

## THIS IS WHO WE ARE

Colombia is located at the northern part of South America, on the border to Central America. 45 million people live there. The country has a very diverse population which reflects its colourful history: descendants of the original native inhabitants, Spanish colonizers, African slaves and twentieth-century immigrants from Europe and the Middle East have produced a rich cultural heritage. The official language is Spanish but in some regions indigenous languages are spoken. In parts of the Colombian highland for example, people speak Chibcha or Quechua - the language from descendants of the Incan empire.

The name of the country comes from Christopher Columbus, the famous adventurer and explorer of the American continent. It is historically proven that Columbus himself never stepped on Colombian earth, but rather opened the way for the many conquistadores who came in search of gold and emeralds. The conquistadores' desperate and often very bloody quest for gold was motivated by the legend of "El Dorado" - one of the most mysterious and inspiring legends in history.



### Legend of El Dorado

"El Dorado" means the "Golden One" in Spanish. The legend began with the story of a Colombian tribal chief of the Muiscas Indians who covered himself with gold dust and would dive into a lake of pure mountain water. On their arrival the Spanish conquistadores heard about the ritual. Among other rumours, the legend of "El Dorado" gradually arose. It was imagined to be a place of fabulous wealth - a kingdom, treasure, empire or valley hidden in the jungle of South America and home of this legendary golden tribal king. Ultimately, the search of "El Dorado" was a strong motive for the Spanish invaders to continue the conquest of the continent.



### Definition:

A legend is a popular story handed down from earlier times which may or may not be true.



### Activity: "Legends in my country"

The children in the class should think of a legend that is typical for their own region or country. Tell the story of this legend to your classmates! Paint a picture of it!

## THIS IS HOW WE LIVE

Reemberto and his family live in the countryside close to Bogotá. Since the highlands in Colombia are a very productive area people often cultivate coffee, sugar cane, rice, cocoa beans and corn. Especially the black coffee beans are world-famous and in high demand: Colombia is the second largest producer of coffee worldwide.

Unfortunately the cultivation of one plant has caused a lot of problems for the region. The coca plant can be processed into cocaine, a dangerous drug. Drug trafficking is a major problem and has led to permanent conflicts in the country among drug gangs, military and rebels.

The eastern half of the country is flat, covered with jungle and rich in water through the Amazon and Orinoco Rivers. This part of the country is inhabited mostly by isolated tropical-forest Indian tribes. Especially in the Amazonian part in the southeast of the country, there is a huge variety of animals and plants.



### Activity: Which animal do you know?

Take a look at the pictures: all these animals live in different parts of Colombia. Do you know what animals these are? Write down what's special about them!

## THIS IS HOW WE LIVE



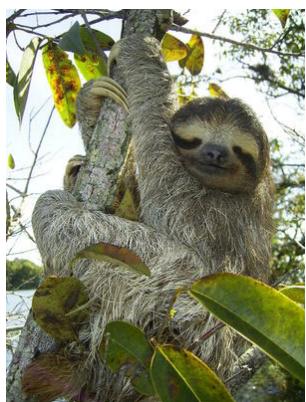
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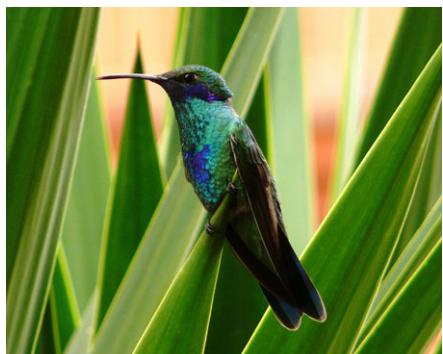
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(Pictures: Wikipedia, Flickr/Juliancamilof, Flickr/Hectormesa)



## THIS IS OUR SCHOOL

Primary education in Colombia is free and mandatory for nine years. The percentage of literacy is 93%, which is relatively high, but in some regions of the country it is hard for children to visit school. The armed conflict between government and rebels sometimes makes it impossible for children to reach school without being endangered. Some parents simply cannot afford the tuition or children have to work to support them. In the Amazonian part where very few people live, school can be reached only by water. Sometimes it takes up to 3 hours by canoe to get to class.



### Discussion: School Uniform - Boring or modern?

Do you have to wear school uniforms in your country?  
What are the advantages/disadvantages?



### Activity: Design your own imaginary school clothes!

Children love to dress up! Let them design the school uniform they would like to wear in classes.

## THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE DISH

Juan Sebastian's favourite dish is the "Bandeja Paisa". This is a very traditional and popular dish in Colombia. It comes from the northwestern part of Colombia - the region of the so-called "paisas", which probably refers to "paisano", the Spanish word for countryman. Many ingredients in the dish come directly from the region, like rice, beans, potatoes and corn.



Bandeja Paisa

(Picture: Wikipedia/Xixtas)



### Recipe for Bandeja Paisa:

#### What you need:

Rice, red beans, beef roast, tomato, small carrot, onion, garlic, salt, pepper, strips of pork belly, sausage (chorizo), arepa(Colombian corn tortilla), eggs, avocado

Rinse the beans before cooking. Place them in a pressure cooker half filled with water and a tablespoon of salt and pepper. Cook the beans for approximately 30 minutes. Meanwhile cut the tomato, carrot, onion and garlic. Then open the pressure cooker and place these ingredients in with the beans. Cook under pressure for another 20 minutes. Bandeja Paisa may be accompanied with grilled beefsteak, steamed white rice, deep fried pork belly, chorizo (a spice dried sausage), fried egg on top of the rice, avocado and arepa.

## THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE DISH



### Activity: Potato Print

What you need:

- Potatoes, poster paint colour
- Paper, cardboard, or wood
- sharp knife
- pencil

1. Cut potatoes in half.
2. Draw your design onto the potato with the pencil.  
Easy to handle are geometrical figures like stars, circles or rectangles.
3. Cut out the potato around the pencil line.  
Maybe an adult needs to help.
4. Place paint in tray or plate.
5. Press potato design into paint and firmly press onto paper.

To accomplish a textured effect let prints dry and add others on top in different colours.



## THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE GAME

### The heart of the Pineapple:

1. Choose a child to be the heart of the pineapple
2. The other children form a line holding hands
3. The child who is “the heart of the pineapple” stands in the middle while the line of the other children starts enwrapping “the heart of the pineapple”.
4. Everybody sings: “We roll up the pineapple, we roll up the pineapple...
5. When the line of children is completely enwrapped, everybody sings: “We roll up the pineapple, we roll up the pineapple ... and everybody is falling down.” Finally everybody is falling down.

The most popular sports in Colombia are soccer and cycling. Another traditional game in Colombia is Yermis - a variation of U.S. American baseball. It is played in parks, streets and in the green areas of Colombian cities.

## THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE SONG

The children of the Primary School in Las Minas sing the song “Colombia tierra querida“ performed by Cabas Andres, a popular Colombian pop musician. He is very much influenced by the so-called “Cumbia“. Here are the lyrics of the song:

*Colombia beloved earth*

*Colombia beloved earth hymn of faith and harmony  
Let's sing, let's sing together about peace and joy  
Let's live let's always live for our beloved homeland  
Your earth is a prayer and a ballad for life*

*Colombia, you grew with the power of your glory  
All America celebrates the prime of your history  
Let's live let's always live for our beloved homeland  
Your earth is a prayer and a ballad for life*

*Singing, singing I will live  
Colombia beloved earth  
Colombia, I love you, I adore you, I feel you*



**Cumbia** is originally a Colombian folk dance and dance music. It is Colombia's representative national dance and music. It originates from the Caribbean Coast with the city of Barranquilla as its center. Today traditional Cumbia is considered representative of the Colombian identity, but especially on the northern Caribbean coast. Typical instruments used in the Cumbia are drums, flutes, accordion and the maracas (a percussion instrument).

Some other musicians from Colombia might sound more familiar to you since they got famous beyond the boundaries of Latin America: for example Shakira or Juanes.



Shakira  
(Picture: Wikipedia/Alejandro Bárjenes)



Juanes  
(Picture: Wikipedia/Venex)