

1819 - 2019: 200 years of Colombia

Colombia has had a rollercoaster 200 years of history. Check out some key moments...
- OLI PRITCHARD

1819 - 1831
GRAN COLOMBIA

This was an expansive territory that stretched from southern Central America to northern South America. The name is used to help historians distinguish between "The Republic of Colombia," which was the territory's official name and is now Colombia's official name.



1830
First military coup, by Rafael Urdaneta.

1832-1858
NUEVA GRANADA

This was a republic consisting of present-day Colombia and Panama. It was formed after Gran Colombia broke apart, following the secession of parts of Venezuela and Ecuador. The territory also included parts of Costa Rica, Peru, Nicaragua, and Brazil.



1851
Slavery abolished.

THE CASE OF THE VASE

On 20 July, 1810 – nine years before full independence – local Criollos (people of Spanish heritage born in the Americas) used an insult over a flower vase as a reason to riot against the ruling Spaniards.

This forced the Viceroy to agree to limited independence. The rest, as they say, is history.



1819
Battle of Boyacá - end of Spanish rule.

Famous five



Simón Bolívar 1783-1830

This Venezuelan military and political leader, often simply known as 'the liberator', is commemorated all over Colombia for liberating the country from the Spanish. Famously triumphing in the Battle of Boyacá in 1819, he later led the country before dying in Santa Marta, where his tomb still stands. See his statues in many plazas around the country.



Policarpa Salavarrieta 1795-1817

Also known as 'La Pola', Bolívar's lover is considered a heroine of Colombian independence. She spied for revolutionary forces and was captured by Spanish Royalists and executed for high treason. Her statue stands on Las Aguas, near to Los Andes University, and she can also be found on old \$10,000 notes.



Gustavo Rojas Pinilla 1900-1975

As Army General, he led a successful coup d'état in 1953, putting an end to *La Violencia*. As the 19th president of Colombia, he imposed martial law and began a short dictatorship. During his rule, he gave women the right to vote, introduced the television and constructed several hospitals, amongst other achievements. His statue is, predictably, on Avenida Rojas with Calle 68.



Jorge Eliécer Gaitán 1903-1948

One of the most charismatic leaders of the Liberal Party, Gaitán was known for criticising the ruling classes and promising greater equality and land reform. He was assassinated in his second presidential campaign in 1948, which triggered the famous *Bogotazo*, the citywide riots that began *La Violencia* which lasted over a decade. His plaque is, ironically, by the McDonalds on Séptima with Aguas.



Gabriel García Márquez 1927-2014

Born in Aracataca, this journalist-turned-author was a pioneer of the Latin American literature boom in the 60s. Affectionately known as 'Gabo', he made an irreversible footprint in the history of literature with his globally-read novels. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is still the archetypal example of Magical Realism. He received the Nobel prize for literature in 1982. His legacy remains in a cultural centre on Calle 11 as well as a statue in the plaza of the Mayoral palace.

- Clemmie Pollard



1953
Third military coup, by Rojas Pinilla (see right).

1954
Television arrives in Colombia with a rendition of the anthem by the Symphonic Orchestra.

1948
Gaitán is shot, triggering *El Bogotazo* and later *La Violencia*.

1948 - 1953
LA VIOLENCIA

Civil war fought between liberals and conservatives – *campesinos*, most notably – throughout the country which resulted in at least 200,000 deaths.

1951
Census registers more than 10,000,000 people in the country.

1928
Outrage at the 'banana massacre'.

1932
Leticia Incident confirms Colombia's stake in the Amazon.

1948
Colombian football finally takes off with the first national championship.

1927
National Coffee Federation formed.



1886
Current name República de Colombia agreed upon.

1899
Civil War of a thousand days kicks off.

1903
Panamá leaves.



1867
The Universidad Nacional is founded.

1863
Renamed Estados Unidos de Colombia.

1854
Second Military coup, by José Melo.

1886-1900
REGENERACIÓN

A series of reforms implemented by then-president, Rafael Núñez, which called for a powerful, centralised government rather than state supremacy, and restored the influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

1957
The Frente Nacional is agreed (also women voted for first time).

1958-1974
FRENTE NACIONAL

16-years of coalition government in which liberals and conservatives alternated four-year presidential terms. Agreed between Alberto Lleras Camargo (Liberal leader) and Laureano Gómez (Conservative leader).

1961
Manuel Marulanda Vélez founds the Republic of Marquetalia.



1964
Marulanda Vélez escapes to the hills after a military attack and founds the FARC.

1964-2016
FARC CONFLICT

Armed conflict lasting more than 50 years. Over 220,000 people have died, including an estimated 45,000 children.

1973
Census registers more than 20,000,000 people.

1982
Gabriel García Márquez receives Nobel.



1984
Cartagena placed on UNESCO world heritage list.

1985
Attack on the Palacio de Justicia.

1991
The current constitution is ratified.

1993
Pablo Escobar is shot on a Medellín rooftop.

1994
Footballer Andrés Escobar is shot after conceding an own goal against the USA.

1998
Attempt at peace talks with the FARC.

2000
María Isabel Urrutia takes first Olympic gold in weightlifting in Sydney.

2005
Census registers more than 40,000,000 people.



2007
Café de Colombia is recognised as a protected label by the EU.

2008
The *falsos positivos* scandal came to light.



2016
Peace is signed!