

Cornell University



Cornell's Adult University (CAU)

Colombia's River of Dreams

Cartagena to Barranquilla Aboard *AmaMelodia*

Accompanied by Charlie Green, PhD, Senior Lecturer,
Department of Literatures in English

December 30, 2025 – January 7, 2026

CRUISE HIGHLIGHTS

CRUISE with CAU fan favorite, author **Charlie Green, PhD**, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literatures in English, aboard the brand-new **AmaMelodia**, the first luxury riverboat to sail Colombia's legendary Magdalena River

RING in 2026 during a **special New Year celebration** with fellow guests aboard **AmaMelodia** in stunning **Cartagena**

PARTICIPATE in **optional creative writing sessions** with Charlie Green, capturing your impressions of landscapes that inspired **Gabriel García Márquez's** literary masterpieces

EXPERIENCE **San Basilio de Palenque**, the Americas' first legally free African settlement, where residents still speak *Palenquero*—the world's only Spanish-Bantú Creole language

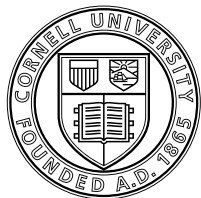
MEET master silver artisans in their **private Mompox workshops**, watching as they craft intricate filigree using techniques preserved from 16th-century Spain

EXPLORE the UNESCO-protected **Ciénaga de Pijiño** wetlands with a naturalist, spotting howler monkeys, neotropical cormorants, and diverse birdlife found nowhere else on Earth

WATCH **local dancers perform cumbia in El Banco**, its birthplace, where African courtship dances merged with Indigenous flutes and European accordions

NAVIGATE through **Nueva Venecia** with a local guide, discovering a remarkable floating village where 3,000 residents travel by canoe between stilted houses, churches, and even an indoor soccer field

CONCLUDE in **Barranquilla** with a special preview of its UNESCO-honored Carnival, savoring regional delicacies and performances during a festive farewell celebration



Cornell University

Dear Alumni, Family, and Friends,

Be among the first to cruise the Magdalena, Colombia's splendid river that inspired **Gabriel García Márquez's** magical realist novels, aboard the newly built luxury riverboat *AmaMelodia*. From **December 30, 2025, to January 7, 2026**, join Cornell's Adult University and **Charlie Green, PhD**, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literatures in English, for this eight-night New Year adventure from **Cartagena to Barranquilla**.

Charlie will connect Colombia's storied literary heritage to the Magdalena's tropical riverscapes and the region's Indigenous, Spanish, and African cultural influences. Enjoy optional creative writing sessions guided by Charlie, capturing the magic of the Magdalena as Colombian authors like García Márquez and **Fernando Vallejo** have done for generations.

Begin with an overnight hotel stay in Cartagena, the colorful Caribbean port with dazzling 17th-century churches and pastel-hued mansions. Then board *AmaMelodia* on New Year's Eve, counting down to 2026 in festive style. Over seven nights, *AmaMelodia* will dock in historic riverside villages, such as the UNESCO-recognized **San Basilio de Palenque**, the first legally free African settlement in the Americas. Learn the history of its residents who still speak *Palenquero*—the world's only Spanish-Bantú Creole language.

At **private performances and exclusive workshop visits**, meet the local artists bringing ancestral traditions of music, dance, and even silver filigree techniques dating to Moorish Spain into modernity. Witness dance and music styles like **cumbia**, which features African rhythms accompanied by Indigenous flutes and European accordions.

On **exclusive wildlife and birdwatching excursions**, join naturalists to spot howler monkeys, neotropical cormorants, parrots, and other species in one of Earth's most biodiverse wetland ecosystems. Conclude with **a private Carnival-inspired celebration** in Barranquilla, Colombia's "Golden Gate." Enjoy thrilling performances and a farewell feast of regional delicacies.

As this cruise is co-sponsored by Yale Alumni Academy, space is limited aboard the new, 32-cabin *AmaMelodia*, so we encourage you to book today. **To secure your place**, contact our tour operator Arrangements Abroad at 212-514-8921 or email trips@arrangementsabroad.com. We hope you join us this December for an unforgettable exploration of Colombia's greatest river.

Warmly,
CAU (Cornell's Adult University)
Alumni Affairs

TRAVELING WITH YOU



Charlie Green, PhD, is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literatures in English at Cornell, where he teaches creative writing and hosts the *Talking Poem Podcast*. On this journey, he will illuminate how the Magdalena River has shaped the nation's literary and artistic imagination. He

is the author of the new novel *The Shah of Texas* and the poetry collection *Feral Ornamentals*. He holds a B.A. from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, an M.A. from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a PhD from the University of Cincinnati.

Activity Level:



Pace Level:



Visit Arrangements Abroad's website for more information about Activity and Pace Levels at www.arrangementsabroad.com/faqs.

Colombia's River of Dreams

Cartagena to Barranquilla Aboard *AmaMelodia*

December 30, 2025 – January 7, 2026



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30: DEPARTURE / CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Arrive in the historic seaside city of **Cartagena**. Transfer to your hotel located within the walls of the Old City, with its colorful architecture and cobblestone streets. This evening, gather for a festive welcome reception in a colonial house featuring a dance performance. R

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31: CARTAGENA / EMBARK AMAMELODIA

Join an expert-led morning walk along Cartagena's centuries-old streets shaded by wooden balconies draped in pink bougainvillea.

Experience **Iglesia de San Pedro Claver**, a church completed in 1654, dedicated to the Spanish Jesuit who ministered to thousands of enslaved Africans between 1610 and 1650. View its interior, which features an Italian marble high altar, ornate stained-glass windows, African masks, pre-Columbian ceramics, and paintings chronicling Claver's ministry.

Savor Caribbean flavors at lunch before boarding the gleaming **AmaMelodia**. Meet a regional scholar who will trace the Magdalena River's role in Colombia's history—its trade routes, music, literature, and daily rhythms. Enjoy New Year's Eve festivities onboard this evening, counting down to 2026 with fellow guests. B,L,D

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1: SAN BASILIO DE PALENQUE / CALAMAR

In **San Basilio de Palenque**, King Benkos Biohó led 30 escaped slaves to establish the Americas' first legally recognized free Black settlement in 1691. Join a local social entrepreneur for a guided morning walk through this UNESCO World Heritage Site, where *Palenquero*, the world's only Spanish-Bantú Creole language, is still spoken today.

Meet the women preserving the traditions of their ancestors, from resistance strategies to culinary rituals, then take in a private concert.

Later, travel by *paolo* (a bicycle rickshaw built for two) through **Calamar**, an 1840s river settlement where the **Canal del Dique** branches from the Magdalena River. Coast past the white-walled **Iglesia de la Inmaculada Concepción** as your driver pedals down sun-baked streets. B,L,D

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2: SANTA BÁRBARA DE PINTO / SANTA CRUZ DE MOMPOX

Where the Cauca and Magdalena rivers meet, join a local guide to explore **Santa Bárbara de Pinto**, founded in 1741 as *Los Pintaos* after Spanish traders battled Chimila warriors.

Marvel at the two distinct towns that emerged from river floods: **Pinto Viejo**, home to the 1750 **Iglesia de Santa Bárbara**, where crowds gather each December for the patron saint's feast, and **Pinto Nuevo**, built 800 feet inland after the devastating 1916 flood split this once-thriving logging port in two.

In the afternoon, enter **Santa Cruz de Mompox**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known simply as Mompox. Walk past Mompox's preserved 17th-century merchant houses, where shared-roof hallways and *albarradas* (flood walls) are rare remnants of Spanish colonial river architecture. This evening, local musicians will treat you to a **private jazz performance**. B,L,D





SATURDAY, JANUARY 3: SANTA CRUZ DE MOMPOX

By the mid-16th century, Spanish metalsmiths had made Mompo a hub of precious metalwork, refining Arab filigree techniques honed for centuries on the Iberian Peninsula.

Even today, the ring of hammers echoes through Mompo as artisans stretch, twist, and flatten silver threads into filigree patterns, preserving a 500-year tradition. Meet master artisans and watch them shape silver into intricate filigree designs on a **private workshop visit**.

With a naturalist, navigate the **Ciénaga de Pijiño** wetlands, watching howler monkeys swing through the canopy and neotropical cormorants plunge for fish. Learn how this vast wetland sustains a complex web of life.

Upon return to Mompo, visit two 17th-century churches: the **Iglesia de Santa Bárbara** (1613), its yellow walls gleaming in the sun, and the **Iglesia de San Agustín** (1606), which houses an ornate altar. Later, savor local specialties, from creamy *capa* cheese to *butifarra soledaña*—Spanish-style sausage formed into bite-sized spheres. B,L,D

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4: SANTA CRUZ DE MOMPOX / EL BANCO

Travel through the **La Mojana** wetlands, a vast floodplain where the Magdalena River carves winding channels, en route to **El Banco**. In 1749, José Domingo Ortiz and a group of settlers founded El Banco at the confluence of the Magdalena and César rivers, a key crossroads for trade and travel.

El Banco is the birthplace of *cumbia*, which was first danced as an African courtship ritual before evolving into a double-beat rhythm further enriched by Indigenous flutes and European accordions. During dinner, watch local dancers bring *cumbia* to life during a **private performance**. B,L,D

MONDAY, JANUARY 5: MAGANGUÉ / CIÉNAGA

In **Magangué**, wake to the calls of tropical birds as you explore lush wetlands teeming with life. Enjoy a **guided birdwatching tour**, spotting species found nowhere



else in Colombia. Alongside an expert, scan the skies for hummingbirds, parrots, macaws, and other birds.

Glide past the stilted houses of **Ciénaga**, a floating town said to have inspired Gabriel García Márquez's dreamlike landscapes in his novels. B,L,D

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6: NUEVA VENECIA / BARRANQUILLA

Discover the floating village of **Nueva Venecia** ("New Venice"), where a local guide will lead you through stilted houses and canals in this remarkable waterborne community. Nueva Venecia's 3,000 residents travel by canoe between brightly painted structures.

Wooden bridges link the town's church, school, library, and even an indoor soccer field, all perched above the UNESCO-protected **Ciénaga Grande**, a vast wetland spanning from the Magdalena River to the Caribbean.

Parrots, Magangué



Sail into **Barranquilla**, Colombia's "Golden Gate," where the Magdalena River spills into the Caribbean. This evening, experience the vibrancy of Barranquilla's UNESCO-honored **Carnival** a month before the official holiday. Celebrate with a farewell event filled with *cumbia* and the flavors of *sancocho de guandú* (hearty meat-and-pea stew) and *bollos de yuca* (cassava dumplings). B,L,D

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7: BARRANQUILLA / DISEMBARK / RETURN

Disembark this morning and transfer to the Barranquilla or the Cartagena airport for your afternoon flight home. B

An optional postlude to Medellín is available from January 7–10, 2026. Details and pricing will be shared with confirmed guests at a later date.



Revelers, Baranquilla Carnival, photo courtesy of Colombia Travel

While Cornell is pleased to facilitate travel opportunities for its alumni and friends with tour operators that specialize in high-quality educational travel, please be aware that Cornell does not conduct, manage, or operate these travel experiences, or act as an agent for travelers interested in tours. Tour operators and travelers are responsible for making their own safety decisions concerning this travel, and, as a facilitator between travelers and the tour operators with whom travelers make arrangements for completing travel, Cornell's role and liability are strictly limited. Specific tour operator and national health and safety protocols will apply to each trip, and travelers should review all protocols and trip terms and conditions, including terms and conditions regarding cancellations, refunds, health and safety, and insurance prior to making a reservation. Cornell is not responsible for changes to trips or travel arrangements or for losses, expenses, damages, or injuries resulting from travel.

DISCLAIMER: This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Cornell's Adult University and Arrangements Abroad. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms.

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AMAMELODIA



Purpose-built for the Magdalena River, this eco-friendly new river ship balances spacious design with an intimate atmosphere, offering panoramic views at every turn. With three decks—Luna, Cumbia, and Salsa—AmaMelodia offers ample space to unwind, whether in the Sun Deck's plunge pool or the fitness room. Savor Latin American flavors and international classics in the Main Restaurant, or enjoy an al fresco dining experience under the stars. Designed for just 64 guests, AmaMelodia's 32 deluxe staterooms and suites all include air conditioning, river views, and AmaWaterways'

SOFITEL LEGEND SANTA CLARA CARTAGENA (OR SIMILAR)

Once a 17th-century convent, this meticulously restored hotel blends modern luxury with original colonial architecture, from arched walkways to stone courtyards. Stay in air-conditioned rooms featuring plush bedding and tranquil courtyard or city views. Relax at the spa, sip cocktails by the poolside bar, or enjoy the fitness center.

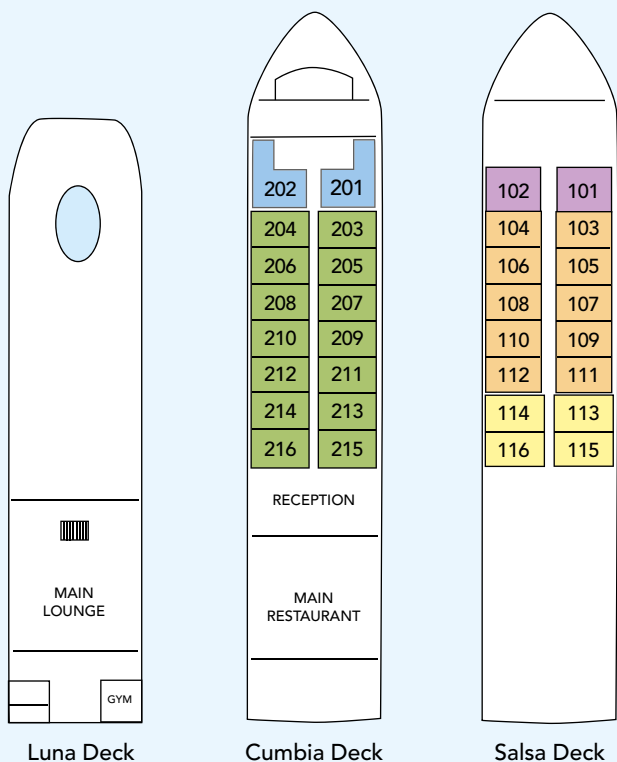


Sofitel Legend Santa Clara, Cartagena



Sofitel Legend Santa Clara, Cartagena

AMAMELODIA DECK PLAN



CORNELL'S ADULT UNIVERSITY COLOMBIA'S RIVER OF DREAMS DECEMBER 30, 2025 – JANUARY 7, 2026 RESERVATION FORM

To reserve a place, please call Arrangements Abroad at 212-514-8921 or 800-221-1944; email: trips@arrangementsabroad.com; fax: 212-344-7493; or complete and return this form with your deposit of \$1,000 per person (of which \$500 is non-refundable for administrative fees) payable to Arrangements Abroad. Mail to: Arrangements Abroad, 260 West 39th Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018-4424.

CRUISE RATES (Per Person)

Cabins	Decks	Double	Single
113 – 116 Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.	Salsa	\$7,999	\$11,599
103 – 112 Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.	Salsa	\$8,999	\$14,999
203 – 216 Twin Balcony, 237 sq. ft.	Cumbia	\$9,999	\$16,999
101 & 102 Junior Suites, Twin Balcony, 275 sq. ft.	Salsa	\$13,999	Inquire
201 & 202 Junior Suites, Twin Balcony, 318 sq. ft.	Cumbia	\$15,999	Inquire

RATES INCLUDE

- One night hotel accommodations in Cartagena; seven nights cabin accommodations aboard *AmaMelodia*
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner). Bottled water, soft drinks, juices, and coffee/tea with all meals; wine and beer with all meals aboard *AmaMelodia*
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
- Airport/hotel/pier/airport group transfers for participants on arrival and departure days
- Taxes, service, and portage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers; customary shipboard gratuities

NOT INCLUDED IN RATES International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than what is noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; optional Medellín postlude; airport transfers other than for those on suggested flights; excess baggage; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

Name(s) in full as on passport(s). Please print.

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone (home)

(business)

Fax

E-mail

ACCOMMODATIONS

AmaMelodia cabin preference (1) _____ (2) _____

I wish to share a cabin with _____

FORM OF PAYMENT

- Enclosed is my check (payable to Arrangements Abroad)
 Debit card Credit card Wire transfer

Name on credit/debit card

Credit/debit card number

3- or 4-digit security code

Expiration date

I/We confirm that I/we have carefully read and agree to the *Terms & Conditions* of this Program (see www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms to review or call for a copy). I/We agree to full payment 120 days prior to departure. Each participant must sign below.

Signature (required)

Date

Signature (required)

Date