



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Bay-headed Tanager

Introduction to Birding Magnificent Colombia

9 Nights/10 Days

Colombia is home to over 1,950 bird species, more than any other country on earth. Just imagine having the opportunity to discover 20% of all bird species in a single country no bigger than Texas and California combined. Our birding tour around the capital city of Bogota and coffee area of Colombia is a great introduction to the birds of the Eastern and Central Andes Cordillera. We will cover ecosystems of high elevation such as Andean forest, Cloud forest, and Paramo, and will have a lowland forest transition as we move from one Cordillera to the next. In terms of birding, you can expect to see some 300 bird species in 10 days including 20 endemics, 50-60 Tanager and 30+ hummingbird species!

Some of the most coveted species on this tour include endemic and near endemic species such as; Green-bearded Helmet-crest, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Indigo-capped Hummingbird, Indigo-topaz Hummingbird, Sooty Ant-Tanager, White-mantled Barbet, White-bibbed Manakin, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Buffy Helmet-crest and the marvelous Rufous-fronted Parakeet, Andean Condor, Many-striped Canastero, Bicolored Antpitta, and Brown-banded Antpitta, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Chestnut Wood-Quail, Moustached Antpitta, Torrent Duck, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Multicolored Tanager, Stiles's Tapaculo Grayish Piculet, and Crested Ant-tanager, Cauca Guan and many more.

9 Night/10 Day Itinerary

Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrival at El Dorado International Airport (BOG)

Day 2: Chingaza National Park

Day 3: Enchanted Garden, and Tabacal Lagoon

Day 4: Bellavista Natural Reserve

Day 5: Páramo del Ruiz

Day 6: Rio Blanco Reserve

Day 7: Tinamu Birding Reserve

Day 8: Otun Quimbaya

Day 9: Salento - Valle del Cocora

Day 10: Departure from El Dorado International Airport

Day 1, Arrival at Bogota International Airport:

Upon arrival in Bogota, our tour guide will pick us up at the airport and we'll transfer to our hotel in one of Bogota's nicest neighborhoods. We will meet for dinner and go through introductions, a tour presentation, rules & expectations and Q&A, and logistics for our first day of birding.

Meals: Dinner

Lodging at Novotel Bogota

Day 2, Birding Chingaza National Park and the Hummingbird Observatory:

Chingaza National Park is located just outside of Bogotá (1.5 hours drive). It includes vast areas of high Andean forest, subparamo and

paramo ecosystems and provides access to some key specialties such as the uncommon Brown-breasted Parakeet, Green-bearded Helmet-crest, and Silvery-throated Spine-tail. We'll bird throughout the park this morning, and then after lunch head to the Hummingbird Observatory for an avian show!

The Hummingbird Observatory is located 40 mins from Chingaza, at an elevation of 9,800 feet in High Andean forest. The weather can vary magically from sunny to rainy many times a day and is not surprising to see fog rolling down the mountain at any time. A total of 118 bird species have been reported here including some 18 hummingbird species. Specialties include Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Coppery-bellied Puff-leg, Shining Sunbeam, Green and Sparkling Violetear, Speckled and Sword-billed Hummingbird, Long-tailed Sylph, Black-tailed Trainbearer and Purple-backed Thornbill. This is also a great place for bird photography!

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging at Novotel Bogota

Day 3, Enchanted Garden, and Tabacal Lagoon:

Early in the morning, we'll visit Tabacal Lagoon, a beautiful wetland located just 1.5 hours away from Bogota at an altitude of 4,100 feet. Birds of interest right at the parking lot include Black-bellied Wren, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner and

Black-billed Mountain Toucan



Red-billed Scythebill. The main entrance is also a good site for the tricky Rosy Thrush-Tanager. Beyond the gate, we may be able to find Velvet-fronted Euphonia, White-throated Crake and Black Hawk-Eagle, White-bellied Antbird, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Gray-throated Warbler and a lek of White-bearded Manakin. Birding Tabacal is a really great introduction to the spectacular humid lowland forests of the Magdalena Valley.

In the afternoon after check in at our new lodging we'll head to the Enchanted Garden, which is a private residence located 40 mins away from Tabacal at an elevation of 4,990 feet. Some 300 hummingbirds can be seen at any moment coming to the 40 plus feeders present in the garden. 27 hummingbird species have been recorded here including the unique and highly regarded Indigo-capped Hummingbird, Red-billed, and Short-tailed Emerald and Indigo-Topaz Hummingbird. This too, is a great place for bird photography!

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Botique Posada Las Trampas*

Day 4, Bellavista Natural Reserve in La Victoria, Caldas:

The Bellavista reserve, conveniently located 40 mins away from the previous night hotel in La Victoria municipality is an amazing birding hotspot in the Magdalena Valley that divides the Eastern and Central Andes Cordillera, with over



Buffy Helmetcrest

200 species recorded. Some specialties here include Black-faced Dacnis, and NT Sooty Ant-Tanager, White-mantled Barbet and the spectacular White-bibbed Manakin. We'll bird the reserve's highly productive trails in the morning and after lunch, transfer for 2 hours to the beautiful hotel Termales del Ruiz and its stunning views of the valleys and mountains of the paramo. The thermal pool for which the hotel is named is a steaming, hot, sulfurous delight, set behind the main hotel building; ideal for a truly relaxing experience after a day of birding.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hotel Termales del Ruiz*

Day 5, Termales del Ruiz and Páramo del Ruiz:

We will spend our morning at Páramo del Ruiz, which is at the highest point of our tour, looming at 14,000 feet elevation. This is the place in Colombia to go in search for the dazzling and very localized Buffy Helmetcrest; a plump little hummingbird and the marvelous Rufous-fronted Parakeet. Other birds of interest include Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager, Tawny Antpitta, White-chinned Thistle-tail, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Black-chested Buzzard-eagle, Andean Condor, Many-striped Canastero, Paramo Seedeater, Noble Snipe, Black Flowerpiercer, and Plain-capped Ground-tyrant. Termales del Ruiz has a set of gardens that normally attract 10 species of hummingbirds including

the highly regarded Black-thighed Puff-leg, Golden-breasted Puff-leg, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Tourmaline Sunangel, Viridian Metal-tail, Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphire-wing, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and Purple-backed Thornbill. This is yet another great place for bird photography!

We'll get back to the hotel in the early afternoon for lunch and to enjoy the feeders for a while longer before heading to a beautiful, rural eco-hotel near the city of Manizales.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Tinamu Birding Reserve*

Day 6, Río Blanco Reserve:

We'll depart early and drive 30 mins from Manizales to the Rio Blanco Reserve, the go-to spot for three coveted species: Masked Saltator, Bicolored Antpitta, and Brown-banded Antpitta. The two Antpittas are commonly heard and both are readily seen at feeding stations. The Saltator is regular, but certainly not guaranteed. Other 2 very important birds to see here are Chestnut Wood-quail and Rusty-faced Parrot. Upon arrival, we can have a cup of the best coffee in the world while enjoying the spectacular hummingbird show at the feeders including Tourmaline Sunangel, Buff-tailed Coronet, Speckled Hummingbird, Bronzy and Collared Inca, Mountain Velvet-breast, the tiny White-bellied Woodstar, and Long-tailed Sylph.



Torrent Duck

Then, we'll be led by a local guide to special Antpitta feeding stations where we hope to enjoy close up views of the endemic Brown-banded Antpitta, Slate-crowned Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta and the newly arrival of the magnificent Undulated Antpitta! We will spend much of the rest of the day exploring this excellent trail network. Along with the endemic and specialties, this area boasts many sought after species including: Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Golden faced Redstart, Dusky Piha, Black-billed and Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanagers, Grass-green and White-capped Tanager, Powerful Woodpecker, and the hard to see Ocellated, Blackish and Spillman's Tapaculos.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Tinamu Birding Reserve*

Day 7, Tinamu Birding Reserve to Otun Quimbaya:

The tropical dry forest of Tinamu Birding Nature Reserve is located less than an hour away from our hotel, and at 4,019 feet elevation. It is home to hundreds of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, butterflies and a variety of plants and trees. Birds of interest at Tinamu include Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Black-throated Mango, White-vented Plumeteer, Blue-headed Parrot, Acorn Woodpecker, Flame-rumped Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Common Potoo, Brown-throated Parakeet, Giant Cowbird, Cocoa



Yellow-eared Parrot

Thrush, Grayish Piculet, Tropical Screech-Owl, Mustached Puffbird, and the amazing Golden collared Manakin. This is a prime location for bird photography in Colombia. After spending the whole morning and part of the afternoon birding Tinamu, we will take the road for 2 hours to visit the spectacular Otun Quimbaya birding reserve, home to the Endemic, localized and endangered Cauca Guan.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Wildlife Sanctuary Otun Quimbaya*

Day 8, Birding Otun Quimbaya:

The majority of today will be spent birding Otun Quimbaya, a nature reserve managed by the local community and well-known

as the best site for the endemic, endangered and now very local Cauca Guan, as well as being a great site for Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Chestnut Wood-Quail, Moustached and Hooded Antpittas, Torrent Duck, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Multicolored Tanager, Stiles's Tapaculo Grayish Piculet, and Crested Ant-tanager. The birding here is along fairly flat trails and a road.

The understory is navigable and open, making this a great place to actually look for Antpittas and the Wood-Quail. Other marvels of Otun Quimbaya include Colombian Screech-Owl Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, White-capped Tanager, Chestnut-breasted Wren, Wattled Guan, Rusty-winged Barbtail, Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet,

Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Wedge-billed Hummingbird, Black-banded Woodcreeper, Streak-capped Treehunter, Bronze-olive Pygmytyrant, Black-billed Peppershrike, Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and Whiskered Wren.

In late afternoon, we will drive to Salento, a gorgeous colonial town well-known for its coffee crops and verdant scenery. Salento is located nearby the Cocora Valley where lofty and gigantic Quindio Wax Palm trees (a national symbol) are abundant.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Wildlife Sanctuary Otun Quimbaya*

Day 9, Salento - Valle del Cocora and Coffee Tour at Finca el Ocaso:

In the morning, we'll have the opportunity to explore the town of Salento with its colorful Calle Real and colonial style houses. We will visit El Ocaso Coffee Farm just outside of town, a working 'finca' where you will learn about the entire process (except roasting) from seed to cup, the best coffee in the world. In total, the tour lasts around two hours, and you will finish with a tasting of their very own coffee. Hiking Cocora Valley is undoubtedly the highlight of any visit to Salento. Here you will find towering 60-meter wax palms nestled into rolling green hillsides. Valle del Cocora will give us the opportunity to see the endangered Yellow-eared Parrot found in the Andes of Colombia and Ecuador. The bird is closely associated with

the wax palm. In the late afternoon, we drive to the Pereira airport for a 1-hour flight back to Bogota and the last day of our birding adventure.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hotel Tequendama*

Day 10, City tour and transfer to El Dorado International Airport:

Depending on flight arrangements, and after a good "Santafereno" breakfast (traditional from Bogota), we can take a city tour to explore some of the most iconic sites that have made of Bogota a world-class tourist destination. Highlights of the day include la Candelaria neighborhood, Gold Museum, Monserrate Mountain and Plaza de Bolivar - all at walking distance from your hotel. We will make sure to drive you to the airport with plenty of time for your international flight home.

Powerful Woodpecker



Included in this itinerary:

In-country accommodations, ground transportation, local flight, tours, meals, soft drinks, guide and entrance fees.

Not Included:

Personal items such as alcoholic beverages, gift shop, laundry, etc. are not included.

Travel insurance:

We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance. In the event that you need to cancel your trip due to medical or other reasons, this insurance will protect you.



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