

Colombia Itinerary

[Link: Colombia](#)

Tour Overview

Colombia! The richest area for birds on the planet! Close to 1900 species have been recorded in this amazing country, with no fewer than 73 endemics.

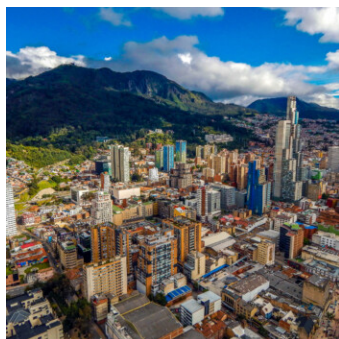
Our Colombia birding tour covers central and western Colombia, from Bogota and its high altitude specialties north through the Magdalena Valley and its very bird-rich reserves, to the western Andes near Manizales, Pueblo Rico/Montezuma and Cali. We will encounter a host of exciting species – trogons, tanagers, wrens, toucans, and more – the list seems endless.

Colombia has now opened her doors to tourists and naturalists alike; where we go is safe, somewhat rugged, but exciting. We stay primarily in or near reserves, where new accommodations facilitate birding groups, birding can be astounding, and the reserves often protect the last remaining habitats of several range-restricted, endangered birds.

We also offer a [Colombia: Santa Marta](#) birding tour. Save \$225 USD (\$300 CAD) when you book on both Colombia tours.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Bogotá



Our Colombia birding tour starts with a welcome dinner at our hotel in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. If you are joining from our Colombia: Santa Marta birding tour, welcome to Bogotá! If you are just arriving, welcome to Colombia! Night in Bogotá.

Day 2: Birding the Bogotá region



We will concentrate on the eastern Andes northeast of Bogotá today, departing before dawn so that we avoid the city's heavy traffic. We will have breakfast en route in a restaurant and spend much of the day birding near Chingaza National Park, including in Bosque Guajira reserve. We will bird forest/forest edge habitat with Brown-breasted Parakeet, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Muisca Antpitta, Black-headed Hemispingus, Coppery-bellied Puffleg, as well as many other species. And we will enjoy time at some wonderful hummingbird feeders at Bosque Guajira, with Blue-fronted Starfrontlet, Longuemare's Sunangel and other species. Temperatures will be mostly pleasant to cool. In the afternoon we will visit another hummingbird feeder setup in the outskirts of Bogotá, known as Observatorio de Colibríes. Here we will see some of the same hummingbirds as at Bosque Guajira and hopefully in addition Green-tailed Trainbearer, Black-tailed Trainbearer and/or Coppery-bellied Puffleg. Night in Bogotá.

Day 3: Birding from the Bogotá region north and transfer to Río Claro



Temperatures will be mostly pleasant in the morning (Eastern Andes) but will become warmer at each stop as we drive to Río Claro in the Nechí Lowlands. We will leave our hotel early with a box breakfast to eat on the road. Our first birding will be in La Florida Park right in Bogotá, where we'll be searching for Spot-flanked Gallinule, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, and the endemics Bogotá Rail and Silvery-throated Spinetail. Next will be Laguna Tabacal, about an hour and a half's drive from Bogotá, where we will walk along quiet forest trails searching for Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Speckle-breasted and Black-bellied Wrens, Blue-colored Antbird, Stripe-breasted Spinetail, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Cinereous Becard and the rare Gray-throated Warbler. The whole afternoon will be driving to Río Claro. Night in Río Claro.

Day 4: Río Claro



All day will be spent in the warm Río Claro area. The birdlife here is very different from what we will find elsewhere on the tour, with species such as Gray-cheeked Nunlet, White-mantled Barbet, Olivaceous Piculet, Beautiful Woodpecker, Saffron-headed Parrot, Slaty-winged Foliage-gleaner, Magdalena and Bare-crowned Antbirds, Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Sepia-capped Flycatcher, Velvet-fronted Euphonia, Sooty Ant-Tanager, perhaps Black Oropendola, and even there is a cave where we can see hundreds of Oilbirds emerging at dusk. We may also be fortunate to see the endemic White-footed Tamarin Monkey. Night in Río Claro.

Day 5: Río Claro and transfer to Termales del Ruíz



This morning we will do some more birding in warm Río Claro, specially looking for the specialty species we may not have seen yet. In mid-morning we will leave and head to our next destination in the town of Manizales, stopping on the way for birding in Puerto Triunfo and near Padua. Night in Manizales.

Day 6: Hacienda el Bosque and Los Nevados



In the morning we will visit Hacienda el Bosque at 2800-3000 meter elevation. This site is a working cattle ranch but has left a portion of the property with its original cloud forest vegetation, and has recently begun to double as a birding hotspot. It has wonderful hummingbird feeders, antpitta feeders and mountain-toucan feeders. Some of the species we will be looking for here are Crescent-faced Antpitta, Equatorial Antpitta, Gray-browed Brushfinch and Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan. In the afternoon we will bird in Los Nevados National Park. This park has páramo (alpine grassland) with martian-looking Espeletia plants similar to Chingaza— home to Buffy Helmetcrest, Viridian Metaltail, White-chinned Thistletail, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Plain-colored Seedeater, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch and Tawny Antpitta. The stunted forest nearby is home to Rufous-fronted Parakeet, Páramo Tapaculo, White-banded Tyrannulet, Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager and Black-backed Bush-Tanager. The water ponds will also give us a chance to look for Andean Duck and Andean Teal. Night in Manizales.

Day 7: Río Blanco, transfer to La Florida, Pereira.



We will start the day driving to Río Blanco Reserve, which is habitat to many marvellous bird species that can be seen along gently sloping tracks through the cool cloudforest. Hummingbird feeders and flowering hedges attract Speckled Hummingbird, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Buff-tailed Coronet, Bronzy and Collared Incas, Tourmaline Sunangel, Long-tailed Sylph, White-throated Daggerbill (formerly known as Wedge-billed Hummingbird) and White-bellied Woodstar. We also have a chance to see Golden-plumed Parakeet, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Rufous Spinetail, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Pearled Treerunner, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Flammulated Treehunter, and Blackish, Ash-colored and Spillman's Tapaculos. But, especially, Río Blanco is best known for its antpitta feeders. Up to 4 species of antpitta visit the different feeders: Bicolored, Chestnut-crowned, Slate-crowned and Brown-banded. In the afternoon we will drive 1 hour to La Florida, Pereira, where we will check into our hotel and have a chance to do some birding. Night in La Florida, Pereira.

Day 8: Otun-Quimbaya and transfer to Montezuma



We will spend most of the morning walking along the road through a protected forest where we look for the endemic Cauca Guan (long thought to be extinct until a healthy population was rediscovered in 1989), Streak-capped Treehunter, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, Variegated and Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrants, Chestnut-breasted Wren, Crested Ant-Tanager and the breathtakingly gorgeous and aptly named Multicolored Tanager. In the afternoon we will drive the 2 ½ hours to Pueblo Rico, where we will transfer into 2 or 3 4-wheel drive vehicles to take us to Montezuma Rainforest Ecolodge, roughly 1 hour's drive. These will be the same vehicles that will be transporting us during our stay at Montezuma. Night in Montezuma.

Days 9 and 10: Montezuma Nature Reserve



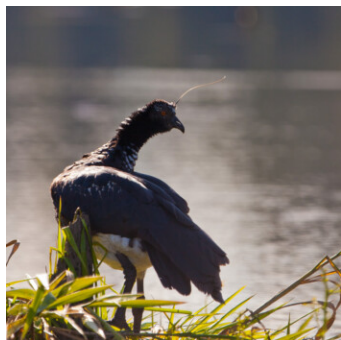
The Montezuma Nature Reserve is part of the buffer zone of the Tatama National Park and consists mainly of a 14-kilometer road that goes from the lodge to a military base at the top of Cerro Tatamá. Many restricted and endemic bird species occur in this lush tropical rainforest and cloud forest. Montezuma is one of the best birdwatching sites in Colombia and is managed by the Tapasco family, headed by mother Leopoldina and 5 of her daughters. Bird species we will be particularly looking for include the endemic Black-and-gold and Gold-ringed Tanagers, Munchique Wood-Wren, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer, Tatamá Tapaculo, and Crested Ant-Tanager, as well as Velvet-purple Coronet, Empress Brilliant, Western Emerald, Rufous-gaped Hillstar, Barred Hawk, Toucan Barbet, White-faced Nunbird, Lanceolated Monklet, and Golden-headed Quetzal. The diversity here is staggering. We'll likely find other exciting species such as Fulvous-dotted Treerunner, Yellow-breasted Antpitta, Chocó Tapaculo, Beautiful Jay, Nariño Tapaculo, Black Solitaire, Tanager Finch, Scaled and Orange-breasted Fruiteaters, Olivaceous Piha, Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia and maybe Choco Vireo. The feeders at the lodge will keep us busy in the late afternoon. We'll likely spend one day working the upper part of the road and the other on the lower stretches. Nights at the Montezuma Rainforest Ecolodge.

Day 11: Montezuma, Laguna del Sonso and transfer to Araucana Lodge



This is a day of mostly driving. After an early breakfast at the lodge the 4-wheel drive vehicles we will take us to Pueblo Rico with a few birding stops. At Pueblo Rico we will return to our tour bus and most of the rest of the day will be taken up transferring to our next lodge, with birding, lunch and washroom stops on the way. The main stop will be in warm Laguna del Sonso. Some of the target birds that we will be looking for in Laguna del Sonso and surrounding tropical dry forest are Apical Flycatcher, Greyish Piculet, Horned Screamer, Jet Antbird, Dwarf Cuckoo, Yellow Oriole and Snail Kite. Night at Araucana Lodge.

Day 12: Buenaventura area and Chocó ecosystem



On the first morning we will drive 1.5 hours to near San Cipriano where we should expect to find an entirely different set of birds in the hot and humid coastal forests of the Chocó ecosystem. Birding will mostly be in San Cipriano, an isolated village accessible only by “brujitas” (pronounced “brew-hee-tas”). There are no roads to San Cipriano, but people reach the village by motorcycle-powered wooden platforms with seats on top that circulate long an ancient railroad track. On the far side of the village, a main trail follows a crystal-clear river and side-trails enter the rainforest. Once again, the diversity here is staggering with possibilities of seeing among other birds tinamous, Tooth-billed Hummingbird, Golden-collared Manakin, Blue Cotinga, Black-tipped Cotinga, Five-colored Barbet, Baudó Guan, Tawny-crested, Lemon-spectacled and Scarlet-and-white Tanagers, Purple Quail-Dove, Olive-backed Quail-Dove, Chocó and Lita Woodpeckers, Rose-faced and Saffron-headed Parrots, Stub-tailed Antbird, Black-headed Antthrush, Western Woodhaunter, Long-wattled Umbrellabird (rare) and Pacific Flatbill, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher. In the mid-afternoon, we will make a birding stop at Atuncela where we will look for Blue-headed Sapphire and perhaps other hummingbirds. Night at Araucana Lodge.

Days 13 and 14: Cali area around Araucana Lodge



In the Cali area we should expect to find another different set of birds in pleasant to slightly warm temperatures. We will be spending the first morning birding in and near Doña Dora’s hummingbird-feeders and tanager-feeders in Queremal, where some of the birds we will be hoping to see are Empress Brilliant, White-whiskered Hermit, Green Thorntail, White-booted Racket-tail, Violet-tailed Sylph, Velvet-purple Coronet, Toucan Barbet, Red-headed Barbet, Silvery-throated, Rufous-throated, and Glistening-green Tanagers, and Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager. Another spot where we will be spending time is the cloud forest and edge near “kilometer 18” and the nearby Finca Alejandría hummingbird garden, where some of the birds we will be looking for are Chestnut Wood-Quail, Multicolored tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Colombian Chachalaca, Golden-naped, Metallic-green and Saffron-crowned Tanager, and Blue-headed Sapphire. In the afternoon of the second day we will fly to Bogotá and have our farewell dinner. Night 13 at Araucana Lodge. Final night in Bogotá.

Day 15: Departure

Our Colombia birding tour ends today. Participants can depart anytime.

What to Expect

Overview

The Colombia tour is a very fast paced birding tour, for the dedicated birder. We typically begin birding before breakfast, as everywhere in the tropics it is desirable to be in good habitat by daybreak when bird activity and song are at their peak. There will be long days out in the field, as we focus on finding a diversity of birds.

Food

Often we are out birding before breakfast and come back to eat. We take most of our meals at the various lodge's dining facilities, but some days we will have a picnic lunch in the field, or visit a local eatery. Dinner is usually at the lodge or a nearby restaurant. Each evening after dinner we compile the day's checklist, review the day's activities, birds, mammals and other observations, and plan the next day's activities.

Accommodation

Accommodations vary from basic lodges to modern hotels.

Walking

The walking on this tour is rated as moderate, with one particularly challenging hike. We generally do not walk for further than 5 km (3 miles) in length, at a slow pace, but the uneven terrain and humidity can make it harder work. Birding will mainly take place along quiet roads, with forest trails being on relatively wide and easy-to-follow trails. When traveling at the higher elevations, we will bird along the roadside just a short distance from the vehicle.

Driving

Most days have a small to moderate amount of driving, but there will be some longer drives of up to several hours, as we transfer from one destination to the next. Some locations will require 4WD vehicles and the roads can be very bumpy.

Climate

Weather varies greatly with elevation, and we should be prepared for a range of temperatures from cool 4°C (40°F) to 30°C (88°F). Sun, drizzle and rain are all likely. Packing layers and a windbreaker are the solution to the inconsistent mountain weather! At all altitudes, we should remember to have adequate protection from the sun. Mosquitoes and other biting insects should not be a problem on this tour; however, it is best to bring insect repellent regardless.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All accommodations (Generally good and modern, some more simple and basic)
- All meals
- Ground transportation (bus or van with driver)
- EET guide and local guide with 4 - 11 participants
- Park entry / tour fees
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to and from start/end location
- Travel Insurance
- Items of a personal nature

