuries passed, and in 1739 it became part of New Granada, together with Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama.

Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish treatment gave rise to some protest among the Natives, but it was not until 1819 when Colombia became independent under the leadership of Simon Bolívar. Nevertheless, the country still confederated with Ecuador and Venezuela in the form of Gran Colombia but after all, Colombia became fully autonomous in 1830 when this empire collapsed in 1830. In 1903, internal divisions lead to the US-sponsored secession of Panama.



Historical Map of New Granada

### 1.3 Geography

Colombia has everything from unfertile mountain highlands to diverse rainforest habitats. Within a total area of 1,138,910 square kilometers, which is slightly less than four times the size of Switzerland, one can find all kinds of astonishing landscapes. Close to the Ecuadorian border in the South, the Andes Mountains split into three mountain ranges, the Western, Central and Eastern Cordilleras. In their valleys, the Cauca and Magdalena rivers connect to the lower plains along the Caribbean coast in the North. Not too far from the Pacific coast in the



Northwest the peak of Cristóbal Colon, Colombia's highest elevation, reaches 5,775 m above sea level. Most major cities, such as Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cartagena, Barranquilla, Ibagué, Manizales, Pasto, Cúcuta and Bucaramanga, are located in the valley and highland regions of the Andes Mountains. The lowland plains in the eastern part of the country are hardly populated at all.

For those who are interested in going diving, the Caribbean Sea surrounding the islands of San Andres and Providencia is a paradise to dive for corals. There, in the so-called Ocean of Seven Colors, or on the island of Gorgona, you can find all kinds of recreational areas.

The Climate is tropical along both coasts, as well as on the eastern plains, whereas it can be considerably cooler in the mountain regions.

### 1.4 The Capital

Bogotá is the Capital and Colombia's largest city, counting 7.7 million inhabitants. Located on a high, sloping plain in the Cordillera Oriental of the Andes Mountains at an altitude of 2640 meters (8,660 feet) above sea level, temperatures can drop to a considerably low level.

Bogotá is sometimes called the "Athens of South America" due to the large numbers of rural Colombians that migrated there in search of greater economic opportunities in the early 1900's. Today it is the country's largest political, financial, and cultural center, and it is continuously expanding.

### 1.5 Language

The official language is Spanish. All courses at the UAO are taught in Spanish, as well. In the past couple of years, a number of businesses offering English

courses have been established in all major cities but it is still not very likely to find someone in public who speaks English. For the better effect, we recommend you to take courses in Spanish, even if you are planning to just intern at our University. From experience, students who arrived here knowing only basic Spanish improved their skills significantly in less than two months.

## 1.6 Government System



Statue of Rafael  
Núñez

Colombia has one of the oldest and most stable democracies in Latin America. Nevertheless, the executive branch dominates government structure. The president, who is elected together with the vice-president by popular vote for a single four-year term, functions as both the head of state and head of government. The next election to be held will be in May 2006.

The legislative branch is made up of a bicameral parliament, the Congress or Congreso, which consists of the 102-seat Senate and the 166-seat Chamber of Representatives. Members of both houses are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms.

The Colombian judicial system has undergone significant reforms in the 1990s. In 1991, Rafael Núñez redesigned the Colombian Constitution for popular vote.

Colombia has 32 states as administrative divisions, (“departamentos”) and each state has a governor, whereas the capital of each state has a mayor. Both of them are elected by popular vote and serve two-year terms.

Moreover, Colombia’s governmental system supports a wide participation of ethnic minorities, and of all religious and gender tendencies.

## 1.7 Population

Colombia has a diverse population that reflects its colorful history and the people that have populated the country from ancient, to colonial and modern times. Three main groups form the demographic majority, the indigenous Amerindians, Spanish colonists, and Africans that had been brought to Colombia as slaves. (XVI Century) Race mixing between these groups has created distinct groups that now constitute much of the population. The country's largest ethnic group is known as Mestizos (58%) who came into existence as a result of intermingling between Spaniards and Amerindians. Whites are mainly Creoles, descendants of Spanish colonists, and constitute

the largest minority (20%) followed closely by Mulattos (14%) whose origins derived from the unions of Spaniards and African slaves. The remaining population consists of 4% unmixed descendants of African slaves, and to another part of 3% of Black-Amerindians, who are called Zambos. On the basis of language and customs, only 1% of the entire population can be identified as fully Amerindian. Colombia is the third most populous country in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico.



### 1.8 Holidays in Colombia

Holidays that fall on weekdays are usually postponed to the following Monday, serving as a “Bridge Day” added to the regular weekend. These days can give you some good opportunities to travel the country.

Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 6	Three Kings' Day
Last week of March	Holy Thursday
	Good Friday
	UAO makes the entire Holy week a break.
May 1	Labor Day
April/May	Ascension Day
May/June	Corpus Christi
June	Sacred Heart of Jesus
June 29	Saint Peter and Saint Paul
July 20	Independence Day
August 7	Battle of Boyacá
August 15	Assumption of the Virgin Mary
October 12	Day of the Race
November 1	All Saints Day
November 11	Independence of Cartagena
December 8	Immaculate Conception
December 25	Christmas Day

### 1.9 Currency

The official currency is the Colombian Peso, formally abbreviated as COP (ISO 4217), and informally as COL\$.

- 1 USD = 2340 COP
- 1 EUR = 3245 COP

Check current exchange rates online:

- <http://www.x-rates.com/>
- <http://www.unido.org/Data/Country/Exchange.cfm?c=COL>

#### Coins

Coins are issued in dominations of:

- 50
- 100
- 200
- 500

#### Bills

Bills are issued in dominations of:

- 1000 COP (Jorge Eliécer Gaitán)
- 2000 COP (Francisco de Paula Santander)
- 5000 COP (José Asunción Silva)
- 10,000 COP (Policarpa Salavarrieta)
- 20,000 COP (Julio Garavito Armero)
- 50,000 COP (Jorge Isaacs)



Here you can take a look at all of the bills:

[http://numismondo.com/pm/col/index\\_0410.htm](http://numismondo.com/pm/col/index_0410.htm)

#### Credit cards

Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. As a precaution against robbery, the daily cash withdrawal for ATM machines has been limited to 1.000.000\$COP.

### 1.10 Map of Colombia



## 2. The City of Cali

Cali is the capital of the Valle de Cauca department, and is a well-known commercial centre throughout Colombia and in many parts of South America. It is located in between the western and central Cordillera of the Andes



View of Cali from the Torre de Cali

Mountains, about 50 miles east of the Pacific Ocean Port City of Buenaventura. 2.3 million people live in the “City of Rumba” along the shores of the Cali River. After Sebastian de Belalcazar, a Spanish conqueror, founded Cali in 1536, the city has been growing steadily. The cityscape is a blend of quaint colonial architecture and functional modern style. Here, the past sits comfortably alongside the vibrant life of the city.

Cali is famous for its attractive women and delicious food, which is known as Mecato. Pan de bono, Empanadas and exotic fruits, such as the aphrodisiacs Chontaduro and Borojó are specialties you’ll definitely have to try.

Most importantly however, Cali is a major center of Salsa dancing. Once you check out Cali’s nightlife you will soon get an idea of what the Salsa means to the people in Cali.

For more information go to:

<http://www.cali.gov.co>

### 2.1 Quick Facts

Population	Cali	2.3 million
	Valle de Cauca	4.4 million

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

## The City of Cali



Area	584 km <sup>2</sup>
Altitude	995 m above sea level

### 2.2 Climate

We have heard people say that Cali is an abbreviation of the word “caliente”.

Considering an annual average temperature range of 20°C (68°F) to 34°C (93°F), frequently rising up to even 37°C (99°F), this is a very figurative expression. During your stay here, you might also experience heavy rainfall, especially in November and December, and occasional intense storms.

In order to get out of the routine, one can find interesting sites and a milder climate only 20 minutes out of town, where temperatures range between 15°C (59°F) and 20° (68°F).



UAO Campus

Therefore we recommend you:

DO bring some warmer clothes for unpredicted weather changes as well as for trips where it can be considerably cooler, but in general you can stick with lightweight summer clothing.

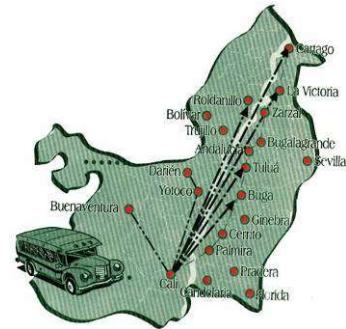
### 2.3 Means of Travel

If you decide to make a trip to one of Colombia’s major cities you can take a bus from the Terminal, which is located at the corner of Calle 25/Ave. 2N. Buses for regional connections leave from first floor, the ones for overland, interurban connections from second floor.

Information: 668-3655 or 667-6068

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

## The City of Cali



### Distances

From Cali to	Distance	Hours	Bus Ticket
Armenia	195 km	1 ½ h	US\$5
Bogotá	393 km	11 h	US\$ 20
Buenaventura	140 km	3 h	US\$ 4
Ibagué	298 km	7h	US\$ 11
Medellín	456 km	9 h	US\$ 15-20
Pasto	410 km	8 h	US\$ 15
Pereira	234 km	5 h	US\$ 9
Popayán	135 km	2 h	US\$ 5
<b>From Bogotá to</b>			
Bucaramanga	904 km	10 h	US\$ 18
Tunja	631 km		US\$ 7
<b>From Medellín to</b>			
Cartagena	1.112 km	12h	US\$ 25
Santa Marta	1.321 km	15h	US\$ 32

Although this is a nice way to get to know the country, we recommend you to take a plane when going on a trip. To begin with, this is much faster, and secondly it is the safest way to travel in Colombia.

Tours are offered by:

- [www.presidencia.gov.co/vivecolombia](http://www.presidencia.gov.co/vivecolombia)

Here you can check out the latest prices for domestic flights:

- <http://www.aerorepublica.com.co> (Colombian Airline Aero Republica)
- <http://www.avianca.com.co> (Colombian Airline Avianca)
- <http://www.satena.com> (Colombian Airline Satena)

- <http://www.evasions.com/airlines5.htm> (South American Airlines Website)

## 2.4 How to find your way in Cali

We do not want you to get lost. Here is how it works...

Streets proceeding from North to South are called “Calles”, the ones going from East to West “Carreras”. From Calle 1 in the outermost West, the counting continues to go eastwards. Carrera 1 is located in the center of Cali, and counts up heading southwards.

North - Heavy industry  
Airport  
Bars, Clubs and Restaurants  
South - Universities  
East - Industry  
West - Zoo  
Restaurants and Bars  
Center - Commercial and Financial

## 2.5 Transportation – How to get around in Cali

### Bus

The cheapest way to get around in Cali is to take the bus. The system might be antique as the construction of a modernized transportation system is still in progress, but it is definitely unique and very original.

There are several bus companies taking different routes, which all together form a network covering almost the entire city. What route a bus takes - that is a list of the bigger places it passes - is displayed on a plastic sign in the left-bottom corner of the windshield. Buses heading to the UAO usually have “Autónoma” on one of their signs. If you cannot figure out whether the bus you are about to take takes you to your destination stop the bus and ask the driver.

To get on a bus you don't have to look for a bus stop, even though they exist. You can stop a bus wherever and whenever just by raising your hand.

The current tariff for riding any bus of any company is 1.200 \$COP, no matter what your destination is. Once you have entered a bus through the front door you give the money directly to the bus driver.

To get off a bus you push a little button that is usually located close to the door, and signals the bus driver to stop. And again, you can get off wherever and whenever, which is very convenient.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

### The City of Cali



For your own security it is recommended that you take a seat behind the driver in one of the front rows. Don't necessarily get out your wallet. It is better to have some change in your pocket to pay the bus fare. On the bus, keep your bag in front of you.

#### Taxi

Taxis are yellow in Colombia. You can flag down a taxi anywhere in the city. Make sure the taxi has a sign that says "Placa" or "Movil". Taxis are numbered. When you call a taxi they tell you what number they are sending you. Only take the taxi with that number. Drivers do not expect a tip. Don't slam the doors, taxi drivers get angry with that!

Minimum	2500 \$COP (44 units)
Night surcharge	600 \$COP
Out-of-city surcharge	2000 \$COP
North of Cali to UAO	12000 \$COP
South of Cali to UAO	7000 \$COP

Phone numbers of Movil Taxi companies:

- 555 55 55
- 444 44 44
- 881 88 88

#### 2.6 Cali – Cultural

Cali has a vibrant street life that offers visitors and residents innumerable choices for recreation and entertainment. Several museums, theatres, movie theatres, restaurants, as well as clubs and discotheques featuring live bands are scattered all over the city. If you want to do something more adventurous, check out the horse riding trail, or the hiking and water sports recreational areas.

The Municipal Government and bi-national associations based in Cali organize cultural events throughout the year, as well.

#### Museums

##### La Tertulia Modern Art Museum

Av. Colombia No. 5-105 Oeste

Phone: 8932941



Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 3:00 to 7:00 pm

This museum is one of the best pieces of the city's modern architecture. Painting and sculpture exhibitions are displayed, as well.

La Tertulia

La Merced Archeological Museum

Carrera 4 No. 6-59

Phone: 8893434

"Federico Carlos Lehmann Valencia" Natural Science Museum

Carrera 2 Oeste No. 7-18

Phone: 8930982

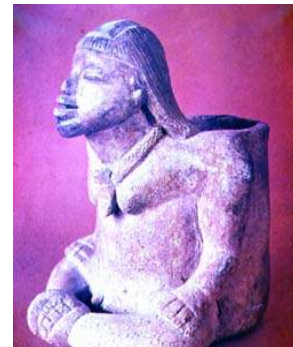
Open Mondays through Fridays, 8:00 am to 12:30 pm and from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. It has a collection of 700 pieces, which represent all the fauna existing in Valle del Cauca, an archeological exhibition, ethnological samples, a room of snails and mollusks, and a room showing insects from southwestern Colombia.

Museo del Oro – Gold Museum

Calle 7 No. 4-69, Banco de la República

Phone: 8834353

Open Mondays through Saturdays, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Gold smithy, pottery pieces, and other samples of regional indigenous cultures are the highlights in this museum.



Exhibition in the  
Gold Museum

Museo Nacional del Transporte

Phone: 6511154/8821525

[www.museodetransporte.org](http://www.museodetransporte.org)

## 2.7 Restaurants

There are a lot of restaurants located in the neighborhood of “Granada” and in the western part of the city. Food courts in malls are very popular, as well. They offer everything from hot dogs to Chinese food at reasonable prices to a wide audience. You will be stunned by how many different options there are to go out for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Fast food (up to 15.000 \$COP)

- Corral (Hamburger)
- Clowns (Sandwiches)
- Crepes & Waffles (Crepes and ice cream)
- Karen’s Pizza (Pizza)
- Frisby (Chicken)

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

### The City of Cali



#### Middle Class (15.000 – 25.000 \$COP)

- Primos (Special hamburgers and salads)
- Café Mulato (Pizza, International)
- Leñas y Carbon (Grilled food and salad bar)
- Salerno (Italian food, chicken)
- Taisú (Asian food)

#### Upper Class (starting at 25.000 \$COP)

- M (International)
- Granada Faro (International)
- Kyoto (Japanese)
- El Emperador Chino (Chinese cuisine)

## 2.8 Shopping

The two biggest shopping malls in Cali are Chipichape in the North and Unicentro in the South. Unlike most European or American malls the ones in Colombia are often outdoor malls with indoor stores. There are also bars and restaurants in there that are still open passed the hours of the regular department stores, boutiques and super markets.

#### ○ Chipichape Plaza Shopping

Cl 38N 6N-35

Phone: 6592199

[www.chipichape.com](http://www.chipichape.com)

#### ○ Unicentro Cali

Cl 5 Cruce Av Pasoancho

Phone: 3396626

[www.unicentro.com](http://www.unicentro.com)



Shopping Center  
"UNICENTRO"

#### ○ Cosmocentro

Located between the Cl 5a and Av Roosevelt

#### ○ Palmetto Plaza

Cl 9#48-81 Centro Comercial Palmetto

#### ○ Unico Outlet Center

Located in the north of Cali. Cl 55 Cra 3

## 2.9 Entertainment

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE  
The City of Cali



For the latest news on what is going on in Cali's nightlife check out the local websites [www.caliescal.com](http://www.caliescal.com) and [www.calibuenanota.com](http://www.calibuenanota.com)  
We are sure students on campus know where to go, as well.

Places that are worth a visit...

- Take a ride in the Chiva, a two-in-one bus and bar driving through Cali with on-board live music. Makes stops at various clubs and bars on the way.
- The Cabalgata. Go on a horse ride with friends, and enjoy the beautiful surrounding areas of Cali.



"La Cabalgata" during the Cali Fair in December

- The zoo is located by the riverside and has over 270 animals of different species.  
[www.zoologicodecali.com](http://www.zoologicodecali.com)



- The Botanic Garden is located next to the zoo. And if you like exotic flowers, you should visit the Orquideorama that displays an orchid exposition and tropical plants.

- The Pance River with its recreational area Parque de la Salud is a nice place to relax.
- Lean back, and watch a movie in one of the following theatres:
  - Múltiplex Chipichape (Avenida 6 Norte #37N-25)

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

### The City of Cali

- Múltiplex Cosmocentro (Calle 5A No. 50-103)
- Multiplex Unicentro (Cra. 100 N°5-169)
- Multiplex Palmetto Plaza (Cl 9#48-81)

See also: <http://www.cinecolombia.com.co>

Prices range between US\$ 3.20 and US\$ 4.60



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

## The University



### 3. The University

Since 1969 Universidad Autónoma de Occidente has had a recruiting area, which covers a great part the Colombian southwest and coffee zone. Counting about 650 professors and 7.700 students, Universidad Autónoma de Occidente offers fifteen undergraduate programs in its five faculties:

Social Communication/Journalism, Arts, Engineering, Economics and Business, Basic Science and Humanities.



In addition to the academic programs, UAO offers its students various options to participate in Intramural sports groups, in which they can compete on team and individual levels, as well as Arts and Culture clubs, programs such as the “School of Leadership”, and the support of our Students Orientation center.

Within an area of 10.000 square meters, advanced laboratories accommodate our students with the latest technology. Our goal is to help them develop a high level of proficiency in what they chose as a career. Therefore, our library has established a broad network of information systems that provide access to local and international platforms.



UAO campus is equipped with a TV studio, in which several news programs are produced and broadcasted to the entire country. This sets a perfect stage for our journalism program.

Together with many other universities UAO is located in the southern part of Cali. The campus is connected to public transportation, shopping malls and principle

roads.

#### 3.1 Academic Calendar

The Academic Year is divided into two semesters of four months each. The first semester starts in the third week of January, and ends at the end of May.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE  
The University



Summer break is in June and July, during which time summer courses are offered, as well. The second semester begins in the second week of August proceeding until the second week of December. Students are dismissed for Christmas break until the middle of January.

Semester 1	<p>January 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Week: Break 3<sup>rd</sup> Week: Orientation for new students Last Week: Begin of 1<sup>st</sup> period of semester</p> <p>May 2<sup>nd</sup> Week: Last week of courses 3<sup>rd</sup> Week: Final exams Last Week: Begin of intermediate period</p>
Summer Courses	<p>July 3<sup>rd</sup> Week: Last week of courses Last Week: Final exams</p>
Semester 2	<p>August: 1<sup>st</sup> Week: Orientation for new students 2<sup>nd</sup> Week: Begin of 2<sup>nd</sup> period of semester</p> <p>November: Last Week: Last week of courses</p> <p>December: 1<sup>st</sup> Week: Final Exams 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> week: Christmas Break</p>

### 3.2 Secure Campus

For the sake of our student's safety, a team of security guards supervises the entire campus. At every entrance you therefore need to show your students ID.

### 3.3. The International Office

The International office is your "person" to talk to in any matter. We arrange an introduction week for you, help you to enroll in your courses, advise you in planning trips and provide you with all information that you find important. It is our job to make your stay in Cali as pleasant as possible. Furthermore, the

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

### The University



International Office is the place to go to for everyone who is interested in going abroad for an exchange program, and a meeting point for those who have already spent an academic semester in another country and would like to share their experience with other students.

Tel.: 3188000 Ext. 11210 or 11212

E-mail: [ori@uao.edu.co](mailto:ori@uao.edu.co)



### 3.4 Medical Insurance

The University policy requires all foreign students to have medical insurance ready at the day of their arrival. This is designed to help students avoid medical expenses in case of an illness or injury. If you need to consult a doctor very urgently there is always an on-campus medical service available for UAO students and employees.

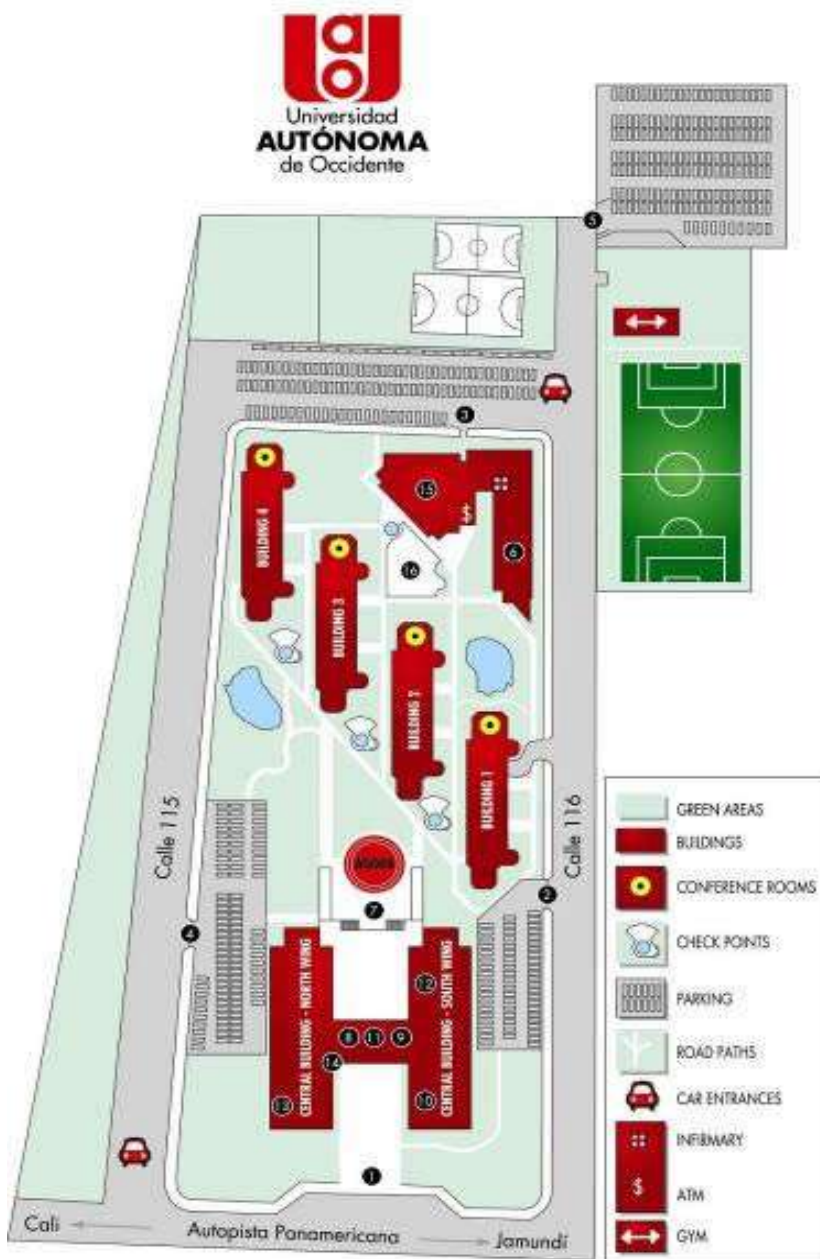
Tel.: 3188000 Ext. 13120

### 3.5 Students Welfare BIENESTAR

The department of BIENESTAR seeks to contribute to the formation of a community within the university and to sustain and enhance the quality of campus life. With this in mind, BIENESTAR promotes programs designed to meet the needs of students and employees, focusing on the social, physical and cultural development of every individual. At no additional cost, BIENESTAR offers various activities for students to take part in. These include sports and recreation, workshops focusing on cultural enrichment, and a psychological consulting service.



3.6 Map of the University



1. Main entrance
2. Employees
3. Parking
4. Entrance
5. South Entrance
6. Employees Parking
7. Entrance
8. Student parking lot
9. Bienestar
10. Basement entrance
11. Auditorium Xepia
12. Auditorium Quincha
13. Auditorium Yquinde
14. Salon Life
15. Bibliotheca
16. Registration office
17. Reception and Information
18. Cafeteria
19. Acacias Square

#### 4. Useful Information

##### 4.1 Visas and Necessary Documents

Please get in contact with the Colombian embassy in your country, and ask for detailed information about what kind of visa you need to be able to enter Colombia. If you attain a visa that is valid for more than six month (180 days) you need to register at the DAS (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad). The registration is free, and usually doesn't take very long. Once you have completed all the forms, you will receive a temporary ID for your stay in Colombia.

Further information is available on the following web pages:

<http://www.das.gov.co/english/extranjeria/>

<http://www.minrelext.gov.co/>

<http://www.colhouston.org> (good overview about visas)

##### 4.2 Immunizations

Standard immunizations for tropical countries like Colombia are Tetanus, Diphtheria and Hepatitis A. Particularly for Colombia, it is strongly advised to get immunization to prevent Yellow fever, Hepatitis B, typhoid fever and rabies. Ask your doctor for detailed information.

##### 4.3 Lodging

The International office provides lodging for all foreign students. You can either choose to live with a family, which is a good way to get to know Colombian customs, or decide to rather share an apartment with other international students. Students living with a family will be charged US\$ 87 monthly, including laundry and ironing services. The monthly rent for a furnished apartment shared with other students is US\$ 110. All places that we offer you to live in are located close to principal roads that connect to the UAO.

##### 4.4 Living Costs

Bus fare:	US\$ 0.44 one way/ monthly: US\$ 18
Lunch at the cafeteria:	US\$ 1.60 per menu/ monthly: about US\$ 32
Bottle of Coke:	US\$ 0.57
Bread:	US\$ 0.70
A slice of Pizza:	US\$ 0.86
Milk:	US\$ 0.70/liter

Meat:	US\$ 4.00 Kilo
Eggs:	US\$ 0.80 dozen
Water:	US\$ 0.55 a bottle
Box of Cereal:	US\$ 3.95

Movie tickets:	US\$ 3.30
Restaurants:	US\$ 6-10

## In Bars and Disco:

Entrance:	US\$ 2-4
Cocktail:	US\$ 6
Beer:	US\$ 1-2
Bottle of "Aguardiente":	US\$20
Bottle of "Tequila":	about US\$ 32

Most students' monthly expenses add up to about US\$ 320, including housing, meals, transportation and entertainment.

## 4.5 Important phone numbers:

International Code for Colombia: +57

Area code for Cali: 2

University UAO: +57 (2) 3188000  
 International Office: Ext. 11210  
 Email: [ori@uao.edu.co](mailto:ori@uao.edu.co)

Security Office: Ext. 12310  
 Bienestar: Ext. 13030

Police: 112  
 Firefighter: 119  
 Red Cross: 132



## 4.6 Interesting Web Portals

Entertainment:

[www.caliescali.com](http://www.caliescali.com)

<http://www.calibuenanota.com/>

<http://www.terra.com.co/cali/>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE  
Useful Information



Newspapers:

[www.elpais.com.co](http://www.elpais.com.co) (Cali)

<http://www.eltiempo.com/> (Bogota)

<http://www.elespectador.com/> (Bogota)

<http://www.elmundo.com/> (Medellín)

Government:

<http://www.cali.gov.co/> (of Cali)

Traveling:

[www.presidencia.gov.co/vivecolombia](http://www.presidencia.gov.co/vivecolombia)

<http://www.virtualtourist.com>

<http://www.bogota.gov.co>

#### 4.7 Consulates

Embassy	Direction	Telephone
Denmark	Av.4N #4-46	6614368
El Salvador	Carrera 5 #12-16 Of. 908	8858989
Ecuador	Calle 19N #2 <sup>a</sup> -29 Of. 2302	6612264
España	Calle 6 #3-34.Centro Histórico.	817085 821055 Fax: 881302
Finland	Calle 3 <sup>a</sup> Oe #4 <sup>a</sup> -15	8938216
France	Av. 3 N #8-24 Of. 405	6531208
Germany	Calle 1B #66B-29	3238402 3234435
Great Britain	Av.4N #5N-20	6536089
Haiti	Carrera 4 #11-33 Of 508	8842326
Italy	Calle 20 #8 <sup>a</sup> -34	8831445
Lebanon	Calle 39 #2-37	4451844
Netherlands	Av2AN #9-09	6531374
Panama	Av6 N #25-58 P-3	6676261
Peru	Av7N #24N-57	6602052
Switzerland	Av4N #3-33	6534793
Uruguay	Cl 67N #8-65	6654115

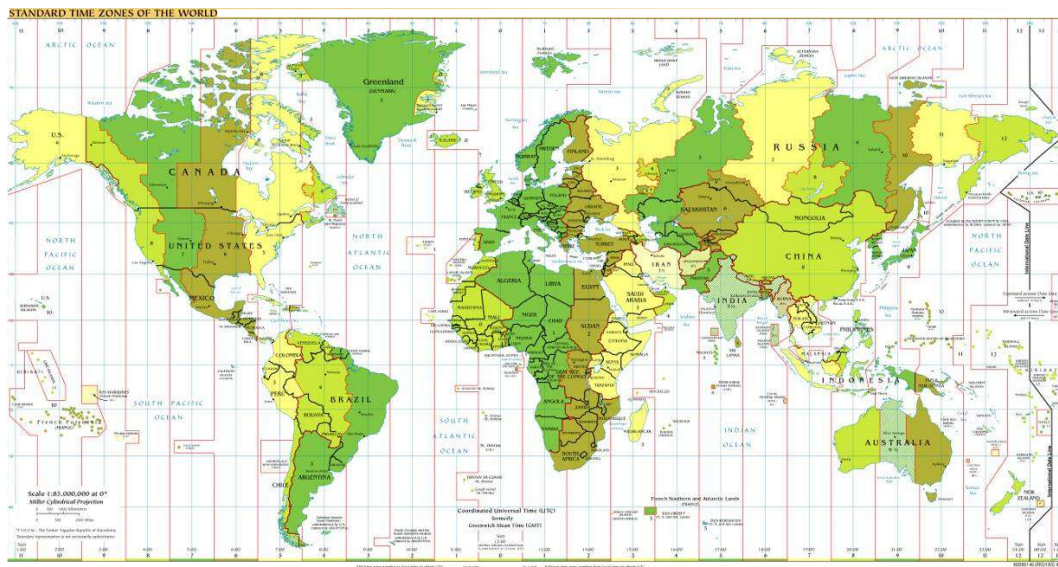
#### 4.8 Banks

To get cash use the ATM machine on campus or the ones in shopping malls. Again, the daily withdrawal limit is 1.000,000 \$COP (US\$230). Try to avoid using ATM machines in the streets since there is no security staff to guard them.

#### 4.9 Electricity

The electrical currents throughout Colombia is 110V, 60 cycles AC., but please note this refers to main towns and hotels, whilst in more remote areas, electricity is produced by a generator and is only provided for a certain number of hours per day. Plugs are the two-pin American flat type, so we recommend taking a conversion plug.

#### 4.10 Time Difference UTC -5 (UTC-6 during summer time)



#### 4.11. Bi-national Associations

Here is a list of organizations that settled here to enhance the relationship between Colombia and their particular countries, and to function as a link between their countries and their citizens that live in Colombia.

- Alianza Francesa de Cali: [www.alianzafrancesa.org.co](http://www.alianzafrancesa.org.co)
- Centro Cultural Colombo Americano: [www.colomboamericano.org](http://www.colomboamericano.org)
- Asociación Colombo Japonesa: [asojaponesa@telesat.com.co](mailto:asojaponesa@telesat.com.co)
- Fundación Cultural Colombo-Alemana – FCCA: [fcca@telesat.com.co](mailto:fcca@telesat.com.co)
- Fundación Hispanoamérica: [fundhispano@emcali.net.co](mailto:fundhispano@emcali.net.co)
- Circolo Italiano: [circoloitalianocali@yahoo.it](mailto:circoloitalianocali@yahoo.it)

## 5. Arrival

In order to go have enough time for the orientation proceedings, plan to arrive at least three days before the beginning of the semester.

### 5.1 Immigration

After arriving at Bogotá airport you go through the immigration procedure, which simply consists of having your passport with your student visa ready to hand. You will receive a stamp dated with the day of your arrival. If your visa says you are staying longer than 180 days you will receive an additional stamp meaning you have to go to the DAS to get registered in Colombia. The International Relations Office will help you with that. Make sure to have a document confirming your blood type, two copies of your passport, and 6 passport-sized photographs.

### 5.2 Transportation from the Airport

Please let us know the exact time and place of your arrival to make sure we can pick you up.

### 5.3 How to get to the UAO during Orientation

During orientation you will be picked up at your house by one of our students, who will show you how to use the bus system, how to take taxis and everything else that is important to know.

## 6. Being safe in Colombia

Is Colombia one of the most dangerous countries in the world? Travel warnings and cases of abduction are certainly reasons to ask this question. But in consideration of the fact that every year dozens of foreign exchange students come to Cali and eventually return safely to their countries, it is inadequate to panic. Cali is a city of 2.3 people and not more or less dangerous than any other big city in South America. Problems that affect the city are rather poverty and unemployment than guerilla and drug war. Therefore, everyone, including the Caleños, is advised to take some basic precautions.

### 6.1 Dos and Don'ts

#### In the streets

- Don't wear expensive jewelry.
- Keep your credit cards at a place separate from your wallet.
- Only carry around as much money as you need for the purpose of your trip.
- If you happen to have a bigger amount of money on you, try to hide it in different places.

#### ATM machines

- Don't use the ATM machines in the streets, as they are unprotected.
- Use the ATM machines on campus or in shopping malls.
- Always try to get cash at an ATM machine that is in a separate room, which you can enter alone.

#### Bus

- Pay the bus fare with some small change that you have ready at hand when you get on the bus.
- Keep your bag in front of you.
- If you notice somebody is observing you get off the bus and take another one.

#### In general

- Avoid demonstrations and political gatherings.
- Never be in the possession of drugs, especially cocaine and its derivatives.

- Don't accept drinks or cigarettes from strangers as they may be laced with a tasteless and odorless drug.
- Always be with friends or acquaintances.

### Phone cards and mobile phones

Most people use mobile phones with prepaid phone cards. Phone cards are available in retail stores and sometimes in the streets. To charge your account, simply follow the instructions on the back of the card.

- Cell phone companies in Colombia:

Comcel [www.comcel.com.co](http://www.comcel.com.co)



Ola [www.ola.com.co](http://www.ola.com.co)



Movistar (Bell South) [www.movistar.com.co](http://www.movistar.com.co)



### 6.2 Safety Map

This is a safety map of Colombia. The dark areas are generally considered unsafe.



## 7. Traveling in Colombia

Time passes fast, and there is a lot to see in Colombia. So, travel as much as you can while you are here. The best way to plan a trip is to read a travel guide. Whenever you intend to travel outside of Cali, please let us know. We will be able to give you detailed information about interesting places and safety issues.

### 7.1. Travel Guides

- Lonely Planet – Colombia (in English)  
Krzysztof Dydyniski (Paperback - June 1, 2003)  
ISBN: 0864426747
- Auto Guía Turística de Colombia 2004 (in Spanish)  
25<sup>th</sup> Edition  
ISSN: 0121-9642

### 7.2 Places in Cali

- At the end of every year, Cali celebrates “La Feria de Cali” (the Cali Fair). For five days in December the world’s industry focuses on Santiago de Cali – together with the many thousands visitors who congregate here. One can for example, witness bullfights with some of the world’s best matadors. Other entertainment options to choose from are Salsa concerts, fashion shows, parades, international food festivals, and sporting events.

More Information available on:

<http://www.cali.gov.co/publico2/feria/fering.htm>

- Another landmark of the city is the Statue of Belalcazar, which is the symbol of Cali showing the founder of the city. From there you have a nice view on Cali.
- The colonial-style church of San Antonio is still well preserved until today. It was constructed in 1747. Its major altar is a baroquean piece of jewel.



### 7.3 Places in the surrounding areas of Cali



- The Lago Calima is one of the most popular recreational areas that offer water sports activities. It takes about an hour and a half to get there.

- A three-hour bus ride will take you to “El Parque del Café”, a beautiful garden park close to the city of Armenia. Following a trail through the forest you will very likely pass by a giant bamboo called Guadua.



- Popayán, the capital of the Cauca department, is located at the foot of the Pearce Volcano in southwestern Colombia. It is considered an important trading center of the surrounding agricultural area. The dominating industries flour milling, tanning, and the manufacture of fiber products, shoes, clothing, and bricks. As it has been a religious and intellectual center since colonial times, the city features old monasteries, a cathedral, colonial houses, and museums. During the holy week, when the solemnity of catholic traditions is performed to evoke the dead and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Popayán is known as the holy city.



### 7.4 Places in Colombia

Bogotá is located on an elevated plain, the "Sabana de Bogotá" It is the political, economic and cultural center of Colombia. Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada founded it on the 6th of August 1538. In 1830 it became the capital of what is now the Republic of Colombia.

Bogotá is a dynamic city in permanent expansion. It's considered to have about 8 million inhabitants (about a fifth of Colombia). Considering the innumerable



cultures that came together in Bogotá the city is a real melting pot. <http://www.bogota.gov.co>

At the Colombian stretch of the Pacific coast you can find the largest and most dazzling beaches, wild jungle habitats, natives who still perform their ancient traditional cultures, but also modern life, as we know it.



- Juanchaco Beach at the Pacific Coast is a beautiful place, located just three hours from the port of Buenaventura and five hours from Cali. The only way to get there is by boat because yet there are no roads connecting to Buenaventura built due to the wild and rough terrain of the jungle.

- Cartagena, also known as Cartagena de Indias, is a large seaport at the north coast of Colombia. Founded in 1533 by Don Pedro de Heredia, and named after Cartagena, Spain, it was a major center of early Spanish settlement in the Americas, and continues to be an economic hub as well as a popular tourist destination.



- In the region where once the pre-Colombian culture San Augustin settled, you can still see the relicts of their civilization in the form of amazing statues. The nearby “Parque Archeológico” provides you with information about pre-Colombian artifacts. Off the beaten path within this region there is an attraction called “Anillo Turístico”, consisting of two giant waterfalls cutting into a massive rock.



Statue in San Antonio

- San Andres is a little island close to the coast of Nicaragua but yet it belongs to Colombia. It is the perfect place to relax, to escape to the beach and soak in the sun. It



also great for diving – there are various diving school offering trips to beautiful coral sites in the Caribbean Sea.

- Medellín is Colombia's second largest city, and a major manufacturing and industrial area. It is also known as a commercial flower-growing region, which is famous for its gorgeous orchids. Every year in August they are cherished in a staggering parade, "La Feria de las Flores." Among a lot of traditional music, dances and cultural events the "Desfile de Silleteros is considered to be one of the highlights of the festive parade. In that, the so-called "campesinos" come walking down from the mountains carrying flowers into the "City of eternal spring." Medellín receives its picturesque from its clean and homey appearance. The historic bond to the former Medellín cartel has been dissolving throughout the last decades. After the death of its leader Pablo Escobar the city has steadily improved and become a modern metropolis.



- Leticia, capital of the state of Amazonas, is a small 40,000 people town located to the left bank of the Amazon River. It is Colombia's southernmost town, and has the only major port along the river. Because of its privileged position as a triple frontier (Peru, Colombia, Brazil) and being very close to a tributary river called Javary, Leticia/Tabatinga can serve as the perfect base for eco-tourist activities as well as for studies of wildlife and flora in the Amazon region. It can also be the perfect starting point for visiting indigenous tribes, such as the Tikunas, Yaguas, Huitotos and Boras in the Amazonas region. There are no possibilities to travel on roads or rivers; the only way to get there is plane.



Amazonas River in Leticia