

Belize & Tikal Itinerary

[Link: Belize & Tikal](#)

Tour Overview

Our Belize & Tikal birding tour visits three outstanding birding locations: Crooked Tree, Pook's Hill (with a visit to Mountain Pine Ridge) and Tikal. Imagine awakening to Ocellated Turkeys gobbling outside your door, Bat Falcons perched on a snag in the lodge grounds, Ornate Hawk-Eagle nesting close by, or a Jaguar ambling across the road. We look for Boat-billed and Agami Herons, Sungrebe and Jabiru and take boat rides for potoos and pauraques as well as Morelet's Crocodile and Hickatee-a large river turtle.

Tikal National Park boasts over 200 species, including woodcreepers, tanagers, cotingas, manakins, toucans, trogons, and much more. Imagine sitting atop a magnificent Mayan pyramid with King Vultures and White Hawks circling close by, Orange-breasted Falcons in sight, and tropical forest canopy stretching as far the eye can see! This tour is what dreams are made of!

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Belize City



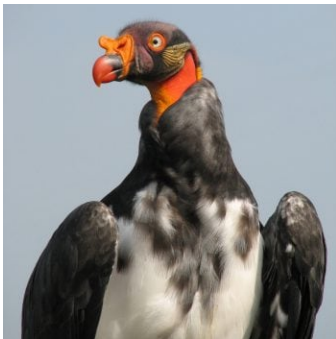
Our Belize & Tikal birding tour begins with an evening meal and welcome at our hotel. Night in Belize City.

Day 2: Monkey Bay and travel to Pook's Hill



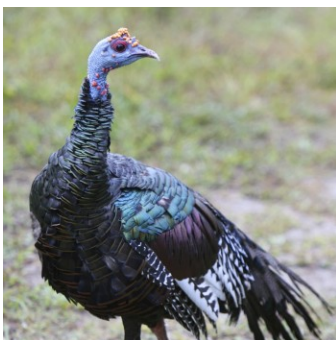
We first visit the waterfront at Belize City to look for coastal species such as Sandwich and Royal Terns and maybe a booby. Flowering gardens nearby host Cinnamon Hummingbirds and Black-cowled and Hooded Orioles. Then we head inland to the Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary for our first introduction to neotropical families such as woodcreepers, honeycreepers, motmots, manakins, maybe a puffbird. Commoner birds include Pale-vented Pigeon, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Golden-fronted Woodpecker and Spot-breasted Wren. Our trip along the road to Jade Jungle Resort will be punctuated with frequent stops, as this area is excellent for raptors – from White Hawk to Bat Falcon to Black Hawk-Eagle. Night at Jade Jungle Resort.

Days 3 & 4: Pook's Hill & Mountain Pine Ridge



We explore the pine forests, broadleaf stream valleys and cliffs of this wonderful area. In the pine forests of Mountain Pine Ridge, we look for mixed flocks containing Grace's Warbler amongst the northern migrants and, with luck, we may even find a roosting Stygian Owl or Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. The broadleaf gullies are home to Little Hermits and Lesson's Motmots, and on past tours we've found Tody Motmots and Stub-tailed Spadebills. Acorn and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, Rusty Sparrows, Azure-crowned Hummingbirds, Black-headed Saltators, and Yellow-tailed and Yellow-backed Orioles are all expected species. While at Mountain Pine Ridge, we may take excursions to Thousand Foot Falls (the highest waterfall in Central America), where we search for the rare Orange-breasted Falcon, and to King Vulture Falls, where we will hopefully see the vultures that gave it its name. Nights at Jade Jungle Resort.

Day 5: Travel to Tikal



Before breakfast we investigate once again the areas around the resort, looking for mixed species flocks. We then drive to the international border and, after crossing into Guatemala, we will bird some of the roadside marshes and lakes and may have time for a visit to the ruins at Yaxha. In the mid- to late afternoon we should arrive at Tikal National Park, an internationally renowned site for both its magnificent Mayan ruins and its incredible wealth of wildlife. We will have some time to do a little birding around the lodge, where we should see Ocellated Turkeys feeding close to our lodge at dusk. Night in Tikal National Park.

Day 6 & 7: Tikal National Park



There are few more exhilarating experiences than walking among the fabulous Mayan ruins at Tikal and watching a wealth of wildlife, often surprisingly unconcerned about our presence. The view atop Temple VI is amazing as one looks in all directions over the top of unbroken tropical forest and observes several raptors circling over the canopy. The list of potential raptors is so impressive that it even includes the near-mythical Crested Eagle! Ocellated Turkeys and Great Curassows stroll through the clearings. Motmots and puffbirds perch quietly along forested trails and Northern Schiffornis whistle melodiously from the undergrowth, as does the aptly-named Mayan Anththrush. Mixed-species flocks containing an interesting mixture of tanagers (led by Black-throated Shrike-Tanagers), warblers and flycatchers move through the canopy, while woodcreepers, ant-tanagers, and antbirds follow army ant swarms. Our time at Tikal will be full and exciting. Nights in Tikal National Park.

Day 8: Tikal to Bird's Eye View Lodge



Today we will drive to Bird's Eye View Lodge, this will be a bit of a driving day, so we will have plenty of snacks on hand! Upon arrival we head for the remarkably productive wildlife areas at Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. En route, we look for Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures among the very similar Turkey Vultures. Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-ducks are often found in flocks of Blue-winged Teal which overwinter in the area.

Days 9 and 10: Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary



The Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary is a superb area of marshes, lagoons, and pine and hardwood forests. It has an extensive complex of shallow lagoons streams, rivers and marshes, linked to the Belize River via Black and Mexico Creeks. The aquatic and riverine habitats are a highlight of our visit; we could encounter Bare-throated Tiger-Herons, Agami and Boat-billed Herons, Snail Kite, Black-collared Hawk, Great and Common Black-Hawks, Muscovy Duck, Sungrebe and American Pygmy Kingfisher. There are nesting Jabirus on Western Lagoon, which we will make a special effort to locate. Our boat trips could turn up potoos and pauraques as well as lots of other interesting wildlife including crocodiles, turtles and fish-eating bats. During our stay, we visit the pine savanna, with its strong Yucatán assortment of birds — Yucatán Woodpecker, Yellow-lored Parrot, Yucatán Flycatcher and Yucatán Jay. Aplomado Falcons cruise the grasslands, and Grace's Warblers grace the pines. The short tropical and second-growth forest support Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Squirrel Cuckoos, Gray Hawks, Laughing Falcons, and an array of orioles, saltators, flycatchers and seedeaters. Nights at Bird's Eye View Lodge.

Day 11: Departure

We have a final morning of birding around the lodge, we head back to the Belize City International airport to conclude our Belize & Tikal birding tour. We will arrive at the airport around 11 am so participants can catch flights home after 1 pm.

What to Expect

Overview

On our Belize & Tikal birding tour we spend the more pleasant parts of the day, morning and late afternoon, birding and exploring each area we visit. We start each day early to take advantage of high bird activity during the first few daylight hours. Early afternoons will be for siestas or gentle birding around the lodges. Each evening, the list of birds and other wildlife will be reviewed, and plans for the next day discussed.

Food and Accommodation

Most meals will be in the lodge restaurants; we have packed lunches on those days when we transfer between sites.

Driving

Driving will generally be limited to transfers between sites, with some additional driving at Pook's Hill Lodge to reach the Mountain Pine Ridge area.

Walking

There is a lot of walking on this tour. Most trails are relatively easy and level. The longest/most challenging walks are in Tikal, especially the walk to see the ruins, which is ~6km (~4 miles) return and involves some inclines and steps. Combined, we can sometimes walk 10-12 km (6-8 miles) in a day while in Tikal. In other areas, most of the longer walks are 2-4 km (1-3 miles) return on relatively flat trails. Trails can be muddy.

Weather

The weather should be warm and pleasant, becoming hot by mid-day. Some rain is to be expected, and a waterproof jacket or umbrella is recommended. Bring mosquito repellent - mosquitos are not usually a problem but can be a nuisance after rain.

Boat Trips

We take two boat excursions in Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. They are each 2-3 hours long on a calm lagoon. Please note that there are not washroom facilities onboard.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All accommodations
 - All meals and soft drinks
 - Airport Transfers
 - Ground transportation & boat rides
 - All park/ tour fees
 - 1 guide with 4 - 8 participants, 2 guides with 9 - 12 participants
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Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to and from Belize
- Items of a personal nature
- Travel Insurance
- Alcoholic Beverages