



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



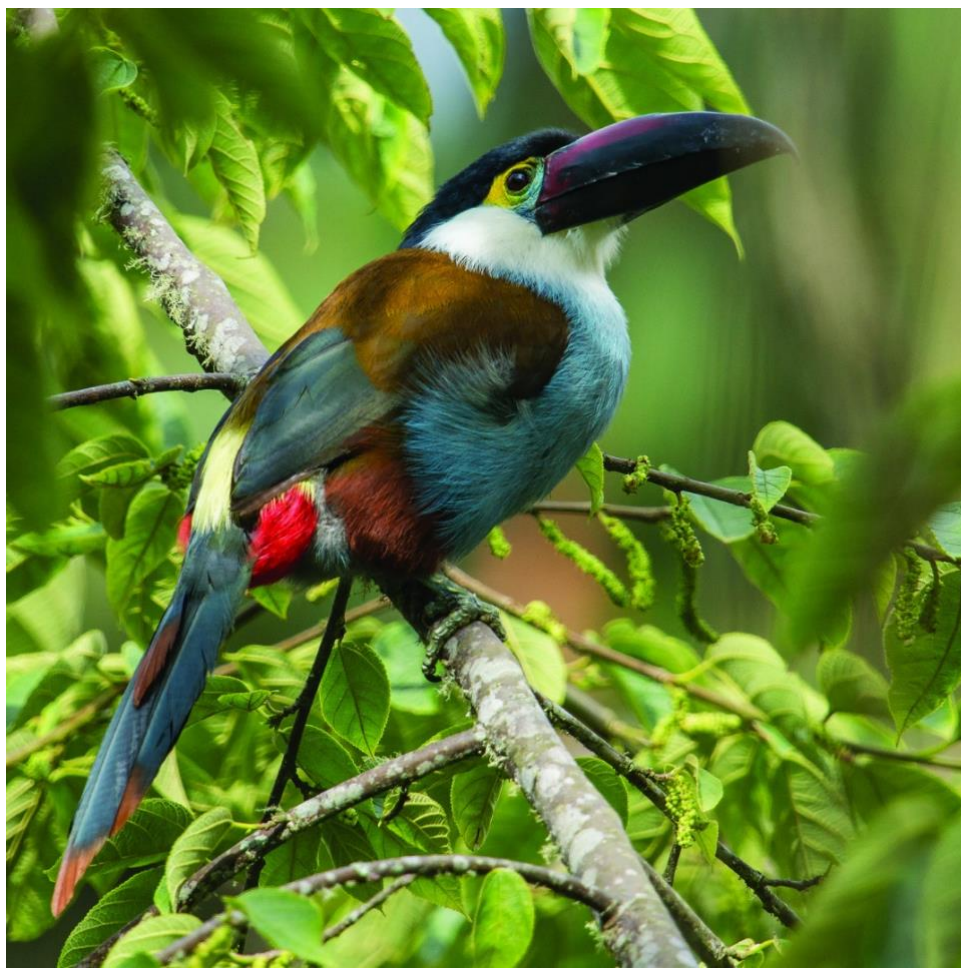
Bay-headed Tanager

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.



Black-billed Mountain Toucan

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: Rio Blanco Reserve
 Day 6: Páramo del Ruiz
 Day 7: Hacienda el Bosque - PM
 High Andean hotspots
 Day 8: AM Otun Quimbaya - PM
 Salento
 Day 9: Coffee Tour, Cocora Valley, and flight to Bogota
 Day 10: Bogota city tour and departure from El Dorado International Airport

Day 1, Arrival at Bogota International Airport:

Upon arrival in Bogota, our tour guide, will pick you up at the airport and take you to a nice and comfortable hotel. In the early night, we will meet for dinner and go through introductions, a tour presentation, rules & and expectations Q&A, and logistics for the tour's first day.

Meals: Dinner

Lodging at Hotel Lusitania Bogota

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

Chingaza National Park is located just outside of Bogotá (1.5 hours land trip), it includes vast areas of high Andean forest, subparamo, and

paramo ecosystems and provides access to some key specialties such as the uncommon (E) Brown-breasted Parakeet, (E) Green-bearded Helmetcrest, and (E) Silvery-throated Spinetail. Hummingbird Observatory is located 40 minutes from Chingaza, at an altitude of 9,800 feet in a High Andean forest. The weather can vary magically from sunny to rainy many times a day, and it is no surprise to see the fog coming down the mountain as well. 118 bird species have been reported here including some 18 hummingbird species.

Specialties include (NE) Blue-throated Starfrontlet, (NE) Copper-bellied Puffleg, Shining Sunbeam, Green and Sparkling Violetear, Speckled and Sword-billed Hummingbird, Long-tailed Sylph, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Purple-backed Thornbill. This is a fantastic place for bird photography.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging at Hotel Lusitania Bogota

Day 3, Enchanted Garden, and Tabacal Lagoon:

Early in the morning, we will visit Tabacal Lagoon, a nice wetland just 1.5 hours away from Bogota at an altitude of 4,100 feet. Birds of interest in the parking lot include Black-bellied Wren, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, and 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 (E) Velvet-fronted Euphonia, White-throated Crake and Black Hawk-Eagle, White-bellied Antbird, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Grey-throated Warbler, and a lek of White-bearded Manakin.

Birding Tabacal is a great introduction to the spectacular humid lowland forests of the Magdalena Valley.

Enchanted Garden is a private residence about an hour and a half west of Bogota at an altitude 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 (E) Indigo-capped Hummingbird, (NE) Red-billed and Short-tailed Emerald, and Indigo-Topaz Hummingbird - This too, is a fantastic place for bird photography.

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

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

La Victoria municipality is an amazing birding hotspot in the Magdalena Valley that divides the Eastern and Central Andes Cordillera, with over 200 species recorded. Some specialties on Victoria include Black-faced Dacnis, (E) and NT Sooty Ant-Tanager, and (E) White-mantled Barbet, Beautiful Woodpecker, and the spectacular (E) White-bibbed Manakin. This area is ideal to see snakes, tarantulas, monkeys, and sloths!

In the afternoon, we will transfer for about 3.5 hours to our headquarters in the coffee area of Colombia - the beautiful and strategically located Recinto del Pensamiento hotel.



Buffy Helmetcrest

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Recinto del Pensamiento*

Day 5, Río Blanco Reserve:

After driving for 30 minutes, we find the Rio Blanco Reserve, the go-to spot for three attractive species: Masked Saltator, (NE) Bicolored Antpitta, and (E) Brown-banded Antpitta. The two Antpittas are commonly heard and seen readily at feeding stations. The Saltator is regular, but certainly not guaranteed.

In the morning you can have a cup of the best coffee in the world while enjoying the spectacular hummingbird show at the feeders including visits by Tourmaline Sunangel, Buff-tailed Coronet, Speckled Hummingbird, Bronzy and Collared Inca, Mountain Velvet-breast, the tiny White-bellied Woodstar, and Long-tailed Sylph.

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, and the impressive Chestnut-crowned Antpitta. We will spend the rest of the day exploring the excellent network of trails.

Along with the endemic and rare species, this area boasts many sought-after species that include: Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Stygian Owl, 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. From Río Blanco we will drive back to Recinto del Pensamiento in the late afternoon.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Recinto del Pensamiento*

Day 6, Páramo del Ruiz and Termales del Ruiz:

Páramo del Ruiz is at the highest altitude of our tour, looming at 13,400 feet. This is the place in Colombia to go after the dazzling and very localized (E) Buffy Helmetcrest a plump little hummingbird and the marvelous (E) Rufous-fronted Parakeet. Other birds of interest include Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager, Tawny Antpitta, White-chinned Thistletail, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Black-chested Buzzard-eagle, Andean Condor, Many-striped Canastero, Paramo Seedeater, Noble Snipe, Black Flowerpiercer, and Plain-capped Ground-tyrant.

We will spend the afternoon at Termales del Ruiz, a nice hotel at a high altitude with a set of gardens that normally attract 10 species of hummingbirds including the highly regarded (NE) Black-thighed Puffleg, (NE) Golden-breasted Puffleg, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Tourmaline Sunangel, Viridian Metaltail, Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and Purple-backed Thornbill. This is a great place for bird photography

Termales del Ruiz has a thermal pool for which the hotel is named. The steaming, hot, sulfurous delightful waters are ideal for a truly relaxing experience after a day of birding.

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



Torrent Duck

Day 7, Hacienda el Bosque and sub-paramo locations:

From our hotel and after just a 35 mins drive, we will get to the fantastic Hacienda El Bosque, the newest addition to top birding hotspots in Colombia located at high Andean Forest and Sub-paramo ecosystems between 9,180 to 12,700 feet asl and home to two fantastic bird species, difficult to find elsewhere; the gorgeous Crescent-faced Antpitta and Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan!

The Antpitta is a regular visitor to a successful feeding station. Other birds of interest include Rufous Antpitta, Golden-fronted Redstart, Pearled Treerunner, Mountain Velvetbreast, and Barred Fruiteater.

This is a great location for bird photography.

After exploring hotspots in the sub-paramo ecosystem looking for high-altitude specialties we will head south for just over two hours to our last birding location, the magnificent Otun Quimbaya Natural reserve.

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

Day 8, Otun Quimbaya and Salento:

The birding in Otun Quimbaya is along fairly flat trails and a road. The understory is navigable and open, making this a great place to look for Antpittas and the Chestnut Wood-Quail. Otun Quimbaya is



Powerful Woodpecker

home to 2 coveted species, endemic and endangered Cauca Guan and Red-ruffed Fruitcrow. Other birds of particular interest include (E) Golden-plumed Parakeet, (NE) Mustached Antpitta, and Hooded Antpitta, Torrent Duck, and (E) Stiles's Tapaculo. After a delicious traditional lunch, we will transfer for just over 1 hour to the quintessential town of Salento at the heart of Coffee Land.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Salento Plaza*

Day 9, Salento - Valle del Cocora and Coffee Tour:

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.

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 provide chances 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.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hotel Hilton Garden Inn Bogota*

Day 10, Bogota Historic District sightseeing, Gold Museum, 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 Bogota a world-class tourist destination. Highlights of the day include the 'La Candelaria' neighborhood, Gold Museum, Monserrate Mountain, and Plaza de Bolivar - We will drive you to the airport with plenty of time for your international flight back home.

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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