

REVIEW: The Ananda Boutique Hotel in Cartagena



If you've ever dreamt of that lazy getaway in a "cute" little hotel filled with luxurious amenities where you can wander into the streets and lose yourself in the middle of a UNESCO

Heritage Site. Well, that's the Ananda Boutique and that's Cartagena.



The hotel's there, its just hidden really well

The first thing you notice about this hotel is how hidden it is. Much like the other hotels in Cartagena's walled city, Ananda is built right into the buildings around it and blends in. When you step in, however, you feel as if you're in a separate world. It's calm, there's trees and a little courtyard for the restaurant and a dipping pool on the first level. The hotel doesn't have many rooms, and the insulation is not so great in between rooms, but for everything is tastefully decorated, the exposed wooden beams and the refinished stone surfaces give the appearance of a modernized-400 year old hotel.



Options Options Options, downstairs or upstairs pool?

The best part of this hotel, though, is the rooftop pool. It affords expansive 360 degree views of the city and although you're right in the middle of it all (the oppressive street vendors can sometimes be a bit too much in Cartagena) – you still get the peace and quiet that you would want at the end of the day.



The Rooftop pool is where you'll find yourself spending some lazy hours relaxing

There's only one other option that is similar to the Ananda Boutique and that is the Bastion Luxury Hotel. I'd cross shop the two when you're booking but if there's one thing that I would say to swing one towards the Ananda it would be that the highest rated restaurant is in the lobby of the hotel. It's one place I highly recommend eating at, but skip the breakfast, it's terrible.

PROS:

- Rooftop pool is spectacular
- It's got one of the best restaurants for dinner and you're already there
- It's nicely updated and extremely quaint (but in a good way)

CONS:

- Service is a bit lacking
- The insulation between rooms is minimal, you can hear

everything

SECRETS:

- They have free bikes for guests to use – these are a great way to get around town and I highly recommend utilizing them
- There's a very cool room that's hidden above the main check-in area. It's air conditioned and has a balcony where you can sit and relax while people watching over the main street

OTHER THINGS TO DO:

- Bar none the coolest bar and hangout spot in cartagena is El Baron in Cartagena. It's got a mixologist which is second to none and the drinks are cheap and the people watching is fun
- I also recommend checking out Gokela if you just want something healthy and fresh to eat. It's also a place for those who are vegan or vegetarian (as it's tough to find good vegan/vegetarian in the city. Think of an upscale sandwich/soup/salad cafe with local organic ingredients. It's a nice change of pace from everything else you would get in Cartagena.