

Trinidad & Tobago Itinerary

[Link: Trinidad & Tobago](#)

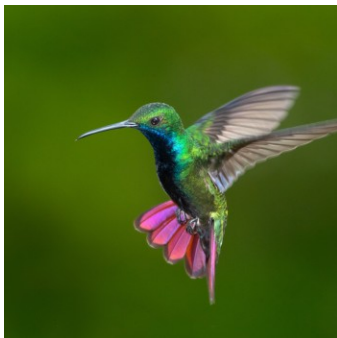
Tour Overview

Many of our guests have been introduced to South America's wonderfully diverse birdlife via our Trinidad and Tobago birding tour. This relaxed and easy-paced birding adventure visits both parts of this two-island nation: The varied rainforests and wetlands of Trinidad and the ocean-oriented paradise of Tobago. Collectively, we affectionately call the place "T & T!"

The highlights are numerous: the spectacle of Scarlet Ibis arriving at their evening roost; the quest for an ultra-rare endemic; an onslaught of motmots, macaws, hummingbirds and honeycreepers; and a nice collection of nightjars and potoos on a night drive. Add to this a glass-bottomed boat tour over a coral reef and you have a perennial favourite with birders and naturalists!

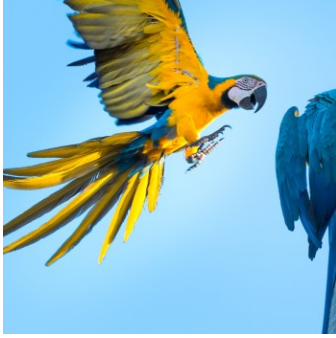
Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Trinidad



Our Trinidad & Tobago birding tour begins at Trinidad's Piarco Airport where you will be met and transferred to our guest house. Night at the Pax Guesthouse.

Days 2 - 5: Port-of-Spain and area



The next four exciting days will be spent exploring the classic destinations that Trinidad has become famous for over the many years we've been birding the island. Our accommodation is set in a strategic, very scenic location above Port-of-Spain that allows for half- or full-day excursions, depending on the destination. The birding around the guesthouse is fantastic, with two hundred bird species possible. Hummingbirds might include Copper-rumped Hummingbird, White-chested Emerald, Blue-chinned Sapphire, White-necked Jacobin, and the awesome Ruby-topaz Hummingbird and Tufted Coquette. Birds of secondary forest such as Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Pale-vented Pigeon and Barred Antshrike can be encountered on the hotel's grounds, offering excellent photography opportunities. Further afield, one morning we will visit the Aripo Savannah, where open-country birds will be easy to see, providing a good introduction for those newer to birding. Guests can expect to see the ubiquitous Southern Lapwing, not to mention Pied-Water-Tyrant, Red-breasted Blackbird, Savannah Hawk, and Grassland Yellow-Finch. After a lunch of local cuisine, we will explore the Nariva Swamp, one of the top birding sites on the islands. In this matrix of palm groves and wetlands we will listen for the raucous calls of macaws. Two species are possible here: the rare Blue-and-Yellow Macaw and the smaller Red-bellied Macaw. When mixing forest and wetlands we often amass a large bird list and today will be no exception. Nariva can produce a varied set of birds with bizarre names including Rufous Crab Hawk, Pinnated Bittern, Bicolored Conebill, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Large-billed Tern, Wattled Jacana, Violaceous Euphonia and Silvered Antbird. We should be close to getting into the triple digits on our species list today. On another morning after a hearty, fruit-filled breakfast we'll embark along the most northerly extension of the Andes mountain range, in the highlands of Trinidad. Here we'll encounter some different species than lower down, and tanagers are one of our targets. This diverse guild of forest birds is one of the reasons many birders jump on a plane to visit this part of the world. We'll look for a dozen species including Turquoise, Speckled, Swallow, Bay-headed Tanagers, and the migrant Summer Tanager—familiar to some folks from home. Three large forest raptors might be spotted today: the glorious Ornate Hawk-Eagle, the more common Black Hawk-Eagle, and the striking White Hawk. Bearded Bellbird, Lilac-tailed Parrotlet, Guianian Trogon, Trinidad Motmot, and Yellow-rumped Cacique are other targets for the day. After a relaxed morning, when the coffee will flow and the garden birds entertain us, we'll set forth one of T & T's most memorable forays: a boat trip to Caroni Swamp. The star attraction here is the hundreds of Scarlet Ibis that arrive to roost in the mangroves. Other less flamboyant species such as flamingos and egrets are common here too! We'll also look for the mangrove-loving Black-crested Antshrike, Black-throated Mango, Anhinga and Tricolored Heron. This trip goes down well with a rum punch at sunset! Other excursions during our first four days could include the Waterloo and Carli Bay area for migrant shorebirds, and a night-time drive to turn up owls, potoos and nightjars. Nights at Pax Guesthouse.

Days 6 - 7: Grand Riviere



After a transfer to the northeast part of Trinidad we'll be based in Grand Riviere, where a single species is our principal target: the critically endangered Trinidad Piping-Guan with a population hovering around 100 individuals. We'll focus on finding these canopy-dwelling birds, one of only two endemic species on T & T (the other being the Trinidad Motmot). Other species we'll look for are: Trinidad Euphonia (not endemic!), Golden-headed Manakin, Purple Honeycreeper, Magnificent Frigatebird, and various other coastline species. After all, we'll be based on the shores of the Caribbean! Nights in Grand Riviere.

Days 8 - 10: Tobago



We depart Grand Riviere after final morning of birding and make our way back to the airport in Port-of-Spain for a short flight to Tobago midday. Birding on Tobago is much different than on Trinidad. It is small enough that a short visit is sufficient to visit the major hotspots, much of the agricultural land is reverting back to second-growth habitat, and it's a fairly obvious Caribbean paradise. We visit the central highlands, mangrove swamps, and take a boat ride to Little Tobago Island, with the target of finding those species not found on Trinidad. These include Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Striped Owl, White-tailed Sabrewing, White-fringed Antwren, Blue-backed Manakin, Scrub Greenlet, and Black-faced Grassquit. Some species are easier to find and observe on Tobago than on Trinidad, and we have a good chance of locating Yellow-legged Thrush, Stripe-breasted Spinetail, Venezuelan Flycatcher, and Great Black-hawk, and especially Trinidad Motmot. At Little Tobago the seabirds are the main attraction and highlights include Brown and Red-footed Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebird, and the stunning Red-billed Tropicbird. A glass-bottomed boat gets us across a postcard-quality coral reef, with an option for some snorkeling en route. Many guests decide to stay on Tobago for a night or two after the tour. Nights at Blue Waters Inn.

Day 11: Departure

At the end of our Trinidad & Tobago birding tour, we leave Tobago in the morning of Day 11 for our flight back to Trinidad, to catch our flights back home after noon. Alternatively, you can spend the night near the airport and fly out early the next morning.

What to Expect

Overview

The Trinidad & Tobago tour is a great introduction to the birds of South America, with relatively easy birding. The daily travel schedule varies to account for weather, bird species and habitat. There will be mostly early mornings and typically one night excursion. Although we will be filling up our days with exceptional birding, there will still be the opportunity for afternoon siestas, and free time to go swimming or snorkelling while in Tobago.

Food

Breakfast will often be at the hotel, although there will be a picnic breakfast on the mornings where we go out birding very early. Lunch will either be out in the field, at a local restaurant or back at the hotel. We will usually have dinner at the hotel restaurant. During dinner we usually discuss the day's activities and review the list of birds seen and heard.

Accommodation

Accommodations will vary from basic hotels to rustic birding lodges. One of the lodges has limited private bathrooms, so book early to secure a room with an en suite or call us to check availability.

Walking

Walking is generally easy to moderate, with much of our birding being from the van or on roads through the forest. There are a few forest trails, which are narrow and may be muddy and uneven, but are generally not more than 2 - 3 km (1.5 - 2 miles) and we walk at an easy pace. The trail to see the seabird colony on Little Tobago is short-medium length (~ 1 km each way), but is steep with some steps. The trail at Gilpin Trace (Tobago) has uneven surfaces and can be muddy, but does not have much elevation. There is an option to opt-out of either of these walks if you wish to.

Driving

Our longest drive is 1.5 - 2 hours in duration. Driving will be mostly highway, but there will be some mountain passes with twists and turns.

Climate

Temperatures will be mostly warm with high temperatures around 27°C (80° F), but expect the occasional rain shower. Lightweight, moisture wicking clothes are recommended, with a light waterproof jacket or sweater for coolish nights. Bring a hat - it is sunny in the Caribbean! Long pants are advisable, especially in the savanna areas where the grass can be quite sharp-edged, but shorts are comfortable to wear in most localities.

Boat Trips

There will be two boat trips on the tour, each around 2 - 3 hours in duration. The Caroni Swamp boat tour is in calm waters of a mangrove swamp & estuary. The boat is open and mostly slow-moving as we bird the entire way. Duration is 2.5 - 3 hrs. The Little Tobago boat trip is on the ocean, and water conditions may vary from calm to choppy depending on the day. We consult with local operators to choose the best time based partly on water conditions. We do some birding from the boat, and also disembark on Little Tobago island. Total duration is around 3 hrs, but with no more than 1.5 of those hours spent on the boat.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All meals and accommodation
- Ground transportation
- Return flights between Trinidad and Tobago
- 1 EET guide with 4 - 8 participants, 2 EET guides with 9 - 12 participants plus local guides
- Park entry / tour fees
- Gratuities to local drivers

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to and from Port of Spain, Trinidad
- Travel Insurance
- Items of a personal nature

