

# Countries that Produce the Most Cocaine



According to a White House report, coca cultivation in Colombia rose 39 percent during 2014, a pattern that various sources on the ground have told InSight Crime has continued, if not accelerated, this year. The increase in terms of hectares of coca was from 85,000 in 2013, to 112,000 in 2014.



Peru's hectares have been steady at around 50,000 over the last few years, and Bolivia has been around 25,000 hectares of production.

Antioquia, which had seen significant drop over recent years, is now back in the big leagues, showing a 95 percent increase in coca crops during 2014, with 11,000 hectares under cultivation.

The White House says Peruvian coca production translated into 290 tons of cocaine in 2012; Bolivia, meanwhile, churned out around 155 tons the same year.



Colombia may have reclaimed its title as the foremost cocaine producing nation, a position it lost to Peru in 2013.

Combined with this is the fact that Colombia coca has been crossbred with particularly potent strains like the Tingo Maria from Peru, which has increased yields per hectare. Finally, coca fields in Colombia can be harvested up to six times a year, whereas in Peru and Bolivia the average is closer to three.



## WHY COCA PRODUCTION HAS INCREASED

There are several explanations for this. The first is linked to the price of gold. When in 2010 and 2011 the price of gold reached record levels (\$1,900 an ounce), many of the casual laborers who worked harvesting coca (known as "raspachines") moved into the informal mining sector. This was particularly relevant in departments like Antioquia which have large gold deposits.



Now prices for gold have fallen to just under \$1,200 an ounce and the informal mining sector, which depends on the exploitation of alluvial deposits which become quickly exhausted, is reduced once again in certain areas. The result is that the labor force has moved back towards coca and the small fields of hardy green coca bushes have once again appeared on the Andean mountainsides.

## ANOTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTOR HAS BEEN A REDUCTION IN THE DRUG CROP ERADICATION PROGRAM.

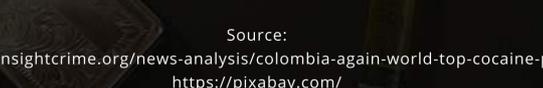
The increased coca cultivation is likely to give Colombian transnational organized crime a serious injection of cash. The Colombians have increasingly been playing second fiddle to the Mexican cartels, which now dominate the US market. However the Colombian mafia is now exploring alternative and more lucrative markets, such as Europe and Asia, as well as flooding booming markets closer to home, like Brazil and Argentina.



The Marxist rebels earn a minimum of \$150 million a year from the drug trade, perhaps even as high as \$500 million



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