



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Horned Guan

Guatemala is the northernmost country in Central America and boasts 749 bird species with at least 35 of these being Mesoamerican endemics. With geographic features including lowland rain forests, high elevation cloud forests, tropical dry forests, spectacular volcanoes, crystalline lakes, colorful Mayan culture and ancient Mayan ruins, Guatemala may well be the most spectacularly diverse nations in all of Central America. This tour leads us across misty cloud forests, beneath the shadows of volcanoes, and through the colonial town of Antigua while offering specialty bird species such as Horned Guan (without having to climb a volcano!), Resplendent Quetzal, stunning Pink-headed Warbler, and more.

Guatemala's Birding Highlights: Highlands, Lowlands and the Mayan City of Tikal

Our itinerary combines Guatemala's southwestern highlands and mid-elevation forests. The locations within were chosen based on their great birding as well as the conservation efforts at each place. Your trip contributes to bird conservation and ecotourism by encouraging more sustainable economic activities throughout the areas we will visit.

Main Tour and Tikal Extension

9 Nights/10 Days

This trip is led entirely by knowledgeable and experienced local guides and an international tour leader who will ensure that you get the best birding experience as you contribute to preserve the fragile ecosystems of the Guatemalan highlands and the bird species they support.

Main Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrival at Guatemala City (GUA)
Day 2: Fly to Quetzaltenango (AAZ) and transfer to Tacana Volcano
Day 3: Tacana Volcano
Day 4: Tacana Volcano and transfer to Quetzaltenango
Days 5, 6 & 7: Tarrales Reserve
Day 8: Santiago Atitlan
Day 9: Transfer to Guatemala City (GUA)
Day 10: Transfer to Guatemala City airport for flights home (GUA).

Extension Overview

Day 1: Flight to Petén and birding Tikal National Park
Days 2, 3: Birding Tikal Ruins and National Park
Day 4: Birding the road from Flores, Peten
Day 5: AM flights to Guatemala City and international flights home.

Fulvous Owl



9 Night/10 Days Itinerary

Day 1, Arrival Day:

After arrivals into Guatemala City, we'll be met by our local guide at the airport and transferred to our hotel for the evening. We'll enjoy a welcome dinner and orientation along with our guide, tour leader and rest of the participants.

Meals: Dinner

Lodging at Hotel Biltmore

Day 2, Fly to Xela and travel to Sibinal, San Marcos:

We will start our adventure with a short morning flight to Quetzaltenango (Xela), to the west of Guatemala City. After arriving in Xela, we'll head to various local birding patches for our first taste of the highland specialties. After lunch, we will start our 4-hour drive to a little town near Tacana Volcano where we will spend the next 2 nights.

Key species here include Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush,

Crescent-Chested Warbler, Black-capped Swallow, Rufous-collared Robin, Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer, Mexican Violetear, Elegant Euphonia, Golden-browed Warbler, Buff-breasted Flycatcher.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Estrella Dorada*

Day 3, Birding the Tacana Volcano area:

Tacana Volcano area is a wonderful opportunity to explore the richness of Guatemala's highlands. We will be birding in lush montane forest above 10,000 ft. where views of the tallest volcanoes in Central America (Tacana and Tajumulco) are unforgettable. Here, our main target is the enigmatic and rare Horned Guan, one of the most sought species for any birder.

Thankfully, we will not have to make the "Horned Guan death march" as many refer when going to other well-known locations for this species. Depending on our success with the Guan, we will visit other locations around the area in look for other specialties such as Maroon-chested Ground Dove, Garnet-throated Hummingbird, Yellow Grosbeak, Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem, Blue-throated Motmot, Rufous-collared Robin, Black-capped Siskin, Slaty Finch, Black-throated Jay, Blue Seedeater, Unspotted Saw-whet Owl, Fulvous Owl, Pink-headed Warbler, and others.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Estrella Dorada*

Day 4, Birding and transfer to Quetzaltenango:

Today we will have an early start to drive to San Marcos, where we will start our birding in Refugio del Quetzal, a well-protected cloud forest in the pacific slopes of Guatemala. Here we will spend most of the morning dedicated to Resplendent Quetzals and Azure-rumped Tanagers among other species. At mid-day we will visit a local home with great hummingbird feeders while we have lunch. Later we will make a short drive to Astillero de San Marcos and bird for a few hours in the afternoon before driving to Quetzaltenango.

Key species here include:

Resplendent Quetzal, Azure-rumped Tanager, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Yellow-throated Nightingale-Thrush, Hooded Grosbeak, Yellow Grosbeak, Barred Forest-Falcon, Golden-browed Warbler, Barred Parakeet and more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Highland Natural Park*

Day 5, Birding and transfer to Tarrales Reserve:

After many days in the highlands of Guatemala we will start heading down to the foothills, enjoying a drastic change in habitat and bird species. We will begin our day with a great breakfast and start our drive, birding along the way and stopping at Lake Atitlán to explore the drier side the lake. Today our main target is the Belted Flycatcher, this flycatcher is



Pink-headed Warbler

restricted to a small geographic area on the Pacific slope of Central America. Here we will also try for the beautiful Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Motmot, blue-and-white Mockingbird among others. After lunch we will continue driving to the well-known birding hotspot: Tarrales Reserve. After arriving we will have some time to rest before an exciting afternoon of birding followed by dinner.

Key species here include: Belted Flycatcher, White-bellied Chachalaca, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Yellow-naped Parrot, Orange-fronted Parakeet, Pacific Parakeet, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Spot-breasted Oriole, Rufous-naped Wren, Green-breasted Mango, Altamira Oriole, Berylline Hummingbird, Blue-tailed Hummingbird, Turquoise-browed Motmot, and more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Los Tarrales Natural Reserve*

Day 6 & 7, Two Full Day of Birding Los Tarrales:

We will have two full days to explore as many spots as possible at this amazing reserve. We will start our days by visiting the upper part of the reserve, home to very special and unique species such as: Highland Guan, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Azure-rumped Tanager, Long-tailed Manakin, Guatemalan Tyrannulet among many others. Around mid-day we'll head back to the lodge to have lunch and rest until the day cools down. In the afternoon we'll continue exploring the reserve by birding along the trails in the lower slopes of the reserve.

Key species here include Highland Guan, Tody Motmot, Long-tailed Manakin, White-eared Ground-Sparrow, King Vulture, Blue-throated Goldentail, White Hawk, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Azure-rumped Tanager, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Northern Emerald-Toucanet, White-eared Hummingbird, Violet Sabrewing,



Resplendent Quetzal

Black-and-white Owl, Collared Forest-Falcon, Guatemalan Tyrannulet, Gartered Trogon, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, and many more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Los Tarrales Natural Reserve*

Day 8, Birding Tarrales in the morning and afternoon transfer to Santiago Atitlan:

Today we will visit the trails near the lodge for lower elevation species such as: Blue-throated Motmot, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Bushy-crested Jay, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, White-bellied Chachalaca among many others.

After a great morning of birding, we'll head back to the lodge for lunch before saying goodbye to Tarrales and making a short 1-hour drive to our next destination: Santiago Atitlán, one of the colorful towns on the shore of Lake Atitlán. In the afternoon we'll bird the lake's shore among agricultural patches

and second growth forests in search for the rare Slender Sheartail.

Key species here include Slender Sheartail, Blue- throated Motmot, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Bushy-crested Jay, Band-backed Wren, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Gray Silky- flycatcher, White-faced Ground- Sparrow, Rusty Sparrow, Black- vented Oriole, Cabanis's Wren, Slate-throated Redstart, Flame- colored Tanager, and many more.

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

Day 9, Rey Tepepul Birding and transfer to Guatemala City:

Today we will be visiting Mirador Rey Tepepul, near Santiago Atitlán. Birding here is along an established trail that will take us through some agricultural landscapes and mature forest that holds one of the most stunning birds: The Resplendent Quetzal. This subspecies is bigger,

has longer upper-tail coverts and is more golden in tone than the subspecies found in Costa Rica and Panama. We will not only hope to watch this magnificent bird but also species such as: Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, White-faced Quail-Dove, Green-throated Mountain-gem, Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, White-naped Brushfinch, Bar-winged Oriole, Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem, and others.

We'll return for lunch to Santiago, Atitlán and then our drive towards Guatemala City. We will try to get to the city fairly early to make sure we have a good night of sleep for the next day.

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

Day 10, flights Home:

After breakfast, we'll transfer to Guatemala City airport for international flights back home.

Meals: Breakfast

Birding Tikal Extension

4 Night/5 Day Itinerary:

Birding at Tikal, Guatemala is unlike anyplace else, with its scenery dominated by impressive Mayan pyramid temples and unbroken rain forest. With archaeological remains dating back to 1,800 years before present, Tikal is one of the largest archaeological sites and urban centers of the pre-Columbian Maya civilization. Today, a dense network of trails provides access to rain forest, secondary forest, and open areas. Over 400 bird species have been reported from Tikal National Park and the surrounding area.

Tikal is Guatemala's first National Park and was declared in 1955 to preserve its majestic Mayan ruins, spectacular rain forests and diverse wildlife. UNESCO then declared it a World Cultural and Natural Heritage site by UNESCO in 1979. Tikal National Park is a component of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, the largest Neotropical rain forest north of the Amazon basin.

Day 1, Fly to Petén and first day birding in Tikal National Park:

For those enrolled in the Tikal Extension, today will start with a flight to Flores Petén. After arriving Flores, we will head straight to Tikal National Park. Tikal National Park is the perfect blend of culture and nature richness where you will truly feel in the heart of the jungle.

We will spend this day walking among towering ancient ruins and numerous rain forest trails in order to encounter as many species as possible.

Key species today at Tikal will include: Slaty-tailed Trogon, Pale-billed Woodpecker, Olive-throated Parakeet, Brown-hooded Parrot, White-crowned Parrot, Red-lored Parrot, Yucatan Flycatcher, Giant Cowbird, Montezuma Oropendola, Keel-billed Toucan, and many more.

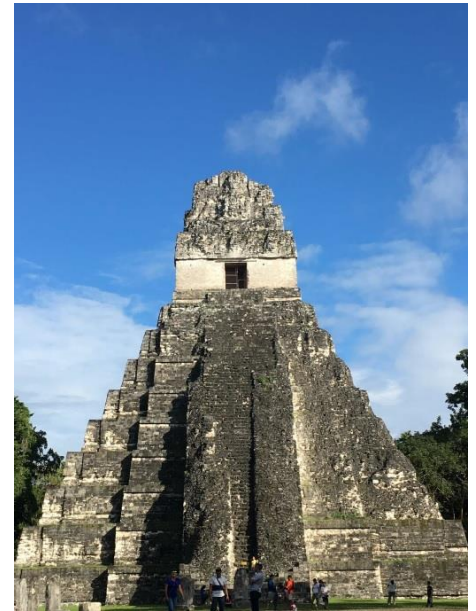
Our Lodge (inside Tikal National Park and a mile away from Tikal Main Plaza) is a very productive area as well, with amazing birds like Ocellated Turkey, Giant Cowbird and with luck even Pheasant Cuckoo! There is an area of dry forest habitat, as well as lagoons that hold species like Russet-naped Wood-Rail, Purple Gallinule, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Agami Heron, Boat-billed Heron, American Pygmy Kingfisher.

*Meals: Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Jungle Lodge*

Day 2 and 3, Tikal National Park:

With the variety of habitats surrounding our lodge, and over 575 square kilometers of rain forest and thousands of ruined structures at Tikal, we have two full days and plenty of trails to roam free and explore this incredibly rich area.

Hunting is prohibited in Tikal National Park and mammals wander freely among the forests



Temple of the Great Jaguar

and Mayan ruins. The most commonly seen species are Coatis, Agoutis, and Gray Fox around the park grounds, while Spider monkeys and Mexican Black Howler Monkeys in the forest canopy above.

Regionally endemic Ocellated Turkeys are also quite tame at Tikal, while army ant swarms often draw species such as Northern Barred, Olivaceous, Ruddy, Tawny-winged, and Ivory-billed Woodcreepers, Red-crowned and Red-throated Ant-Tanager, Gray-headed Tanager, Tawny-crowned Greenlet, and many more.

Other key species here include: Keel-billed Toucan, Collared Aracari, Plain Chachalaca, Pheasant Cuckoo, Gray-throated Chat, Purple-crowned Fairy, Stub-tailed Spadebill, Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Great Curassow, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Black-faced Antthrush, Royal Flycatcher, Red-capped Manakin, White-collared Manakin, Gray-headed Tanager,



Temple of the Great Jaguar

Black-throated Shrike-Tanager,
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager, Red-
throated Ant-Tanager.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Jungle Lodge

**Day 4, Birding the road to Flores,
Petén:**

Today we will say goodbye to Tikal National Park and travel the bird-rich route between Tikal and Flores. Along the way we'll visit the lush shores of Lake Petén Itza for American Pygmy Kingfisher, Amazon Kingfisher, Russet-naped Wood-Rail, Bat Falcon, Ruddy Crake and Pinnated Bittern. After a great lunch at a lake-side restaurant we'll head to drier areas and grasslands to try for birds like Black Catbird, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Black-throated Bobwhite, Botteri's Sparrow, Green-backed Sparrow.

After dinner at our hotel, we will have to chance to do some owling nearby for Striped Owl.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Villa Maya

**Day 5, Flights home from Guatemala
City:**

Today we will have breakfast at our hotel and head to the airport to catch our flight to Guatemala City.

Meals: Breakfast

Included in this itinerary:

Main Tour: Accommodations from arrival at Guatemala City on day 1 to departure on day 10. All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 10. One-way GUA – AAZ airfare, all ground transportation, bi-lingual birding guide throughout, all guide, park, and entrance fees.

Extension: Accommodations from arrival at Tikal on day 1 to departure from Flores on day 5, all meals beginning lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 5. Round-trip GUA – FRS airfare, all ground transportation, bi-lingual birding

guide throughout, all guide, park, and entrance fees.

Not Included:

Alcoholic beverages, additional soft drinks other than juice and water, laundry, souvenirs, or similar items of a personal nature.

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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