

Georgia Audubon Travel - 2023

Location: Colombia

Duration: 15 days

Dates: March 10 (Fri) to March 24 (Fri)

Group Size Limit: 10 + guides

Guides:

- Adam Betuel - Georgia Audubon
- Diego Calderon - COLOMBIA Birding & The Birders Show

Tour Price:

- Georgia Audubon Members- **\$5,660**
- Non Members (Includes a one-year Georgia Audubon membership) - **\$5,710**
- Single supplement for non-shared hotel room: **\$530/person**

Cost Includes: One expert local birding tour leader (Diego Calderon) and a co-leader from Georgia Audubon (Conservation Director Adam Betuel), accommodations in all destinations (double room), all ground transportation during the trip (including pick-up and drop-off at the airport), domestic flights, all meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 15 (additionally, water will be available on the bus at all times), An alcoholic or specialty drink with dinner, all entrance fees to parks and preserves, taxes, limited medical insurance in case of emergency

Cost Does NOT Include: Costs of obtaining passports, international airfare and any accompanying baggage fees, additional alcohol or specialty coffee (beyond what is included with dinner) snacks, additional beverages, room service, sightseeing not specified in itinerary, souvenirs, laundry, travel insurance (strongly recommended), medical costs, cost associated with Covid testing in Colombia if required, gratuities, personal communications, and any other incidentals that participants may wish to purchase

Payments:

1. Down-payment of \$500.00 per person due to reserve spot on trip (\$550 for non-members)
2. Half of cost (less \$500) due by June 15, 2022
3. Full payment must be made by December 15, 2022

Cancellation: If notice of cancellation by the participant is received by June 15, 2022 a refund of all payments made will be given (less a \$50 administrative and all credit card fees). If notice of cancellation is received between June 16, 2022 and December 15, 2022 a 50% refund of the fees paid to date will be given unless the space(s) can be filled, in which case a full refund will be given (less a \$50 administrative fee and all credit card fees). Thereafter, all deposits and payments are non-refundable unless the space(s) can be filled, in which case a full refund will be given (less a \$50 administrative fee and all credit card fees). In the event of tour cancellation due to weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other unforeseen emergency situation, a refund will be given less any non-refundable payments made to the local company. Please contact Adam Betuel if you have any questions regarding the non-refundable payment schedule.

Travel Insurance: We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance in case you must make an unforeseen trip cancellation or other circumstances cause the cancellation/postponement of the trip past our refund period. Check with your own insurance carrier or consider a travel insurance specialist.



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Number of bird species expected: 350 to 400

Target Species: Silvery-throated Spinetail, Pale-bellied Tapaculo, Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Moustached Brushfinch, Golden-fronted Redstart, Golden-bellied Starfrontlet, Chestnut Wood-Quail, Blue-headed Sapphire, Multicolored Tanager, Toucan Barbet, Rufous-gaped Hillstar, Yellow-collared Chlorophonia, Flame-rumped Tanager, Red-headed Barbet, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Cauca Guan, Apical Flycatcher, Spectacled Owl, Little Tinamou, Grayish Piculet, Common Potoo, Chestnut-naped Antpitta, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Andean Pygmy-Owl, Bicolored Antpitta, Masked Saltator, White-capped Tanager, Rusty-faced Parrot, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Crescent-faced Antpitta, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Barred Fruiteater, Buffy Helmetcrest, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Green-bearded Helmetcrest, Red-Rumped Bush-Tyrant, Apolinar's Wren, Bogota Rail, Silvery-throated Spinetail

Pace/Effort: Easy to moderate pace. Though there is a fair amount of relocating, we will stay at least two nights at all hotels. Very few long walks. Most walking will be on shorter loop trails, along roads, at feeders or gardens at lodges. Some flat terrain but many spots will have at least some incline. When possible, we will try and walk down hill and have the vehicle pick us up instead of walking back up. Some areas can be steep and wet. You will spend a lot of time on your feet. Days will typically be long with substantial time on your feet or on the vehicle. Most mornings will have a very early start so that we can get to the birding locations at peak time for bird activity. Some nights will have optional owling. If it is not a travel day, participants can of course skip any outing and stay at the hotel.

Money: Colombia uses the Colombian Peso (roughly 3,900 to 1 USD). Dollars are not typically accepted so you will want to exchange money for purchases in country. ATMs are plentiful and typically offer a good exchange rate. Credit cards are accepted at some locations. You may want to notify your credit cards or bank prior to departure.

Tipping: From the local company we are partnering with *“Tipping is an important way that you can indirectly support conservation efforts. The more economic impact local businesses and other service providers feel from ecotourism, the more word will spread that conservation is a viable economic alternative. At Nature Colombia, as much as possible we hire local labor and buy our building materials and foods locally. Likewise, you as an individual can also have a significant cumulative effect with other visitors over the course of a season or year. Your trip cost only includes tips with meals. There are some people you may want to tip such as porters, housekeeping, and of course our guide(s) and drivers. With this concept in mind, while staying at natural reserves we suggest a tip of \$5 US/person/night for the reserve staff (guards, cooks and local guides).”* Most places we will go have a box where you can drop in a tip that will be split among the staff.

Away from the reserves/hotels, you may want to keep in mind tipping for our drivers and other guides, including Diego.

- You can find information on tipping guides and drivers online but some recommendations are:
 - Main guide (Diego) - \$10 to \$20 USD per day
 - Local guides - \$5+
 - Driver - \$5 per day
 - Feeders - Consider leaving a small tip for the people who maintain and refill feeder stations
 - These costs are per person in case you are travelling as a couple/group

Photography: Opportunities will be quite variable. Many habitats will be lush and forested which may make photography a bit more difficult. Additionally, we will be in some damp areas and on steep trails that could pose a risk to your equipment or limit visibility at times. However, we will visit multiple

feeders that can provide spectacular opportunities for pictures. High elevation sites will have shorter vegetation and could provide great views. It is important to remember this is a bird and nature watching trip and not a photography trip. We will slow for photos when appropriate but in general, we will keep a pace best for birdwatching.

Climate/Weather: We will be visiting a large range of altitudes and thus a variety of temperatures. We can expect temperatures as low as the mid 30's at the highest mountain spots and as hot as the 80's to 90's in the valleys. Most places should be pleasant.

Rain is possible at some locations, despite us visiting in the drier season. It should not be constant but we will be in cloud forests and the Choco forest in particular is one of the wettest areas on the planet. Rubber boots or things like that are not necessary but rain gear would be handy and is strongly recommended.

Bugs: Not expected to be an issue, especially at mid to high elevation stops. That being said, it is always smart to have bug spray on hand.

Accommodations: Good to very good/excellent (not 5-star!). At most locations, we will be using one of if not the best lodging options available and places that cater to birders. However, at some destinations we will prioritize proximity to birding locations. Hotels should have typical amenities including WIFI. The planned hotels are:

- Hilton Garden Inn Bogota Airport
- La Araucana Lodge
- Hotel Hacienda San Jose
- Recinto del Pensamiento
- Termales del Ruiz



Transportation within country: The group will be in a large Mercedes Benz van/bus. It is a 15-person vehicle, and thus more than 1 seat per person (extra seats can be shared spaces for gear, cameras optics. At one or two spots, we may need to split up into jeeps to access some higher elevation spots.

Water and snacks: We encourage you to bring a reusable water bottle. In general, the tap water is safe to drink/use. This is especially true at the high elevation locations. However, most places will have a refill station you can use for your bottle. There will always be drinking water on the bus. Additional snacks or drinks desired away from meal times will be the responsibility of the trip participant.

Electricity

Most hotels and lodges in Colombia have Type B, 3 pin North American plugs as in the USA. Some older establishments may have only the Type A, 2 pin North American plugs. The frequency is 60 Hz and the voltage is 110V (same as the USA), though in rural areas the voltage can fluctuate.

Field Guides: The leaders will have guides so you do not need to purchase a book unless you would like your own. Here are some things to consider.

- Hilty, Steven L. 2021. Birds of Colombia. Lynx Edicions
- Ayerbe, Fernando. 2019. An illustrated field guide to the birds of Colombia. Wildlife Conservation Society/Colombia
- Merlin - The Merlin app by Cornell has a downloadable pack to the birds of Colombia. It is a great resource and is like a localized field guide on your phone.

Itinerary Outline:

Day 1: Arrive in Bogota

Day 2: Chingaza National Park

Day 3: Chicaque Natural Park

Day 4: San Antonio Cloud Forest & La Conchita

Day 5: Doña Dora feeders and Chocó specialties

Day 6: San Felipe

Day 7: Otun-Quimbaya National Park

Day 8: Tinamú Reserve

Day 9: El Color de mis Rêves

Day 10: Rio Blanco Reserve

Day 11: Hacienda El Bosque

Day 12: Los Nevados National Park

Day 13: Return to Bogota

Day 14: Sumapaz National Park

Day 15: Departure



Tips for packing

- Layers
- Thin long pants and long sleeved shirts
- Fleece or jacket (remember it could be cold and windy at some high elevation locations)
- Rain gear
- Hiking boots or very sturdy hiking shoes. Rubber boots not necessary. Waterproof is always preferable
- Comfortable shoes for around hotels
- Sun protection (hat, sunglasses, sunscreen)
- Bug spray
- Gloves and hat
- Binoculars
- Camera (if you want)
- Scope - Both guides (Adam & Diego) will have a scope. You only need to bring one if you want your own
- Medication
- Cell phone - Make sure to check with your provider on an international package. Could consider local SIM card
- Chargers & batteries
- Flashlight
- Water bottle
- Travel insurance documentation should you get some
- Passport (may want a photo in case you lose it)
- Field guides (optional)

- Some people like a small, collapsible umbrella
- Foldable waking sticks if needed

For luggage, a single large (hold luggage) bag and a day rucksack, or something equivalent, would likely be ideal. Internal flights allow just 23kg (44 lbs) of checked luggage and 10kg (22 lbs) of carry-on baggage.

If you have any further questions, please contact Adam Betuel

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