



Proposed Itinerary Specially Designed for Atlanta Audubon Society

**January 17 – 26, 2020
10 Days / 9 Nights**

**Letter Codes: B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner
TG = Transfer Guide, NG = Naturalist Guide**

Friday, Jan 17: Arrival City of San José (SJO), Costa Rica (D) (TG)

Arrive at Juan Santamaria International Airport, after exiting the plane, first follow the signs to immigration where you will have to wait in line to get your passport checked and stamped. Continue to baggage claim and customs. There are carts in the baggage claim area that are free of charge, so grab one of those while you wait for your luggage to come out on the designated carousel.

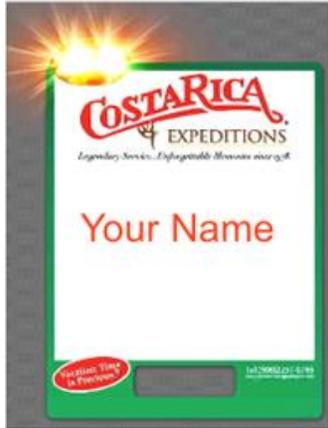
If your flight is arriving between the hours of 7 am- 10 pm, you may be greeted by a representative from the Costa Rican chamber of tourism. If so they will give you a sticker that identifies you to customs officials as a tourist. These representatives are not always available, and if you don't see them don't worry, as the sticker is a courtesy and not a necessity.

Once you have your luggage, you'll need to get in line to go through customs. Normally this consists of putting your luggage and carry on luggage on a conveyor belt to be x-rayed; when it's your turn to put your luggage on the conveyor belt you will have to give the Customs Official the form that you filled out on the plane. Once you've retrieved your luggage, you can exit the airport.

IMPORTANT: When you exit the building, you'll see a lot of people, and you will most likely be approached by taxi drivers looking for a fare, tell them it's not necessary. Before stepping into the crowd; **take a moment to scan it for your Costa Rica Expeditions guide.**

You'll recognize your guide by their bright orange or yellow shirt. Also, he or she will be holding a sign with your name on it. You can count on their being there -- even if your flight arrives early, or arrives quite late -- no matter how late. After all, it's our first chance to have you experience that every part of your vacation will go smoothly. He or she will take you to your hotel.

Here is a photo of the sign and **Priscilla Montero**, one of our transfer guides, in the uniform; this is what you need to look for.



If you arrive with day light and have time for a bird walk in the hotel gardens, this hotel has some great birding in their courtyard—Ferruginous Pygmy-owls, Blue-crowned Motmot, Rufous-capped Warblers, and Grayish Saltator, their garden is a great place to see the elusive White-eared Ground-sparrow.



Overnight at: Hotel Bougainvillea. Standard Room - Mountain View
Number of Nights: 1

Saturday, Jan 18: City of San Jose – Copey de Dota Valley (BLD) NG

Today meet your Private Bilingual Birding Guide, Charlie Gomez and you Spanish speaking driver. They will be with you for the next 8 days.

Charlie and the driver will join for breakfast in the hotel, and after a tour briefing, depart for the highlands at Cerro de la Muerte.

En route, your naturalist guide will stop at Finca Cristina, this site is an organic shade-grown coffee farm in the middle of a major flyway for neotropical birds, the farm is dedicated to producing the finest Arabica coffee while protecting and preserving native flora and fauna with responsible practices such as not using any pesticides. The farm provides important habitat for species that breed in North America and winter in the tropics, with a bird list over 300 species, some of them are Warblers, hummingbirds, tanagers, oropendolas, hawks and owls.



After the visit to Finca Cristina, continue to Cerro de la Muerte.

Cerro de la Muerte literally translates to Mountain of Death. This not very appealing name was given to the region by the travelers that intended to conquer the mountain many decades ago. Before any roads were built, and during the time that nobody lived in this region, crossing the Cerro de la Muerte high elevations on foot was a real challenge. The rain and the cold temperatures just made the task harder and kept the area isolated from Central Valley and the capital San José. Elevations at the Cerro de la Muerte are close to 12,000 feet, and the landscape is very particular. Both the “Paramo”, which refers to the vegetation that grows above the timber line, and the Oak Forest are considered rare nowadays in Central America. During the construction of the Pan-American Highway during the 50s, many workers ventured into this land and some small villages were born in the midst of this remote area.

Today, the region has a special importance for conservation, and for the development of crops like apricots, apples and black berries, as well as Eco-tourism. Despite there're many different species of trees that can be seen in this high altitude, the different varieties of oak, as well as the wild avocado species are particularly important for the area. Besides, there is an abundant plant life in the area such as mosses, bamboo, and tree ferns. Aside from birds, wildlife is rarely sighted at this point. Cerro de la Muerte is considered a birdwatcher's paradise with the iconic Resplendent Quetzal, Emerald Toucanettes and hummingbirds being fairly common sightings. The scenery at the top of Cerro de la Muerte is different from any other area of the country. The high elevations, dwarf vegetation and cold temperatures promote the development of various habitats. On a clear day visitors will be able to look out across the lush forest to see the Pacific Ocean in the background. Temperatures drop to 40 F (5 C) during the night, mostly from December through February



Besides the Resplendent Quetzal, other species here are Black-and-Yellow Silky-flycatcher, Timberland Wren, Ochraceous Wren, Ochraceous Pewee, Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Volcano Hummingbird, Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Collared Trogon and Tufted Flycatcher



Overnight at: El Toucanet Lodge. Standard Room
Number of Nights: 3

Sunday, Jan 19: Copey de Dota Valley (BLD) NG

Today with your guide visit the Paraiso de Quetzal site, this is an extension of 80 hectares (200 acres) that contains a wealth of flora and fauna. More than 140 species - some of them endemic to the area- make this place a birdwatcher's dream. Paraiso Quetzal has managed to respect and safeguard the Cloud Forest. Its varied fauna, especially the quetzal, make this place a good sightseeing area. A gentle 1.5 km (1 mile) walk through the cloud forest will lead you to the Quetzals habitat. Epiphytes, such as orchids and bromeliads, make this tour a gratifying experience en route to your possible encounter with the Quetzal. Despite its normally reticent and silent behavior, the male, during the mating season, sometimes emits a wide range of sounds to attract a nearby female and so initiate their reproductive cycle. Paraiso Quetzal is located in one of the most prolific zones for this bird species

What to bring: hiking boots, long pants, long-sleeved shirt (recommended), dull color clothing (recommended), sunblock, insect repellent, water bottle, camera and binoculars (recommended) as well as protection gear for your optics in case of rain

Note: you'll hike at about 9500 f (2900 m) above sea level, so plan for cold, windy and misty weather



Also, you'll have the opportunity to use the private observation deck individually and assisted by your Naturalist Guide. The staff person will locate flowers, branches & sticks, backgrounds, etc, to make photography of local species possible. Hummingbirds are normally attracted to this spacious outdoors platform, 24 sq m (264 sq f)



Monday, Jan 20: Copey de Dota Valley (BLD) NG

Second full day in this region with your Naturalist Guide Charlie to explore other trails near the lodge, at Toucanet has been recorded over 200 species of birds in its vicinity. Oak and cypress trees grow at the higher altitudes, as well as the “aguacatillo trees”, a type of avocado and main diet for Quetzals. Some species here are Emerald Toucanet, Acorn Woodpecker, Black Guan, White-winged Tanager, Flame-colored Tanager, Spangle-cheeked Tanager, Barred Becard, White-throated Mountain-gem, Scintillant Hummingbird, Magenta-throated Woodstar, Green Violet-ear, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, Bare-shanked Screech-owl, Mottled Owl, Dusky Nightjar and Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher

Also, today you will participate in a bird banding activity.



Tuesday, Jan 21: Copey de Dota Valley – Carara National Park (BLD) NG

This morning departs from Copey de Dota Valley to the Carara National Park in the central Pacific coast.

The Central Pacific Region encompasses a variety of habitats distributed in different zones of life from the ocean level up to 3000 ft. This is an overlapping area where the northern hemisphere flora & fauna meets the southern hemisphere species. Consequently, there is a large diversity of plants and animals found in this environment. Among all the many species of birds we can observe in the area, the Scarlet Macaw is probably the most colorful and loud. There is no way to miss them when they fly around the forest. This region encompasses some important conservation areas like Carara National Park. Established originally like a Biological Reserve in 1978, Carara was upgraded to National Park status in 1990. The landscape in the area consists of a mix of secondary growth forest and farmlands. Lately, many of the farm owners have opted for reforesting their land with exotic trees like Melina and Teak wood. These trees ended up providing extra nourishment for the macaws and parrots that adapted quickly to the new species. Besides, it is not hard to find green iguanas and frogs in the area, as well as mammals like coatis, agoutis and monkeys. Near the Tarcoles River mouth, you can easily observe large crocodiles sun basking in the sandbanks.



Besides the Scarlet Macaw, other species in this area are Fiery-billed Aracari, Crane Hawk, White-throated Magpie Jay, Double-striped Thick-knee, Southern Lapwing, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Black-headed Trogon, Cinnamon Hummingbird and Steely-vented Hummingbird



Overnight at: Cerro Lodge. Bungalow
Number of Nights: 2

Wednesday, Jan 22: Carara National Park (BLD) NG
Full day to explore the national park and Rio Tarcoles by boat

Carara National Park offers high species diversity. The park is located between the dry forests of the north and the humid ones of the south. As a result of this confluence of species and habitats, Carara provides interesting opportunities for anyone interested in nature & photography. Many endangered and threatened species live and breed here, like the American crocodile (*Cocodrilus acutus*). In fact, many people stop in a bridge located near the park to observe these ancestral reptiles. Carara is also considered a sanctuary of the Scarlet Macaw, as well as many more species of birds like Tiger Herons, Egrets, Sand-pipers, Stilts, Tanagers, Honeycreepers, Trogons, Toucans and many more. The Three-toed Sloth lives, feeds and mates on the trees, and they can be spotted occasionally along the pathways. The area in which the reserve is located was occupied by an indigenous culture that lived from 300 B.C. to 1500 A.D. Extensive tomb sites have been excavated here, and the burial places of people of high status are remarkably complex. The trails in Carara are in good shape, and they're mostly flat with shaded sections under trees

What to bring: hiking boots, rain gear, hat or cap, insect repellent, sunblock, plenty of drinking water, light "fast-dry" clothing, camera & binoculars, back pack (recommended)



Late afternoon explore Rio Tarcoles by boat, a tour specially designed for adventurers and bird watchers, yet safe for the whole family. The adventure takes place on the Tárcoles River, one of four rivers flowing out into the Nicoya Peninsula, and home to one of the world's largest crocodile populations in the wild with individuals up to fifteen feet long. In addition to the crocodiles, over fifty different kinds of birds can be seen on site, including the very rare scarlet macaw and a great variety of resident and migrant waterfowl. Iguanas and basilisk lizards are very common as well. On the way downstream, the boat heads along the Estero Guacalillo, a most impressive mangrove ecosystem that features four different species of mangrove trees.

What to bring: Light "fast dry" Clothing, Comfortable Footwear, Cap or Hat, Bottle of water, Insect Repellent, Sun block, Binoculars & Camera (optional)



Thursday, Jan 23: Carara National Park – Tenorio Volcano (BLD) NG

Today you will depart for Tenorio Volcano region. The slopes of the Caribbean side of the Tenorio volcano are covered with rural farms, cattle ranches, small villages, mountain forest, rivers and waterfalls that create one of the most scenic regions of the country. The Río Celeste in Tenorio National Park, with its turquoise color waters and waterfall is one of the main attractions in the area, but the region also provides many other possibilities like horseback riding, hiking, birding and other wildlife viewing opportunities through trails in the park and private reserves.



Some of the species that you will see in this region are Yellow-eared Toucanet, Rufous-winged Tanager, Lovely Cotinga, Streak-crowned Antwreio, Keel-billed Motmot, Tody Motmot, Rufous Motmot, Broad-billed Motmot, Olive Tanager, Dull-mantled Antbird, Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser, White Hawk, Black-hawk Eagle, Ornate Hawk-eagle, Rufous-eared Wood-quail, Song Wren, Lattice-tailed Trogon, White-fronted Nunbird, Central American Pygmy-owl, Crested Owl, White-tipped Sickled-bill and Violet-headed Hummingbird



Overnight at: Celeste Mountain Lodge. Standard Room
Number of Nights: 2

Friday, Jan 24: Tenorio Volcano (BLD) NG

Full day to explore the Heliconias rainforest suspension bridges and Finca Danta

You will walk for approximately 2500 mts (1.6 miles) and explore the surrounding rain forest as well as three hanging bridges. The first bridge is 75 m long (250 f) long and 27 m (90 f) high, the second one is 105 m long (350 f) and 37 m high (122 f). The third bridge is 95 m long (314 f) and 30 m high (99 f) All the bridges are situated over the forest canopy and will let you explore some of the most relevant ecosystems safely. 70% of all forms of life in the rain forest live or originate in the forest canopy. You will be able to enjoy a myriad of epiphyte plants including bromeliads and orchids, as well as a sizable number of birds and even mammals occasionally.



Finca Danta, the farm is located at close distance of Celeste Mountain Lodge and even the road taking to the farm provides great opportunities for birding. Finca Danta is located in the slopes of the Tenorio volcano, in a U-shaped valley surrounded by mature forest and secondary growth, with a marsh and pasturelands with patchy woods, offers the opportunity to look for specialties of this elevation, like Rufous-winged Tanager, Central American Pygmy Owl, Black-hawk Eagle and many more. A dirt trail will take us through the farm with beautiful views of the area.



Saturday, Jan 25: Tenorio Volcano – City of San Jose (BLD) NG

Full morning exploring the trails at Celeste Mountain Lodge, after lunch return to San Jose

Tonight, farewell dinner in the hotel with your Naturalist Guide Charlie and the driver

Overnight at: Hotel Bougainvillea. Standard Room - Mountain View

Number of Nights: 1

Sunday, Jan 26: City of San José - Departure (B) (TG)

Transfer to the Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO) at least three hours prior to the departure time for your flight out of the country (30 min drive).

HOTEL & ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

Hotel Bougainvillea

Located outside San Jose, in Santo Domingo de Heredia, Hotel Bougainvillea offers far more than just accommodations. All 82 rooms have unique furniture made of Costa Rican hardwoods and balconies with views of gardens, the city of San Jose and the Central Valley. There is a swimming pool, conference room, sauna, and tennis courts, as well as a restaurant. Guests find the gardens an inspirational paradise where they can relax and discover the beauty of many Costa Rican plants and birds. With its 10 acres of carefully tended tropical grounds, the Hotel Bougainvillea features over 50 species of bromeliads, Costa Rican native trees, and numerous species of orchids, ferns, herb and cacti gardens; and humming birds typical of the Central Valley of Costa Rica. Temperate climate Hotel telephone: 011 (506) 2244-1414



Standard Room - Mountain View

The Standard Room includes 2 full beds, with a desk, flat screen cable TV, direct dialing telephone, Wi-Fi, safety deposit box, ceiling fans coffee maker, room service and glass doors leading into a balcony with a mountain view. There is a private bathroom or bath tub with hot water and a hair dryer. This is a non-smoking room.



El Toucanet Lodge

El Toucanet Lodge offers you spectacular views and personalized service, in a comfortable rustic atmosphere, only one and a half hours from San José on good roads. The valley, the cloud forest and over 200 bird species make this area similar to Monteverde, and is an excellent place to stop and relax to break up the long drive to the southern beaches and National Parks of Costa Rica. Cool weather. Breakfast included. Hotel telephone 011 (506) 2541-3045.



Standard Room

The rooms of El Toucanet Lodge are modern rustic made of wood and very cozy. Private bath, hot water, desk, reading lamps, closet and big windows to enjoy the beautiful view of the mountains and cloud forest and sometimes to admire the beauty of a rainbow. Private terraces in each room. The Lodge has comfortable rooms from one double bed for couples to six beds for families with fireplace, jacuzzi bath, coffee maker and a small refrigerator. All the rooms have plenty of extra blankets to keep you warm during those chilly nights. Typical breakfast included



Cerro Lodge

Located on a farm in Tárcoles (Central Pacific) this property has 8 bungalows with private bathroom and indoor garden, swimming pool and dining area, all this is surrounded by trees, palms, gardens and panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, mangrove forests and Carara National Park. Weather year around is very hot and humid. A/C service is provided in all the rooms. Master Card and Visa credit cards are accepted, as well as US dollars. Breakfast included. Hotel Telephone: 011(506) 2427-9910.



Bungalow

The Bungalows in Cerro Lodge feature A/C and Full Breakfast. The Bungalows offer different bedding configurations: Two Full sized Beds, or One Full and Two Twins. The Rooms offer more space than Standards, Bathroom with shower and separate units for more privacy

- Free Internet Service around Front Desk only
- Free Coffee
- Laundry Service by a Fee

Note: Some of the Bungalows have an Open-air Bathroom with an interior garden



Celeste Mountain Lodge

The Celeste Mountain Lodge sits on a 3 hectares green area and 4 hectares of protected primary forest. Because neighboring properties also consist of protected areas, deep jungles surround the lodge on 3 sides. Around the building on 2 kms of primary forest, wildlife abounds, often allowing spotting and observing of local fauna such as monkeys (howler and white-face), an extensive bird species list such as toucans, hummingbirds or parrots and even rare species, also butterflies and mammals like the tapir roam the property. You may also enjoy the rich diversity of the vegetation with centennial trees or vines. The lodge boasts a very innovative, contemporary design, altering traditional parameters in hotel architecture, opening walls and spaces, blending the different areas and inviting the beauty of the surroundings right inside the building. All meals are included (daily fixed menu).

Celeste Mountain Lodge opens the doors to the Tenorio Volcano National Park and Rio Celeste, being located at 3 miles (5 kms) from its entrance. The nearest village is Bijagua, 2.5 miles from the lodge on a rustic road. There's no public transportation available and cabs charge between \$35 and \$75 to pick you up at the hotel and drive to the attractions like the National Park. Warm weather. Hotel telephone 011 (506) 2278-6628.



Standard Room

The Standard Rooms in Celeste Mountain Lodge have views to the volcano, rainforest, gardens and the valley down below. The lodge offers 18 rooms within one building, on two floors. The Standard Rooms are 27 sq. m / 291 sq. f and have private bathroom (2 handicapped facilities). The rooms have different bedding configuration. The Standard Rooms are in minimalist style, decorated with eco-design furnishing such as the nightstand-lamps, and feature a wash basin, hairdryer, hot shower and toilet, cloth-hanging space and shelving.

- Bedding 1: one Queen or one King bed
- Bedding 2: one Queen and one Single or three Single beds
- Bedding 3: two Double beds



INCLUDED:

- Accommodations: As featured in the itinerary.
- Meals: As indicated in the itinerary. (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Transfers: Transfers are included as indicated. Unless tours are specifically indicated as private all transportation to tours are shared with other passengers and with a Spanish speaking driver. All tours will be with a bilingual guide.
- Portage: When the tour includes international airport transfers, the handling of two bags per person is included.
- Taxes & Entrance Fees: Hotel taxes, meal taxes (when meals are included), entrance fees to National Parks, museums and places of interest are included unless otherwise specified.
- Sightseeing: As specified in the itinerary.

NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR PRICES:

Costs of obtaining passports, visas or tourist cards; excess baggage fees; personal expenses such as room service, beverages and laundry; personal communications charges; international airfare; sightseeing or meals not specified in the itinerary; personal insurance coverage (strongly recommended), gratuities.