



FEBRUARY 2022 | VOL. 19

TOUR UPDATE



The Newsletter of mikesworldtour

Tour Highlight:

February 2022
Zipaquirá, Colombia



Salt-Bae's Paradise

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A QUICK HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, & SOCIAL OVERVIEW

(Saving full Colombia overview for Bogota semester review so I guess you will have to be patient and wait!) Zipaquirá is in the department (state) of Cundinamarca, but is technically part of the greater Bogota metropolitan area. It was inhabited in 1600 by Don oidor Luis Henríquez. Salt has always been a major factor within the city, and even caused residents to be removed in the city during the 1700s due to protests over their salt deposits being taken. The salt mines have been used since the pre-Colombian era by the Muisca Indigenous group. It was then exploited as a natural resource by the Spanish during colonization. The city has undergone many changes to its road structure and layout to accompany the thousands of tourists that come every year to visit the salt cathedral. The estimated population of the city is 130,000 people.

Zipaquirá, Colombia



Some quick tips for Zipaquirá :

- No matter what transportation you take here from Bogota ask them to drop you off at the Salt Cathedral because it is at the top of a hill and after you can walk to main square
- If you order an Uber back from Zipaquirá to Bogota the drivers will make you pay a price higher than what Uber lists, it is impossible to avoid so you kinda have to accept it

EXPERIENCES

Just a quick trip away from Bogota is a massive underground Salt Cathedral filled with massive crosses and attractions to spend time at during the day. If you have a few extra days while visiting Bogota this is a must visit!

SALT CATHEDRAL

The Salt Church is a Roman Catholic church that is located in a salt mine (that is still being used today) about 660 feet below the ground. Just from the salt in this mine, Colombia has a supply of salt that would last the country 500 years. It is split into 3 sections intended to mimic the birth, life, and death of Jesus. It is a place of pilgrimage for many as well. The church is still functioning and was built to provide a place of worship for the Halite mines. There was an old cathedral built in 1932, and in 1991 the government of Colombia decided to build the new church that is there today. Beyond the church under ground there are mines you can visit, shops, a movie theatre, as well as a museum.



Zipaquirá, Colombia



PLAZA MAYOR & CATHEDRAL DIOCESANA



As with most of Latin American towns, the main plaza in the city (Plaza Mayor) has the main church of the city. The plaza is filled with restaurants and shops on its surrounding sides. When I was here it was full of people enjoying the sun, taking photos, and just relaxing during the day. Historically, the main plaza was used for community gathering, and there were restrictions on its use. It is commonly an effect of Spanish colonialism where they brought this idea/trend (if that is what I wanna call it) to Latin America during the colonization.

ARCHEOLOGY MUSEUM



With over 3,500 pieces, the archeology museum in the city gives a lot to explore. It also explains how the pieces were used by people historically as well as the meaning of each of the pieces. It represents the pre-hispanic culture within Colombian which is extremely important to preserve the native heritage of the country. The museum includes pieces from 19 different cultural groups.

PLAZA DE LA INDEPENDENCIA

Originally named the Plaza Agustín Zapata, the main market in Zipaquirá was held in this square. The flags in the square have the dates of when various countries in Latin America (Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Peru) became independent from Spain. There is a statue of Antonio Nariño in the middle of the square who was a politician/military man that was key in Colombia and New Granada's (name for the region in colonization) at the time. His statue represents the human rights of the citizens freed from colonial rule and their liberty to govern themselves.



Zipaquirá, Colombia

IGLESIA LA CONCEPCIÓN



The Iglesia La Concepción is not particularly open for visitors although the church is stunning. Zipaquirá is like one giant hill with the salt mines at the very top. On top of the main city region is this church (side note the city's population is almost 150,000 which surprised me for being so much). From the front courtyard of the church provides stunning views of the city settled in the mountains. Although it is a minor trek up the streets... totally worth it!

I actually have no pictures of myself in Zipaquirá, and that is on purpose. Not too overshare too much medically (I just think this is really funny to be honest), but the picture of me the night before I was supposed to leave. I woke up the next morning with my face even more swollen, but was not in pain so I decided to go to the Salt Church and Zipaquirá anyways because I was really looking forward to it and did not want to waste the day. Although one side of my face looked like it weighed 2x the other I had a great day, and went to the doctor the next day got medicine and now look like a real person again! I guess you could say I made the right choice and it was all worth it. Shoutout First International Aid Clinic in Bogota for seeing me right away that day so I could recover before classes that week.



See You On the Next Stop on the Tour!