

## The Perfect Girl's Weekend in Cartagena



Photo: Courtesy of Hotel Tcherassi

It's to women what the phrase "road trip" is to men. A chance to let loose, get some sun, and shake your hips until your everyday cares are gone.

A girl's weekend in Cartagena, the ancient city on the Colombian coast, is the destination you didn't know you'd been looking for. It's long been a vacation spot for the South American elite and for European boys out on a lark, and we think it's time the Americans got in on the action. Along with our local expert, fashion designer and hotelier Silvia Tcherassi, we've planned the perfect weekend for you and yours:



Photo: Courtesy of Hotel Tcherassi

**Tip from a local:** Even after years spent here, says Tcherassi, "Walking through the streets at around 5 o'clock in the afternoon, exploring every nook and cranny is my favorite thing to do in Cartagena."

**Where to eat:** Many of the best restaurants in Cartagena are hotel-based—[The Hotel Charleston Santa Teresa](#), Vera at the Tcherassi, and Carmen at [the Ananda](#) are all hotspots for Colombians and visitors alike. Other must-tries are [Mila](#) for breakfast and afternoon coconut shakes (they're really that good, and no one will tell if you spike it with rum), [Restaurant Arabe](#) for the Cartagenian take on Middle Eastern food, and [La Cevicheria](#), an Anthony Bourdain-approved ceviche spot, which is a staple here. Venture outside the city walls to [Socorro](#) in Getsemani, a backpacker's haven about a five minute cab ride away, and explore the wild graffiti decorating around the neighborhood after a late lunch.



Photo: Courtesy of Hotel Tcherassi

**Where to stay:** For a fashion lover, [Hotel Tcherassi](#) is a perfectly couture experience. With just seven luxe fashion-themed rooms and an amazingly attentive staff, you'll feel like you're staying in a private villa, whether you're sunbathing in the rooftop pool or having drinks next to the waterfall in the garden. For a more classic but still boutique feel, [Casa San Agustin](#) weaves rustic colonial touches with all the comforts of clean, modern luxury in your room. [Sofitel](#) and [Hilton](#) both have locations here as well—and the surprisingly well appointed Hilton is beachfront, something you don't get in the old city.



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**Tip from a local:** Tcherassi recommends eating local-style: A big Cartagenian-style breakfast, a simple lunch, and a light, late dinner—the days get too hot to stick with the northern norm!

**Where to shop:** We apologize in advance to your wallet, because Cartagena is a GREAT place to shop. [La Boh M](#), [OndadeMar](#), and [Beatriz Camacho](#) make it really difficult to come back with fewer than a dozen caftans, and the jewelry at [Mercedes Salazar](#) hits the perfect balance between tropical whimsy and "yes, I can actually wear this at home!" [Tcherassi's own boutique](#) is a luxurious version of these local staples, and fellow socialite Chiqui de Echavarría has stocked her store, [Casa Chiqui](#), with her incredible finds from Southeast Asia as well as curated picks from local artists all over South America. The perfect souvenir is a [colorful mochila bag](#) made by the Wayuu Indians—they're all over town, and finding your perfect one is like finding your soulmate.

**Tip from a local:** Tcherassi is a fashion authority in town, so take her advice:

“The ultimate daytime look in Cartagena a sheer cover-up over a swimsuit, Birkenstock sandals, a hat and a mochila bag. For an evening look, try a long silk maxi dress, gladiator sandals, a pretty clutch, and minimal makeup.”

**What to do:** Big attractions are religious and historical—the church of [San Pedro Claver](#) is home to a totally charming museum and a beautiful garden, and the gallery scene is small but vibrant. Cartagena is definitely a party town, so don't be surprised if you see some cute English fellows carrying sundowners around—follow them to the [Plaza Bolivar](#) for a drink, or hit [Don Juan](#) for drinks and apps to meet some charming locals. And if they spirit you off to [QuiebraCanto](#) or another Getsemani club for all-night salsa dancing? So much the better. Sunset cocktails at [Café del Mar](#) are a touristy must on your last night, to look out over the rooftops and enjoy the view.

**Tip from a local:** Tcherassi tells visitors, “Don't miss the street crafts and the [Cano Gallery](#)! I also love to take visitors to [Café Havana](#) for dancing.”