

## Colombia Itinerary

[Link: Colombia](#)

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### 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.

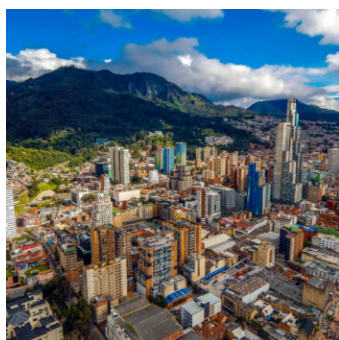
Our Colombia birding tour covers central and western Colombia, from Bogota and its high altitude specialties north through the Magdalena Valley and its very bird-rich reserves, to the western Andes near Manizales, Pueblo Rico/Montezuma and Cali. We will encounter a host of exciting species – trogons,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

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### 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 a field breakfast en route and spend much of the day birding in and near Chingaza National Park, including Bosque Guajira. This park has páramo (alpine grassland) with martian-looking Espeletia plants - home to Green-bearded Helmetcrest, Matorral (Pale-bellied) Tapaculo, and White-chinned Thistletail. We will also bird forest/forest edge habitat with Brown-breasted (Flame-winged) Parakeet, Rufous-browed Conebill, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Muisca Antpitta, Black-headed Hemispingus, Agile Tit-Tyrant, Bronze-tailed Thornbill, Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Coppery-bellied Puffleg, Black-chested Mountain-Tanager, as well as many other species. Temperatures will be mostly pleasant to cool. Night in Bogotá.

## Day 3: Birding from the Bogotá region north and transfer to Victoria



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 (near the airport and our hotel, though Bogotá traffic will already be heavy), 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 a rural road and quiet forest trails searching for Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Speckle-breasted and Black-bellied Wrens, Short-tailed Emerald, Blue-lored Antbird, Stripe-breasted Spinetail, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Cinereous Becard and Spectacled Parrotlet. Temperatures will be mostly pleasant in the morning (Eastern Andes) but will become warmer at each stop as we drive to Victoria in the lowlands. The whole afternoon will be driving the 3 1/2 to 4 hours to Victoria. Night in Victoria.

## Day 4: Victoria



All day will be spent in the warm Victoria area. The birdlife here is very different from what we will find elsewhere on the tour, with species such as Pale-bellied Hermit, White-vented and Bronze-tailed Plumeleteers, Blue-chested Hummingbird, Black-crowned Antshrike, White-mantled Barbet, Olivaceous Piculet, Beautiful Woodpecker, Slaty-winged Foliage-gleaner, Yellow-headed Manakin, Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo, Magdalena and Bare-crowned Antbirds, Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Sepia-capped Flycatcher, Velvet-fronted Euphonia, Sooty Ant-Tanager, and several species of trogons. Night in Victoria.

## Day 5: Victoria and transfer to Hotel Termales del Ruiz



This morning we will do some more birding in warm Victoria at 750 m elevation, specially looking for the specialty species we may not have seen yet. Mid-morning, we'll do the 3 ½ to 4 ½ hour drive to Termales del Ruiz, which will place us strategically for the next day's birding. Termales del Ruiz is a hotel and spa at 3600 m elevation, where it is cool. Termales del Ruiz has wonderful hummingbird feeders with a few species that we will probably not see elsewhere, particularly Rainbow-bearded Thornbill and Great Sapphirewing. And visitors to the tanager feeders include the glowing, multicolored Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager. Night at Termales del Ruiz.

## Day 6: Hacienda el Bosque and Río Blanco Reserve



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 began 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, near Termales del Ruiz. This park has páramo (alpine grassland) with martian-looking Espeletia plants similar to Chingaza—home to Buffy Helmetcrest, Viridian Metaltail, White-chinned Thistletail, Andean Tit-Spinetail, 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 marshy areas and water ponds will also give us a chance for Andean Teal and Noble Snipe. Night in Termales del Ruiz.

## Day 7: Río Blanco, transfer to Santa Rosa de Cabal



We will start the day driving 1 ½ hours 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 transfer the 2 hours to 1700 m elevation Santa Rosa de Cabal, our base for exploring Finca El Cortaderal the following morning. Night in Santa Rosa de Cabal.

## **Day 8: Finca El Cortaderal, transfer to La Florida, Pereira**



We will bird the cloud forest of Finca El Cortaderal this morning. This area is one of few localities in the world where Indigo-winged Parrot can be found. In addition, we shall see several other higher-elevation cloud forest birds that we will not find elsewhere on this tour, probably including Mountain Avocetbill, Bar-bellied Woodpecker and Red-crested Cotinga. 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 9: Otun-Quimbaya and transfer to Montezuma**



We will leave the hotel an hour before sunrise to drive to a special spot where there is a chance to see Mountain Tapir and Hooded Antpitta, and then spend most of the rest of the day walking along the road through pristine 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, Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, Variegated and Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrants, Chestnut-breasted Wren, White-capped Tanager, 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.

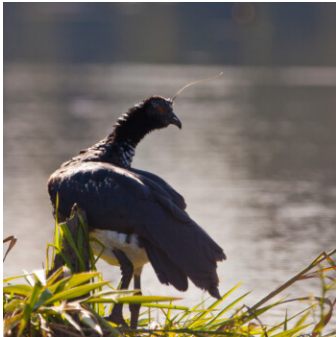


## **Days 10 and 11: Montezuma**



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, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, Rufous-throated Tanager, Tanager Finch, Barred, 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 in Montezuma.

## **Day 12: Montezuma, Laguna del Sonso and transfer to Cali area**



In the morning we will bird the lower stretches of the Montezuma road above the lodge. Most of the rest of the day will be taken up transferring to the Cali area, with birding 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, Masked Duck, Great Antshrike, Dwarf Cuckoo, and Snail Kite. Night in or near Cali.

## Days 13 and 14: Cali area



In the Cali area we should expect to find a different set of birds in pleasant to slightly warm temperatures. We will be spending the first morning 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 cloudforest and edge near "kilometer 18" and the nearby Finca Alejandría hummingbird garden, where some of the birds we will be looking for are Multicolored tanager, Golden-headed and Crested Quetzals, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Colombian Chachalaca, Golden-naped, Metallic-green and Saffron-crowned Tanager, Blue-headed Sapphire, Bronzy Inca, and Andean Emerald. In the afternoon of the second day we will fly to Bogotá and have our farewell dinner at the hotel. First night in Cali area, final night in Bogotá.

## Day 15: Departure

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

## What to Expect

On our Colombia birding tour, 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. We concentrate on "edge" birding until light is good enough to enter forest trails. We have several travel days; we sometimes rise very early to give ourselves plenty of time to reach our destinations. After lunch we may have time for a siesta or enjoy watching hummingbirds at feeders at lodges. In the late afternoon we venture again to the forest. We will schedule optional walks for nocturnal species spotlighting in the forest at night. Our tour takes in national parks and nature reserves renowned for their diversity. Birding will be mainly along quiet roads, and we enter forest areas on relatively wide and easy-to-follow trails. Trails may be muddy, therefore good walking footwear is always recommended. At higher elevation, we bird along the roadside a short distance from the vehicle. On most days we travel short distances with most time being spent outdoors, however, there will be some long drives during transfer days. Accommodations vary from basic to modern, and all will be comfortable. Weather varies greatly with elevation, and we should be prepared for a range of temperatures from cool forties to hottest eighties. Layers and a windbreaker are the solution in the mountains. At all altitudes, we should remember to have adequate protection from the sun. Drizzle and rain are likely, therefore stout, waterproof footwear, a light rain jacket and waterproof hat are recommended. Mosquitoes and other biting insects should not be a problem on this tour; however, bring insect repellent. We enjoy excellent meals provided by the various lodges' dining facility. Some lunches will be a lunch box in a nice setting; occasionally we dine in local eateries. In the evening, after dinner, we discuss the day's events and sightings, and list birds and other wildlife seen.

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# 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 - 10 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
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