

Bogota cost savings

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My calculation comes to US\$1,266 per month for a single person living comfortably in a small, rented flat in a middle class ("Estrato 4") area of Bogotá. That's GBP ?1,000 a month, or EUR EUR1,170.

Of course, there are many variables, so read on for more details and some price comparisons with London and New York (currently two of the most expensive cities in the world). The data presented below is from multiple sources and my own calculations based on living in Bogotá for more than a decade. I've also included some tips on how to reduce costs.

Bogotá is a mega-city of officially 8 million inhabitants (though probably many more) set deep in the Andes (at 2,550 metres, or 8,400 feet) with a temperate mountain climate, but a few hours' drive from tropical jungles, deserts, and plains. New arrivals to Bogotá might feel a bit of soroche from the thin air but most people quickly adjust, see my post [Do You Have an Altitude Problem?](#)

The big bustling city covers hundreds of local barrios which are often self-contained communities with shops, services and entertainment to meet most needs, a theme I explored in the post ["Is Bogotá a 15-Minute City?"](#).

In Bogotá you need to get your head around the "estrato" zoning system, a socio-economic classification for barrios and even city blocks. This might stem from the fact that in terms of livelihoods, Colombia is one of the most unequal countries in the world, in the bottom ten worldwide for variation between very rich and poor (the GINI index), and Bogotá has extremely wealthy and very poor areas.

Of course, every city has its mosaic of areas. What's interesting in Bogotá is how it is officially divided up. The estrato system is also important for anyone moving to the city, since the level will impact on costs, particularly accommodation.

Public services costs such as gas, water and electricity are pegged to the estrato (the lower areas cost less) but also informally in costs such as property prices, rent, and in groceries, clothing, restaurants etc. As a generalisation, lower estrato zones generally have higher crime and homicide rates, presence of gangs, higher air contamination and less services. But don't assume they are more dangerous to live in as a foreigner, as long as you fit in. In fact, some "uptown" barrios can attract more crime because more people are worth robbing.

Most Estrato 1 and 2 zones are in the south of the city and most Estrato 5 and 6 barrios are in the north-east of the city, though some localities are a mosaic; Chapinero, for example, ranges from Estrato 1 to 6, with barrios at the two extremes within a kilometre of each other. You can download estrato maps here for each Bogotá locality.



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Overall, I would recommend Estrato 4 as good areas to live, though some folk on a tight budget might opt for Estrato 3 or even Estrato 2. Speaking some Spanish will help fitting into to lower estrato zones.

If you are new to the city and want to visit Estrato 1 and 2 areas, see my posts Entrenubes: The Best View in Bogot?? and A Day Trip to Ciudad Bolivar and Riding Bogot?"s TransiMiCable.

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